



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

March 16, 2012

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

Dear Governor Haslam:

I am writing with regards to the documentation that Tennessee submitted on November 14, 2011, December 27, 2011, and February 27, 2012, in response to the conditions included in U.S. Department of Education's September 27, 2011, approval of Tennessee's request to amend the Achievement School District (ASD) project in its approved Race to the Top plan. In conformance with the condition, Tennessee submitted program implementation milestones and strategic plans, evidence of communication to directors of schools, and press releases announcing schools participating in the ASD in school year (SY) 2012-2013. Additionally, in conjunction with the State's ESEA Flexibility Request submitted on November 14, 2011, and subsequently approved on February 9, 2012, the State provided evidence of its processes for identifying ASD-eligible schools and notifying schools of their eligibility.¹ Based on the documentation that Tennessee submitted, as well as additional clarification and explanation of that documentation on follow-up phone calls on November 28, 2011, December 27, 2011, and January 23, 2012, Tennessee has fulfilled the conditions specified.

Under the approved amendment, for SY 2011-2012, Tennessee will co-manage five schools and monitor an additional eight schools of the 13 that were eligible for the ASD based on the State's initial plan. The State will also build capacity at the State education agency to run the ASD and build relationships with districts and communities with schools eligible and identified to be a part of the ASD in SY 2012-2013. The Department is currently reviewing the State's amendment request submitted February 24, 2012, and discussed March 9, 2012, clarifying the adjusted approach and timeline and related budget implications for the remainder of the grant period.

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

As stated in my September 27, 2011 letter, it is important to note that the Department expects that Tennessee will fulfill the commitment it made in its Race to the Top application to establish an ASD to implement effective reforms in the State's lowest achieving schools. Further, Tennessee has indicated that this amendment will neither result in a change in Tennessee's Race to the Top student outcome goals nor substantially change the scope of work from its approved application.

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.

Sincerely,

//s//

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

Cc: Kevin Huffman
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