Alabama State Department of Education

Request for Proposal
RFP ALSDE 2018-13
Student Assessment
Department of Education
Alabama Summative Assessment

Note: FAXED OR E-MAILED APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Inquiries and response submissions related to this RFP are to be addressed to:

Mr. Jacky P. Todd
Administrator - Office of Operations
Alabama State Department of Education
50 N. Ripley Street, Room P305
Gordon Persons Building
Montgomery, AL 36104
Telephone 334-242-9760
Email: jtodd@alsde.edu

Deadline:
Applications must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. CDT on June 15, 2018

It is required that each vendor clearly mark the envelope RFP ALSDE 2018-13 in the lower left corner of the envelope (Response packages that are not marked will be rejected).

The application package must contain the following:

1. One (1) original application plus five (5) copies with original signatures (The proposal must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the vendor to the information provided). One (1) electronic copy on a USB Flash Drive in MS WORD format.

2. Must be currently registered with The Alabama Department of Finance, Division of Purchasing as a State Vendor and provide vendor number.

3. The vendor must complete the affidavit for business entity/employer/vendor. Verification of enrollment in E-verify should be presented on the form found in Appendix A.

Proposal Public Opening
June 18, 19, 20, 2018
9:00 am
Gordon Persons Building
Willie J. Paul Conference Room
50 North Ripley Street
Montgomery, AL 36104
# Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................................... 5  
A. Overview ............................................................................................................................ 5  
B. Background ......................................................................................................................... 6  

SECTION I – ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION ..................................................................... 7  
A. Signed Cover Letter ........................................................................................................... 7  
B. Estimated RFP Timeline ................................................................................................... 7  
C. Application Evaluation ...................................................................................................... 7  
D. Term of Contract, Renewal and Extension Option ............................................................ 8  
E. Cost Proposal Content ...................................................................................................... 9  
F. Legislative Changes ......................................................................................................... 9  
G. Mutual Responsibilities ..................................................................................................... 10  
H. Rights in Data, Documents, and Computer Software ....................................................... 10  
I. ALSDE’s Reservation of Rights ........................................................................................ 10  
J. Terms and Conditions ...................................................................................................... 11  
K. Considerations and Other Issues .................................................................................... 11  
L. Performance Penalty ........................................................................................................ 12  
M. Confidentiality ................................................................................................................. 12  
N. Vendor Cooperation ........................................................................................................ 12  

SECTION II – PROFESSIONAL SERVICE REQUIREMENTS .................................................. 12  
A. Scope of Work .................................................................................................................... 12  
B. Vendor Qualifications ....................................................................................................... 14  
C. General Requirements ...................................................................................................... 14  
   C.1. Professional Standards/Best Practices  
   C.2. State and Federal Requirements  
   C.3 Communication  
   C.4. Security  
   C.5. Backup and Recovery  
   C.6. Travel  
   C.7. Subcontractor Requirements  
   C.8. ALSDE Sign-Off  
D. Organization and Personnel ............................................................................................. 16  
   D.1. Organization Structure  
   D.2. Staff Qualifications and Experience  
   D.3. Corporate Capabilities and Capacities  
   D.4 Relevant Experience  
   D.5. Executive Summary  
E. Program Management ....................................................................................................... 20  
   E.1. Schedule of Activities  
   E.2. Project Schedule  
   E.3. On-going Communication  
   E.4. Project Meetings  
   E.5. Monthly Reports  
   E.6. Risk Management and Quality Assurance  
   E.7. Program Improvement Plans  
   E.8. Quality Control and Sign-offs  
   E.9. Deliverables  
   E.10. Pricing Model
E.11. Invoices
F. Assessment Development
   F.1. Item Specifications and Guidelines
   F.2. Item Writer Training and Assignments
   F.3. Item Blueprints
   F.4. Passage Selection
   F.5. Passage Review
   F.6. Test Item Development
   F.7. Use of Items from Other Sources
   F.8. Item Review Committees
   F.9. Content and Bias/Sensitivity Review Meetings
   F.10. Item Types
   F.11. Number of Items
   F.12. Field-Testing (initial and embedded)
   F.13. Regular Forms
   F.14. Breach Forms

G. Document Development
   G.1. System Test Coordinators Manuals
   G.2. Test Administrators Manuals
   G.3. Sample/Released Items

H. Assessment Administration
   H.1. Distribution of Printed Test Materials
   H.2. Packaging of Printed Test Materials
   H.3. Collection and Destruction of Printed Testing Materials
   H.4. Test Booklet Specifications
   H.5. Verification of Printed Testing Materials
   H.6. Web-based online test delivery system
   H.7. Tools and Accommodations
   H.8. Online Tutorials
   H.9. Application Testing
   H.10. Training
   H.11. Software Implementation Training
   H.12. Technology Director Training
   H.13. Assessment Administration Training
   H.14. Assessment Results Training
   H.15. Online Training Support
   H.16. Accommodations and Accessibilities
      H.16.1. Accommodations
      H.16.2. Accessibilities
      H.16.3. Print-on-Demand
      H.16.4. Braille and Large Print
      H.16.5. Braille-on-Demand and Large Print
      H.16.6. Braille and Large Print Testing Materials (non-computer)
      H.16.7. Assistive Technology

I. Data Integration and Collection
   I.1. System Requirements
   I.2. Data Collection in Protection Features
   I.3. Access to Data Collection System
   I.4. System Reliability and Mitigation Experience
      I.4.1. Information Technology
      I.4.2. Cyber Security
1.4.3. Online Assessment Challenges and Remedies

1.5. Scoring
   1.5.1. Range-finding Meetings
   1.5.2. Anchor Validation Meetings
   1.5.3. Scoring Decision Guide
   1.5.4. Scoring of Selected Response
   1.5.5. Scoring Center
   1.5.6. Human Scoring
   1.5.7. Scoring Staff
   1.5.8. Scoring Confidentiality and Security Procedures
   1.5.9. Scorer Training
   1.5.10. Artificial Intelligence Scoring

1.6 Additional Scoring Considerations
   1.6.1. Reliability and Validity of Scoring Procedures
   1.6.2. Procedure for Unusual Responses
   1.6.3. Rescoring

1.7 Submission of Data Files and Reporting Assessment Results
   1.7.1. Data
   1.7.2. Data Files
   1.7.3. Data Documentation
   1.7.4. Data Ownership
   1.7.5. Student Biographical Data
   1.7.6. Quality Control
   1.7.7. Formatting of Reports
   1.7.8. Individual Student Reports
   1.7.9. State/System/School Reports
   1.7.10. Report Approval
   1.7.11. Reporting Dates
   1.7.12. Report Dissemination
   1.7.13. Reporting Errors
   1.7.14. Reprinting
   1.7.15. Assessment Interpretive Guide

1.8. Operational Analysis

1.9. Scaling
   1.9.1. Vertical Scale Design
   1.9.2. Scaling
   1.9.10. Standard Setting
   1.9.11. Performance Level Descriptors
   1.9.12. Linking and Equating

1.10. Plans for Establishing Technical Adequacy
   1.10.1. Peer Review Requirements
   1.10.2. Alignment Studies
   1.10.3. Establishing Comparability
   1.10.4. Technical Advisory Committee
   1.10.5. Technical Report

1.10.5. Technical Report
   1.10.6. Irregularity and Date Forensic Analysis

1.11. Training and Support
   1.11.1. Work Plan
   1.11.2. Fact-to-Face Training
   1.11.3. Webinars
I.11.4. Online Training Support
I.12. Customer Service
   I.12.1. System Test Coordinator Routine Communications/Notifications
   I.12.2. Telephone and email Support
   I.12.3. Issue Resolution
   I.12.4 Records of Interaction with Customers
   I.12.5. Customer-Initiated Calls and Communications
   I.12.6. Customer Feedback Survey
I.13. Contractual Information
   I.13.1. Performance Bond
   I.13.2. Inquiries/Questions
   I.13.3. Conflict of Interest
   I.13.4. Alabama Discrimination Statement
   I.13.5. Proposal Submission
   I.13.6. Addendum or Supplement to Request to Proposal
   I.13.7. Non-Collusion
   I.13.8 Award of Contract
   I.13.9. Contract Modification
   I.13.10. Termination of Contract
I.14. Contract Award Protest Procedures

Cost Options ..........................................................................................................................................................60

Immigration..........................................................................................................................................................61

Certification of Compliance with the Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection ACT...............62
INTRODUCTION

A. Overview
The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) is seeking proposals from qualified vendors experienced in statewide student assessment with the capacity to develop and deliver an assessment, assessment system, and support services for a machine-scored computer-based summative (with paper-based option). Eligible vendors may be either for-profit or not-for-profit entities, including large testing companies, consultants and/or educational organizations with demonstrated capacity to complete all required services as defined in this Request for Proposal (RFP) and do not provide direct instructional services to students in kindergarten through Grade 12 in Alabama. Vendors must have experience in developing, administering, scoring and reporting large-scale assessments and in educational measurement, including test development, scaling and equating, data analysis, standard setting, technical reporting, and computer-based testing.

The requested services include:
- partner with Alabama’s current vendor in order to allow for field-test items to be embedded into the spring 2019 operational assessment (if desired);
- conducting field-testing using items embedded within the operational tests;
- scoring the field tests;
- developing all operational test forms;
- developing ancillary materials and scoring materials;
- performing all analysis and research; and
- reporting capabilities to allow easy and timely access to results at various reporting levels from statewide down to the individual student/parent.

This RFP requires vendors to submit technical and cost proposals that clearly delineate the vendor’s plan for delivering products and services for multiple years. The assessment must be developmentally appropriate for students and substantially aligned to Alabama College and Career Ready Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Grades 3 – 8 and high school and science in Grades 5, 8, and high school with a cost option to include K-2 and Kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2, and science for grades 3, 4, 6, and 7. ALSDE would like to explore assessment attributes at the high school level that include grade level specific content assessments for mathematics and ELA. The assessments need to be fiscally reasonable with results. ALSDE is also interested in adaptive testing as a cost option. Vendors should propose as a cost option, innovative solutions that offer the benefits of adaptive testing while balancing the resource requirements for item development. The summative assessments must be technically sound as defined by the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association and the National Council on Measurement in Education. Additionally, development and implementation of the assessment must adhere to the established guidelines and requirements for the U.S. Department of Education’s (USED) Peer Review Guidelines and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The development of additional assessments is found as cost options on page 60. All requirements in the RFP pertain to the assessments to be included in the cost options.

The ALSDE will select the vendor that provides the most technically sound and cost-effective proposal. Vendors may partner with another firm to provide parts of the solution; however, the vendor must provide management of the partner and is responsible for all project performance. Any subcontractor or partner will be subject to the same vetting process as the vendor, and the vendor is responsible for ensuring that each subcontractor acknowledges and is contractually bound by the staffing plan and other commitments listed in this RFP.

Nothing in this RFP shall be construed to create any legal obligation on the part of ALSDE or any respondents. ALSDE reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to amend, suspend, terminate, or reissue the RFP in whole or in part, at any stage. In no event shall ALSDE be liable to respondents for any cost or damages incurred in connection with the RFP process, including, but not limited to, any and all costs of preparing a response to this RFP or any other costs incurred in reliance on this RFP. No respondent shall be entitled to repayment from ALSDE for any costs, expenses, or fees related to the RFP. All supporting documentation submitted in response to the RFP will become the property of the ALSDE.
Respondents may also withdraw their interest in the RFP, in writing, at any point in time, as more information becomes known.

B. Background

The Alabama Accountability Act (AAA) [Alabama Administrative Code, Section 290-4-1-.04(1)], enacted during the 2013 Alabama legislative session and updated in 2015, provides for a grading system to "reflect the performance for a school system and individual schools." In response, the ALSDE developed its "A-F Report Card," which uses an accountability model to measure school performance. Included in this model are three indicators of academic achievement:

1. learning gains—determination based on individual students who demonstrate improvement from one year to the next (reading and mathematics);
2. student achievement—determination based on the percentage of students proficient in the areas of reading and mathematics, utilizing assessments in tested grades; and
3. graduation rate—determination based on the percentage of high school students who graduate within four to five years of first entering the 9th grade.

The first and second indicator—learning gains and student achievement—constitute the purview of the assessment effort outlined in this RFP.

The goal of Alabama’s new statewide assessment system is to measure student acquisition of important academic outcomes in selected academic content areas and to provide useful, timely feedback to students, teachers, principals, and other stakeholders. Alabama’s new assessment system will provide ongoing signals and measurement of students' progress toward Alabama College and Career Ready Standards. The assessment system must provide stakeholders with varied, informative, and easily interpretable reports that help end-users understand student, local, and statewide educational expectations. ALSDE seeks to develop and implement efficient, cost effective, and technically sound reading, writing, mathematics and science assessments that draw upon technological resources and innovative approaches to measure student progress in a meaningful way.

Ultimately, the ALSDE desires a technically sound assessment solution that will:

- demonstrate substantial alignment to the Alabama reading, writing and mathematics content standards and practices for Grades 3 through 8 and high school;
- demonstrate substantial alignment to the Alabama science content standards and practices for Grades 5 and 8, and high school;
- allow prompt reporting of results that provide stakeholders with varied, informative, and easily interpretable reports that help end-users understand student, local, and statewide educational expectations;
- provide meaningful results for a diverse student population;
- leverage existing resources to the extent practicable;
- allow for the involvement of Alabama educators in the development process;
- allow comparison of ALSDE students’ proficiency levels to those of students in other states.

These priorities are woven throughout the scope of services described in the RFP.

### Alabama Student Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Systems and Schools</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estimated statewide number of systems</strong></td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estimated statewide number of schools</strong></td>
<td>1,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estimated statewide number of virtual schools</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Estimated Number of Students Tested:**
- Currently, approximately 55,000 – 60,000 students are tested in each grade level.
• A cost estimate is needed for Grades 3 – 8 and high school.
• The ALSDE will only be charged for the actual number tested for scoring. In preparing the “Cost Response” vendors must proposal “unit” prices, not block prices.

The number of students in each system for 2017-2018 can be found on the ALSDE website (http://www.alsde.edu) under Data Center.

The Alabama Courses of Study for Reading, Mathematics and Science may be found at the following link: https://alex.state.al.us/ccrs.

SECTION 1 – ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

A. Signed Cover Letter
The cover letter shall serve as the first page of the applicant’s proposal. The vendor shall complete the cover letter and attach it to the application in response to the RFP. An official authorized to legally bind the applicant must sign the cover letter. It will state that the applicant is a legal entity that will meet the specifications. The cover letter must accompany the submitted application. The letter accompanying the application must have original signatures and must include contact numbers and email addresses for the authorized official signing the letters.

B. Estimated RFP Timeline
Test development will start as soon as the contract is awarded with the development of field-tests for administration in the 2018-2019 school year and operational test beginning in the spring of 2019-2020 school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Release of RFP</td>
<td>May 25, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for submission of RFP (4:00 pm CDT)</td>
<td>June 15, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal Evaluation</td>
<td>June 18, 19, 20, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three finalists will be chosen and will be given an opportunity to present a 1 hour presentation.</td>
<td>Presentations by finalists will take place one week after the three finalists are chosen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Award Issued</td>
<td>After presentations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Application Evaluation
An Evaluation Team will review the proposals and make a selection. The criteria listed below will be used to evaluate the proposals for the purpose of ranking them in relative position based on how fully each proposal meets the requirements of this RFP.

Evaluation Criteria:

1. **Vendor qualifications, experience and references**
   - Vendor meets the mandatory minimum qualifications and provides an organizational structure and overall management plan for the ALSDE state assessment program.
   - Vendor provides narrative of experience and at least three references.

2. **Vendor provides a detailed description of development, administration, and delivery of ALSDE state assessment, training materials, presentations, and/or modules.**
   - Vendor demonstrates technically sound methodologies to manage continued ALSDE state assessment development, including new content development as necessary aligning with ALSDE state standards
   - Vendor provides a clear solution, capacity, and tools to manage and implement the online delivery system for administering the state assessment, including but not limited to, test enrollment, test delivery, student and user management, system security, upgrades, user interface interoperability and embedded usability, and accessibility and
accommodations features.
- Vendor demonstrates a strategy and capacity to administer print accommodations including but not limited to, Braille and Large Print test forms, including production, delivery, retrieval, scoring, security and records management.
- Vendor provides documentation for solutions and procedures to manage and implement test item scoring capacity, item management, training, and quality control to accommodate specified reporting timelines.
- Vendor demonstrates solutions to produce data files, individual student reports, group level reports, assessment interpretive guides, and a general research file to support ALSDE state assessment.
- Vendor demonstrates a method and schedule to ensure timely delivery of high quality ancillary materials and supports including manuals, training meetings, and modules, and help desk services to ensure uniform statewide administration of ALSDE state assessment.
- Vendor provides clear solutions and the capacity to conduct all psychometric services, ongoing research, and technical services to support ALSDE state assessment administration, including a technically sound method for establishing cut scores and achievement levels.
- Vendor provides a detailed plan for the annual release of a representative sample of test items to provide information about the type and level of knowledge and skills assessed on the assessments, the variety of item types, and the rigor of the items.
- Vendor provides a detailed plan for developing an item bank for the ALSDE state assessment.
3. **Vendor provides a plan for addressing Peer Review/ESSA and for the reporting of irregularities and forensic analysis.**
   - Vendor provides a plan for conducting studies necessary to meet all requirements for Peer Review/ESSA.
   - Vendor provides a detailed plan on irregularity and data forensic analysis to assure that all assessment data collected represents the independent work of the students assessed.
4. **Cost Proposal**
   - Vendor provides a cost proposal that is technically sound, cost-effective, includes cost options, and clearly delineates the reasonableness for each required activity and deliverable.

D. **Term of Contract, Renewal and Extension Option**
1. The contract resulting from this RFP is renewable for four additional years pending contract of the vendor and ALSDE.
2. The vendor shall be fully prepared to commence work after full execution of the contract by parties and the receipt of required governmental approvals.
3. The initial contract period pursuant to this RFP shall be for a contract period of up to 12 months with an option to issue a second, third, fourth and fifth 12-month contract under the pricing, terms and conditions established in the vendor’s proposal and agreed upon by the ALSDE. Second, third, fourth and fifth 12-month contracts, if requested by the ALSDE and agreed upon by the vendor, would begin the day after the previous contract expires. Any subsequent contract must have the written approval of both the ALSDE and the vendor approximately 30 days before the expiration of the previous contract.
4. Prior to each renewal, ALSDE shall subjectively consider the value of the contract to the state, the vendor’s performance under the contract and other factors, including but not limited to:
• terms and conditions of documents validity with current state and other applicable statutes and rules;
• then current products pricing and price discounts offered by vendor; and
• then current products and support offered by vendor.

5. If ALSDE determines changes to a contract document are required as a condition to renewal, the ALSDE and vendor will cooperate in good faith to evidence such required changes in an Amendment.

6. ALSDE, at its sole option, may choose to exercise an extension for ninety (90) days beyond the final renewal option period, at the contract pricing rate. If this option is exercised, ALSDE, at its sole option, may choose to exercise subsequent ninety (90) day extensions, by mutual consent and at the contract pricing rate, to facilitate the finalization of related terms and conditions of a new award or as needed for transition to a new vendor.

7. It is expressly understood and agreed that the obligations of the ALSDE to proceed is conditioned upon the continued availability of funds that may be budgeted for these purposes.

8. The contract will commence pending Legislative Review Committee approval and Governor’s signature.

E. Cost Proposal Content

1. Vendor must specifically identify all costs including expenses for services covered in this RFP.

2. The cost proposal should clearly delineate the reasonableness for each required activity and deliverable and the proposal should reflect cost efficiency.

3. Vendor must hold proposals firm for at least 60 days from the deadline for receipt of proposals. The ALSDE may send a written request to all vendors to hold their offer firm for a longer period. Unless this RFP specifies otherwise, a vendor shall submit a firm, fixed price for the term on the contract.

4. Vendor must guarantee unit prices to be correct.

5. All travel expenses to be incurred by the vendor in performance of the contract shall be included in the total proposal price/contract amount.

6. All costs incurred by the vendor for proposal preparation and participation in this competitive procurement shall be the sole responsibility of the vendor. The ALSDE shall not reimburse any vendor for any such costs.

7. The vendor must submit a payment plan relating payment to the specific activities and deliverables for the project. The payment plan is subject to modification and approval by the ALSDE.

8. All fees and costs are to be stated in United States currency.

F. Legislative Changes

1. The content of this RFP is subject to legislative changes either by the federal or state government. If any changes occur prior to the submission deadline, then all vendors will have the opportunity to modify their proposals to reflect such changes.

2. If any such changes occur after the submission deadline, then:
   • ALSDE reserves the right to negotiate modifications to the identified finalist and the vendor’s proposal reflecting such legislative changes; and
   • ALSDE shall have no obligation to provide unsuccessful vendors with the opportunity to modify their submissions to reflect such legislative changes.
G. Mutual Responsibilities
   1. ALSDE and vendor agree that:
      • neither party grants the other the right to use any trademarks, trade names, or other
designations in any promotion or publication without express written consent by the other
party;
      • this is a non-exclusive contract and each party is free to enter into similar agreements with
others;
      • each party grants the other only the licenses and rights specified in the Contract Document and
all other rights and interests are expressly reserved; and
      • except as otherwise set forth herein, where approval, acceptance, consent, or similar action by
either party is required under this contract, such action shall not be unreasonably delayed or
withheld.

H. Rights in Data, Documents, and Computer Software
   1. Any software, research, reports, studies, data, photographs, negatives or other documents, drawings,
models, materials, or work product of any type, including drafts, prepared by the vendor in the
performance of its obligations under the resulting contract shall be the exclusive property of the ALSDE. The
vendor shall deliver all such products to the ALSDE upon completion, termination, or cancellation of the
contract. The rights of the ALSDE with respect to such products shall include, but not be limited to, the right
to copy, publish, display, transfer, prepare derivative works, or otherwise use such products.
   2. The ALSDE shall be the owner of all licenses to third party proprietary operating and vendor software
packages provided by vendor.

I. ALSDE’s Reservation of Rights
   1. ALSDE reserves the right to:
      • reject any or all proposals received in response to the RFP;
      • withdraw the RFP at any time, at the agency’s sole discretion;
      • make an award under the RFP in whole or in part;
      • disqualify any vendor whose conduct and/or proposal fails to conform to the requirements of
the RFP;
      • seek clarifications of proposals;
      • use proposal information obtained through site visits, management interviews and state’s
investigation of a vendor’s qualifications, experience, ability or financial standing, and any
material or information submitted by the vendor in response to the agency’s request for
clarifying information during evaluation and/or selection under the RFP;
      • prior to the proposal opening, amend the RFP specification to correct errors or oversight, or to
supply additional information, as it becomes available;
      • prior to the proposal opening, direct vendors to submit proposal modifications addressing
subsequent RFP amendments;
      • change any of the scheduled dates;
      • waive any requirements that are not material;
      • negotiate with the vendor within the scope of the RFP in the best interests of the state;
      • conduct contract negotiations with the next responsible proposaler, should the agency be
unsuccessful in negotiating with the selected vendor;
      • utilize any or all ideas submitted in the proposals received;
      • unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, every offer is firm and not revocable for a period of
60 days from the proposal opening;
      • require clarification at any time during the procurement process and/or require correction of
arithmetic or other apparent errors in order to assure a full and complete understanding of a
vendor’s proposal and/or to determine a vendor’s compliance with the requirements of the solicitation; and
• to request best and final offers.

J. Terms and Conditions

1. All tests and test-related materials submitted to ALSDE pursuant to the contract are required to be original materials developed solely by the vendor for use in satisfaction of this contract unless ALSDE specifies used, reconditioned, or remanufactured products are acceptable.

2. All tests (including field and operational test items in both print and computer file format) and test-related materials are the exclusive property of ALSDE and cannot be used by the vendor or any subcontractor for any purpose other than what is defined in the contract without the permission of the ALSDE.

3. ALSDE is the sole owner of outputs resulting from the work proposed in the RFP, including but not limited to: item banks, technical documents, test questions developed for field tests, operational tests, all scoring materials, test samples, manuals, scoring rubrics, score scales and all guides, booklets, papers and reports generated under this contract. The vendor must be prepared to deliver all or part of these outputs to ALSDE at any point during the term of the contract. These materials can only be used by ALSDE.

4. All such outputs are to be turned over to the ALSDE in print and/or electronic form, as specified by ALSDE, prior to the final payment to be issued under this contract. The ALSDE may accordingly, at its discretion, make public, and may publish on its web site, all tests and test-related materials noted in the preceding paragraph after administration of the operational tests.

5. All materials are to be delivered, as appropriate, in copyright form. Where original works are included in the body of the material, an acknowledgment statement must be included, setting forth the copyright information with respect to such original works.

6. All materials written or revised under this contract are to be held strictly confidential and may not be copied, duplicated, or disseminated in any manner other than as authorized in writing by ALSDE. The vendor must obtain permission from copyright holders to use copyrighted work on the tests.

7. The vendor (and its employees, agents, consultants, or subcontractors arising out of this contract) will not disclose any information pertaining to ALSDE’s test content, specifications, or development to any person(s) or entity that does not need to know such information for the purpose of carrying out the tasks specified by the contract.

K. Considerations and Other Issues

1. The vendor agrees to cooperate with ALSDE with respect to any challenge to an assessment and, if necessary, provide at no expense to ALSDE, experts, evidence, witness testimony, or other documentation necessary, within reason, to refute a challenge to the validity, reliability, cultural fairness, or any other aspect of the development of the assessments with which the vendor was associated for a minimum of five years after a particular test item, test form, or field/operation test is administered.

2. Upon completion or termination of the contract awarded as a result of this RFP, the vendor will use its best efforts to assist ALSDE in completing a seamless transition to any successive vendor and/or ALSDE, including, but not be limited to, assisting ALSDE in developing and implementing a feasible transition plan in advance of the anticipated expiration, cancellation, or termination of the contract.

3. The vendor agrees to cooperate fully with any vendor and ALSDE and refrain from any activity that would interfere with the implementation of the transition plan and a seamless transition. The vendor shall provide all items, reports, materials, data, and equipment owned by ALSDE in the vendor’s possession, and any information useful to and requested by ALSDE in developing an RFP for a vendor, prior to the expiration, cancellation, or termination of the contract.
L. Performance Penalty
   1. Once completion dates are mutually agreed upon, and the vendor fails to perform any of the services and/or make deliveries within the time specified in the contract, or any extension period, the vendor shall pay the ALSDE the sum of 2.5% of the total annual contract per calendar day for failed or delayed services/deliveries. The vendor shall NOT be charged when delay in performance and/or delivery arises out of causes due to acts of the ALSDE.
   2. Should the vendor see that it will not be able to meet a delivery date, the vendor may request an extension in writing. This request may or may not be granted at the discretion of the ALSDE. If written approval is granted by the ALSDE, liquidated damages will not be assessed for the duration of the extension.
   3. Failure to correct any errors in materials or prevent disruptions that negatively alter the ability to administer tests or to use score reports or that denigrates confidence in the testing program will be viewed as a violation of the contract, and the vendor will pay liquidated damages to the ALSDE in the amount of 5% of the total annual contract amount for each day during which the online, electronic, paper, print, or other document is incorrect until a corrected online, electronic, paper, print, or other document approved by the ALSDE is distributed by the vendor. ALSDE agrees that when liquidated damages become a possibility, it will expedite its responses and requirements in this regard in an effort to limit the amount of liquidated damages.

M. Confidentiality
   1. The vendor, vendor staff, subcontractors, and educators participating in any aspect of this project agrees to comply with all state and federal laws relating to student data and privacy, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
   2. The vendor will be required to sign a FERPA Confidentiality Agreement upon awarding of contract.
   3. The vendor will safeguard the confidentiality and integrity of all data received pursuant to this project, place limitations on its use, and maintain compliance with all applicable privacy laws.
   4. The vendor shall establish appropriate administrative, technical and physical safeguards to ensure the security and confidentiality of all student data.
   5. The vendor should include sample confidentiality agreements as an attachment to this proposal.

N. Vendor Cooperation
   1. The development, implementation, administration, and reporting required for the state testing program will require the coordination of activities between the vendor, the ALSDE, and other possible vendors providing services to the ALSDE either currently or in the future.
   2. The vendor will be required to provide full cooperation when working with one or more of the parties involved in various aspects of the state testing program.
   3. The vendor shall agree that during a transition, all products associated with this RFP shall be in a format readily accessible by other vendors that will not impede the efforts of the ALSDE or the new vendor to continue development and/or delay the continuation of the program.

SECTION 2 – PROFESSIONAL SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

A. Scope of Work
   1. The summative assessment in reading, writing and mathematics will be administered annually to students in Grades 3 - 8 and high school. A commercial Off-the-Shelf assessment or product will not meet the needs of this proposal.
   2. The summative assessment in science will be administered annually in Grades 5, 8 and once in high school.
   3. Vendor should include a science assessment for Grades 3, 4, 6, and 8 as a cost option in the proposal.
   4. K-2 assessments (cost option) are to be included in the proposal. ALSDE is seeking a cost option for a Kindergarten assessment; a first grade assessment; and a second grade assessment separate from the cost option for K-2 assessments.
5. Interim assessments (cost option) are to be made available for local system use at least in the same grades included in the summative assessments described above. The purpose is to provide timely and useful feedback that Alabama educators can use to assess the growth and achievement of students throughout the school year and to predict summative learning.

6. Reporting Portal – the reporting portal must be capable of being upgraded across time. Initially, the system must be able to organize and present assessment data in a way that is easy for all users to read and understand. The Reporting Portal should allow for differentiated access to individual student, classroom, school, system and state assessment data, and they should integrate seamlessly with each other. Assessment results must be able to be provided to parents, among others, in a timely manner, either online or by printed report.

7. ALSDE is seeking assessments that will 100% online in the first year (i.e., 2020), but will provide support materials (e.g., test coordinator manuals, test administrator manuals, system administrator manuals, ancillaries, scratch paper, etc) both digitally and via paper. The vendor must offer innovative approaches for moving Alabama toward 100% online testing as a cost option to help the ALSDE understand possibilities to support dual-mode administration. In addition, paper versions will be required for those special needs students who’s Individual Education Plans (IEPs), 504 Plans, or EL Plans request paper-based administrations.

8. Mandated by state and federal law, these assessments are characterized in the following ways:
   - align substantially to the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards (ACCRS);
   - support instructional improvement;
   - support calculating growth for students in Grades 3 – 8 and high school;
   - demonstrate sufficient technical quality to support the intended purposes and current uses of student accountability; and
   - support criterion-referenced performance interpretations against the ACCRS as well as normative information, including scale score, Lexile, Quantile, content cluster, growth performance, and intra-state percentiles.

9. It is the responsibility of the vendor to be cognizant of all ALSDE Board of Education rules and state and federal statutes and regulations pertaining to the assessment program, regardless of whether they are referenced in the RFP.

10. The vendor shall ensure the production of error-free assessment items, testing materials, ancillary materials, data, reporting documents, and technical reports. Unless otherwise specified herein, the vendor shall furnish all material, labor, facilities, equipment, and supplies necessary to perform the services required herein. All products and services as defined by the requirements herein shall be completed to the sole satisfaction of the ALSDE.

11. The Alabama state assessment is to be valid and reliable. ALSDE staff and Alabama teachers will view and approve all item writing, item review and alignment activities. A sufficient number of items shall be pilot-tested in order to create three equivalent forms of the assessment and an item bank. The three forms may be reused, changing out some items from the item bank (see page 29 for percentages). The nature of the constructed-response items will require that all of these items be replaced each year for the additional years of the contract.

12. ALSDE desires the use of multiple item types and technology-enhanced items to capitalize on efficiency while ensuring that the assessment is aligned to the full breadth, depth, and cognitive complexity of the Alabama content standards and practices. The vendor’s blueprints shall specify the percent of items needed for each reported score (e.g., domain or standard within the content area) and shall suggest a minimum number of items per reporting category. The blueprints shall specify both Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and Range of Knowledge (ROK) consistent with the ALSDE content standards and practices.

13. The online assessments must work with a variety of devices, such as PCs, Mac, iPads, Chromebooks, and Windows tablets and use a variety of browser products, if necessary.
14. Results from the assessments will be used for school accountability and federal and state reporting requirements.

15. The vendor will be responsible for all administration, scoring, analysis, and reporting associated with the assessment, as well as any required test development, standard setting, psychometric services, technical reporting, and research studies, in accordance with all requirements described herein.

16. The vendor must be willing to partner with Alabama’s current vendor in order to allow for field-test items to be embedded into the spring 2019 operational assessment if desired.

B. Vendor Qualifications

It is imperative that the vendor meet the mandatory minimum qualifications listed below. If partnering with a subcontractor, the vendor and its proposed subcontractor(s) may collectively meet the mandatory minimum qualifications. If these qualifications are not met in the initial evaluation, the vendor will not proceed in the evaluation process. The vendor can recommend a team or a single resource to address the scope of this project.

1. A minimum of five (5) years of experience in developing, producing, administering, scoring, and reporting of large-scale, high-stakes, statewide assessments.
   - Experience with development of short- and extended-constructed response items.
   - Experience with assessment of complex performances.
   - Experience with scoring rubrics and performance scoring procedures.
   - Demonstrated expertise in vertical scale development and growth modeling.

2. A minimum of five (5) years of experience with developing, producing, administering, scoring, and reporting of large-scale, high-stakes computer-based assessments
   - Experience with developing, administering, scoring, and reporting of innovative, interactive technology-enhanced items.
   - Online test administration system must allow for (proctor) caching.
   - Test items must be in XML. Flash-based items are not acceptable.
   - Experience with establishing security protocols for online assessments.

3. A minimum of five (5) years of experience with practical application of automated scoring.

4. Demonstrated experience in providing policy and practice guidelines for accessibility and accommodations in secure paper-pencil and computer-based assessment environments, utilizing a diverse array of hardware and software.

5. Demonstrated project management experience, with specific focus on work planning, status reporting, issue management, and deliverable review and approval procedures.

6. Familiarity with ACT standards, the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards and with NAEP frameworks for reading, writing, mathematics, and science.

C. General Requirements

1. Professional Standards/Best Practices
   - The vendor shall ensure that all materials, practices, and procedures developed under this contract meet relevant professional standards, such as those contained in the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, American Educational Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), 2014, particularly in terms of privacy, reliability, validity, opportunity to learn, accommodations, scoring, reporting, and documentation.
   - The vendor shall inform ALSDE in writing when implementation practices or policies are not consistent with the best educational research and practice. The vendor shall be responsible for clearly communicating the risks of violating conclusions of the best educational research and practice. If ALSDE agrees, the vendor shall work to make necessary corrections.
   - The vendor shall confirm its contract to meet this requirement in the submitted proposal.
2. **State and Federal Requirements**
   • The vendor shall ensure that all materials, processes, and procedures developed under this contract meet relevant state and federal legal requirements, including requirements under ESSA and peer review, as well as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
   • Throughout the life of the contract, and any extensions, the vendor shall communicate in writing to the ALSDE when it concludes that the program is no longer meeting state and federal requirements and shall provide corrective options to the ALSDE for consideration.
   • The vendor shall confirm its contract to meet this requirement in the submitted proposal.

3. **Communication**
   • Project communication will occur through a series of face-to-face meetings, in addition to regular conference calls between the vendor and the ALSDE.
   • Upon contract award, the vendor shall organize and facilitate a kick-off meeting at the vendor’s office to review and finalize the project work plan. In addition, the vendor shall attend up to two additional planning meetings annually, excluding the training and development meetings required herein at the discretion of ALSDE.
   • The vendor shall also designate appropriate personnel to attend at least one meeting of ALSDE’s Technical Advisory Committee, typically held in Montgomery. If requested by the ALSDE, the vendor shall present technical, development, and psychometric information at such meetings.
   • The vendor shall be responsible for all expenses, including travel expenses, incurred by the vendor’s personnel to attend or participate in planning, ad hoc, and Technical Advisory Committee meetings.

4. **Security**
   • The vendor shall follow FERPA, state, and industry standard security policies, including the provision of confidentiality agreements for all vendor staff, subcontractors, and educators participating in any aspect of this project.
   • The vendor should include sample confidentiality agreements as an attachment to the proposal.
   • The vendor must indicate the base services (ex. accounting of all secure materials, sealing, forensic analysis, etc.) related to test security that it requires for its high stakes state accountability assessments. The vendor must indicate in the proposal if it offers a variety of services but does not have its own base requirements regarding security.
   • Any breach of security that occurs through the negligence or inaction of the vendor, such as, but not limited to, failure to adhere to any security protocol or allowing raters to remove secure materials from item writing meetings, item review meetings, data review meetings, etc., will be considered a default on the terms of this contract.
   • The vendor shall confirm its agreement to meet this requirement in the submitted proposal.

5. **Backup and Recovery**
   • The vendor shall provide a detailed description of the backup and recovery processes used to protect critical data.
   • The vendor will:
     ▪ describe the tools used for backup and recovery of applications and data;
     ▪ describe the impact of the proposed backup process on the operation of the system;
     ▪ address the following:
       o use of and method for logging and journalizing;
       o single points of failure and recommended approaches for the elimination;
       o approach to redundancy; and
       o describe options to have the collected data stored at the vendor’s site in addition to sending results along to the ALSDE. A proposed retention schedule must be included.
6. Travel
- The vendor will be required to travel to various statewide locations to meet project requirements/training.
- All anticipated travel expenses are to be included in the vendor’s proposed cost component response. Therefore, the total price quoted for this project should include any travel, lodging, or per diem costs to be incurred by the vendor’s personnel to provide services requested. NO ADDITIONAL COSTS WILL BE REIMBURSED.
- The vendor shall confirm its contract to meet this requirement in the submitted proposal.

7. Subcontractor Requirements
- The vendor may complete a portion of the required services and deliverables using subcontractors. If the vendor elects to use a subcontractor for any part of the required scope of services, the vendor shall provide an effective supervisory structure for overseeing the equality of the subcontractor’s work and shall ensure that all deliverables are completed in accordance with the requirements of the contract.
- All subcontractors must be approved by the ALSDE.
- The vendor will serve as the sole point of contact for all contractual matters, including those that may impact or involve a subcontractor.
- The vendor shall remain wholly responsible for performance of the entire contract regardless of whether a subcontractor is used.
- The vendor shall confirm its contract to meet this requirement in the submitted proposal.

8. ALSDE Sign-Off
- All procedures followed in the development, production, administration, scanning, scoring, and reporting of the Alabama state summative assessment shall be made available for review by ALSDE and, as determined by ALSDE, may be subject to ALSDE approval.
- The vendor shall confirm its contract to meet this requirement in the submitted proposal.

D. Organization and Personnel
Throughout this document, the term “vendor(s)” is also assumed to include subcontractors where appropriate and applicable. If the vendor proposes to subcontract any part of the work, the vendor’s response to this RFP must refer to the subcontractors where appropriate. Within the relevant requirements and specifications, a description of each proposed subcontractor’s role in the project, qualifications to perform that role, management structure, key staff assignments, and qualifications of assigned staff shall be included.

If the vendor has discovered fault with a subcontractor named in the proposal, the vendor has the obligation to inform ALSDE immediately, and the appropriate steps must be taken by either the subcontractor or the vendor to correct the problem prior to that problem resulting in substandard performance or non-compliance. The vendor shall remain responsible for the performance of its subcontractors.

1. Organizational Structure
- Organizational charts, including identification of executive and key personnel, for the vendor, and for the ALSDE project team specifically, including any subcontractors where applicable, must be provided.
  - The charts shall clearly indicate lines of authority and communication within and among the vendor’s departments and subcontractors, where appropriate.
  - The vendor shall also describe its escalation process for resolving any vendor/client disagreements.
- An executive team member directly in charge of overseeing the Alabama project shall be identified. This executive team member shall be available both during and outside of normal business hours to assist with any urgent situations.
• Contact information for this individual shall be provided at the time of contract award.
• Changes to the assigned executive team member, except for those resulting from separation of services, require prior written consent by ALSDE.
• The replacement shall have qualifications that meet or exceed the original staff member proposed or the staff member holding the position previously and shall be approved by ALSDE.
• Qualifications of key executive personnel must be presented. A supporting resume outlining education/training, employment history, and experience in conducting work like what is expected under this contract shall be included as an appendix.

2. **Staff Qualifications and Experience**

• Qualifications of all key personnel shall be presented in the vendor’s proposal, including subcontractors. Supporting resumes outlining education/training, employment history, and experience in conducting work like what is expected under this contract shall be included as an appendix.
  • Each staff member’s assigned responsibilities and time allocated to the project must be provided.
  • Time expected to be allocated to other projects must also be indicated. In no case should an individual be assigned to more than one full-time equivalent position.
• The vendor shall affirm in the response to this request for proposals that should the contract be awarded, all key personnel proposed shall be released from any concurrent responsibilities that would impede their availability to assume the work as proposed.
• The vendor shall assign one person, with ALSDE approval, to function as the Program Manager. The Program Manager must have at least three years of experience with projects of similar scope and size and will be committed to the project throughout its duration. At least three references from individuals in states or agencies where the proposed Program Manager has coordinated a comparable assessment program must be provided. That person must be responsible for all activities required by the project and will serve as the main contact person between the vendor and ALSDE. The Program Manager shall have the authority to make decisions and commitments on behalf of the vendor, subject to ALSDE approval.
• The Lead Online System Manager(s) will oversee all aspects of the online assessment system. The Lead Online System Manager(s) will be responsible for the design and function of the online system, assistance with training school systems in the use of the online system and troubleshooting any system technical problems with the system. The Lead Online System Manager(s) will also be responsible for scheduling stress tests and readiness tests to ensure that all school systems are prepared for online testing.
• The Project Manager(s) will manage the item and test development efforts, holding responsibility for development schedules and oversight of all item development, test construction, editorial tasks and test-related publications.
• Lead Content Specialists must have a bachelor’s degree (master’s degree preferred) as well as classroom experience in the specific content area.
• The Scoring Project Manager(s) will oversee technical team members to complete processing, programming, scoring, reporting, and quality assurance tasks according to the timeline and requirements from the ALSDE. At least three references from state or agency clients previously served by the Scoring Project Manager(s) are required.
• The Lead Psychometrician(s) will oversee tasks and issues that relate to item selection, test form equating, sample selection, calibration, scaling, validity evidence, reliability evidence, reporting, test design, and other technical analyses. Psychometric staff must conduct studies and provide resources sufficient to meet the requirements of the United States Department of Education (USDE), Peer Review and technical needs of the ALSDE. Sufficient resources must be allotted for timely test construction, reporting, and all other technical tasks. The proposal must provide evidence that the
in-house psychometricians assigned to support the ALSDE are highly qualified and experienced in current industry-standard psychometric practice and USDE assessment and accountability requirements. The Lead Psychometrician(s) must also have strong communication skills and the ability to make highly technical issues and information understandable to various audiences.

- The Quality Assurance Leader(s) will implement the steps and procedures used to ensure the products meet ALSDE requirements without errors.
- Dedicated Data Analyst(s) are required throughout the duration of the project to analyze student performance results or other technical aspects of the project and produce reports, including ad hoc or longitudinal reports, as required by the ALSDE. The Data Analyst(s) must be highly proficient in statistical analysis software and spreadsheet programs and have practical knowledge to be able to provide data in a format easily understandable by the public and media.
- Technical Editors and Reviewers will develop all test-related publications and ensure that they are accurate, concise, user-friendly, grammatically correct, and technically sound. In addition to the work, Technical Editors and Reviewers would contribute to test administration materials. Graphic Designers must be available to the ALSDE for providing design and copy layouts for brochures, websites, and other communications or presentations.
- Help Desk Administrator(s) will ensure communication services for Alabama schools and systems are correct and timely. The Help Desk Administrator(s) must train responders to accurately address specific Alabama policy, procedures, and issues on all aspects of the testing program.
- ALSDE requires that a Technology Consultant be identified.
  - This individual shall be responsible for many tasks, including but not limited to, assisting ALSDE and the systems with online assessments; working with ALSDE information staff to ensure the accurate and efficient transfer of data to and from ALSDE; creating, defining, and reviewing file layouts; providing assistance in the verification of demographic data; and assisting ALSDE and System Test Coordinators with the use of contractor websites and functionality.
  - Ideally, this person will be located in the Montgomery area.
  - At a minimum, this person will be available to be on-site at the request of ALSDE. Outside of the installation and testing window, this person’s availability may be more flexible; however, during the actual installation and testing window, this person must be immediately available with little to no notice.
- For all meetings involving educators, the vendor must indicate the qualifications of the facilitators.
  - General qualifications for training and meeting facilitators must be included in the response to this request for proposals.
  - Facilitators must be familiar with best practices, as well as state and federal laws, procedures, and regulations concerning assessment.
  - As applicable, facilitators must also be familiar with the academic instruction of students and the educational and assessment landscape.
  - Facilitators must be able to clearly articulate spoken English and create easily understood written materials and visual training aids.
  - Facilitators must have demonstrated successful experience in leading large-group trainings, including webinars and meetings, as fit their responsibilities.
- ALSDE reserves the right to interview and approve all key staff, including subcontractor staff.
  - Throughout the life of this contract, and any extensions, changes to the assigned Program Manager, Program Coordinator, Project Manager, Lead Psychometrician, Content Development Lead, Content Specific Area Lead, Special Populations Consultant, Lead Online System Manager, and Technology Consultant, except for those resulting from separation of services, will require prior written consent by ALSDE.
  - If ALSDE requests removal of specific vendor personnel, the vendor shall provide replacement(s), with no impact to the project.
- Replacement(s) shall have qualifications which meet or exceed the original staff member proposed or the staff member holding the position previously and shall be approved by ALSDE.

- All personnel who will work on-site at ALSDE or school sites may be required to be pre-approved for site access via a criminal background check paid for by the vendor.

3. **Corporate Capabilities and Capacities**
   - The vendor must present a description of corporate capabilities.
     - The vendor shall provide the company’s history, including the number of years that it has been in business, buyouts, takeovers, IPO’s, bankruptcies, litigations, and claims, etc., within the last 5 years, or for that period in which the firm has been in business if less than 5 years.
     - Situations arising in assessed liquidated damages (LDs) must be described with their resolution, along with the amount of the LDs or provided additional services.
   - The description shall also identify the number of employees in the company and the company’s location(s). The overall capacity of the vendor’s organization(s) and the resources it will commit to the work for the project (by name and role in project) shall be discussed.
   - A general description of the vendor’s capabilities and capacities related to development, production, shipping and receipt, administration (of paper-based and computer-based assessments), scanning, scoring, data processing, reporting, and psychometric activities shall be included. Responses must demonstrate that the vendor meets, at a minimum, the mandatory qualifications presented at the beginning of this component.
   - Specific examples of the vendor’s work products, such as test and item specifications, items, forms, technical manuals, research reports, technical services, etc., should be identified under the relevant requirements and specifications and provided in attachments as appropriate. ALSDE expects to receive the same or better quality of work throughout the contract, including any extensions, as the examples that are provided in the proposal.

4. **Relevant Experience**
   - In tabular format, the vendor shall provide a listing and descriptions of all work in similar projects that it and its proposed subcontractors have carried out or are carrying out for other clients. The table shall include client, program name, content area, grades, administration mode (paper-based or computer-based), use of scoring, length of contract, and number of students.
   - For computer-based testing, the vendor shall include the total number of tests administered and the highest number of successful concurrent testers. For each such project, the vendor must provide the name of the state or other organization, name of client contact person, this individual’s telephone, email, and fax numbers.
   - Company Experience: The following vendor qualifications are required to ensure that effective services for the described project are achievable:
     - documentation of expertise; and
     - technical competency in all areas identified in the RFP.
   - Submit a minimum of three (3) references for each of the areas listed above for experience in the last 5 years.
   - Further evidence of experience should be evident in responses to specific requirements and specifications as appropriate.

5. **Executive Summary**
   - An Executive Summary is required. This summary should condense and highlight the content of the vendor’s application.
E. Program Management

Due to the high level of attention focused on these tests and their importance, the goal for the ALSDE and the vendor is 100% accuracy in every aspect of the program. Toward that end, the contracted vendor will utilize formal project management methodology and provide the ALSDE with a project management plan. The plan will include position assignments with areas of responsibility, project schedules and milestones, tasks, subtasks, critical path analysis, specifications for key systems, and Gantt charts detailing the production schedules and critical deadlines. The vendor is required to obtain ALSDE written approval of the timelines and all materials prior to their use, distribution, or publication. Review time for ALSDE will be a minimum of seven calendar days except during periods of state holidays, which will not count for the ALSDE review period; for very lengthy documents the lead-time should be longer. The vendor must include the review time requirements into the appropriate project management plans. The proposal will detail the methodology to be employed and provide samples of the documents that will be used for project management, including progress reports.

The vendor’s proposal should include a detailed program management plan, including, but not limited to, the items listed below. The vendor shall confirm its contract to meet the requirements outlined for each item in the submitted proposal.

1. Schedule of Activities
   - The vendor shall provide a proposed schedule that clearly identifies and includes:
     - key activities related to the field (ordering of materials; receipt of materials; test dates; return of materials; demographic clean-up window; release of individual student scores; final individual student, school, and system score file release; and receipt of paper reports); and
     - key transfer dates between the vendor and ALSDE related to development, production, shipping and receipt, administration (of paper-based and computer-based assessments), scanning, scoring, data processing, reporting, and psychometric activities
   - The vendor must provide a Key Activities Table for each fiscal year.

2. Project Schedule
   - Proposals shall include a detailed schedule, reflective of the work plans, that describes how each of the requirements and specifications described in the proposal will be accomplished. The schedule shall, at a minimum, identify the tasks, subtasks, beginning date, end date, and the party/functional group responsible for each step in the process. The schedule must be included as a separate attachment to the proposal.
   - Schedules must reflect the following periods:
     - No sooner than July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019
     - July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020
     - July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021
     - July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022
     - July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023
   - Activities related to the development of the next year’s assessment and reporting for the prior year’s assessment must be clearly distinguishable from activities related to the current year’s assessment.
   - Joint review of this schedule, followed by ALSDE’s approval for the first contract period, should occur within two weeks of the contract award. The vendor and ALSDE shall mutually agree upon final dates. Joint monitoring of the schedule shall occur on an on-going basis. The vendor shall ensure that all schedule adjustments allow final deliverable dates to be met. If necessary, timelines and schedules may be revised with prior approval of ALSDE and an executed contract amendment for all deliverables subject to liquidated damages.
   - A revision of a timeline on the part of the vendor exempts the vendor from meeting a contractual deadline only if:
     - the vendor and ALSDE mutually agree upon and document, through a contract amendment, an extension of the deadline as executed through a contract amendment; or
• the vendor can prove that the deadline was not met due to ALSDE’s failure to meet a contractual
deadline, resulting in the vendor’s inability to adhere to the schedule for delivery of products and
services.
• The vendor shall alert ALSDE as soon as it believes a deliverable subject to liquidated damages is at risk of
not meeting its delivery date.
• ALSDE must be notified whenever its contract is included in the vendor’s internal meetings focused on
programs at risk.
• For the contract beginning in July 2018, the review of the schedule should occur within the first two
weeks of the initial contract. For each following contract year, by May 1, the vendor shall provide an
updated detailed work plan and project schedule that specifies all activities leading to products or
services deliverable to either ALSDE or local school systems for the following assessment year.

3. On-going communication
• Communication between the vendor and ALSDE assessment personnel will be essential. Telephone calls,
television conference calls, emails, overnight courier service, facsimile correspondence, and other
communication will be at the expense of the vendor. Toll-free numbers shall be provided by the vendor
for telephone communication, including conference calls and webinars.
• The vendor shall make all written communication or summaries of communications with any
subcontractor(s) identified in this proposal available to ALSDE at its request. In addition, ALSDE expects
to be able to participate during all appropriate and applicable meetings and trainings between the
vendor and any subcontractor(s) identified in this proposal.
• The vendor’s Program Manager shall serve as the primary liaison between the vendor and ALSDE.
Likewise, ALSDE shall designate a Program Manager who will oversee all aspects of the contract
resulting from this RFP. Ongoing communication will occur between ALSDE and the vendor via the
designated Program Managers as necessary whenever issues arise.
• To facilitate regular communication between the vendor, ALSDE, and any relevant subcontractors, the
vendor’s Program Manager shall organize weekly conference calls with ALSDE personnel.
• The vendor’s Program Manager and ALSDE’s Program Manager shall work collaboratively to develop a
mutually agreed upon agenda for conference calls. The vendor shall be responsible for scheduling and
setting up conference calls and any costs associated with the conference call.
• In addition to weekly progress calls, the vendor shall submit a monthly report to ALSDE demonstrating
progress toward deliverables within the project’s work plan.

4. Project meetings
• Periodic meetings between ALSDE staff and representatives of the vendor are essential. Those persons
directly involved with the project shall be available for technical assistance and discussion at the project
meetings at the expense of the vendor. Strategies, procedures, and timelines for the next testing cycle
will be discussed and reviewed and will cover all aspects of the program including blueprints and test
specifications; item development and item banking; field-testing; computer-based testing; scoring;
equating; test booklet production; standard setting; training; administration manuals and ancillaries;
test administration; security and inventory procedures; shipping, delivery, and return procedures;
reporting and analysis; and quality assurance.
• The vendor shall provide travel and time for appropriate staff to be available as needed to consult with
the ALSDE. At a minimum, the supplier will coordinate the following meetings:
  ▪ planning/close-out meetings;
    ○ The first such meeting should take place within two weeks of contract award.
    ○ Up to four (4) ALSDE representatives will travel to the vendor’s office for this meeting
      with all arrangements made by the vendor.
    ○ The vendor will provide the project management plan to the ALSDE one week prior to
      this meeting and then present this plan for discussion face-to-face.
  ▪ content and test specifications meetings;
item development meetings;
- monitoring the training of scorers and monitoring scoring of open-ended items (4 ALSDE staff, 7 days);
- content review committee meetings—10 meetings (10 people per grade, per subject for 5 days)
- bias review committee meetings—4 meetings (16 people per grade span, per subject for 5 days)
- alignment study meetings—5 meetings (4 people per grade for Grades 3, 4, and 5 in reading, writing, science, and mathematics for 3 days; 9 people for Grades 6, 7, and 8 in reading, writing, mathematics, and science for 2 days)

- The vendor will be responsible for reimbursing committee members’ travel and per diem at the state rate. A committee meeting of three days may require travel the night before, resulting in per diem being paid for four days. Other meetings between the vendor and ALSDE staff may be necessary. If the ALSDE deems these meetings necessary, the meetings will be at the expense of the vendor.
- The vendor shall prepare written documentation of each in-person and committee project meeting. This shall be submitted to the ALSDE within one week of the conclusion of each meeting.

5. Monthly reports:
- The vendor shall provide a monthly report that summarizes actions taken, issues that arose, issue resolution that occurred, outstanding issues and when they will be resolved, upcoming deadlines, work that will occur in the next month and beyond, and so forth.
- These reports shall be sent monthly to the ALSDE Assessment Coordinator and the ALSDE Program Manager by the third business day of the following month.

6. Risk Management and Quality Assurance
- The vendors shall specifically address timeline issues, risks, and mitigation and contingency plans for all aspects of the project. These plans should refer to more than just “communication.” Additional details may be provided in the response to relevant requirements and specifications.
- The vendor should highlight its and its proposed subcontractors, proven ability to document and enact risk management strategies — especially as they relate to the development, production, shipping and receipt, administration (of paper-based and computer-based assessments), scanning, scoring, data processing, reporting, and psychometric activities of high-visibility assessments.
- The vendor should submit sample Risk Assessment documentation used in an existing program to demonstrate the comprehensiveness of its ability to conduct contingency planning for a variety of conditions. This Risk Assessment documentation may be submitted as an attachment to the proposal. This documentation should also highlight internal procedures and protocols for quality assurance in all aspects of delivering large-scale, statewide assessments — including test development, production, shipping and receipt, administration (of paper-based and computer-based assessments), scanning, scoring, data processing, and reporting.

7. Program Improvement Plans.
- For each phase of the program including development, production, shipping and receipt, administration (of paper-based and computer-based assessments), scanning, scoring, data processing, reporting and psychometric activities, the vendor shall provide a report that addresses the relevant phase by detailing the activities completed and by providing recommendations for improvement for the next assessment cycle.
- The report shall also detail errors, problems and/or discrepancies by system and by school.
- The report will allow ALSDE to detect any patterns in the errors, problems, or discrepancies noted in the report and to use that information to clarify instructions in the Assessment Administration and/or Coordinator Manuals.
- This report shall be completed within one month of completing the relevant phase.
8. **Quality Control and Sign-Offs.**
   - Reviews and signoffs for all deliverables shall be documented and available to ALSDE upon request. The vendor shall document the steps, timeline, and staff involved in the quality control procedures for each phase and deliverable of the project.
   - The vendor shall confirm its contract to fulfill this requirement.

9. **Deliverables**
   - The vendor shall provide the ALSDE with the deliverables and services consistent with the time frames in the work plan. All deliverables must be accepted by the ALSDE. When the vendor submits a deliverable, the vendor is considered to have fulfilled its obligation under the contract associated with the deliverable. The ALSDE reserves the right to reject any and all deliverables in the event the ALSDE detects any deficiency in the system, in whole or in part. For each denial of acceptance, the ALSDE may elect to extend the acceptance period by the time required to correct the deficiency, retest or review.
   - The ALSDE will have final approval of all deliverables.

10. **Pricing Model**
    - The vendor shall provide a *detailed* description of the Pricing Model (per student) for the proposed solution that addresses the following components:
      - fixed prices;
      - recurring prices;
      - price per transaction;
      - operations pricing;
      - transition services pricing; and
      - other applicable prices.

11. **Invoices.**
    - The vendor shall submit invoices according to the procedures and requirements set forth by ALSDE. It is expected that the payment schedule for this contract will be four quarterly and one final payment for the services performed and deliverables provided during each period.
    - The fiscal year for the State of Alabama runs from October 1 to September 30. The last invoice for each fiscal year must be received by September 15. The final invoice for each assessment cycle must be provided by September 1.
    - The vendor shall confirm its contract to fulfill this requirement.

12. The vendor shall make all arrangements and cover the costs for ALSDE staff (up to five) to attend the annual National Conference on Student Assessment (NCSA) including hotel, travel, registration, and incidentals.

13. The vendor shall cover the costs for three ALSDE staff memberships to the state membership of the Council of Chief State Schools Officers (CCSSO), Technical Issues in Large Scale (TILSA), and State Collaboratives on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS).

F. **Assessment Development**
The following is a list of activities required by this RFP for the development of the Alabama state assessment. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of every activity required by this RFP, and it is expected that the vendor will carefully read all sections of the RFP and undertake and complete all work necessary to ensure ALSDE can successfully administer the Alabama state assessment in Grades 3 – 8 and high school. All mathematics and science versions will be offered in Spanish.

1. **Item Specifications and Guidelines**
   - The vendor’s proposal should include a detailed plan of the procedure to be used to write item specifications for each grade of the assessment. The plan should include the number and statement of each standard, format/item type(s), content limits, and sample items for each format/type.
• The vendor shall develop specifications for each type of item and artwork to be created. The vendor shall work with ALSDE to prepare an Alabama Style Guide that will be used for paper-based and computer-based item presentation. In addition, online items should include Accessible Portable Item Profile (APIP) coding. The vendor shall provide evidence of its ability to fulfill this requirement.
• After the Item Specifications are approved by the ALSDE, the vendor will provide the ALSDE with an electronic copy of the final versions for publication on the ALSDE website.
• It will be the vendor’s responsibility to do final proofreading of all text and graphics for accuracy prior to sending to ALSDE for approval.

2. **Item Writer Training and Assignments.**
   • The vendor shall describe in detail its plan for providing item writing training and assignments.
   • The multiple-choice, short constructed-response and extended constructed-response types of items are to be created by the vendor under the direction of ALSDE (using Alabama educators unless otherwise agreed upon by the vendor and ALSDE).
   • The vendor shall indicate in detail what materials it proposes to use for assessment development training, as well as how these materials will be created, reviewed by ALSDE, and used.
   • The training must assist item developers in understanding Universal Design principles, including accessibility related to interactive online item types, so that the need for extensive assessment accommodations for students with disabilities and English learners is minimized. Item writers will need to be helped to understand the implications of automated scoring for item development.
   • ALSDE must review and approve these materials and procedures before these materials are used.
   • The vendor must present a process for recruiting, evaluating, and retaining educators to serve in the role of item writers.
   • The vendor must also provide a plan for determining item writing assignments, as well as contingency plans should the educators be unable to produce enough items in the available time.

3. **Item Blueprints**
   • The vendor shall create a proposed test blueprint for the assessments to be developed in each content area.
   • The vendor shall provide refined blueprints to be reviewed by the field, as appropriate, and revised by ALSDE.
   • The vendor will be responsible for providing a finalized document for ALSDE approval. This blueprint must specify the numbers of each type of assessment items: content standards and practices, multiple choice (MC), extended constructed-response (CR), short constructed-response (SR), performance-based (PB), and technology-enhanced (TE) to be used at each grade level in each content area, depth of knowledge, the numbers of items in each eventual test form (operational and field-test slots), the number of sessions required and the total amount of testing time.
   • The vendor must allow for the accommodation of additional testing time into the schedule.
   • The vendor must take into consideration the fact that the assessments must generate valid information throughout the data distribution, including both tails.
   • Reading assessments must include a combination of literary and informational passages. Literary texts include fiction, literary nonfiction, and poetry. Informational texts include exposition, argumentation, persuasive texts, procedural texts and documents. The text distributions should be based on the NAEP Reading Assessment Framework.
   • The vendor should provide ALSDE with additional guidance and expertise based on the expectations of the standards.

4. **Passage Selection**
   • The vendor shall describe its plan for selecting appropriate passages for all relevant content areas based on complexity, quality, and range.
• Although ALSDE values the use of authentic, classic, and historically significant passages, it recognizes that, especially in lower grades, the vendor may have the ability to provide appropriately complex, high quality literary and informational texts through a commissioned process.

• ALSDE also appreciates the flexibility in use that commissioned passages provide. ALSDE will, therefore, permit the vendor to use high quality commissioned passages as well as copyrighted passages for which permission is obtained.

• It will be the responsibility of the vendor to provide all needed passages for Alabama assessments, including both printed and online tests. For all permissioned passages, it will be the vendor’s responsibility to secure the permissions ensuring that ALSDE can use the items on both paper-based and computer-based assessments, as well as use as released items.

• ALSDE requests that a percentage of the passages (TBD) be written from topics addressed in the Alabama Social Science Course of Study.

• The vendor shall provide evidence of its ability to fulfill this requirement.

5. Passage Review

• The vendor shall present its plan for ALSDE review followed by field review of the passages.

• The plan must include the recruitment of educators, confirming final arrangements, preparing the necessary materials and facilitating the review.

• For the passages, the review must reflect an evaluation of the complexity, quality and range of text, as well as sensitivity/bias.

• Vendors should assume a minimum of 5 diverse educators per grade span (3-4, 5-6 and 7-8) and high school for the passage review.

Note: Ultimately, the vendor is responsible for the production of the needed number of items for each content area and grade level.

6. Test Item Development

ALSDE is looking to develop a bank of items that it owns and/or shares with and/or licenses from other states. It is not seeking to use vendor owned items, unless there is compelling psychometric rationale. The vendor shall confirm its contract to meet this requirement.

• The vendor’s proposal should include a detailed plan for item development.
  ▪ Vendor must specifically address timeline issues, risks, and mitigation and contingency plans, especially for the first year of development of items to be piloted.
  ▪ Potential supplemental resources and activities for year one should be discussed.
  ▪ Although ALSDE is not interested in utilizing items from vendor-owned item pools for reading, writing, science and mathematics, it is amenable to utilizing items reviewed by other states’ educators with respect to the college and career ready state standards.

• The vendor’s content specialists and item writers must have experience teaching reading, writing, mathematics, or science. Passages, items for reading, prompts for writing, items for mathematics, and items for science may be custom written for the test, with the understanding that any item submitted will become the property of the ALSDE, which will retain all rights, including full distribution rights.

• After item reviews and item pilot, the item bank must have a sufficient number of unique items, with good statistics, to develop three equivalent forms and with enough additional items to change out all open-ended items for three additional administrations and six extra items per content standard.

• The vendor must provide for appropriate over-production of items to allow for elimination due to content reviews, bias reviews, and the item pilot.

• The vendor must edit the items before submitting them for review at content and bias committee meetings.

• The vendor must also provide the artwork for items before submitting them for review at content and bias committee meetings.
• The vendor shall provide samples of high quality elementary and middle school assessment items of each type for each content area so the ALSDE can see the nature of the work the vendor is capable of providing.
• The vendor shall create, with the assistance of ALSDE, a variety of prototypical assessment items. These could include innovative approaches to performance assessments, computer-based assessments, and other non-standard assessment methods. These prototypes will illustrate the types of items to be created for the item developers and will be used to illustrate the new assessments to Alabama educators and others.
• Timelines associated with the above activities must also be provided.
• The vendor shall describe in detail how it will provide and monitor the assignments given to the developers.
• The vendor must describe in detail its plan for thoroughly editing the items at the end of the second meeting. Editors shall be persons qualified in the content area(s) in which they are editing.
• The vendor must manage an electronic item bank that will be fully accessible to ALSDE. This bank will include items with field-test statistics.
• Accurate and detailed item bank records must be kept and reported as requested by the ALSDE. The proposal should detail the item bank structure and the processes the vendor will use to update and maintain the bank.
• The vendor shall provide electronic copies of the item bank by content area when necessary.
• The vendor should note if a software program or web-based application for the item pool will be provided to the ALSDE as part of the proposal.

7. Use of Items from Other Sources
• The vendor will describe how the interests of the ALSDE will be assured and protected if items from other sources are included on the assessments. In particular, the vendor’s response will describe:
  ▪ how items eligible for use on the ALSDE assessments will remain secure, including any procedures in place to ensure that items are not released by other assessment programs or used for any other non-secure purposes;
  ▪ how license agreements will be structured to ensure that items may be used on the ALSDE assessments for multiple administrations; and
  ▪ the vendor’s experience in handling any restrictions that may be placed on the use of items from other sources that would negatively impact the ALSDE.

8. Item Review Committees
• The ALSDE believes that the use of Item Review Committees consisting of educators from the state is a critical part of the item development process. The use of state educators enhances the transparency of the program and increases understanding and buy-in.
• The vendor will support grade-level item review committees (3-8 reading and writing, 3-8 mathematics, and 5, 8, and high school science) for each assessment proposed. The committees will consist primarily of grade-appropriate teachers recruited and selected by the ALSDE. Additional committee members may include local curriculum coordinators, content specialists, and ELL or special education specialists. The ALSDE will determine the composition of committees.
• The ALSDE and the vendor’s Item Development Team will work together to facilitate the meetings which will be held annually in Alabama during the summer months. If the vendor feels that additional meetings are necessary, and/or the timing of the meetings should be changed, the vendor’s response should include a proposal for an alternative meeting schedule.
• The vendor’s response should include the steps taken to ensure the most efficient use of the limited time available with the members of the Item Review Committees.
• The vendor should plan on supporting the item review committee meeting with the following specifications:
  ▪ each grade level committee will consist of 6 – 8 members;
committee members will be paid a stipend of $120 per day for participation in the summer meetings. (If the vendor proposes meetings during the school year, the stipend will be replaced by a corresponding payment to committee members’ school system for substitute reimbursement and state approved per diem and mileage); and

- representative from ALSDE will also attend the meeting, up to a maximum of six people;
- the vendor will support and arrange for lodging for committee members and ALSDE representatives. The response should assume that all participants will require at least 3 nights lodging for the meeting (beginning one night prior to the meeting);
- the vendor will also be responsible for travel expenses (e.g., mileage, airfare) for all participants to attend any out of state meetings;
- the vendor will be responsible for dinner expenses ($25 per day) on days that require an overnight stay;
- meetings will be held at a suitable location in Alabama. The meeting location may vary across the state or may be held in a central location to minimize travel requirements and expenses for committee members;
- the vendor will work with the ALSDE to ensure that ALSDE has sufficient time to review and provide feedback on all materials and items prepared for the Item Review Committee meetings;
- the vendor will schedule an additional meeting with ALSDE to reconcile item feedback; and
- written documents will be produced by the vendor, summarizing the meeting and recommendations, within two weeks of each committee meeting.

9. Content and Bias/Sensitivity Review Meetings (refer to page 22 for breakdown of committee members)
   - The vendor must present its plan for ALSDE review, followed by a field review, of the items and associated scoring rubrics.
   - The plan must include the recruitment of educators, confirming final arrangements, preparing the necessary materials and facilitating the review.
   - Items are to be reviewed upon the completion of item editing.
   - Each item must be reviewed by a Content and Bias/Sensitivity Review Committee in each content area to assure that the item is of high quality, that it is aligned with a skill in the content area, that it measures the skill in a sound manner, and that the item does not unfairly advantage/disadvantage any student and is not offensive to students, parents, or the public.
   - This committee shall also review the overall content coverage of the set of items, noting any areas where the alignment of the set of assessment items is weak.
   - A separate committee will be convened in each content area (mathematics, reading, writing, and science). Each committee will review each batch of items prior to field-testing, as well as prior to embedded field-testing of the items.
   - It is expected that as the assessment matures, these meetings will take one day for science, two days for mathematics, one day for writing and three days for reading.
   - During the initial development, it is expected that these meetings may take an additional day. In years when the review will take more than three days, vendors may propose adjustments based on their experience.
   - Initially, these meetings must occur face-to-face. As the assessment matures, vendors may propose to conduct these reviews either in person at meetings to be held in Montgomery, AL, or by using an electronic item review system. In either case, the vendor will need to describe how it will protect the confidentiality of the items before, during, and after the review meetings.
   - If the vendor proposes to use electronic means for conducting the item reviews, the vendor must provide detailed information on the electronic system they propose to use and provide illustrative graphics that show the review capabilities of their system(s) and/or provide online access to the system for ALSDE to review.
   - The issues noted by each review committee shall be corrected by the vendor, or the item(s) shall be deleted from the pool of items.
• The vendor will be responsible for providing ALSDE with summary information, including the number of items accepted as is, the number of items accepted with revisions, and the number of items rejected.
• The vendor is expected to take the lead role in training the educators and facilitating each one of the Item Review Committees (IRCs) responsibilities.
• The vendor shall indicate in detail what materials it proposes to use for these meetings, as well as how these materials will be created, reviewed by ALSDE, and used. All materials must be reviewed by ALSDE at least one-week prior to the meeting to allow time for revisions to be made prior to printing.
• The vendor will be responsible for all costs associated with this educator meeting.

10. Item Types
The vendor’s response must describe the variety of item types that could be included on the assessment, including item types that require students to generate or produce a response as well as select a response. The vendor’s response must provide access to sample items to allow ALSDE to review proposed item formats.

11. Number of Items
The vendor’s response must include a proposed plan for the number of items of various types that will need to be developed for the Spring 2019 administration and subsequent operational test administrations. The vendor’s response should address the number of items that will be administered to an individual student as well as the total number of items that will be administered across matrix-sample forms of each assessment.

The vendor’s response should reflect an understanding of ALSDE’s intended use of the results from the assessment, the type of scores that will be reported, the plan to release items, as well as an understanding of academic standards. The vendor’s response should also consider the testing time and cost constraints discussed throughout this RFP.

12. Field-testing (initial and embedded)
• All newly created items are also to be formally field-tested.
• For the first year of the contract, field-testing will be conducted by partnering with Alabama’s current vendor in order to allow for field-test items to be embedded into the spring 2019 operational assessment (if desired);
• The vendor shall provide its plan for conducting the field-test (e.g., how many items of each type are to be field-tested, how many items will be in each form, and the number of test forms needed to accommodate the number of items to be field-tested at each grade level).
• The vendor’s plan for including accommodations in field-testing must also be included.
• In determining the number of items that will be field-tested initially, the vendor must take into consideration the time limitations for testing in operational years.
• The vendor must be willing to partner with Alabama’s current vendor in order to allow for field-test items to be embedded into the spring 2019 operational assessment if ALSDE deems necessary.
• After initial field-testing, field-testing will be embedded. The vendor shall describe its detailed plan for embedding field-test items in operational forms (e.g., how many items of each type are to be field-tested, how many items will be in each form, and how many test forms will be needed to accommodate the number of items to be field-tested at each grade level).
• While there will be only one Core operational form, the use of embedded field-testing will result in multiple forms used during each administration, differing only in the field-test positions of each.
• The vendor’s development plan for field-testing shall include how the materials will be prepared for field-testing, including test forms, administrator’s directions, and proctor directions.
• The vendor’s development plan must also address how many forms will be required to carry out the field-testing, how items will be selected for field-test forms, how the Core and field-test forms will be created (e.g., how anchor items will be selected, which new items are to be field-tested, etc.), how student responses will be scored and analyzed, and how the field-test results will be used to select items for use or to refine the items in preparation for additional field-testing.
• The purpose of this step in the development process is to determine how each item performs when administered in an actual setting so that the new items can be placed on the same scale as the operational items.

13. Regular Form.
• The vendor shall describe in detail how it will select the items to be used in the operational forms each year.
• The plan for the development of the forms shall include consideration of the number of anchor items needed to equate the measures from year to year, the number of new operational items to be included, and the number and position of new items to be field-tested. Maximum number of exposures for items must also be addressed.
• This plan must also describe how the vendor will support the equating of the assessment from year to year during the development process. This must include the way the item bank will be utilized to select the operational items as well as the field-test items, and what percentage of pre-used items the vendor proposes be used again.
• The table below shows the suggested item refresh rates for each of the item types in the summative assessments. These rates apply across all the content areas. Based on experience and expertise, vendors are encouraged to provide alternate item refresh rates that maintain test security, allow for released items, support technical adequacy, and promote cost efficiencies.
• The annual refresh rate for writing prompts will be 100%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Type</th>
<th>Annual Refresh Rate with New Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selected Response</td>
<td>≈25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Constructed-Response</td>
<td>≈50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Constructed-Response</td>
<td>≈50-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology-Enhanced</td>
<td>≈50-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance-Based</td>
<td>≈50-100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. Breach Form
• The vendor shall describe the way it will provide a breach form for each grade and content area. Where possible, it is the expectation that the same breach form will be used for the life of the contract, including any extensions. A breach form will need to be available online as well.

G. Document Development
The following describes the documents required by this RFP. ALSDE will have final approval on all documents.

1. System Test Coordinators Manual
• The vendor shall describe in detail the contents of the System Test Coordinators Manual, as well as the planned processes for creating and proofing the manual.
• The System Test Coordinators Manual must provide an overview of the assessment program, responsibilities of the STC and directions on how to prepare for the assessment.
• The manuals will be printed, as well as made available in electronic format from the vendor's and ALSDE websites.

2. Test Administration Manuals
• The vendor must describe the steps it will follow to create the Test Administration Manuals.
• The Test Administration Manual will include, at a minimum;
  o changes or clarifications to the assessment from the previous year;
  o an annual timeline of assessment activities;
o security procedures;
o specific assessment administration procedures; and
o instructions to be read to the students.
- The vendor shall describe in detail the contents of the Test Administration Manual, as well as its planned processes for creating and proofing the manual.
- The vendor shall provide a cost-based recommendation as to whether the manual(s) should be cross-grade or a single-grade document.
- The manuals will be printed and distributed to the STCs, as well as made available in electronic format from the vendor’s and ALSDE websites.

3. Sample/released items
- The vendor will propose a plan for the annual release of a representative sample of test items. The purpose of releasing items is to provide stakeholders with information about the type and level of knowledge and skills assessed on the assessments, the variety of item types used on the assessments, and the rigor of the items of the assessments.
- The released items will consist of up to 25 percent of the items on a single student test form.
- The vendor’s response should address how common items in a common matrix design may be used to support the release of items.
- Release of items will begin with the first operational administration of the summative assessment.
- Each year it is ALSDE’s goal to release and post on the state website ALSDE staff-approved items of each type in each content area and grade. The items must be presented in a way that they are easily downloadable for use in the classroom.
- For all items, standard(s) measured by the item and item statistics must be provided for educator use.
- Correct answers and most common incorrect answers must be identified except for performance-based and constructed-response.
- For constructed-response items, scoring guides and annotated responses for each point on the rubric scale must also be provided.
- The vendor must describe the support materials it intends to develop to meet this specification, as well as the steps it will follow to develop and produce those materials.

H. Assessment Administration
The vendor shall describe in detail its plan for the administration of the operational assessment. This plan must describe each step in the assessment administration process and must reflect assessment administration activities, from start to finish, for each assessment year.

1. Distribution of Printed Test Materials
- The vendor should include in the response a detailed description of the procedures along with the name of the subcontractor or carrier to be used to distribute testing materials to each Local Education Agency (LEA). These procedures must be approved in advance by the ALSDE. The vendor’s procedures must include the following activities in connection with the distribution of materials:
  o obtain a list of System Test Coordinators, LEA names, mailing addresses, and shipping addresses from the ALSDE;
  o generate a packing list based on student enrollment and a 10% overage of all materials for each LEA;
  o develop a plan which emphasizes quality control in the “picking and packing” operation;
  o assume responsibility for inside delivery of the testing materials to each LEA. It will be the responsibility of the vendor to ensure that specified quantities reach the LEAs by the date agreed upon in the planning meeting;
  o testing materials must remain secure at all times; and
  o develop a plan to deliver additional materials requested by any LEA after the original delivery date.
2. Packaging of Printed Testing Materials
   - The vendor must describe in detail its plans for ensuring quality control of the packaging commensurate with a high stakes assessment program.
   - Materials will be packaged according to system and school and sent to the STCs. The vendor shall describe in detail how the assessment materials will be picked and packed, including how overages will be calculated and included.
   - The vendor should assume a 10% overage of all materials are maintained by the vendor for coverage of any shortages reported by local school systems and describe in detail the manner in which inventories will be monitored so that impending shortages can be avoided, or if noted, rectified before they prevent the filling of initial orders or re-orders.

3. Collection and Destruction of Printing Testing Materials
   - The vendor’s response should include a detailed plan along with the subcontractor or carrier to be used for the collection and destruction of used answer documents and all other testing materials from each LEA.
   - The ALSDE must approve vendor’s plan for collecting and destroying all testing materials.
   - The ALSDE must approve carrier for all shipping.
   - The vendor must arrange for an inside collection/pickup of the testing materials at collection sites or at each LEA’s location. If collection sites are used for picking up used answer documents, the vendor must provide enough sites so that LEAs will not be required to drive over one hour one way to and from the site.
   - The vendor must pick up all other testing materials at each LEA or a designated location.
   - The vendor will pay charges for shipment of testing materials.
   - The vendor must ensure that the testing materials will be picked up on the date at the time agreed upon during the planning meeting.
   - The vendor must ensure that all test booklets are secured at all times.
   - The used answer documents will be received in the scoring center within two working days after they are picked up from the LEA by the vendor.
   - All other testing materials will be received at a later date for verification and destruction by the vendor.
   - No materials will be destroyed without the approval of the ALSDE.
   - The ALSDE must receive documentation of destruction of testing materials.

4. Test Booklet Specifications
   - All test booklets will be labeled with unique numerical codes in sequential order to assist with test booklet security and inventory control.
   - Test booklets will be designed and constructed to ensure durability.
   - The vendor must include samples of a proposed test booklet, demographic collection page, and seal, which must consist of the same paper that will be used in actual test booklets.
   - The vendor will also be responsible for providing Braille and Large-Print versions of all tests as necessary. It is anticipated that a total of 10 Braille formatted assessments per grade will be needed. For Large-Print versions, approximately 10 formatted assessments per grade will be necessary.
   - The quality of Braille must meet the standards established by the American Printing House for the Blind. The vendor is responsible for having Braille materials proofed by an independent party (approved by the ALSDE) that includes a certified Braille reader.
   - Large-Print documents will be printed in a minimum of 18-point type.

5. Verification of Printed Testing Materials
   - The vendor should include in the response a detailed plan for verifying the receipt of all test booklets.
   - The vendor must account for all test booklets.
6. Web-based Online Test Delivery System

- The vendor shall indicate whether the hosted infrastructure service that it proposes to use for the assessment will be used in its current form or if it will be modified in any way for Alabama.
- If the service will be modified, the vendor shall specify which elements of the proposed service are parts of a currently operational system.
- The vendor must specify the version/release number of the service to be implemented for this project.
- The vendor must also provide a list with contact information for all state customers that are currently using/have used the proposed version of the service and a list for all state customers that are using/have used prior versions of the service.
- The vendor shall provide ALSDE with a detailed infrastructure Plan, which will incorporate all components required to meet industry standard best practices and, at a minimum, include the following:
  - hardware;
  - software;
  - network;
  - active directory services;
  - database;
  - caching capabilities;
  - configuration;
  - contractor resources for implementation;
  - timeline segment in accordance with the Project Plan; and
  - testing and validation.
- The vendor shall review and update the Infrastructure Plan as needed throughout the project; however, ALSDE shall have final approval of the Infrastructure Plan and any modifications. Any changes made must occur by December 31st of the administration.
- The vendor's web-based hosted infrastructure service must provide for delivery on wireless networks with comparable performance to wired networks.
- Due to the expectation that some systems will have to rely on lower-grade access, such as dial-up, proctor caching must be provided.
- Applications must be delivered within a secure browser that restricts access to the desktop and Internet, based on the requirements of ALSDE.
- The secure browser must function (and be maintained) on a current release of Linux, Windows/Intel, Macintosh (Intel and PowerPC chips), and Citrix operating systems.
- The application must be compliant with terminal server-based applications, such as Citrix.
- The vendor must indicate how it proposes to fulfill this requirement.
- Alabama does not have established minimum technology standards for schools within the state. However, support from the vendor must include the following technical standards at a minimum: Windows 98 Service Pack II or higher, VISTA, Windows 7, plus Mac OS 9.2.2 and Mac OS 10.1.1 or higher as well as current version of the Linux kernel.
- The vendor shall be prepared to support all subsequent releases of these platforms as well.
- The vendor shall indicate how it proposes to fulfill this requirement.
- Support for versions of operating systems will be continued until ALSDE approves discontinuing support for a particular version.
- The vendor shall discuss the minimum hardware specifications and technical standards, as well as the recommended hardware specifications and technical standards needed, for operation of its proposed system. This discussion should also include an analysis of differences in system performance based on minimum or recommended hardware.
• The vendor shall describe in detail how it will assure that all items placed in its web-based test delivery system will appear on students' computer screens as intended, for the variety of types of computers, operating systems, and connectivity described here.
• The vendor shall also describe its strategy for ensuring that new systems and all interfaces function properly when releasing new versions of any software application.

7. Tools and Accommodations

• The vendor is expected to adhere to and meet the evolving expectations of industry standards in online accommodations.
• The vendor must describe the extent to which its system currently meets the Accessible Portable Item Profile (APIP) standards and specifications.
• Based on the vendor's recommendation and input from the field, ALSDE will determine the content areas for which tools and accommodations will be provided, as well as which ones should be able to be turned on or off by students.
• The vendor shall discuss how the tools and accommodations accessed by the student during testing will be tracked, as well as how student profiles will be created and/or uploaded to allow for appropriate accommodation options during testing.
• The vendor shall specify the extent to which its system can provide the following:
  o navigation tools, including navigation buttons such as next, back, skip to, and mark for review;
  o test taking tools, including highlighter, notepad, strikethrough, reset, and customizable exhibit window;
  o writing tools, including cut, paste, copy, undo, redo, font format, spell check, and paragraph format among other basic word processing functionalities; and
  o additional mathematics and science tools, including grade-level equation editors, drawing tools, rulers, protractors, calculators, compasses, formula sheets, periodic tables, etc. if determined necessary by the ALSDE.
• The vendor's test delivery interface shall include all the information and resources required to make a test item accessible for students with a variety of disabilities and special needs.
• The vendor shall discuss the extent to which its test delivery interface includes the following accommodations:
  o audio accommodations, either through text-to-speech or through recorded audio (the vendor should discuss the pros and cons of these audio alternatives)
  o for audio accommodations, the discussion should include the vendor's ability to highlight portions of the screen to be read aloud, alternate text tags, captioning, text within a graphic or table to be read aloud, audio for all on-screen text in writing, science and mathematics online assessments and how the audio for an item may be altered to eliminate cuing should also be discussed;
  o visual accommodation tools, including magnification, reverse contrast, selection of foreground and background colors, color overlay, masking, adjustable font face, and alerts to test takers that alternate tactile representations; and
  o additional accommodation tools, including virtual keyboards, translation tools, sign language and sign system presentation, voice recognition, and word prediction.
• The vendor shall discuss the extent to which its web-based test delivery system will be compatible with third-party devices and software that allow accommodations to be offered to students with disabilities for accommodations that cannot be built into the vendor's system.
• Devices that can be used with the test delivery interface to include alternate keyboard, alternate mouse, refreshable Braille displays, Braille note-takers, keyboard emulators, and alternative and augmentative communication devices.
• The vendor shall discuss how individual student profiles are created or imported into the system to select and make available appropriate accommodations based on student need.
8. **Online Tutorials**
   - Online stand-alone tutorials shall be developed by the vendor.
   - These will be used to familiarize the student with the system and the item types prior to the opening of the testing window.
   - Tutorials shall be available a minimum of four weeks prior to the beginning of testing.

9. **Application Testing**
   - The vendor will be responsible for comprehensively testing its applications and ensuring that its services provide a stable platform for assessment.
   - The vendor shall describe its overall approach to testing its proposed system. The description must include details pertaining to how the vendor will ensure that the appropriate people are assigned and scheduled to the testing effort and how the vendor will ensure that all requirements for the online system have been tested.
   - The vendor’s demonstration of the system should occur at least eight weeks prior to the start of computer-based assessment administration.
   - Each system component must be made accessible to ALSDE staff in a non-production environment that comprehensively mimics the production (i.e. pre-production) environment, such that ALSDE will be able to conduct its own application tests and be assured that the application test responses represent the exact behavior that will be expected of the application in the production environment.
   - ALSDE will be allowed no fewer than five business days to conduct testing of any system component and 10 business days to conduct any system-wide tests. Any changes must occur by December 31st of the administration.
   - All systems must be functional and available for system installation at least six weeks prior to testing.
   - The vendor must document the plan for application testing and the results of the application tests. Both the testing plan and the subsequent results of the testing plan must be provided to ALSDE with sufficient time such that ALSDE can request substantive changes to the plan or the application as appropriate.
   - Any mandatory changes identified by ALSDE will be incorporated by the vendor before the start of administration.
   - Final approved forms and items will be available in the vendor’s test delivery system a minimum of two weeks prior to the opening of the test window.
   - Vendors shall provide in their proposals recommended mitigation and contingency plans should the vendor’s system be inoperable for some or all schools during the testing window, with final plans being determined by the vendor and ALSDE. This includes plans to address schools and systems that may have sub-standard infrastructure and hardware.

10. **Training**
    - Vendor will establish and implement a training plan for system and school educators, administrators, and technology coordinators on all aspects of the assessment program. The vendor should describe written materials, both face-to-face and online module training and other supports that may be developed to ensure that students are prepared to function within the computer-based and paper-based testing environments.
    - This training should be specific to Alabama’s needs and developed in collaboration with the ALSDE.
    - Both face-to-face and online trainings should be available beginning December 1, 2018.
    - Trainings should be conducted for the first year of administration.
    - Vendor will be required to develop other resource materials including user guides and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).
    - The vendor shall provide its work plan for training and support. A schedule in table format should be provided identifying the topic, target audience and target dates.
    - Vendor policies, procedures and systems should exemplify user-friendliness and be intuitive to the extent possible.
• The online modules and face-to-face presentations shall meet the following requirements: minimum 20-point font, clear and readable screen shots from the computer-based assessment platform, and minimum of two-week review and approval by ALSDE staff prior to the training date.
• The ALSDE shall retain ownership of all training materials and online modules.
• The table on page 36 indicates the training provision requirements for Year 1 of the assessment. In Year 2, at least three (3) sessions of each module will need to be offered in three (3) regions of the state. After Year 2, training may be provided online only. The final list of training modules should be agreed to by the ALSDE and vendor.

11. Software Implementation Training
• Recommended training approach (instructor led vs. computer-based)
• Training evaluation tools
• Training coordination
• Description of training materials and plans for revision
• Training timeline

12. Technology Director Training
• Training on the operation and features of the online assessment system.
• Training on the physical and electronic security of assessments, system requirements for implementing the online assessment and troubleshooting of technology issues at the school or system site.
• May include a visual as well as oral presentation and may include other types of interactive technology.
• Delivery method must be identified.
• ALSDE reserves the right to preview each training session and webinar.

13. Assessment Administration Training
• Vendor must work with ALSDE to coordinate assessment administration training plans for the System Test Coordinators and Test Administrators.
• Vendor must agree to participate in the ALSDE System Test Coordinator’s Academy held in the fall and winter unless ALSDE decides otherwise.

14. Assessment Results Training
• The vendor shall describe its plans for providing educators with tools to evaluate and analyze assessment results in order to make informed instructional and programming decisions.
• May include a visual as well as oral presentation and may include other types of interactive technology.
• Delivery method must be identified.

15. Online Training Support
• The vendor shall describe its plan to provide training and customer support specific to online assessment. The description should include training with an easy to understand set of directions, including screenshots, for operating the online assessment software. The vendor may also include other beneficial training materials in its response such as e-learning modules and online tutorials for users.
Training Provision Requirements for Year 1 of the Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Minimum Number of Face-to-Face Sessions</th>
<th>Number of Participants Expected at Each Session</th>
<th>Online Module Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology Readiness</td>
<td>One in each of eleven regions (total of 11)</td>
<td>50-100</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment System</td>
<td>One in each of eleven regions (total of 11)</td>
<td>100-500</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summative Administration</td>
<td>One in each of eleven regions (total of 11)</td>
<td>100-500</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>One in each of eleven regions (total of 11)</td>
<td>100-500</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources for Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Science</td>
<td>One in each of eleven regions (total of 11)</td>
<td>100-500 each subject</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score Reports and Data Use</td>
<td>One in each of eleven regions (total of 11)</td>
<td>100-500</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available Resources</td>
<td>One in each of eleven regions (total of 11)</td>
<td>100-500</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. Accommodations and Accessibility
The ALSDE is committed to maximum accessibility for all students including those with disabilities and English learners (ELs) with or without disabilities. The vendor must provide assurances that the test items, test forms, and platforms were designed and developed from the beginning with Universal Design principles to allow participation of the widest possible range of students and result in valid inferences about performance for all students participating in the assessment. The vendor will provide a detailed list of accessibility supports and accommodations available within their assessment platform. Provide information regarding fairness in administration and accommodations such as evidence of validated, feasible accommodations available. Vendor will provide detailed information regarding costs for technology to deliver accessibility and accommodations. The vendor must provide their accessibility and accommodations manual in their response to this RFP. The manual should address accessibility and accommodation features for all students, including students with IEPs, 504 Plans, and ELs. To ensure that students with different levels of English language proficiency and ELs with disabilities can demonstrate their knowledge and skills on the assessments, the tests must be designed to eliminate or minimize any factors that are irrelevant to measuring the constructs represented in the test specifications.

- Accommodations
  - Accommodations are used to increase access to assessments for students with disabilities. They may differ based on the format of the administration (i.e., computer-based or paper-based).
  - The vendor will provide for incorporation of all accommodations stipulated in the vendor’s accessibility and accommodations manual for both paper-based administration and computer-based administration.
  - In those instances where the ALSDE uncovers a tool, support or accommodation not addressed by the vendor’s accessibility and accommodations manual, the vendor will facilitate engagements with the ALSDE to consider the situation. If the decision is to allow the newly identified means of access, the vendor will collaborate with the ALSDE to incorporate into the next feasible administration.
  - In those instances where the ALSDE wishes to be more restrictive with respect to means of access, the vendor will work with the ALSDE to adapt the vendor’s Assessment Delivery Platform to support the change in access guidelines.
• Any changes in access guidelines, will require the vendor to ensure coding is updated to match administration protocols and that associated data captured with respect to identified access means are consistent with the guidelines.

• Accessibility
  • Universally designed assessments are developed to ensure all students in the school are tested, and that testing results are not affected by disability, gender, race, or English language ability.
  • The vendor must provide assurances that the test design, development, and administration allow fair access for all students.

• Print on-Demand
  • For students with specific testing barriers (i.e., student’s IEP dictates administration of tests in paper-based format), vendor’s Assessment Delivery Platform must support the ability for print on demand (the student’s test can be designated through the Assessment Delivery Platform and accompanying connection to a printer, for creation of hardcopy versions of the items).

NOTE: Upon the student’s completion of applicable print versions of items, test administrators would be expected to transcribe the student response into the Assessment Delivery Platform interface. Print versions of the test items will be destroyed under secure means.

• Braille and Large Print
  • For each operational assessment, the vendor’s system will support administration instances in both Braille and Large Print.

• Braille On-Demand / Large Print
  • The vendor’s Assessment Delivery Platform will provide for students identified through an IEP to access the assessment through on-demand Braille using refreshable Braille devices or Large Print formatting using vision enhancing tools or software.
  • The vendor must provide assurances these requirements will be met.

• Braille and Large Print Testing Materials (Non-Computer)
  • In those instances where a school or system is not prepared to support computer-based testing, the vendor will provide means of producing Braille and Large Print forms based on the vendor’s paper-based form.
  • Based upon the 2017-2018 testing data, the ALSDE estimates, but in no way guarantees, annual quantities for use of Braille and Large Print testing materials at approximately 10 students per grade in grades 3-8 and high school.
  • The vendor shall provide a process for school systems to order Braille and Large Print testing materials and shall distribute all such testing materials in a Braille/Large Print kit to the associated school system.
  • The vendor’s Braille/Large Print kit shall include Braille response documents for Braille assessments and appropriate response documents for Large Print assessments.
  • Students being administered a Large Print assessment will respond directly on the Large Print test document, unless the student’s IEP specifies a scribing accommodation.
  • Test administrators would be expected to transcribe student responses from Braille and Large Print test forms into the Assessment Delivery Platform interface.
  • The vendor shall provide for the secure return of Braille and Large Print testing materials to the vendor facilities. Vendor’s Braille/Large Print kit shall include all materials (boxes, envelopes, and prepaid return shipping labels) for the schools to use to return testing materials.
  • The vendor must provide assurances these requirements will be met.
• Assistive Technology
  ▪ The vendor's assessment administration platform shall support refreshable Braille devices and vision enhancing software.
  ▪ The vendor shall work with the ALSDE to explore the feasibility of supporting additional assistive technology including, but not necessarily limited to, screen reader and text-to-speech software, screen enlargement, and alternative input devices and software.
  ▪ If the ALSDE requests test access through a specific assistive technology device, vendor shall make provisions to support the aforementioned assistive technology but would not be responsible for providing any needed hardware or software (such as refreshable Braille devices) for school systems or the ALSDE.
  ▪ The vendor must provide assurances these requirements will be met.

1. Data Integration and Collection
The vendor will interface with a web service written and hosted by the ALSDE to retrieve the data for the organization and student demographic files. Once the vendor has processed all testing data, the ALSDE will retrieve test results via a web service written and hosted by the vendor.

1. System requirements
• The vendor shall describe in detail the services to be provided to conduct the required online data collections.
• The vendor shall include a detailed description of how its data collection system will be designed to operate within existing local system communication infrastructures, including T-1, DSL, or cable modem lines.
• The vendor shall assume that the existing technological infrastructure and computing hardware of the state, systems, and schools will not be replaced, as well as taken into consideration that some systems will be upgraded.
• The vendor shall also describe how its system works with system/school content filtering systems and firewalls.
• The online data collection system design must be flexible, so that software modifications, database changes, and reporting requirements can be made efficiently and cost effectively. The vendor must indicate how it will assure that this can be done.
• The vendor's system must be able to download rosters.
• The vendor must explain how its system will accommodate for students who have moved in and out of a school or system since the rosters were created.
• The vendor's system must show real-time online testing status and statistics by assessment and system. This status will be available to ALSDE and systems. (For example, number of students testing by system and total tested, average time tested, system response time, etc.). Daily status reports shall be available for viewing.
• The vendor's system shall have the ability to collect test codes, administration codes, and other demographic information by administration for online assessments before, during, and after testing.

2. Data collection protection features
• The vendor shall discuss how its system responds to interrupted Internet services without the loss of data, including student responses.
• The vendor's online data collection system must have a time-out or similar locking mechanism to prevent unauthorized access in the event that a student, while entering data, has to immediately evacuate the area due to an emergency such as a fire or tornado drill. This must also include an auto-save feature so that the student can easily resume when the emergency or the time-out has passed.
• The vendor shall indicate how it proposed to do this.
3. Access to data collection system
The vendor shall provide ALSDE and selected technical advisors with a secure, password-protected, web-based system for the purposes of analyzing the assessment processes and the resultant data.
- ALSDE shall have access to and oversight of all aspects of online performance during the data collection windows and access to captured data after the data collection windows close.
- The vendor shall indicate how it proposes to do this.
- The vendor must provide access to the online data collection system via a unique log-in ID and password.
- All communications directly from the vendor to the field (STCs, teachers, or others) must be approved in advance by ALSDE.
- The vendor shall indicate how it proposes to do this.
- The vendor shall describe its procedures for ensuring that students take the assessment under the correct name, using the appropriate name, log-in ID, and password.

4. System Reliability and Mitigation Experience
   - Information technology
     - The vendor shall ensure the reliability of information technology used in the transmission and function of computer-based assessments.
     - The vendor shall provide a draft plan detailing the deployment and operation of information technology and contingencies for the failure of information technology systems.
     - The vendor will finalize this plan.
     - The vendor must identify its metric for system performance.
   - Cyber security
     - The vendor shall agree at all times to maintain network system and application security that, at minimum, conform to the following:
       - State of Alabama Cyber Security Policies as found at http://www.Alabama.gov/cybersecurity; and
       - current cyber security standards set forth and maintained by the Center for Internet Security, which can be found at http://www.cisecurity.org.
     - The vendor must agree to document all cyber security expectations to State of Alabama Policies and Standards in response to this RFP.
     - Special consideration must be made to ensure the security of Personally Identified Information (PII) stored or processed by the system.
     - The system will be subject to security reviews by OIT Office of Cyber Security.
     - The vendor shall describe the overall approach to security in its proposed system.
     - The vendor shall describe all cyber security exceptions to State of Alabama Policies and Standards in response to this RFP.
     - Challenges that the vendor may encounter for meeting cyber security standards during this project and how those challenges can be mitigated shall also be identified.
     - The vendor shall discuss the features of its system which prevent infiltration.
   - Online assessment challenges and remedies
     - The vendor shall describe the issues/challenges/problems/mistakes that arose in its history with online assessment administrations.
     - The vendor must describe and indicate the level of impact to school personnel, students, scores, and timeline for reporting. The description shall include the steps taken by the vendor or sponsoring agency to mitigate those issues.
     - Finally, the vendor should indicate what steps it will take to prevent these issues from occurring in Alabama.
5. **Scoring**

The vendor shall describe in detail its plan for scoring of the tests. This plan must describe each step in the scoring process and must reflect all scoring activities from start to finish for each assessment year.

- **Range-finding meetings**
  - The vendor shall facilitate range-finding meetings for content specialists and Alabama educators to define rubric score points for scoring of the field-test items.
  - For purposes of this RFP, the vendor should assume that no less than 4 individuals from the ALSDE will be selected to participate for mathematics, reading, and writing, each, while 2 individuals each will be used in science.
  - Each meeting is expected to last for three days and be held in Montgomery, AL.
  - Based on its experience, the vendor is encouraged to suggest adjustments to the length of the meetings between the first year and subsequent operational years.
  - The vendor will be responsible for all costs associated with this educator meeting.
  - The vendor shall select exemplary student responses from field-testing that are representative of the various types of responses collected from students.
  - The vendor shall describe its plan for selecting student responses for range finding.
  - The plan shall include an estimate of how many responses will be needed to appropriately define rubric score points for items and a rationale for why these numbers will adequately meet Alabama’s needs.
  - The vendor shall also describe its procedure for determining if items are inappropriate for use in the operational assessments.

- **Anchor validation meetings**
  - After the completion of field-test scoring and item selection for the next year’s operational items, the vendor shall conduct anchor validation meetings that use content specialists and Alabama educators to review scoring rubrics and to select anchor papers for scorer training.
  - For purposes of this RFP, the vendor should assume that 4 individuals from the ALSDE will be selected to participate for mathematics, reading, and writing each, while 2 individuals each will be used in science.
  - Each meeting will last for three days and be held in Montgomery, AL.
  - Based on its experience, the vendor is encouraged to suggest adjustments to the length of the meetings between the first year and subsequent operational years.
  - The vendor will be responsible for all costs associated with this educator meeting.
  - Content specialists and Alabama educators shall review the adequacy of the scoring rubrics developed during the range finding meetings so that they can be finalized for operational use.
  - Anchor validation meetings shall also be used to select anchor papers for scorer training, certification, and validity checks throughout the actual scoring process.
  - The vendor must describe its plan for conducting anchor validation meetings.
  - The vendor should also provide technical expertise about whether using anchor papers from the field test are adequate to train, certify, and validate scorers during scoring of operational assessments.

- **Scoring decision guide**
  - The vendor shall develop and maintain a scoring decision guide, including decisions for how to address unusual situations or questions that arise each year.
  - ALSDE will review and approve any changes to the scoring decision guide, scoring rubrics, and/or the scoring rules contained in it before they are utilized in the scoring of operational assessments.
  - The vendor shall describe how it proposes to do this.
  - The scoring decision guide developed and used for scoring of released items shall be made available to classroom teachers each August for teacher use in “scoring” the work of their students.
• **Scoring of selected responses**
  - The vendor shall describe how it will assure that items are correctly coded with keys matching the intended correct answers.
  - The vendor shall describe its disaster recovery plan for backup and recovery of data.
  - The vendor shall collaborate with ALSDE to resolve discrepancies among student, school, and system data.
  - Alabama has a unique student identifier system in place that will be used for resolution of student data.
  - The vendor shall address the following issues regarding documents and data:
    - describe the capacity and process of ensuring accurate data files. Include a description of quality control measures and documentation;
    - describe the procedures the vendor will use to ensure that data will be kept confidential and secure; and
    - the vendor shall provide data to ALSDE, other contractors, and agents working for ALSDE so that others can perform the necessary quality control analyses and associated documentation before score reports are released, on a schedule to meet ALSDE contractual deadlines.

• **Scoring center**
  - If a physical scoring center is used, all costs associated with the Scoring Center will be the responsibility of the vendor.
  - These include rental of the facility, rental of any equipment needed for the facility, compensation for the raters, and so forth.
  - If distributed scoring is to be used, the vendor should indicate:
    - who will do the scoring (e.g. AI versus Human Scoring where appropriate);
    - how the confidentiality of student responses will be protected; and
    - how scorers will be trained, certified, and monitored remotely.
  - The vendor shall specify the proportion of scoring that will occur at a physical scoring center, as well as the proportion of scoring that will occur through distributed scoring procedures.
  - ALSDE shall be allowed to observe and monitor scoring without restriction.

• **Human Scoring**
  - The vendor shall identify the number of staff required to meet its proposed timeline.

• **Scoring staff**
  - Only those individuals who have been approved by ALSDE may serve as scorers, table leaders, and scoring supervisors for Alabama’s assessment.
  - The vendor shall provide in writing the credentials and qualifications of the individuals it proposes to use as raters, table leaders, and scoring supervisors for ALSDE’s approval.
  - All scoring staff must pass a criminal background check to be paid by the vendor.
  - The vendor shall provide its pay rate for the scoring personnel.

• **Scoring confidentiality and security procedures**
  - The vendor shall provide the confidentiality agreement used with its scoring staff.
  - ALSDE reserves the right to modify the agreements as needed to stipulate that the person signing the agreement shall not provide Alabama assessment information or materials to any individual or entity for any purpose, including, but not limited to, use as test preparation materials, whether for profit or not.
  - The vendor shall confirm its agreement with this.
  - Security procedures employed at scoring centers or for distributed scoring must be described.
• Scorer training
  ▪ The vendor shall develop scorer training for scorers each year.
  ▪ Training materials and procedures shall be developed by the vendor and be approved in advance by ALSDE.
  ▪ The vendor shall indicate how it proposes to do this.
  ▪ The vendor must also describe how the content specialists involved in the item writing are involved in the scoring process.
  ▪ The vendor shall identify the number of staff required to meet its proposed timeline.
  ▪ Scorers shall only review student work for the items on which they have been trained.
  ▪ The vendor shall indicate their understanding of this requirement.

• Artificial Intelligence Scoring
  ▪ ALSDE would like to explore options for automated scoring using artificial intelligence (AI) where appropriate. The vendor shall describe in detail its current capacity to score the different item types and content areas represented in the Alabama summative assessments with AI. The vendor must also make ALSDE aware of limitations of the use of the vendor’s AI scoring engine for each item type.

6. Additional Scoring Considerations

• Reliability and Validity of Scoring Procedures
  ▪ The vendor shall describe its proposed procedures for assuring that the assessments will be scored in a reliable and valid manner.
  ▪ This includes proper incorporation and utilization of the following components in human scoring procedures:
    o rater read-behind rates;
    o raters’ papers monitored by table leaders and scoring supervisors;
    o scoring of expert pre-scored samples; and
    o additional strategies suggested by the vendor to monitor and enhance rater reliability and validity.
  ▪ ALSDE expects the vendor to meet the following minimum inter-rater agreement requirements for scoring:
    o 3-point items - 90% exact agreement and 95% exact or adjacent agreement;
    o 4-point items - 78% exact agreement and 95% exact or adjacent agreement; and
    o 6-point items - 65% exact agreement and 95% exact or adjacent agreement.

• Procedure for Unusual Responses
  ▪ The vendor shall describe its procedures for dealing with unusual student responses, such as those that indicate abuse or potential for student self-harm that may need to be brought to the attention of local educators.
  ▪ It is essential that unusual responses such as these be sent electronically, in a secure manner, to ALSDE as soon as they are discovered (within 24 hours of discovery), along with student and system identification information so that ALSDE can provide them to the STC for system investigation.

• Rescoring
  ▪ Local school systems may also request through the ALSDE that student responses be re-scored.
  ▪ If the rescoring shows no change, then the local system will pay the reasonable cost of rescoring.
  ▪ If rescoring student work results in a change in a student’s score, the vendor shall pay the cost.
  ▪ Before work begins, the system will need to provide the vendor with a purchase order for the work.
  ▪ ALSDE will not be responsible for the fees associated with rescoring of students’ responses.
  ▪ The vendor shall indicate what systems will be charged to rescore student work samples.
- The vendor shall notify ALSDE of any student scores that have been changed.
- For informational purposes, each vendor is asked to provide its proposed rates within its cost proposal.

7. Submission of Data Files and Reporting Assessment Results
The vendor shall describe in detail its plan for the reporting of data files and results of the assessment. This plan must describe each step in the reporting of data files and assessment results process and must reflect all reporting of data files and assessment results activities, from start to finish, for each assessment year.

- Data
  - All raw student data must be provided to ALSDE by the vendor.

- Data files
  - The deadline for posting the initial individual student level file for the systems is the first Friday in June.
  - The exact content, naming conventions, definitions of data elements, and file type shall be clearly documented and agreed upon by the vendor and ALSDE at least three (3) months prior to test administration.
  - The deadline for providing Alabama assessment results to the ALSDE for its use in preparing school and system accountability reports is no later than June 30 of each school year.
  - The vendor shall confirm its agreement to fulfill this requirement.
  - The vendor shall provide full state data files to ALSDE.
  - The vendor will maintain the proper identification of each student and the accurate matching of the student to the test results using the identification number for each student.
  - The data file shall contain all information gathered on each student during the test administration and scoring period including but not limited to:
    - school and system name and identification number assigned by ALSDE designating where the student was tested;
    - responses to individual items; and
    - all raw and derived data.
  - The state data file shall be transmitted to ALSDE.
  - At a minimum, the state file must include all elements that have been used in reporting. A PDF of the state file must also be provided to ALSDE.
  - All timelines for posting and releasing data is negotiable according to the Accountability timeline.

- Data Documentation
  - The vendor is expected to develop data specification/file layouts, definitions, and formats in collaboration with ALSDE technical staff to document all data provided to ALSDE.
  - The vendor shall confirm its contract to fulfill this requirement.

- Data Ownership
  - ALSDE shall own the raw and final data generated through the contract awarded from this solicitation.
  - The vendor is not allowed to utilize data generated through the Alabama summative assessment for its own purposes.
  - Any usage of the data generated through activities related to this RFP may not be used for purposes outside of this RFP without prior written approval from the data owners.
  - ALSDE may choose to report the data in additional reporting layouts.
  - Additionally, electronic images of the state-level summary report by grade shall be delivered to ALSDE.
  - These images shall be in a format mutually agreed upon by the vendor and ALSDE.
  - The vendor shall confirm its contract with this requirement.
• **Student Biographical Data**
  - After testing, systems will be provided with the opportunity to review the demographic data generated from the scan file.
  - A Student Biographical Data (SBD) review allows school systems the opportunity to verify the accuracy of the demographic data submitted for each student assessed in Alabama.
  - The review process will occur after all testing has been completed and before all assessments are scored and final results are made available.

• **Quality Control**
  - The vendor shall ensure that all data operations are subject to multiple checks for accuracy before data, files, or reports are released.
  - The vendor shall include in its proposal a full and complete description of its quality control procedures used in the reporting process for ALSDE review.
  - The procedure shall include hand calculations of a sample of student reports and aggregation of student results from the school level to the system level. This should first take place with a test deck of mock student data when the scoring and reporting system is first finalized and then be repeated when the first live student data is received. The goal is to demonstrate that the scoring and reporting system is error-free.
  - The vendor shall indicate in detail how it proposes to do this.
  - The vendor shall develop and implement quality control procedures for checking the accuracy of all test information, all student scores and identification, and all summary data.
  - The standard for the error rate of data reports provided by the vendor is zero (0.0).
  - The vendor must plan and prepare quality assurance (QA) schedules that will allow work to flow in a timely, effective manner, while maintaining high quality deliverables.
  - ALSDE must review and approve the QA schedules annually.
  - The vendor shall indicate how it proposes to do this.
  - The vendor shall create detail logs that trace the application of QA procedures to the state score reports after each administration.
  - The vendor is responsible for maintaining quality products and services in all aspects of the assessment program component from initial development of training materials to the production of electronic data files and score reports.
  - The vendor shall indicate how it proposes to do this.

• **Formatting of Reports**
  - Assessment results are to be reported in a “user friendly” format.
  - ALSDE is especially interested in reporting approaches that provide actionable information for students, parents, and classroom teachers.
  - The reporting system must be designed to complement instruction and to facilitate the use of assessment results to improve student achievement.
  - Reports must reflect areas of strength as well as areas that need to be targeted for instruction.
  - ALSDE expects the vendor to utilize feedback from students, parents, administrators, and teachers on report shells and content when designing and creating the reporting system.
  - Report shells and reports for accommodated forms of this assessment component, such as Spanish, will also need to be generated.
  - The vendor shall provide in detail how it proposes to fulfill this requirement.
  - The design and layout of reports will be initiated in a timely manner so that ALSDE has sufficient time to review the reports and to provide feedback to the vendor.
  - This timeline shall be incorporated into the detailed schedule that will be included in each proposal.
• Individual Student Reports
  ▪ Score reports shall fulfill the Federal reporting requirements of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Specifically, the reporting system shall meet the expectations outlined in current Peer Review requirements.
  ▪ The vendor shall indicate how it proposes to fulfill this requirement.
  ▪ At a minimum, individual score reports shall summarize the student’s performance in all content areas on which the student was assessed.
  ▪ This report shall include an overall transformed scale score, performance level, performance level descriptor, and sub-scores for each content area tested.
  ▪ Two (2) paper copies (one for the school’s student permanent folder and one for the parent) and an electronic version of individual student score reports shall be prepared that summarize the student’s performance.
  ▪ The reports must include:
    ▪ an indication of measurement error, such as error band graphics;
    ▪ relevant comparative information, such as a bar chart displaying student scale score, school scale score means, and system scale score mean; and
    ▪ explanatory narrative on all reports where appropriate.
  ▪ Proposals should include sample score reports.
  ▪ These reports must be provided in Spanish for all content areas.
  ▪ In addition, translated report shells, with explanations, will have to be created for all the English assessments.
  ▪ Additionally, Alabama is interested in providing reporting measures that contain actionable information, such that teachers and parents can use results to connect students with targeted instructional and leisure-time materials that meet and challenge the student’s abilities, interests, and learning objectives.
  ▪ Should the vendor propose to utilize the scores of a subcontractor that can help identify appropriate costs reading materials, those must be listed as an option.
  ▪ The vendor should describe additional types of information that may be added to reports as the program matures (ex., provide predictive scores related to meeting other college readiness benchmarks.)
  ▪ The vendor shall describe how it proposes to fulfill this requirement and shall provide a graphic to illustrate what the proposed reports would look like.

• State/System/School Reports
  ▪ Summary reports shall be prepared at the state, system, and school levels.
  ▪ The same data reported on the individual student report must be aggregated for state/system/school reports.
  ▪ Additionally, state/system/school reports must provide disaggregated data by student population and trend data.
  ▪ Electronic reports must be generated that summarize the performance of the state/system/school on all components of the assessment taken and on any sub-domain or instructional objective sub-score.
  ▪ Exact content and format for each of the reports and files listed below will be further refined during the project.
  ▪ The vendor will be responsible for the following:
    ▪ state PDF reports of summary and disaggregated data by grade and content area;
    ▪ state file of data used to populate the system summary and disaggregated reports by grade and content area;
    ▪ state file of data used to populate the school summary and disaggregated reports by grade and content area;
    ▪ system PDF reports of summary and disaggregated data by grade and content area;
- system file of data used to populate the system summary and disaggregated reports by grade and content area;
- system PDF reports of school level summary and disaggregated data;
- system file of data used to populate the school level summary and disaggregated reports;
- system file including PDFs of all individual student level reports;
- school PDF reports of summary and disaggregated data by grade and content area;
- school file of data used to populate the school summary and disaggregated reports by grade and content area;
- school file including PDFs of all individual student level reports; and
- school file of all individual student level data.

- **Report Approval**
  - After ALSDE has approved the report formats and the type of information that will be included on the reports, the vendor shall prepare accurate printed examples of the reports using mock data.
  - The vendor will submit the report mockups to ALSDE for approval before proceeding with creation of the final score reports.
  - Following each test administration, the vendor will print score reports for a small number of selected school systems and submit these reports to ALSDE for approval before any other reports are produced.
  - The first school systems processed will be mutually agreed upon by the vendor and ALSDE and will be considered a trial run of the reporting process.
  - This report printing/approval process by ALSDE will be designed to be completed within a period of two to three days.
  - The vendor shall indicate how it proposes to do this.
  - Prior to the distribution of reports, the vendor shall provide computer readable student level data files to ALSDE.
  - Prior to the first transfer, the vendor and ALSDE will mutually agree upon the exact format of the data files.
  - However, the vendor shall plan for the first transfer to be a direct electronic transfer to an agreed-upon secure server to be followed with an acceptable computer readable media (DVD preferred).
  - The computer readable data file will include an indicator that specifies whether the student’s biographical information was obtained from a pre-ID.
  - The vendor must discuss the availability of reports in languages other than English.
  - The vendor shall indicate how it proposes to do this.

- **Reporting Dates**
  - With standard setting occurring in the first year of administration, ALSDE acknowledges that the initial reporting date may need to be later than preferred.
  - It is the expectation that as the program leverages the advantages of online administration reporting of all data will be moved closer to the time of actual testing.
  - The vendor is asked to present testing windows and reporting dates for each type of reporting (ex. Individual Student Reports electronically, school and system electronic reporting, as well as options of reporting some scores shortly after testing).

- **Report Dissemination**
  - The vendor shall maintain security of all individual test results.
  - Individual test information shall be made available only to ALSDE, authorized school system personnel, and other entities identified and authorized by ALSDE.
  - The vendor shall indicate how it proposes to do this.
  - After approval of the test run of a limited number of selected and agreed-upon systems, the vendor shall provide all the score reports and files to school systems as early as possible.
• The two copies of the Student Score Report must be provided in a paper copy so that one copy can be distributed to parents and the other retained in the student’s permanent folder.
• Other reports are to be provided in electronic format to systems and schools, via a secure web site or by a CD delivered to systems by a secure carrier.
• Paper copies of individual student reports shipped to school systems shall be packaged to allow systems to easily separate the reports and to distribute them to individual schools.
• ALSDE will provide a list of names, emails, and mailing addresses for each system’s Assessment Coordinator.
• All timelines for reporting dissemination is negotiable according to the Accountability timeline.

• Reporting Errors
  • The vendor shall immediately notify ALSDE when an error in reporting has been discovered.
  • The vendor and ALSDE will develop a plan for correcting the error.
  • The plan will include a description of how timely and forthright information will be communicated to all affected stakeholders.
  • The vendor shall indicate how it proposes to do this.

• Reprinting
  • In the event that a system needs to have score reports reprinted for any reason, the STC may contact the ALSDE. The ALSDE will contact the vendor to request the necessary reports.
  • The vendor will charge the system a set-up fee and a per-report fee for the specific reports requested.
  • Before work begins, the system will need to provide a purchase order for the job to the vendor.
  • ALSDE will not be responsible for the fees associated with the reprinting of score reports.
  • For informational purposes, each vendor is asked to provide its proposed rates within its cost proposal.

• Assessment Interpretive Guide
  • Annually, the vendor shall develop an Interpretive Guide to assist parents and teachers in interpreting assessment results.
  • The vendor shall describe in detail the contents of the Guide, as well as its proposed process for creating and proofing it.
  • This Guide shall be downloadable from ALSDE’s website.
  • The vendor shall annually submit this Guide to ALSDE for approval prior to posting.
  • The Interpretive Guide must be available online prior to the release of reports.
  • ALSDE will consider the vendor’s suggestions for alternative formats or distribution strategies for this guide.
  • The Interpretive Guide shall be formatted in such a way that pertinent information can easily be copied at the school building for distribution to teachers or parents.
  • The format shall have information that is specifically targeted to parents.
  • This information shall start and end with page breaks so that a parent does not get a partial page with information before or after the page break that is out of context.
  • Parent information pages and teacher information pages should each “stand alone.”
  • The URL for the Interpretive Guide shall appear on all reports.

8. Operational Analysis
• Item data from the operational assessment must include appropriate IRT item and task parameters, distractor and bias sensitivity analysis, and fit and DIF statistics based on the selected IRT model.
• The vendor shall describe its plan for providing each of these item data components and the method to be used for calculations.
• The vendor shall also describe its approach to item calibration, including its approach to parameter estimation and any proprietary or third-party software to be employed by the vendor.
• Examination of performance task data from the operational assessment must include rater reliability information, percentages of students in categories, materials used during review and any other relevant information.
• The vendor must provide ALSDE with all appropriate test statistics and information including:
  - test information functions;
  - differential test function information; and
  - validity and reliability measures.
• The vendor shall describe its method for establishing inter-rater agreement among its scorers, including how it will calculate inter-rater agreement statistics by grade and content area each year.
• Inter-rater agreement shall be examined separately for each dimension in each scoring rubric, as this may inform subsequent test development, training, or professional development priorities.
• A description of the method to be used for standard errors of measurement calculations shall also be included.
• The vendor shall produce a report of recommendations for changes to the future Alabama assessments based on operational assessment results.
• The report shall include item development process revision recommendations, administration materials and process revision recommendations, and an analysis of anchor pools available for future operational testing.

9. Scaling

• Vertical Scale Design
  - The vendor shall make evidence-based recommendations about whether Alabama should use vertical scaling in its assessments.
  - It shall also propose a method of vertical scaling to be approved by the Technical Advisory Committee, including a detailed plan for how vertical scales can be computed using all the aforementioned item types.
  - Should Alabama move forward with a vertical scale design, the vendor will need to identify scaling problems as early as possible, so they can be resolved in time for operational testing.
  - Preliminary linking and analysis must be done as early as possible to identify any lack of continuity between grades or possible differences in construct that prevent solid scale construction.
  - The scaling design needs to address how cross-grade scaling can be carried out so that all students have had an opportunity to learn the material in linking blocks.

• Scaling
  - The vendor shall work with ALSDE to implement a scaling procedure that will result in scale scores.
  - The vendor will need to establish model fit and individual score reliability for the selected scaling procedure.
  - The vendor shall identify advantages and potential disadvantages of its proposed scaling procedure within its description.
  - Vendors shall indicate which statistics will be used to establish model fit, student-level score reliability, and the success of various item type score combination methods in maintaining the desired score results across years.

• Standard Setting
  - The standard setting process shall use empirical data to establish patterns of performance that correspond to achievement levels.
  - Criteria for standard setting shall include student information from all the assessment's item types.
  - The vendor shall provide a description of its standard setting method(s), which shall include a detailed explanation of the proposed statistical methods and how they will be used to set standards.
- Procedures must be approved by ALSDE's Technical Advisory Committee.
- Although ALSDE is interested in utilizing standard setting methods that are heavily dependent upon data, standard setting panels Alabama educators, Alabama higher education educators, as well as representatives from the business community as appropriate must be included in the process.
- The vendor should plan on 12-15-member, content-specific panels that span 2-3 grade levels.
- The vendor shall be responsible for all costs associated with convening these panels for two- to three-day meetings.
- Alabama is interested in identifying the degree to which students are on track to being college- and career-ready at each grade level. Therefore, ALSDE is interested in standard-setting approaches that connect achievement levels to post-secondary and workforce readiness indicators.
- The vendor's plan to ensure continuity between grade levels must be described.
- The vendor shall recommend methods of validating cut scores across time, including approaches to revising as evidence indicates.
- The vendor shall suggest how to approach communication with the field regarding potentially changing cut scores.
- The vendor shall prepare a report describing and documenting the entire standard setting process. The report shall be delivered in digital format no later than one month following the completion of the standard setting process.

- **Performance Level Descriptors**
  - It is the vendor's responsibility to describe in detail the process to be used to develop general and grade level specific performance level descriptors for the Alabama assessments. Performance levels shall be set, at a minimum, to meet federal assessment reporting requirements.
  - The vendor shall provide a detailed process for determining the number and names of performance levels. A timeline of major activities in the process should be included in the response.
  - The vendor is responsible for all costs associated with proposed meetings. Vendors should use $120 per day per participant for stipends for these meetings plus travel if meetings are during the summer.

- **Linking and Equating**
  - The vendor shall describe its proposed equating process, including any equating proposed at the sub-score level.
  - While ALSDE will begin a new trend line with this assessment, a means of linking current scores to scores on the new assessment must be addressed.
  - In addition, the vendor shall describe its procedure for maintaining trend lines over time for the new assessment.
  - Vendors shall describe the linking and equating procedures to be used in support of the vertical scales in each content area.
  - The description shall include the vendor's approach to linking across adjacent grades, a description of the proposed equating method, and the linking design.

10. **Plans for Establishing Technical Adequacy**
- **Peer Review Requirements**
  - The vendor shall provide its plan for conducting the studies necessary to meet all requirements of the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) *Standards and Assessment Peer Review Guidance*, especially Section 4, Technical Quality (or more current Peer Review/ESSA requirements).
  - The vendor must describe its plan for providing the best and most cost-effective studies for meeting this requirement.
  - The vendor shall describe in detail how it will conduct studies to verify and support the validity of interpretations drawn from test scores.
• The vendor shall also propose its strategy for developing studies that investigate the intended and unintended consequences of the Alabama assessment.
• The vendor shall indicate how the studies will support ALSDE’s response to each element of the Peer Review Guidance.

• Alignment Studies
  • The vendor shall set aside resources for independently conducted alignment studies of the assessments to the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards.
  • For purposes of this contract, vendors must specifically identify in a separately packaged cost proposal and set aside a minimum of $75,000 for conducting these studies.
  • The vendor will be responsible for the contractual and payment arrangements with the ALSDE approved independent entity.

• Establishing Comparability
  • The vendor must provide its plan for establishing comparability between accommodated and non-accommodated test forms and administrations, including the Spanish mathematics, and science assessments.
  • The vendor must present its plan for establishing comparability between paper-based and computer-based assessments.
  • The vendor shall provide any relevant empirical evidence that supports its ability to accomplish this goal.
  • Comparability will need to be established within a year between the online and accommodated paper-based forms.

• Technical Advisory Committee
  • The vendor shall work with ALSDE to plan and participate in Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings.
  • The vendor is expected to provide clearly-stated questions and supporting background materials in a timely fashion for review by ALSDE and the TAC, prior to TAC meetings.
  • All psychometric processes, including test design, scaling, equating, standard setting, and validation procedures must go before the TAC for review and must receive ALSDE approval.
  • The vendor shall be responsible for taking minutes and distributing meeting summaries to ALSDE and TAC members within two business days.
  • The TAC meeting costs are reconcilable costs, such that ALSDE is not responsible for paying the vendor for a meeting that does not occur.
  • For costing purposes, the vendor should assume that three, two-day TAC meetings will be conducted each year in Montgomery, Alabama.
  • A minimum of two individuals from the vendor shall attend each meeting in person.
  • Additional representatives from the vendor shall be available as needed upon request from ALSDE.
  • With prior approval from ALSDE, the vendor may opt for these additional personnel to participate via teleconference or via another distance communication technology.
  • The vendor shall describe its plan for facilitating and participating in TAC meetings.
  • The vendor should assume eight (8) ALSDE participants.
  • This assessment will fund five (5) members in total, (4) from Alabama and (1) from out of state.
  • TAC members shall be given a $1,500 honorarium per day (this is an estimate). They shall also be reimbursed for meals, mileage or airfare, rental car or cab fees, and lodging.

• Technical Report
  • The vendor shall propose how it will develop and deliver a Technical Report or a Technical Report Supplement (with the year’s statistical information in it) annually that provides:
    o details of the test development and administration processes;
    o validity and reliability of the assessments;
o standard-setting information; and
o all other information for each assessment component necessary to support ALSDE’s compliance with the U.S. Department of Education’s Standards and Assessment Peer Review Guidance (or similar document developed in the future).

- The Technical Report shall include all relevant psychometric information for each test, including, but not limited to, the following:
  o purpose;
  o test blueprint;
  o alignment of the test to the relevant ALSDE content standards and practices;
  o test development procedures;
  o reliability data;
  o validity data;
  o accommodations and testing of students with special needs;
  o security;
  o administration procedures and issues that arose during administration;
  o scoring;
  o psychometric analysis (such as item analyses, DIF analyses, distractor analyses, and fit statistics);
  o IRT calibrations;
  o equating and scaling;
  o standard setting;
  o opportunity to learn data;
  o reporting procedures and formats;
  o special studies; and
  o appropriate use and interpretation of test data.

- The report is to be completed before July 15th of each year, following the end of the operational program unless otherwise determined by ALSDE and vendor.

- Appendices must include related materials, such as:
  o administrative regulations;
  o state standards;
  o work samples;
  o frequency/percentile distributions;
  o summary tables providing data from technical analyses;
  o state and system performance summaries by racial-ethnic group; and
  o other pertinent information.

- Irregularity and Data Forensic Analysis
  - The vendor shall indicate the steps that it will take to assure that the assessment data collected represent the independent work of the students assessed.
  - Solutions using data forensic statistical analyses to evaluate whether some of the test results were not earned fairly should be offered.
  - ALSDE is specifically interested in:
    o determining whether there is evidence of collusion among test takers;
    o if there are results indicative of prior exposure to test questions;
    o if students are responding consistently across the test materials; and
    o if changes in performance from test event to test event are consistent with what might be expected given a conscientious effort to help students learn.
  - These steps shall include:
    o pattern analyses of wrong to right answer changes;
    o erasure analyses;
o examination of school performance to detect unusual score gains or losses, including follow-up procedures to investigate such score changes; and
o other means for detecting results which are aberrant and may indicate that standardized test administration and security procedures were not followed.

ALSDE anticipates that the vendor will use multiple methods to analyze results.

The vendor shall submit samples of data forensics reports illustrating how the results can be used by ALSDE.

The data forensics analysis solution may include those used by other State Departments of Education for analyzing test results.

The RFP response must include detailed specifications of the statistical analyses used to provide the data forensics analyses.

Should the vendor propose to utilize the services of a subcontractor for some of the analyses, those costs must be listed as an option.

11. Training and Support
   • Work Plan
     ▪ Training and support for the Alabama assessment shall be provided by the vendor to Alabama educators as needed for this assessment.
     ▪ The vendor must include in its proposal a detailed plan of action and timeline that describes how and when each of the training and support tasks will be accomplished.
     ▪ The vendor shall preview each training session and webinar for ALSDE staff.
     ▪ The vendor shall describe its plan to create the materials for each training session and webinar, with sufficient time so that ALSDE has at least two weeks to preview the materials to be used and so that any necessary changes can be incorporated into the training materials before use.
     ▪ Training content and materials must be approved by ALSDE before use.
     ▪ The vendor shall provide face-to-face and online webinar training to System Test Coordinators and System Technology Coordinators for the assessment.

   • Face-to-Face Training
     ▪ Technology Coordinator training
       o These sessions shall provide system IT personnel with training on the operation and features of the online assessment system.
       o It must include training on the physical and electronic security of assessments, system requirements for implementing the online assessment, and troubleshooting of technology issues at the school or system site.
       o Training must include a visual as well as oral presentation and may include other types of interactive technology.
       o The vendor shall be mindful of and ensure the provision of all facility and training accommodations that are required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.
       o Training sessions shall be recorded and archived as a potential future training or reference resource.
     ▪ System Test Coordinator training
       o The ALSDE holds two workshops a year with all STCs, one at the beginning of the school year and one after the winter break.
       o The vendor’s Program Manager and other pertinent vendor staff shall attend these workshops at the vendor’s expense.
       o Vendor will be responsible for securing and paying for locations of workshops.
       o These sessions shall provide STCs with information concerning the administration of assessments and security of assessments.
       o Training must include a visual as well as oral presentation and may include other types of interactive technology.
o The vendor shall be mindful of and ensure the provision of all facility and training accommodations that are required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

o Training sessions shall be recorded and archived as a potential future training or reference resource.

- Understanding the assessment results training
  o These sessions shall provide STCs with tools to evaluate and analyze assessment results to provide meaningful recommendations to their systems about curriculum and other policies.
  o Training must include a visual as well as oral presentation and may include other types of interactive technology.
  o The vendor shall be mindful of and ensure the provision of all facility and training accommodations that are required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.
  o Training sessions shall be recorded and archived as a potential future training or reference resource.

- Webinars
  o Webinars shall be conducted once for each type of training.
  o They are intended as an additional resource for system personnel who may not be able to attend a face-to-face session or to share important assessment information with their colleagues.
  o The webinars may be based off recordings of the face-to-face training sessions or created as unique training sessions.
  o The webinars must include opportunities for participants to ask questions and interact with presenters either via text chat or voice.
  o After the initial webinar presentation, webinars will be posted online at the Student Assessment website.

- Online training support
  o The vendor shall create training materials and provide customer support specific to online assessment.
  o The training materials must at least include a user manual with an easy to understand set of directions, including screenshots, for operating the online assessment software.
  o Vendors may also include other beneficial training materials in their response, such as e-learning modules and online tutorials for users.

12. Customer Service

Vendors should respond to the requirements below with the understanding that it is ALSDE's expectation that technical and logistical support will be provided in a responsive manner that minimizes school personnel and student burden, disruption, and inconvenience.

- System Test Coordinator Routine Communications/Notifications
  o The vendor will be responsible for writing routine communications/notifications to the STCS.
  o These communications will be forwarded to ALSDE for approval and distribution.

- Telephone and email Support
  o A dedicated toll-free customer service number and trained customer service representatives shall be provided by the vendor for this project.
  o Customer service personnel must be able to clearly articulate spoken English.
  o The lead customer service representative must be named in the proposal, and ALSDE shall have the right to approve the named person.
  o The lead supervisor and other vendor trained staff shall be available to answer Alabama calls from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. central time each business day, excluding federal and Alabama state holidays.
- When customer service staff is not available to take a call, a voicemail service system must be available to record the caller’s message.
- Messages must be returned in a timely manner, generally within one hour or less but always within one business day.
- The vendor shall describe its proposed procedures for providing telephone support to Alabama.
- The vendor shall provide e-mail support from its customer service center.
- STCs should submit their non-technical questions to ALSDE.
- If an STC contacts the vendor, the vendor will inform the ALSDE.

**Issue Resolution**
- Customer service staff shall have a system to ensure that issues raised by STCs have been satisfactorily resolved.
- The vendor shall notify ALSDE of any communication with the field regarding urgent or sensitive issues.

**Records of Interaction with Customers**
- An electronic record of all telephone calls and e-mails, as well as responses given to customers, must be maintained by the vendor.
- The vendor shall include a description of how calls and emails will be logged, including:
  - the caller/e-mailer name, system, school, date, and time of incoming call/email;
  - a summary of the issue;
  - resolution; and
  - date and time of resolution.
- This electronic record shall be in a format (e.g., a database), so that ALSDE can sort by system, school, date, etc.
- Along with other information, this will allow ALSDE to determine the frequency of issues that arise before, during, or after assessments.
- The electronic record will also be used to produce a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document and/or to inform future trainings.
- The vendor shall indicate how it proposes to do this.

**Customer-Initiated Calls and Communications**
- All communications with the field initiated by the vendor must be pre-approved by ALSDE.
- This includes both written communications and oral scripts used when customer service representatives must contact STCs.
- Additionally, customer service staff may be asked to initiate e-mail communications in unusual circumstances by ALSDE.

**Customer Feedback Survey**
- The vendor shall create and administer at least once annually a customer feedback survey, including both close-ended and open-ended items.
- The vendor will be responsible for compiling responses.
- The feedback surveys will be available to ALSDE for review, as well as to be used in planning for the next year’s program.
- Surveys used by the vendor in the past may be included in an attachment.

13. **Contractual Information**
- This RFP provides vendors with sufficient information to enable them to prepare and submit proposals for consideration by the ALSDE and to satisfy the need for expert assistance in the completion of the goals in this RFP.
• This RFP contains instructions governing the proposal to be submitted and the material to be included therein, mandatory requirements which must be met to be eligible for consideration, and other requirements to be met by each proposal.
• Vendors are responsible for checking the ALSDE website to obtain all information and documents related to this RFP. Go to: www.alsde.edu; click on Department Offices then on Student Assessment.
• The proposal shall be typewritten on 8.5" x 11" paper and sent in sealed envelopes.
• The envelopes shall be labeled with the following information:
  ▪ RFP Number: ALSDE 2018-13 (lower left-hand corner of the envelope)
  ▪ RFP Title: Statewide Alabama Student Assessment
  ▪ Jacky P. Todd
    Alabama Department of Education Office of Operations, P305
    Gordon Person’s Building
    50 N Ripley
    Montgomery, AL 36104-2101
• The ALSDE will not be responsible for misdirected packages or premature opening of proposals if a proposal is not properly labeled.
• One (1) original, one (1) digital, & five (5) copies of the proposal shall be timely submitted to the Issuing Officer in a sealed envelope.
• The ALSDE assumes no responsibility for delays caused by any delivery service. A proposal submitted orally, by email, by fax or any other electronic means will be rejected.
• The ALSDE will select the vendor that provides the most technically sound and cost-effective proposal.

• Performance Bond
  ▪ The selected vendor should, within ten days after notification of the award and at no additional cost to the SDE, furnish a performance bond in the amount of $1,000,000.
  ▪ The performance guarantee will be one of the following: cashier’s check, other type bank certified check (personal or company checks not acceptable), money order, an irrevocable letter of credit, or surety bond issued by a company authorized to do business within the state of Alabama.
  ▪ The director of the Department of Finance or his designee will be the custodian of the performance guarantee. The performance guarantee will reference this proposal and will be payable to the State of Alabama.

• Inquiries/Questions
  ▪ Vendors should carefully review the RFP including all attachments. Questions or requests for clarification must be submitted to the designated contact (Jacky Todd) in writing via emails only. Send all inquiries to:
    Questions or Requests
    Jacky P. Todd, Operations Administrator
    Email: j todd@alsde.edu
  ▪ Inquiries/questions must be clearly labeled in the subject line with the RFP number and a reference to the applicable RFP section or subsection.
  ▪ Responses to the vendor’s inquiries will be published, in a timely manner, as a modification. Go to: www.alsde.edu; click on Department Offices then on Student Assessment to find the inquiries and responses.
  ▪ Vendors shall not rely on any verbal statements that alter any specification or other term or condition of the RFP. Such changes are valid only if provided in writing by the Operations Administrator.
• Conflict of Interest
  - The ALSDE prohibits any business entity or person to be awarded a contract if they have an “Organizational Conflict of Interest” regarding this solicitation and the resulting contract.
  - An Organizational Conflict of Interest exists when a person or business entity has an unfair competitive advantage because of other activities or relationships with other persons. No person or business entity who was engaged by the ALSDE in preparing the original RFP solicitation or who had access prior to the solicitation to procurement-sensitive information related to this procurement, including, but not limited to, Requirements, Statements of Work, or Evaluation Criteria will be eligible to directly submit or participate in the submittal of a proposal for this solicitation. The ALSDE considers this to be an Organizational Conflict of Interest. For purposes of this solicitation, organizational conflict of interest means that because of other activities or relationships with other persons, a person or business entity has an unfair competitive advantage. All vendors who wish to participate in this solicitation must certify that no conflict of interest exists.

• Alabama Discrimination Statement
  No person shall be denied employment, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of disability, gender, race, religion, national origin, color, age, genetic information, or any other category protected under the law. Ref: Sec. 1983, Civil Rights ACT, 42 U.S.C.; Title VI and VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Sec. 504; Age Discrimination in Employment Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act of 2008; Equal Pay Act of 1963; Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972; Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008. Title IX Coordinator, P. O. Box 302101, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101 or call (334) 242-8165.

• Proposal Submission
  - Vendors are permitted to submit only one (1) proposal in response to this RFP.
  - All proposals submitted in response to the RFP must consist of:
    - one (1) original and five (5) clearly identified copies of the proposal, including all required attachments; and
    - one (1) electronic copy on a USB Flash Drive in MS WORD format.
  - The original and all copies shall be bound separately, delivered in sealed containers, and permanently marked as indicated above. A vendor's disclosure or distribution of its proposal other than to the ALSDE will be grounds for disqualification.
  - Vendor is responsible for ensuring that its proposal is physically received by the ALSDE prior to the deadline for receipt of proposals identified in the Estimated RFP Timeline.
  - A solicitation amendment will be issued if this deadline is changed.
  - A proposal submitted orally, by email, by fax or by other electronic means will be rejected.
  - Vendors mailing their proposals shall allow sufficient mail delivery time to ensure receipt of their proposals by the time specified. Postmarks are not sufficient for timely submissions.
  - Late proposals will not be accepted.
  - The proposal package shall be delivered or sent by mail to:
    Jacky P. Todd, Operations Administrator
    Department of Education Office of Operations, P305
    Gordon Persons Building
    50 N Ripley, Montgomery, AL 36104-2101
  - Proposals will be secured and held unopened until the deadline for receipt of proposals.
  - As proposals are received, the outer envelope will be annotated with the date and time of receipt.
  - The vendor may contact the Operations Administrator to inquire whether its proposal has been received.
• The ALSDE Request for Proposal Cover Sheet and attached documents requiring signatures must be signed in ink, by the vendor or an officer of the vendor legally authorized to bind the vendor to the proposal.

• Addendum or Supplement to Request for Proposal
  • In the event that it becomes necessary to revise any part of the RFP, a notice will be posted on the Alabama State website. Go to: www.alsde.edu; click on Department Offices then on Student Assessment. It is very important that vendors check the website on a regular basis, as this is the sole means for communicating any clarifications or changes to RFP content and/or requirements.
  • Responses to inquiries will be posted here as well.

• Non-Collusion
  • The vendor’s signature on a proposal submitted in response to the RFP guarantees that the prices, terms and conditions, and services quoted have been established without collusion with other vendors and without effort to preclude the ALSDE from obtaining the best possible competitive proposal.

• Rejection of Proposal
  • The ALSDE reserves the right to reject any proposals that do not comply with the requirements and specifications of the RFP, are late in submission, or unsatisfactory in any way.
  • A proposal may be rejected that imposes terms or conditions that would modify requirements of this RFP or limit the vendor’s liability to the ALSDE.
  • Attempts to impose unacceptable conditions on the ALSDE or impose alternative terms not in the best interest of the ALSDE shall not be tolerated. Continued attempts to impose unacceptable conditions or terms on the ALSDE shall result in a determination of non-responsiveness of the proposal due to lack of compliance with the terms and conditions of negotiation or this RFP.

• Award of Contract
  • All proposals received by the proposal due date that meet the mandatory requirements of the RFP will be reviewed by an evaluation committee. The committee will make a recommendation for award.
  • The award will be made to the responsible vendor whose proposal will be the most advantageous to the ALSDE, price and other factors considered.
  • The Department will post a “Notice of Intent to Make an Award” on the website which will announce the apparent successful vendor. Go to: www.alsde.edu; click on Department Offices then on Student Assessment.
  • A contract must be completed and signed by all parties concerned. In the event the parties are unable to enter into a contract, the ALSDE may elect to cancel the “Notice of Intent to Make an Award” letter and make the award to the responsible vendor whose proposal would subsequently have received the award.
  • ALSDE may, at its sole discretion, either accept a vendor’s initial proposal by award of a contract or enter into discussions with vendors whose proposals are deemed to be reasonably likely of being considered for award. In conducting discussions, there shall be no disclosure of any pricing information derived from proposals submitted by a competing vendor. Vendor(s) may be invited to submit a “Best and Final Offer” to ALSDE for consideration. Best and Final Offers will be made at the vendor’s expense.
  • The ALSDE will make all decisions regarding evaluation of the proposal. The ALSDE reserves the right to judge and determine whether a request is compliant with and has satisfactorily met the requirements of the RFP. The ALSDE reserves the right to waive technical defects if, in its judgment, the interest of the ALSDE so requires. Any further information disclosed about the RFP during this process will be provided to all applicants.
For the purpose of verifying the contents of the applications, the ALSDE may request additional information, vendor interviews, and content presentations or materials. Discussions may be conducted with applicants that submit proposals determined to be reasonably suitable of being selected for clarifying and assuring full cooperation in meeting the required terms. The ALSDE reserves the right to reject at its sole discretion the proposals it deems non-cooperative applications.

ALSDE reserves the right to reject all proposals and cancel the RFP if it is in the best interest of the ALSDE.

- **Contract Modification**
  - The Contract issued may be modified only through a written Amendment, signed by the ALSDE.
  - Any change to the Contract, including the addition of work or materials, the revision of payment terms, or the substitution of work or materials, directed by a person who is not specifically authorized by ALSDE in writing, or that is made unilaterally by the vendor, is a material breach of the Contract. Unless otherwise specified by applicable laws or rules, such changes, including but not limited to any unauthorized written Amendment, shall be void and without effect, and the vendor shall not be entitled to any claim under the Contract based on those changes. No oral statement of any person shall modify or otherwise affect the terms, conditions, or specifications stated in the Contract.

- **Termination of Contract**
  - The vendor may terminate this Contract, in whole or in part, for default with both a thirty (30) day written notification from the vendor and upon written approval from the ALSDE. The ALSDE may terminate this Contract, in whole or in part, for default or any other just cause upon a thirty (30) day written notification to the vendor.
  - The ALSDE may terminate this Contract immediately, in whole or in part, without a thirty (30) day written notice to the vendor, when violations are found to be an impediment to the function of the ALSDE and detrimental to the cause of a State Entity, when conditions preclude the thirty (30) day notice, or when the ALSDE determines that an administrative error occurred prior to Contract performance.
  - If this Contract or certain obligations hereunder are terminated, the ALSDE or State Entity shall be liable only for payment for products delivered and accepted, and such termination shall not be an exclusive remedy but shall be in addition to any other rights and remedies provided for by law.

14. **Contract Award Protest Procedures**

- Vendors who receive a notice of non-award may file a protest on any phase of solicitation or award, including, but not limited to, specifications, award, or a disclosure of information marked confidential in the response.

- The protest shall be submitted in writing within seven (7) working days after such aggrieved person knows, or should have known, of the facts giving rise thereto, to:
  
  Alabama State Department of Education  
  Office of General Counsel  
  5103 Gordon Persons Building  
  50 N. Ripley Street  
  Montgomery, AL 36104
• Any action to enforce this contract must be adjudicated exclusively in the State System Court of Montgomery County, Alabama. Each party consents to the exclusive jurisdiction of such court and waives any claim of jurisdiction or forum non-convenes.

• ALSDE does not agree to any form of binding arbitration, mediation, or other forms of mandatory alternative dispute resolution. The parties have the right to enforce their rights and remedies in judicial proceeding. ALSDE does not waive any right to a jury trial.

• In the event a lawsuit is instituted by ALSDE to obtain performance due under this Contract, and ALSDE is the prevailing party, vendor shall, except where otherwise prohibited by statute, pay ALSDE’s reasonable attorney fees and costs in connection with the lawsuit.
COST OPTIONS:

Cost options are expected to adhere to all guidelines outlined in this RFP unless otherwise agreed upon by the vendor and the ALSDE.

1. K-2 assessments – Alabama acknowledges that learning gaps often start prior to elementary school. The ALSDE would like the vendor to include in this proposal a cost option to develop K-2 assessments to better gauge student progress and help identify students who may be academically lagging. ALSDE will seek guidance from the vendor on the development of this assessment. Included with this cost option, ALSDE would like the vendor to include in this proposal a cost option to develop a Kindergarten assessment, a cost option for a grade 1 assessment and a cost option for a grade 2 assessment.

2. ALSDE wants to provide interim assessments that will be made available online for voluntary system use at the same grades and subjects included in the Summative component. The purpose is to provide a set of field-tested items that local education agencies can use to monitor student learning and inform instruction. To ensure continuity across assessments the interim assessments should have the same format used in other assessments except writing. ALSDE desires that the interim assessments be a system of modular, on-demand assessments in reading, mathematics, writing and science to be administered in fall and winter for Grades 3 – 8 and high school.

3. ALSDE wishes to cost option a science assessment for Grades 3, 4, 6, and 7 that adheres to all guidelines for Grades 5 and 8.

4. ALSDE is also interested in adaptive testing as a cost option. Vendors should propose as a cost option, innovative solutions that offer the benefits of adaptive testing while balancing the resource requirements for item development.

5. ALSDE is seeking assessments that will 100% online in the first year (i.e., 2020), but will provide support materials (e.g., test coordinator manuals, test administrator manuals, system administrator manuals, ancillaries, scratch paper, etc) both digitally and via paper. The vendor must offer innovative approaches for moving Alabama toward 100% online testing as a cost option to help the ALSDE understand possibilities to support dual-mode administration and include a cost option for paper based tests.

6. ALSDE wishes to cost option the inclusion of speaking and listening standards in its state assessment. This component of the assessment should be research and evidence based, aligned to college and work expectations, and rigorous. ALSDE speaking and listening standards require students to collaborate for both comprehension and presentation. Preparation for discussions is emphasized across the grades, as is following agreed-upon rules. Opportunities should be offered for students to adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, which they can apply in all subject areas and life endeavors. ALSDE will seek guidance from the vendor on the development of this assessment.

7. ALSDE wishes to cost option end-of-course assessments. Vendor must demonstrate the knowledge and expertise to implement and provide assessments aligned with the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards and corresponding Alabama Courses of Study. Specific courses to consider for this cost option include: English 9; English 10; English 11; English 12; Algebra I; Algebra II; Geometry; Pre-Calculus; Biology; Chemistry; Physics; and U.S. History.

Courses of Study that will guide the development of the assessments created in response to this RFP are as follows:

- Science, 2015
- Mathematics, currently under revision
- English Language Arts, 2015
Immigration
The proposal must contain a statement that the firm is aware of the requirements of the Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act; a statement that the Proposer is enrolled in the E-Verify as required by Section 31-13-9 (b), Code of Alabama 1975, as amended:

BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT
COMPLIANCE

The Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act (31-13-1 et seq, Code of Alabama, 1975 as amended by Act 2012-491) regulates illegal immigration in the State of Alabama. All contracts with the State or political subdivision thereof must comply with that law.

For the purposes of this RFP and any responding Proposal, the following sections of that law impose specific requirements: Section 9 (a) of the Act provides "As a condition for the award of any contract, grant, or incentive by the state, any political subdivision thereof, or a state-funded entity to a business entity or employer that employs one or more employees, the business entity or employer shall not knowingly employ an unauthorized alien within the State of Alabama."

Section 9(b) of the Act requires "As a condition for the award of any contract, grant, or incentive by the state, any political subdivision thereof, or a state-funded entity to a business entity or employer that employs one or more employees within the State of Alabama, the business entity or employer is enrolled in the E-Verify program."

As provided in the Act a "business entity" is any person or group of persons performing or engaging in any activity, enterprise, profession, or occupation for gain, benefit, advantage, or livelihood, whether for profit or not for profit and an "employer" is defined as any person, firm, corporation, partnership, joint stock association, agent, manager, representative, foreman, or other person having control of custody of any employment, place of employment, or of any employee, including any person or entity employing any person for hire within the State of Alabama, including a public employer. This term shall not include the occupant of a household contracting with another person to perform casual domestic labor within the household.

A proposal must include a statement that the Proposer has knowledge of this law and is in compliance. Before a contract is signed, the Contractor awarded the contract must submit a Certificate of Compliance using the form at Appendix A to this RFP and, unless exempt because it has issued by the United State Department of Homeland Security upon enrollment in the E-Verify Program. E-Verify enrollment can be accomplished at the website of the United States Department of Homeland Security at http://www.uscis.gov.

See Section 10 for additional language required by Section 10(k) of the Act to be included in the contract. Rev.5-24-13
CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT (ACT 2011-535, as amended by Act 2012-491)

DATE:________________________
RE Contract/Grant/Incentive (describe by number or subject):
________________________________________________________
By and between
________________________________________________________ (Contractor/Grantee) and
________________________________________________________ (State Agency, Department or Public Entity)

The undersigned hereby certifies to the State of Alabama as follows:

1. The undersigned hold the position of with the Contractor/Grantee named above, and is authorized to provide representations set out in this Certificate as the official and binding act of that entity, and has knowledge of the provisions of the BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT (ACT 2011-535 of the Alabama Legislature, as amended by Act 2012-491) which is described herein as "the Act".

2. Using the following definitions from Section 3 of the Act, select and initial either (a) or (b), below, to describe the Contractor/Grantee's business structure.

   BUSINESS ENTITY. Any person or group of persons employing one or more persons performing or engaging in any activity, enterprise, profession, or occupation for gain, benefit, advantage, or livelihood , whether for profit or not for profit. "Business entity" shall include, but not be limited to the following:
   a. Self-employed individuals, business entities filing articles of incorporation, partnerships, limited partnerships, limited liability companies, foreign corporations, foreign limited partnerships, foreign limited liability companies authorized to transact business in this state, business trusts, and any business entity that registers with the Secretary of State.
   b. Any business entity that possess a business license, permit, certificate, approval, registration, charter, or similar form of authorization issued by the state, any business entity that is exempt by law from obtaining such a business license, and any business entity that is operating unlawfully without a business license.

   EMPLOYER. Any person, firm, corporation, partnership, joint stock association, agent, manager, representative, foreman, or other person having control or custody of any employment, place of employment, or of any employee, including any person or entity employing any person for hire within the State of Alabama, including a public employer. This term shall not include the occupant of a household contracting with another person to perform casual domestic labor within the household.

   — (a) The Contractor/Grantee is a business entity or employer as those terms are defined in Section 3 of the Act.
   — (b) The Contractor/Grantee is not a business entity or employer as those terms are defined in Section 3 of the Act.

3. As of the date of this Certificate, Contractor/Grantee does not knowingly employ an unauthorized alien within the State of Alabama and hereafter it will not knowingly employ, hire for employment, or continue to employ an unauthorized alien within the State of Alabama;

4. Contractor/Grantee is enrolled in E-Verify unless it is not eligible to enroll because of the rules of that program or other factors beyond its control.

Certified this day of______ ________ 20__

By: ________________________________
Name of Contractor/Grantee/Recipient

________________________
Its

The above Certification was signed in my presence by the person whose name appears above, on this______ day of______ ________ 20__.

WITNESS: ____________________________

Printed Name of Witness