



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

August 15, 2014

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, including revisions to the project period to implement a portion of its plan. On July 28, 2014, the State submitted documentation to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) to support amendment requests to its approved Race to the Top plan. As you are aware, the Department 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 March 2013, 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. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Department 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 issued to Governors of grantee States in October 2011.

I approve the following amendments, including an extension to the time period for implementation to June 30, 2015, Year 5, as described below.

- Shift \$500,000 from Year 4 to Year 5 contractual in the Instructional Support System project-level budget, formerly titled "Instructional Management System." These funds are available from Year 4 personnel savings across the State's Race to the Top budget due to some staff leaving positions earlier in Year 4 than anticipated. In Year 5 these funds will support enhancements to the Instructional Support System (ISS), as approved in a March 12, 2014 amendment letter. These enhancements include functionality for local

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educational agencies (LEAs) to enter local assessment data into the ISS, and other enhancements for implementation of interim assessments (e.g., printing scoring materials, printing student responses, creating role-based functionality). The State plans for this work to be complete by January 2015.

- Shift \$500,000 in Year 4 savings to Year 5 personnel in the Instructional Support System and State and Local Capacity project-level budgets. These funds are available from Year 4 savings in the contractual and supplemental funding for participating LEAs budget categories from across the State's Race to the Top budget. In Year 5 these funds will continue to support personnel for grant and fiscal management, and to support to LEAs in using the ISS and in implementing mini-grants focused on data use (see below).
- Shift \$1,082,304 in unspent Year 4 contractual funds to Year 5 supplemental funding for participating LEAs in the Instructional Support System project-level budget. These funds are available from Year 4 due to challenges with a vendor. The State will award "mini-grants" to LEAs to support local use of data during school year (SY) 2014-2015. LEA efforts will address the following areas of work: training on resources available through the ISS, creating assessments using the State's interim assessment item bank, furthering the use of data from State data systems in data-driven decision-making, and understanding student data in the context of other data sources (e.g., growth data, Student Learning Objects, discipline data).

As described in a March 12, 2014, amendment approval letter, the Department indicated that it generally approves the State's process to review LEA subgrant requests to obligate and liquidate funds after September 23, 2014.

It is our understanding that this amendment and no-cost extension 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 1, 2015, given that by law all Race to the Top funds revert to the U.S. Department of Treasury as of October 1, 2015. The State must request and receive approval to move forward with no-cost extensions for any additional projects. This letter will be posted on the Department's website as a record of the amendments.

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, Monika Bandyopadhyay, at 260-260-2531 or [monika.bandyopadhyay@ed.gov](mailto:monika.bandyopadhyay@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

//s//

Patrick Rooney  
Acting Director, Policy and Program Implementation  
Implementation and Support Unit

cc: Commissioner Deborah Gist  
Mary-Beth Fafard