



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

April 25, 2011

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 March 2 and April 1, 2011, the State provided information to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) regarding this amendment request. 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 amendment to the First to the Top (FTTT) Oversight project (A)(2)(i) to allow Tennessee to update its organizational chart. This change includes moving the FTTT Team from the Governor's office to the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) and adjusting the staff roles to:

- Broaden the scope of the Deputy Director position to include responsibility for coordinating implementation of all FTTT projects within TDOE and across agencies and school districts integral to the State's plan;
- Broaden the scope of one Policy Advisor position to include policy coordination across all FTTT projects; and
- Add a Program Assistant position to provide overall support to all FTTT projects by eliminating one FTTT Policy Advisor position that has not been filled to date.

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The salaries for each of these positions have been adjusted to reflect the requisite skills and competencies needed to carry out the roles and responsibilities described above. Overall, however, there is no net budget change to the personnel or other budget categories in this project. The State believes these adjustments will allow for a better use of fiscal resources and human capital.

Through conversations with staff at the State agency and Governor's office, it is the Department's understanding that the functions of the Oversight Team, which was previously housed in the Governor's office, will remain the same, as will its relationship with internal and external partners and stakeholders. Currently, the Governor's office meets regularly with TDOE staff to communicate progress and issues regarding the State's plan and both parties have affirmed intent to maintain this level of engagement.

As part of this amendment request, the Department received an updated organizational chart as well as two additional key personnel resumes. The State has acknowledged that it will provide the Department with additional key personnel resumes as necessary. 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.

I am confident that Tennessee 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 Tennessee's Race to the Top Program Officer, Jessie Levin, at 202-453-6651 or [Jessie.Levin@ed.gov](mailto:Jessie.Levin@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

//s//

Ann Whalen  
Deputy Director, Implementation and Support Unit

cc:  
Kevin Huffman, Commissioner  
Erin O'Hara, First to the Top Director  
Patrick Smith, Deputy Commissioner