Request for Proposal Contractor Questions and Associated Answers

Below is a list of questions submitted by contractors related to **RFP # 0000018122**, with the associated answers.

	Contractor Question (Written as Received)	**CSDE/Performance Office Answer**
1.	After the field testing of MOU items on the NGSS assessment in CT, which contractor will be responsible for the data analysis and calibration of the items shared and field tested across the MOU states?	Please see the Memorandum of Understanding for Science Item Sharing.
2.	"The Contractor must support the following psychometrics-related activities if needed: standard setting, standards validation, item parameter drift analysis, etc." For costing, planning, and full proposal responsiveness, will the Contractor be required to provide a standard setting or standards validation meeting for: • NGSS? If so, for which contract year? • CTAA? If so, for which contract year? • CTAS? If so, for which contract year?	The contractor will not be required to provide a standard setting or standards validation for these assessments.
3.	"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." • Starting in the 2015–2016 summative test administration, Connecticut made changes in the summative tests, including: **Removed the summative field-test items** and off-grade items from the ELA/L and mathematics CAT item pool. For 2026 and beyond, can CSDE confirm that **summative field test items** will NOT be included in Smarter Balanced administrations in Connecticut?	The CSDE does include summative field test items now and plans to include them through 2030. However, item analysis is completed by the Smarter Balanced Consortium.
4.	The Terms and Conditions from the Comptroller's Office only give general guidance for insurance requirements. Could those be defined a bit more so we can be certain we comply?	Please see page 10 of this resource.
5.	Although there is no provision in the RFP for delays in performance as a result of a force majeure event (events beyond the contractor's reasonable control including without limitation, acts of God; acts or omissions of governmental authorities or the other party or any third party; strikes, lockouts or other industrial disturbances; acts of public enemies; wars; blockades; riots; civil disturbances; epidemics; floods; hurricanes; tornadoes; and any other similar	The RFP does not contain all the contract language. CSDE contracts contain a force majeure clause (cited below) that addresses this concern. Force Majeure: Neither party shall be liable for any delays or failures in performance resulting from acts beyond its

Request for Proposal Contractor Questions and Associated Answers

Below is a list of questions submitted by contractors related to **RFP # 0000018122**, with the associated answers.

	Contractor Question (Written as Received)	CSDE/Performance Office Answer
	acts, events, or omissions), does the CSDE acknowledge that such delays in performance would not constitute a breach of the contract?	reasonable control including but not limited to natural disasters, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, severe weather, acts of war or terrorism, threats of terrorism, bomb threats, civil disorder, labor strikes or disruptions, fire, disease or pandemics, epidemics or outbreaks, power outages, gas leaks, curtailment of transportation preventing or delaying attendance by at least 25 percent of meeting participants, governmental rule, regulation or decree, and any other events or circumstances not within the reasonable control of the party affected, whether similar or dissimilar to any of the foregoing events. The non-performing or delaying party shall be diligent in attempting to remove any such cause and shall promptly notify the other party of the extent and probable duration of such delay or nonperformance.
6.	With respect to ownership of intellectual property, Pearson understands and agrees that all materials that are specifically developed for CSDE under this program shall be the sole property of CSDE subject to any limited use rights granted by third parties for any permissioned work included in such materials with CSDE's approval; however, does CSDE agree that rights in any materials and proprietary computer programs previously developed by the contractor, as well as rights to any derivative works, shall belong to the contractor?	CSDE can include a provision that states so in the agreement.
7.	Are manuals and guides to be printed AND distributed? The requirement indicates the "*Contractor must create*" but it does not indicate print. 11.1.9 indicates "Contractor must create and publish resources". Please provide clarity on printing and distribution.	Test Administration and Test Coordinator Manuals must be printed and shipped to districts. For Smarter Balanced and NGSS, one Test Administration Manual should be printed/sent for every 30 students and for CTAA two manuals should be sent to every school. The CTAS Manual is published electronically and is not shipped to districts. For the Test Coordinator Manual, every district should receive 5 manuals.

Request for Proposal Contractor Questions and Associated Answers

Below is a list of questions submitted by contractors related to **RFP # 0000018122**, with the associated answers.

	Contractor Question (Written as Received)	CSDE/Performance Office Answer
		Note that these manuals are in addition to the many electronic manuals/resources/guides that are created but not distributed via printing and sending.
8.	Please provide the number of schools and districts that will take each assessment and an understanding of how many of the schools and districts might order paper materials?	Please see EdSight under Performance Reports for reported scores for schools and districts for all assessments. Please also see Find Schools (ct.gov) for all schools and districts in the state.
9.	What is the approximate number of students who will take special versions of each assessment? How many large print, braille on paper may be requested?	For every grade and subject, approximately 10 large print and 3-5 braille books should be prepared for Smarter Balanced and NGSS Assessments.
10.	For the alternate assessment, how much content is available for ELA and Math in the bank developed by NCSC?	A full form (along with a bank of items) is available. Please see Section 6.6 of the RFP for information on potential future development.
11.	Does the alternate science test get refreshed by a certain percentage every year?	No. There is no refresh.
12.	Are all 7-8 Item Writing Workshops (IWWs) in person?	There is only one, annual 2–3-day NGSS Item Writing Workshop (described in Sections 4.8.1-4.8.5 of the RFP) and it is conducted in person. Other item development sessions (described in Sections 4.8.6 and 4.9 of the RFP) involve item review, scoring rubric validation, and data review activities, and are conducted virtually.
13.	Style Requirements – Does the 11pt minimum, 1.5 spacing apply to tables in the proposal too, or is it permissible to use single spacing, size 10pt in the requested fonts for tables? Additionally, does the 1.5 spacing apply to headings within the proposal text as well?	Regarding the first question, it is appropriate to do this. Regarding the second question, this does not have to be followed for headings.
14.	Please confirm that "annual development of 20 item clusters and 40 stand-alone items (across Grades 5, 8, and 11) owned by Connecticut to be field	The annual NGSS assessment development of 20 item clusters and 40 stand-alone items is in total (across grades 5, 8 and 11) and not per grade level.

Request for Proposal Contractor Questions and Associated Answers

Below is a list of questions submitted by contractors related to **RFP # 0000018122**, with the associated answers.

Contractor Question (Written as Received)	CSDE/Performance Office Answer
tested as part of the summative assessment administration" is in total and not per grade level?	
15. How many 2 - 3-day item development workshops will there be annually?	There is one 2-3 day, in-person NGSS Assessment Item Writing Workshop per year.
16. Does the reference to 20 educators reviewing items in 7-8 meetings per year applies to all review meetings or specifically to the educators participating in item writer workshop?	The annual NGSS Item Writing Workshop described in Sections 4.8.1 - 4.8.5 of the RFP is a 2-3 day, in-person session involving approximately 15-20 educators focused on writing new items. The NGSS item development sessions (described in Sections 4.8.6 and 4.9 of the RFP) involve subsequent item review for content and fairness/accessibility, scoring rubric validation, and data review activities. There are typically 7-8 sessions per year involving 6-7 educators (about 20 in total) per session at each tested grade.
17. CTAS Materials: Please clarify how a vendor should provide a means for teachers to create Braille test materials, tactile graphics and tactile symbols to students who require Braille paper testing accommodation as referenced in the CTAS Test Administration Manual.	For equity reasons, we should offer braille test materials upon request for the student who can read braille and access the test with some level of independence with support from the teacher. The CTAS Performance Task and CTAS Student Score Worksheet are for teacher use only – a braille version is not applicable. However, students interact with the Resource Packet - and the resource cards and materials within this packet should be offered in braille. This may include, but is not limited to, embossed tables, charts, and graphics. Please refer to Required Materials for CTAS Materials (Resource Packets) for examples of items that may need to be braille/embossed. The test contractor should work with Braille Clearinghouse to provide braille sets of the Grade 5, 8, and 11 CTAS. The braille format used for NGSS is UEB Contracted + Nemeth.

Request for Proposal Contractor Questions and Associated Answers

Below is a list of questions submitted by contractors related to **RFP # 0000018122**, with the associated answers.

	Contractor Question (Written as Received)	**CSDE/Performance Office Answer**
18.	The requirements speak to guidance from the NCSC 2015 operational assessment technical manual to guide scoring. In the manual, there is reference to writing constructed response items that went through range finding and human scoring in the pilot. The test administration manual and administration training module indicates that writing for CTAA is measured through select response items. Are there any constructed responses requiring human scoring on the CTAA assessment?	The Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) for math and ELA includes selected response items in Grades 3-8 and 11. The CTAA ELA Reading Assessment includes open response foundational items in Grades 3 and 4, and these are administered and scored by the teacher directly on the test for those items. There are constructed response items on the CTAA Math Assessment in Grades 3-5, 8 and 11. These are administered and scored by the educator administering the assessment and they assign a score based on the scoring guidelines in the Secure Directions for Test Administration.
19.	Is this set of assessments to replace SBAC, NGSS, and SAT tests?	No.
20.	Is this an ongoing project (in order to maintain the platform, score the assessments, etc.)?	See the Scope of Services in the RFP.
21.	What is the timeframe for completion of the project (i.e. When will the rollout for the new assessments begin)?	There are no new assessments.
22.	Will there be opportunities for piloting the assessments in order to streamline the test administration and refine test questions?	Please see the Scope of Services in the RFP.
23.	Is there a file size limitation for sending electronic submission via email?	The limit is 25 MB.
24.	Can you provide more details on the required features and specifications of the web-based assessment delivery platform?	Please see Section 9 in the Scope of Services in the RFP.
25.	What standards or guidelines should we follow when creating the assessments?	Since the CSDE is only requesting item development for NGSS, all science items must meet the NGSS Assessment Item/Test Specifications shared with MOU collaborating states. All NGSS Assessment items must follow formats described in the Style Guide. (See

Request for Proposal Contractor Questions and Associated Answers

Below is a list of questions submitted by contractors related to **RFP # 0000018122**, with the associated answers.

	Contractor Question (Written as Received)	CSDE/Performance Office Answer
		questions 49 – 51 for information on development of a new form for CTAA.)
26.	Are there any specific frameworks we should use for question design?	Since the CSDE is only requesting item development for NGSS, all science items must meet the NGSS Assessment Item/Test Specifications shared with MOU collaborating states. All NGSS Assessment items must follow formats described in the Style Guide. (See questions 49 – 51 for information on development of a new form for CTAA.)
27.	What is the process for developing and approving new test questions?	Since the CSDE is only requesting item development for NGSS, for the NGSS Assessment, the item development process is described in the Connecticut NGSS Assessment Technical Report – Volume 2. (See questions 49 – 51 for information on development of a new form for CTAA.)
28.	Are there specific criteria for question difficulty, type, or subject coverage?	Since the CSDE is only requesting item development for NGSS, see the Connecticut NGSS Assessment Technical Report – Volume 2 for information.
29.	How should the results be reported to educators and stakeholders?	Please see the Section 11 in the Scope of Services in the RFP.
30.	What types of data analysis and reporting are required?	Please see the Section 11.2 and Section 12 in the Scope of Services in the RFP.
31.	What are the key metrics or indicators of success that we should focus on in the reports?	There are no metrics specified for reports in the RFP.
32.	How should the interim assessments be structured to align with the summative assessments?	For the NGSS Assessments, the interim assessment items are the same as the summative assessment items. They include both stand-alone items and item clusters aligned to the same NGSS Assessment Item/Test

Request for Proposal Contractor Questions and Associated Answers

Below is a list of questions submitted by contractors related to **RFP # 0000018122**, with the associated answers.

	Contractor Question (Written as Received)	CSDE/Performance Office Answer
		Specifications and follow formats described in the NGSS Assessment Style Guide. For the Smarter Balanced Assessments, the contractor would simply work to administer the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments provided by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.
33.	Are there specific user interface and user experience guidelines we need to follow?	No.
34.	How often should we update or revise the questions?	This is a collaborative judgment by the contractor and CSDE and varies depending on grade, content, and item.
35.	What process should we follow for these updates?	This process is left up to the contractor in collaboration with the CSDE.
36.	How should different types of questions (like multiple choice and short answer) be scored?	All assessments should be scored in accordance with their respective scoring criteria. Please see Section 2 through 7 of the RFP for information about each specific assessment.
37.	Are there specific scoring guidelines we need to follow?	All assessments should be scored in accordance with their respective scoring criteria. Please see Section 2 through 7 of the RFP for information about each specific assessment.
38.	Are there specific document formats or templates needed for the federal review process?	Please see this guidance on the USED Assessment Peer Review Process.
39.	What details should the documentation include?	Please see this guidance on the USED Assessment Peer Review Process.
40.	Can you provide the required format and specifications for the data files we need to submit?	There are links to samples in the RFP in Section 12; specifically see 12.6.

Request for Proposal Contractor Questions and Associated Answers

Below is a list of questions submitted by contractors related to **RFP # 0000018122**, with the associated answers.

	Contractor Question (Written as Received)	CSDE/Performance Office Answer
41.	What are the key milestones and deliverables expected in the first year of the contract?	Please see the Scope of Services in the RFP.
42.	How should we plan our timeline to meet these milestones?	This is up to the contractor in collaboration with the CSDE.
43.	What are the exact requirements for item development and field testing for the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) assessment?	Please see Section 4 of the RFP. It includes the NGSS Assessment Item Development process which is described in the Connecticut NGSS Assessment Technical Report – Volume 2. As indicated in Section 4.7 of the RFP, all items must align to the NGSS Assessment Item/Test Specifications and follow formats described in the NGSS Assessment Style Guide.
44.	What is the timeline and detailed process for transitioning from the current contractor to ensure a smooth handover?	See page 8 of the RFP for a timeline. All necessary processes will be determined at that time.
45.	How will the item development process be coordinated with the existing contractor?	As indicated in the RFP, the CSDE is only requesting item development for NGSS. All science items must meet the NGSS Assessment Item/Test Specifications shared with MOU collaborating states. All NGSS Assessment items must follow formats described in the NGSS Assessment Style Guide. (See questions 49 – 51 for information on development of a new form for CTAA.)
46.	What are the specific requirements for integrating with the Public School Information System (PSIS)?	The contractor shall be prepared to accept a simple file transfer into their test delivery system nightly to populate students for testing from August to the end of June for each school year.
47.	What are the technical specifications for the nightly rostering of students from the Public School Information System(PSIS)?	The contractor shall be prepared to accept a simple file transfer into their test delivery system nightly to populate students for testing.

Request for Proposal Contractor Questions and Associated Answers

Below is a list of questions submitted by contractors related to **RFP # 0000018122**, with the associated answers.

	Contractor Question (Written as Received)	CSDE/Performance Office Answer
48.	Are there any penalties or performance guarantees specified in the contract terms that we should be aware of?	No.
49.	Are there existing Task Specifications for the Alternate Assessment Item Development for each grade/content area for ELA and math or will they need to be created as part of this contract?	In the event a contractor will create another form (per section 6.6 in the RFP), task specifications will need to be created.
50.	How many unique forms does Connecticut use for the Alternate Assessment for each grade/content area? Are these forms different than what was administered in 2015 with NCSC given the licensure of the content for ELA and math?	Connecticut currently uses one unique form for each grade/content area. They are administered in association with the NCSC licensure. The math and ELA forms for each grade were pulled from one of the original four forms administered as an operational field test in 2014-15 with some minor changes to a few test items.
51.	How does Connecticut use the task families from NCSC for ELA and math? Are items in the bank enemy items that cannot appear on the same form?	As articulated in question #50, Connecticut currently uses one unique form for each grade/content area. Thus, this will not be an issue unless CSDE were to develop new CTAA forms using the items from the NCSC item bank. In that case, task families will need to be considered and enemy items should not appear on the same form. The contractor shall also assist with identifying the task families and enemy items if new items are developed for the new CTAA forms.