



## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Honorable Bill Haslam  
Office of the Governor  
State Capitol, 1st Floor  
Nashville, TN 37243

May 26, 2015

Dear Governor Haslam:

I am writing in response to Tennessee's request to amend its approved Race to the Top (RTT) grant plan, including revisions to the project period to implement a portion of its plan. Between March 9 and April 17, 2015, the State submitted documentation to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to support amendment requests to its approved RTT plan. ED has the authority to approve amendments to your plan and budget, provided the revisions do not change the overall scope and objectives of the approved proposal. In March 2013, ED issued *Amendment Requests with No-cost Extension Guidance and Principles*, indicating the process by which amendments containing a request to provide additional time for a grantee to accomplish the reform goals and deliverables it committed to in its RTT application and approved Scope of Work would be reviewed. To determine whether ED could grant approval, ED has applied the conditions noted in the document, and compared it with the RTT program *Principles*, which are also included in that document.

I approve the following amendment, as described below.

- Shift a total of \$1,776,070 in unallocated funds from Year 4 of multiple RTT projects to expand work underway in Year 5 for sub-criteria (A)(2): "First to the Top Oversight Team", "(C)(2): "Data Systems", (D)(3): "Teacher and Principal Evaluation Development", (D)(5): "SITES-M" and Competitive Priority: Tennessee STEM Innovation Network. Funds are available due to lower-than-expected expenditures needed to complete grant activities, primarily in the contractual category. According to the State, projects with excess funds are either complete or will be completed under a revised budget.<sup>1</sup> Tennessee will shift these excess funds from Year 4 to expand work taking place during the no-cost extension year in various projects as described below:

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<sup>1</sup>The total of \$1,776,070 is derived from actual expenditures in the following projects: (A)(2): "Tennessee Consortium on Research, Evaluation, and Development"; (B)(3): "Integrating Common Core"; (C)(2): "Data Systems" and "Integrating TVAAS"; (D)(1): "U Teach Replication"; (D)(2): "Innovation Acceleration Fund" and "Competitive Supplemental Fund"; (D)(3): "Teach TN"; (D)(4): Tennessee College Access & Success Network, "School Leader Study," and "Preparation Program Report Card"; (D)(5): "Leadership Initiatives" and "STEM Professional Development"; (E)(2): "Achievement School District"; the "Supplemental Scope of Work Fund," and the additional unspent noted in Tennessee's April 6, 2015 amendment approval letter.

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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.*

- Use \$427,377 of the total unallocated funds discussed above based on actual Year 4 costs to expand work underway in Year 5 in sub-criterion “Tennessee Stem Innovation Network” and extend the time period for implementation through June 30, 2015. The State will use these funds to continue support for the three distinct sub-projects through summer 2015, focused on the development of the STEM innovation across the State;
- Use \$154,332 of the total unallocated funds discussed above based on actual Year 4 costs to expand work underway in Year 5 in sub-criterion (A)(2): “First to the Top Oversight Team” and extend the time period for implementation through August 31, 2015. The State will use these funds to continue contractual and personnel expenses;
- Use \$444,017 of the total unallocated funds discussed above based on actual Year 4 costs to expand work underway in Year 5 in sub-criterion (C)(2): “Data Systems” and extend the time period for implementation through June 30, 2015. The State will use these funds to continue implementing its communication support systems;
- Use \$444,018 of the total unallocated funds discussed above based on actual Year 4 costs to expand work underway in Year 5 in sub-criterion (D)(3): “Teacher & Principal Evaluation Development” and extend the time period for implementation through June 30, 2015. The State will use these funds for educator professional development aligned with Tennessee’s educator equity plan; and
- Use \$306,326 of the total unallocated funds discussed above based on actual Year 4 costs to expand work underway in Year 5 in sub-criterion (D)(5): “SITES-M,” and extend the time period for implementation through June 30, 2015. The State will use these funds to provide mathematics professional development for teachers.

As described in a July 12, 2013, amendment approval letter, ED indicated that it generally approves Tennessee’s process to review LEA subgrant requests to obligate and liquidate funds after September 23, 2014. On June 27, 2014, Tennessee submitted a record of each participating LEA project approved by the State for a no-cost extension and the total funding approved for LEAs’ Year 5 Scopes of Work.

It is ED’s understanding that this amendment 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 we expect grantees with no-cost extensions to liquidate all funds by September 1, 2015, given that by law all Race to the Top funds revert to the U.S. Department of Treasury as of October 1, 2015. This letter will be posted on ED’s website as a record of this amendment.

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If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding RTT, please contact Victoria Hammer at (202) 260-1438, Nkemjika Ofodile at (202)401-4389 or [OSS.Tennessee@ed.gov](mailto:OSS.Tennessee@ed.gov). Thank you for your continued commitment to enhancing education for all of Tennessee's students.

Sincerely,

/s/

Monique Chism, Ph.D.  
Director  
Office of State Support

cc: Dr. Candice McQueen, Commissioner  
Sam Percy, Director, First to the Top