



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

April 8, 2011

The Honorable Martin O'Malley
Office of the Governor
Maryland State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor O'Malley:

I am writing in response to Maryland's request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project. On April 6, 2011, the state submitted 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 amendments:

- In the project titled "Implement a Statewide System to Support Student Instructional Intervention Strategic Staffing Initiative" (Project number 21/42), shift the completion date of the student learning and intervention system to year 2, rather than year 1, as originally proposed. The project began on January 3, 2011, and will end on March 3, 2012. The following activities within this project will be completed during year 2 (rather than year 1) due to this overall timeline shift: pilot the instructional intervention system; train participating local educational agency (LEA) users; complete LEA local installations of the system; and complete web-based satisfaction survey. This shift in timeline is due to the delay in hiring the necessary technology personnel to assist in project development and implementation. The total scope of work and budget amount for the project has not changed; however, the contractual budget of \$500,000 will be spread evenly across two years instead of one year.
- In the project titled "Implement a System to Support E-Learning for Intervention, Enhancement, and Enrichment" (Project number 26/43), shift the completion date to year 2 rather than year 1, as originally proposed. The project began on March 3, 2011, and will be completed by June 30, 2012. The following activities within this project will be completed during year 2 (rather than year 1) due to this overall timeline shift: conduct multi-media training; pilot e-learning support application; conduct school curriculum team training; deploy e-learning support application; and conduct end-user satisfaction survey. The timeline shift is due to the delay in hiring the Technology Project Manager and in procuring a vendor for the project. The total scope of work

and budget amount for the project has not changed; however, the contractual budget of \$500,000 will be split evenly across two years.

- In the Great Teachers and Leaders section of the application (section (D)), Maryland proposed establishing the Educator Effectiveness Council – a group created by the Governor and tasked with making recommendations to the Governor, State Board of Education, and State Superintendent on the design of the teacher and principal evaluation system. The Educator Effectiveness Council’s recommendation on the preliminary design of the evaluation system will be available in June 2011, rather than December 2010, as originally proposed. As a result of this shift, the following changes will be made to the State’s plan and performance measures:
 - Change the timeline for the pilot of the teacher and principal evaluation system. Maryland will pilot the evaluation system in seven LEAs in September 2011 through June 2012, rather than January 2011 through June 2012, as originally planned. This shift still allows for a one-year pilot of the evaluation system that begins at the start of a school year rather than the middle of a school year, as was originally planned.
 - Adjust the performance measures related to the implementation of the teacher and principal evaluation system to reflect targets for sample schools within the seven LEAs involved in the pilot. (See attached chart of performance measures.)
 - *School year (SY) 2010-11:* Since pilot data will not be available until SY 2011-12, adjust all related targets (D)(2) and (D)(3) to 0 percent in SY 2010-11.
 - *SY 2011-12:* Correct targets in SY 2011-12 to accurately reflect the targets for the sample schools in the seven pilot LEAs, as opposed to all LEAs, as mistakenly specified in the application.
- Correct errors in performance measures in section D (Great Teachers and Leaders). (See attached chart of performance measures.) Specifically:
 - Correct an error in the application regarding targets for highly effective teachers and principals in low-poverty/low-minority schools (D)(3)(i). These targets should have an upward trajectory, not a downward trajectory, as was the case in the application.
 - Correct an error in the following performance measures: (D)(2)(iv)(b)(c)(d). Because the pilot evaluation data will not be used to inform decisions regarding compensation, promotion, retention, grant of tenure, or dismissal, the performance measures should be 0 percent in SY 2011-12. However, pilot data will still be used to inform decisions regarding professional development, therefore performance measure (D)(2)(iv)(a) does not change.
 - Provide accurate data for participating LEAs in the “general data” sections of (D)(3)(i) and (D)(3)(ii), as opposed to including general data that reflects all LEAs, as mistakenly specified in the application.
- In the “Professional Development for Executive Officers” project (Project number 40/15), adjust some of the activities to align with the shift in timeline of the design of the teacher and principal evaluation system. This project supports the training of Executive Officers, Superintendents, and administrators who evaluate the performance of principals. Professional development on the teacher and principal evaluation system is dependent on the completion of the design of the evaluation system. Specifically, the activities related to hiring the professional development design contractor and regional trainers have been shifted from year 1 to year 2. Timelines for

activities in years 3 and 4 are not expected to shift. The total scope of work and budget amount for the project has not changed; however, the contractual budget amount of \$250,000 is shifted from year 1 to year 2.

- In the “Teach for Maryland” project (Project number 32/73), Maryland’s previous budget estimates did not include sufficient funds to support the quality of work the state expects of partnerships between teacher- and principal-preparation programs and LEAs to recruit and prepare teachers specifically for high-poverty and high-minority schools. Therefore, Maryland adjusted the total number of sub-grants awarded to IHEs from 13 to nine. Although fewer sub-grants will be awarded, the state anticipates the number of teachers served to only decrease by five teachers (from 165 to 160) because more teachers will be placed in each school than originally planned.

It is our understanding that the amendments will not substantially change Maryland’s scope of work. Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department’s website as a record of the amendments.

I am confident that Maryland 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 Maryland’s Race to the Top Program Officer, Rina Dhalla at 202-453-5546 or rina.dhalla@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

//s//

Ann Whalen
Deputy Director, Implementation and Support Unit

cc: Nancy Grasmick
James V. Foran