



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

February 3, 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. Between December 20, 2013 and January 17, 2014, the State submitted an amendment request 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 October 4, 2011, the Department sent a letter and revised "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 approve the following amendments:

- For the Intensive Curriculum Alignment project, disseminate model curricula and units of study to local educational agencies (LEAs) through the Instructional Management System (IMS) and in an electronic format, rather than only the IMS. During Year 3 the State and LEAs experienced challenges with access, usability and functionality with the IMS. In addition, the vendor announced in May 2013 that it would no longer provide support or maintenance for the platform where the curricula and units of study currently reside. The State reports that offering LEAs access in alternative ways will ensure sustained use of these resources. LEAs will have continued access to the IMS throughout Year 4.
- For the Formative Assessment Professional Development project, deliver modules through RIDEmap rather than through the IMS. During Year 3 these

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professional development modules were accessible through the IMS but there were functionality issues with video content. Without continued vendor support, as described above, the State has shifted access to RIDEmap to ensure continued access and use of the modules in Year 4.

- For the Interim Assessments project, adjust the approach to scoring and reporting capabilities to ensure LEAs have access to student data on interim assessments developed using the test-construction tool. During Year 3 the State experienced vendor challenges with regularly updating student-teacher-course connection data and with providing key deliverables related to ad hoc reporting on the interim assessments. In Year 4 the State will continue to make the item bank available to LEAs through the IMS, however, ad hoc reporting will be provided through a State-managed web service, rather than through the IMS. The Department acknowledges that full use of the test-construction tool was delayed from January 2013 to November 2013.
- For the Early Warning System (EWS) project, adjust the approach to LEA access to the EWS screener in Year 4. During the State's March 2013 pilot of the EWS, the State learned that the IMS vendor was not regularly updating student-teacher-course connection data, which made reliable use of the EWS challenging. In Year 4, rather than use the vendor-developed platform, the State will engage LEAs in a two-pronged approach to access. For LEAs with student information systems, the State will provide the newly developed EWS screener as a "plug-in" so that these LEAs can leverage existing sources of data. For other LEAs, the State will provide access to regularly updated dashboards in RIDEmap. The Department acknowledges that these changes in approach have resulted in further delay in LEA training, which will now occur through February 2014 rather than in June 2013. The Department first described delays in the EWS project in a March 2013, amendment letter.

The Department understands that the State will submit additional amendments to adjust the budget for these projects, including the IMS project, in Year 4 and to account for changes in approach to designing and developing a sustainable system.

It is our understanding that these amendments 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 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 202-260-2531 or [monika.bandyopadhyay@ed.gov](mailto:monika.bandyopadhyay@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

//s//

Ann Whalen  
Director, Policy and Program Implementation  
Implementation and Support Unit

cc: Commissioner Deborah Gist  
Mary-Beth Fafard