



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

November 10, 2011

The Honorable Rick Scott
Office of Governor
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott:

On September 24, 2010, Florida received a grant of \$700,000,000 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. On November 23, 2010, the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) received scopes of work for all of Florida's participating local education agencies (LEAs). We approved the format of the LEA scopes of work; they include specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures.

Through our conversations with the Florida Department of Education Race to the Top Team, we understand that the State has approved an LEA scope of work for all participating LEAs. Further, we understand that LEAs have the option, on a quarterly basis, to amend their scope of work and budget if needed and are required, at the end of every year, to provide quarterly milestones for the next year's activities. The Department supports this annual revision process and will work closely with the Florida Department of Education to determine how we can best support your efforts. The State's plans are consistent with our view the scopes of work are living documents that can be subject to additional review and revision where appropriate over time.

On November 23, 2010, the Department also received a Florida's State scope of work. At this time, Florida and the Department recognized that Florida's scope of work would require additional revisions given the State's unique approach of implementing most Race to the Top activities via contracts. Florida has been working with the Department to submit a revised scope of work that includes the Grantee's specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures related to the State's 50 percent share of the grant. At this point in time, the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) has submitted a State scope of work that is consistent with its approved application.

I am pleased to provide approval to Florida's State Scope of Work with the condition specified below.

Condition: Florida will provide timely updates to Race to the Top project timelines as related contracts are awarded.

<http://www.ed.gov/>

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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 its approved Race to the Top application, the State established yearly goals for completing each of its Race to the Top projects. Florida indicated that it is unable to provide a detailed timeline for these projects until the related contracts are in place. With this in mind, the Department's Race to the Top staff worked with FDOE Race to the Top staff to develop a plan for detailing the project timelines as contracts are awarded and additional details become available. The key elements of this plan are outlined below.

- 1) On a monthly basis, Florida will provide the Department with a list of all pending contracts related to Race to the Top that will include the status and expected award date for each contract. Florida will notify the Department within five working days if the expected award date for the contract is changed.
- 2) After a contract is awarded, FDOE will submit, within four weeks, a detailed timeline that includes, at a minimum, quarterly benchmarks outlining the State's plan for accomplishing the related project(s) outlined in the State's approved Race to the Top application. These updates will then become part of the State's scope of work.

The Department expects that Florida will meet all benchmarks established by the State in its scope of work (as updated) and all goals outlined in its approved application unless revised via the established amendment process (please see October 2011 letter at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/grant-amendment-submission-process-oct-4-2011.pdf>).

If Florida fails to meet the requirements for the condition outlined above, the Department will take appropriate enforcement action, which may include placing the State on reimbursement status until such time as the State has met the requirements. Under reimbursement status, the State will be required to provide evidence of expenditures before funds are released.

I am pleased to conditionally approve Florida's State scope of work and to notify you that the remaining balance of the award is now available to the State. Consistent with Grant Condition K of the Phase 2 Race to the Top Grant Conditions, funds may be drawn down only as they are needed, and their use must be consistent with the implementation of the State's approved Race to the Top plan, Scope of Work, and in support of accomplishing its proposed goals and activities.

If you have any questions concerning your Race to the Top award, please contact Lauren Scott at Lauren.Scott@ed.gov or 202-205-0940.

Sincerely,

//s//

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

cc: Gerard Robinson, Commissioner of Education
Linda Champion, Deputy Commissioner, Finance and Operations
Holly Edenfield, Race to the Top Coordinator