



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

January 8, 2013

The Honorable Bill Haslam
Office of the Governor
State Capitol
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0001

Dear Governor Haslam:

I am writing in response to Tennessee's request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project. Between September 13 and December 17, 2012, the State submitted documentation to and held conversations with the U.S. Department of Education (Department) staff in the Implementation and Support Unit (ISU) to support an amendment request 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 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.

Tennessee's approach to supporting school leaders includes studying principal effectiveness and sharing best practices across the State. Based on additional planning, the State has refined its approach to meeting this outcome. The State's current theory of action aims to "transform what it means to be an effective leader at all phases of a leader's career by setting high standards for effective leadership based on research and best practice, supporting leaders to reach those standards, and empowering districts to build a network of exceptional instructional leaders who get results." The State has demonstrated evidence of consideration of the policy and practice levers related to this more explicit and broadened theory of action. I approve Tennessee's request to allocate resources to further refine its approach and implement activities related to supporting school leadership. The State will direct a portion of the funds initially budgeted for the "Leadership Action Tank" as follows:

www.ed.gov

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202

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

- Approximately \$500,000 in Years 3 and 4 to develop and make accessible to all local educational agencies (LEAs) an online teacher and leader marketplace to support recruitment and hiring decisions;
- Approximately \$3.7 million in Years 3 and 4 to support competitive grants for partnerships to develop or replicate innovative programs to increase leader effectiveness and improve student outcomesⁱ; and
- Approximately \$250,000 in Years 3 and 4 for additional staff and contractual support to build capacity to further refine and implement the projects and approach.

Based on conversations with the State, the Department expects to see progress against this refined approach to school leadership as well as additional details about the timelines and expected deliverables in the next three to six months.

- (a) By May 1, 2013, the Department expects to see evidence of policy development to align preparation program approval standards with the State's revised leadership standards and the initial development of a statewide marketplace to support LEA recruitment practices. Additionally, the Department expects to receive a refined scope of work and expected functionalities for the development of the licensure data system, the rationale and expected outcomes of a teacher leadership research activity, and a plan for ongoing engagement to support LEAs' human capital and recruitment strategies.
- (b) By June 15, 2013, the Department expects to see evidence of a rigorous LEA competitive grant competition to develop or replicate innovative leadership programs. Additionally, the Department expects to receive an additional request for providing online and face-to-face supports to LEAs in leadership training and development.

The State will include updates about progress of the activities in this project in each of the monthly reports the State submits to the Department beginning in January 2013. Based on these progress updates and subsequent amendment requests, the Department will consider the State's proposed use for the \$5,516,120 remaining from the original "Leadership Action Tank" project budget.

It is our understanding that this amendment will not result in a change in your State's performance measures and outcomes, nor will it substantially change the scope of work. Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department's website as a record of the amendment. If you need assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact Tennessee's Race to the Top Program Officer, Jessie Levin, at 202-453-6651 or Jessie.Levin@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

//s//

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

cc: Commissioner Kevin Huffman
Meghan Curran, Director, First to the Top

ⁱ It is the Department's understanding that the State plans to run a competition in winter 2013 and make approximately eight awards in spring 2014.