Alabama State Department of Education



Request for Proposal RFP ALSDE 2022-04 EARLY YEARS CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT FOR GRADES K-3 LITERACY AND MATH Alabama State Department of Education DIVISION OF INSTRUCTION

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

ALL 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 p.m. on April 1, 2022. It is required that each vendor clearly mark the envelope RFP ALSDE 2022-04 in the lower left corner of the envelope.

(Response packages that are not marked and separated will be rejected).

The proposals package must contain the following:

- 1. Original proposal plus 20 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. Completed affidavit for business entity/employer/vendor. Verification of enrollment in E-verify should be presented on the form found in Appendix A.
- 3. Proposal that complies with any and all requirements contained herein.

Proposal Opening
Beginning April 4, 2022, at 9:00 am
P103 Conference Room on the Plaza Level
50 North Ripley Street
Montgomery, AL 36104
NO VISITORS DUE TO COVID

Request for Proposal (RFP) RFP ALSDE 2022-04 Alabama State Department of Education, Division of Instruction

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Section 1.00 Administrative Overview

1.1 Purpose and Background

The purpose of RFP ALSDE 2022-04 is to solicit proposals from vendors who are interested in being included on a list of vetted and state approved literacy and mathematics formative and diagnostic assessments for public school grades K-3. The legislature has appropriated money in the Education Trust Fund (ETF) for early years classroom assessments for both literacy and mathematics. This RFP aligns to the Alabama Literacy Act¹, but is also inclusive of early grades mathematics assessment systems. The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) solicits vendors who will be able to provide appropriate, evidence-based interventions and resources to address knowledge and skills challenges that are identified through the administration of assessment.

Proposals may include only early literacy assessments systems, only early math assessment systems, or both early literacy and early math assessment systems. Each of the three sections of the evaluation criteria should be submitted separately. Please clearly identify which type of proposal is being submitted by marking the outside envelope containing the packets and the inside contents with either of the following:

- EARLY LITERACY ONLY
- EARLY MATH ONLY
- BOTH EARLY LITERACY AND EARLY MATH

A cost proposal must be submitted for each assessment system proposal.

This RFP is not an offer to contract but seeks the submission of proposals from interested vendors which may form the basis for negotiation of a contract. Vendors chosen through this RFP process may be included on an ALSDE approved assessment list to be published on or about April 15, 2022. Said list will remain in effect through July 1, 2023. Vendors may be required to sign an agreement with the ALSDE establishing a per student cost structure and other assurances; however, any contracts resulting from the approved assessment list would be between Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and their chosen vendor. Districts will receive funds to offset the cost of their purchase of one of the approved assessments based on ETF appropriations.

Specific terms and requirements in this RFP may be waived or modified by the State of Alabama as it deems necessary and appropriate. The state has no liability for any costs incurred by a vendor for the preparation and production of a proposal or for any work performed prior to the issuance of a contract. The ALSDE reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to solicit additional proposals if that is determined to be in the best interests of the State of Alabama.

1.2 Anticipated Timetable

RFP Release Date

Deadline to Submit Questions

Deadline for ALSDE to Answer Questions

RFP Submission Deadline

Bid Opening

Estimated Date for Announcing the Approved Assessment List

Said list will remain in effect through

March 9, 2022

March 25, 2022

April 1, 2022

April 4, 2022

TBD

July 1, 2023

1.3 Selection Process:

An Evaluation Team *for each section* of the evaluation criteria will review the proposals and make a recommendation. The criteria listed below will be used to evaluate the proposals.

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¹ Ala. Code 16-6G-1, et. seq.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Overall Design of Early Literacy and Mathematics Assessment Systems (components outlined in section 1.3A)
- Alabama Literacy Task Force Assessment Evaluation Tool for Literacy Proposals (components outlined in section 1.3B)
- AMSTI Assessment Evaluation Tool for Mathematics Proposals (components outlined in section 1.3C)

*Any proposal's failure to provide evidence of the outlined components may result in automatic disqualification of the assessment.

Upon review and evaluation of proposals, ALSDE may select the vendor(s) determined to best meet the needs of early grades literacy and mathematics assessment systems. Upon selection of the preferred vendor(s), the ALSDE may initiate negotiations for cost structure, assurances, and other terms and conditions. All proposals received in response to this RFP may be rejected, and the ALSDE may solicit additional proposals. The number of selected vendors that may appear on an approved list is to be determined during the evaluation process.

Final selection of any 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 those 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.

Specific Requirements of Proposal

A successful vendor must address each of the following sections (A, B, & C) of the evaluation criteria *in a separate packet*, utilizing the outlined information that follows.

- Overall Design of Early Literacy and Mathematics Assessment Systems
- Components of Early Literacy Assessment Systems
- Components of Early Mathematics Assessment Systems

<u>Automatic disqualification</u> will occur for individuals who do not submit a completed packet with evidence outlining each component and <u>separated packets for each of the three sections</u> of the evaluation criteria.

Each component must be addressed:

- In a concise manner
- In order outlined below,
- Clearly marked referencing the component (example: A7i or B4c), and
- Must only address information relevant to the component.

A. Overall Design of Early Literacy and Mathematics Assessment Systems

- 1) Include a statewide per student cost structure in their response to this RFP.
- 2) Professional development costs included and itemized.
- 3) Describe and provide examples of all available reports, including timelines in reporting assessment results to teachers, administrators, and parents for beginning, middle, and end of the year administrations.
- 4) Describe screening and diagnostic capabilities for monitoring student progress and guiding instruction.
- 5) Describe the level of integration of assessment results with instructional support for teachers and students (i.e., student learning paths and or personalized student suggestions for Tier 2/3 instruction).

- 6) Provide the time required to administer the assessments, with the intention of minimizing the impact on instructional time.
- 7) A letter to agree to the following conditions if granted recommendation as a vendor for early literacy or mathematics assessments.
 - i. Sign data sharing agreement with the ALSDE for all early years assessment data
 - ii. Send ALSDE information requested in the data map reporting chart including support for and complete rostering identifiers TCERT, SSID.
 - iii. Submit BOY, MOY, and EOY Data Reports according to specifications described in i.
 - iv. Work with the ALSDE and LEAs to ensure their data can link their assessment data to PowerSchool
 - v. Provide a minimum of five quick turnaround reports per calendar year to meet ALSDE deadlines as requested by ALSDE
 - vi. Complete the linking study with ACAP
- 8) Describe what accessibility features are available with the assessment system; what accommodations are allowed for students with disabilities, including hearing and vision impairments, and English Language learners; and what alternate assessment options are provided for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (include examples).
- 9) Provide evidence of alignment with the Alabama English Language Arts and/or Math Courses or Study.
- 10) Provide a link to the assessment site for ALSDE staff and/or Task Force members to take assessments and see reports.
- 11) Provide detailed descriptions of development, training materials, and supports for delivery of assessment system.
- 12) Vendor qualifications, experience, and references

B. Components of Early Literacy Assessment Systems

1) Overall Design for Literacy

- a) Assessment is a universal screener
- b) Assessment has diagnostic capabilities (i.e., identifies struggling readers and their specific deficits)
- c) Assessment monitors the reading progress of the student at least monthly as required by the ALA (i.e., progress monitoring)
- d) Assessment screens for all characteristics of dyslexia (including letter naming fluency, letter sound fluency, nonsense word reading, reading accuracy, and spelling)
- e) Assessment provides a full composite score, including all areas that must be reported to parents (reading deficiency, letter naming fluency, letter sound fluency, nonsense word reading, sight words, oral reading accuracy, vocabulary, comprehension)
- f) Administration time is efficient (i.e., assessment can be administered, scored, and interpreted quickly and accurately).
- g) Assessment is easily linked to instruction (i.e., high level of integration of assessment results with instructional support for teachers and students).
- h) Assessment provides immediate results (i.e., the length of administering the assessment minimizes the impact on instructional time).
- Assessment provides data needed for reporting to parents, including reading deficiency, letter naming fluency, letter sound fluency, nonsense word reading, sight words, oral reading accuracy, vocabulary, comprehension

2) Phonological and Phonemic Awareness

GLOSSARY

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS (as defined in the ALA): The general understanding of the sound structure of words and sentences.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS (as defined in the ALA): The ability to hear, identify, and

manipulate individual sounds. Phonemic awareness is an auditory activity.

- a) Assessment breaks down phonological awareness (syllables, rhyme, onset-rime) including moving to the phoneme level
- b) Phonemic awareness is not connected to printed letter

3) Alphabetic Principle

GLOSSARY

Alphabetic Principle (as defined in the ALA): The ability to accurately apply knowledge of the relationship between letters and sounds during the acts of encoding and decoding.

- a) Tests individual letter sounds
- b) Tests sound-letter correspondence

4) **Phonics – Decoding**

GLOSSARY

PHONICS (as defined in the ALA): The relationships between the letters of written language and the individual sounds of spoken language including syllable types, morphology of Greek and Latin roots, and multisyllabic words.

DECODING (as defined in the ALA): The act of applying knowledge of the alphabetic principle to correctly pronounce written words.

Required reporting to parents: LNF, LSF, NWR, Accuracy, Vocabulary, Sight word fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, dyslexia characteristics

- a) Assesses nonsense words
- b) Assesses words in isolation
- c) Assesses words in connected text

5) **Phonics – Encoding**

GLOSSARY

PHONICS (as defined in the ALA): The relationships between the letters of written language and the individual sounds of spoken language including syllable types, morphology of Greek and Latin roots, and multisyllabic words.

ENCODING (as defined in the ALA): The act and process of using knowledge of the relationships between sounds and letters to spell and write words.

a) Assesses encoding

6) Accuracy

GLOSSARY

FLUENCY (as defined in the ALA): The ability to read with accuracy, appropriate rate, and proper expression.

- a) Assesses words correct per minute
- b) Assesses words correct per minute and oral reading accuracy
- c) Accuracy assessment is administered in a one-on-one, face-to-face, educator-student format

7) Vocabulary

GLOSSARY

VOCABULARY (as defined in the ALA): The body of written or oral language known to an individual.

a) Assessment measures grade-level vocabulary in context

8) Reading Comprehension

GLOSSARY

COMPREHENSION (as defined in the ALA): The ability to read and process text and understand its meaning.

a) Assessment measures grade-level reading comprehension

9) Optional Components

GLOSSARY

ORAL LANGUAGE: The system through which we use spoken words to express knowledge, ideas, and feelings.

- a) Does the assessment provide options for additional testing to determine lowest deficit skills at a lower grade level?
- b) Does the assessment measure more advanced phoneme manipulation tasks?
- c) Does the assessment measure oral language as define above?

C. Components of Early Mathematics Assessment Systems

- a) Contains a diagnostic interview tool for grades K-2
- b) Contains screeners to identify students who need intervention in fractional reasoning
- c) Identifies students at risk for math deficiency including dyscalculia
- d) Provides a dyscalculia-specific screener
- e) Provides personalized student suggestions for at-home learning support
- f) Provides evidence of alignment to the 2019 Math Course of Study
- g) Provides an early numeracy screener
- h) Tests and provides a report and personalized student suggestions for the following areas:
 - i. Counting and recognizing whole numbers
 - ii. comparing and ordering numbers
 - iii. composing and decomposing numbers
 - iv. operations with whole numbers
- i) Tests and provides a report and personalized student suggestions for the following areas:
 - i. Operations of addition and subtraction
 - ii. Properties of operations
 - iii. Counting and recognizing numbers to 1,000
 - iv. Understanding of models for addition and subtraction within 1,000
 - v. Comparing and ordering numbers up to 1,000
 - vi. Composing and decomposing numbers up to 1,000
 - vii.Solving one-step and two-step word problems involving addition and subtraction within 100
 - viii. Using a variety of strategies and algorithms, based on place value
 - ix. Describing and comparing measurable attributes

Best and Final Offers:

The ALSDE reserves the right to either accept a vendor's initial proposal or enter into discussions with vendors. 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:

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. ALSDE reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to amend, suspend, terminate, or reissue the RFP in whole or in part, at any stage. Vendors may also withdraw their interest in the RFP, in writing, at any point in time.

Automatic disqualification will occur for individuals who do not submit completed evidence outlining the proposed evidence for each component as it has been requested in each section.

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.

All supporting documentation submitted in response to the RFP will become the property of the ALSDE and could be subject to open record laws. Only the final results of the ALSDE Evaluation Committee may be considered public. Any work papers, individual evaluator or consultant comments, notes, or score will not be considered public. The final results of the ALSDE Evaluation Committee will not be publicly available until a final agreement pursuant to the RFP has received all necessary approvals.

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:

Vendors may be required to sign an agreement with the ALSDE establishing a per student cost structure, providing certain assurances, and agreeing to other general terms and conditions in order to be on the approved assessment list; however, any contracts resulting from the approved assessment list will be between LEAs and their chosen vendor. Districts will receive funds to offset the cost of their purchase of one of the approved assessments pending legislative funding.

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

This RFP solicits vendors for inclusion on an ALSDE approved assessment list to be published on or about April 15, 2022. Said list will remain in effect through July 1, 2023.

Proposals should reference <u>each element in the RFP by number on the cover of each copy and be arranged in</u> <u>the same sequence.</u> 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

Specific responsibilities of the vendor are stated below:

- Provide real time assessments of literacy and math skill levels for students enrolled in grades K-3 falling within ALSDE designated testing windows.
- Provide the preliminary identification of students at risk for literacy and math difficulties including dyslexia.

- Provide performance measures which shall include student outcomes.
- Provide requested reports, not limited to BOY, MOY and EOY administrations, to the LEA and ALSDE based on the outcome data from their assessment and within the requested timeline.
- Provide dedicated personnel for technical assistance to the ALSDE and LEA.
- Describe and attach detailed examples of the included professional development plan that will be provided to ALSDE state and regional staff.
- Provide <u>evidence</u> outlined in 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 in sequential order with clearly marked indicators (3.1A, 3.1B...3.3C...) *The RFP committee will not search for any vendor submissions that are not provided in the order outlined below.

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

Specific responsibilities of the ALSDE are stated below:

- Approve the scope of the work proposed as outlined above.
- Notify vendors and publish list of approved assessments in a timely manner.
- Provide reimbursement funds to LEAs in support of assessments provided in response to this RFP.

Section 3.00 Requirements

3.2 General 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 Ill

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

outcomes, including names or persons who may be contacted, position of person, addresses, and phone numbers where similar training 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.** Sub-Contractors 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 Sub-Contractor; however, the ALSDE reserves the right to refuse the Sub-contractor 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 Vendor Disclosure and Immigration Compliance

The vendor must provide an original Disclosure Statement as required by Section 41-16-82 *et seq.*, Code of Alabama (1975). Copies of the Disclosure Statement, and information, may be downloaded from the State of Alabama Attorney General's Office website.

The selected provider must also attest that all workers are citizens of the United States or are proper and legal immigration status in compliance with the Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act. (See Attachment A). Section 31-13-9(b), Code of Alabama (1975) provides, "As a condition for the award of any contract to a business entity or employer that employs one or more employees, the business entity or employer shall provide documentation establishing that the business entity or employer is enrolled in the E-Verify program."

A proposal must include a statement that the vendor has knowledge of this law and is in compliance. Prior to the award of a contract, the selected responder must submit a fully executed, completely legible, copy of the Memorandum of Understanding between the contractor and the United States Department of Homeland Security as evidence of compliance with this requirement.

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

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.

4.5 Inquiries/Ouestions

Vendors shall carefully review the RFP including all attachments. Questions or requests for clarification shall be submitted to the designated contact in writing via emails only. Send all inquiries to:

Questions or Requests
Cindy Gillespie, Office Services
Supervisor Email: cgillespie@alsde.edu

Emailed questions shall be clearly labeled in the subject line with **RFP ALSDE 2022-04** and a reference to the applicable RFP section or subsection. Responses to vendor's inquiries/questions shall be published under the "Communications" section of the ALSDE website. Vendors shall not rely on any verbal statements that alter any specification or other term or condition of the RFP. Such changes are only valid if provided in writing by the Operations Administrator. ALSDE will announce apparent successful vendor(s) by posting such under the "Communications" section of the ALSDE website.

RFP Release Date

Deadline to Submit Questions

Deadline for ALSDE to Answer Questions

RFP Submission Deadline

Bid Opening

Estimated Date for Announcing the Approved Assessment List

Said list will remain in effect through

March 9, 2022

March 25, 2022

April 1, 2022

April 4, 2022

TBD

July 1, 2023

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
Name of Contractor/Grantee/Recipient By:
Its
The above Certification was signed in my presence by the person whose name appears above, on thisday of
WITNESS: