Department of Education and Early Development
Division of Education Support Services
801 W Tenth Street Suite 200
PO Box 110500
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0500

**THIS IS NOT AN ORDER
DATE AMENDMENT ISSUED: September 7, 2016.**

RFI for Alaska Statewide Assessments

RFI CLOSING DATE AND TIME: 4:00 PM on Wednesday September 14, 2016

Note: numbering in this amendment continues from the prior amendment.

D. The deadline for questions is 5:00 PM on Friday, September 9, 2016.
E. The following questions have been asked. Answers follow each question. All questions received prior to 5:00 PM on Tuesday, August 30, 2016 have been answered.

(21) Can Alaska provide any historical information on the testing administration window with estimates of number of students tested per week through the window?
Answer: Alaska monitored test completion rates during the spring 2015 five-week test window. The numbers below indicate an approximate cumulative total count of students that had completed both ELA and math tests by the end of each week.

Week	Count of Students Completing Tests
One	18,774
Two	42,873
Three	59,715
Four	68,601
Five	70,336

(22) How quickly does Alaska anticipate providing the science item bank to the selected vendor?
Answer: The science item bank could be provided right after a contract is issued. Depending on the format of items that the vendor can accept, the time period needed for the actual transfer process will vary and cannot be determined at this time.

(23) Does Alaska anticipate using a single form assessment in March 2017?
Answer: Because of the limited timeframe, Alaska is open to options for spring 2017, but anticipates a minimum of 2 forms of a fixed-form assessment. If using a single form assessment in spring 2017, a vendor should provide best practices for ensuring test security is not breached. Additionally, a vendor should be able to address psychometric reliability of using a single form per grade across Alaska.

(24) Are the following tools mandatory or desired: Tags and Search Tool?

Answer: Tags such as main idea, supporting idea, key word, etc. assist students in demonstrating knowledge as outlined in Alaska's standards in English Language Arts. While this tool is not mandatory, it is an example of a tool helpful to students. The search tool, as it was designed in the previous assessment, is not mandatory.

(25) Are the following Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) accessibility tools mandatory or desired: Auditory Calming?

Answer: Alaska has students who are visually-impaired and the need for Braille is a required part of their daily instruction. Therefore, these students will require this accommodated format for participating in the summative assessment. DEED understands American Sign Language (ASL) may be a cost prohibitive option for Alaska. If not available for spring 2017 testing, Alaska desires to have discussions on the capabilities of implementing this support for students in future contract years.

(26) Are the following embedded accommodations mandatory or desired: Braille and American Sign Language?

Answer: Alaska has students who are visually-impaired and the need for Braille is a required part of their daily instruction. Therefore, these students will require this accommodated format for participating in the summative assessment. DEED understands American Sign Language (ASL) may be a cost prohibitive option for Alaska. If not available for spring 2017 testing, Alaska desires to have discussions on the capabilities of implementing this support for students in future contract years.

(27) In regards to p. 8, 5. Student demographic, participation and enrollment data, can Alaska provide any additional information on the DIASA system (database type, structure, current access tools, etc.)?

Answer: The assessment vendor will provide a flat file of information that will be included in DIASA. Data fields will include student demographic information as well as the overall test scale score, and sub-scores, and the achievement level.

(28) In regards to p. 5, Technology, last paragraph, are the minimum and recommended bandwidths described for the 2016 ELA and mathematics assessments on a per student basis or an aggregate measure?

Answer: On page 5 of the RFI, information for bandwidth without a local caching server was a per student requirement, while the information with a local caching server was an aggregate total measure.

(29) Does DEED have the test maps for each of the 2016 paper and online science assessment forms?

Answer: DEED anticipates using a science assessment for 2017 that is based on the test maps for 2015 as provided in Attachment 1

(30) Since DEED owns all the science assessment items, would DEED be able to obtain an editable electronic version of the 2016 science assessment paper test materials from the prior contractor?

Answer: DEED can make available a PDF file of the 2015 science assessment paper test materials.

(31) It appears based on the 2016 science assessment item samples booklets posted on the DEED web site that consumable test books (as opposed to separate test books and answer documents) are preferred for each grade level. Can you confirm this would be the desired approach for 2017

Answer: DEED would prefer consumable books for the science test. However, because of the short timeline, test books with separate answer documents would be acceptable.

(32) In regards to p. 4, Accommodations and Paper-Based Assessments, (d), it is stated that "approximately 2,200 students in about a dozen schools required paper-based forms in Spring 2015." This implies that about 490 of the 502 schools (and about 97% of AK students) tested online. This does not seem correct, given the descriptions of the rural conditions of many of AK's schools. Is it accurate that 490 out of 502 schools tested online in Spring 2015?

Answer: DEED worked diligently in partnership with district Technology Directors in all school districts to prepare for computer-based testing in spring 2015. As a result, the 2015 computer-based assessment was very successful, with all schools in the state testing at least a portion of their students on computer-based tests, e.g., a small school tested five out of their 20 students on a computer while the rest tested paper-based format. The vast majority of the paper-based tests were administered to students in statewide correspondence schools that received an approved waiver from administering the computer-based version of the assessment to their whole student population due to lack of technology infrastructure. These schools serve students around the state, primarily in larger communities, and must arrange for a testing facility and the technology required to administer the tests. Those schools were to create an implementation plan starting with a small percentage of students taking the computer-based format and increasing with the goal of all students testing on a computer in three years.

(33) Will DEED be able to engage in contract discussions prior to HB156 taking effect on October 26, as long as no contract is signed by then?

Answer: If the state pursues a contract through AS 36.30, contract negotiations will occur after the vendor selection process determined by the procurement, and may occur prior to October 26. If the states pursues a contract through an exempt procurement process, contract negotiations will occur after October 26.

<End of Amendment 03>

Robert Roys
Procurement Officer