



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
NINTH FLOOR, ANDREW JOHNSON TOWER  
710 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY  
NASHVILLE, TN 37243-0375

**BILL HASLAM**  
GOVERNOR

**CANDICE MCQUEEN**  
COMMISSIONER

August 18, 2016

Gay Ojugbana  
Education Program Specialist  
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Office of Academic Improvement  
U. S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Way, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Gay Ojugbana:

The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) is requesting a Tydings waiver from the United States Department of Education for the following grant:

- CDFA/ Subprogram number 84.366B, PR/Award Number S366B140043, balance of \$625,768.76 with an award date of July 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015.

This request is made under the statutory authority for the period for obligating and expending carryover funds in the Tydings Amendment section 412(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), 20 U.S.C. 1225(b) and in accordance with section 76.709 of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), 34 C.F.R. § 76.709.

The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) did not expend fully the Title II, B (MSP) FY 14 funding during the period of availability due to three significant factors:

- 1) *Significant transition of program leadership at the state level.* There have been frequent changes of leadership of the MSP program at the state level. Due to numerous state coordinators housed in different divisions in the TDOE, it has been challenging to manage the grant as effectively as needed to ensure timely draw downs and expenditures in line with approved MSP project applications.
- 2) *Two projects not expending funds.* Two of the awarded projects did not expend all of their awarded funds (which totals \$625,768.76, the amount requested for this waiver), though they met the requirements of the approved applications. It should be noted that these projects were not awarded additional MSP funds in FY 15 and will not be available to receive awards for the final year of funding.

3) *Changes in state contracting and grants management procedures.* State procurement procedures were undergoing changes during the period when additional funds might have been allocated to existing grantees. Program staff were unable to amend hard copies of grant contracts quickly enough in alignment with approved MSP project applications to expend FY 14 funds during their period of availability. The MSP program is now housed in the Division of Consolidated Planning and Monitoring, which oversees most federal title programs. In addition, the current state coordinator is familiar with federal grants guidelines and best practices in grants management. Lastly, MSP funds are now integrated into TDOE's online consolidated grant management system.

The TDOE is requesting to extend the period of availability for the remaining \$625,768.76 from the S366B140043 award to September 30, 2017. TDOE proposes to use these funds to allow the three highest-performing MSP projects in Tennessee the opportunity to build upon their significant success and expand upon their current work. These projects also have demonstrated the following: fiscal responsibility, compliance with program requirements, strong collaboration with math and science departments at institutions of higher education, partnerships with community stakeholders, and dedication to providing high-quality professional learning opportunities to educators in a multitude of districts in Tennessee. These projects have a proven track-record of success and will have the opportunity to expand upon their work through their approved projects in FY15 and FY16. As a result, more teachers and ultimately, more students will benefit from this extension. The Tydings waiver will increase the capacity of those programs to reach more students in high-need LEAs.

The directors of each of those projects will be required to submit a plan outlining how the awarded funds will be utilized to expand and build upon their existing MSP projects. There will be no maximum limit to the award to each project.

If this waiver request is approved, the TDOE will provide stakeholders in the State with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on this request. The TDOE will provide notice and information regarding this waiver request to the public in the manner in which the SEA customarily provides such notice and information to the public. This opportunity for comment will be posted in the Public Notices section of the TDOE website. Impacted project directors will also be notified of the request via email.

Please feel free to contact Alyson Lerma, the MSP State Coordinator at TDOE, by telephone at 615-770-3871 or at [Alyson.Lerma@tn.gov](mailto:Alyson.Lerma@tn.gov) if there are questions regarding this request or if additional information is needed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Candice McQueen" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Candice McQueen, Ph.D.  
Commissioner

AFL