



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

January 19, 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 November 30, 2010 and January 10, 2011, the State submitted these amendment requests 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 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 following amendment(s):

- Decrease of \$1,773,527 to contractual costs in the "Integrating Data to Improve Instruction" project budget. This change is due to the State's determination that several projects proposed by the contractor are unnecessary because of software that already exists in the State. In addition, Tennessee confirmed that all activities and outcomes related to the data system as outlined in the original application will still occur.
- Addition of \$635,806 to the "Tennessee Department of Education Delivery Unit" project budget over the course of the grant to hire two additional staff members and to support monthly travel for EDU staff to meet with districts. By increasing staff of this effectiveness unit, the State expects to enhance its ability to meet the goals of First to the Top.

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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.*

- Increase of \$1,137,721 to the “Teacher and Principal Evaluation Development” project budget. These funds will be used in years 1 and 2 to support additional travel costs for educator and technical advisor engagement in the development of growth measures as well as additional training for educators on the new evaluation system. The State considers the work of the teacher and principal evaluation system as “the essential underpinning of the First to the Top Great Teachers and Leaders work,” and believes it did not originally estimate enough funds for statewide training on the new system. Additionally, based on work to date, the state determined additional educators need to be involved in the development process around growth measures in non-tested subjects.
- Adjustments in several STEM-related project budgets to update the State’s contract with Battelle Memorial Institute. Battelle entered into a \$1 million in-kind agreement with Tennessee prior to the State receiving an Race to the Top grant so these changes will coordinate Battelle’s support for Tennessee’s STEM initiatives. Specifically:
  - The budget for “STEM Hubs,” formerly a stand-alone project budget, is moved into the “STEM Innovation Network Infrastructure” project budget;
  - Funds in the budget for the “STEM Innovation Network Infrastructure” shift from activities to personnel and support for personnel; and
  - In the \$9 million “STEM Platform Schools” project budget, most supplemental funding for participating LEAs will move to contractual since Battelle Memorial will manage the direct grants to LEAs with the exception of \$1 million that the State already granted directly to Metro Nashville. Battelle will not retain any of \$8 million remaining for administrative purposes.

All activities proposed in the original Race to the Top budget will occur within the same projected timelines; these changes will allow funds for all three activities to flow through the same agent with greater oversight and cohesion.

It is our understanding that the amendments will not result in a change in your State’s performance measures and outcomes, nor will they 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(s).

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//

Joseph C. Conaty, Ph.D.  
Interim Director, Race to the Top Program

cc: Erin O'Hara  
Patrick Smith  
Rachel Woods