



STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS # 33111-00816
AMENDMENT # 4
FOR SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS IN ENGLISH
LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS FOR 2ND
GRADE**

DATE: February 24, 2016

RFP # 33111-00816 IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

1. This RFP Schedule of Events updates and confirms scheduled RFP dates. Any event, time, or date containing revised or new text is highlighted.

EVENT	TIME (central time zone)	DATE
1. RFP Issued		January 27, 2016
2. Disability Accommodation Request Deadline	2:00 p.m.	February 1, 2016
3. Pre-response Conference	2:00 p.m.	February 4, 2016
4. Notice of Intent to Respond Deadline	2:00 p.m.	February 5, 2016
5. Written "Questions & Comments" Deadline	2:00 p.m.	February 10, 2016
6. State Response to Written "Questions & Comments"		February 24, 2016
7. Response Deadline	2:00 p.m.	March 10, 2016
8. State Completion of Technical Response Evaluations		March 17, 2016
9. State Opening & Scoring of Cost Proposals		March 21, 2016
10. Negotiations (Optional)		March 22 -25, 2016
11. State Notice of Intent to Award Released <u>and</u> RFP Files Opened for Public Inspection	2:00 p.m.	April 1, 2016
12. End of Open File Period		April 8, 2016
13. State sends contract to Contractor for signature		April 8, 2016
14. Contractor Signature Deadline	2:00 p.m.	April 12, 2016

2. State responses to questions and comments in the table below amend and clarify this RFQ.

Any restatement of RFQ text in the Question/Comment column shall NOT be construed as a change in the actual wording of the RFQ document.

QUESTION / COMMENT	STATE RESPONSE
<p>1 RFQ Attachment 6.6, Pro Forma Contract Section A.3.b:</p> <p>Would the DOE consider a computer-based assessment administration? If not, please provide the reasons for not considering computer-based administration of the assessment.</p>	<p>No. At this time, we are planning paper/pencil administration for 2nd grade based on feedback from schools and districts.</p>
<p>2 Does the State have any plans to move towards online assessment vs paper at any point during the proposed contract period, or does the State anticipate keeping paper-based assessments for the term of the contract?</p>	<p>At this time, the plan is for a paper/pencil assessment. It is not a disadvantage to the respondent to only have a paper/pencil form. However, vendors should feel free to share their online assessment capabilities.</p>
<p>3 General: Should the vendor include optional costs for developing assessments at Grades K and 1? Or will these options be explored with the vendor through a contract change process?</p>	<p>No. At this time, the proposal is only for 2nd grade assessment. The department has eliminated a statewide assessment option for kindergarten and 1st grades.</p>
<p>4 A.8.e.2, page 68: Should the vendor provide costs for the development and production of braille versions and materials for the Grade 2 ELA and Math assessments?</p>	<p>Yes. We will need to provide accommodations and accessibility features for students with special needs. There are line items in the cost proposal for Braille development. While TN is aware that Braille is not usually provided in K-2, we are including the possibility in this proposal. Pursuant to RFP section 3.1.2, a cost proposal must be recorded on an exact duplicate of the RFP Attachment 6.3, Cost Proposal and Scoring Guide.</p>
<p>5 Can the state list the accommodated forms it requires to be produced for the Grade 2 ELA and Math assessment?</p>	<p>Braille, large print, alternate assessment for cognitively disabled students.</p>
<p>6 A.12.a.(5), page 96: Does the vendor need to support the upload of student data from a state file, from schools, and/or EAS? Or will the state provide demographic data from the EdTools platform?</p>	<p>Pre-ID is completed via a file upload from our EIS platform. Demographic data verification will be completed via the EdTools platform.</p>
<p>7 Is there currently a single documented and defined format that student data will be provided to the vendor? Or will the vendor need to support multiple file formats for upload?</p>	<p>There is single file format for student collected for the Pre-ID process.</p>
<p>8 A.9.y, page 86: The RFP seems to call for a paper Grade 2 test to be developed. If the vendor is not proposing an online-delivered assessment will the state still require a comparability study?</p>	<p>The request is for a paper/pencil assessment. No comparability study will be required in terms of comparing online administration to paper-based administration.</p>
<p>9 A.10.c.(1), page 88: if the vendor is proposing a paper test, does the state require the vendor to build an online item sampler tool with all</p>	<p>Currently, the department requires only sample items in paper/pencil form. The respondent can speak to additional platforms on which they can</p>

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functionality listed in section A.10.c (1)? Is there an existing item sampler tool that the state will use with items provided by the vendor?	provide sample items, but it is not a requirement nor is an advantage in the response process.
10 A.12, page 95: Is the intent that Grade 2 assessment will utilize the EdTools platform for the functional specifications listed in section A.12 and the vendor will work with that provider to coordinate data? If not, does the state intend that the vendor propose their own platform for the Grade 2 assessments that meets the requirements listed?	The department uses the EdTools platform and its EIS system to generate data file for upload to complete pre-ID, student demographic data verification, teacher-student claiming, and materials ordering. Respondents should assume all other functions will require a data platform that the contractor provides.
11 A.14.d.(2).ii, page 105: Does the state require the production of an erasure analysis report after each test administration? What other forensics reports does the state require to be produced?	At a minimum, erasure analysis will be required. Respondents should include any other recommended forensic reports for bolstering test security in their proposals.
12 Does the state require that the Grade 2 assessment contain constructed response, graphing, short response, or essay items that would require handscoring? If so, how many? (This item type is referred to in numerous spots within the RFP/Pro-forma document, but questions arose during the vendor conference as to whether CRs are actually required.)	Detailed form construction will not occur until after the award of the contract. The proposal requires that the contractor be able to support and provide multiple item-types – some that may require hand-scoring – such that the assessment fully reflects the depth and breadth of the Tennessee State Standards for second grade ELA and math.
13 A.7.d.f.(2), page 67: Can the state provide an example of the data that will be exported from the EdTools platform for customer service tickets? What is the frequency which the state will submit tickets to the vendor for import?	Typically, support tickets generated via EdTools are transferred to the vendor via the established email address for customer support. The form in EdTools simply redirects to the contractor email address for support tickets based on the user selecting a particular product/assessment as the subject of their support issue. The frequency of such requests depends on user interaction.
14 A.3.j, page 55: Between 2014 and 2015, there is a significant drop in the number of Grade 2 students who took the assessment. Does the state expect that decline to continue, or can the state provide a baseline for number of students to be tested for consistent costing purposes? Will the Grade 2 assessment remain optional, or does the State plan to make it mandatory for all students?	There are approximately 70,000 students in second grade. The department expects there will be significant interest in a criterion-referenced assessment aligned specifically to Tennessee State Standards. However, we cannot make any projections, given we do not have any recent historical data on district orders for an optional criterion-referenced assessment for second grade.
15 A.12.c.4: Is the 250,000 concurrent users the number of users the state expects to utilize the online administration tools for ordering materials and accessing reports for the Grade 2 assessment? Is there a smaller number that a vendor may use to determine appropriate hardware needs for the Grade 2 assessments?	For paper/pencil administration, we expect that only teachers and administrators will access Contractor data systems. As such, there are approximately 4,000 teachers for second grade in the state. There are approximately 3,000 elementary administrators. Concurrent users would likely be limited to these groups. A figure of 10,000 concurrent users for Contractor data systems is a reasonable estimate that ensures capabilities will not be exceeded. Contractor should also consider data system access and

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	concurrent users from other customers.
16 A.12.d.2, page 98: Is there an existing API that the vendor will push data to, or is the vendor expected to build an API? If there is an existing API in use by the state can the state provide a use case?	<p>As noted in the RFP: “Ed-Fi technical documentation can be found at http://www.ed-fi.org/tech-docs/</p> <p>(2) In addition to CDF requirements described in section A.15, the Contractor shall develop the capability to transmit assessment data to the State using the Web Application Programming Interface (API) specification, XML and JSON payloads described in the Ed-Fi 2.0 standard.”</p>
17 A.12.d.2, page 98: Is the vendor expected to transmit data in real time? Or can the vendor install a time buffer between transmissions to reduce traffic and allow time for data validation?	<p>The department is transitioning to real-time transmission. Respondents should be able to deliver web services that function in real time. However, the department does expect that there may be up to a five-day window for QA from the point of collection or upload/transfer.</p>
18 A.12.g.4, page 100: Can the state supply documentation or white papers around current SSO implementations with other vendors? Barring that, can the state supply a use case describing how they currently federate user identities with other systems? When would the state require that SSO integration be accomplished?	<p>The department implements SSO based on the protocol defined by Microsoft for Azure Active Directory. Note that we do not federate with other applications. The department leverages “claims based authentication”, where the state handles user registration and authentication at runtime. Trusted applications are registered with the Azure Active Directory service in advance and third party developers are given the necessary cloud service “end points” to interrogate the “claim” that identifies the authenticated user at runtime.</p> <p>Respondents are encouraged to read about the Azure SSO implementation here: https://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ff359102.aspx.</p> <p>The department will work with the successful respondent to onboard to the SSO process.</p> <p>NOTE: At this time, State SSO is limited to authentication. Individual applications must implement authorization based on the identity supplied in the claim. We do not have information regarding SSO with other vendors or use case information to provide.</p>
19 A.3.j, page 55: Could the DOE provide the actual number of districts/schools that participated in the Grade 2 Assessment and Grade 2 Alt Assessment in 2014 and 2015?	<p>Approximately 77 districts participated in 2nd grade assessment in 2015 and 88 districts in 2014. The school counts are not readily available at this point.</p>
20 6.2 A.7. and C.4, pages 19 and 26: If a vendor is proposing a portfolio-based alternate (one that does not utilize standard items/tasks), what types of documentation/samples will satisfy the sample requirements of these two sections?	<p>As stated in proposal: Sample(s) test items using templates provided as RFP Attachment 6.2.1, minimum of 2 tasks per content area. Items should be labeled Mandatory Secure Test Materials.”</p>

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Does the State have a preference for the alternate to be delivered in a format different from portfolios?	The department does not have a preference. Respondents should indicate their proposed format and benefits of their proposal.
21 A.12.a.5, page 96: Which student management systems are currently in use in the state, or planned for future use?	The only student management system currently in use by the department is the EIS system, which is an Oracle database platform. Districts have their own SMS vendors, which feed data to the state EIS database.
22 A.12.e.1, page 98: Has the state already defined a desired look and feel and, if so, are those style guides and/or CSS available for review?	No. The department has not already defined a desired look and feel. We have attached department style guide for communications in general.
23 Does the State have data on the volume of customer support contacts that occur during testing windows and during non-testing times of the year?	On average, there are approximately 300 support contacts per week during the school year across vendor and department contact platforms. These are for all assessment programs, so we would expect the 2 nd grade assessment to be some subset of those contacts.
24 6.2.1, page 20: Is there an expectation that sample items would be field tested prior to proposal submission or is it acceptable to submit new items that are tailored to the TN grade 2 standards (in which case the Contractor would not have psychometric data)? Note: The Sample Item form includes a table with fields for psychometric data, which would be blank or N/A for newly developed items.	The current Tennessee State Standards are the common core standards currently in use in many states. Those standards will be ones in use for the 2016-17 school year. Beginning in 2017-18, Tennessee will implement revised standards. The preference is for sample items to be items that have field test data or have been in an operational assessment in other states. However, new items may be acceptable they reflect item specifications that will be in use for operational assessment.
25 A.3.g, pages 54-55: Please confirm that the “pre-test to be given to 2nd grade students in the fall or a 1st grade summative assessment” is beyond the scope of the initial contract.	No, a pre-test would not be considered beyond the scope of the initial contract. If there was a 2 nd grade pre-test, it would not be administered until fall 2017 for first administration. There are no plans to administer a summative assessment in 1 st grade. The scope of the contract allows for test administrations to be given in whatever windows the state requires and line item pricing provides for tests to be administered whether in a pre-test or summative format.
26 A.3.h A.4.aa, A.8.e (2), pages 55, 57, 68-69: Are there expectations about the distribution of item types across the grade 2 assessments? Please clarify the item type expectations and/or possibilities for the test. Section A.8 indicates that there should be “a variety of item types” but A.3 indicates that items should be either CR or SR. A.4.aa states that test questions may include CR, performance tasks, and/or SR.	Detailed form construction will not occur until after the award of the contract. The proposal requires that the contractor be able to support and provide multiple item-types – some that may require hand-scoring – such that the assessment fully reflects the depth and breadth of the Tennessee State Standards for second grade ELA and math. CR, performance tasks, and/or SR are all item types that may be included to fully reflect and align with state standards.
27 A.8.a, page 66: What, specifically, would be the included in the Contractor responsibilities for	As noted in the RFP: “The comprehensive system will coherently address curriculum, instruction and

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developing a “comprehensive assessment system” in addition to the grade 2 “item samplers, practice items [tests], summative and alternative assessments”?	assessment needs by producing technically defensible item samplers, practice items and summative assessments; and, incorporating evidence-based instruction and curriculum models.” P. 66
28 A.8.e.1, page 68: The RFP indicates that the Contractor shall utilize an alignment method approved by the State to provide alignment reports. The RFP further states that the Contractor will complete additional alignment studies, as requested by the State. Are we to budget for the additional alignment studies, as requested? If so, how many additional alignment studies should we anticipate?	Yes, respondents should budget for alignment studies that may potentially be completed via third-parties for maximum independence. Alignment studies would typically be required once annually, but proposals should include line item pricing in the event these studies are requested more or less often than typical. At a minimum, respondents must budget for an annual alignment study.
29 A.8.e (1) iv, page 68: What is the state’s definition of range of balance?	The range of balance may refer to the balance of cognitive challenge, the balance of item types, and/or the balance of content strands (such as major work of the grade versus non-major work) etc. Such metrics would be defined and approved prior to the study’s commencement.
30 A.8.e (2) ii 2), page 68: What is the rationale behind the idea that some reading passages and questions will be read aloud to the students? Would these items be used to assess listening skills or would they be used a measure of “pre-reading” skills?	Listening, pre-reading, and comprehension skills will be assessed via passages that are read aloud and ask students to respond to questions related to the passage. The department is interested in understanding comprehension in isolation from decoding skills. Allowing students to make meaning of passages when read aloud may help in our effort to distinguish between student performance on skills-based and knowledge-based competencies. Therefore, we can better determine where to focus student support based on results.
31 A.8.e (2) ii 3), page 68: What is the state’s definition of task? Is this the same definition for performance task as referenced in other parts of the RFP (e.g., pg. 57, section A.4.aa)? Throughout A.8.e (2) ii 1) – 5) reference is made to questions, tasks, and items. Is a meaningful distinction being made among these three assessment formats? If so, please clarify.	Tasks, in our usage, generally refer to whatever the student is being asked to respond. “Performance task” in our usage typically goes beyond SR and may include multiple contingent steps, CR, or some other innovative item type that targets higher order thinking.
32 A.8.e (2) ii 8), page 69: Are items assessing the language standards assumed to be part of a writing subtest? #11 says that “CR items should assess the writing and foundational skills (and are those reading foundation skills)?	Language standards may be assessed via writing or other types of tasks. There is no assumption that language will be exclusively assessed in a particular way. As noted in the RFP: “Foundational skills items should assess grade-level phonics, word analysis skills in decoding words, phonological awareness.” P. 68
33 A.8.e (2) ii 12), page 69: Mention is made of multiple subtests. Are these subtests to correspond to desired reporting categories? Or, are the multiple subtests referring to the presentation of the assessment through multiple	Subtests generally refer to testing sessions to complete the assessment. Reporting should be available at the domain and/or content strand level at a minimum for individual student reporting.

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test sessions? What is the desired level of reporting at the student level for ELA and mathematics?	
34 A.8.e (3) iii, page 72: The RFP indicates that the item bank should have sufficient depth and coverage to produce equated, unique test forms plus linking items for field testing each year. Does the State desire that the test forms be unique each administration except for the items used for linking across years?	Yes. The department does require a unique form for each administration. Ideally, each administration will have multiple unique forms (with unique operational items) and multiple versions embedding field test items.
35 A.8.e (3) xiii, page 73: For budgeting purposes, what is the number of miles per participant we should use for attendance at review meetings? For budgeting purposes, what rate should we use for a teacher honorarium? For a substitute teacher?	For conservative budgeting, assume on average teachers will travel 140 miles for review meetings. Assume that teacher honorariums are \$250 per day. Assume that substitutes are \$100 per day. These are estimates at the higher end of the range to ensure budgeted amounts are not exceeded.
36 A.8.(3) xx, page 75: The RFP states "Practice items shall be updated annually during the Contract." Please explain the expectation of "updating annually." Is this full replacement, adjustment to items, partial replacement, or something else?	Ideally, updating annually is full replacement. Potentially, prior operational items that cannot be used again can fulfill the requirement for additional practice items.
37 A.8.(4) iii, page 76: Please further explain the state's expectations of a Learning Progressions Framework and the Contractor's responsibilities related to its development.	The information provided in the RFP is sufficient for responses at this time. After the award of the contract, the Contractor will be responsible for working with the department's early learning and special populations staff to develop the learning progressions framework for use in the alternative assessment. The alternate assessment is expected to align to the format of the assessment and frameworks developed for the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA).
38 A.12.c.6, page 98: Please describe the specific user requirements that need to be met by this scaling specification. Will the State accept an alternate configuration that meets these same needs, via different methodology or architecture?	<p>The department will expect each respondent to assess the scale considerations and requirements associated with their service and service level agreements (SLAs). We anticipate this will vary depending upon how technology is leveraged by each vendor in the delivery of their services. For example, a vendor who hand scores will have different scale considerations versus a vendor who uses optical scanning technology. Assessing scale requirements should include consideration to factors such as: concurrency of users, processing times, total transactions, storage requirements, performance SLAs and security.</p> <p>The state will consider other architectures that clearly meet a scale/performance profile commensurate with the role of the technology in the vendor's solution. Industry best practices for enterprise grade software and adherence to sound engineering principals will be the key factors in</p>

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	<p>this assessment.</p> <p>If the respondent speaks to their online assessment capabilities, they should address these scaling requirements, and alternate configurations may be considered if deemed comparable to the method that the department has described in the RFP.</p>
<p>39 A.10.c, page 88: Do item samplers need to adhere to the same requirements of practice test items (e.g., should they be field tested and go through content/bias reviews)?</p>	<p>Ideally, practice items and item samplers will have same requirements in terms of content bias/review and field testing. Respondents may explain how they will insure item quality that reflects the operational assessment in the absence of these steps.</p>
<p>40 A.3.e (4), page 54: Does the scope for this RFP include pre-test development?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>41 A.12.f.10, page 99: Does this requirement apply for a paper and pencil assessment?</p>	<p>Yes, potentially. This provision would be applicable if the respondent proposes an online platform for practice items and/or item samplers or for any online reporting platforms.</p>
<p>42 A.12.f.7, page 99: Does this requirement apply for a paper and pencil assessment?</p>	<p>Yes. Assuming that the respondent proposes an online platform for reporting and related administration functions.</p>
<p>43 A.12.f.5, page 99: Does the requirement to maintain dedicated hardware for only Tennessee apply for a program where there is no online delivery of tests?</p>	<p>Yes, potentially. This provision would be applicable if the respondent proposes an online platform for practice items and/or item samplers or for any online reporting platforms.</p> <p>In general, the department would prefer dedicated computing capacity and data storage for critical systems and data that is protected by PII or FERPA legislation. The department will consider alternatives to this requirement in situations where the role of the specific technology is not critical or where the vendor can clearly demonstrate how computing capacity will be prioritized for TN in a shared environment. Such a demonstration would need to include a discussion on partitioning semantics in both computing and data storage tiers, proactive monitoring/capacity planning and approaches to scaling out individual tiers of the solution that may be impacted by load outside of TN.</p>
<p>44 Will the new contractor have access to existing test blueprints and item specification documents to use for future development? During the meeting, we asked if the contractor would have access to previous tests, and you indicated that since this test was intended to replace SAT 10, the answer would be no. We are requesting clarification on what blueprints or specifications could be made available.</p>	<p>There are no blueprints available for a criterion-referenced second grade assessment. Respondents may access existing public-facing blueprints for other grades at http://www.tn.gov/education/article/tready-blueprints</p>

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45 Does the state anticipate that all the written student responses in ELA and math will be hand scored, or is AI scoring a possibility? Taking into consideration cost and accuracy of scoring, would the state consider a solution that was based on machine scoring rather than hand scoring?	The department will consider all submitted proposals. Respondents should articulate how their proposal ensures that items reflect the full breadth and depth of the Tennessee State Standards for second grade ELA and math.
46 If machine scoring is an acceptable solution, does the State have any preference as to the item types to be delivered on the Math and ELA? For example, would assessments consisting of multiple select (choose all answers that apply) and/or traditional multiple choice (choose one answer) questions be acceptable?	The department will consider all item types that reflect the expectations of the Tennessee State Standards. We will develop an assessment that includes a variety of item types that represent higher order thinking skills. It is unlikely that such could be accomplished with only multiple choice items.
47 What percentage of the test does the state anticipate will be released each year?	The state will release all items except for linking and field test items each year, subject to specific copyright limitations.
48 What is the expected refreshment rate for the assessments?	The state will require a new assessment annually. State law requires the release of test items and 70% fresh and non-redundant assessments each year.

3. **RFP Amendment Effective Date.** The revisions set forth herein shall be effective upon release. All other terms and conditions of this RFP not expressly amended herein shall remain in full force and effect.