



National Center and State Collaborative

**National Center and State Collaborative GSEG Project
Item Writing
RFP #2012-08-01**

Questions Received August 17, 2012

NOTE: The “Intent to Bid Form” can be found under the Procurement Tab on the www.ncscpartners.org website. Two-thirds of the way down the page will be a sentence “Organizations interested in bidding should indicate their intent by August 24th, 2012, by completing this form.” The actual form can be found by clicking on the link.

Question 1: Sec. 5.2.1.2 Vendor & Partner Overview & References, RFP Page 50, *Vision and Strategy*. Vendors should describe their organization’s mission and vision and show how these items will provide the business direction and resources to enable the Vendor to facilitate the successful implementation of the NCSC GSEG Project. Vendors must describe their strategy to providing key competencies and focused, service-oriented support required for a successful implementation.

Sec. 5.2.1.2 Vendor & Partner Overview & References, RFP Page 51, *Vendor References*. Vendors and subcontractors shall provide a list of three references where the Vendor implemented a similar Item Writing Project and the work was similar in size, application, and scope to the projects described herein. The NCSC GSEG team will contact these companies or organizations and ask them about the Vendor’s technical capabilities, project management skills, and ongoing support.

Question 1: For both of these RFP sections, can you please clarify what you mean by “support”? Do you mean a company needs to provide “customer support” or some other kind?

Response: *Support refers to resources and capacity necessary to provide the services and deliverables described in the RFP. The Vendor will primarily interact with leadership teams at the project level. In depth, detailed, or frequent ‘customer support’ directly to all NCSC GSEG states is beyond the scope of this RFP.*



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Questions Received August 17-24, 2012

NCSC is issuing a correction to line 3 in the table found on p.12, section 2.3 of RFP #2012-08-01. The correct date for submission of math item specifications is November 26, 2012.

Question 2: Section 4.4.1, Page 37, General Information. General Information of the RFP details the term of the contract shall be for one year with one possible extension for a period of one year. Can you please provide further detail regarding the activities/scope under the one year extension?

Response: *There are no additional activities or scope contemplated in the one year extension. NCSC GSEG has specific timelines for activities beyond this RFP such as field tests and an operational test in 2015 that require item development to be completed in the one year period as described in this RFP. It is not the intention of NCSC GSEG and edCount Management to extend the contract beyond one year.*

Question 3: Section 4.4.1, Page 37, General Information. Please specify if you would like bidders to provide pricing for the possible one year extension as part of the RFP response. If yes, you would like bidders to provide pricing for the possible extension, will bidders be evaluated on their base term price only or will bidders be evaluated on the base + the extension price?

Response: *No, all work should be priced to be completed in the first year of the contract.*

Question 4: Can you provide the proposed budget for this program?

Response: *Our NCSC GSEG project was funded for just under \$45 million to develop a comprehensive system of curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional development for 18 states. The states and staff partners will provide the conceptual underpinnings of the entire system, and NCSC GSEG will work in partnership with each of our vendors to provide the leadership as the pieces of the system are being built. A full-time NCSC project manager has been hired to ensure smooth and timely communication between NCSC state and staff persons, and between the vendors doing particular tasks. Given this, we believe that vendors will be well served by demonstrating through the RFP process how they can use their considerable logistical infrastructures and organizational tools to leverage and operationalize the considerable conceptual work done by the NCSC partners, with their best and most reasonable pricing structures.*



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Question 5: Section 4.4.4 (q), Page 44, General Contract Terms. In the event there is any discrepancy between any of these contract documents, the following order of documents governs so that the former prevails over the latter: contract, NCSC GSEG's RFP, Vendor's response to the RFP and purchase order. Will the Questions submitted by vendors and Answers to those questions be a part of the final contract documents?

Response: *Yes, the questions submitted by Vendors and answers to those questions will become part of the RFP by amendment. This document contains all of such questions and related responses. Thus, the answers are binding for potential Vendors, NCSC GSEG, and edCount Management.*

Question 6: Section 3.2.2, Page 14, Item Review. Is NCSC open to conducting the Bias/Sensitivity Committee Review Meetings and the Universal Design Review Meeting on back-to-back days?

Response: *NCSC is open to conducting bias/sensitivity reviews and universal design reviews on back to back days. The Vendor may also propose to combine some review activities into a single session (e.g. bias/ sensitivity and universal design review could occur in one session).*

Question 7: Section 3.4.1, Page 20, Item Writing. Will each student respond to every item in a task? Or would the teacher have the student start with the Level 4 item (most complex) and if the student cannot respond accurately and independently would the teacher then move to the Level 3 item and so forth? If not, will it be the responsibility of the teacher to determine the entry/access point for their student and administer only items at that complexity level?

Response: *NCSC leaders have not made final decisions regarding test design, but it is safe to assume that teachers will not be asked to select an access point to determine complexity level. While some items associated with a single task could appear together, items should be developed such that they could function independently and could appear without any other items associated with that task in a test session.*

Question 8: Section 3.4.1, Page 20, Item Writing. Will each item rubric incorporate a scaffolded scale of independence, accuracy of response and supports?

Response: *NCSC does not anticipate multiple rubrics to address support, independence and accuracy separately. Supports should be regarded not as a separate dimension to be scored, but as part of the item features that (in part) inform complexity. These well-specified supports are designed such that they will not interfere with the independence*



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of a student's response. Therefore, the Vendor should produce a single rubric that evaluates the accuracy of a student's response.

Question 9: Section 3.4.1, Page 20, Item Writing. Should there be a task rubric developed incorporating the potential pts. based on the items at the different levels of complexity? Will the score structure vary based on the level of complexity? Will students that respond at the lowest level of complexity be able to earn as many points as the level four students?

Response: *It is not the case that rubrics for items at a lower level of complexity will have a reduced range of score points. The score structure for the rubric will be based on accuracy of the student response and will not vary by item complexity. See responses to questions 7 and 8 for additional clarity. To the extent that complexity informs the students final score on the assessment, this will be addressed more broadly in the test design and scoring phase, which is beyond the scope of this contract.*

Question 10: Appendix 1, Page 3. States “While creating items for a particular task, developers consider each of the potential variable features to determine whether that variable feature should, indeed, be incorporated into the item. . . For each potential variable feature developers document whether and how it is incorporated into the item.”

The task templates provided had the variable features already identified as “Implemented,” “Yes,” and “No.” Will these features be pre-determined in the item template or will that be the responsibility of the item developer?

Response: *The Vendor should not assume these features will be pre-determined. The Vendor should plan to use the information provided and extend/ refine as needed within an ECD framework to make final decisions about features and develop a supporting rationale for these decisions.*

Question 11: Appendix 1, Page 3. Does NCSC prefer a multi-dimensional matrix that allows for assigning points for two or more dimensions? Could there be different types of rubrics for selected response items and open-ended response items?

Response: *Assigning points should be based on accuracy of response only. NCSC anticipates that selected response items will simply be scored as correct or incorrect. A rubric should be developed for open-ended items that takes into account degree of accuracy. See responses to questions 7, 8, and 9 for more clarity.*



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Question 12: Appendix 1, Page 3. Will vendors use the PADI system to access the design patterns and task models, or will NCSC provide a PDF of tables?

Response: *Vendors should not expect to have access to the PADI system. Information will be provided as MS Word documents and in PDF format.*

Question 13: Appendix 1, Page 3. Will the design patterns and task models for math be available at contract execution to inform the development of the specifications? When does NCSC anticipate that the ELA design patterns and task models will be ready and available?

Response: *Design patterns and task models will be available for math at contract execution. NCSC anticipates that the ELA design patterns and task models will be ready and available by the end of November, 2012.*

Question 14: Section 3.4.2, Page 20, Paragraph 2, Item Review. Paragraph 2 on page 20 indicates that the vendor is responsible for funding of review meetings and travel expenses. Will the vendor be responsible for funding of teacher labor, per diems or substitute pay?

Response: *The vendor will not be responsible for teacher labor or per diem, but must cover direct travel expenses for participants. The vendor must cover substitute pay, if applicable, but may cap it at \$150 per day.*

Question 15: Section 3.4.2, Page 20, Paragraph 2, Item Review. For what percentage of teacher attendees should the vendor assume airfare would be applicable?

Response: *It is likely that airfare will be applicable to all teacher attendees, except those that reside in or near the city where the reviews will take place. It is not possible to produce a more accurate projection at this time.*

Question 16: Section 3.4.2, Page 20, Paragraph 2, Item Review. Please provide an average rate for teacher attendees' hotel, airfare and per diem costs to be applied by all bidders.

Response: *It is the responsibility of the vendor to develop a reasonable and sufficient per diem cost. NCSC follows the federal per diem rates by city as published on the GSA website.*

Question 17: Section 3.4.1, Page 20, Paragraph 5, Item Writing. Section 3.4.1, paragraph 5 on page 20, says that the vendor is responsible for obtaining permissions and paying any associated costs for usage through the field testing phase. Does the



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NCSE GSEG have an expectation for the percentage of reading passages requiring copyright permissions versus being commissioned specifically for the assessments?

Response: *NCSC does not have an expectation for a number or percentage of reading passages requiring permissions.*

Question 18: Section 3.4.2, Page 22, Paragraph 3, Bullet 4 Item Review. Section 3.4.2, paragraph 3, bullet 4 on page 22 says that committee meetings must be completed in one day. Is it acceptable to hold the item content review, bias/sensitivity review, and universal design review meetings on sequential days during the same week? Recommendations for revisions from the three committees would be considered together when revising the tasks following the meetings.

Response: *The Vendor may propose to hold the meetings on sequential days. The Vendor may also propose to combine some review activities in the same session (e.g. bias/ sensitivity and universal design in one session).*

Question 19: Section 2.3, Page 12, ID 3, Schedule of Major Milestones. Should this be November 26, 2012?

Response: *Yes. The year listed is an error. It should be November 26, 2012.*

Question 20: Section 2.3, Page 12, ID 4, 5, 10, 11, Schedule of Major Milestones. There are a month between steps 4 and 5, is this time for NSCS review and revision of items? Could NCSC review of items occur on a rolling basis? What is the NCSC's capacity for leadership review?

Response: *Part of the intention is, in fact, to allow ample time for internal review and planning. NCSC is open to a plan that involves review of items on a rolling basis. NCSC will ensure that state and staff leaders are available as necessary to support review.*

Question 21: Section 3.4.1, Page 20, Paragraph 6, Item Writing. Please confirm that this is 2 passages per form for at least 8 passages per grade level.

Response: *The Vendor will not be required to develop intact forms as part of this contract. In fact, the reference to the creation of four forms per grade on page seven of the RFP, section 2.1.3, should be disregarded. Notwithstanding, it is a very reasonable estimate to assume development of eight (8) passages per grade level as part of this contract.*



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Question 22: Section 3.4.2, Page 22, Paragraph 3 Bullet 4, Item Review. Does this mean that no one committee can meet for more than a single day? Or that meetings can be multiple days, but each day can only be 8 hours?

Response: *The idea is that one committee focusing on one review activity (e.g. bias and sensitivity review) should be able to complete that review activity in one eight hour day for all assigned items. To the extent that more time is expected, the Vendor should plan for additional committees to meet simultaneously such that each committee has fewer items to review. NCSC wishes to avoid a review plan that involves a small number of committees reviewing an excessively large number of items over many days. However, the NCSC will remain open to proposals that involve review committees meeting for more than one day to complete a review task as long as each review day is eight hours or less and the total number of days, including days planned for combined and/or sequential review activities as addressed in questions six and eighteen, does not exceed four days.*

Question 23: Section 3.3.2, Page 18, Paragraph 4, Project Staffing and Qualifications. Can you please define the role of the Technical Lead [excerpted from the passage, “At a minimum key personnel will include the Vendor Project Manager and Technical Lead”]?

Response: *Technical Lead refers to the staff member with overall responsibility for the design of the item writing and review process and who will plan and coordinate the production of technical documentation. This staff member may be asked to attend or present at NCSC TAC or similar meetings.*

Question 24: Section 3.2.4 and 3.4.4, Pages 15 and 23, Paragraphs 1 and 3, Item Delivery. Do all items need to be delivered via the interim solution?

Response: *Yes. All items must be rendered for computer based delivery as intended and any associated interactive functionality (e.g. answer choice interaction for selected response items) must work as intended in the interim solution.*

Question 25: Section 3.4.4, Page 22, Paragraph 1, Item Delivery. Please define what the NCSC considers APIP core standards? Once APIP tags are applied to items, the format of the content will be APIP 1.0 XML. That allows the administration of the items via an APIP-compatible CBT delivery system. Can we assume that APIP 1.0 is the required XML format for final handoff, rather than QTI 2.1?

Response: *The Vendor should propose a solution for item format and delivery along with a detailed explanation for how the proposed solution will conform to the industry standard for interoperability with computer based item banking and delivery systems.*



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This solution should address the manner in which the required elements in the APIP standards are addressed.

Question 26: Section 6.2, Page 55, Paragraph 1, Price Proposal. What is the anticipated budget for this project? (section 6 vendor price proposal pg 54)

Response: *See question 4 above.*

Question 27: Section 4.4.1, Page 37, Bullet 1, General Information. Please confirm the price proposal is for 1 year October 2012 through October 2013.

Response: *edCount Management intends to negotiate a contract with the successful Vendor in October 2012, at which point the contract period would begin and would, thus, end one year later, October 2013.*

Question 28: Section 3.5, Pages 24-25, Paragraph 1, Deliverable Summary. Please confirm the pricing by deliverable – payment schedule should be based on just the 12 deliverables.

Response: *Pricing should be by deliverable and all costs associated with a deliverable must be included in that price. Payment will be based upon successful delivery of the items as listed in the RFP.*

Question 29: Section 3.2.2, Page 14, Paragraph 4, Item Review. Please confirm NCSC will recruit and pay the teachers for *all* committee review meetings (see questions 30 and 31 below).

Response: *The Vendor is responsible for developing a plan for identifying participants for the item review process. NCSC leadership will work with the Vendor to recruit and select the final list of participants. The Vendor is responsible for direct travel costs for all reviewers (i.e. teacher participants) at these meetings to include travel, meals, lodging, and substitute pay up to \$150 per day. The Vendor is also responsible for procurement of meeting facilities. The Vendor is NOT responsible for the travel of NCSC project staff nor is the Vendor required to pay any labor costs or honoraria for NCSC project or teacher participants.*

Question 30: Section 3.4.2, Page 21, Paragraph 2, Item Review. Can you clarify what portion of the review meetings is the Vendor responsible for and what portion NCSC will pay?

Response: *See question 29.*



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Question 31: Section 3.4.2, Page 21, Paragraph 3 Bullet 3, Item Review. Are the committee members teachers that are recruited by NCSC? Can you clarify what it means by “NCSC GSEG Leadership must approve the final committee composition”?

Response: *The Vendor will develop a plan to populate the review committees with teachers from member states. NCSC will work with states to identify a sufficient number of teachers that meet the specifications of that plan (e.g. by grade, content, area of expertise etc.). The Vendor will work with NCSC on the process of communicating with the teachers and handling logistics. For example, some states may prefer to communicate directly with districts and schools using materials provided by the Vendor; other states may permit the Vendor to communicate directly with the schools and districts. Approval of committee composition means that NCSC has the authority to accept, reject, or ask for revisions to the plan for populating the review committees, the plan for communicating with potential reviewers, and the final list of invited participants.*

Question 32: Section 3.4.2, Page 21, Paragraph 1, Item Review. Can NCSC please describe the state partner review meeting? This is the only place it is mentioned and seems to be a separate review from the NCSC GSEG staff review.

Response: *The Vendor should propose a method for state partners to review the items prior to the items going to the review committees. It is not expected that the Vendor will facilitate a review of each item with the state leads. However, the Vendor may wish to schedule a face to face meeting or webinar to discuss the process broadly and showcase some exemplar items. The Vendor should also clarify how states can access the full bank of items for independent review and how feedback can be submitted.*

Question 33: Section 3.4.1, Page 19, Item Writing. Can NCSC provide information on their expectations regarding the text complexity of the passages?

Response: *NCSC is currently developing a protocol to guide text complexity of passages and other key variables for ELA. We expect this protocol will be available to the Vendor in October of 2012.*

Question 34: Section 3.4.1, Page 20, Item Writing. Will passages that are developed for this project undergo a separate passage review or will the passages be reviewed with the associated items?



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Response: *Vendors should plan for an initial review of passages with NCSC leadership prior to more extensive development. Subsequently, passages will be reviewed with the associated items by review committees.*

Question 35: Section 3.4.1, Page 20, Paragraph 5, Item Writing. The CCSS for ELA/Literacy identify literary and informational texts, as well as print and non-print texts. (1) Will there be limitations regarding passage genres, or will the vendor be expected to represent both genres within each grade level's tasks? (2) Are there defined limits on text length, and/or text complexity, and if so, what are they? (3) Will the vendor be expected to develop non-print texts as stimuli for ELA/Literacy tasks? If so, please describe the non-print formats that may be used.

Response: *The Vendor will be provided a protocol that that addresses these issues. See question 33.*

Question 36: Section 2.3, Page 12, Table ID #9, Schedule for Major Milestones. When will the Vendor be provided with the tasks models for ELA literacy?

Response: *See question 13.*

Question 37: Section 3.1, Page 13, Paragraph 1, Bullet 2, Project Phases. Will FDOE supply the vendor with the passage specifications upon contract award? If not, what guidelines will be provided to the vendor to create the passage specifications for each grade level?

Response: *See question 33.*

Question 38: Section 3.1, Page 13, Paragraph 1, Bullet 2, Project Phases. Will FDOE provide to the vendor the protocols that will be used by the reviewers at each respective grade? If so, at what point will the protocols be provided?

Response: *NCSC will work with the successful Vendor to develop protocols to guide item review. The Vendor may propose item review plans/ protocols for consideration.*

Question 39: Section 2.3 and 3.2.3, Page 12, Table, and Page 15, Paragraph 1. Will all tasks be piloted? At what point in the schedule will the pilot occur and how quickly will feedback be provided to the vendor?

Response: *NCSC will be conducting research studies separate from and outside of the scope of this contract. Some information will be available in the fall of 2012 and may inform initial item development. Other information may be available in the spring of*



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2013 and may inform revisions to the items. Importantly, NCSC will provide any information that may impact required item revisions prior to the completion of the item reviews. By so doing, the Vendor can incorporate this feedback as well as review committee feedback in a single revision phase (3.2.3) prior to final delivery.

Question 40: Section 3.4.3, Page 22, Paragraph 1, Item Revision. The items are to be uploaded into the item bank in July and August 2013 for mathematics and ELA respectively. It appears there is insufficient time to pilot all tasks before the end of the 2012-2013 school year and to then make revisions prior to the upload deadlines. It also appears there is insufficient time at the start of the 2013-2014 school year to conduct the pilot and complete revisions based on the results before the end of the contract period.

Response: *See question 39.*

Question 41: Section 4.1.6, Page 26, Contact with NCSC Partners. Direct contact with NCSC GSEG staff, partners or contractors working on the NCSC GSEG project other than NCSC GSEG Designated Contact regarding this RFP is expressly prohibited without prior consent. Question: How can a vendor, during the proposal process, obtain consent pursuant to paragraph 4.1.6 to collaborate with a NCSC contractor on this effort?

Response: *A Vendor desiring to collaborate with a NCSC GSEG contractor should send a written email request to the NCSC GSEG Designated Contact for consideration.*

Question 42: Section 4.1.6, Page 26, Contact with NCSC Partners. If read strictly this excerpt could be interpreted to mean that any bidder who does not fall under the exception (in the last line), and who is teaming with a current NCSC contractor on a proposal in response to this RFP needs to request consent to speak with that contractor about the proposal. Is this a correct interpretation? As a current NCSC contractor, do teammates on our proposal team need to seek consent from NCSC before they can speak with us about the RFP?

Response: *See question 41 above. A Vendor desiring to collaborate with a NCSC GSEG contractor should send a written email request to the NCSC GSEG Designated Contact for consideration.*

Question 43: Section 3.2.4, Page 15, Paragraph 1, Item Delivery. Would NSCS consider review of items during the content and bias/sensitivity reviews without APIP tagging? If allowable APIP tagging would be applied for the Universal Design Review. This method would streamline the development process by applying APIP tagging to only those items that have a high probability of being approved.



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Response: Yes. NCSC is open to proposals using this approach.

Question 44: Section 6.1, Page 55, Pricing Proposal. Section 6.1 of the RFP on page 55 states that "All labor rates must be "fully loaded" to represent all services provided even those that may be required at the project site (i.e., travel and expenses must be included in the rates). . . ." If we propose to use any subcontractors and/or consultants, should those costs also be rolled up into the labor rates or should those costs be presented as separate line item prices in addition to the labor price by deliverable?

Response: NCSC is open to the best way for a vendor to present the price by deliverable.

Questions Received August 27-31, 2012

Question 45: Section 3.2.2, Page 14, Item Review. How many NCSC leaders or partners will attend committee review meetings? We assume NCSC will cover its own travel costs, however total number of meeting attendees is needed to determine meeting space and food cost.

Response: See question 29. NCSC does not expect a large number of project representatives to attend the educator review sessions apart from the reviewers. The proposed process should allow for state leader review separate and prior to educator committee review. Therefore, NCSC expects only a core team of project staff to be onsite at the educator review event.

Question 46: Section 3.2.2, Page 14, Item Review. Should respondents assume that review meetings will be held in a defined location so that NCSC can compare costs across bids? For example, lodging costs for Atlanta are generally significantly lower than lodging costs for DC. Also should all respondents assume the same per diem rate for committee members (e.g., \$50 per day)?

Response: See questions 16 and 29.

Questions Received August 31-September 6, 2012

Question 47: Section 1.1.1 and 3.4.2, Pages 1 and 21, Paragraphs 2 and 3, Item Review. The RFP states that vendors must "Conduct reviews of the items following NCSC GSEG protocols," but later states that "Vendors should propose an item review process deemed best suited to support the needs of NCSC GSEG." Are the NCSC GSEG review Protocols available for review? Are these protocols general guidelines or prescriptive methodologies for review?



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Response: NCSC does not have a prescriptive methodology in place. The Vendor should develop a proposal for the development of a process deemed best suited to support the needs of the project given the information provided in the RFP.

Question 48: Section 2.1.4, Page 8, Paragraph 2, Role of SRI. Will SRI provide a complete set of item level templates including item level KSA for all items, all possible variable features as provided in the Appendix, and highest level DOK expected?

Response: NCSC will provide the successful Vendor with a Design Pattern for each targeted Core Content Connector, plus one Task Template which includes a Task Family of four items for each targeted Core Content Connector, complete with all information provided in the Appendix for each.

Question 49: Section 2.1.4, Page 8, Paragraph 2, Role of SRI. If the vendor has to provide the variable features information, is there a minimum number of variables that should be included for each item?

Response: The variable features will be defined by the evidence centered design process the vendor uses. While creating a task family for a targeted CCC, developers consider each of the potential variable features to determine how that variable feature should be incorporated into the items. See Appendix 1 background on Variable Features Glossary for the rationale and features we have been using. The Vendor should provide a similar rationale for their approach.

Question 50: Section 2.2, Page 11, Paragraph 9, Development of Target Content and Guidelines for Item Writing. For each task, the RFP stipulates that 4 levels of items be developed. Is it required that these items be hierarchical in structure? In other words, must the items be constructed in such a way that if a student gets a level 1 item wrong it could be assumed that he/she would also get the items at levels 2-4 wrong as well? Or, if he/she gets the level 4 item correct that he/she would automatically be assumed to be able to do the items at levels 1-3 for that task?

Response: Items at a lower level will focus on essential understandings whereas items at higher levels will more fully align to the focal KSA. Consequently, in general it is expected that students who respond incorrectly to lower level items will have a low probability of responding correctly to higher level items and vice versa. This hypothesized ordering will be investigated during pilot testing.

Question 51: Section 3.2.1 and 3.4.1, Pages 14 and 20, Paragraphs 1 and 6, Item Writing. Are there a set of accommodations that NCSC wants the Vendor to supply for



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the paper/pencil version? What is the extent of accommodations that are provided to the test administrator and what, if anything, would the test administrator be expected to make? (i.e. objects, manipulatives, tactile cues, answer cards)?

Response: *NCSC will develop overall accommodations guidelines and training based on the final design of the test. For individual items, the Task Templates will provide the actual format for answer cards, delivered electronically. They will also provide directions to teachers for use of manipulatives or objects that the student typically uses in classroom instruction, consistent with the variable features specified through ECD. The Task Templates to be provided will include task-specific Associated Variable Features which describe aspects of the assessment situation which may or may not be the Test Administrator. Administration training developed by NCSC and a separate Vendor partner will include procedures teachers will use to prepare for test administration, in order to gather necessary materials for any individual student.*

Question 52: Section 3.2.1 and 3.4.1, Pages 14 and 20, Paragraphs 1 and 6, Item Writing. Should vendors assume computer based delivery for any innovative item types?

Response: *Vendors should propose whether and how items developed will incorporate innovative computer technology. All items developed for this project must be rendered on a computer and must include basic interactivity (e.g. selected response, text input). Given the nature and variability of some items/ tasks, it is acceptable to propose a solution in which interactivity takes place outside the computer based system and the response is subsequently entered into the system.*

Question 53: Section 3.2.2 and 3.2.4, Pages 14 and 15, Paragraphs 4 and 5, Item Review. Although the RFP notes that member states will provide subject matter experts for review, will the vendor be fully responsible for SMEs needed for item (and related materials) development?

Response: *Yes.*

Question 54: Section 3.2.2 and 3.2.4, Pages 14 and 15, Paragraphs 4 and 5, Item Review. Can panelists stay the same throughout the item development process or do we need new panelists for each step of review?

Response: *It is acceptable to propose a review process such that the same panelist(s) review the item for different features (i.e., content, bias/ sensitivity, and universal design). See questions 18 and 22.*



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Question 55: Section 3.4, Page 18, Paragraph 6, *Technical Topics*. What technical specifications have been established for the computer based delivery (e.g., bandwidth, graphics' standards)?

Response: *Specifications have not been established at this time.*

Question 56: Section 3, Page 12, Paragraph 1. “This section of the RFP provides a description of NCSC GSEG’s expectations for the work to be completed by the Vendor for the Item Writing Project. The General Topics section describes technical requirements that must be addressed in the Vendor response to this RFP.” What additional responsibilities should the vendor anticipate beyond the scope of the project?

Response: *The responsibilities the Vendor should anticipate are those described in section 3 of the RFP.*

Question 57: Section Appendix 1, Page 17.

NCSC Numbers 4.NO.1n1 Nu Design Pattern 2644		[Permit Delete View: View (vertical)]	
Title	[Edit]	NCSC Numbers 4.NO.1n1	notes
Overview	[Edit]	CCC: Select a model of a given fraction (halves, thirds, fourths, sixths, eighths).	

Could NCSC please provide assistance in understanding the numbering of the titles in the provided templates? In the example, Design Pattern 2644, the title reads NCSC Numbers 4.NO.1n1 and the CCSS provided is 3.NF.1. Is this referring to a 4th grade CCC (i.e., 4.NO.1n1) or is it not associated with a specific grade level?

Response: *With respect to the code hierarchy used by NCSC, all numbering of the item codes in the provided patterns and templates are designed to show the associated grade for CCC and CCSS, but flagging specific locations where the Learning Progression Framework (LPF) and the CCSS differ slightly on the sequence of the progression with the lower or higher grade coded CCSS. These flags are being reviewed in the item tryouts, initial alignment studies, and will undergo external content reviews prior to final test design decisions.*

The more complex implied part of the question relates to the coding of a 4th grade CCC/LPF-Progress Indicator (PI) with a 3rd grade CCSS. The Core Content Connectors (CCCs) are the prioritized academic content designed to frame the instruction and



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assessment of students with significant cognitive disabilities. This identified core content serves as a connection or stage between the LPF (designed for typically developing students) and the CCSS (which define grade level content and achievement). The CCCs preserve the sequence of learning outlined in the learning progression to the extent possible while deconstructing the progress indicators (which describe concepts and skills along the learning continuum for each grade span in the learning progression) into teachable and assessable segments of content. In a few instances, the LPF and CCSS differ slightly on the sequence of the progression, resulting in a few content priorities that are assigned different CCSS grade levels within the same LPF-PI. In each case, NCSC provides a justification and annotation of the rationale for the CCC alignment, whether for use in curriculum or in assessment. In our tryouts and cognitive labs, and in our test alignment study, we will specifically be checking our assumptions and will finalize based on those data.

Question 58: Section 4.4.4 (h), Page 42, Warranty. Is this clause applicable to this RFP?

If yes, would NCSC GSEG please clarify what “system” is subject to “acceptance” and Warranty under this RFP? We understand we will provide an “interim solution to view and test items in computer presentation during review” under the contract, but did not see that service provision as the delivery of software.

Response: *It is correct that the Vendor is required to provide an interim solution to view test items and can be met without delivery of software; therefore, there would be no warranty expected by NCSC.*

Question 59: Sections 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, Page 55, Price Proposal. Section 6.1 “All labor rates must be “fully loaded” to represent all services provided even those that may be required at the project site (i.e., travel and expenses must be included in the rates).”

Page 55, Section 6.2 “All price figures shall be provided in a fixed fee amount”

Page 55, Section 6.3 “A fixed price must be provided for each deliverable identified in Section 4 of this RFP.”

Which requirements apply to this RFP? Are vendors required to provide (1) fixed fee amounts/fixed prices by deliverable, or (2) fully loaded labor rates?

If both, what is the purpose of the providing the other? How will the other figure in the evaluation?

Response: *See question 44. NCSC requires all costs, including “fully loaded” labor costs, in a fixed fee amount by deliverable (section 6.3). NCSC also requires a “Total Not To Exceed Price” as stated in 6.1.*



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Question 60: Section 3.4.1, Page 20, Item Writing. “..the Vendor is responsible for obtaining permissions and paying any associated costs for usage through the field testing phase.”

Given permissions are based on exposure, how many students will see each passage/stimulus in the field test?

Response: *NCSC cannot estimate the extent of exposure at this time. Please provide the assumptions and rationale that you use in your response.*