



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

April 8, 2011

The Honorable Lincoln Chafee
Office of the Governor
State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1196

Dear Governor Chafee:

I am writing in response to Rhode Island's request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project. Between February 1, 2011 and March 25, 2011, the State submitted amendment requests to the U.S. Department of Education (Department). As you are aware, the Department has the authority to approve amendments to your plan and budget, provided that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On January 6, 2011, the Department sent a letter and "Grant Amendment Submission Process" document to Governors of grantee States indicating the process by which amendments would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Department 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 am pleased to approve the following amendments:

- In place of the State Board Exams project, Rhode Island will implement the Multiple Pathways through Virtual Learning project. The State Board Exam project design was dependent upon the successful awarding of Race to the Top Assessment funds to the State Consortium on Board Examination Systems and its Project Management Partner, the National Center on Education and the Economy. Given that these funds were not awarded, Rhode Island is unable to implement the State Board Exams project. The Multiple Pathways through Virtual Learning project also supports the goal of college and career readiness through expansion of the quality and quantity of pathways available to students, and utilizes the \$1,000,000 formerly designated for the State Board Exams project. The project has three main elements: (1) A contract with a high-quality vendor to develop a series of web-based modules that focus on the development of foundational math skills in the areas of pre-algebra, geometry, and algebra I; (2) A subsidy of the cost of virtual/blended instruction for a select profile of students with substantial skill gaps who could most benefit from that environment; and (3) A statewide Request For Proposal (RFP) to seek high-quality virtual providers of Advanced Placement and world language courses with the goal of increasing economic efficiencies through a statewide economy of scale.
- Rhode Island will move \$286,000 from the "Other" budget line in the "Study of Standards and Intensive Curriculum" project budget to the "Contract" line in the "State

and Local Capacity” project budget. This change reflects a savings in curriculum work in mathematics and a need for additional funds for the contract in the “State and Local Capacity” project budget in order to increase Rhode Island’s State education agency (SEA) capacity to develop high-quality RFPs, and increase SEA and local education agency (LEA) capacity to implement the Ed Stat system and conduct performance monitoring.

- Amendment requests relating to timeline adjustments, as detailed in Appendix 1.
- Revisions to performance measures in the application areas of (C)(2), (C)(3)(i), (D)(4)(ii), (D)(5)(ii), and (E)(2). See Appendix 2 for the revised measures.
 - (C)(2), (C)(3)(i), (D)(4)(ii), (D)(5)(ii): Revised to reflect approved amendments outlined in this letter.
 - (E)(2): Revised to reflect Rhode Island’s plans for the use of School Improvement Grant funds. Rhode Island will initiate one of the school intervention models in five schools for each of the following years: SY 2010-11, SY 2011-2012, and SY 2012-13. The Race to the Top application did not define “initiate,” but the Department will provide clarification to all grantees at a later date. At this point in time, the Department understands that Rhode Island interprets the term to mean that the schools have been identified and initial work is taking place; much of that work is planning, but in some cases it might include such steps as replacement of the principal, depending on the model selected. The new targets for this measure represent an increase in the number of schools initiating one of the four school intervention models over the prior targets.

Additionally, Rhode Island has provided the following clarifications:

- Rhode Island clarified the timelines for the data dictionary, data standard, and data dashboards and platforms project. Due to the work of the Data Governance Board, some work will be achieved ahead of schedule. The original timeframe was that by spring 2012, Rhode Island would develop the data dictionary and state data standards for data collection/exchange. The data dictionary and data standards will now be developed in spring 2011, and the business rules for data flow, along with the start of collaboration around the quality and interoperability of data that enters the warehouse, how errors are fixed, and what new business rules are needed for automation, will take place in summer 2011.
- Rhode Island clarified the timeline for the Academy for Transformative Leadership and the Turnaround Principal Corps. The sequencing and timing of some intermediate steps have been adjusted to allow sufficient time to refine the design, conduct market research, and work with participating LEAs to provide the level of services required, and to recruit and hire professionals with experience in transforming persistently lowest achieving schools. Training will take place in summer 2011, as previously planned.
- Rhode Island clarified that there was a typo in the application timeline for the development of the early warning indicators tool. The application states the Research Collaborative will work with Rhode Island to identify predictor indicators in spring 2011, and then those indicators will be used to create the early warning indicators tool

in fall 2010. The timeframe for the early warning indicators tool should have read fall 2011.

It is our understanding that the amendments will not substantially change the scope of work. Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department's website as a record of the amendments.

I am confident that Rhode Island will continue its bold, comprehensive reform efforts. If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact Rhode Island's Race to the Top Program Officer, Bridget Kelly, at (202) 453-5534 or bridget.kelly@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

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Ann Whalen
Deputy Director, Implementation and Support Unit

cc: Commissioner Deborah Gist
Mary-Beth Fafard
Carolyn Dias

Appendix 1: Timeline adjustments

Item #	Grant project area	Project(s)	Timeline adjustment	Description
1	(B)(3): Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	Interim assessments; formative assessment modules	Vendor selection for interim assessments shifts from winter 2010 to spring 2011; release of interim assessments shifts from winter 2011 to winter 2012. Vendor selection for formative assessment modules shifts from fall 2010 to spring 2011; training shifts from fall 2011 to fall 2012.	These changes reflect the need for additional time for the following: coordination with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium's assessment model, coordination with other states to identify areas of collaboration, and additional market research before issuing the RFP.
2	(C)(3): Using data to improve instruction	Supporting LEAs in providing professional development on data-driven instruction to drive student achievement	Training to develop teacher and administrator capacity to use interim and summative assessment data shifts from summer 2011 to summer 2012.	This timeline shift results in a budget shift of \$250,000 from Year 1 to Year 2. The timeline and budget shifts reflect the shifts in timeframe for the interim assessment and Instructional Management System projects and the need for additional time to coordinate efforts with other states.
3	(C)(2): Accessing and using State data	Educator evaluation data collection and reporting tool	The RFP related to the educator evaluation data collection and reporting tool shifts from fall 2010 to winter/spring 2011. Training on the use of the tool shifts from fall 2011 to fall 2012, to align with the new timeframe.	This change reflects the need for additional market research and identification of elements for the RFP and permits Rhode Island to incorporate learning from its spring 2011 pilot of the educator evaluation model. The pilot is helping Rhode Island understand ways to improve processes for data collection, review, and use. We understand that these adjusted timeframes do not impact Rhode Island's ability to implement growth measures and collect data, but rather impact the way that data are

				collected in 2011-12. Rhode Island will implement the educator evaluation system primarily as a paper system in that year, and will fully implement the data system in 2012-13.
4	(C)(2): Accessing and using State data	Rhode Island Certification System upgrade	The start of work on the Rhode Island Certification System upgrade shifts from fall 2010 to winter/spring 2011. The completion of the database will remain in 2011-12. The portal was formerly planned to be built in spring/summer 2011, with data available in winter 2011-12; Rhode Island now plans for the portal to be completed in 2012-13.	This change reflects the need for additional market research and identification of elements for the RFP and permits Rhode Island to incorporate learning from its spring 2011 pilot of the educator evaluation model.
5	(D)(4): Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	Educator preparation report cards	The release of educator preparation report cards from summer 2012 to school year 2013-14.	This change reflects alignment with the adjusted timelines for the educator evaluation data collection and reporting tool and the Rhode Island Certification System upgrade. A full year of data is needed prior to creating the report cards, and the link between the educator evaluation data and preparation program data was initially planned to be established in 2011-12, but now is planned to be in place in 2012-13.
6	(D)(2): Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	Compensation project	Shift the start of the compensation project from winter 2011 to spring 2012. Rhode Island will still implement the compensation project in school year 2012-13.	This change reflects Rhode Island's understanding that LEAs would benefit from additional time to understand the new evaluation system prior to proposing plans for the compensation project.

Appendix 2: Performance measures

Table C3 - Performance Measures (C)(2) Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the State wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or	End of SY 2010- 2011	End of SY 2011- 2012	End of SY 2012- 2013	End of SY 2013- 2014
Build a customized data dashboard for 4 user groups (educators, principals, district administrators, parents)	0	1	3		
Train 2,950 principals and educators on use of dashboards	0	0	700	300	1950
Train 700 principals/school leadership members of Participating LEAs on state educator evaluation data collection tool			700		
Develop 1 statewide data dictionary with data collection/exchange standards		1			
Number of unique users of data dashboards		1,000	5,000	8,500	0

Table C5 - Performance Measures (C)(3)(i) Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the State wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
Deliver Data-Driven PD model to 225 total schools in 3 annual cohorts (includes principal and school leadership team)			0%	50%	100%
Percentage of Rhode Island educators accessing and using IMS			0%	50%	100%

Table D10 - Performance Measures (D)(4)(ii)	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010- 2011	End of SY 2011- 2012	End of SY 2012- 2013	End of SY 2013- 2014
General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
Percentage of teacher preparation programs in the State for which the public can access data on the achievement and growth (as defined in this notice) of the graduates' students.	0	0	0	100%*	100%
Percentage of principal preparation programs in the State for which the public can access data on the achievement and growth (as defined in this notice) of the graduates' students.	0	0	0	100%*	100%
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data] This evaluation data will be available in a data platform in 2012-13. RIDE and the Board of Regents will utilize this data to inform the continued improvement and approval of all teacher and principal preparation programs.					
General data to be provided at time of application:					
Total number of teacher credentialing programs in the State.	9				
Total number of principal credentialing programs in the State.	3				
Total number of teachers in the State.	15,977				
Total number of principals in the State.	446				
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]					
Data to be requested of grantees in the future:					

Number of teacher credentialing programs in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.	
Number of teachers prepared by each credentialing program in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.	
Number of principal credentialing programs in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.	
Number of principals prepared by each credentialing program in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.	
Number of teachers in the State whose data are aggregated to produce publicly available reports on the State's credentialing programs.	
Number of principals in the State whose data are aggregated to produce publicly available reports on the State's credentialing programs.	

Table D14 - Performance Measures (D)(5)(ii)	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010- 2011	End of SY 2011- 2012	End of SY 2012- 2013	End of SY 2013- 2014
Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the State wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.					
(Enter measures here, if any.)	0	0*	0	100%	100%
1) Provide effective data-informed professional development, coaching, induction and common planning and collaboration to teachers and principals.					
2) Measure, evaluate, and continuously improve the effectiveness of those supports to improve student achievement.	0	0*	0	100%	100%
* Data system will capture professional development accessed by educators beginning in 2011-12. RIDE and LEAs will then be able to link data to teacher and principal evaluations and performance.					

Table E3 - Performance Measures (E)(2)

	Actual Date: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
The number of schools for which one of the four school intervention models (described in Appendix C) will be initiated each year.	0	5*	5	5	0

*Note that these identified schools are supported through Race to the Top and 1003(g) School Improvement funds.