



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

July 2, 2012

The Honorable Chris Christie
Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Christie:

I would like to thank Acting Commissioner Cerf and the staff at the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) for their hard work and collaboration with us as your State begins to implement its Race to the Top grant. On April 2, 2012, we received scopes of work for all of New Jersey's participating local educational agencies (LEAs), and a detailed scope of work for New Jersey's projects that is consistent with its approved application. We approve the State's scope of work and the format of the LEA scopes of work; the State and LEA scopes of work include specific goals, activities, timeline, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures.

Through our conversations with the NJ DOE team, we understand that the State has conditionally approved the participating LEA scopes of work and will grant final approval once the State scope of work is approved. The State has required the LEAs to provide detailed work plans for Years 2-4 of the grant as part of the conditional approval process and has supported them in refining their work plans. We support this plan to continue to work with participating LEAs as they finalize their scopes of work, as this is consistent with our view that the State's and LEAs' scopes of work are living documents that may be subject to additional review and revision where appropriate over time.

On December 22, 2011, New Jersey received a grant of \$37,847,648 with the condition that the State draw down no more than 12.5 percent of the grant prior to approval of the State's scope of work. I am pleased to notify you that the remaining balance of the award is now available to the State. Funds may be drawn down only as they are needed, and their use must be consistent with the implementation of New Jersey's Race to the Top plan and in support of accomplishing its proposed milestones.

If you have any questions concerning your Race to the Top award, please contact Renee Faulkner at Renee.Faulkner@ed.gov or 202-205-4012.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ann Whalen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ann Whalen
Director, Policy and Program Implementation

Cc: Acting Commissioner Chris Cerf
Andy Smarick
Evan Linhardt
Juliet Squire



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Dear Governor Christie:

I am writing in response to New Jersey's request to amend its approved Race to the Top Grant project. Between May 31 and June 5, 2012, the State submitted amendment requests and supporting documentation to the U.S. Department of Education (Department). As you are aware, the Department has the authority to approve amendment requests 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 published the "Grant Amendment Submission Process" 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 approve the amendments detailed in the attached table. In general, these amendments are a result of timeline shifts. In its scope of work, the State adjusted certain project timelines outlined in its approved plan to more accurately reflect the sequence of events and better accommodate procurement requests as well as local education agencies and teachers as they implement activities. Some timeline shifts were also necessary to account for late hiring of grant-funded positions. Two of the timeline shifts described in the attached table have implications for the approved budget. Due to late hiring and delayed procurement, the State will shift Year 1 Personnel and Contractual funds to Years 2 and 3.

It is our understanding that these amendments will not result in a change in your State's performance measures and outcomes. Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department's website as a record of the amendments.

I am confident in New Jersey's efforts to implement its Race to the Top plan. If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact New Jersey's Race to the Top Program Officer, Renee Faulkner, at 202-205-4012 or Renee.Faulkner@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ann Whalen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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

cc: Acting Commissioner Chris Cerf
Andy Smarick
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Assurance Area	Project	Description of Change
(B)(3)	Transition to CCSS and STEM	Shift scaffolding of Model Curriculum for English language learners and special education students from May 2012 to August 2012 to accommodate the completion of necessary prerequisite work such as developing student learning objectives, and allowing sufficient time to convene writing teams. The timeline for teachers' access to the Model Curriculum resources remains the same.
(B)(3)	Transition to CCSS and STEM	Shift the development of formative assessments from May 2012 to November 2012. Procurement regulations for this scope of work require an RFP process that takes a minimum of 10 months. This process began in April 2012. In the interim, educator cadres from across the State led by the NJ DOE content leads will begin the process of developing assessment items so that this work will be completed by November of 2012.
(C)(3)	Instructional Improvement System	Shift the timeline for uploading content into the IIS from Spring 2013 to October 2013. The original timeline erroneously proposed loading content into the IIS <i>prior</i> to constructing the IIS. This new timeline takes into account the logical sequencing of activities.
(D)(2)	Educator Effectiveness	Shift the timeline for hiring the two-year educator evaluation implementation manager and contracting with the principal evaluation manager from January 2012 to September 2012. To accommodate this new timeline, shift \$47,500 in Personnel and \$70,000 in Contractual funds for this project from Year 1 to Years 2 and 3. The implementation managers will be hired by individuals in leadership positions that are not yet filled. The new timeline still allows for timely implementation of phase 2 of the teacher evaluation pilot and phase 1 of the principal evaluation pilot, both of which will launch in September 2012.
(D)(2)	Educator Effectiveness	Shift the timeline for contracting with a vendor to evaluate the educator evaluation pilots from June 2012 to August 2012. It has taken the State longer than expected to procure a qualified vendor for this project. The adjusted timeline provides that the vendor will be procured by the time the pilots are launched. The delay will require that the contracts extend into Year 3, therefore, shift \$33,000 of unspent Year 1 Contractual funds to Year 3.
STEM. (B)(3)	STEM	Shift the timeline for evaluating STEM instructional materials from February 2012 to July 2012. This timeline reflects the logical sequencing of activities, as content will not be developed until June 2012.