



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

August 6, 2012

The Honorable Patrick Quinn  
Office of the Governor  
207 State House  
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Quinn:

I would like to thank Superintendent Christopher Koch and the staff at the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for their hard work and collaboration with us as your State begins to implement its Race to the Top grant. Between April 2<sup>nd</sup> and May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the State submitted a detailed scope of work for Illinois's entire project that is consistent with its approved application to the U.S. Department of Education (Department), and additional clarification as requested. On April 2, 2012, the State also provided the Department with access to the Rising Star continuous improvement system, which houses the final scopes of work for all of Illinois's participating local educational agencies (LEAs). We approve with conditions the State's scope of work and approve 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. As noted in the letter dated May 14, 2012, the following conditions are placed on our approval of the State's scope of work:

- Within 60 days, the State must submit to the Department a plan for how it intends to support its Race to the Top Participating LEAs in selecting valid, reliable, and fair assessments to determine student growth are for use in teacher and principal evaluation systems.
- The State must submit to the Department a plan for conducting a validation study to demonstrate that student growth as measured by the assessments selected by Participating LEAs is correlated to student growth as measured by

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the State assessments and outline what actions the State will take in response to the results.

The Department understands that Illinois is a governing State in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment consortium, and that all of Illinois's LEAs will use PARCC as one measure of student growth once it is available.

Through our conversations with the ISBE team, we understand that the State approved or approved with conditions participating LEAs' SOWs submitted on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The State will continue to work with those LEAs that were approved with conditions until the plans are approved in full. As LEAs were required to develop plan for the entire grant, the State will support the LEAs to refine the work plans through the LEA monitoring process. We support your plan to continue to work with LEAs as they revise their scopes of work in the future as this is consistent with our belief 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, Illinois received a grant of \$42,818,707 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 Illinois' 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 Rebecca Zazove at [rebecca.zazove@ed.gov](mailto:rebecca.zazove@ed.gov) or 202-260-1425.

Sincerely,

//s//

Ann Whalen  
Director, Policy and Program Implementation

Cc: Christopher Koch  
David Osta