

RFP Questions and Clarifications Memorandum

To: Vendors Responding to RFP 4542 for the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment
From: David C. Johnson
Date: February 2, 2024
Subject: Responses to Questions Submitted and Clarifications to Specifications
Contact Name: Solicitations Team
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RFP Number 4542 is hereby amended as follows:

1. Attachment A, Item 46 is being modified to read:

All contract awards are at the discretion of the State Board of Education (SBE). The contract will be awarded for an initial project period up to of five (5) years; ~~four (4) years with a one (1) year option to renew the contract.~~ At the end of the initial five-year services term, services may, upon the written agreement of the parties, be renewed under the same terms and conditions for an additional term, the length of which shall not exceed ten (10) years. Each year of the contract will be reviewed to ensure services will be continued annually and shall be contingent upon successful completion of the services in the preceding year's contract, availability of funding and a performance-based evaluation.

Vendor must include in their proposal a response to each amended requirement as listed above. Vendor must respond using the same terminology as provided in the original requirements.

The following questions were submitted to ITS and are being presented as they were submitted, except to remove any reference to a specific vendor. This information should assist you in formulating your response.

Question 1: "No proposal bonds are required for this procurement"

"The vendor is not required to include a proposal bond with its RFP proposal"

"The Vendor must include the price of a performance bond or irrevocable bank letter of credit with its RFP proposal..."

#49 in Attachment A states, "Awarded Offeror must agree to secure a performance bond for 100% of the awarded fiscal year contract amount or the total value of a multiple year contract for services. The performance bond shall not be waived or negotiated."

Can the State clarify the terms around bonds and when the State would like one secured if one is required?

Response: A proposal bond, as referenced on pages 5 and 21 of the RFP, is not required to be submitted with the vendor's RFP response. Vendors responding to this RFP must include the cost of acquiring a performance bond in their Cost Information Submission. Once an award is made, the awarded Vendor will submit a performance bond or irrevocable letter of credit to ITS prior to the execution of a contract. Please see Section IV: Legal and Contractual Information, Item 38 for more details about your performance bond requirements.

Question 2: Article 2.1 states, "Unless this Agreement is extended by mutual agreement or terminated as prescribed elsewhere herein, this Agreement shall begin on the date it is signed by all parties and shall continue in effect for five (5) years after acceptance of implementation services ('Initial Term'). At the end of the Initial Term, the Agreement may, upon the written agreement of the parties, be renewed under the same terms and conditions for an additional term, the length of which shall not exceed ten (10) years."

#46 in Attachment A states, "The contract will be awarded for a project period up to five (5) years; four (4) years with a one (1) year option to renew the contract. Each year of the contract will be reviewed to ensure services will be continued annually and shall be contingent upon successful completion of the services in the preceding year's contract, availability of funding and a performance-based evaluation," but

Can the State clarify the potential terms of award and extension for this proposal?

Response: The base term of the Contract will be five years, as stated in 2.1 under Article 2 Period of Performance. At the end of the initial five-year services term, services may, upon the written agreement of the parties, be renewed under the same terms and conditions for an additional term, the length of which shall not exceed ten (10) years (as stated under Article 2 Period of Performance in Exhibit A). See Amendment 1 above.

Question 3: "One USB flash drive that includes the Vendor's complete proposal. Label the USB with the Vendor name and RFP number. Include the items listed below on the USB."

Would the State like a printed copy of the proposal in addition to the USB, or just one USB with a digital copy of the proposal?

Response: The Vendor is required to submit one response of the complete proposal, including all sections and exhibits, on a USB flash drive. A printed copy of the proposal response is not required.

Question 4: #55 in Attachment A states, "Offeror will ensure that all reports are accessible to parents, regardless of their disability or native language. Describe the format in which the reports will be provided to all parties in comparison to the alternate format."

What languages does the State require for parent/family reports?

Response: The State does not have a language requirement. The potential Vendor must outline their capabilities for communicating student progress to parents/guardians who do not speak/read English and/or have a disability that prevents the reading of printed reports.

Question 5: #11. c. states, “An online and paper version of the alternate screener for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten for students with significant cognitive disabilities (SCD). Optimally, the online screener should be adaptive. If an Alternate Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten for SCD students is not currently available, describe in detail the plan (with timeline) for its development, field testing, and implementation.”

Seeing as the MS alternate standards do not begin until grade 3, what standards should we align to for the Pre-K–K alternate assessment?

Response: Both sets of Alternate Academic Standards can be found on the webpage: <https://www.mdek12.org/OAE/college-and-career=readiness-standards>.

See linked ELA document, specifically pages 15-21:

https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/oe/ose/Info-and-Publication/2019_ms_aaas_mathematics_7_18_19_final.pdf.

Math pages 11-14:

https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/oe/ose/Info-and-Publication/2019_ms_aaas_mathematics_7_18_19_final.pdf.

Question 6: Please confirm if this is a print/hardcopy submission or if vendors can submit online? We do not see a delivery address for proposals in this section.

Response: The Vendor is required to submit one response of the complete proposal, including all sections and exhibits, on a USB flash drive to the address listed on the cover page of RFP No. 4542.

Question 7: If submissions are to be shipped/delivered, please confirm MDE wants the vendor to ship a single USB flash drive, containing the vendor’s response documents? No physical copies are required.

Response: Yes, a single USB drive containing the vendor’s response must be shipped to the address listed on the RFP cover page. Physical copies are not required.

Question 8: COST INFORMATION SUBMISSION: “Vendors must propose a summary of all applicable project costs in the matrix that follows. The matrix must be supplemented by a cost itemization fully detailing the basis of each cost category...”

Please provide the number of educators and students who will be using the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and training services and, therefore, will need to be included in the cost proposal.

Response: Please see the following chart for the past 3 years:

Year	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten
2023-2024	10,970	32,555
2022-2023	10,033	33,055
2021-2022	8,867	33,841

Each year the legislature often increases funding to add more students in the Pre-Kindergarten category, so this number does tend to increase from year-to-year. Training services shall be on how the system works and how to administer tests and review/download results. This can be recorded and provided on the assessment platform/portal.

For more information about schools and the assessments, see the following link to access the MDE public reporting site. Click on each year to see reports detailing districts/schools and number of students for each K-Readiness assessment (pre-K and K).

<https://www.mdek12.org/OPR/Reporting/Assessment>

Question 9: What is the annual budget allocation for this project? Is it per student or a lump sum?

Response: There is no budget allocation. The contract will be based on the successful award and contract negotiations. See the budget spreadsheet attached to the RFP. There is a category on the budget spreadsheet for the assessment as a basic cost per student for the three basic assessments per year. Additional scope of work, such as, MDE assessment portal/platform, student reports, technical information, data files, travel & meetings, can be priced separately in another category on the spreadsheet, as needed.

Question 10: Will districts be reimbursed, or will the costs for this project be fully covered by MDE?

Response: The Beginning of the Year (BOY), Middle of the Year (MOY), and End of the Year (EOY) will be paid for by the MDE. The Middle of the Year assessment was paid through reimbursement from the MDE in the past. This will become part of the new contract for K-Readiness.

Question 11: B. Program Office Requirements: “q. Will conduct bias, reliability, validity, usefulness studies and include the data from those studies in the technical reports submitted to the MDE. Validity studies and supporting psychometric analyses should be conducted annually and ongoing.”

Will the state commit to providing all the data required to support validity and usefulness studies?

Response: The awarded Vendor will collect the student data for these new assessments to submit to the MDE. Any past data can be made available for the awarded Vendor as needed.

Question 12: Section II: Functional Requirements; Part B: Program Office Requirements; Item 'n'. Requirement "n" indicates the vendor will attend TAC meetings. Can the state provide guidance on the nature of the vendor's attendance, including potential topics the vendor will be responsible for addressing and any analyses the vendor will be expected to conduct in conjunction with this TAC attendance?

Response: The MDE Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings occur for one-day, three times a year. If the TAC would like to discuss anything about the K-Readiness assessment, this may be accomplished either in-person or virtually. The discussion topic would be provided in advance.

Question 13: Section II: Functional Requirements; Part A: The Assessment; Requirement #14. Requirement 14 reads, "Categorized Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) including percentile ranks are needed for both the KRA and the Alternate KRA." Recognizing that percentile ranks are not a metric associated with PLDs, was this sentence potentially meant to read, "Categorized Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs), as well as percentile ranks, are needed..."

If not, can the state provide guidance on the nature of the percentile ranks that are meant to be associated with PLDs?

Response: The categorized Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) as well as percentile ranks are needed to be used to measure student progress for each assessment opportunity. Each assessment shall be equated for comparability purposes.

RFP responses are due February 27, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time).

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Solicitations Team via email at RFP@its.ms.gov.

cc: ITS Project File Number 47540