



## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Honorable Tom Wolf  
Office of the Governor  
225 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

JUL 15 2015

Dear Governor Wolf:

I am writing in response to Pennsylvania's June 30, 2015, request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project, including revisions to the project period to implement a portion of its plan. Between May 13, 2015, and June 30, 2015, the State submitted documentation to and held conversations with the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to support amendment requests to its approved Race to the Top plan. ED has the authority to approve amendments to your plan and budget, provided the revisions do not change the overall scope and objectives of the approved proposal. In June 2014, ED issued *Amendment Requests with No-cost Extension Guidance and Principles*, indicating the process by which amendments containing request to provide additional time for a grantee to accomplish the reform goals and deliverables it committed to in its Race to the Top application and approved Scope of Work would be reviewed. To determine whether approval could be granted, ED has applied the conditions noted in the document, and compared it with the Race to the Top program *Principles*, which are also included in that document.

I approve the following amendments, including timeline extensions, as described below.

- In the (A)(2) *Building Strong Statewide Capacity* grant budget area, Pennsylvania will shift a total of \$422,766.15 in unexpended grant funds to Year 5 to continue to provide programmatic and fiscal oversight and support for the grant through December 31, 2016. Specifically, funds will continue to provide for a Race to the Top director and assistant director at the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). The State will also extend contracts with a select number of Intermediate Units (IUs) to provide fiscal support and oversight of participating local educational agencies (LEAs) that are approved by PDE to continue work in Year 5.
- In the (B)(3) *Supporting the Transition* grant budget area, Pennsylvania will shift a total of \$189,500.00 in unexpended grant funds to Year 5 to continue the State's Math Design Collaborative (MDC) Project through June 30, 2016. The State will build upon work previously accomplished to provide training, supports, and resources to LEAs to implement standards-aligned mathematics formative assessments with a focus on the middle school grades. In Year 5, the State will continue this work and expand its supports and resources to the elementary grades.
- In the (C)(2) *Assessing and Using State Data* grant budget area, Pennsylvania will extend the performance period for two projects through June 30, 2016, as described below.

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*The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.*

- Pennsylvania will allocate \$344,230.00 in unexpended grant funds to its Data Governance project to continue its support of the State’s Data Collection Consolidation efforts to reduce burden on LEAs and ensure quality State data.
- The State will also allocate \$257,652.50 in unexpended grant funds to continue the State’s rollout and implementation of its Early Warning System dashboard to existing and additional LEAs in Year 5. Pennsylvania will continue to provide targeted supports, training, and implement continuous improvement processes to ensure LEAs have the capacity to implement the Early Warning System dashboard at the local level.

Pennsylvania also submitted a request to revise the project period for LEAs to implement their Scopes of Work. In June 2014, the Department issued “Amendment Requests with No Cost Extension Guidance and Principles” indicating the process by which amendments containing requests to provide additional time for a grantee to accomplish the reform goals and deliverables it committed to in its Race to the Top application and approved Scope of Work would be reviewed and approved or denied. In order to consider amendment requests with no-cost extensions, ED indicated that States must address the timelines and implications of the amendment on the 50 percent LEA subgrants (i.e., allocations to participating LEAs), as well as the process the State will use to review LEA subgrant requests to obligate and liquidate funds after the current project period. To determine whether approval could be granted, ED has applied the conditions and elements specific to no-cost extensions noted in the document, and compared it with the Race to the Top program *Principles* included in the “Grant Amendment Submission Process” document issues to Governors of grantee States.

Through conversations with Pennsylvania and documentation submitted as part of this amendment request, we understand that the State will begin to review requests from participating LEAs with its IUs to extend the project period to complete Race to the Top activities on a case-by-case basis. ED generally approves the State’s process as described in Appendix 1. Prior to September 30, 2015, ED expects the State to submit a record of each participating LEA project approved by the State for a no-cost extension and the total funding approved for the LEAs’ Year 5 Scopes of Work.

It is ED’s understanding that this amendment will not result in a change in your State’s performance measures and outcomes, nor will they substantially change the scope and objectives of the work. Please note that we expect grantees with no-cost extensions to liquidate all funds by September 30, 2017, given that by law all Race to the Top funds revert to the U.S. Department of Treasury as of October 1, 2017. This letter will be posted on ED’s website as a record of the amendments.

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please contact Julie Glasier at (202) 205-0940 or [OSS.Pennsylvania@ed.gov](mailto:OSS.Pennsylvania@ed.gov). Thank you for your continued commitment to enhancing education for all of the Pennsylvania’s students.

Sincerely,

/s/

Monique M. Chism, Ph.D.  
Director  
Office of State Support

cc: Angie Eifert, Race to the Top Director

Enclosure

Appendix 1: Process Pennsylvania will use to review LEA subgrant requests from participating LEAs to obligate and liquidate funds after the current project period, as described by the State

## PENNSYLVANIA NCE IU/LEA IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

### AMENDMENT REQUEST

#### Overview

Pennsylvania (PDE) is seeking the Department's approval of the implementation plan, process, and criteria for Intermediate Units (IU) and local education agencies (LEA) seeking the No Cost Extension (NCE) option to the Race to the Top (RTT) grant. This amendment request also includes PDE's proposed timeline, communication to IUs, and a letter of intent for all current RTT participants.

#### Process

As the timeline below suggests, PDE will use criteria to determine which LEAs will be granted the NCE throughout the summer 2015. PDE will review requests from participating LEAs to extend the project period to complete RTT activities on a case-by-case basis. Those LEAs not opting for the NCE will begin the close-out process; while those LEAs who are granted the NCE will have until June 30, 2016 to meet their established and approved goals. As part of PDE's NCE approval process, RTT staff is currently developing a template to outline the following:

- LEA intent of funds
- How the intent of funds relate to Educator Effectiveness
- Strategies for implementing activities
- How the NCE will help the LEA achieve its goals
- Updated timelines for activities and relevant deliverables
- Budget documentation

This template will be distributed to participating LEAs, along with amended grant agreements, by July 1, and must be signed by the LEA's superintendent before being submitted to the IU and PDE.

#### Criteria for Granting NCE to LEAs

Any LEA may submit an amendment for the NCE; however PDE reserves the right to deny amendments under the provisions outlined below. The criteria for PDE's consideration include:

- Has sufficiently delivered on the requirements described in their original grant agreement
- Has submitted expenditures aligned with the grant
- Submits a compelling rationale for granting the NCE, which is outlined in the LEA template
- Completes and submits all required documentation (grant agreement, template, annual survey) in a timely manner
- Has met all expectations/requirements of PDE's progress monitoring plans and protocols
- Demonstrates reasonable alignment to PDE's goals of implementing the Educator Effectiveness system

#### Timeline

##### 2015

April 15	IUs receive RTT NCE information and LEA letter of intent template
May 15	LEA signed letters of intent to IU due
May 27	LEAs signed letters of intent to PDE due
June 8	Email SY 14/15 APR survey link to all participants
June 11	Email IUs to confirming NCE options, IU admin amount, final LEA totals
June 30	Option 1 & 2 LEAs final expenditures submitted to IU
July 15	IUs receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PDE-IU grant agreement</li><li>• IU-LEA amended grant agreement (with attached NCE SOW) template</li></ul>

- LEA Closeout Survey
  - Send Fiscal Closeout procedures to IU 7 & IU 23
- Aug. 14 PDE receives:
- Signed PDE-IU grant agreement (US mail)
  - Signed IU-LEA amended grant agreement (with attached NCE SOW) (electronic)
- Sept 15 Receive final invoices from IU 7 & IU 23
- Sept. 30 RTT original grant agreements expire for non-NCE participants
- Oct. 1 IU and LEA NCE begins

**2016**

- June 30 LEA NCE participants' reimbursement requests due to IUs
- Sept. 1 Final reimbursement requests due to PDE
- Sept. 30 RTT NCE grant agreements expire