

Questions and Answers for the Request for Information (RFI)
For
Printing, Scanning and Scoring

1. Q. Will the responses you receive from this RFI be available for public review?

A. All questions from the vendors with responses from SED will be posted on the website by close of business Tuesday, September 7, 2004.

2. Q. Could you be clearer of the number of tests booklets?

A. Math: grade 3 – 2 booklets, grade 4 – 3 booklets, grade 5 – 2 booklets, grade 6 – 2 booklets, grade 7 – 2 booklets, grade 8 – 2 booklets. Total for Mathematics = 13 booklets.
ELA: grade 3 – 2 booklets, grade 4 – 3 booklets, grade 5 – 2 booklets, grade 6 – 3 booklets, grade 7 – 2 booklets, grade 8 – 3 booklets. Total ELA = 15 booklets.

3. Q. The RFI does not indicate whether the constructed-response items have been field tested. Have the items been administered, and if so, how many responses are available for rangefinding and training response selection?

A. The RFI is for the scanning and scoring of the operational tests only. The rangefinding and training response selections would be provided to you for scoring training.

4. Q. The third sentence of section II (Scanning) of the RFI reads, “Scanning these booklets in a timely manner would require the vendor to process the job quickly and accurately.” Can the department be more specific regarding what is meant by “timely” and “quickly”?

A. We would like possible time frames for turn around and processing included in the response.

Q. How are materials currently ordered for the test administrations? Are they ordered by Web, phone, or fax?

A. They are done by mail-in forms to SED.

Q. Who will place the orders for materials?

A. Schools will place the orders for needed materials.

Q. Where are the test material distributions directed? Does the contractor ship directly to the 4500 schools or are the materials shipped to the 700+ districts?

A. Currently orders go directly to schools, but SED is open to other possible scenarios.

Q. What are the expectations regarding customer service support for this program? For example, what are the expectations for call centers, hours of operations, etc.?

A. The vendor must provide a toll free number which is staffed from 7:30 – 4:30 pm EST each business day to handle all test related questions beginning the first day of the testing period and for two weeks after the testing period ends. In addition, a dedicated fax line must be established.

Q. Would the state entertain the idea of a scannable answer document detached from the test book (not scannable)?

A. Any feasible proposal or various alternative scenarios will be considered.

Q. What are the capabilities of the Remote Information Centers (RICs)? How many scanners are available per site? What types of scanners do these centers contain? Do state personnel support these centers, such as in the operation of the scanners, etc.?

A. Each RIC has scanning capabilities, however each vary in size and capability. The number of scanners at each site will vary. SED supports the RICs by overseeing their operation and providing information and policy. Most RICs deal directly with the schools they support.

Q. How many RICS are available, and how are they distributed across the state?

A. There are 17 RICs geographically located throughout the state.

Q. Do all of the RICS have consistent capabilities, or are some better suited to handle these tasks than others?

A. All the RICs have similar capabilities, however, do vary in size and capacity. They are all able to handle similar tasks as they have the same scanning software.

Q. The RFI discusses, in detail, scanning responses to all item types and constructed response scoring. Would the vendor be responsible for scoring the multiple-choice items or just scanning and returning responses to the state?

A. A response to the RFI should consider both options. What would be the Pro's and Con's to each method?

Q. Does the state have a strong preference for decentralized scanning?

A. No. A response to the RFI should detail a scanning mechanism.

Q. Please clarify the following questions. What, if any, are the score reporting requirements? The RFI discusses the delivery of a data file with each student's scores to the designated regional center. Does this mean that the SED produces and distributes individual, classroom, school, district, and state score reports?

A. The vendor would need to deliver data to the Regional Center by school district. The score reporting vendor would break down the data and print it by classroom and individual.

Q. Are secure materials returned to the vendor for retention and destruction?

A. The 3-8 tests will not be secure after administration. Schools are free to use the test booklets for training and review.

Q. Are teachers paid scoring honoraria for participation in this program?

A. No, it is considered a professional development opportunity.

Q. Will the contractor be responsible for development of an Ordering system to support the testing?

A. SED will probably continue to handle the ordering of test booklets through the districts. However, you may propose this in your response.

Q. What is meant by "electronically distribute student test booklets"?

A. Distributed through electronic means to a scoring site located within New York.

Q. Does the NYSED require access to track the inventory?

A. Yes.

Q. Are contract extensions possible?

A. Yes.

Q. What is/are the funding sources (Federal, State, District)? What percentage applies to which? Are the funds appropriated or when will they be appropriated?

A. Funds will be appropriated.

Q. Are there any technological constraints or guidelines?

A. No. This RFI is needed to receive input from vendors.

Q. May the contractor reuse existing products (such as Online Scoring Network for the grading)?

A. Yes.

Q. Are there any performance guidelines, response times or other SLAs?

A. Scoring guidelines are generated by SED and the test development vendor.

Q. What happens if the number of tests, locations, students, etc. changes significantly (plus or minus 10%)?

A. Present solutions to this problem in your proposal.

Q. If selected, do any of the hardware or software packages need to go through State approved vendors or existing State contracts?

A. No.

Q. How long before the testing do the materials need to be received, either district or school? What are the guidelines?

A. Material should be received by schools one week prior to administration.

Q. Will there be out-of-level testing?

A. This is being evaluated.

Q. Will the forms have versioning and spiraling?

A. No.

Q. Will there be Special Education testing w/provisions? Is there Dependent as well as Independent Charter schools?

A. Special accommodations for Special Education students will be made. This should not affect this process.

Q. Is there a requirement for demographic and mark quality editing during the post scan process and prior to distributing the images for scoring?

A. Address this issue in your response to the RFI.

Q. Does the current system utilize student pre-identification (barcoding, pre-coding, etc.)?

A. This type of system will be used in this process. Address it in your response.

Q. Does this request imply the scoring of multiple-choice items?

A. Yes.

Q. How will the contractor distribute the constructed response items to the scoring centers for scoring?

A. Address this issue in your response to the RFI.

Q. What percentage of NY teachers must participate in scoring?

A. There is no set amount.

Q. If teachers are required to participate, who pays the teachers' scoring honoraria? If the contractor pays, is there a minimum rate?

A. Teachers are not paid to participate.

Q. If the contractor can distribute scoring work to scorers' homes, will there still be a need to track the amount of work performed by teachers in each district?

A. There would need to be a system in place to track progress.

Q. Are teachers currently receiving CEU's in return for their scoring work? If so, who is responsible for giving them?

A. No.

Q. For the 10% double-scored items, will the contractor need to read a third time when there are non-adjacent scores?

A. This should be address in your response.

Q. Will the number of ELA constructed responses vary much from the examples for grades 3,5,6,7 math?

A. No.

Q. Is pilot testing included in this RFI?

A. No.

Q. Can the vendor charge districts for excessive ordering of materials?

A. This option can be explored in the vendor's response.

Q. Will districts be allowed to edit their demographic data after the administration for the purposes of reporting deliverables?

A. Not sure at this time at what point in the process districts will be allowed to edit data.

Q. Are there any special specifications for the scannables?

A. Needs to be presented in your proposal.

Q. Would the state consider separate answer booklets, rather than integrated test booklets/answer documents – at least for grades 5-8?

A. Yes, SED is open to consider various possible scenarios.

Q. How does the state define “camera ready” (e.g., do you expect the contractor to proof the tests?

A. The tests would be presented to you “Camera ready.” No changes would need to be made and no proof would be necessary from the vendor.

Q. Will demographic information be gathered in either of these test booklets?

A. Yes, if scannable test booklets are used, demographic information will be gathered in the test booklets.

Q. Does the state use a statewide student information system?

A. Yes.

Q. Will the SED provide a complete and accurate database for the number of test booklets to be shipped to each school, the contact information, address, etc.? Will the contractor be expected to verify this information?

A. SED will work with the vendor and provide a complete list. However, it will be the vendor's ultimate responsibility under the proposal.

Q. What overage does the SED typically require? Are additional materials requested at the school- or district-level?

A. Schools and districts typically order 5% more than needed, therefore SED generally doesn't order more than needed.

Q. Does the state require pre-slugging or labels?

A. [Pre-slugging is generally used by SED.](#)

Q. Please define the capabilities, capacity, hardware, and software of the RICs. For example, regarding hardware: what is the memory of the machines, video card memory, hard disk size (or an average available space)? Regarding software: what operating system is being used, what other software is standard? Regarding network capabilities: what is the bandwidth availability, what is the network type (e.g., wireless), are proxy servers used?

A. [As far as hardware and software, please present the best technological solution that you feel will work best. An RFI is for information only.](#)

Q. How will the 13th and 15th booklets be used? For example, it appears there is an extra math booklet with constructed response items.

A. [See question and answer #2.](#)

Q. Is there only one form of each test for each grade (e.g., no spiraling needed)?

A. [Yes, there is only one form of each test. This is for operational tests only.](#)

Q. What file formats and application software are used for data required to perform the scope (e.g., school and student information, test scores)?

A. [SED provides the software to the districts at no cost to the schools.](#)

Q. Is the Needs/Resource Category information provided with the student data?

A. [Yes.](#)

Regarding distributive vs. centralized scanning: [The vendor's response should address these issues.](#)

Ø If distributive

o How many sites will be required?

o Who will manage the sites?

o Is it feasible, from a logistics standpoint, to operate multiple scanning sites?

Ø If centralized

o Lower labor and hardware costs.

o Logistically manageable with one central receiving and shipping queue.