



National Center and State Collaborative

**National Center and State Collaborative GSEG Project  
Summative Assessment  
RFP #2012-11-01**

There is an amendment to RFP #2012-11-01, Section 4.4.1(a) that has been posted on the [www.ncscpartners.org](http://www.ncscpartners.org) website. It relates to Question 1 below.

**NOTE:** The “Intent to Bid Form” can be found under the Procurement Tab on the [www.ncscpartners.org](http://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 November 20th, 2012, by completing this form.” The actual form can be found by clicking on the link.

**Questions Received November 14, 2012**

**Question 1: Sec. 4.4.1, General Information, Paragraph a, Page 56. Text of Passage being questioned: “The term of the contract between the successful bidder and edCount Management shall be for one year with one possible extension for a period of one year.” Question:** The RFP provides for a one year contract with a possible one year extension. The RFP also requires that services and deliverables be provided through 2015. Should vendors price for and expect a contract from 2013 through 2015?

**Response:** *The RFP will be amended to state that the contract shall be for one year with two one-year options through 2015. Pending issuance of the amendment, Vendors should plan on pricing deliverables that span multiple years as outlined in the deliverable table through 2015. The contract will be renewable annually through 2015 provided the work performed during the contract period is acceptable.*

**Question 2: Sec. 5.2.1, Paragraph 2 and Table, Page 66. Question:** We would like some clarification on which information should go behind each specified tab, specifically for Tabs 4, 5, and 6 that all include responses to requirements 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4. **Can you please clarify which requirements belong under which tab, or reorder the tabs to reflect the order of the RFP?**

We are assuming 3.1 belong under General Requirements? Does 3.2 also belong under General Requirements or should 3.2 be under Technical Requirements (then putting it out of numerical order within the response)? We are assuming that 3.3 belongs under the Management Requirements tab. Does 3.4 belong under Technical Requirements? Or does 3.4 need to be included in Management Requirement?  
Or does the order of the tabs need to be rearranged to:



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**Tab 4 General Requirements (Includes 3.1)**

**Tab 5: Technical Requirements (Includes 3.2)**

**Tab 6: Management Requirements (Includes 3.3 and 3.4)**

**Response:** Based on statement on page 16, “General Topics section describes technical requirements that must be addressed in the Vendor response to this RFP. The Management and Technical Topics address specific requirements and describe deliverables to be produced . . .”; therefore:

*Tab 4, General Requirements, should address sections of the RFP up to and including section 3.1.*

*Tab 5, Management Requirements, should address 3.3 and 3.4.*

*Tab 6, Technical Requirements should address requirements in 3.2.*

**Question 3:** Regarding the many RFP requirements/deliverables that call for a plan to be provided and/or developed, do in depth details of these plans need to be included as part of the vendors proposal response or to be provided during delivery?

**Response:** The in depth details will be provided during delivery. However, vendors should provide information that addresses the process that will be followed and a supporting rationale for that process.

**Question 4:** When can the Vendor expect the technology platform to be available?

**Response:** NCSC expects to have an interim solution for computer based presentation of items in the spring of 2013. A platform that will support pilot testing will be available by January 1, 2014.

**Question 5: Sec. 3.2.3.3, Page 25. Text of Passage being questioned:** “... approximately 2/3 of the constructed responses items will be scored by the test examiner during the test administration and the results will be recorded in the NCSC computer based testing system.” **Question:** Please confirm the scores (results) of the externally scored items will be entered into the NCSC computer based testing system and that the vendor will not be required to provide a scoring system.

**Response:** The Vendor will be responsible for designing, managing, implementing, and evaluating/documenting the external scoring of items. This will be accomplished primarily through centralized scoring. Also, as noted, NCSC wishes to explore distributed scoring, which will require the Vendor to design and manage a process that produces



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*reliable and valid scores. However, NCSC expects that the technology system used to support these activities will not be the responsibility of the Vendor.*

**Question 6: Sec. 3.2.3.3, Page 25. Text of Passage being questioned:** Pilot Scoring Vendor Response, “The Vendor will receive scoring rubrics for all constructed response items.” **Question:** Will we also receive training sets or is the Vendor expected to create the training sets?

**Response:** *The Vendor should expect to create training sets.*

**Question 7: Sec. 3.2.3.3, Page 25. Text of Passage being questioned:** Pilot Scoring Vendor Response, “The Vendor will receive scoring rubrics for all constructed response items.” **Question:** If the Vendor must create training sets, how will the responses needed for RF be provided to us (how meaning hardcopy responses or online responses)? How many people do you see attending Rangefinding and do you foresee how long it will take?

**Response:** *The Vendor will be responsible for training sets and range finding and should propose a process to accomplish these tasks.*

**Question 8: Sec. 3.2.3.3, Page 26. Text of Passage being questioned:** Pilot Scoring Vendor Response, “The Vendor should expect to provide sufficient scoring capacity to centrally score 80% of all constructed response submissions in pilot. Assume the distributed scoring pilot will apply to approximately 20% of the externally scored constructed response content.” **Question:** Does the 80% apply to the 744 Constructed Response items or does it apply to the 80% of the 252 Constructed Response items?

**Response:** *Assume approximately one third of the items will be constructed response. Further assume that one-third of this subset will be scored externally. Of that one-third, assume approximately 80% of the items will be scored centrally and the remaining 20% will be scored via distributed scoring.*

*It may be instructive to think about this per grade/content test. If we assume 30 items are on the test, assume 10 of these items are constructed response. Of those 10, assume the examiner scores 7 during the test event and the remaining 3 will be externally scored either through a centralized process or distributed process. We estimate that 80% of districts/schools will take advantage of centralized scoring and the remaining 20% will pursue distributed scoring. We stress that all of these estimates are for planning purposes and may change over the course of the project. However, the Vendor should base plans and cost estimates on these assumptions.*



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**Question 9: Sec. 3.2.3.3, Page 26. Text of Passage being questioned:** Pilot Scoring Vendor Response, “. . . investigate the feasibility of having educators in each state review and score the work of other students at different schools within that state.”

**Question:** Does this mean that you just want the Vendor to investigate or to cost it? Can the Vendor give an alternative plan?

**Response:** *The vendor should produce a plan and cost estimate based on designing and implementing distributing scoring as described in the RFP and clarified in this document. The Vendor may, however, propose an alternative plan and rationale for that plan.*

**Question 10: Sec. 3.2.3.3, Page 26. Text of Passage being questioned:** Pilot Scoring Vendor Response, “. . . investigate the feasibility of having educators in each state review and score the work of other students at different schools within that state.”

**Question:** If the Vendor were to use educators does the Vendor need to hire and pay the teachers that participate in the “distributed study”?

**Response:** *The Vendor should not plan to compensate teachers participating in distributed scoring.*

**Question 11: Sec. 2.1.3.4, Paragraph 2, Page 13. Text of Passage being questioned:** The Design Patterns and Task Templates described above represent:

- Two (2) subject areas (English language arts and mathematics)
- Seven (7) grade levels (3–8 and 11)
- Ten (10) tasks per grade level and subject
- Four (4) items per task

**Question:** What was the item development plan based upon?

**Response:** *The item development plan was based on an estimate of the number of items necessary to support census field testing in spring 2015 and create a minimum of two intact forms available following the grant. Each form should address 10 target CCCs for each grade and content area tested.*

**Question 12: Sec. 2.1.3.4, Paragraph 5, Page 13 Table 2 and Section 3.2.1 Paragraph 2, Page 19. Text of Passage being questioned:** Draft Test Design, Specifications, and Blueprint. **Question:** How many levels of blue prints and test designs should the vendor create?

**Response:** *The Vendor should propose a solution and supporting rationale.*



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**Question 13: Sec. 2.1.3.4, Paragraph 5, Page 13 Table 2 and Section 3.2.1 Paragraph 2, Page 19. Text of Passage being questioned:** Draft Test Design, Specifications, and Blueprint. **Question:** How many tasks and items would a student need to take out of the 10 tasks and 160 items?

**Response:** *Assume a form addresses each of the ten tasks. Assume approximately 30 items per test. However, this estimate will be investigated and possibility adjusted over the course of the project. See section 3.2.1.*

**Question 14: Sec. 2.1.3.4, Paragraph 5, Page 13 Table 2 and Section 3.2.1 Paragraph 2, Page 19. Text of Passage being questioned:** Draft Test Design, Specifications, and Blueprint. **Question:** What assurance do we have that the bank at each grade level is representative and has adequate coverage?

**Response:** *NCSC will work with the item development Vendor to ensure the bank is sufficient. Acknowledging that the work of the summative assessment development and administration vendor and the item development vendor will occur contemporaneously, NCSC expects there will be opportunities for review, feedback, and collaboration between all parties to ensure mutually shared goals are achieved.*

#### **Questions Received November 21, 2012**

**NOTE:** The census field test to be conducted in Spring 2015 is the full operational assessment.

**Question 15: Sec. 1.4, Page 4, Table 1. Text of Passage being questioned:** 4 Response to Final Vendor Questions November 30, 2012 and 5 Proposals Due 3:00 PM EST December 5, 2012. **Question:** Would NCSC give an extension to the due date given that answers to bidder's questions will be returned 2 business days prior to the due date of the proposals, limiting respondents' ability to respond to changes that may be issued?

**Response:** *At this time, all dates remain as written in the RFP. Proposals are due at 3:00 PM EST on December 5, 2012.*

**Question 16: Sec. 5.2.1.4, Paragraph 1, Page 70. Text of Passage being questioned:** The format for the response is the same for these three tabs. For each heading identified in sections 3.2 and 3.3, list the heading and provide the response. Use as much space as required to completely respond to NCSC GSEG's request and include a response for each heading listed. Please refer to the "Vendor Response" comments under each heading in Section 3 to make certain your response is complete. **Question:**



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Would you please clarify how the proposal should be set up? This seems to indicate that the sections 3.2 and 3.3 should be responded to three times.

Should the set-up be:

Tab 4 - General Requirements– Section 3.1

Tab 5 - Management Requirements – Section 3.3

Tab 6 - Technical Requirements – Section 3.2

**Response:** See Question 2 above. Based on statement on page 16, “General Topics section describes technical requirements that must be addressed in the Vendor response to this RFP. The Management and Technical Topics address specific requirements and describe deliverables to be produced . . .”; therefore:

*Tab 4, General Requirements, should address sections of the RFP up to and including section 3.1.*

*Tab 5, Management Requirements, should address 3.3 and 3.4.*

*Tab 6, Technical Requirements should address requirements in 3.2.*

**Question 17: Question:** What is the estimate of how many districts/school will be testing?

**Response:** NCSC is unable to provide the requested information at this time. However, it is important to clarify that assessments (with the exception of Braille tests) and ancillary materials (e.g. administration manuals) may be provided electronically. Nevertheless, in the absence of this information, respondents may estimate any associated costs the Vendor believes is variable by school/district count as a cost per school/district.

**Question 18: Sec. 3.2.1, Paragraph g, Page 20. Text of Passage being questioned:**

Interaction: Students may respond to the test items directly via interaction with computer presentation; others will respond by interaction with a test administrator. Some students may experience a combination of both. **Question:** Will it be required that the test forms be made available to print for the student to take/interact with on paper, or will the test delivery platform have this capability?

**Response:** It is anticipated that the computer based delivery system will have the capacity to produce printed versions of test items if needed, with the exception of Braille forms, which the Vendor must provide.





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**Question 19: Sec. 3.2.3.3, Page 25. Question:** Please identify NCSC's expectations for the number of and type of artifacts – for each item - that will be collected and subsequently evaluated as evidence of student work.

Please describe the scoring capabilities of the NCSC computer based testing system.

- Will the scoring capability simply collect a single score entered by the test examiner?
- Will the NCSC computer based testing system have the capability to support the presentation of training and certification materials to test examiner?
- Will the NCSC computer based testing system have the capability to support the scoring processes and requirements identified on RFP pg 26?
- Will the test examiner be expected to train and certify the same as the external scorers?

Please provide a sample of the Constructed Response scoring rubric(s) that vendors will be required to use.

For the externally scored Constructed Response items, should vendors expect to score all responses to each of these items or will some responses to an item have scores assigned by the test examiner while other responses are scored by the vendor?

**Response:** Information about the proposed capabilities and specifications for the planned NCSC computer based testing system are available at:  
<http://www.ncscpartners.org/news/ncsc-produces-architecture-and-technology-system-requirements-for-the-assessment-platform>

*NCSC expects to have the capability to support presentation of training and certification materials and support distributed scoring described on p. 26.*

*A decision about the certification requirements for test examiners has not been made at this point.*

*Regarding the estimated number/percent of constructed response items that will be scored 'on-site' versus 'externally,' please see question #8.*

**Question 20: Sec. 3.2.3.3, Page 26-27. Text of Passage being questioned:** “Although decisions are not final, for planning purposes, the Vendor should expect to provide sufficient scoring capacity to centrally score approximately 80% of all constructed response submissions in the pilot test. Assume the distributed scoring pilot will apply to approximately 20% of the externally scored constructed response content. **Question:**



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Please clarify whether NCSC or the vendor will provide the scoring system for the centrally and distributed scored items (i.e., the items that will be scored after test administration). If the system is to be provided by NCSC, please provide specifications on the system's planned implementation, functionality, etc. .

**Response:** *The most current and detailed information available about the proposed NCSC technology system is available at: <http://www.ncscpartners.org/news/ncsc-produces-architecture-and-technology-system-requirements-for-the-assessment-platform>. The development of the NCSC technology system described in this document is beyond the scope of the current RFP.*

**Question 21: Sec. 3.2.6.5, Page 33. Text of Passage being questioned:** “The Vendor must develop and implement a system for the efficient and accurate scoring of student responses from the field test.” **Question:** Please clarify whether NCSC or the vendor will provide the scoring system for the field test. If the system is to be provided by NCSC, please provide specifications on the system's planned implementation, functionality, etc..

**Response:** *The most current and detailed information available about the proposed NCSC technology system is available at: <http://www.ncscpartners.org/news/ncsc-produces-architecture-and-technology-system-requirements-for-the-assessment-platform>. The development of the NCSC technology system described in this document is beyond the scope of the current RFP.*

**Question 22: Sec. 3.2.7.1 – 3.2.7.2, Page 35-36. Text of Passage being questioned:** Note section 3.2.4.1 paragraph 1: “It is the responsibility of the successful Vendor to develop, plan, facilitate, and fund all review meetings to include coordination and funding of travel expenses for reviewers.” Such a statement is not included in the section on standard setting. **Question:** Should vendors include costs for funding of travel expenses for standard setting participants?

**Response:** *Yes. Vendors should include costs for funding of travel expenses for standard setting participants.*

**Question 23: Sec. 3.2.8.2.1, Paragraph 1, Page 40. Text of Passage being questioned:** The Vendor will produce and disseminate reports and supporting materials communicating results from the census field test to participating states, districts, schools, and students as well as summary reports to NSCS leadership. **Question:** We are expecting that the reports will be created out of the NSCS system, so what is the vendor expected to produce in this RFP for this requirement of the census field test?





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**Response:** *The respondent to this RFP will be responsible for producing all information necessary for the design and production of electronic score reports and supporting materials. It is correct to assume that a system will be available to support dissemination of this information.*

**Question 24: Sec. 3.2.8.2.1, Paragraph 2, Page 40. Text of Passage being questioned:**

The Vendor will provide all scored data files and data files containing all report results to NSCS leadership in a mutually agreed upon format. **Question:** Can you confirm that the scored data will be provided from the NSCS system and the Vendor of this RFP will just be using that system to provide the file to NCSC leadership for the census field test?

**Response:** *It is correct that NCSC expects to have system available to support scoring and reporting for this project, which is separate from this RFP. The Vendor should, however, work with NCSC and the system provider to help ensure results are accurate and provided in an acceptable format.*

**Question 25: Sec. 6.1, Page 72. Text of Passage being questioned:** Proposal Contents of the RFP requests a “Total Not to Exceed Price” and a “Price by Deliverable.” The deliverables span three years, and the contract will be awarded initially only for one year. **Question:** Will Bidders be evaluated by the total price by deliverable (3 years of work) or the total price for the initial one year contract? Should Pricing be provided by deliverable by year also?

**Response:** *The Price Proposals will be ranked, lowest to highest, by the total price by deliverable – 3 years of work.*

**Question 26: Sec. 3.2.3.1, Paragraph 5, Page 25. Text of Passage being questioned:** All NCSC states must have the opportunity to participate in the pilot test. Some states may not administer all grades or content areas. In other words, a state may administer the pilot in a subset of selected grades and/or content areas to a portion of eligible students in the state. **Question:** Would NCSC consider making the pilot test mandatory for all member states? If not, could an incentive be offered to schools/students who participate?

**Response:** *NCSC expects that states will be agreeable to a level of participation required to support a robust pilot and produce a sufficient and representative sample of results. Nevertheless, respondents may propose a plan that involves incentives for participation.*

**Question 27: Sec. 3.2.3, Paragraph 3, Page 24. Text of Passage being questioned:** “The Vendor should assume that the pilot test will be delivered via a computer based system.



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It is not the responsibility of the Vendor to develop that system.” **Question:** What assumptions should we make about the online administration system and how it will function? Do you have a process in mind for how the Vendor will work with you within this system to create and review these online forms?

**Response:** *The most current and detailed information available about the proposed NCSC technology system is available at: <http://www.ncscpartners.org/news/ncsc-produces-architecture-and-technology-system-requirements-for-the-assessment-platform>. A process for review of forms within that system has not been developed. NCSC is open to proposals that address how this is best accomplished.*

**Question 28: Sec. 3.2.1, Paragraph 9, Page 20. Text of Passage being questioned:** Mode “...Braille tests must be provided upon request.” **Question:** For budgeting purposes, how many braille tests are anticipated being needed?

**Response:** *Our total population estimate in our 18 Tier I states from baseline data is 96,108. On average, our baseline data show teachers report that 3% of students have no functional use of vision. This includes students who use Braille but others who do not. For proposal purposes, provide a cost per 1000 Braille forms, distributed to 18 state offices, not to the individual schools.*

**Question 29: Sec. 3.2.1, Paragraph 1, Page 21. Text of Passage being questioned:** Scoring “...some portion of the constructed response items may be scored externally.” **Question:** For budgeting purposes, how many students are expected for the census field test?

**Response:** *The census field test is the full operational assessment. Therefore, students eligible to participate in this assessment in the 18 Tier 1 states will participate.*

**Question 30: Sec. 3.2.6.2, Paragraph 2, Page 32. Text of Passage being questioned:** “In this section the Vendor will also address the need for developing alternate forms of the tests for any particular purpose.” **Question:** In addition to braille, what other types of alternate forms does NCS potentially envision the need for?

**Response:** *NCSC has not identified a need for additional alternate forms at this time.*

**Question 31: Sec. 3.2.6.4, Paragraph 2, Page 33. Text of Passage being questioned:** “The training plan must address training opportunities for students as well as those for coordinators and administrators (e.g., practice tests, guides, sample materials).” **Question:** The RFP calls for practice tests, for budgeting purposes are these expected to



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be developed as part of the item revision process outlined in this RFP or are they coming from the other RFP (Item Writing)?

**Response:** *The respondent to this RFP will not be responsible for developing practice tests. However, a robust training plan will likely involve presentation of sample items.*

**Question 32: Sec. 3.2.8, Vendor Response, Page 40. Text of Passage being questioned:**

“The proposal must provide a detailed plan for how it will fulfill reporting requirements and prepare high quality, comprehensive technical documentation. The Vendor will document the process for creating item specifications from the ECD Task Templates, including all decisions regarding item formats, allowable changes in item administration, administrator instructions, and scoring rules, determined in collaboration with NCSC GSEG partners.” **Question:** The vendor response guideline does not seem to reflect the deliverables outlined throughout section 3.2.8 Reporting and Technical Documentation. Can NCSC please clarify that the vendor response should be addressing Reporting and Technical Documentation deliverables as outlined throughout section 3.2.8?

**Response:** *It is correct that the Vendor should address the reporting and technical documentation requirements outlined in section 3.2.8.*

**Follow-up Question**

**Question 33:** Can you please provide the exact number (or range) of students vendors should assume? Without this figure, costs will radically vary amongst bidders due to assumed case counts. This might make it difficult for NCSC to conduct a reasonable comparison between bidders. As it stands, vendors must guess case counts. Further, given the vital nature of this information, we are requesting an extension to the due date be granted.

**Response:** *As stated in the response to question 28 above, the population estimate in our 18 Tier I States from baseline data is 96,108.*