



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



Clark Greene
Chief of Staff
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster St.
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Mr. Greene:

This letter is in response to Rhode Island's request to amend its approved Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant projects. The State submitted an amendment request package to the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services (Departments) on October 25, 2012. As you are aware, the Departments have 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 July 18, 2012, the Departments sent a letter and "RTT-ELC Amendment Process" document to Project Directors of grantee States indicating the process by which amendments would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Departments have applied the conditions noted in the document and compared it with the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge program requirements and conditions.

The following amendment request is approved, as described below:

- Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) will add .25 FTE time to an Early Learning Specialist at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: to devote approximately 10 hours per week to assist in the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT- ELC) components assigned to the RIDE, including oversight of the State Pre-K Program and oversight of special education efforts targeting Children with High Needs.
- RIDE will add one FTE Information Services Technician: to support key projects identified in Rhode Island's Scope of Work: Project 4 - Using Early Learning and Development Standards, Project 5 - Developing and Supporting Effective Early Childhood Assessment including the development of a Kindergarten Entry Assessment, Project 6 – Building an Early Learning Data System, and Project 7 – Improving the Knowledge and Competencies of the Workforce.
- RIDE will add .5 FTE in the Division of Purchasing Department of Administration: to support the timely processing of Request for Proposals (RFP), Letters of Intent (LOI), and contracts generated by each of RTT – ELC projects and will assist in ensuring that each project's timelines are met.
- RIDE will add to Project 1 – Public Communication Consultant: to identify current base-line communication efforts and assist the state in designing and implementing an effective communication and outreach plan for three years of the grant that would sustain communication efforts beyond each grant year to increase public awareness, outreach as identified per project, and engage families and providers.
- RIDE will identify an outside Data Consultant: to conduct a base-line data scan on the current demographics of children, age birth to five, who are not currently enrolled in a licensed family

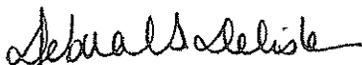
child care or center care program and identify strategies for collecting data to add to Rhode Island's proposed early learning data system.

- RIDE will hire a Physician Consultant: to promote the use of developmental screening and subsequent referrals to evidence-based programs, and act as a liaison to others in the primary care community.
- RIDE will add funding to support 20 hours a week for a staff person/consultant: to support a fiscal agent (to be identified) who will be responsible for facilitating family referrals from primary care providers to evidence - based service providers.
- RIDE will add one FTE Programming Services Officer at the Department of Human Services (DHS): to ensure DHS has sufficient staff to cover critical meetings across all projects and execute and monitor all DHS contracts that are related to RTT-ELC and optimize Rhode Island's early learning capacities.
- RIDE will add one FTE Licensing Aide to DCYF's Division of Licensing: to increase the capacity of DCYF to meet the demand for increased monitoring visits and the ability to disseminate information to child care providers ultimately increasing their knowledge of newly revised child care licensing standards.

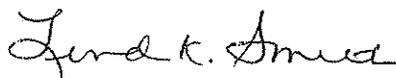
It is our understanding that the amendments will not result in a change in your State's performance measures and outcomes, nor will they substantially change the scope of work. Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department of Education's website as a record of the amendment request.

We are confident that Rhode Island will continue its comprehensive efforts towards building successful state systems of early learning. If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding RTT-ELC, please do not hesitate to contact your Project Officer, Tammi Fergusson, at 202-453-7508 or Tammi.Fergusson@ed.gov.

Sincerely,



Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education



Linda K. Smith
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Early Childhood Development
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

cc: Governor Lincoln D. Chafee
Commissioner Deborah Gist
Judy Willgren



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

May 9, 2013

Clark Greene
Chief of Staff
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster St.
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Mr. Greene:

I am writing in response to Rhode Island's request to amend its approved Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant projects. On March 1, 2013 and May 7, 2013, the State submitted documentation to and held conversations with the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services to support amendment requests to its approved Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge plan and budget. As you are aware, the Departments have 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 July 18, 2012, the Department sent a letter and "RTT-ELC Amendment Process" document to Project Directors 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-Early Learning Challenge program requirements and conditions.

I approve the following amendment, as described below:

- Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) will purchase the Child and Health Development Interactive Systems (CHADIS) which is an electronic system for approximately 73 practices of primary care providers serving children with high needs, over the grant period. This would also allow HEALTH to capture data electronically to monitor screening rates statewide.

It is our understanding that this amendment is aligned with the existing Scope of Work under task 5.19.1 of supporting primary care providers to implement standardized developmental screening and the amendment will not result in a change in your State's performance measures and outcomes, nor will it 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.

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge, please do not hesitate to contact your Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge program officer, Tammi Fergusson, at 202-453-7508 or Tammi.Fergusson@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tammy Proctor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tammy Proctor
Group Leader
Office of Early Learning
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

Cc:

Commissioner Deborah Gist
Judy Willgren



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



May 30, 2013

Clark Greene
Chief of Staff
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster St.
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Mr. Greene:

I am writing in response to Rhode Island's request to amend its approved Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant projects. On May 17, 2013, the State submitted documentation to and held conversations with the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services to support amendment requests to its approved Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge plan. As you are aware, the Departments have the authority to approve amendments to your plan and budget, provided that such as change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On July 18, 2012, the Department sent a letter and "RTT-ELC Amendment Process" document to Project Directors 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-Early Learning Challenge program requirements and conditions.

I approve the following amendments, as described below:

Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) will make modifications to Project 6, Early Learning Data System Scope of Work, specifically tasks within "Activity 6.11- Expand capability of Department of Human Services Eligibility System (InRhodes) to include program quality information in order to process tiered quality incentive payments.

- The State has determined that a manual process is the most cost effective method at this point in time since it will only require support of a limited number of programs that meet the criteria (Programs operating at a Star level 3, 4, 5) and eligible to receive a quality award payment. Phasing in the automation process in early CY2014 (see d2) will reduce manual effort and allow DHS to handle the anticipated increase in the number of programs that become eligible to receive Quality Award payments over the next two years.

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 amendments.

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge, please do not hesitate to contact your Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge program officer, Tammi Fergusson, at 202-453-7508 or Tammi.Fergusson@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tammi M. Fergusson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, decorative flourish at the end of the name.

Tammi Fergusson
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Early Learning
RTT-ELC and Even Start
400 Maryland Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20202-6200

Cc: Governor Lincoln D. Chafee
Commissioner Deborah Gist
Judy Willgren



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



June 27, 2013

Clark Greene
Chief of Staff
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster St.
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Mr. Greene:

I am writing in response to Rhode Island's request to amend its approved Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant projects. On May 17, 2013, the State submitted documentation to and held conversations with the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services to support amendment requests to its approved Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge plan. As you are aware, the Departments have the authority to approve amendments to your plan and budget, provided that such as change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On July 18, 2012, the Department sent a letter and "RTT-ELC Amendment Process" document to Project Directors 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-Early Learning Challenge program requirements and conditions.

I approve the following amendments, as described below:

Amendment 3.2- Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) will fund a new activating under Project 5, SOW 5, Developing and Supporting Early Childhood Assessment. Funds are requested to provide for quality improvement activities and supports to increase rates of developmental screening in primary care practices.

- The State has requested funding to support the implementation of electronic systems of developmental screening in primary care practices and related quality improvement to help practices integrate electronic developmental screening to their practice workflow and increase rates of developmental screening.

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 amendments.

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge, please do not hesitate to contact your Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge program officer, Tammi Fergusson, at 202-453-7508 or Tammi.Fergusson@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tammi M. Fergusson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, decorative flourish at the end of the word "Fergusson".

Tammi Fergusson
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Early Learning
RTT-ELC and Even Start
400 Maryland Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20202-6200

Cc: Governor Lincoln D. Chafee
Commissioner Deborah Gist
Melissa Emidy
Blythe Berger



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



September 25, 2013

Clark Greene
Chief of Staff
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster St.
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Dr. Greene:

This letter is in response to Rhode Island's request to amend its approved Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant project budget and add an additional activity to Project 2, Improving Program Quality. The U.S. Department of Education approved Rhode Island's grant projects and scope of work on November 14, 2012. On June 28, 2013, Rhode Island submitted a budget and activity amendment request for the RTT-ELC grant and supporting information to the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (the Departments).

As you are aware, the Departments have the authority to approve amendments to your RTT-ELC plan and budget, provided that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On July 18, 2012, the Departments sent a "Grant Amendment Submission Process" document to RTT-ELC Project Directors indicating the process by which amendments would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Departments have applied the conditions noted in that document and compared it with RTT-ELC program requirements and conditions.

The following amendments to the State's budget are approved, as described below. Please note that no changes have been made to grant activities:

- In project 1, Grant Management and project 7, Improving the Knowledge and Competencies of the Early Learning Workforce, the State will reallocate \$19,800 in unexpended RTT-ELC grant funds from Year 1 to Years 2-4 for facilitation of interagency meetings, development of the next phase of Workforce Knowledge and Competency (WKC) Frameworks and for conducting community feedback forums.
- In project 1, Grant Management, SOW 1.3, project 4, Using ELDS and project 7, Improving the Knowledge and Competencies of the Early Learning Workforce, the State will reallocate \$120,000 in unexpended RTT-ELC grant funds from Year 1 to Years 2-4 for translation services.
- In project 3, Establishing and Measuring Tiered Quality Program Standards for Early Learning Programs, SOW 3.9.7, the State will reallocate \$3,773.94 in unexpended RTT-ELC grant funds from Year 1 to Year 2 to purchase six laser measuring devices and six handheld infrared thermometers for the Child Care Licensing Staff.

- In project 4, Using Early Learning and Development Standards, SOW 4, the State will reallocate \$170,400 in unexpended RTT-ELC grant funds from Year 1 to Years 2-4 to support the implementation and dissemination of the RI Early Learning and Development Standards.
- In project 5, Developing and Supporting Early Childhood Assessment, the State will reallocate \$65,150 in unexpended RTT-ELC grant funds from Year 1 to Year 2 to hire a half-time consultant to work specifically on developing a coordinated set of professional development opportunities that address using Teaching Strategies Gold and achieving reliability status.
- In project 6, Building an Early Learning Data System, the State will reallocate \$117,180 in unexpended RTT-ELC grant funds from Year 1 to Years 2-4 to supplement the existing staff to enhance planned functionality and support additional operational efficiencies.
- In project 7, Improving the Knowledge and Competencies of the Early Learning Workforce, SOW 7.4 and 7.5, the State will reallocate \$71,000 in unexpended RTT-ELC grant funds from Year 1 to Years 2-3 to support the development of the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Frameworks (WKC), the alignment of the WKC framework addendum for special education teachers with Rhode Island College's Early Childhood Special Education Master's program, and to hire a consultant to draft a technical paper outlining decision points in the development of WKC process.
- The State will add an activity to project 2, Improving Program Quality. The activity will include the reallocation of \$334,000 in unexpended RTT-ELC grant funds from Year 1 to Year 3 to test whether the inclusion of a Pre-K classroom in community-based child care programs and in local Head Start agencies that provide State Pre-K helps to increase the overall quality star rating of the entire child care program as a result of the of the intensive, on-going technical assistance and evaluation that is provided to the program as they implement their state Pre-K classroom.

It is the Departments' understanding that this amendment will not result in a change in your State's performance measures and outcomes, nor will it substantially change the scope of work.

Please note that this letter will be posted on the U.S. Department of Education's website as a record of the amendments. If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding RTT-ELC, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Early Learning program officer for Rhode Island, Tammi Fergusson, at 202.453-7508 or Tammi.Fergusson@ed.gov.

Sincerely,



Libby Doggett
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Early Learning
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education



Linda K. Smith
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood
Development
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Cc: Governor Lincoln D. Chafee
Commissioner Deborah A. Gist



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



January 9, 2014

Clark Greene
Chief of Staff
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminister St.
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Dr. Greene:

This letter is in response to Rhode Island's request to amend its approved Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant projects. The U.S. Department of Education approved Rhode Island's grant projects and scope of work on November 14, 2012. On September 3, 2013, Rhode Island submitted a project amendment request and supporting information to the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (the Departments).

As you are aware, the Departments have the authority to approve amendments to your RTT-ELC plan and budget, provided that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On July 18, 2012, the Departments sent a "Grant Amendment Submission Process" document to RTT-ELC Project Directors indicating the process by which amendments would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Departments have applied the conditions noted in that document and compared it with RTT-ELC program requirements and conditions.

The following amendments to the State's budget are approved, as described below.

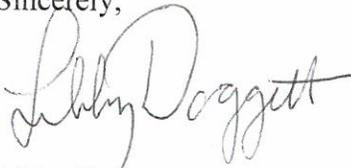
- In Amendments 5.1 and 5.3, the State requests to hire several FTEs across multiple projects and activities.
 - a. In Amendment 5.1, the State requests to reallocate \$215,197 to hire a full-time staff person to respond to referrals that are received from primary care providers in response to screening results for Project 5, Supporting Effective Child Assessment. This will allow the Rhode Island Department of Health to carefully track referrals and availability of services during the first years of full developmental screening to determine what is needed for sustainability.
 - b. The State is requesting to reallocate a total of \$1,050,343, in Amendment 5.3, to hire various support positions across the projects. Amendment 5.3 requests the following staffing additions:
 - i. In Project 1, Grant Management, the State will add two FTEs to support the CCDF Administrator in leading the overall facilitation and implementation of the RTT-ELC projects and manage the implementation of Quality Awards and other financial incentives.

- ii. In Project 6, Building an Early Learning Data System, the State will add one FTE Senior Data System Specialist who will assist in the development of the shared statewide early childhood data system. This person will be responsible for expanding the capability of the DHS' Data Systems.
 - iii. In Project 7, Improving the Knowledge and Competencies of the Existing Early Childhood Workforce, the State will add one FTE Programming Services Officer who will be responsible for the management and oversight of the Professional Development & Technical Assistance Center contract and related deliverables.
- In Project 7, Improving the Knowledge and Competencies of the Existing Early Childhood Workforce, the State request to reallocate \$2,000,000 to establish a Center for Early Childhood Teaching and Learning through a competitive bidding process; these funds are awarded to a state Institution of Higher Education that currently has an early childhood education teacher certification program. This will enhance Rhode Island's work within Project 7 to help align higher education credentials and advance its existing workforce through a career pathway that contributes to high-quality early care and education programs.

The funds, totaling \$3,265,540, for these amendments are available due to an excess of \$4.7 million dollars that was over budgeted for Project 2, Program Quality Improvement Awards. It is the Departments' understanding that this amendment will not result in a change in your State's performance measures and outcomes, nor will it substantially change the scope of work.

Please note that this letter will be posted on the U.S. Department of Education's website as a record of the amendments. If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding RTT-ELC, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Early Learning program officer for Rhode Island, Tammi Fergusson, at (202) 453-7508 or Tammi.Fergusson@ed.gov.

Sincerely,



Libby Doggett
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Early Learning
Office of Elementary and Secondary
Education
U.S. Department of Education



Linda K. Smith
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early
Childhood Development
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services

Cc: Governor Lincoln D. Chafee
Commissioner Deborah A. Gist



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



April 23, 2014

Clark Greene
Chief of Staff
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster St.
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Mr. Greene,

This letter is in response to Rhode Island's request to amend its approved Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant projects. The U.S. Department of Education approved Rhode Island's grant projects and scope of work on November 14, 2012. On March 4, 2014 the Rhode Island Department of Education submitted a 6th amendment request, whereby it proposes to increase a key personnel's hours and revise and refine its project 6, Early Learning Data System, budget.

As you are aware, the Departments have the authority to approve amendments provided that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On July 18, 2012, the Departments sent a document to Project Directors describing the process by which amendments would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Departments have applied the conditions noted in that document and compared it with RTT-ELC program requirements and conditions.

The following amendments to the State's budget and projects are approved, as described below:

- In Amendment 6.1, the State requests to reallocate funds available due to modest savings across all projects and project years to increase the time of the Supporting Effective Child Assessment Team Lead on project 5, Supporting Effective Child Assessment, and therefore increase the amount of RTT-ELC funds used to support the salary. The amendment will be funded utilizing the savings that resulted from being able to more accurately estimate the following budget categories: personnel, fringe, travel, equipment, supplies, and indirect costs; and after adjusting for year one and two actual expenditures.

Increasing the Team Lead's time allocated to this project is critical to meeting RTT-ELC goals. Amendment 6.1 is directly related to Rhode Island's plan to support effective use of comprehensive assessment systems. The increase in salary will support the work with pediatricians to be able to distribute funding for evidence-based programs to increase children's language and literacy skills, social-emotional development, and family engagement in health settings. The estimated scope of work and associated tasks under the Team Lead's supervision are significantly more complex than initially anticipated. In addition, the Team Lead will need to devote more time to this project for the time remaining in the grant period because the work

that initially was proposed to be completed in 3 years must now be completed in 2 years. All project amounts will be adjusted to support the increase in RTT-ELC funds needed to support the project 6 Team Lead's salary by \$45,214 (\$22,607 for year 3 and \$22,607 for year 4).

- Amendment 6.2 requests to allocate additional funding to complete all of the required programming to enhance the KIDSNET information system at the Department of Health. KIDSNET is Rhode Island's confidential, computerized child health information system, which serves families, pediatric providers, and public health programs. The initial cost estimates for enhancing the KIDSNET information system at the Department of Health to expand collection, display and reports of developmental screening data were based on limited information. Thus, the State requests to reallocate funds to the KIDSNET project so that the project and the associated information system programming can fully capture the breadth and depth of developmental screening taking place in Rhode Island. The KIDSNET enhancement request is \$178,258 for year 3 and \$92,521 for year 4 (\$270,779 total).

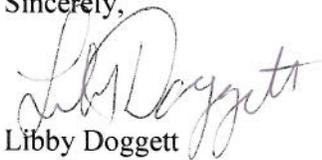
The enhancement will be supported by some of the funds that were initially allocated to Rhode Island's Quality Awards, which are awards given to certain child care programs that commit to operating at higher quality levels. An analysis of estimated expenses, based on current data of eligible programs at higher tiers of the QRIS and the use of the newly developed formula, demonstrates the amount necessary for the Quality Awards was overestimated by approximately 4.4 million dollars. As a result of the budget adjustment, there will be no substantive changes to the Quality Awards program.

We understand that this amendment request will not impact Rhode Island's overall RTT-ELC goals, plans, outcomes, or performance measures, but will ensure Rhode Island can continue to make progress on its RTT-ELC scope of work activities.

Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department of Education's website as a record of the amendment request and our approval. All budget changes are recorded in the GRADS 360 system and the detailed budget request is saved in the official grant file.

We are confident that Rhode Island will continue its comprehensive efforts towards building successful state systems of early learning. If you need any assistance regarding RTT-ELC, please do not hesitate to contact your Project Officer, Tammi Fergusson, at (202) 453-7508 or Tammi.Fergusson@ed.gov or your co-project officer Ngozi Onunaku, at (202) 260-5943 or Ngozi.Onunaku@acf.hhs.gov.

Sincerely,



Libby Doggett
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Early Learning
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education/Office of Early Learning
U.S. Department of Education



Linda K. Smith
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

CC: Melissa Emidy



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



August 4, 2014

Deborah Gist
Commissioner
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster St.
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Commissioner Gist,

This letter is in response to Rhode Island's request to amend its approved Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant projects. The U.S. Department of Education approved Rhode Island's grant projects and scope of work on November 14, 2012. On June 25, 2014 the Rhode Island Department of Education submitted an amendment request, whereby it proposes to increase contractual staffing and support for Project 6, Early Learning Data System.

As you are aware, the Departments have the authority to approve amendments provided that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On July 18, 2012, the Departments sent a document to Project Directors describing the process by which amendments would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Departments have applied the conditions noted in that document and compared it with RTT-ELC program requirements and conditions.

To complete Rhode Island's original scope of work by the end of the grant period, December 2015, this request provides for additional contract positions to accelerate the pace of the development of the workforce and child domain, as well as to support data system users through a contract for a help desk. These activities are aligned with the State's approved scope of work.

The following amendments to the State's budget and projects are approved, as described below:

- A contract for a full-time position for the remainder of the grant to coordinate all aspects of the business engagement and data governance. The person in this position will review, facilitate and monitor all aspects of business engagement and data governance. Specifically, the position is needed to monitor progress against the project work plan to ensure that appropriate time is allocated for stakeholder input; manage process to handle red flags raised by the technical lead; and facilitate the development and implementation of a data governance structure. This contract would require a total of \$197,500 over the remaining two years of the grant.
- Contracts for one full-time Business Systems Analyst and one full-time Web Application Developer, as well as a contract extension for the current data analyst (approved in Amendment 4) through the final year of the grant. Rhode Island has found that meeting the stated objectives

in its RTT-ELC application are more complex than originally anticipated. The additional supports will allow the State to accelerate the development of the data system's program domain and begin the development of the workforce registry. This would require \$480,480 over the remaining two years of the grant.

- A contract for a help service desk to assist providers as they enter data into the system, and to work with Participating State Agencies to determine appropriate service methods for supporting end users. A help desk would address challenges with child care providers entering information into the data system, a lesson learned from Rhode Island's K-12 Race to the Top grant. This contract would build on the functionality already developed and improve responsiveness and user support. This would require \$225,000 over the remaining two years of the grant.

These expenses totaling \$902,980 will be largely funded from savings that resulted from being able to more accurately estimate travel, equipment, supplies, indirect costs, and Quality Awards, after adjusting for Year Two actual expenditures. Additional savings came from a short-term vacancy in the position of Grants and Finance Officer. In addition, the State has determined that funds allocated for a proposed data collection effort, approved as Amendment 1 in March 2013, will not be feasible given the time remaining in the grant period, and that the activities in this amendment are higher priorities for achieving the goals of the project. For those reasons, the State will repurpose those funds, in the amount of \$280,000, for the activities in this amendment.

We understand that this amendment request will not impact Rhode Island's overall RTT-ELC goals, plans, outcomes, or performance measures, but will ensure Rhode Island can continue to make progress on its RTT-ELC scope of work activities.

Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department of Education's website as a record of the amendment request and our approval. All budget changes are recorded in the GRADS 360 system and the detailed budget request is saved in the official grant file.

We are confident that Rhode Island will continue its comprehensive efforts towards building successful state systems of early learning. If you need any assistance regarding RTT-ELC, please do not hesitate to contact your Project Officer, Deborah Spitz, at (202) 260-3793 or Deborah.Spitz@ed.gov or your co-project officer Ngozi Onunaku, at (202) 260-5943 or Ngozi.Onunaku@acf.hhs.gov.

Sincerely,



Libby Doggett
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Early Learning
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education



Linda K. Smith
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood
Development
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

CC: Melissa Emidy



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



September 25, 2014

Deborah Gist
Commissioner
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster St.
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Commissioner Gist,

This letter is in response to Rhode Island's request to amend its approved Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant projects. The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (the Departments) approved Rhode Island's grant projects and scope of work on November 14, 2012. On September 5, 2014 the Rhode Island Department of Education submitted an amendment request, whereby it proposes to move funds within Project 2, Improving the Quality of Early Learning Programs, to assist programs with indoor and outdoor environment concerns.

As you are aware, the Departments have the authority to approve amendments provided that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On July 18, 2012, the Departments sent a document to Project Directors describing the process by which amendments would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Departments have applied the conditions noted in that document and compared it with RTT-ELC program requirements and conditions.

In 2013, Rhode Island conducted a Facilities Needs Assessment to identify barriers for early learning providers in meeting regulatory standards and attaining higher ratings in its Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS). The resulting report indicated that more than 50% of Rhode Island's early learning providers have some indoor or outdoor environment issues that require technical assistance and financial support to resolve.

To address these needs, Rhode Island requests to procure a vendor to provide specialized assessment and technical assistance to early learning providers related to facilities concerns. The vendor will also award aligned program improvement grants to support minor renovations such as improving playgrounds or increasing natural light. Priority would be given to supporting compliance with regulations and remediating areas which pose risks to children's health and safety.

This amendment will move \$1 million within Project Two, Improving the Quality of Early Learning Programs, from Line 11 (Funding for Localities, etc.) to Line 8 (Contractual). The proposed budget provides \$325,000 in Year Three and \$675,000 in Year Four. An estimated 70 to 75 percent of these funds will be used for program improvement grants. These funds were

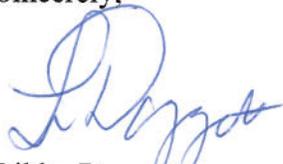
initially allocated for Quality Awards to reward providers with high TQRIS ratings. However, due to delays in determining ratings, and a lower number of eligible providers than anticipated, Rhode Island cannot spend these funds on Quality Awards as originally budgeted. This amendment will serve the important goal of improving program quality, resulting in programs attaining higher TQRIS ratings.

We understand that this amendment request will not impact Rhode Island's overall RTT-ELC goals, plans, outcomes, or performance measures, but will ensure Rhode Island can continue to make progress on its RTT-ELC scope of work activities.

Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department of Education's website as a record of the amendment request and our approval. All budget changes are recorded in the GRADS 360 system and the detailed budget request is saved in the official grant file.

We are confident that Rhode Island will continue its comprehensive efforts towards building successful state systems of early learning. If you need any assistance regarding RTT-ELC, please do not hesitate to contact your Project Officer, Deborah Spitz, at (202) 260-3793 or Deborah.Spitz@ed.gov or your co-project officer Ngozi Onunaku, at (202) 260-5943 or Ngozi.Onunaku@acf.hhs.gov.

Sincerely,



Libby Doggett
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Early Learning
Office of Elementary and Secondary
Education
U.S. Department of Education



Linda K. Smith
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early
Childhood Development
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services

CC: Melissa Emidy



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



May 15, 2015

Deborah Gist
Commissioner
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster St.
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Commissioner Gist,

This letter is in response to Rhode Island's request to amend its approved Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant projects. The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (the Departments) approved Rhode Island's grant projects and scope of work on November 14, 2012. On August 24, 2015, the Rhode Island Department of Education submitted an amendment request, whereby it proposes to move funds within Project 2, Improving the Quality of Early Learning Programs, to assist programs with indoor and outdoor environment concerns.

As you are aware, the Departments have the authority to approve amendments provided that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On July 18, 2012, the Departments sent a document to Project Directors describing the process by which amendments would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Departments have applied the conditions noted in that document and compared it with RTT-ELC program requirements and conditions.

The following amendment to the State's budget is approved, as described below. Please note that no changes have been made to grant activities:

In 2013, Rhode Island conducted a Facilities Needs Assessment to identify barriers for early learning providers in meeting regulatory standards and attaining higher ratings in its Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS). The resulting report indicated that more than 50% of Rhode Island's early learning providers have some indoor or outdoor environment issues that require technical assistance and financial support to resolve.

To address these needs, Rhode Island procured a vendor in 2014 to provide specialized assessment and technical assistance related to facilities concerns, and to award aligned program improvement grants specific to improving early learning facilities. Due to the high demand for these awards, and the importance of helping early learning providers improve program quality, this amendment will move \$1.1 million from Line 11 (Funding for Localities) to Line 8 (Contractual), to be spent on additional awards and technical assistance in Year 4 of the grant.

These funds were initially allocated for Quality Awards to reward providers with high TQRIS ratings. However, due to delays in determining ratings, and a lower number of eligible providers than anticipated, Rhode Island cannot spend these funds on Quality Awards as originally budgeted.

We understand that this amendment request will not impact Rhode Island's overall RTT-ELC goals, plans, outcomes, or performance measures, but will ensure Rhode Island can continue to make progress on its RTT-ELC scope of work activities.

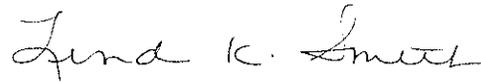
Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department of Education's website as a record of the amendment request and our approval. All budget changes are recorded in the GRADS 360 system and the detailed budget request is saved in the official grant file.

We are confident that Rhode Island will continue its comprehensive efforts towards building successful state systems of early learning. If you need any assistance regarding RTT-ELC, please do not hesitate to contact your Project Officer, Deborah Spitz, at (202) 260-3793 or Deborah.Spitz@ed.gov or your co-project officer Amy Spates, at (617) 565-3772 or Amy.Spates@acf.hhs.gov.

Sincerely,



Libby Doggett
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Early Learning
Office of Elementary and Secondary
Education
U.S. Department of Education



Linda K. Smith
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early
Childhood Development
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



June 10, 2015

Deborah Gist
Commissioner
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster St.
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Commissioner Gist:

This letter is in response to Rhode Island's request to amend its approved Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant, including revisions to the project period to implement a portion of its plan. On April 27, 2015, the Rhode Island Department of Education sent an amendment request to its Project Officers indicating the grantee would like to extend its grant period by one year by reallocating unspent funds in the amount of \$9,081,100 from its Year 4 budget to Year 5.

As you are aware, the Departments have 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 March 3, 2015, the Departments 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 RTT-ELC application and approved Scope of Work would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Departments have applied the conditions noted in that document and compared it with RTT-ELC program requirements and conditions. In reviewing this request, project officers considered the State's explanation and plan for how the work will be sustained (or, if appropriate, completed) after the timeframe of the no-cost extension.

Based on the documentation submitted, Rhode Island has fulfilled the conditions specified. Under the approved amendment, the State will complete the implementation of the RTT-ELC grant by December 31, 2016. None of the changes proposed in this amendment change the scope or objectives of the grant.

The following no-cost extension amendment is approved, as described below:

Project 1 (Overall Grant Management): Rhode Island will spend up to \$566,421 in Year 5 of the grant to ensure oversight of grant deliverables for Projects 2, 5, and 6, and to support interagency collaboration, fiscal management, and implementation of the sustainability plan.

Project 2 (Improving the Quality of Early Learning Programs): Rhode Island will spend up to \$5,946,425 in Year 5 of the grant in order to support key activities related to increasing the quality of early learning programs participating in its TQRIS. Specifically, these funds will be used for: RIELDS training through the end of 2016; facilities grants and program quality improvement grants; technical assistance and professional development for providers; achievement awards for providers reaching a higher rating; access to college courses at the Community College of Rhode Island and the Institute for Teaching and Learning; access to

TEACH Scholarships; assessment of programs in the TQRIS; and completion of the validation study of the TQRIS.

Project 5 (Developing and Supporting Effective Early Childhood Assessment): Rhode Island will spend up to \$1,574,437 in Year 5 of the grant to support the development and implementation of early childhood assessment systems. These funds will support developmental screening and implementation of evidence-based grants; data systems modifications; development of a comprehensive assessment system for Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education; training for educators to administer assessments; technology grants to support assessment; and development and piloting of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment.

Project 6 (Building an Early Learning Data System): Rhode Island will spend up to \$993,817 in Year 5 of the grant to support the development of the early learning data system. Primary activities in this extension will include ongoing systems development, development of user interfaces, training and grants to support the use of the data system, and data governance. In 2014, Rhode Island hired a full time consultant to coordinate the business engagement and data governance. This consultant has worked with RI to restructure the process and develop a new timeline that will complete the basic system development by the end of 2015, with enhancements, modifications, and user training in 2016.

The Departments approve Rhode Island's request to obligate funds through December 31, 2016 for the purposes described in this letter. The State must request and receive approval to move forward with no-cost extensions for any additional projects.

It is our understanding that this amendment request will not change Rhode Island's overall RTT-ELC goals, plans, outcomes, or performance measures, but will ensure that Rhode Island can continue to make progress on its RTT-ELC scope of work activities. Please note that we expect grantees with no-cost extensions to liquidate all funds by March 31, 2017, given that by law all RTT-ELC funds revert to the U.S. Department of Treasury as of October 1, 2017. This letter will be posted to ED's website as a record of the amendments.

We are confident that Rhode Island will continue its comprehensive efforts towards building successful state systems of early learning. If you need any assistance regarding RTT-ELC, please do not hesitate to contact your Project Officer, Deborah Spitz, at (202) 260-3793 or Deborah.Spitz@ed.gov or your co-project officer Amy Spates, at (617) 565-3772 or Amy.Spates@acf.hhs.gov.

Sincerely,



Libby Doggett
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Early Learning
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education



Linda K. Smith
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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services