July 21, 2017

To: All Potential Respondents

From: Nancy Wheelock, Purchasing Agent

Subject: RFP1117282197 – Statewide Assessment of Student Progress

**Addendum Two**

**Please amend the subject RFP to include answers to the following timely received questions:**

Q1. Can you confirm there is no incumbent for this project? If there is, who is the vendor and when does it expire?

A1. The current provider for Iowa’s assessment system is Iowa Testing Programs. During the 2017 legislative session, the Iowa Legislature passed Senate File (SF) 240 which requires the Agency to issue a Request for Proposal for a Statewide Assessment of Student Progress to be administered annually in the last quarter of each school year beginning in 2018-2019.  This Request for Proposal (RFP) creates an open opportunity for any Contractor to bid on implementing a new Statewide Assessment of Student Progress which best meets the requirements outlined in the RFP.

Q2. What is the estimated project cost?

A2. The state has no estimated project cost. Contractors are asked to provide costs associated with the requirements of the RFP.

Q3. Can a vendor be party to more than one bid (e.g., prime one bid and be a subcontractor on another)? The RFP language doesn't seem to preclude it I wanted to make sure prior to responding.

A3. Contractors can submit more than one bid or may choose to partner on multiple bids.

Q4. Throughout the RFP there are references to “pre-existing assessments.” Please confirm that the vendor will own any pre-existing content as well as any new content that may be used to update forms in the future.

A4. Contractors may retain rights to pre-existing content. Any development work completed to enhance or align, as examples, assessments given under this contract, will be owned by the Iowa Department of Education. If the Contractor is unable to comply with this requirement it shall explain why in its response. The Agency is willing to discuss content ownership as part of contract negotiations.

Q5. Page 5, 1.5 and page 63, 4.7: Instructional time required to administer the assessment is one of the seven scored technical requirements. How much instructional time is required to administer the current Iowa statewide assessments by subject area?

A5. The current administration time for the Iowa Assessment can be found in the [Planning and Implementation Guide](https://itp.education.uiowa.edu/ia/PlanningImplementationGuide.aspx) in Appendix B.

The Agency is interested in knowing the average length of time to administer the proposed assessment in each grade and content area. Additionally, the Agency wants a justification which includes the time needed for administration along with quality of the set of items given to the student, coverage of standards, depth of knowledge, etc., which provide quality information to students, parents and educators about the skills and knowledge attained along with progress toward the Iowa Core Standards. The Agency is interested Contractor’s justification of its balance between the time needed for assessment administration and quality of the set of items given.

Q6. What are the requirements for comparability, including comparability to performance of students in other states and comparability to previous years, including the current Iowa assessments?

A6. Comparability requirements are included in section 4.5.2 and 4.6.1.

Q7. May a company serve as a subcontractor for proposals from different primary contractors?

A7. Yes. Also, refer to A3.

Q8. Page 17, Section 3.3.2, if the program is not funded at the State level, how is billing to be done for planning deliverables prior to the spring 2019 administration?

A8. Contractors need to build this into the per pupil costs for the assessment system.

Q9. Page 24, Section 4.1.12.4, should “addenda” be read as “agenda”?

A9. Yes. The following sentence in Section 4.1.12.4 should be read as “These meetings may be held virtually, providing the **agenda** is provided to the Agency team at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.”

Q10. Page 25, Section 4.1.14, are all TAC meetings expected to be held in Des Moines?

A10. Yes.

Q11. Page 26, Section 4.1.16, Table 2 shows the completion of “Range finding and rubric validation” occurring in May/ June 2019, which could possibly be after “Scoring which could include technology enhanced (TE) and selected response item scoring; constructed response (CR) Scoring” (scheduled from February to May, 2019). Does this range finding and rubric validation activity refer to field-tested items?

A11. The Scoring which could include technology enhanced (TE) and selected response item scoring; constructed response (CR) Scoring” deliverable from February to May 2019 refers to the completion of scoring of the assessment. The Range finding and rubric validation refers to completion of these analyses and review process to occur after the operational assessment.

Q12. Page 26, Section 4.1.16, Table 3. Can the state clarify how Liquidated Damages will be determined and remitted in the event districts pay some (or all) the costs associated with the Statewide Assessment of Student Progress?

A12. Liquidated damages will be paid to the entity or entities paying for the costs of the Contractor provided services specified in the RFP.

Q13. Page 29, Section 4.2.3, Can the State provide the file record layout/ file specification that the State and the Districts would follow when pre-loading student demographic data?

A13. The desired implementation will use the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF), North American Data Model version 2.4, for data exchange for necessary system functions such as pre-loading student data, including enrollment information, rostering details, and additional required supporting data. This information will be extracted, via SIF, directly from district and school Student Information Systems (SIS).

 SIF is an open standard for the exchange of education data that defines both a data model and a standard means of communication. More information on SIF can be found at the Access 4 Learning Community (A4L) web site - http://www.a4l.org/. The state and the contractor will work together to identify the SIF objects and data elements necessary to meet system requirements.

Q14. Page 32, Section 4.2.3.4, can the Agency provide specifications for the District Record Sheet and School Record Sheet reports?

A14. Report specifications are not available at this time.

Q15. Page 32, Section 4.2.3.4 b), Individual Student Reports: Please define the term "claim scores" that are referenced in this section.

A15. This refers to any Individual, School or District level reports which show how a student or group of students performed related to the Iowa Core Standards.

Q16. Page 36, Section 4.2.3.8, this section requires Contractor “to provide districts the opportunity to reconcile discrepancies in the collected student file prior to release of reports.” Is this intended to happen within the ten-business-day turnaround of reports as required in Section 4.2.9.4? If not, to which reports does this apply?

A16. Districts need the opportunity to review and update demographic and other program information about students. District test coordinators need an opportunity to review and update this information prior to submission of student responses to the Contractor for scoring. In this case, the ten day window would start after the review is completed. In addition, a Contractor could propose the review and update process to occur during the testing window identified by the district.

Q17. Page 37, Section 4.2.4, one sentence in this section references billing “Iowa districts and nonpublic schools directly”; whereas a later sentence omits nonpublic schools and states “…districts will be required to pay any additional cost associated with the Statewide Assessment of Student Progress.” Can the Agency elaborate on the distinction of which costs would be billed to both public districts and nonpublic schools, and which costs would only be billed to districts?

A17. If funding is secured for the Statewide Assessment of Student Progress, these costs will likely cover public district costs. It would be expected there might be additional cost for nonpublic schools because it’s unlikely there will be a state allocation covering nonpublic costs. If no funding is available, costs need to be billed to the appropriate district or nonpublic school.

Q18. Page 37, Section 4.2.4, would additional costs be billed by students tested, or by LEA (district or nonpublic school)?

A18. Contractor needs to be ready to bill public districts and nonpublic schools the entire cost of the Statewide Assessment of Student Progress. Typically, this would be based off of a per student charge based on the number of students assessed or expected to be assessed for billing purposes.

Q19. Page 46, Section 4.3.3.1 c), can the Agency confirm its desire to provide kits which contain both large-print and Braille?

A19. Both forms need to be available. Only Braille needs to be in a kit.

Q20. Page 49, Section 4.4 a), RFP says “Contractor is only required to address reading and writing [Iowa Core Standards]. Are Language standards also to be included among the set of the ELA standards to be covered by the assessment?

A20. The Iowa Legislature requested an assessment “capable of measuring student performance in English language arts, including reading and writing”. Assessments with a high degree of alignment comprehensively assess the full scope of ELA and Literacy standards in the Iowa Core. Alignment detail is provided in Section 4.4.1 Alignment to Standards –English Language Arts/Literacy.

Q21. Page 56, Section 4.5.4 d), there does not appear to be a line-item in the Cost Proposal (Attachment 5) to propose the costs associated with developing and reporting a College and Career Readiness Level of Performance. Is this an Optional Requirement; and if so, where should the costs be included in the Cost Proposal?

A21. Any costs associated with developing a CCR level of performance should be included in the Cost Details section (tab) of the Cost Proposal.

Q22. Page 47, Section 4.3.3.1 b), What Braille format does the State desire (e.g., EBAE, UEB, contracted vs uncontracted, etc.)? If multiple formats, please clarify whether all formats should be included for all contract years.

A22. Because this is an assessment for grades 3-11, the preferred formats would be UEB, both contracted and uncontracted braille. Iowa is in the process of moving to UEB, but to ensure fair access to all students requiring braille, EBAE contracted and EBAE uncontracted may also be required in the first few years of this contract.  UEB mandates using standard contracted braille for embedded computer items and uncontracted braille for displayed computer items. Nemeth Braille should be used for advanced mathematical coding only when appropriate.

Q23. Attachment 5 – Cost Proposal, for the Cost Chart, please confirm that Year 1 is the 2017–18 school/fiscal year, and therefore will include development/start-up costs, but no administration costs since the first administration is during the 2018–19 school year (which would be year 2 on the cost format).

A23. The first year of the contract is 1 year and 8 months. Year 1 needs to include all costs associated with the period covering November 1, 2017 to June 30, 2019. Each renewal will be for 12 months after this initial period. Year 2 will be 12 months starting July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, etc.

Q24. Attachment 5 – Cost Proposal, the Cost Chart indicates that 323,569 summative student assessments should be assumed for grades 3 through 8 and one high school grade. However, Table 4 on page 29 of the RFP has a total of 323,569 that includes grades 9, 10, and 11 (3 grades of high school). Please clarify the quantity to use for bidding purposes.

A24. The State is amending Attachment 5 – Cost Proposal to indicate the number of summative student assessments for grades 3 to 8 and one high school grade should be based on **253,209** students in both reading and mathematics for costing purposes. Science estimates should be based on 107,762 summative student assessments.

Q25. Attachment 5 – Cost Proposal, for section 4.2.2 of the Cost Chart, is quantity of 16,500 for paper-pencil administration anticipated to be per grade or across all 7 grades? What about for science, how many paper-pencil tests per grade should be assumed?

A25. 16,500 paper-pencil assessments in both English Language Arts, including reading and writing, and mathematics across all grades 3 to 8 and one high school grade. Contractors should assume 5,500 paper-pencil science assessments.

Q26. Page 38: Section 4.2.310; Page 8: Section 2.12.2; and Attachment 5 – Cost Proposal, Cost Chart Tab rows 36-45 and rows 46-58.

The sections above reference the following RFP text: “Contractors shall provide pricing for both an Agency owned and operated online assessment delivery platform and a licensed platform.” Also reference Attachment 5, Cost Proposal, Cost Chart tab.

Based on our understanding of the RFP, the agency-owned option does not appear to be listed under "Mandatory Requirements" (Section 5.1). Can you please confirm this is not a mandatory requirement and thus a licensed only online platform solution is compliant with the RFP specifications? If a vendor proposes only a licensed option, please confirm that it is acceptable to leave rows 38-45 blank in Attachment 5, Cost Chart tab.

There are many benefits to a licensed assessment solution instead of the State owning the administration and online testing platforms, including cost avoidance, security, monitoring, and accessibility considerations.

A26. The Agency is interested in receiving bids for both a licensed and State owned system. The Agency will determine which solution it will choose to be implemented. If a Contractor is unable to provide a state owned assessment solution, it shall explain why in its response.

Q27. Page 29, Section 4.2; Page 41, Section 4.2.9: Please confirm that there is to be no financial information provided in the technical proposal in response to the Cost-Best Value or related sections.

A27. No cost information should be included in the Technical Proposal. All cost information should be included in the Cost Proposal.

Q28. Page 23, Section 1.15.32 – Standard Terms and Conditions: With regard to the Force Majeure Clause, Page 23, Section 1.15.32, of the Standard Terms and Conditions, we presume the Contractor will not be held responsible for delay or default to the extent caused by the State or third parties contracted by the State. Is this correct? If this is not correct, please explain.

A28. Per Section 7.1, if Contractor takes exception to a provision in the terms and conditions of this RFP and the General Terms and Conditions, it must identify it by page and section number, state the reason for the exception, and set forth in its Proposal the specific RFP or General Terms and Conditions language it proposes to include in place of the provision. The Agency reserves the right to negotiate Contract terms with the successful Contractor if the best interests of the State would be served.

Q29. Page 9, Section 1.8 – Standard Terms and Conditions: We presume that the obligation to indemnify in Section 1.8, Page 9 of the Standard Terms and Conditions applies only to the extent that the Indemnitor is the cause of damage. Is this correct?

A29. See A28.

Q30. Page 12, Section 1.12.1 – Standard Terms and Conditions: With respect to ownership of Intellectual property, does the State of Iowa agree that rights in any materials and proprietary computer programs previously developed by the contractor, as well as rights to any derivative works, shall belong to the contractor?

A30. See A28.

Q31. Section 4.3.3 (in general): Does the Agency have a set of standards for developing alternate text?

A31. The Contractor needs to describe how their online platform will meet the Accessibility requirements in section 4.3.3 which includes, but is not limited to, the ability to generate Alt text. The platform needs to be capable of providing a text equivalent for every non-text element (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content).

Q32. Page 48, Section 4.3.3.1 e): With respect to translations, please verify the content areas for which Spanish translations are required and other language accommodations are desired as options.

A32. Spanish translation should be available for all content areas cover by the Contractor’s assessment. American Sign Language is required if there are audio components as part of the assessment. The Agency is interested in the cost of the additional languages listed in the RFP but these are not required.

Q33. Page 63, Section 4.6.16: Should costing be included to develop online practice tests for end users accessing accommodations by the August 2018 targeted training date? Will the Agency provide accessibility staff and access to screen readers, ASL users, and braille readers) with whom we can work to review and approve these practice tests?

A33. If there is a cost for developing online practice tests for end users accessing accommodations by August 2018 target training dates, then the costs must be included in section 4.6.16 of the Cost Proposal. The Agency could provide the consulting services of the accessibility staff, but the use of screen readers, and braille readers is the responsibility of the Contractor. The Agency could collaborate to recruit ASL users for reviews.

Q34 Page 47, Section 4.3.3.1 b): How many versions of braille should we plan to offer/produce at each grade and subject, for example, English Braille American Edition (EBAE), Unified English Braille (UEB), contracted, uncontracted, etc.?

A34. See A22.

Q35. Section 4.6.17 on page 62 includes requirement d., which states: “Contractor will provide technical documentation that interim assessments are predictive of student performance on statewide summative assessments.” This seems to be the only reference to interim assessments, are their provision or description a requirement for this solicitation?

A35. The state has amended Section 4.6.17 to remove requirement (d) only. Interim assessments are not a requirement of the RFP.

Q36. The last paragraph in Section 4.1.1, page 18, provides instructions for proposing the assessment for the high school grade chosen by the vendor and for including prices for assessments for the other grades. The relevant sections in the costing spreadsheet for Attachment 5 includes a single line, “Optional grade level costs”. How should a vendor respond if it includes two different tests with different per-student prices for the two optional grades?

A36. A Contractor needs to indicate which high school grade will be assessed in their proposal and include these costs in the Cost Proposal. The optional grade level costs include other grades outside of grade 3-8 and one high school grade for English/Language Arts and Mathematics and grade 5, 8 and 10 in science. There is no requirement to include other grades but if a Contractor has additional grades available, then Iowa Districts can choose to assess these additional grades. If there are different costs for optional grades, then provide the detailed breakdown of these costs in the cost detail tab.

Q37. Can the State elaborate on the number and type of data exchanges that are described in Sections 4.2.3.5, 4.2.3.6, and 4.2.3.7? Specifically, can the State provide a general description of the types of data that will be exchanged, (e.g., from organizations, users, students, and/or other sources?)? Additionally, is the IDOE system/database in question equipped with web services that permit the exchange of data or does this require interaction with the databases? Finally, which format would be needed to support the exchanges, e.g., text, CSV, SIF, CEDS, etc.?

A37. Data exchanges required for system functions include district/school-to-contractor exchange for student data, state-to-contractor exchange for contextual data, contractor-to-state exchange of assessment results and other pertinent research information. Assessment result delivery to Local Education Agencies (LEA's) must be actively managed to ensure accuracy and agreement between result sets maintained by the state and the LEA's.

District/school-to-contractor data exchange will provide all student data necessary to ensure tests can be administered to all students. The data domains necessary for this to occur include basic student demographics, local and state identifiers, enrollment information including entry/exit and relationship to educational organizations, relationship of students and test administrators or other relevant staff, additional rostering data, and a small number of student indicators required to enforce all state accountability and business rules. This data exchange will occur using the SIF standard as outlined in the response to Q13.

State-to-contractor data exchange will provide contextual data necessary to implement state business rules, such as validation to ensure data quality and implementation of accountability requirements. Examples include an annually-updated official education organization list and a regular review of the accuracy of the state identifiers assigned to students within the assessment system.

 Contractor-to-state data exchange will provide assessment results, including but not limited to student indicators, enrollment and roster information, test administration details including accommodations and alerts, performance measures including granular achievement details as available. Additional data may be exchanged for other accountability processes or research needs as required for state operations.

 The state's preferred mode of data exchange with contractors is secure file transfer; the state maintains a secure file transfer server, though some flexibility exists for the implementation. File formats and content will be determined through mutual agreement of both parties.

 The Contractor and the state will develop requirements and an implementation plan to deliver assessment results to LEA's.

 Communication and data exchange between the assessment delivery system, test engine, item bank, or any other related repository must use current industry interoperability standards. The choice of standard is left to the contractor, as is system design, within the parameters noted in the RFP.

Q38. Section 4.1.3 on Page 20 includes this sentence: “A current vita/resume shall be included for all Key Personnel in Appendix F of the response to the RFP.” There does not seem to be additional references to named appendices. Does the RFP require a particular format or naming convention with respect to proposal appendices?

A38. Proposals should reference the same section numbering and naming conventions for appendices as stated in the RFP. For instance, the RFP is stating current vita/resume shall be included in Appendix F, so Contractor shall include the requested information in Appendix F of its Proposal. Contractor should only provide the appendices in their Proposal which require a response.

Q39. We need help resolving the number of students to price between the RFP and the Cost Proposal forms.

* Attachment 5, Cost Proposal Section 4.2.2, Paper-Pencil (P&P) Summative Assessment Administration, states “Per student and total cost should be based on the assumption of 16,500 students for Section 4.2.2”
* RFP Section 4.2.2 states “…seventy seven (77) percent of Iowa students indicated they are planning to administer assessments using the online platform. This information should be used only for the purposes of cost estimates for this RFP…”
* If the remaining 23% of students in Grade 3-8 and high school require paper, this would be approximately 58,000 students on paper.

**Question**: Would Iowa please clarify what number of students vendors should use for pricing purposes?

A39. Of those who responded to the survey, districts indicated that 95 percent of students would take paper-pencil summative assessments. Use 16,500 students as the basis for costs estimates of paper-pencil administration for ELA and Mathematics. Use 5,500 students as the basis for cost estimate of estimates of paper-pencil administration for Science.

Q40. We need help resolving the number of students to price between the RFP and the Cost Proposal forms.

* Attachment 5, Cost Proposal Section states “For consistency, Contractor shall assume 323,569 summative student assessments will be administered for grades 3 through 8 and one high school grade in English Language Arts including reading and writing and mathematics. Science estimates shall include grades 5, 8 and 10 for each of the years proposed for 107,762 summative student assessments.”

**Question:** We are able to reconcile the 107,762 Science assessments with Table 4 in the RFP. However, using Table 4 for ELA and Math, we calculate the summative assessments in Grades 3-8 plus one high school grade equal ~252,000 students x 2 assessments = ~504,000 (exact numbers depending on high school grade selected). Would Iowa please confirm the approximate number of ELA and Math assessments that vendors should use for pricing purposes?

A40. Use 253,209 as the basis for the total cost estimates for ELA and Mathematics. Continue to use 107,762 for cost estimates for Science. Also, see A39.

Q41. General Terms and Conditions for Services, Effective May 1, 2016:

1. Section 1.12.1 Ownership and Assignment of Other Deliverables

Question: Please confirm this is a services contract for test content and test delivery, and the Contractor will retain all pre-existing intellectual property and derivations of that IP.

1. Section 1.12.1 Ownership and Assignment of Other Deliverables

Question: Please confirm no Software is to be delivered under this contract.

1. Section 1.12.1 Ownership and Assignment of Other Deliverables

Question: Please confirm that IP of third-parties will remain property of those parties.

A41. a. See A28 and A4.

 b. See A28. Additionally, the Agency is interested in receiving bids for an Agency owned platform as well as a services cost for the platform. This can be found in section 4.2.3.10 of the RFP.

 c. See A28.

Q42. Section 1.3 Overview of the RFP Process, page 4

Question: Will the Department accept USB flash drives for electronic copies of the technical and cost proposals?

A42. Yes, USB flash drives are acceptable to the state for electronic copies of the technical and cost proposals.

Q43. Attachment 5, Cost Proposal

Question: Would Iowa please confirm the 4.2.4 costs for district billing should only be vendor’s incremental additional cost for this service and allowance for uncollectable/unpaid invoices?

A43. Correct. If there are additional costs associated with direct billing these should be outlined in section 4.2.4. It is important to note that if no legislative allocation is made during the 2018 Legislative session, it is expected that the entire cost of the Statewide Assessment of Student Progress be billed directly to districts and nonpublic schools.

Q44. Section 4.2.3.10 Agency Ownership of the Online Platform, page 37

Question: Would Iowa please confirm this pricing and clause would only apply in the case of non-performance and termination of the contract?

A44. This clause would apply for non-performance and termination of the Contract. In addition, the Agency is interested in receiving bids for an Agency owned online assessment along with contracted platform costs.

Q45. Section 6.4 Technical Proposal Evaluation and Scoring, page 64

Question: We understand an addendum identifying the points assigned to the TECHNICAL evaluation criteria and minimum score will be posted prior to the RFP due date. Will that addendum identify the ratio between TECHNICAL and the COST scoring?

A45. Yes.

Q46. Section 4.2.4 Direct Billing, page 37

Question: Based on prior experience with district billing, there is typically a number of uncollectable/unpaid invoices at the district level. Would Iowa consider allowing Contractors to hold scores for districts with unpaid invoices, or some other method of guaranteeing payment?

A46. No. The Agency is willing to assist by working with the Contractor and Iowa Districts to resolve unpaid invoices.

Q47. Section 4.6.17 Psychometrics, page 62

Question: There is a reference to Interim assessments in 4.6.17, bullet d) “Contractor will provide technical documentation that interim assessments are predictive of student performance on statewide summative assessments”.  This appears to be the only reference to interims that we found in the RFP.  Does Iowa require interim assessments?  If not, would Iowa like to see interim assessments offered as a cost option?

A47. See A35.

Q48. Page 77, Attachment 5, on Attachment 5-Cost Proposal, 'Cost Chart' worksheet, each cell contains writing. Can this be removed to allow calculations in the cells and be able to sub-total and total?

A48. The state has amended the Cost Proposal and posted a revised Cost Proposal. See the last page of this Addendum to view the list of changes in the Cost Proposal.

Q49. Page 5, Section 1.5, how many Iowa school districts will be served under this Contract?

A49. There are 333 Iowa public school districts.

Q50. Page 37, Section 4.2.4, how does the Agency envision the direct billing to work? What role would the Agency play in assisting Contractors with direct billing?

A50. See A46.

Q51. Would separate agreements be needed with all the school districts and nonpublic schools to accommodate direct billing?

A51. Yes. Separate agreements would be needed. The Agency does not have authority to enter into direct billing agreements for school districts or nonpublic schools.

Q52. Why are additional billing costs for the nonpublic schools prohibited to be included in the Cost Proposal?

A52. Nonpublic costs are included in the cost proposal and broken out specifically to capture these costs such as the “Nonpublic School Access License” in section 4.2.3.2 of the Cost Proposal.

Q53. Can you please clarify the statement regarding Key Personnel release effort? For example, does this mean that we would have to release Key Personnel for 100% effort even if we proposed them at 50% effort for the project? Or does it mean that if we propose some Key Personnel at 50% effort that we would release them from 50% in order to work on this project?

A53. Key Personnel need to be dedicated to the implementation of Iowa’s Statewide Assessment of Student Progress. Contractor shall indicate the percent time the Key Personnel will be devoted to the project, if less than 100 percent, and shall affirm these individuals shall be released from concurrent responsibilities to cover the duties and tasks for the portion of time indicated by the Contractor.

Q54. In what manner do Contractors confirm the provisions in 4.1.7 - 4.1.8, 4.1.11, & 4.1.13?

A54. Contractors shall affirm the provision in sections 4.1.7 - 4.1.8, 4.1.11, & 4.1.13. Additionally, Contractor may provide information for how they will meet the requirements or examples of past practice in meeting these types of requirements.

Q55. Can Contractors use their own institution's travel costs or will they have to adhere to Iowa's guidelines regarding travel costs.

A55. All travel costs shall align with the State of Iowa travel guidelines. Please refer to the links provided in Section 4.1.12.3 to view state of Iowa travel costs.

Q56. Page 21, Section 4.1.3, Can you please clarify the Appendix layout IDOE wants to see? IDOE specifically requests that "current vita/resume shall be included for all Key Personnel in Appendix F of the response to the RFP" (page 21). Does this mean that IDOE wants Appendix documents A-E returned back in the response? Or does IDOE want the first Appendix document in the RFP to truly start with the letter "F" (minus returning A - E)? Or is there other layout flexibility such as using numbers instead?

A56. See A38.

Q57. Page 49, Section 4.3.3.1 c), what grade level content is used for the Engineering standards in 5th grade (ex. 3-5-ETS1-1)?  Grade 5 content only or Grade 3 and 4 Performance Expectations (3-PS2-4, 3-LS4-4, 3-ESS3-1, 4-PS3-4, 4-PS4-3, and 4-ESS3-2)?

A57. See section 4.4.c in the RFP where it refers to science grade bands. The science assessment only should cover the respective standards in the grade bands.

Q58. Page 30, Section 4.2.3.2, what are the Recovery Point Objective expectations?

A58. Contractors shall provide a detailed plan for disaster recovery including their recommended Recovery Point Objective which meets industry standards.

Q59. Page 1, Cover Sheet, RFP states, “Agency’s written response to RFP questions, requests for clarifications and suggested changes due: July 21, 2017**.”** In order to provide vendors time to consider Agency responses early on in proposal processes, we respectfully request that the Agency please provide responses sooner, and/or in batches. If so, please provide new timeframe(s) for posting the Agency responses.

A59. The July 21, 2017 date for posting the responses to Contractor questions will not be revised. However, the Agency retains the right to post an Addendum prior to the date on the Cover Sheet of the RFP.

Q60. Please provide information on the State’s planned proposal evaluation team: size of team, background, types of positions held, and knowledge of assessments represented by participants.

A60. The state does not share that information.

Q61. Section 1.15.4 of the General Terms states that if all or a portion of the funding used to pay for the Deliverables is being provided through a grant from the Federal Government, then the Federal Government reserves certain intellectual property rights in the Deliverables. Please confirm if this contract will be funded with Federal grant money, and if so, whether or not and to what extent the awarded Contractor will be considered a Subrecipient under the Federal Uniform Guidance requirements.

A61. The Agency expects that Federal funds will be used to pay for Deliverables. The awarded Contractor will be considered a Vendor, not a Sub-recipient.

Q62. Page 9, Section 2.14, the RFP indicates that bidders should expect that references will be checked, but we cannot locate a requirement for references.

How many are needed, and will the Agency require names/contact info only?

Are specific references required for subcontractors?

A62. Provide relevant experience, including subcontractors, in response to section 4.1.4. Additionally, Contractors may provide references and contact information.

Q63. Page 11, Section 2.20, will the Agency respect the proprietary nature of materials submitted as confidential, thereby exempting said materials from the Agency’s stated “right to use ideas or adaptations of ideas that are presented in Proposals”?

A63. Form 22 – Attachment 3 of the RFP addresses how to request confidential treatment of information. See Section 2.21.3 of the RFP for further information.

Q64. Page 20, Section 4.1.3, this section calls for contractor resumes to be submitted in Appendix F, though there are no previous references to including specific additional materials in other defined appendices. We typically put resumes in our submitted Appendix A. Will that be acceptable?

A64. See A38.

Q65. Page 23, Section 4.1.11, Section 4.1.11 states that the Agency may contract separately with a third-party verification contractor, and the awarded Contractor will need to share information with the verification contractor. Will the verification contractor be contractually obligated to protect any of the awarded Contractor’s confidential information?

A65. It would be the intent of the state to protect confidential information. However, further discussion would be needed with the successful Contractor during the negotiating period to establish contractual obligations.

Q66. Page 26, Section 4.1.16, regarding the timing requirements in Table 2:

a. Will the Agency allow flexibility of score reports, etc., in year 1, to allow for the required standard setting and other processes that are required to produce meaningful data with a new assessment?

b. Will the Agency please explain the need for paper test booklets to be ready 4 months prior to shipping?

c. Will the Agency consider allowing paper test materials to be ready later than September 2018?

A66. a. If the assessment proposed is a new test requiring standard setting after the first operational

 administration, flexibility of score report delivery will be allowed in Year 1. An agreed upon timeline

 will be negotiated in advance. The timeline in Table 2 is a proposed timeline.

b. The summative assessment forms for all test types need to be available in adequate time for preparing test administrator training materials. The timeline in Table 2 is a proposed timeline.

c. The Agency’s preference would be to have the paper test materials ready in booklet form but not printed by September 2018. The timeline in Table 2 is a proposed timeline.

Q67. Page 63, Section 4.2.19, Section 4.2.19 implies that all ancillary test materials will be provided online only.

a. Does the Agency require print production and distribution of the Test Administration Manual, Test Coordination Manual, Guide to Interpreting Results and Technology Readiness, and Technical Manual to districts/schools?

b. Please clarify how we will obtain enrollments (online and paper-pencil) for non-public schools. Will non-public schools register during the same window as all other schools?

c. Will the “Optional Assessment Inventory” require any paper-pencil production or will it be offered online only?

A67. a. On page 63, Section 4.6.19, the Agency requires that the identified assessment materials be provided

online for printing at the local level. If the Contractor proposes to include an option to schools/ districts for print production and distribution, it must be described in the Cost Detail section of the Cost Proposal and reflected in the Cost Proposal.

b. Nonpublic schools will register during the same window as all other schools.

c. It is anticipated that the Optional Assessment Inventory will be conducted online only. If the Contractor proposes to add a paper-pencil version, the cost must be included in the Cost Proposal and described in the Cost Detail section of the Cost Proposal.

Q68. Page 28, Section 4.2.2, the cost sheets show a baseline of 16,500 students for paper-pencil testing, yet based on Section 4.2.2, Table 4, 23% of students total approximately 58,300 students across grades 3-8 and one high school grade?

a. Please confirm you only want us to cost for 16,500 paper-pencil testing students across all grade levels?

b. Could you please provide an estimate of the number of schools that would require paper-pencil testing?

c. Does the Agency have a required shipping overage for paper-pencil testing materials?

A68. a. See A39.

 b. It is unknown how many schools would require paper-pencil testing.

 c. No.

Q69. Page 29, Section 4.2.3.1 d), please provide details on the types and scope of data forensics security the Agency requires here.

A69. A Contractor may describe the data forensics capabilities available a part of their online assessment delivery platform. This may include, but are not limited to, analyses or reports which identify statistical inconsistencies which may be associated with testing irregularities.

Q70. Page 34, Section 4.2.3.5, the system availability hours listed in table 5 do not match those required for customer support to be available. Will it be made clear to users accessing the system outside of the required hours that they will not be able to access live help?

A70. Yes. The online platform will be available outside hours where technical support is available. This will be communicated to users of the system.

Q71. Page 36, Section 4.2.3.8, the requirement for Agency review and approval of the scoring files has the potential to prevent the timely delivery (10 business days) of the scores. Will the Agency put a process in place to allow extra time, should the review/approval process delay score delivery?

A71. The Agency requires the opportunity for schools/districts to review the GRF prior to consolidation of scores. The final GRF is due by July 1. This should not impact delivery of timely individual student score reports to schools/districts.

Q72. Page 37, Section 4.2.3.10, is the Agency open to acknowledging that it is purchasing a non-custom product, in use by and delivered to other states, and therefore cannot take over ownership of the platform on which it is delivered?

A72. Yes. If the product is in fact in general use by other states, the Agency is open to acknowledging that it is purchasing a non-custom product, and therefore cannot take over ownership of the platform on which it is delivered. See Q4.

Q73. Page 38, Section 4.2.3.10, Section 4.2.3.10 requires the Contractor to provide pricing for both an Agency-owned and -operated online assessment delivery platform and a licensed platform. It goes on to state that all the system components will be put in escrow, and that the Agency can choose to take ownership of the last-used version of the platform. Please clarify if the escrow and the State taking ownership of the last-used version of the platform requirements would only come into play under a proposed Agency-owned and -operated option, or if these requirements would also apply to the licensed platform option.

A73. It would apply to both the licensed and Agency owned platform due to nonperformance.

Q74. Page 37, Section 4.2.5.1, will remote customer support agents satisfy the Agency’s desire for multiple customer support centers?

A74. Customer service representatives may be located in a remote site as long as they meet the other requirements outline in section 4.2.5.1.

Q75. Page 38, Section 4.2.5.1, what is the typical volume of calls to Customer Support during test admin windows? At other times of the year?

A75. It is unknown what the call volume during the assessment administration window. The Agency would expect a Contractor to provide an estimate based on experience administering summative assessments in other States similar to Iowa’s size. Contractors may provide detail for assumptions in building cost estimates.

Q76. Page 38, Section 4.2.5.1, RFP states, “The lead supervisor and other Contractor trained staff shall be available to answer Iowa calls from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Central Standard Time Monday through Friday, excluding federal and Iowa state holidays.” Our understanding is that each day refers to only to each day during the testing periods. Please clarify the Agency’s desired dates and times for customer service staff.

A76 Customer support needs to be available throughout the year and not just during the spring assessment window.

Q77. Page 39, Section 4.2.6, as part of the non-public school supports:

a. Will those schools require their own sets of training sessions, meetings, etc., or will representatives from non-public schools attend sessions conducted with Agency staff?

b. Will non-public schools require all of the same accommodations, including paper, braille, ASL, and Spanish?

A77. a. Training requirements are outlined in section 4.2.10. Separate trainings are not required.

b. Yes

Q78. Page 39, Section 4.2.7, please provide more details on the “Assessment Inventory.”

a. What item types/types of questions are to be included?

b. Is this an inventory that will produce results that need to be processed?/scored?/delivered?

c. Where and in what form must the data be stored?

d. What kinds of 3rd parties will have access, and how will they be vetted?

A78. a. The Assessment Inventory are multiple choice items.

 b. Yes.

c. The Assessment Inventory is an optional inventory which should be asked prior to the assessment administration. Data should be stored separately from the assessment results. Data needs to be available to the agency in a similar format such as txt or csv.

d. The Agency will have a vetting and approval process in place. Contractors shall provide results the Agency and the Agency will provide access to the appropriate 3rd party.

Q79. Page 45, Section 4.3.3. a), please acknowledge that, if the Agency “uncovers” other tools/supports/accommodations it deems desirable, following contract award, developing and adopting those will increase the scope of the project and necessitate a contract change request.

A79. If the Agency uncovers a tool, support or accommodation not addressed by the Contractor’s accessibility and accommodations manual, the Contractor will facilitate engagements with the Agency to consider the situation. If the decision is to allow the newly identified means of access, Contractor is expected to collaborate with the state to incorporate into the next feasible administration. If additional costs are to be incurred, it will be negotiated during collaboration and a change order issued for the Contract per the state’s General Terms and Conditions for Services.

Q80. Page 48, Section 4.4 a), please clarify how the Agency wants other content areas such as history/social studies, science, and technology subjects to be covered in the ELA/literacy content.

A80. The Iowa Legislature requested an assessment measuring reading and writing standards of the Iowa Core. The Iowa Core ELA/Literacy’s reading standards include reading for literature, reading for informational text, reading for literacy in history-social science, and reading for literacy in science and technological subjects. The Iowa Core ELA/Literacy’s writing standards include both writing standards and writing standards for literacy in history-social studies, science, and technical subjects.

Q81. Page 50, Section 4.4.1 a), the Agency states that letters of recommendation may be used as evidence to support newly developed assessments. How many letters should be included?

A81. Contractors may provide letters of recommendation as evidence.

Q82. Page 56, Section 4.5.2, regarding information related to maintaining and approving the assessment system, the Agency states, “This information will be combined with information from Iowa’s alternate assessment.”

a. What entity performs this combination?

b. Do bidders on this contract have responsibilities in this process?

A82. a. The state has amended Section 4.5.2 (3) to remove the sentence, “This information will be combined

with information from Iowa’s alternate assessment.”

 b. No.

Q83. Page 59, Section 4.6.5, \*what exactly is the Agency looking for in the monitoring of test administrations?

a. Is it actual people onsite in Iowa schools? (Does the Agency have a budget for this?)

b. Is it remote monitoring of progress in the online system?

c. How are vendors to ensure that Iowa educators properly assign assessments to students with 504 plans, IEPs, students who are ELs? (Student confidentiality concerns, etc.)

A83. a. Contractor shall propose the plan to describe how the proposed Statewide Assessment of Student Progress will be adequately monitored to ensure that standardized test administration procedures are implemented with fidelity across districts and schools. That plan may include online or onsite monitoring. If additional costs are required they should be included in the Cost Proposal and described in the Cost Detail section of the Cost Proposal.

b. See the answer to Q83a.

c. The Contractor’s plan should include a means of identifying that students who require specific accommodations and assurances, that these were available to the students during testing - online or paper-pencil.

Q84. Page 62, Section 4.6.17 d), RFP states, “Contractor will provide technical documentation that interim assessments are predictive of student performance on statewide summative assessments.” Nowhere else in the RFP specifications is there a reference to providing interim assessments. Please clarify this requirement and inform vendors whether we must actually provide any information on interim assessments.

A84. See A35.

Q85. Page 67, Section 6.4, RFP states, “An addendum identifying the points assigned to evaluation criteria and minimum score will be posted prior to the RFP due date.” To help vendors prepare proposal responses, we respectfully request this addendum to please be posted as soon as possible. What date is planned by the Agency for posting this addendum?

A85. The addendum containing the scoring point breakdown will be posted on August 4, 2017, one hour prior to the close of the RFP.

Q86. Page 5, Section 1.5, one requirement says: “…shall be available in paper-and-pencil and computer-based formats.”

Is it a firm requirement that the computer-based format be available right away (in all grades) in all years of the contract, or would it be acceptable to the State that, for example, one grade would be paper/pencil-only in Year 1, and would be paper-pencil OR computer-based in all subsequent years?

A86. It is expected all parts of the assessment be available in both paper-pencil and online formats.

Q87. Pages 22 and 23, Sections 4.1.10 and 4.1.11, will either the quality control contractor or the verification contractor conduct their analyses concurrent with operational scoring activities? Will either contractor be required to approve results before reports are distributed to schools/districts?

A87. The Agency will work with the Contractor to determine the scope and timeline for the Quality Control and Verification Contractor to complete a required review.

Q88. Page 24, Section 4.1.14, how many face-to-face Technical Advisory Meetings will be held each year? What is the duration of each face-to-face meeting?

A88. It is expected the TAC will meet face-to-face quarterly. The duration is anticipated to be no more than one business day.

Q89. Page 24, Section 4.1.14, how many virtual Technical Advisory Meetings will be held each year? What is the duration of each virtual meeting?

A89. Although it is expected the TAC will meet face-to-face quarterly, weather or other issues may require a virtual meeting in place of the face-to-face for some or all of its members. Neither the occurrence nor the duration of such meeting can be determined at this time.

Q90. Page 25, Section 4.1.16, is the August 2018 summative assessment, listed in the schedule of deliverables on pg. 25, intended to provide the contractor with an opportunity to conduct field testing of items for the future summative assessments? If not, please describe the purpose of this administration. Is this an annual administration or a one-time administration? Also, please identify whether or not this is a required test administration.

A90. There is not a testing window in August 2018. The test administration is February 2019 to May 2019. The exact dates are to be determined. The summative assessment forms for all test types are due in August 2018. If the Contractor wishes to embed field test items, they would be due at the same time.

Q91. Page 26, Table 2; Page 41, Section 4.2.9.4: would the agency please clarify the expectation for score reports? Table 2 indicates a May/June 2019 date but the narrative in 4.2.9.4 implies a 10-day turnaround. Does section 4.2.9.4 only refer to 10 days for scoring or does it mean 10 days for individual student reporting?

A91. Districts will choose their assessment period within the spring 2019 administration window. Once assessment results are complete Contractors need to turn around scoring and reporting within the 10-day turnaround beginning approximately in March or April 2019. Final assessment results are due to the Agency in June 2019.

Q92. Page 26, Table 2, please clarify “range finding and rubric validation.” Is this for field test items or operational testing? Does this refer to AI Engine Model Building?

A92. See A11.

Q93. Pages 32-33, Section 4.2.3.3, “The Contractor will be responsible for collaborating with the Agency and Portal vendor to complete the integration with the existing SAML implementation.”

Does the Agency expect that the test delivery and reporting system will be integrated with the state’s educational portal?

A93. Yes. The Portal single sign on solution needs to integrate with all components of the Contractors online platform.

Q94. Page 35, Table 5, “The system must include a secure administration that allows for review of available tests, items inserted into the system, and import and export of test items. Methods must be available to check item availability in development vs. production.”

This appears to be referring to an authoring system rather than a delivery system. The rest is about delivery. Please clarify.

A94. It is up the Contractor to determine the best means to deliver the functionality to review items that are part of the Statewide Assessment of Student Progress.

Q95. Page 36, Section 4.2.3.6, “The Agency retains ownership of all data in the Statewide Assessment of Student Progress system. Contractor system shall allow for near real-time movement of student assessment results to EdInsight. In addition, Contractor must have the capability of integrating student information from the Agency source systems to populate the Assessment Delivery Platform.”

a. Can we use the item response data to facilitate multi-state comparisons as part of a product’s capability/features?

b. Can we use the item response data to facilitate research as part of a product’s research and analysis plan?

c. Can we use the item response data to generate item statistics to use in test construction and other operational updates to the product?

A95. a. The Agency will retain ownership of all data related to the Statewide Assessment of Student

 Progress. Any additional use of these data for research or development purposes shall be

 negotiated.

 b. See above response.

 c. See above response.

Q96. Page 38, Section 4.2.3.9, “In addition to the GRF, annually by June 7 (or the preceding business day if June 7 falls on a weekend), the Contractor shall provide a biographic file for the administration year.”

Please provide information as to what data are contained in a biographic file. (What data fields are in the biographic file?)

A96. The terms "General Research File" (GRF) and "Biographic File" are synonymous with the term "assessment results" used elsewhere in discussions of data transfers from the contractor to the state. Files containing assessment results typically include, but are not limited to, information such as student indicators, enrollment and roster information, test administration details including accommodations and alerts, performance measures including granular achievement details. As an example, in previous contracts, the state has received this data in two files - a GRF containing assessment results and performance measures, and a "Biographic File" containing student and enrollment details, with a key field present for linking records across files. File formats and content will be determined through mutual agreement of both parties.

Q97. Page 40, Section 4.2.6, “There are approximately 203 nonpublic schools in Iowa serving about 34,000 students from kindergarten to grade 12. Estimates for nonpublic schools should be based from 20,000 students enrolled in grades 3 to 8 and one high school. Nonpublic schools shall be able to access either the paper-pencil or online version of the assessments proposed by the Contractor. The Contractor must be prepared to bill nonpublic schools directly for all costs associated with accessing and administering the proposed assessments. No additional cost shall be included in the response to the RFP for Nonpublic schools.”

Should the proposal indicate a per-pupil cost for providing these services to non-public schools?

A97. Yes. It would be helpful to know both total costs and per-pupil costs if available for nonpublic schools.

Q98. Page 47, Section 4.3.3.1 e), for the list of languages on page 47, would the Agency prefer the items be translated to each language, or, would the Agency prefer a language translation glossary (with key words in English and the second language)?

A98. There is no requirement that the items be translated into any other languages other than Spanish and ASL. Spanish needs to be available in both the online and paper-pencil assessments.  The Agency is interested in learning if the Contractor’s system can currently, or in the future, cover a wider variety of translations.

Q99. Page 54, Section 4.1, Scored Technical Requirement 5: Ability of the Assessment to Measure Student Growth and Student Proficiency

Please clarify the questions that should be answered in a response to this section.

A99. Page 54, Section 4.5 of the RFP includes Scored Technical Requirement 5: Ability of the Assessment to Measure Student Growth and Student Proficiency. In response to this section, a Contractor shall provide information about how the proposed Statewide Assessment of Student Progress will meet all of the requirements outlined in section 4.5. For example, in response to section 4.5.2 Validity, Reliability, Precision and Error of Measurement, a Contractor could provide evidence such as documentation of validity, reliability and error of measurement information for the proposed Statewide Assessment of Student progress. Other evidence might include, Alignment studies, Iowa Core content coverage, as examples.

Q100. Page 57, Section 4.1, Scored Technical Requirement 6: Ability of the Assessment to Meet the Requirements of the Federal Every Student Succeeds Act, Pub. L. No. 114-95

Please clarify the questions that should be answered in a response to this section.

A100. Page 57, section 4.6 of the RFP includes Scored Technical Requirement 6: Ability of the Assessment to Meet the Requirements of the Federal Every Student Succeeds Act, Pub. L. No. 114-95. Contractor shall provide information about how the proposed Statewide Assessment of Student Progress will meet all of the requirements outlined in section 4.6. For example, copies of test blueprints for the proposed assessment, items statistics, item development processes, test administration guidelines, monitoring protocols are just a few examples of the evidence a Contractor may provide in response to this section.

Q101. Please confirm what activities, if any, are required as part of the 2017-2018 school year test cycle. For example, will the vendor be required to deliver an operational assessment in spring 2018?

A101. The schedule of deliverables can be found in section 4.1.16. The first operational assessment will be in spring 2019, not 2018.

Q102. Page 67, Section 6.4, has the Agency finalized the evaluation criteria and the evaluation points to be assigned to each criterion? If this information is not released prior to responses to vendor questions, by when can respondents expect to receive this information?

A102. See A85.

**COST PROPOSAL AMENDMENTS**

The State has amended the Cost Proposal and has posted a revised Cost Proposal which replaces the original Cost Proposal. **Respondents will use the replacement file “Attachment 5 – Cost Proposal Rev. 7.21.17” to submit their Cost Proposal.** The following items were revised in the Cost Proposal:

1. Removed Year 6 from the Cost Proposal and defined the dates for each year at the top of each column. See A23 for additional information.

2. Removed the text from the number fields as requested in Q48.

3. Corrected the number of assessments to be used in determining costs for the various sections of the Cost Proposal. See A24 for additional information.

4. Added rows for per student costs associated with nonpublic school costs.

**Please acknowledge receipt of this addendum by signing in the space provided below, and return this letter with your offer (do not send back separately).**

I hereby acknowledge receipt of this addendum.

Signature Date

Typed or Printed Name