



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

February 14, 2011

Patrick Smith
Acting Commissioner
Tennessee Department of Education
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

Dear Acting Commissioner Patrick Smith:

I am writing to follow up on recent conversations regarding Tennessee's State and local educational agencies (LEA) scopes of work for Race to the Top. Between December 6, 2010 and February 2, 2011, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) received updated information on the alignment between State and local plans supporting First to the Top that are consistent with prior correspondence regarding the approval of these plans.

When the Department approved the format of Tennessee's LEA scopes of work on July 23, 2010, subsequent to approval of the State scope of work on April 12, 2010, we noted our support for your plan to continue to work with your participating LEAs on their scopes of work. In particular, we encouraged you to consider ways in which the LEA scopes of work could more comprehensively align with the State's overall plan. Over the last several months Tennessee has begun this work, supporting each participating district in revising its scope of work to include targets for student performance and a trajectory that connects these target levels of performance to strategies and activities each LEA is pursuing to support the State's First to the Top reform plan. As we have discussed, we see both the State's and LEAs' scopes of work as living documents that may be subject to additional review and revision where appropriate over time.

The Department looks forward to continuing to work with the First to the Top team in carrying out Tennessee's \$500,741,200 grant including the ongoing, iterative process of refining the State and local scopes of work so that they may continue to serve as useful tools for implementation.

If you have any questions concerning your Race to the Top award, please contact Tennessee's Race to the Top Program Officer, Jessie Levin, at 202-453-6651 or Jessie.Levin@ed.gov.

www.ed.gov

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

Sincerely,

//s//

Ann Whalen
Deputy Director, Implementation and Support Unit

cc: Governor Bill Haslam
Erin O'Hara
Rachel Woods