

ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**Request for Proposal
RFP ALSDE 2024-10
ALIGNMENT STUDY OF THE *ACT WITH WRITING* AND THE *PREACT SECURE*
ASSESSMENTS TO THE ALABAMA COURSES OF STUDY
Student Assessment**

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

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

Cindy Gillespie
Office of Operations
Alabama State Department of Education
50 N. Ripley Street, Room P305
Gordon Persons Building
Montgomery, AL 36104
Email: cgillespie@alsde.edu

Deadline:

Proposals must be received no later than 4:00 pm on June 14, 2024.

It is required that each vendor clearly mark the envelope RFP ALSDE 2024-10 in the lower left corner of the envelope (Response packages that are not marked will be rejected).

The proposal package must contain the following:

1. **Original proposal plus four 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 Procurement as a State Vendor and provide vendor number. <http://www.purchasing.alabama.gov>
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.

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Section 1.00 Administrative Overview

1.1 Purpose and Background

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) elected to use the *ACT with Writing* as its statewide assessment in Grade 11 for English language arts, mathematics, and science in 2017-2018 for ALSDE's state and federal accountability. The ALSDE elected to administer the *PreACT Secure* in Grade 10 for a growth measure to the Grade 11 *ACT with Writing*. This decision was based on the state's goal to provide parents, educators, and students with valid information regarding the extent to which students are on-track to be college and career ready. The *ACT with Writing* and *PreACT Secure* and *ACT College Readiness Benchmarks* were specifically developed to address this goal and are supported by research, data and evidence related to this goal. Similarly, the *Alabama Courses of Study Standards* were developed to highlight the concepts, knowledge and skills Alabama believes students should be working on within each grade to be college and career ready.

The skills and knowledge represented in the conceptual framework of the *2021 Alabama Course of Study: English Language Arts* will prepare students to function as highly skilled communicators, critical thinkers, and effective problem-solvers. They will be able to meet the academic demands of elementary, middle, and high school and be prepared for further study and the workplace.

The purpose of the *2019 Alabama Course of Study: Mathematics*, which is to ensure that all students receive the mathematics preparation they need to access further educational and professional opportunities, to understand and critique the world around them, and to experience the joy, wonder, and beauty of mathematics.

The conceptual framework of the *2023 Alabama Course of Study: Science* is designed to present standards and progressions which will produce scientifically literate citizens who are fully prepared for college and careers. Scientifically literate citizens have a foundation of scientific knowledge, a technological understanding of problem-solving, and an innovative ability to design scientific solutions.

To determine what students have learned throughout the school year and to meet the goals as outlined for each of the *Alabama Courses of Study Standards*, the *ACT with Writing* and the *PreACT Secure* assessments reflect the overarching concepts and priorities that are reflected in both the assessments and the content standards. This is due to shared intent of the *Alabama Courses of Study Standards* and the assessments, and the fact that a similar body of research/literature was used to inform the expectations for student performance within and across grades in each content area.

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to seek proposals from vendors qualified to provide, as per federal requirements, an alignment study of the *Alabama Courses of Study Standards* and the *ACT with Writing* assessments in three content areas – English language arts, mathematics, and science. The ALSDE requires a vendor with a proven record of expertise, capacity, and delivery to complete the federal mandate for a high-quality, unbiased alignment study conducted by an independent, third-party alignment study.

The external alignment study must address, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the comprehensiveness of tests in terms of the federal peer review alignment requirements as defined by the United States Department of Education’s peer review requirements.

This alignment study would occur immediately upon award of the contract with anticipated results due back upon completion of the study. The report would identify item alignment issues per content area and recommendations as to how to address each of the alignment findings. The alignment study committee must include external reviewers along with internal reviewers. The actual alignment study review must be conducted in Alabama.

This RFP indicates the key components required for bidders in order to have their proposals considered. These components include:

1. Demonstrated ability to conduct high-quality studies of alignment to *Alabama Courses of Study Standards*.
2. A comprehensive, alignment design and methodology that:
 - a. Is based upon a clear rationale and definition of alignment that reflects an understanding of the context of assessment in Alabama and the manner in which assessment results are interpreted and used.
 - b. Use at least three assessment test forms per subject.
 - c. Explicitly considers the *Alabama Courses of Study Standards* for English language arts, mathematics, and science. The *Alabama Courses of Study Standards* can be found at <https://www.alabamaachieves.org/content-areas-specialty>.
 - d. Evaluates the alignment between the concepts, knowledge and skills contained in the *ACT with Writing/PreACT Secure*.
3. Evaluates the alignment of *ACT with Writing* and *PreACT Secure* test items with the *Alabama State Courses of Study Standards* at multiple levels of granularity (i.e., at the standard level as well as the broader conceptual level).
 - a. Results are presented in a final report that summarizes the process implemented and addresses any documented key issues related to the alignment.
4. Detailed proposed project schedule, including preparations for the study, securing the location for the meeting and all costs associated with the study (including educator stipends, meals, mileage, and lodging), conducting the study, training for committee members, analyzing the data/information obtained for the alignment study, and producing the final study report.
5. Staffing plan, including resumes, highlights of staff experience, and descriptions of staff capabilities and/or specialties.

1.2 Anticipated Time Table

June 4, 2024	Question Submission Deadline
June 7, 2024	Question Responses Due
June 14, 2024	Proposal Submission Deadline 4:00PM Central

1.3 Proposal Evaluation

An Evaluation Team will review the proposals and make a recommendation. 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:

Vendor qualifications and experience	30 points
Budget Proposal-Detailed description of budget	35 points
Detailed description and delivery of an external alignment study, provide a final report summary, and recommendations of actions to be taken for deficiencies	35 points

Best and Final Offers:

The ALSDE may 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 acceptable consideration for award. After discussions are concluded, a vendor may be allowed to submit a "Best and Final Offer" for consideration in a manner and method prescribed by the ALSDE. By submitting a proposal each vendor accepts and agrees to all conditions and requirements herein.

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 and other 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 vendors in a manner and method prescribed by the ALSDE.

Rejection of Proposal:

The ALSDE reserves the right to reject any or all proposals which are deemed to be non-responsive, late in submission, or unsatisfactory in any way. ALSDE shall have no obligation to award a contract for work, goods and/or services as a result of this RFP.

Qualified bidders aggrieved in connection with the solicitation of a contract may protest to the Chief Procurement Officer. See generally State of Alabama Department of Finance Administrative Code Regulations at <https://finance.alabama.gov/media/rnii4ga1/administrative-code-355-4-1-01-thru-06.pdf>.

Confidentiality:

All information contained in the RFP is considered to be the exclusive property of the ALSDE. Recipients of this RFP are not to disclose any information contained within the RFP unless such information is publicly available. This RFP is provided for the sole purpose of allowing vendors to respond to these specifications.

Selection Process:

The ALSDE will select the vendor that provides the most technically sound and cost-effective proposal that best fits the needs of the ALSDE. Final selection of the successful vendor will not be based solely on cost. The vendor product will be evaluated primarily on the scope of the activities linked to associated costs as detailed in the RFP. RFPs will be reviewed to ascertain that minimum requirements have been met. The ALSDE reserves the right to conduct discussions with potential vendors in order to clarify information contained in their proposals, but the ALSDE has no obligation to do so. This may include requesting a presentation of top finalists for final scoring. The vendor will provide notice to the ALSDE any partnership 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.

Unless provided by law, 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. If, within the confines of this RFP, the vendor provides intellectual property be it understood that all RFP contents are subject to *Open Records Act* laws and thus are subsequently in the public domain.

Intent to Award

Division of Procurement will send out an intent to award participating suppliers, defining the protest period. The Chief Procurement Officer (CPO), is the awarding authority and as such is a signatory on the agreement/contract.

Disclaimer Notice:

The ALSDE shall not be liable for any costs associated with the preparation of proposals or negotiations of a contract incurred by any party.

Availability of Funds:

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 expended for these purposes.

1.4 Conditions and Terms**Contract Terms:**

The contract resulting from this RFP will be for the alignment study which will be completed within one year, dependent upon required state approvals, availability of funds, performance evaluations of the project, at the full discretion of the ALSDE. The contract will commence pending Legislative Review Committee approval and the Chief Procurement Officer's (CPO) signature.

The vendor shall be fully prepared to commence work after full execution of the contract by parties and the receipt of required governmental approvals.

Proposals should reference each element in the RFP by number on the cover of each copy and be arranged in the same sequence. All fees and costs are to be stated in United States currency. Vendors must reply to each element of the RFP.

Section 2.00 Scope

2.1 Scope of Vendor's Work and Responsibilities

1. The vendor is required to conduct an external alignment study of the *Alabama Courses of Study Standards* and the *ACT with Writing/PreACT Secure* assessments. The state must be provided clearly articulated procedures that address the following criteria:
 - a. Provide an established training process and materials for reviewers.
 - b. Alignment of the *ACT with Writing/PreACT Secure* assessments to the *Alabama Courses of Study Standards* by each content area (English language arts, mathematics, and science).
 - c. Show the coverage of *ACT with Writing/PreACT Secure* assessments to the breadth of the *Alabama Courses of Study Standards*.
 - d. Evaluate the alignment of items and standards complexity – depth-of-knowledge.
 - e. Show categorical concurrence of items matching to standards.
 - f. Provide balance of representation of items on the assessments.
 - g. Provide a high-quality final report for each content area and an executive summary which outlines each of the critical alignment elements by content area to include recommendations to address any deficiencies.

2. The study must provide the following products for alignment study:
 - a. A written summary report that provides results of the analysis of the English language arts, mathematics, and science alignment.
 - b. Explicit identification data detailing whether the standards and assessments are aligned or not aligned to include the degree of alignment.
 - c. Graphs, tables, charts, as appropriate, to report the analysis for each criterion for each content area.
 - d. Data file summarizing how each reviewer coded each item.
 - e. A report on inter-rater (reviewer) reliability.
 - f. Recommended action to correct each cited alignment deficiency.

3. Review of the assessment forms provide the following information:
 - a. A written summary report that provides results of the analysis of the *ACT with Writing/PreACT Secure* for English language arts, mathematics, and science that identifies the content match, level of complexity and sources of challenge, if any, for each item.
 - b. Suggested edits defined in recommendations that need to be made to identified items to rectify the deficiencies found.

2.2 Scope of Alabama State Department of Education's Work and Responsibilities

The ALSDE will work with the vendor to secure qualified Alabama educators to participate in this alignment study.

Section 3.00 General Requirements

3.1 Requirements of Proposal

The vendor must provide the following mandatory information. **Failure to provide this information may be cause for the proposal to be rejected.** Qualifications, experience, and cost will be evaluated for contract award. The proposal may be submitted under the same cover with Vendor Requirements and Cost Proposal in two distinct sections. E-verify information is required to be submitted for all employees to include contractors of the vendors if necessary and applicable.

Part I

Signed Cover Letter:

The cover letter shall serve as the first page of the vendor's proposal. The vendor shall complete the cover letter and attach it to the proposal in response to the RFP. The cover letter must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the vendor. It will state that the vendor is a legal entity that will meet the specifications. The cover letter must accompany the submitted proposal. The letter accompanying the proposal must have original signatures and must include contact numbers and e-mail addresses for the authorized official signing the letters.

Part II

Vendor Qualification and Experience:

Vendor shall provide satisfactory evidence of the vendor's capability to coordinate the types of activities and to provide the services described in the RFP in a timely manner. Special attention should be given to the discussion of qualifications. The discussion shall include a description of the vendor's background and relevant experience as related to the required activities in the RFP.

Part III

Vendor shall provide a detailed plan describing how the services will be performed to meet the requirements of the RFP. The description shall encompass the requirements of this RFP. The response must be prepared and organized in a clear and concise manner that is easily understandable.

Vendor Organization:

Describe your organizational structure and explain how your organization qualifies to be responsive to the requirements of this RFP.

References:

The vendor shall provide a minimum of three (3) references that can support and validate training and/or projects and outcomes, including names or persons who may be contacted, position of person, addresses, and phone numbers where similar training and/or projects to that described in this RFP have been conducted.

Executive Summary:

An executive summary is required. This summary will condense and highlight the contents of the vendor's proposal.

Part IV

Cost Proposal:

Vendor shall include the fee structure and pricing for the training sessions/program. The vendor shall submit a cost proposal in addition to other required information.

Subcontractor Disclosure:

If the execution of work to be performed requires the hiring of subcontractors, **you must clearly state this in the bid proposal and provide qualification for such individuals.** Subcontractors must be identified and the services they will provide or work they will perform must be clearly defined. The ALSDE will not refuse a proposal based upon use of a subcontractor; however, the ALSDE reserves the right to refuse the Subcontractor you have selected. Contractor and associated personnel shall remain solely responsible for the performance of all work, including work that may be sub-contracted.

Describe your rationale for utilizing subcontractors including relevant past experience partnering with stated Subcontractor(s). Documents for E-verification of subcontractors are the sole responsibility of the contractor and must be available upon request to ensure compliance.

Section 4.00 General Terms and Conditions

4.1 Governance

This RFP and its terms shall be governed and construed according to the laws of the State of Alabama. Any dispute arising out of this RFP shall be brought in the state of Alabama, with venue in Montgomery County, Alabama. Vendors agree to comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

4.2 Immigration

The proposal must contain a statement that the firm is aware of and in compliance with the requirements of the *Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act*; a statement that the vendor 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 fully comply with each provision as provided by law.

A proposal must include a statement that the vendor has knowledge of this law and is in compliance. Before a contract is signed, the vendor awarded the contract must submit a Certificate of Compliance using the form at Appendix A. 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.

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4.3 Conflict of Interest

The vendor attests that no employee, officer, or agent of the vendor shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract if a real or apparent conflict of interest may be involved. A conflict would arise when the employee, officer, agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein has a financial or other interest in the organization selected for an award. The officers, employees, and agents of the vendor, if selected as the career planning system vendor, shall neither award nor offer gratuities, favors, nor anything of monetary value from vendors or subcontractors.

4.4 Discrimination

Alabama Non-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 Amendments 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) 694-4717.

APPENDIX "A"

State of _____)
County of _____)

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 holds 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.

a. Self-employed individuals, business entities filing articles of incorporation, partnerships, limited partnerships, limited liability companies, foreign corporations, foreign limited partnerships, and 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 possesses 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, the 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. The 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_____.

Name of Contractor/Grantee/Recipient
By: _____
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