



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

July 17, 2013

The Honorable Rick Scott
Office of the Governor
The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor Scott:

I am writing in response to the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE)'s request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project, including revisions to the project period to implement a portion of its plan. Between May 6, and July 12, 2013, the State submitted documentation to and held conversations with the U.S. Department of Education (Department) to support amendment requests to its approved Race to the Top plan. As you are aware, the Department 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, the Department issued "Amendment Requests with No Cost Extension Guidance and Principles" indicating the process by which amendments containing requests to provide additional time for a grantee to accomplish the reform goals and deliverables it committed to in its Race to the Top application and approved Scope of Work would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Department has applied the conditions and elements specific to no cost extensions noted in the document, and compared it with the Race to the Top program *Principles* included in the "Grant Amendment Submission Process" document issued to Governors of grantee States in October 2011.

I approve the following amendments, including an extension to the time period for implementation of one project, as described below.

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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.

In order to consider amendment requests with no cost extensions, the Department indicated that States must address the process the State will use to review LEA subgrant requests to obligate and liquidate funds after the current project period. Through conversations with the FLDOE and documentation submitted as part of these amendment requests, we understand that the State will review requests from participating LEAs to extend the project period to complete Race to the Top activities as part of the State's annual monitoring of LEAs. The Department generally approves the State's process as described in appendix 1.

Prior to June 30, 2014, the Department expects the State to submit 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.

To provide adequate time for LEAs to implement Race to the Top activities funded by LEA subgrants, the State is approved to transfer \$997,950.87 from unallocated funds to contractual funds in grant project area (A)(2): State Success Factors. The contractual funds will support 9.5 full-time equivalent positions from September 23, 2014, to September 1, 2015.

It is our understanding that these amendments and no cost extensions 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 are expecting grantees 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. The State must request and receive approval to move forward with no cost extensions for any additional projects. This letter will be posted on the Department's website as a record of the amendment.

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact Florida's Race to the Top Program Officer, Patrick Carr, at 202-834-2905 or patrick.carr@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

//s//

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

cc: Dr. Tony Bennett, Commissioner of Education
Linda Champion, Deputy Commissioner of Finance and Operations
Holly Edenfield, Race to the Top Program Coordinator

Appendix 1: Process the State will use to review LEA subgrant requests to obligate and liquidate funds after the current project period, as described by Florida Department of Education.

Assurance Area and Budget #s: (A)(2) State Success Factors

Description of Requested Change and Rationale:

Florida has 65 participating LEAs. In 2010, each completed a Scope of Work (SOW) aligned to the 14 projects below. The state provided required deliverables for each, and LEAs could add additional district-specific deliverables. For each project, LEAs provided supporting activities for deliverables, timelines, key personnel, sustainability factors, and a quarterly budget. At the beginning of each grant year, they must tell us their timelines for completing deliverables. Deliverables are submitted quarterly per their SOW timelines.

LEA SOW Projects

1. Expand Lesson Study
2. Expand STEM CTE Program Offerings
3. Increase Advanced STEM Coursework
4. Bolster Technology for Improved Instruction and Assessment
5. Improve Access to State Data (Single Sign-on)
6. Use Data to Improve Instruction (Local Instructional Improvement System)
7. Provide Support for Educator Preparation Programs
8. Improve Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems
9. Use Data Effectively for Human Capital Decisions
10. Focus Effective Professional Development
11. Drive Improvement in Persistently Low-Achieving Schools (turnaround model)
12. Implement Proven Programs for School Improvement
13. Include Charter Schools in LEA Planning
14. Administration

LEAs must complete an annual monitoring report in July.* We propose that in this year's report LEAs will provide requests to FDOE on the SOW projects of high quality (based on ongoing monitoring, including review of deliverables, and the annual report) for which they would like a no cost extension.

LEAs may request less than a full year extension. At this time, all other projects are eligible except Project 6 as the date to acquire a local instructional improvement system is June 30, 2014, per Florida Statutes. Projects with statutory requirements will be given additional weight during the FDOE review process; for example, using local funds to develop interim assessment items not covered by statewide assessments or state-level

projects (many districts have this budgeted in Project 8). These must be in place by the 2014-15 school year, per Florida Statutes.

An LEA's budget and expenditure status will also be considered.

The specific questions LEAs will need to address for each project in their request are:

- How many additional quarters are requested (1-4)?**
- What will be different/enhanced as a result of an extension?
- How will an extension help meet their targets and goals?
- How have they considered staffing/technology costs that accompany extending this project?
- Which deliverables will be delivered in Year 5, and in which quarter?
- Which statutes, rules, or local board policies are affected by this project, if any?
- Budget information

With USED approval of this approach, FDOE will begin accepting no cost extension requests from LEAs in July 2013 as part of the annual report.

*The other components of the annual report are below, and will help us gauge the quality of each project's progress.

For each of the 13 projects:

1. Identify greatest accomplishment in Year 3
2. Are you on target to achieve full implementation during 2013-14? Provide color rating.
 - Green=on track
 - Yellow=somewhat on track
 - Red=off track
3. Is expenditure of funds on track with successful implementation? Is anything projected to not be accomplished? If so, is it because of funds or another factor (identify)?
4. How are sustainability plans taking shape or how have they changed?
5. Consideration of No Cost Extension, if applicable

**LEAs are already on different timelines for their projects, all to be completed by June 30, 2014, so extensions of varying lengths would not further complicate management of the grant. Extension of LEA SOW projects will not affect state-level projects.