

STATE OF CONNECTICUT PROCUREMENT NOTICE

Request for Proposals (RFP)
Summative Assessment Contractor for English Language
Arts/Math, Science, and Alternate Assessments
RFP Name: Summative Assessment Contractor for ELA/Math,
Science, and Alternate Assessments

Issued By:
Connecticut State Department of Education
May 2024

This RFP is available in electronic format on the State Contracting Portal by filtering by Organization for Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE or the Agency)
<https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/BidBoard>
or from the CSDE Official Contact:

Name: Abe Krisst
Address: 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103
Phone: 860-713-6894
Email: Abe.krisst@ct.gov

The RFP is also available on the Agency's website at
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/RFP/Request-for-Proposals/2024-RFPs>.
There will be a bidders' conference using Teams on May 31, 2024, at noon. Contractors who plan to attend the conference should RSVP to abe.krisst@ct.gov by 12:00 p.m. on May 29, 2024, and they will be e-mailed a link.

Responses must be received no later than
July 1, 2024
at 3:00 P.M. Eastern Time

An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of: race; color; religious creed; age; sex; pregnancy; sexual orientation; workplace hazards to reproductive systems; gender identity or expression; marital status; national origin; ancestry; retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion; intellectual disability; genetic information; learning disability; physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness); mental disability (past/present history thereof); military or veteran status; status as a victim of domestic violence; or criminal record in state employment, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes. Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Attorney Louis Todisco, Connecticut State Department of Education, by mail (450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 605, Hartford, CT 06103-1841; or by telephone 860-713-6594; or by email louis.todisco@ct.gov).

The Connecticut State Department of Education is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.

The CSDE reserves the right to reject any and all submissions or cancel this procurement at any time if deemed in the best interest of the State of Connecticut (State).

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I. General Information

A. Introduction

RFP Name and Number. Summative Assessment Contractor for ELA/Math, Science, and Alternate Assessments, RFP # 0000018122.

RFP Summary. The CSDE is seeking proposals from contractors to develop, maintain, and support a statewide standardized assessment platform. The web-based platform would need to comply with all federal and state statutory obligations for administration, scoring, and reporting on the standard and alternate assessments of Connecticut students in English language arts (ELA) and math (Grades 3-8, and 11), and in science (Grades 5, 8, and 11).

RFP Purpose. Federal and State laws require that all students in Grades 3-8 and 11 be assessed annually using the same summative assessment in English language arts, mathematics, and science in designated grades using standard or alternate assessments as appropriate. The selected Contractor will:

- provide an assessment delivery platform that enables educators across the state to securely deliver the computer-adaptive, summative assessments online to over 250,000 students;
- provide training, technical assistance, and other administration support during the assessment window to over 40,000 educators;
- deliver over 700,000 interim assessments online to over 250,000 students in all subjects - score interim assessments in near real time through automated scoring of both selected and constructed response items;
- score all summative assessments accurately and in a timely manner including release of results on a rolling basis during the assessment window;
- provide a comprehensive reporting portal for both interim assessment and summative assessment results so educators can use information for program planning and informing instruction;
- provide accurate and validated data files to CSDE for summative assessment results in a timely manner and in the format and to the specifications set by the CSDE;
- work closely with CSDE to roster students from the State data system (i.e., Public School Information System (PSIS)), on a nightly basis;
- provide methods to support item development and field testing annually for the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) assessment, and
- provide all requisite technical documentation as requested by the U.S. Department of Education for the federal peer review process.

Commodity Codes. The services that the CSDE wishes to procure through this RFP are as follows:

- 91000000 Personal Services

B. Instructions

1. **Official Contact.** The CSDE has designated the individual below as the Official Contact for purposes of this RFP. The Official Contact is the **only authorized contact** for this procurement and, as such, handles all related communications on behalf of the CSDE. Proposers, prospective proposers, and other interested parties are advised that any communication with any other Agency employee(s) (including appointed officials) or personnel under contract to the Agency about this RFP is strictly prohibited. Proposers or prospective proposers who violate this instruction may risk disqualification from further consideration.

Name: Abe Krisst
Address: 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, Connecticut 06103
Phone: 860-713-6894
Email: abe.krisst@ct.gov

Please ensure that email screening software (if used) recognizes and accepts emails from the Official Contact.

2. **Registering with State Contracting Portal.** Respondents must register with the State of CT contracting portal at <https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/Registration> if not already registered. Respondents shall submit the following information pertaining to this application to this portal (on their supplier profile), which will be checked by the CSDE contact.

- Secretary of State recognition – Click on appropriate response
- Non-profit status, if applicable
- Notification to Bidders, Parts I-V
- Campaign Contribution Certification Office of Policy and Management (OPM) Ethics Form 1): <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/Fin-PSA/Forms/Ethics-Forms>

3. **RFP Information.** The RFP, amendments to the RFP, and other information associated with this procurement are available in electronic format from the Official Contact or from the Internet at the following locations:

- CSDE RFP Web Page: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/RFP/Request-for-Proposals/2024-RFPs>
- State Contracting Portal (go to CTsource Bid Board, filter by "Education, Department of"): <https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/BidBoard>

It is strongly recommended that any proposer or prospective proposer interested in this procurement check the Bid Board for any solicitation changes. Interested proposers may receive additional emails from CTsource announcing addendums that are posted on the portal. This service is provided as a courtesy to assist in monitoring activities associated with State procurements, including this RFP.

4. **Procurement Schedule.** See below. The CSDE may amend the schedule as needed. Any change to non-target dates will be made by means of an amendment to this RFP and will be posted on the State Contracting Portal and, if available, the CSDE's RFP Web Page.

- RFP Released: May 2024
- RFP Conference: May 31, 2024
- Letter of Intent Due: June 3, 2024
- Deadline for Questions: June 3, 2024
- Answers Released: June 14, 2024
- Proposals Due: July 1, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. EST

5. **Contract Awards.** The award of any contract pursuant to this RFP is dependent upon the availability of funding to the CSDE. The CSDE anticipates the following:
 - Tentative Contract Term: September 30, 2025–September 30, 2030
6. **Eligibility.** To be eligible for evaluation, the proposal must (1) be received on or before the due date and time; (2) meet the Proposal Requirements; (3) have submitted a letter of intent; and (4) be complete. Proposals that fail to follow instructions or satisfy the minimum submission requirements may be deemed ineligible for further review. The CSDE reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal that, in the judgement of the CSDE, deviates significantly from the requirements of this RFP.
7. **Minimum Qualifications of Proposers.** Contractors must meet the criteria outlined in the Proposal Evaluation Criteria table in the Vendor Experience Section.
8. **Letter of Intent.** A Letter of Intent (LOI) is required by this RFP. The LOI is non-binding and does not obligate the sender to submit a proposal. The LOI must be submitted to the Official Contact by email by the deadline established in the Procurement Schedule. The LOI must clearly identify the sender, including name, postal address, telephone number, firm/company name, and email address. It is the sender's responsibility to confirm the CSDE's receipt of the LOI. Failure to submit the required LOI in accordance with the requirements set forth herein shall result in disqualification from further consideration.
9. **Inquiry Procedures.** All questions regarding this RFP or the CSDE's procurement process must be directed, in writing, electronically (email) to the Official Contact before the deadline specified in the Procurement Schedule. The early submission of questions is encouraged. Questions will not be accepted or answered verbally except for at the RFP Conference. All questions received before the deadline(s) will be answered. However, the CSDE will not answer questions when the source is unknown (i.e., nuisance or anonymous questions). Questions deemed unrelated to the RFP, or the procurement process will not be answered. At its discretion, the CSDE may or may not respond to questions received after the deadline. As this RFP requires a Letter of Intent, the CSDE reserves the right to answer questions only from those who have submitted such a letter. The CSDE may combine similar questions and give only one answer. All questions and answers will be compiled into a written amendment to this RFP. If any answer to any question constitutes a material change to the RFP, the question and answer will be placed at the beginning of the amendment and duly noted as such. The CSDE will release the answers to questions on the date(s) established in the Procurement Schedule. The CSDE will publish any and all amendments to this RFP on the State Contracting Portal and, if available, on the CSDE's RFP Web Page. At its discretion, the CSDE may distribute any amendments to this RFP to prospective proposers who attended the RFP Conference and/or submitted a Letter of Intent.
10. **RFP Conference.** An RFP conference will be held to answer questions from prospective proposers. Attendance at the conference is optional. Contractors who plan to attend should RSVP to abe.krisst@ct.gov by 12:00 p.m. on May 29, 2024, to receive a Teams Meeting link via e-mail to attend the conference.
11. **Proposal Due Date and Time.** The Official Contact is the **only authorized recipient** of proposals submitted in response to this RFP. Proposals (both electronic and paper copies) must be received by the Official Contact on or before the due date and time: July 1, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. EST.

Proposals received after the due date and time will be ineligible and will not be evaluated. The CSDE will send an official letter alerting late respondents of ineligibility.

An acceptable submission must include all the following:

- One (1) electronic proposal and,
- One (1) printed original proposal plus four (4) conforming copies of the original proposal.

The proposal must be complete, properly formatted and outlined, and ready for evaluation by the Screening Committee.

The electronic copy of the proposal must be emailed to the official agency contact for this procurement. The subject line of the email must read: Summative Assessment Contractor for ELA/Math, Science and Alternate Assessments, RFP # 0000018122. Required forms and appendices may be scanned and submitted as PDFs at the end of the main proposal document. Respondents should work to ensure there are not any IT limitations from the provider side. The electronic copy can also be submitted via delivery of a media file. The acceptable submission should also include the following:

- One (1) printed original proposal plus four (4) conforming copies of the original proposal.
- The original proposal must carry original signatures and be clearly marked on the cover as "Original." Unsigned proposals will not be evaluated. The original proposal and each conforming copy of the proposal must be complete, properly formatted and outlined, and ready for evaluation by the Screening Committee.
- When hand-delivering proposals by courier or in person, allow extra time due to building security procedures. The CSDE will not accept a postmark date as the basis for meeting the submission due date and time.
- Proposals received after the due date and time may be accepted by the CSDE as a clerical function, but late proposals will not be evaluated. At the discretion of the CSDE, late proposals may be destroyed or retained for pick up by the submitters.

12. Multiple Proposals. The submission of multiple proposals as the exclusive (only Contractor) is not an option for this procurement. Note that multiple cost options within a single proposal is allowable.

II. Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

A. Agency Overview

1. **Agency Vision:** The CSDE is the administrative arm of the Connecticut State Board of Education (CSBE). Through leadership, curriculum, research, planning, evaluation, assessment, data analysis, and other assistance, the CSDE helps to ensure equal opportunity and excellence in education for all Connecticut students.
2. **Mission:** Within the CSDE, the Performance Office is the entity overseeing summative testing. The Performance Office's mission is to improve student outcomes using data and technology. The goals of the office are Data Collection, Student Assessments, Data Integration/Reporting, Research and Analyses, and Accountability.
3. **Organization:** The Performance Office is seeking proposals to execute this work for the purpose of achieving the goals outlined in the Introduction in [Section I.A.](#)

B. Service Overview

1. Purpose of Summative Assessments:

Summative assessments are the culminating evaluation of student performance against a set of grade-appropriate standards. The primary purpose of the state's summative assessments is to provide an efficient and reliable estimate of a student's overall performance in a subject area relative to grade-appropriate standards that enable valid interpretations of student achievement (in all tested grades and subjects) and progress in Grades 4-8 for ELA and mathematics.

Below is the legislation that mandates state summative assessments. This legislation requires that students be assessed in Grades 3-8, and 11 in mathematics, reading, and writing, as well as science in Grades 5, 8, and 11.

Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-14n-Mastery examination (b) states:

(1) For the school year commencing July 1, 2015, and each school year thereafter, each student enrolled in grades three to eight, inclusive, and grade eleven in any public school shall, annually, take a mastery examination in reading, writing and mathematics during the regular school day...

(3) For the school year commencing July 1, 2018, and each school year thereafter, each student enrolled in grades five, eight and eleven in any public school shall annually take a state-wide mastery examination in science during the regular school day.

Federal law also requires testing, which is outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). States must administer, to all students, annual statewide assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics in Grades 3-8 and once in high school, as well as assessments once in each grade span (3-5, 6-8, and in high school) in science.

Federal law requires full participation of all students on the state summative assessments. The minimum standard for the participation rate is at least 95 percent of all students and all student groups for each subject.

2. Relevant Assessments for RFP

- **The Smarter Balanced Assessments:** The Smarter Balanced Assessments are aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards (CCS) in ELA and mathematics and measure student progress toward college and career readiness. These assessments are administered to students in Grades 3-8. The ELA assessment

- consists of a Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) while the mathematics assessment consists of a CAT and a Performance Task (PT). The CSBE adopted the use of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System shortly after the CCS were adopted in 2010. (The Contractor will not be responsible for delivering an ELA and mathematics assessment in Grade 11.)
- **The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessments:** The NGSS Computer Adaptive Assessments are aligned to the NGSS. These standards were adopted by the Connecticut State Board of Education in November 2015. The first operational year of the NGSS Assessments was the 2018-19 school year. The assessments are administered in Grades 5, 8, and 11.
 - **The Connecticut Alternate Assessments (CTAA) and the Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) Assessments:**
 - Alternate assessments support student independence to the greatest extent possible by making academic content accessible and the expected achievement levels appropriate. The CTAA for math and English language arts was developed to ensure that all students with significant cognitive disabilities can participate in an assessment that measures what they know and can do in relation to grade-level standards. The CTAA is only administered to eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities in Grades 3-8 and 11. It is a secure test, accessed online (or paper-pencil) with the support of a trained teacher.
 - The CTAS was developed to ensure that all students with significant cognitive disabilities can participate in an assessment that is a measure of what they know and can do in relation to the NGSS. The CTAS includes six Performance Tasks that are intended to be administered throughout the year as teachers work with eligible students to rate student performance on the CTAS Core Extensions. This alternate science assessment is only administered to eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities in Grades 5, 8, and 11. The Contractor must have a system in place to receive the student responses collected by the trained teacher.

Contract Transition Timeline for Summative and Interim Assessments

Date	Major Activities
January 2025 – May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate and execute contract.
June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct first annual planning meeting. • Develop a work plan with detailed tasks and timelines for summative and interim assessments.
June 2025 – March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare materials for interim and summative assessment administration. • Prepare online interim and summative assessment delivery system. • Launch online interim and summative assessment administration system and communicate with districts regarding access. • Training of districts for February/March 2026 test administration. This includes Smarter Balanced, NGSS Assessments, CTAA, and CTAS. • Launch any collections that are needed prior to the assessment window such as the Early Stopping Rule collection needed for Alternate Assessments. • NOTE: NGSS Grade 11 begins in early February.

September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment materials made available. Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment window opens.
February/March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summative test window opens for 2026. NOTE: NGSS Grade 11 begins in early February.

C. Scope of Services

Proposals must include an affirmation of the following requirements and include enough information about the Contractor's qualifications to ensure that the required services will be provided with a high-degree of quality and on-time.

1. General Requirements

- 1.1. The Contractor must annually for the duration of this contract administer the Smarter Balanced Assessment (Grades 3-8), the NGSS Assessment (Grades 5, 8, and 11), the Connecticut Alternate Assessment (Grades 3-8, and 11), and the Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment (Grades 5, 8, and 11) beginning in the fall of 2025. The assessment window will run from February/March to early June for all these assessments. These assessments are collectively known as the Summative Assessment Program. (It should be noted that the Grade 11 NGSS Summative Assessment begins in early February and the Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment begins in September of each school year.)
- 1.2. The Contractor must administer the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments and NGSS Interim Assessments beginning in September of each school year and keep the assessment delivery system open until early June. The Contractor must be prepared to have this delivery system opened in September 2025.
- 1.3. The Contractor must have experience with projects of similar scale, scope, and implementation timeline as outlined in this RFP.
- 1.4. The Contractor must provide all services under a resulting contract in compliance with all applicable Federal and State statutes, regulations, rules and/or policies, including but not limited to:
 - 1.4.1. Connecticut General Statute 10-14n
 - 1.4.2. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
 - 1.4.3. Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)
 - 1.4.4. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - 1.4.5. Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- 1.5. The Contractor must annually elicit requirements from the CSDE and provide a comprehensive schedule to implement, administer, and report out on the Smarter Balanced Assessment (Grades 3-8), the NGSS Assessment (Grades 5, 8, and 11), the Connecticut Alternate Assessment (Grades 3-8, and 11), and the Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment (Grades 5, 8, and 11).
- 1.6. The Contractor will collaborate with the current assessment Contractor to create a transition plan. The Contractor will be responsible for ensuring that it has all of the resources required to complete the required scope of work including collaborating as needed with the current assessment Contractor to plan for and accept delivery of data files, applications, documents, specifications, and any other materials.

2. The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment

- 2.1. The CSDE is a member of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. The Contractor must provide necessary resources to administer and report on this summative assessment for students in Grades 3–8, which currently is about 250,000 students.

- 2.2. The Contractor must coordinate with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to gain access to the Smarter Balanced item bank and other necessary information for implementation of tests.
- 2.3. The Contractor must follow guidance outlined in the Connecticut Smarter Balanced [mathematics blueprint](#) and [ELA blueprint](#).
- 2.4. The Contractor should refer to the [Smarter Balanced Development and Design](#) web page for information on development and design.
- 2.5. The Contractor must follow guidance, where applicable, in the [Smarter Balanced Implementation Guide for States and Service Providers](#).
- 2.6. The Contractor must follow guidance, where applicable, in the [Smarter Balanced Members Procedures Manual](#).
- 2.7. The Contractor should refer to the [Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines](#) for information on supports that will be made available to students.
- 2.8. The Contractor must follow guidance, where applicable, in the [Smarter Balanced Technical Report](#) regarding test development, field-test administration, item-data review, item calibrations, and standard setting.
- 2.9. The Contractor must follow guidance, where applicable, in the [Connecticut Smarter Balanced Assessment Technical Report](#) regarding test administration, scoring, reporting, and quality control procedures.
- 2.10. The Contractor must follow guidance, where applicable, in the [Smarter Balanced Scoring Specifications for Summative and Interim Assessments](#).
- 2.11. The Contractor must include in their proposal an option for the CSDE to continue using hand scoring and an option that incorporates automated scoring as part of the process for scoring constructed responses on the Smarter Balanced Assessment. The CSDE makes the decision regarding the use of automated scoring on an annual basis based on the body of evidence that the contractor is able to provide that ensures that validity and reliability can be preserved while using this method of scoring.
- 2.12. The Contractor must create the following resources to support test administration and reporting of Smarter Balanced. The Contractor shall not be limited by this list if the need arises to create more resources.
 - 2.12.1. Test Coordinators Manual
 - 2.12.2. Smarter Balanced Test Administration Manual
 - 2.12.3. Test Administration User Guide
 - 2.12.4. Smarter Balanced Results Interpretation Guide

3. The Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment

- 3.1. The CSDE is a member of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. The Contractor must provide necessary support to administer and report on the interim assessment for students in K-12 in Connecticut.
- 3.2. The Contractor must follow guidance, where applicable, in the [Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Technical Report](#) regarding test design, test administration, and reporting/interpretation.
- 3.3. The Contractor must follow guidance in the [Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Blueprints](#) regarding interim assessment blueprints.
- 3.4. The Contractor must follow the guidance in the [Interim Assessments Guide](#) for information on test format, test administration, scoring and reporting, and available supports to students.
- 3.5. The Contractor must use their assessment administration platform to administer and report on this assessment including:
 - 3.5.1. Ability of educators to view the interim items through secure accounts.

- 3.5.2. Use of all tools, supports, and accommodations available for the summative assessment during the administration of the Smarter Balanced Interims.
- 3.5.3. Reporting of results for individual students and relevant aggregate groups of students. Reporting of results must be provided immediately, with the support of AI scoring for constructed responses.
- 3.5.4. Maintenance of Smarter Balanced Interim answer keys available to educators through secure accounts.
- 3.5.5. A hand scoring system whereby districts can hand-score student responses to open-ended interim items.
- 3.6. The Contractor must be responsible for creating the following resources to support test administration and reporting of Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments. The Contractor shall not be limited by this list if the need arises to create other resources.
 - 3.6.1. Interim Assessment Test Manual
 - 3.6.2. Interim Assessment Users Guide
 - 3.6.3. Interim Assessment Interpretive Guide

4. The NGSS Summative Assessment

- 4.1. The Contractor must provide the necessary support to administer and report on the NGSS summative assessment in Grades 5, 8, and 11 in Connecticut. Currently, this includes about 115,000 students.
- 4.2. The CSDE is a member of the Memorandum of Understanding For Science Item Sharing collaborative that is assembled to share items for NGSS assessments. The Contractor must work with this collaborative to supplement the Connecticut bank of science items including annual development, review, and field testing.
- 4.3. The Contractor will facilitate the transfer of all existing stimuli and items, including graphics, rubrics, and existing accommodation supports from Connecticut's current Contractor.
- 4.4. The Contractor must follow guidance in the Connecticut NGSS Assessment Technical Report regarding item scoring and quality control procedures. Additionally, the Contractor must follow guidance in the following sections of the Connecticut NGSS Assessment Technical Report.
 - 4.4.1. The Contractor must follow guidance in the Connecticut NGSS Assessment Technical Report – Volume 2 regarding test development.
 - 4.4.2. The Contractor must follow guidance in the Connecticut NGSS Assessment Technical Report – Volume 3 regarding performance standards.
 - 4.4.3. The Contractor must follow guidance in the Connecticut NGSS Assessment Technical Report – Volume 4 regarding reliability and validity.
 - 4.4.4. The Contractor must follow guidance in the Connecticut NGSS Assessment Technical Report – Volume 5 regarding test administration.
 - 4.4.5. The Contractor must follow guidance in the Connecticut NGSS Assessment Technical Report – Volume 6 regarding score interpretation.
- 4.5. The Contractor must include in their proposal an option for the CSDE to continue using hand-scoring and an option that incorporates automated scoring as part of the process for scoring constructed responses on the NGSS Assessment. The CSDE makes the decision regarding the use of automated scoring on an annual basis based on the body of evidence that the Contractor is able to provide that ensures that validity and reliability can be preserved while using this method of scoring.
- 4.6. The Contractor must create the following resources to support test administration and reporting of NGSS. The Contractor shall not be limited by this list if the need arises to create other resources.

- 4.6.1. Test Coordinators Manual
- 4.6.2. NGSS Test Administration Manual
- 4.6.3. NGSS Results Interpretation Guide
- 4.7. Each year, Connecticut develops NGSS assessment items to replenish the summative item pool. Connecticut also participates in various stages of development for items owned by collaborating states and/or the testing Contractor under the MOU. All items are field tested during the annual summative test administration. The Contractor must provide support for the following NGSS Assessment Item Development:
 - 4.7.1. Annually, the Contractor must provide an Item Development Plan that addresses, at minimum, each of the requirements in this subsection including:
 - 4.7.1.1. Annual development of 20 item clusters and 40 stand-alone items (across Grades 5, 8, and 11) owned by Connecticut to be field tested as part of the summative assessment administration.
 - 4.7.1.2. Ensuring all items meet NGSS Assessment Item/Test Specifications shared with MOU collaborating states.
 - 4.7.1.3. Ensuring all items follow formats established by the NGSS Assessment Style Guide shared with MOU collaborating states.
 - 4.7.1.4. Conducting training for item writers based on guidance developed by the MOU collaborating states.
 - 4.7.1.5. Implementation of a system/platform to house items and track edits/versions of items throughout the development process.
- 4.8. The Contractor must annually conduct an Item Writing Workshop (IWW) with Connecticut science educators to develop a subset of new Connecticut owned NGSS assessment items including:
 - 4.8.1. Arrangements for a 2-3 day in-person meeting at a central Connecticut location that includes breakfast and lunch for participants, at a time that maximizes the opportunity for educators to participate.
 - 4.8.2. Assistance with recruitment and correspondence with participating educators with an emphasis on eliciting participation of educators from across the state.
 - 4.8.3. Development of training materials and activities.
 - 4.8.4. Use of an online platform for entering items developed by educators.
 - 4.8.5. Arrangements for on-site facilitators to train and assist educators in the item writing process.
 - 4.8.6. Payment of participating educators at a rate of \$300 per day in the 2025-26 school year and then increasing by \$10 per day every year starting at the beginning of each consecutive school year. The Contractor must be prepared to adjust these payments if there is an unforeseen daily educator rate increase. Generally, there are approximately 20 educators reviewing items in 7 – 8 meetings per year.
- 4.9. The Contractor must develop a process to annually review new Connecticut owned NGSS Assessment items including:
 - 4.9.1. Review of items by the CSDE staff prior to and following science assessment committee reviews.
 - 4.9.2. Review of items by the State Science Assessment Advisory Committee (SSAAC) for content accuracy, cognitive demand, and alignment to NGSS and item specifications.
 - 4.9.3. Review of items by the State Science Assessment Fairness and Accessibility Committee (FAC) for evidence of bias and to ensure fairness and accessibility for all students.

- 4.9.4. Payment of science experts (e.g., university-level professors recruited by CSDE) for review of items, at a rate of \$90 per item cluster and \$30 per stand-alone item. The Contractor must be prepared to adjust these payments if there is an unforeseen daily educator rate increase.
- 4.9.5. Review of items following field testing by members of the SSAAC and FAC to ensure the accurate scoring of the variety of student responses (i.e., rubric validation) including identifications of examples of the range of student responses on item interactions, identification of examples of student responses for high, medium, and low performing students, and final approval of scoring by CSDE staff following committee review.
- 4.9.6. Review by members of the SSAAC and FAC of field-tested items flagged based on data concerns established by the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) collaborating states including performance by subgroups of students, low or high p-values, low PBS, and/or excessive time.
- 4.9.7. Arrangements to conduct and facilitate item review, rubric validation, and data review activities virtually during dates/times convenient for educators as approved by the CSDE.
- 4.9.8. Development and delivery of appropriate training for science educators participating in the above activities.
- 4.9.9. Payment of Connecticut educators for participating in item review, rubric validation, and data review activities for Connecticut owned items at a rate of \$300 per day in the 2025-26 school year and then increasing by \$10 per day every year starting at the beginning of each consecutive school year. The Contractor must be prepared to adjust these payments if there is an unforeseen daily educator rate increase.
- 4.9.10. Ensure the security of all items during the review processes outlined above including use of non-disclosure agreements for all participants.
- 4.10. The Contractor must develop a process to support the review of items owned and developed by collaborating states and/or the testing Contractor including:
 - 4.10.1. Payment for educators at a rate of \$300 per day in the 2025-26 school year and then increasing by \$10 per day every year starting at the beginning of each consecutive school year, for participation in virtual item review, rubric validation, and data review activities of items owned and developed by collaborating states and/or the testing Contractor. The Contractor must be prepared to adjust these payments if daily educator rates increase.
 - 4.10.2. Review of all field-tested items owned by other states and/or the testing Contractor by the SSAAC and FAC for inclusion in the CT summative assessment item pool.
 - 4.10.3. Ensure the security of all items during the review processes outlined above including use of non-disclosure agreements for all participants.

5. The NGSS Interim Assessments

- 5.1. The Contractor must work with Cambium Assessments Inc. to procure their NGSS Interim Assessment Items for Grades 5, 8, and 11 and must administer and report on these assessments. In the event these items are not available, the Contractor must provide a comparable NGSS Interim Assessment.
- 5.2. The Contractor must follow the guidance in this [Interim Assessments Guide](#) for information on test format, test administration, scoring and reporting, and available supports to students.
- 5.3. The Contractor must use their assessment administration platform to administer and report on this assessment including:
 - 5.3.1. Ability of educators to view the NGSS interim items through secure accounts.

- 5.3.2. Use of all tools, supports, and accommodations available for the summative assessment during the administration of the NGSS interims.
- 5.3.3. Reporting of results for each item interaction/scoring assertion for individual students and aggregate groups of students.
- 5.3.4. Maintenance of NGSS interim answer keys available to educators through secure accounts.
- 5.3.5. Maintenance of the semi-secure nature of the NGSS interim items.
- 5.4. The Contractor must be responsible for creating the following resources to support test administration and reporting of the NGSS Interim Assessments. The Contractor shall not be limited by this list if the need arises to create other resources.
 - 5.4.1. Interim Assessment Test Manual
 - 5.4.2. Interim Assessment Users Guide
 - 5.4.3. Interim Assessment Interpretive Guide

6. The Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA)

- 6.1. The CSDE has a licensing agreement with EdCount acquiring items from the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC). The Contractor must provide necessary resources to administer and report on these summative assessments for eligible students in Grades 3–8 and 11.
- 6.2. The Contractor will facilitate the transfer of all existing stimuli and items, including graphics, rubrics, and existing accommodation supports from Connecticut’s current Contractor.
- 6.3. The Contractor must follow guidance, where applicable, in the NCSC 2015 Operational Assessment Technical Manual regarding item and test development, test administration, scoring, psychometric analyses, standard setting, and score interpretation.
- 6.4. The Contractor must follow guidance, where applicable, in the 2023 Connecticut Alternate Assessment Technical Report regarding scoring, reporting, technical analysis, and quality control.
- 6.5. The Contractor must be responsible for creating the following resources to support test administration and reporting of CTAA. The Contractor shall not be limited by this list if the need arises to create other resources.
 - 6.5.1. Test Coordinators Manual
 - 6.5.2. CTAA Test Administration Manual
 - 6.5.3. CTAA Results Interpretation Manual
- 6.6. The CSDE would like to explore the possibility of adding an additional test form and requests that the Contractor submit a proposal for the development of this additional form. This proposal would include item development and field-testing costs.

7. The Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment (CTAS)

- 7.1. The CTAS Assessment is an assessment based on alternate achievement standards for students with significant cognitive disabilities. It has been developed to ensure that all students with significant cognitive disabilities can participate in an assessment that measures what they know and can do in relation to the NGSS. The CTAS Assessment includes six performance tasks that are intended to be administered throughout the year. Teachers work with eligible students to rate student performance on the CTAS Core Extensions. Teachers administer various activities to the students and submit performance ratings. The Grade 5 test consists of 44 items, and the Grades 8 and 11 tests have 42 items.
- 7.2. The Contractor will facilitate the transfer of all existing stimuli and items, including graphics, rubrics, and existing accommodation supports from Connecticut’s current Contractor.

- 7.3. Districts shall administer these tests and the Contractor shall collect results and report on this assessment for eligible students.
- 7.4. The Contractor must follow guidance, where applicable, in the 2023 CTAS Technical Report regarding test forms, test windows, scoring, score reporting, reliability and validity, and quality control/assurance.
- 7.5. The Contractor must follow details of the CTAS Test Blueprint.
- 7.6. The Contractor must make available to districts all the required materials outlined in the Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment: Test Administration Manual.
- 7.7. The Contractor must make available all the required materials on the CTAS Required Materials page.
- 7.8. The Contractor must print a sample of the available CTAS Required Materials and be prepared to distribute them in the event of a district request.
- 7.9. The Contractor must be responsible for creating the following resources to support test administration and reporting of CTAS. The Contractor shall not be limited by this list if the need arises to create other resources.
 - 7.9.1. Test Coordinators Manual
 - 7.9.2. CTAS Test Administration Manual
 - 7.9.3. CTAS Results Interpretation Manual

8. Program Management

- 8.1. The Contractor must outline a clear and sustainable plan for management of the project for the period covered by this contract.
- 8.2. The Contractor must assign a primary program manager to oversee the entire program.
- 8.3. The Contractor must assign two assistant program managers to support the primary program manager.
- 8.4. The Contractor must schedule weekly meetings with the CSDE assessment team and always be accessible for emergent issues. The CSDE and Contractor will agree upon the agenda at least two days prior to these scheduled meetings.
- 8.5. The Contractor must schedule and attend an annual on-site kickoff meeting with location to be determined by the CSDE. The CSDE and Contractor will agree upon the agenda for this annual meeting at least 7 days prior to the event.
- 8.6. The primary program manager shall be responsible to attend any ad hoc meetings to address any emerging issues within the assessment program.
- 8.7. The primary program manager must be available to attend daily assessment program updates during the assessment window. During these daily assessment window meetings, the primary program manager should be able to facilitate discussions and implement solutions for any topics in this RFP.
- 8.8. The primary program manager must be available to attend weekly "Office Hours" offered to districts during the testing window. The intent of these Office Hours is to communicate emerging news and support districts on the emerging information.

9. Assessment Administration System/Platform

- 9.1. The Contractor must provide a single assessment management system/platform for assessment administration, score reporting, housing student data, assessment administration practice, assessment administration training, interim assessment item viewing, and access to Smarter Balanced Tools for Teachers.
- 9.2. The Contractor must provide a single assessment management system/platform that is securely accessible only to educators in Connecticut with secure accounts.
- 9.3. The Contractor must provide an assessment administration system that provides all the universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations currently available on the Smarter Balanced Assessments and NGSS Assessments. These must be available

- on both the interim and summative assessments. The platform must incorporate new item types and accessibility resources as identified in the item content packages and Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility and Accommodations Guide.
- 9.4. The Contractor must provide the appropriate servers, secure browsers, and applications for the assessment administration platform.
 - 9.5. The Contractor must provide minimum system requirements so districts can access the system/platform on any district or student device.
 - 9.6. The Contractor must provide a connectivity checker so that districts can check if devices have the appropriate amount of bandwidth to test.
 - 9.7. The Contractor must provide a system so that the CSDE can upload student data from the CSDE Public School Information System on a nightly basis. The Contractor must provide this system and link the student information to their CSDE issued State Assigned Student Identifier (SASID).
 - 9.8. The Contractor must provide a system so that the CSDE can upload student support/accommodation data as well as the student Alternate Eligibility Indicator on a nightly basis from its statewide Individualized Education Plan (IEP)/504 Plan system, Connecticut Special Education Data System (CT-SEDS)—the new electronic IEP system for IEP/504 students in Connecticut.
 - 9.9. The Contractor must provide a system so that all embedded supports/accommodations can be delivered seamlessly to students for assessment administration.
 - 9.10. The Contractor must provide an assessment administration system/platform that has a proven track record of success in other summative and interim assessment programs. The Contractor must provide an assessment administration system that can accommodate 250,000 concurrent testers in Connecticut.
 - 9.11. The Contractor must provide a platform for item development that may be integrated in this assessment administration system or may be a standalone system.
 - 9.12. The Contractor must provide a practice test site for all tests. The Contractor must update the practice test site as needed. All the supports available on the summative and interim assessments should also be present on the practice tests.
 - 9.13. The Contractor must provide a training test site for all tests. The Contractor must update the training test site as needed. All the supports available on the summative and interim assessments should also be present on the training tests.
 - 9.14. The Contractor must offer practice and training tests using a secure browser and a non-secure browser.
 - 9.15. The Contractor must provide an assessment administration system where roles can be created for users at the district, school, teacher, test administrator, and state level. Each role must have a tiered level of access/tasks from district users to test administrators. This includes roles that allow educators to administer tests for specific rostered students.
 - 9.16. The Contractor must provide a method for all the state's current users in the assessment administration system to be migrated to any new systems.
 - 9.17. The Contractor must provide a system that monitors and reports on open-ended responses that present a student, school, or community safety concern. These reports must be provided daily.
 - 9.18. The Contractor must provide a system so that the CSDE can access all scored test responses.
 - 9.19. The Contractor must provide a delivery system that ensures students log into the correct test.

- 9.20. The Contractor must provide tools to monitor websites, discussion forums, public social media platforms, etc., where sensitive test information may be disclosed and constitute test irregularities.

10. Documentation of Records

- 10.1. The Contractor must document all procedures, processes, business rules, calculations, measures, decision points, decision options, and decision criteria used to develop and perform work under a resulting contract.
- 10.2. The Contractor must provide an online contract documentation repository to store and manage all documents used to develop and perform work under a resulting contract.
- 10.3. The Contractor must provide additional secure transfer mechanisms to transfer data and documents between the Contractor and the State as needed.
- 10.4. All documents, records, presentations, or other materials produced under this contract shall be the sole property of the CSDE.

11. Online and Paper Reporting

- 11.1. The Contractor must develop a secure online reporting system, linked to its assessment administration system, to deliver online reports for all assessments, including the Smarter Balanced/NGSS Interim Assessments.
- 11.1.1. The Contractor must thoughtfully consider and provide online score reporting for the following key audiences: Teachers, School Administrators, District Administrators, and other district staff.
- 11.1.2. The Contractor must provide "rolling" online reporting of individual student scores in their online reporting system by early May of each assessment administration.
- 11.1.3. The Contractor must provide preliminary online reporting of all scores using the Contractors reporting system by June 15 of each assessment administration. These scores include final individual student scores as well as district/school aggregate reports.
- 11.1.4. The Contractor must provide an online reporting system where roles can be created for users at the district, school, teacher, test administrator, and state level. This includes specific roles that allow educators to see test results for specific rostered students.
- 11.1.5. The Contractor must provide an online reporting system that reports on all components of the summative assessments such as scale scores, performance levels, and claim/target sub scores.
- 11.1.6. The Contractor must provide an online reporting system that considers all data privacy elements.
- 11.1.7. The Contractor must provide score interpretation resources to assist with results interpretation for the summative and interim assessments.
- 11.1.8. The Contractor must provide an online reporting system that reports out all the relevant Smarter Balanced/NGSS Interim Assessment scores, and also shows each item and the associated student work.
- 11.1.9. The Contractor must create and publish resources, such as Interpretive Guides and User Guides, to support interpretation of reports.
- 11.2. The Contractor must develop a method to deliver paper Individual Student Reports to districts for Smarter Balanced, NGSS, CTAA, and CTAS. The Contractor must collaborate with the CSDE to create and approve these customized reports.
- 11.2.1. The Contractor must deliver these paper reports to districts by August 15 of each school year.
- 11.2.2. The Contractor must deliver these reports in an electronic format (such as PDFs) to districts by August 1 of each school year.

- 11.2.3. The Contractor must make paper reports available in multiple languages if requested.
- 11.2.4. The Contractor must provide tracking information to the District Test Coordinator and the State for Individual Student Report packages.
- 11.2.5. The Contractor must provide Individual Student Reports that include overall performance on the assessment, sub scores, and district/school performance for perspective. The reports will also include brief explanations for all the data elements provided.
- 11.2.6. The Contractor must create and publish resources, such as Interpretive Guides and User Guides, to support interpretation of Individual Student Reports.

12. Data File Transfers

- 12.1. For each assessment year, the Contractor must deliver the following assessment data files:
 - 12.1.1. For Smarter Balanced: Student-level and item-level data files.
 - 12.1.2. For NGSS: Student-level, item-level, and assertion-level data files.
 - 12.1.3. For CTAA: Student-level and item-level data files.
 - 12.1.4. For CTAS: Student-level and item-level data files.
- 12.2. For each of these data files, the Contractor must deliver different versions of the files, including sample files, preliminary files, and final files. Each of these versions are described in the section below. In addition, the Contractor must follow the file specifications in the data layout files described in the section below.
- 12.3. The Contractor must deliver three different versions of the data files listed below:
 - 12.3.1. Sample data files:
 - 12.3.1.1. The sample data files should be delivered to the CSDE before the start of the testing window. The Contractor and the CSDE shall agree upon the exact file delivery dates, but it should occur at least two months prior to the start of the testing window. The file delivery dates must be listed in the data layout file described in the section below.
 - 12.3.1.2. The sample data files contain generated ("not real") data but with accurate fields and data format for the CSDE to check the data fields and field format.
 - 12.3.1.3. The CSDE will review the files and sign off on the files.
- 12.4. Preliminary data files:
 - 12.4.1. The Contractor must deliver at least two sets of the preliminary data files during the testing window. This first must be delivered approximately one month after testing begins, and the second must be delivered approximately two months after testing begins. The Contractor and the CSDE shall agree upon the exact file delivery dates two months prior to the start of the testing window. The file delivery dates must be listed in the data layout file described in the section below.
 - 12.4.2. The Contractor must support the data/scoring review conducted by the CSDE with the preliminary files.
 - 12.4.3. The CSDE will need to review the files and sign off on the files.
- 12.5. Final data files:
 - 12.5.1. The Contractor must deliver the final data files no later than one week after the testing window is completed. The Contractor and the CSDE shall agree upon the exact file delivery dates two months prior to the start of the testing window. The file delivery dates must be listed in the data layout file described in the section below.

- 12.5.2. The final data files must contain the correct records for all students and test events.
- 12.5.3. The CSDE will review the files and sign off on the files.
- 12.5.4. If necessary, the Contractor shall support the CSDE in loading the data files into the CSDE data warehouse.
- 12.5.5. The Contractor must provide corrected files by August 1 of each calendar year if the CSDE identifies errors with the previously noted final file.
- 12.6. For each assessment year, the Contractor must deliver a data layout file for each assessment, including Smarter Balanced, NGSS, CTAA, and CTAS. The structure of the data layout files should follow that of the current data layout files which include (but are not limited to) the following main sections (or tabs if an Excel file is used):
 - 12.6.1. Delivery Information:
 - 12.6.1.1. As mentioned in the section above, the Contractor and the CSDE shall agree upon the exact file delivery date two months prior to the start of the testing window for each assessment file.
 - 12.6.1.2. All the file delivery dates should be listed in this portion of the data layout file.
 - 12.6.2. The Contractor must follow the **exact** same student level data format that the CSDE currently uses below:
 - 12.6.2.1. Smarter Balanced: Please see the Tab "Output (STUDENT)"
 - 12.6.2.2. NGSS: Please see the Tab "Output (STUDENT)"
 - 12.6.2.3. CTAA: Please see the Tab "Output (STUDENT)"
 - 12.6.2.4. CTAS: Please see the Tab "Output (STUDENT)"
 - 12.6.3. The Contractor must follow the **exact** same item level data format that the CSDE currently uses below:
 - 12.6.3.1. Smarter Balanced: Please see the Tab "Output (ITEMS)"
 - 12.6.3.2. NGSS: Please see the Tab "Output (ITEMS)"
 - 12.6.3.3. CTAA: Please see the Tab "Output (ITEMS)"
 - 12.6.3.4. CTAS: Please see the Tab "Output (ITEMS)"
 - 12.6.4. The Contractor must follow the **exact** same assertion level data format that the CSDE currently uses below:
 - 12.6.4.1. NGSS: Please see the Tab "Output (ASSERTIONS)"
 - 12.6.5. The Contractor must list all the mappings between any specific terms listed in the student/item/assertion file and the corresponding explanation or full terms.
 - 12.6.6. The Contractor must record and list all the edits/changes made in each of the data layouts in this portion of the data layout file.
- 12.7. The data layout files should be delivered to the CSDE at least one month before the start of the testing window. The CSDE will need to review the files and sign off on the files.

13. Contractor Psychometric Consultation

- 13.1. The Contractor must provide item bank management for the following assessments:
 - 13.1.1. Summative assessments, including Smarter Balanced, NGSS, CTAA, and CTAS.
 - 13.1.2. Interim assessments, including Smarter Balanced and NGSS.
 - 13.1.3. Pertaining to item bank management and for each administration year, the Contractor must provide an item metadata file for each assessment item bank before the testing window. The item metadata file should include the

- details (e.g., item characteristics, item statistics, and associated test information) of all operational and field-tested items in the item bank.
- 13.2. The Contractor must implement the current adaptive item-selection algorithm for Smarter Balanced and NGSS Assessments. The Contractor must be prepared to implement this with the few unique characteristics of Connecticut's algorithms. For example, for Smarter Balanced, Connecticut does not use items from the expanded pool.
 - 13.2.1. For Smarter Balanced, the implementation and use of the current adaptive test can be found in the Smarter Balanced Technical Report. Proposals must include a description of the Contractor's capacity to implement an adaptive algorithm that will yield results that are comparable to Connecticut's prior test administrations.
 - 13.2.2. For NGSS, the implementation and use of the current adaptive test can be found in the Connecticut NGSS Assessment Technical Report.
 - 13.2.3. Pertaining to the adaptive item selection and for each administration year, the Contractor shall conduct a simulation analysis for each Smarter Balanced and NGSS administration to examine the test design and the statewide/individual student blueprint coverage.
 - 13.3. The Contractor must establish, implement, and maintain the scoring engine that allows them to use the current psychometric models and scoring methods for scoring all the assessments, including Smarter Balanced, NGSS, CTAA, and CTAS.
 - 13.3.1. Pertaining to the scoring engine and for each administration year, the Contractor must provide the scoring specifications of each assessment.
 - 13.4. For each administration year, the Contractor must perform forensic analysis and quality control analysis after the tests are administered.
 - 13.4.1. Pertaining to the forensic and quality control analysis and for each administration year, the Contractor must provide the resulting files of the analysis, including but not limited to person fit statistics, item answer key versus responses analysis, blueprint coverage, and item exposure rates.
 - 13.5. The Contractor must provide evidence of the validity of any allowable accommodation.
 - 13.5.1. Pertaining to the designated supports and accommodation resource usage and for each administration year, a set of data files that list 1) all the allowable accommodation tools for each test taker (or each test event) and 2) the actual usage of the accommodation tools in each test event.
 - 13.6. The Contractor shall support the preparation for the psychometrics-related discussion with the Connecticut Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The Contractor will manage the payment of Connecticut's five TAC members estimated at a daily rate of \$1,500. The Contractor should be prepared to host two, 2-day TAC meetings annually.
 - 13.7. The Contractor must support the following psychometrics-related activities if needed: standard setting, standards validation, item parameter drift analysis, etc.
 - 13.8. The Contractor must host and actively participate in a weekly psychometric call throughout the calendar year to facilitate any emerging psychometric issues.
 - 13.9. The Contractor must develop an annual comprehensive technical report for each assessment. The Contractor's technical reports must provide all technical data consistent with the State's Guide to the U.S. Department of Education's Assessment Peer Review Process. The technical report must include all the typical sections of a high-quality assessment technical report detailing the test development, scaling, reporting, evidence of construct, content, and consequential validities. It should also include reliability indicators such as internal consistency, decision accuracy, and decision consistency.

14. Educator Training for Test Administration

- 14.1. The Contractor must assist and support the CSDE with developing plans and materials for onsite and virtual trainings that will include the following:
 - 14.1.1. Four onsite training courses for District Test Coordinators to be held annually in January of each year for summative assessment administration.
 - 14.1.2. Four virtual training courses for District Test Coordinators to be held annually in January of each year for summative assessment administration.
 - 14.1.3. Multiple pre-administration virtual training courses to support annual summative assessment administration.
 - 14.1.4. Two result interpretation virtual trainings to support score interpretation for summative and interim assessments.
- 14.2. The Contractor shall create and collaborate with the CSDE on the supports (such as manuals and help guides) necessary for summative and interim assessment administration, that include the following content:
 - 14.2.1. Early preparation such as IT infrastructure, supports/accommodations entry for students who are English learners/Multilingual learners (ELs/MLs) or students with an IEP, and student placement in the Test Delivery System.
 - 14.2.2. Near term preparation such as IT infrastructure, preparing workstations, and testing conditions.
 - 14.2.3. Ensuring Test Security
 - 14.2.4. Entering Supports/Accommodations
 - 14.2.5. Post assessment tasks including how to use assessment data to inform policies and practices.
- 14.3. All supports must address, at a minimum, the following:
 - 14.3.1. Local responsibilities of educators involved in testing (e.g., District Test Coordinator, School Coordinator, and teacher)
 - 14.3.2. Test Security
 - 14.3.3. Test examiner script for test administration
 - 14.3.4. The Contractor shall support and participate in annual post-assessment meetings to gather feedback and information on testing experiences from educators.
 - 14.3.5. The Contractor must ensure that all created resources are edited properly and free of any errors.
 - 14.3.6. The Contractor must provide a “demo” district for state and district users to become familiar with Contractor systems. The demo district must include:
 - 14.3.6.1. Pre-generated data for educators to apply in system trials.
 - 14.3.6.2. Functionality for educators to generate their own data through creating demonstration student records, administering tests to demonstration students, scoring demonstration student responses (both automatically and manually), etc., allowing educators to experience the various processes involved.
 - 14.3.6.3. Year-round access.

15. Accommodations and Accessibility

- 15.1. The Contractor must ensure accessibility and equity in access to test delivery and items through the provision of embedded and non-embedded accessibility supports as indicated in the [Connecticut Assessment Guidelines](#). The Contractor must be able to continue to provide these accessibility features. Additionally, the Contractor must be willing to accept and adapt to the addition of new accessibility features that meet the constantly changing improvements and enhancements to accessibility supports.

- 15.2. The Contractor must provide a test administration system that provides all the Designated Supports and Accommodations currently available on the Smarter Balanced Assessments, NGSS, and Alternate Assessments. These supports and accommodations must be available on both the interim and summative assessments.
- 15.3. The Contractor must provide a mechanism for the CSDE to seamlessly load all documented designated supports and accommodations for students who have an IEP or Section 504 Plan from CT-SEDS into the test administration system.
- 15.4. The Contractor must provide a mechanism for the CSDE to seamlessly load all students who are eligible for an alternate assessment as indicated in CT-SEDS into the test administration system.
- 15.5. The Contractor must support the creation of resources to support the testing for special populations students, including students who may be taking the CTAA or CTAS.
- 15.6. The Contractor must support the CSDE in any ad hoc professional development (such as webinars and on-site meetings) that relate to implementing Designated Supports and Accommodations as well as administering the CTAA and CTAS.
- 15.7. The Contractor must support the CSDE in monitoring districts regarding the one percent cap on students taking the CTAA and CTAS.
- 15.8. The Contractor must offer a solution for potential remote testing in the event this is necessary in future years.
- 15.9. The Contractor must work with the CSDE in the future to implement any new embedded designated supports or accommodations identified by outside organizations (e.g., Smarter Balanced) or the CSDE.
- 15.10. The Contractor shall be responsible for ensuring all universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations are available on the practice tests.
- 15.11. The Contractor shall be responsible for ensuring all universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations are available on the training tests.
- 15.12. The Contractor shall be responsible for supporting and creating training for certification of educators who will be administering an alternate assessment.

16. Assessment Security Requirement

- 16.1. The Contractor must ensure test security for all assessments that must include the following:
 - 16.1.1. Contractor/subcontractor security policies.
 - 16.1.2. Contractor/subcontractor procedures.
 - 16.1.3. Contractor/subcontractor security audit reports.
- 16.2. The Contractor must include data security protocols/requirements for data transfers between the CSDE and Contractor.
- 16.3. The Contractor must include the following data security protocols/requirements during test administration:
 - 16.3.1. Existing test security policies.
 - 16.3.2. Electronic test security monitoring.
 - 16.3.3. On site test security monitoring.
- 16.4. The Contractor shall provide a system to track test irregularities and to track appeals entered by district when incidents occur. Appeals that typically are processed due to test irregularities include:
 - 16.4.1. Reopening a Test.
 - 16.4.2. Invalidating a Test.
 - 16.4.3. Resetting a Test.
 - 16.4.4. Restoring a Test.

16.4.5. Reassigning a Test.

17. Assessment Validation and Peer Review Support

- 17.1. The Contractor shall assist the CSDE in planning for the bi-annual on-site meeting with the CSDE's Technical Advisory Committee.
- 17.2. The Contractor shall assist the CSDE in preparing for peer review discussions with the Technical Advisory Committee.
- 17.3. The Contractor will assist the CSDE in collecting and tracking documents as evidence for anything required for federal peer review.
 - 17.3.1. The most recent peer review requirements can be found here: Standards and Assessments - Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.

18. Quality Assurance

- 18.1. The Contractor shall be responsible for the following quality assurance measures for the assessments:
 - 18.1.1. Data Preparation (e.g., ensuring correct keys are being used or ensuring the correct amount of live vs. field-test items are being used)
 - 18.1.2. Test Delivery System (e.g., monitoring of the concurrent number of users on the test delivery system)
 - 18.1.3. Test Preparation (e.g., reviewing and editing tests that may undergo User Acceptance Testing prior to publishing)
 - 18.1.4. Score Report Quality Checks
- 18.2. Where applicable, the Contractor must implement these measures in a prompt and timely manner as indicated by the CSDE.
- 18.3. The Contractor must include a plan for CSDE staff to engage in User Acceptance Testing (UAT) of each system for each administration. The UAT should be scheduled over multiple rounds, alternating between CSDE testing of the system and Contractor fix cycles. UAT will be considered complete, and the Contractor's systems will be approved by the CSDE for use, only after all fixes requested by the CSDE have been enacted by the Contractor.

19. Communications

- 19.1. The Contractor must assist the CSDE in developing a communication plan and any materials that must include the following elements:
 - 19.1.1. The Contractor must develop, maintain, and institute a publicly accessible website to distribute all assessment related materials. This portal will be accessible for state staff, districts, students, families, and private citizens.
 - 19.1.2. The Contractor shall support the CSDE in the development of a distribution method to educators for test related activity, such as a listserv.
 - 19.1.3. The Contractor must support and deliver any webinars necessary for training educators for test administration, results interpretation, or any other assessment related activities. The Contractor must record the webinars as well as caption them. The Contractor must create publishable scripts of the webinars when requested by the CSDE.
 - 19.1.4. The Contractor must support the Performance Office and/or CSDE Communications Office in any ad hoc requests from organizations outside of the CSDE. The Contractor must support the public release of the Summative Data including analysis and interpretation as necessary to communicate the assessment results in plain language to policy makers, administrators, educators, families, and the general public.
- 19.2. The Contractor must make sure that all resources developed pursuant to this RFP will meet the requirements of Section 508, ADA, and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

- 19.3. The Contractor must provide a support or help desk that will be available via a toll-free number and email daily from 8 a.m. EST to 5 p.m. EST. During regular business hours, the Contractor will provide support to inquiries within 5 minutes of receipt of the call or email. For communications received during off hours, the Contractor must respond during the next business day.
- 19.4. The Contractor must provide a technical support help desk for technical questions that will be available via a toll-free number and email daily from 8 a.m. EST to 5 p.m. EST. During regular business hours, the Contractor will provide support to inquiries within 5 minutes of receipt of the call or email. For communication received during off hours, the Contractor must respond during the next business day.
- 19.5. The Contractor must provide regular access to call log information and performance metrics. Information from help desk interactions will be reviewed for program improvements.

20. Disaster Planning

- 20.1. To mitigate the impact of a disaster, the Contractor must be prepared with the following:
 - 20.1.1. The Contractor must have a disaster containment plan in place.
 - 20.1.2. The Contractor must immediately inform contacts at the CSDE of an emerging disaster and keep the CSDE updated on any changes.
 - 20.1.3. The Contractor must immediately notify key team members to diagnose a cause for the disaster, end the disaster, and resume normal operations.
 - 20.1.4. If necessary, the Contractor must communicate with districts about the disaster and keep the districts updated on any changes.
- 20.2. The Contractor must frequently, automatically, and fully backup data on any systems associated with the proposed contract.
- 20.3. The Contractor must maintain a schedule of full backup of system information.

21. Data Ownership and Contract Transition

- 21.1. The CSDE shall retain sole ownership, rights, title, and interest to all data collected and stored by the Contractor under a resulting contract.
- 21.2. The CSDE shall retain sole ownership, rights, title, and interest to all process documents used to develop the components of the assessments.
- 21.3. The CSDE requires that at the end of the contract, the Contractor must transfer all the CSDE-owned data back to the CSDE or to another entity as requested by the CSDE, including all historical data and stored backup data.
- 21.4. At the end of the contract when all CSDE-owned data, deliverables, and products the Contractor has created, developed, produced, and managed while performing the services outlined in this RFP have been successfully transferred back to the CSDE, the Contractor must destroy all copies, including file backups, of the CSDE-owned data the Contractor possesses.
- 21.5. The Contractor must limit access of student data to only those staff with a verifiable need to access the data.

D. Performance Measures

The following performance metrics highlight key priorities that will be analyzed with Providers/Contractors collaboratively during the life of the contract. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather an indication of significant performance metrics of interest to CSDE. The CSDE looks forward to working with Providers/Contractors to define additional important performance metrics.

- The Contractor will successfully provide an assessment delivery platform that enables educators across the state to securely deliver the summative assessments online to over 250,000 students,

- The Contractor must provide training, technical assistance, and other administration support during the assessment window to over 40,000 educators,
- The Contractor must deliver over 700,000 interim assessments online to over 250,000 students in all subjects and score interim assessments in near real time through automated scoring of both selected- and constructed-response items,
- The Contractor must score all summative assessments accurately and in a timely manner including release of results on a rolling basis during the assessment window and provide a comprehensive reporting portal for both interim and summative assessment results so educators can use the information for program planning and informing instruction,
- The Contractor must provide accurate and validated data files to the CSDE for summative assessment results in a timely manner, and
- The Contractor must provide all requisite technical documentation as requested by the U.S. Department of Education for the federal peer review process.

E. Contract Management/Data Reporting

As part of the State's commitment to becoming more outcome-oriented, the CSDE seeks to actively and regularly collaborate with Providers/Contractors to enhance contract management, improve results, and adjust service delivery and policy based on learning what works. Reliable and relevant data is necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate results and performance, and drive service improvements. As such, the CSDE reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from Providers/Contractors.

III. Proposal Submission Overview

A. Submission Format Information

1. **Required Outline.** All proposals must follow the required outline presented in Section IV – Proposal Outline. Proposals that fail to follow the required outline will be deemed non-responsive and not evaluated.
2. **Cover Sheet.** The cover sheet is page 1 of the proposal. The proposer must develop a cover sheet that includes the information below. *Legal Name* is defined as the name of the provider, Contractor, CT State agency, or municipality submitting the proposal. *Contact Person* is defined as the individual who can provide additional information about the proposal or who has immediate responsibility for the proposal. *Authorized Official* is defined as the individual empowered to submit a binding offer on behalf of the proposer to provide services in accordance with the terms and provisions described in this RFP and any amendments or attachments hereto.
 - RFP Name or Number
 - Legal Name
 - FEIN
 - Street Address
 - Town/City/State/Zip Code
 - Contact Person
 - Title
 - Phone Number
 - Email Address
 - Authorized Official
 - Title
 - Signature
3. **Table of Contents.** All proposals must include a table of contents that conforms with the required proposal outline.
4. **Executive Summary.** Proposals must include a high-level summary—not exceeding 2 pages—of the main proposal and cost proposal. The summary must also include the organization’s eligibility and qualifications to respond to this RFP.
5. **Main Proposal Submission.** See section IV below for information on the content of this section.
6. **Attachments.** The required appendices or forms must not be altered or used to extend, enhance, or replace any component required by this RFP. Failure to abide by these instructions will result in disqualification.
7. **Style Requirements.** *One electronic copy plus five hard copies are required.*
Submitted proposals must conform to the following specifications:
 - Paper Size: 8.5”x11” format
 - Page Limit: None
 - Print Style: 2-sided
 - Font Size: 11 Point minimum
 - Font Type: Arial, Tahoma, or Verdana
 - Margins: 1”
 - Line Spacing: 1.5 Spacing
8. **Pagination.** The proposer’s name must be displayed in the header of each page. All pages, including the required appendices and forms, must be numbered in the footer.

9. **Packaging and Labeling Requirements.** All proposals must be submitted in sealed envelopes or packages and be addressed to the Official Contact. The legal name and address of the proposer must appear in the upper left corner of the envelope or package. The RFP name and number must be clearly displayed on the envelope or package. Any received proposal that does not conform to these packaging or labeling instructions will be opened as general mail. Such a proposal may be accepted by the CSDE as a clerical function, but it will not be evaluated. At the discretion of the CSDE, such a proposal may be destroyed or retained for pick up by the submitters.
10. **Declaration of Confidential Information.** Proposers are advised that all materials associated with this procurement are subject to the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the Privacy Act, and all rules, regulations, and interpretations resulting from them. If a proposer deems that certain information required by this RFP is confidential, the proposer must label such information as Confidential prior to submission. In Main Proposal Submission, the proposer must reference where the information labeled Confidential is located in the proposal. *Example: Section G.1.a.* For each subsection so referenced, the proposer must provide a convincing explanation and rationale sufficient to justify an exemption of the information from release under the FOIA. The explanation and rationale must be stated in terms of (a) the prospective harm to the competitive position of the proposer that would result if the identified information were to be released and (b) the reasons why the information is legally exempt from release pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) § 1-210(b).
11. **Conflict of Interest - Disclosure Statement.** Proposers must include a disclosure statement concerning any current business relationships (within the last three (3) years) that pose a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85. A conflict of interest exists when a relationship exists between the proposer and a public official (including an elected official) or State employee that may interfere with fair competition or may be adverse to the interests of the State. The existence of a conflict of interest is not, in and of itself, evidence of wrongdoing. A conflict of interest may, however, become a legal matter if a proposer tries to influence, or succeeds in influencing, the outcome of an official decision for their personal or corporate benefit. The CSDE will determine whether any disclosed conflict of interest poses a substantial advantage to the proposer over the competition, decreases the overall competitiveness of this procurement, or is not in the best interests of the State. In the absence of any conflict of interest, a proposer must affirm such in the disclosure statement. *Example: "[name of proposer] has no current business relationship (within the last three (3) years) that poses a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85."*

B. Evaluation of Proposals

1. **Evaluation Process.** It is the intent of the CSDE to conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of proposals received in response to this RFP. When evaluating proposals, negotiating with successful proposers, and awarding contracts, the CSDE will conform with its written procedures for POS and PSA procurements (pursuant to C.G.S. § 4-217) and the State's Code of Ethics (pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 1-84 and 1-85). Final funding allocation decisions will be determined during contract negotiation.
2. **Evaluation Review Committee.** The CSDE will designate a Review Committee to evaluate proposals submitted in response to this RFP. The Review Committee will be composed of individuals, Agency staff or other designees as deemed appropriate. The contents of all submitted proposals, including any confidential information, will be shared with the Review Committee. Only proposals found to be responsive (that is, complying with all instructions and requirements described herein) will be

reviewed, rated, and scored. Proposals that fail to comply with all instructions will be rejected without further consideration. The Review Committee shall evaluate all proposals that meet the minimum submission requirements by score and rank ordered and make recommendations for awards. The Commissioner of Education will make the final selection. Attempts by any proposer (or representative of any proposer) to contact or influence any member of the Review Committee may result in disqualification of the proposer. The CSDE reserves the right to award a proposer who did not rank the highest if it deems it to be in the best interest of the state.

3. **Minimum Submission Requirements.** To be eligible for evaluation, proposals must (1) be received on or before the due date and time; (2) meet the proposal format requirements; (3) meet the eligibility and qualification requirements to respond to the procurement, (4) follow the required proposal outline; and (5) be complete. Proposals that fail to follow instructions or satisfy these minimum submission requirements may not be reviewed further. The CSDE will reject any proposal that deviates significantly from the requirements of this RFP.
4. **Evaluation Criteria (and Weights).** Proposals meeting the minimum submission requirements will be evaluated according to the established criteria. The criteria are the objective standards that the Review Committee will use to evaluate the technical merits of the proposals. Only the criteria listed below will be used to evaluate proposals. The weights are disclosed below.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Each Proposal Evaluation Criterion will be rated for evidence of quality, clarity, completeness, innovation, and overall probability of success using the following ratings:

SUPERIOR (6) Meets and exceeds expectations for this criterion; demonstrates a high level of capacity, innovation, and creativity; high probability of success.

ADEQUATE (4) Meets expectations for this criterion; consistent with industry standards and practices; good probability of success. (4 Points)

MINIMAL (2) Meets some but not all expectations, and/or meets expectations at the lowest acceptable levels; moderate to low probability of success.

INADEQUATE (0) Fails to meet some or all expectations; does not demonstrate sufficient capacity to reach project objectives; low to very low probability of success.

Criteria	Points
<p>Quality of Response (24 points):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responds clearly, concisely, and completely to all RFP requirements. 2. Demonstrates understanding of Connecticut’s vision and the challenges that need to be met to achieve it. 3. Proposes methods, procedures, and strategies that are sound and represent current research and best practice in assessment design and delivery. 4. Achieves an acceptable level of balance between technical quality, efficiency, and cost effectiveness. 	<p>6 4 2 0</p> <p>6 4 2 0</p> <p>6 4 2 0</p> <p>6 4 2 0</p>
<p>Corporate Capacity and Staffing (24 points):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides a staffing plan that is sufficient in terms of numbers, roles, and areas of expertise. 2. Includes evidence that key project staff are adequately trained and have sufficient experience with respect to each staff member’s role in the project. 3. Demonstrates the capacity to meet project deadlines, work within budgets, handle and solve problems, and achieve a high level of client satisfaction, citing satisfactory completion of similar projects and providing references where appropriate. 4. Proposes project management procedures and strategies that address the challenges of executing this work, citing experience that prepares the bidder for this role. 	<p>6 4 2 0</p> <p>6 4 2 0</p> <p>6 4 2 0</p> <p>6 4 2 0</p>
<p>Expertise in Priority Areas (30 points):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrates the capacity to develop, administer and process student assessments. 2. Demonstrates the capacity to score student assessments with a high degree of accuracy, integrity, and efficiency. 3. Demonstrates the capacity to host a web-based assessment delivery system, provide technical assistance to system users, and implement sound quality assurance protocols. 4. Demonstrates the capacity to analyze and report student results to meet a variety of purposes and satisfy the needs of key constituent groups, including educators, policy makers, and parents. 5. Provides evidence that all project activities and deliverables will adhere to the highest standards of integrity particularly as it relates to the confidentiality of student information. 	<p>6 4 2 0</p> <p>6 4 2 0</p> <p>6 4 2 0</p> <p>6 4 2 0</p> <p>6 4 2 0</p>
<p>Fiscal Management and Cost (18 points)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proposes a budget that is cost effective. 2. Proposes a budget that is price competitive. 3. Demonstrates the ability to employ sound fiscal management. 	<p>6 4 2 0</p> <p>6 4 2 0</p> <p>6 4 2 0</p>
<p>Vendor Experience (30 Points)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrates experience with Smarter Balanced state assessments. 2. Demonstrates experience with NGSS state assessments. 3. Demonstrates experience with ELA, math, and NGSS Alternate Assessment assessments. 4. Demonstrates positive outcomes with similar projects with state assessments. 5. Demonstrates experience in providing the requested deliverables in the Scope of Services. 	<p>6 4 2 0</p> <p>6 4 2 0</p> <p>6 4 2 0</p> <p>6 4 2 0</p> <p>6 4 2 0</p>

Overall Quality of Proposal (12 Points)	
1. Provides a comprehensive, coherent, and integrative response to the scope of work and other project priorities.	6 4 2 0
2. Demonstrates the capacity to implement the project on time, within budget, and at a high level of quality.	6 4 2 0
Total	/138

Note: As part of its evaluation of the staffing plan, the Review Committee will review the proposer's demonstrated commitment to affirmative action, as required by the Regulations of CT State Agencies § 46A-68j-30(10).

5. **Proposer Selection.** Upon completing its evaluation of proposals, the Review Committee will submit the rankings of all proposals to the Commissioner. The final selection of a successful proposer is at the discretion of the Commissioner. Any proposer selected will be so notified and awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract with the CSDE. Such negotiations may, but will not automatically, result in a contract. Any resulting contract will be posted on the State Contracting Portal. All unsuccessful proposers will be notified by email or U.S. mail, at the CSDE's discretion, about the outcome of the evaluation and proposer selection process. The CSDE reserves the right to decline to award contracts for activities in which the Commissioner considers there are not adequate respondents.
6. **Debriefing.** Within ten (10) days of receiving notification from the CSDE, unsuccessful proposers may contact the Official Contact and request information about the evaluation and proposer selection process. The email sent date will be considered "day one" of the ten (10) days. If unsuccessful proposers still have questions after receiving this information, they may contact the Official Contact and request a meeting with the CSDE to discuss the evaluation process and their proposals. If held, the debriefing meeting will not include any comparisons of unsuccessful proposals with other proposals. The CSDE may schedule and hold the debriefing meeting within fifteen (15) days of the request. The CSDE will not change, alter, or modify the outcome of the evaluation or selection process as a result of any debriefing meeting.
7. **Appeal Process.** Proposers may appeal any aspect the CSDE's competitive procurement, including the evaluation and proposer selection process. Any such appeal must be submitted to the Commissioner or the Commissioner's designee. A proposer may file an appeal at any time after the proposal due date, but not later than thirty (30) days after CSDE notifies unsuccessful proposers about the outcome of the evaluation and proposer selection process. The email sent date will be considered "day one" of the thirty (30) days. The filing of an appeal shall not be deemed sufficient reason for the CSDE to delay, suspend, cancel, or terminate the procurement process or execution of a contract. More detailed information about filing an appeal may be obtained from the Official Contact.
8. **Contract Execution.** Any contract developed and executed as a result of this RFP is subject to the CSDE's contracting procedures, which may include approval by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG). Fully executed and approved contracts will be posted on the State Contracting Portal and the CSDE website.

IV. Required Proposal Submission Outline and Requirements

A. Cover Sheet

The Respondent must use a cover sheet capturing the following information:

- RFP Name or Number
- Legal Name
- FEIN
- Street Address
- Town/City/State/Zip Code
- Contact Person
 - Title
 - Phone Number
 - Email Address
- Authorized Official
- Title
- Signature

Legal Name is defined as the name of provider, Contractor, CT State agency, or municipality submitting the proposal. *Contact Person* is defined as the individual who can provide additional information about the proposal or who has immediate responsibility for the proposal. *Authorized Official* is defined as the individual empowered to submit a binding offer on behalf of the proposer to provide services in accordance with the terms and provisions described in this RFP and any amendments or attachments hereto.

B. Table of Contents

Respondents must include a table of contents that lists sections and subsections with page numbers that follow the organization outline and sequence for this proposal.

C. Executive Summary

The page limitation for this section is 2 pages briefly describing how the respondent meets the eligibility and qualification criteria outlined in the proposal overview and a brief overview of why the respondent should be selected for the activities highlighted in the scope of services.

D. Main Proposal Submission Requirements to Submit a Responsive Proposal:

1. Organization Description and History: Provide a general overview of your organization including its history and prior experiences engaging with relevant key stakeholders.
 - a. Qualifications: Provide a general overview of your organization. What sets your organization apart from your competitors? Why is your organization uniquely qualified to conduct this scope of service?
 - b. Experience: Describe the extent of your organization's experience conducting similar services for state governments. How does that experience relate to the services sought in this proposal?
 - c. References: Please include no more than five (5) recent references from other states where similar services have been provided.
2. Scope of Services: Describe the proposed services in detail sufficient to demonstrate an understanding of the work to be performed, the partnership needs, and the desired results. Proposals must address **all** the elements listed in the scope of service.

3. Staffing Plan:
 - a. Project Staff: Describe the team that would provide these services. Indicate key staff to be assigned to the program by name (if known), title, qualifications, job descriptions, and if the staff is a sub-contractor.
 - b. Organizational Chart, Capacity: Indicate, through an organizational chart and supporting narrative, the lines of authority and responsibility related to the proposed program and its components. Include all project staff as well as all management-level staff either dedicated to or accountable for each phase of this project.
4. Subcontractors: If proposal includes the use of any subcontractors for the provision or delivery of a service, please include the following information about them:
 - a. Legal Name of Entity, Address, Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)
 - b. Contact Person, Title, Phone, Fax, Email
 - c. Services Currently Provided
 - d. Services to be Provided Under Subcontract
 - e. Subcontractor Oversight
 - f. Subcontract Cost and Term
5. Work Plan
 - a. Methodology: Provide a detailed description of your organization's ability, approach, and methodology for this project in line with the RFP objectives and key elements outlined in the scope of service.
 - b. Project Timeline: Provide a timeline for the execution of work in the scope of service.
6. Financial Profile
 - a. Fiscal Profile: What is the fiscal health of your organization? Provide any documentation that supports the organizations' past, present, and future fiscal stability.
 - b. See the Proposal Checklist in the Appendix for additional elements.
7. Cost Competitiveness and Budget Narrative
 - a. Complete a budget proposal in its entirety that will enable the effective delivery of the proposed services.
 - b. Present a detailed cost narrative that explains the basis and rationale for the costs proposed. Provide assumptions or calculation approaches used to develop the cost proposal.
 - c. It is recommended to use the budget template.

E. Attachments

See the Proposal Checklist in the Appendix for a list of relevant attachments. Further, the required attachments must not be altered or used to extend, enhance, or replace any component required by this RFP. Failure to abide by these instructions may result in disqualification.

F. Declaration of Confidential Information

If a proposer deems that certain information required by this RFP is confidential, the proposer must label such information as Confidential prior to submission. The proposer must reference where the information labeled Confidential is located in the proposal. *Example: Section G.1.a.* For each subsection so referenced, the proposer must provide a convincing explanation and rationale sufficient to justify an exemption of the information from release under the FOIA. The explanation and rationale must be stated in terms of (a) the

prospective harm to the competitive position of the proposer that would result if the identified information were to be released and (b) the reasons why the information is legally exempt from release pursuant to C.G.S. § 1-210(b).

G. Conflict of Interest – Disclosure Statement

Proposers must include a disclosure statement concerning any current business relationships (within the last three (3) years) that pose a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85. A conflict of interest exists when a relationship exists between the proposer and a public official (including an elected official) or State employee that may interfere with fair competition or may be adverse to the interests of the State. The existence of a conflict of interest is not, in and of itself, evidence of wrongdoing. A conflict of interest may, however, become a legal matter if a proposer tries to influence, or succeeds in influencing, the outcome of an official decision for their personal or corporate benefit. In the absence of any conflict of interest, a proposer must affirm such in the disclosure statement. *Example: "[name of proposer] has no current business relationship (within the last three (3) years) that poses a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85."*

H. Statement of Assurances

Proposers must include the Statement of Assurances provided in the Appendix. Sign and return and place after Conflict of Interest-Disclosure Statement.

V. Mandatory Provisions

A. Standard Contract Provisions

Proposers may view the Comptroller's Office PSA Terms and Conditions, available here <https://www.osc.ct.gov/vendor/rfps/2005/hbcs/AttachmentIItermsandconditions.xls>, which includes generic state contract requirements.

B. Assurances

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, a proposer implicitly gives the following assurances:

- 1. Collusion.** The proposer represents and warrants that the proposer did not participate in any part of the RFP development process and had no knowledge of the specific contents of the RFP prior to its issuance. The proposer further represents and warrants that no agent, representative, or employee of the State participated directly in the preparation of the proposer's proposal. The proposer also represents and warrants that the submitted proposal is in all respects fair and is made without collusion or fraud.
- 2. State Officials and Employees.** The proposer certifies that no elected or appointed official or employee of the State has or will benefit financially or materially from any contract resulting from this RFP. The CSDE may terminate a resulting contract if it is determined that gratuities of any kind were either offered or received by any of the aforementioned officials or employees from the proposer, contractor, or its agents or employees.
- 3. Competitors.** The proposer assures that the submitted proposal is not made in connection with any competing organization or competitor submitting a separate proposal in response to this RFP. No attempt has been made, or will be made, by the proposer to induce any other organization or competitor to submit, or not submit, a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition. The proposer further assures that the proposed costs have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement with any other organization or competitor for the purpose of restricting competition. Nor has the proposer knowingly disclosed the proposed costs on a prior basis, either directly or indirectly, to any other organization or competitor.
- 4. Validity of Proposal.** The proposer certifies that the proposal represents a valid and binding offer to provide services in accordance with the terms and provisions described in this RFP and any amendments or attachments hereto. The proposal shall remain valid for a period of 180 days after the submission due date and may be extended beyond that time by mutual agreement. At its sole discretion, the CSDE may include the proposal, by reference or otherwise, into any contract with the successful proposer.
- 5. Press Releases.** The proposer agrees to obtain prior written consent and approval of the CSDE for press releases that relate in any manner to this RFP or any resultant contract.

C. Terms and Conditions

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, a proposer implicitly agrees to comply with the following terms and conditions:

- 1. Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action.** The State is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer and does not discriminate in its hiring, employment, or business practices. The State is committed to complying with the Americans with

Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services, or activities.

2. **Preparation Expenses.** Neither the State nor the CSDE shall assume any liability for expenses incurred by a proposer in preparing, submitting, or clarifying any proposal submitted in response to this RFP.
3. **Exclusion of Taxes.** The CSDE is exempt from the payment of excise and sales taxes imposed by the federal government and the State. Proposers are liable for any other applicable taxes.
4. **Proposed Costs.** No cost submissions that are contingent upon a State action will be accepted. All proposed costs must be fixed throughout the entire term of the contract.
5. **Changes to Proposal.** No additions or changes to the original proposal will be allowed after submission. While changes are not permitted, the CSDE may request and authorize proposers to submit written clarification of their proposals, in a manner or format prescribed by the CSDE, and at the proposer's expense.
6. **Supplemental Information.** Supplemental information will not be considered after the deadline submission of proposals, unless specifically requested by the CSDE. The CSDE may ask a proposer to give demonstrations, interviews, oral presentations, or further explanations to clarify information contained in a proposal. Any such demonstration, interview, or oral presentation will be at a time selected and in a place provided by the CSDE. At its sole discretion, the CSDE may limit the number of proposers invited to make such a demonstration, interview, or oral presentation and may limit the number of attendees per proposer.
7. **Presentation of Supporting Evidence.** If requested by the CSDE, a proposer must be prepared to present evidence of experience, ability, data reporting capabilities, financial standing, or other information necessary to satisfactorily meet the requirements set forth or implied in this RFP. The CSDE may make onsite visits to an operational facility or facilities of a proposer to evaluate further the proposer's capability to perform the duties required by this RFP. At its discretion, the CSDE may also check or contact any reference provided by the proposer.
8. **RFP is Not an Offer.** Neither this RFP nor any subsequent discussions shall give rise to any commitment on the part of the State or the CSDE or confer any rights on any proposer unless and until a contract is fully executed by the necessary parties. The contract document will represent the entire agreement between the proposer and the CSDE and will supersede all prior negotiations, representations, or agreements, alleged or made, between the parties. The State shall assume no liability for costs incurred by the proposer or for payment of services under the terms of the contract until the successful proposer is notified that the contract has been accepted and approved by the CSDE and, if required, by the Attorney General's Office.

D. Rights Reserved to the State

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, a proposer implicitly accepts that the following rights are reserved to the State:

1. **Timing Sequence.** The timing and sequence of events associated with this RFP shall ultimately be determined by the CSDE.
2. **Amending or Canceling RFP.** The CSDE reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP on any date and at any time, if the CSDE deems it to be necessary, appropriate, or otherwise in the best interests of the State.

3. **No Acceptable Proposals.** In the event that no acceptable proposals are submitted in response to this RFP, the CSDE may reopen the procurement process, if it is determined to be in the best interests of the State.
4. **Award and Rejection of Proposals.** The CSDE reserves the right to award in part, to reject any and all proposals in whole or in part, for misrepresentation or if the proposal limits or modifies any of the terms, conditions, or specifications of this RFP. The CSDE may waive minor technical defects, irregularities, or omissions, if in its judgment the best interests of the State will be served. The CSDE reserves the right to reject the proposal of any proposer who submits a proposal after the submission date and time.
5. **Sole Property of the State.** All proposals submitted in response to this RFP are to be the sole property of the State. Any product, whether acceptable or unacceptable, developed under a contract awarded as a result of this RFP shall be the sole property of the State, unless stated otherwise in this RFP or subsequent contract. The right to publish, distribute, or disseminate any and all information or reports, or part thereof, shall accrue to the State without recourse.
6. **Contract Negotiation.** The CSDE reserves the right to negotiate or contract for all or any portion of the services contained in this RFP. The CSDE further reserves the right to contract with one or more proposers for such services. After reviewing the scored criteria, the CSDE may seek Best and Final Offers (BFO) on cost from proposers. The CSDE may set parameters on any BFOs received.
7. **Clerical Errors in Award.** The CSDE reserves the right to correct inaccurate awards resulting from its clerical errors. This may include, in extreme circumstances, revoking the awarding of a contract already made to a proposer and subsequently awarding the contract to another proposer. Such action on the part of the State shall not constitute a breach of contract on the part of the State since the contract with the initial proposer is deemed to be void *ab initio* and of no effect as if no contract ever existed between the State and the proposer.
8. **Key Personnel.** When the CSDE is the sole funder of a purchased service, the CSDE reserves the right to approve any additions, deletions, or changes in key personnel, with the exception of key personnel who have terminated employment. The CSDE also reserves the right to approve replacements for key personnel who have terminated employment. The CSDE further reserves the right to require the removal and replacement of any of the proposer's key personnel who do not perform adequately, regardless of whether they were previously approved by the CSDE.

E. Statutory and Regulatory Compliance

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, a proposer implicitly agrees to comply with all applicable State and Federal laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. **Freedom of Information, C.G.S. § 1-210(b).** The Freedom of Information Act generally requires the disclosure of documents in the possession of the State upon request of any citizen, unless the content of the document falls within certain categories of exemption, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-210(b). Proposers are generally advised not to include in their proposals any confidential information. If the proposer indicates that certain documentation, as required by this RFP, is submitted in confidence, the State will endeavor to keep said information confidential to the extent permitted by law. The State has no obligation to initiate, prosecute, or defend any legal proceeding or to seek a protective order or other similar relief to prevent disclosure of any information pursuant to a FOIA request. The proposer has the burden of establishing the availability of any FOIA exemption in any proceeding where it is an issue. While a proposer may claim an exemption to the State's FOIA,

the final administrative authority to release or exempt any or all material so identified rests with the State. In no event shall the State or any of its employees have any liability for disclosure of documents or information in the possession of the State and which the State or its employees believe(s) to be required pursuant to the FOIA or other requirements of law.

2. **Contract Compliance, C.G.S. § 4a-60 and Regulations of CT State Agencies §§ 46a-68j-21 thru 43, inclusive.** CT statute and regulations impose certain obligations on State agencies (as well as contractors and subcontractors doing business with the State) to ensure that State agencies do not enter into contracts with organizations or businesses that discriminate against protected class persons.
3. **Consulting Agreements Representation, C.G.S. § 4a-81.** Pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 4a-81 the successful contracting party shall certify that it has not entered into any consulting agreements in connection with this contract, except for the agreements listed below. "Consulting agreement" means any written or oral agreement to retain the services, for a fee, of a consultant for the purposes of (A) providing counsel to a contractor, vendor, consultant or other entity seeking to conduct, or conducting, business with the State, (B) contacting, whether in writing or orally, any executive, judicial, or administrative office of the State, including any department, institution, bureau, board, commission, authority, official or employee for the purpose of solicitation, dispute resolution, introduction, requests for information, or (C) any other similar activity related to such contracts. "Consulting agreement" does not include any agreements entered into with a consultant who is registered under the provisions of chapter 10 of the Connecticut General Statutes as of the date such contract is executed in accordance with the provisions of section 4a-81 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Such representation shall be sworn as true to the best knowledge and belief of the person signing the resulting contract and shall be subject to the penalties of false statement.
4. **Campaign Contribution Restriction, C.G.S. § 9-612.** For all State contracts, defined in section 9-612 of the Connecticut General Statutes as having a value in a calendar year of \$50,000 or more, or a combination or series of such agreements or contracts having a value of \$100,000 or more, the authorized signatory to the resulting contract must represent that they have received the State Elections Enforcement Commission's notice advising state contractors of state campaign contribution and solicitation prohibitions, and will inform its principals of the contents of the notice, as set forth in "Notice to Executive Branch State Contractors and Prospective State Contractors of Campaign Contribution and Solicitation Limitations." Such notice is available at https://seec.ct.gov/Portal/data/forms/ContrForms/seec_form_10_final.pdf
5. **Gifts, C.G.S. § 4-252.** Pursuant to section 4-252 of the Connecticut General Statutes and Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz's Executive Order No. 21-2, the Contractor, for itself and on behalf of all of its principals or key personnel who submitted a bid or proposal, represents:
 - (1) That no gifts were made by (A) the Contractor, (B) any principals and key personnel of the Contractor, who participate substantially in preparing bids, proposals or negotiating State contracts, or (C) any agent of the Contractor or principals and key personnel, who participates substantially in preparing bids, proposals or negotiating State contracts, to (i) any public official or State employee of the State agency or quasi- public agency soliciting bids or proposals for State contracts, who participates substantially in the preparation of bid solicitations or requests for proposals for State contracts or the negotiation or award of State contracts, or (ii) any public official or State employee of any other State agency, who has supervisory or appointing authority over such State agency or quasi-public agency;

(2) That no such principals and key personnel of the Contractor, or agent of the Contractor or of such principals and key personnel, knows of any action by the Contractor to circumvent such prohibition on gifts by providing for any other principals and key personnel, official, employee or agent of the Contractor to provide a gift to any such public official or State employee; and

(3) That the Contractor is submitting bids or proposals without fraud or collusion with any person.

Any bidder or proposer that does not agree to the representations required under this section shall be rejected and the State agency or quasi-public agency shall award the contract to the next highest ranked proposer or the next lowest responsible qualified bidder or seek new bids or proposals.

- 6. Iran Energy Investment Certification C.G.S. § 4-252(a).** Pursuant to C.G.S. § 4-252(a), the successful contracting party shall certify the following: (a) that it has not made a direct investment of twenty million dollars or more in the energy sector of Iran on or after October 1, 2013, as described in Section 202 of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010, and has not increased or renewed such investment on or after said date. (b) If the Contractor makes a good faith effort to determine whether it has made an investment described in subsection (a) of this section it shall not be subject to the penalties of false statement pursuant to section 4-252a of the Connecticut General Statutes. A "good faith effort" for purposes of this subsection includes a determination that the Contractor is not on the list of persons who engage in certain investment activities in Iran created by the Department of General Services of the State of California pursuant to Division 2, Chapter 2.7 of the California Public Contract Code. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to impair the ability of the State agency or quasi-public agency to pursue a breach of contract action for any violation of the provisions of the resulting contract.
- 7. Nondiscrimination Certification, C.G.S. § 4a-60 and 4a-60a.** If a bidder is awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract, the proposer must provide the State agency with *written representation* in the resulting contract that certifies the bidder complies with the State's nondiscrimination agreements and warranties. This nondiscrimination certification is required for all State contracts – regardless of type, term, cost, or value. Municipalities and CT State agencies are exempt from this requirement. The authorized signatory of the contract shall demonstrate their understanding of this obligation by either (A) initialing the nondiscrimination affirmation provision in the body of the resulting contract, or (B) providing an affirmative response in the required online bid or response to a proposal question, if applicable, which asks if the Contractor understands its obligations. If a bidder or vendor refuses to agree to this representation, such bidder or vendor shall be rejected, and the State agency or quasi-public agency shall award the contract to the next highest ranked vendor or the next lowest responsible qualified bidder or seek new bids or proposals.
- 8. Access to Data for State Auditors.** The Contractor shall provide to OPM access to any data, as defined in C.G.S. § 4e-1, concerning the resulting contract that are in the possession or control of the Contractor upon demand and shall provide the data to OPM in a format prescribed by OPM [or the Client Agency] and the State Auditors of Public Accounts at no additional cost.
- 9. Other Provisions.** The Contractor shall comply with all applicable State of Connecticut and the CSDE policies including the CSDE Ethics Policy. The Contractor shall also comply with all Federal and State statutes and regulations regarding the protection of all confidential data including, but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA")."

VI. Appendix

A. Abbreviations/Acronyms/Definitions

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
BFO	Best and Final Offer
CAT	Computer Adaptive Test
CCS	Connecticut Core Standards
C.G.S.	Connecticut General Statutes
CHRO	Commission on Human Rights and Opportunity (CT)
CT	Connecticut
CSBE	Connecticut State Board of Education
CSDE	Connecticut State Department of Education
CT-SEDS	Connecticut Special Education Data System
CCSS	Common Core State Standards
CTAA	Connecticut Alternate Assessment System
CTAS	Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment
DAS	Department of Administrative Services (CT)
ELA	English Language Arts
EL/ML	English learner/Multilingual learner
FAC	Fairness and Accessibility Committee
FEIN	Federal Employer Identification Number
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act (CT)
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program
IRS	Internal Revenue Service (US)
IWW	Item Writing Workshop
LOI	Letter of Intent
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCSC	National Center and State Collaborative
NGSS	Next Generation Science Standards
OAG	Office of the Attorney General
OPM	Office of Policy and Management (CT)
OSC	Office of the State Comptroller (CT)
PSIS	Public School Information System
PSA	Personal Service Agreement
PT	Performance Task
P.A.	Public Act (CT)
RFP	Request for Proposal
SASID	State Assigned Student Identifier
SBAC	Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium
SEEC	State Elections Enforcement Commission (CT)
SSAAC	State Science Assessment Advisory Committee
TAC	Connecticut Technical Advisory Committee
U.S.	United States

- *contractor*: a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that enters into a POS contract with the Agency as a result of this RFP.
- *proposer*: a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that has submitted a proposal to the Agency in response to this RFP. This term may be used interchangeably with respondent throughout the RFP.
- *prospective proposer*: a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that may submit a proposal to the Agency in response to this RFP but has not yet done so.

- *subcontractor*: an individual (other than an employee of the contractor) or business entity hired by a contractor to provide a specific service as part of a PSA with the Agency as a result of this RFP.

B. Statement of Assurances

Connecticut State Department of Education

The undersigned Respondent affirms and declares that:

General

- a. This proposal is executed and signed with full knowledge and acceptance of the RFP CONDITIONS stated in the RFP.
- b. The Respondent will deliver services to the Agency at the cost proposed in the RFP and within the timeframes therein.
- c. The Respondent will seek prior approval from the Agency before making any changes to the location of services.
- d. Neither the Respondent or any official of the Respondent’s organization, nor any subcontractor to the Respondent or any official of the subcontractor’s organization, has received any notices of disbarment or suspension from subcontracting with other states within the United States.
- e. Neither the Respondent or any official of the organization nor any subcontractor to the Respondent or any official of the subcontractor’s organization has received any notices of debarment or suspension from contracting with other states within the United States.

Legal Name of Organization: _____

Authorized Signatory

Date

C. Proposal Checklist

To assist respondents in managing proposal planning and document collation processes, this document summarizes key dates and proposal requirements for this RFP. Please note that this document does not supersede what is stated in the RFP. **This is a tool for proposers to use.** It is the **responsibility** of each respondent to ensure that all required documents, forms, and attachments, are submitted in a timely manner.

Key Dates

Procurement Timetable		
The CSDE reserves the right to modify these dates at its sole discretion.		
Item	Action	Date
1	RFP Conference	May 31, 2024
2	Letter of Intent Due	June 3, 2024
3	Deadline for Questions	June 3, 2024
4	Answers Released	June 14, 2024
5	Proposals Due	July 1, at 3:00 p.m. EST

Registration Link for Pre-bid Conference:

Contractors who plan to attend the RFP Conference should RSVP to Abe Krisst at abe.krisst@ct.gov. A link will be sent to Contractors to attend the conference.

Registration with State Contracting Portal (if not already registered):

- Register at: <https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/Registration>
- Submit required forms:
 - Campaign Contribution Certification (OPM Ethics Form 1): <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/Fin-PSA/Forms/Ethics-Forms>

Proposal Content Checklist

- Cover Sheet** including required information:
 - RFP Name or Number
 - Legal Name
 - FEIN
 - Street Address
 - Town/City/State/Zip Code
 - Contact Person
 - Title
 - Phone Number
 - Email Address
 - Authorized Official
 - Title
 - Signature
- Table of Contents**
- Executive Summary:** 2 pages, maximum
- Main proposal body answering all questions with relevant attachments.**
Proposers should use their discretion to determine whether certain required information is sufficiently captured in the body of their proposal or requires additional attachments for clarification.
- IRS Determination Letter** (for nonprofit proposers)
- Two years of most recent annual audited financial statements; OR any financial statements prepared by a Certified Public Accountant** for proposers whose organizations have been incorporated for less than two years.

- Proposed budget**, including budget narrative and cost schedules for planned subcontractors if applicable. It is recommended to use the budget template.
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement**
- Statement of Assurances**

Formatting Checklist

- Is the proposal formatted to fit 8 ½ x 11 (letter-sized) paper?
- Is the proposal in 11-point, and Arial, Tahoma, or Verdana Font?
- Does the proposal format follow normal (1 inch) margins and 1 ½ line spacing?
- Does the proposer's name appear in the header of each page?
- Does the proposal include page numbers in the footer?
- Are confidential labels applied to sensitive information (if applicable)?