



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Minnesota Assessments

including the development, administration, scoring,
and reporting for the following components:

- Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (II & III)
- Graduation-Required Assessment for Diploma
- Basic Skills Tests (retest mode)
- Test of Emerging Academic English (I & II)
- Test of Emerging Academic English: Listening & Speaking (I & II)
- Mathematics Test for English Language Learners (II & III)
- Mathematics Test for English Language Learners – GRAD Version
- Minnesota Writes!
- Formative Assessments
- Value-added Model

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

This Request for Proposal (RFP) from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) invites technical and cost proposals for work associated with the following eight assessments, aligned formative assessments, a value-added model (VAM), and their related scopes of work:

[Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments – Series II \(MCA-II\)](#)

These tests are part of Minnesota’s accountability system under [No Child Left Behind \(NCLB\)](#). They measure student performance on the [Minnesota Academic Standards](#) in the following grades and contents:

- [Mathematics](#): Grades 3-8 and 11
- [Reading](#): Grades 3-8 and 10
- [Science](#): Grades 5, 8 and High School

[MCA-II Test Specifications](#) can be found on the MDE website.

[Graduation-Required Assessment for Diploma \(GRAD\)](#)

These tests fulfill Minnesota’s high school exit exam requirement. They measure student performance on those skills essential for success in the 21st century in the following grades and contents:

- Mathematics: Grade 11 (and retests)
- Reading: Grade 10 (and retests)
- Writing: Grade 9 (and retests)

[GRAD Test Specifications](#) can be found on the MDE website.

[Basic Skills Tests \(BST\)](#)

These tests are being retired as Minnesota’s high school exit exam requirement. However, students who began their educational career under these exams (entered grade 8 prior to 2005-2006) must pass these exams as their high school exit exam requirement. They measure basic academic skills in the following contents:

- Mathematics
- Reading
- Writing

The mathematics and reading tests are computer based (writing is still paper based at present) and are in a re-test mode only and have no grade level assigned to a census administration. Any student in any grade required to pass this exam may

participate in the retest administrations. [BST Test Specifications](#) can be found on the MDE website.

[Test of Emerging Academic English \(TEAE\)](#)

This test is designed to measure the [English language proficiency \(ELP\) standards](#) for reading and writing and to measure growth toward proficiency from year to year. It measures English language proficiency skills in the following grades and contents:

- Reading: Grades 3-12
- Writing: Grades 3-12

[TEAE Test Specifications](#) can be found on the MDE website.

[Test of Emerging Academic English: Listening & Speaking \(TEAELS\)](#)

This computer-based test is designed to measure the [English language proficiency \(ELP\) standards](#) for listening and speaking and to measure growth toward proficiency from year to year. It measures English language proficiency in the following grades and contents:

- Listening: Grades K-12
- Speaking: Grades K-12

[TEAELS Test Specifications](#) can be found on the MDE website.

[Mathematics Test for English Language Learners \(MTELL-II & III\)](#)

This is a computer-based, sheltered-English mathematics test that serves as an accommodated form for those students who are English language learners. This test serves as part of Minnesota's accountability system under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). It measures student performance on the [Minnesota Academic Standards](#) in the following grades and content:

- [Mathematics](#): Grades 3-8 and 11

[MTELL-II Test Specifications](#) can be found on the MDE website.

Mathematics Test for English Language Learners (MTELL) – GRAD Version

This is a computer-based, sheltered-English mathematics test that serves as an accommodated form for those students who are English language learners. It measures ELL student performance on those skills essential for success in the 21st century in the following grade and content:

- Mathematics: Grade 11 (and retests)

MTELL-GRAD Version Test Specifications will be finalized during the 2006-2007 school year. The responder should use the

mathematics [GRAD Test Specifications](#) for guidance in how these MTELL-GRAD Version test specifications will be authored.

Minnesota Writes! (MW)

This is a developmental writing assessment given at grade 6. It serves as a diagnostic tool for both students and districts to assess the writing skills that students have mastered by the time they begin the middle school level. In time, it is designed to help predict student passing rates on the GRAD writing test. The MW serves no purpose in school or district accountability either at the state or federal level. The test measures student performance on the [Minnesota Academic Standards](#) in the following grade and content:

- [Writing](#): Grade 6

[MW Test Specifications](#) can be found on the MDE website.

Formative Assessments

MDE desires to offer a formative assessment system as a companion to the MCAs in mathematics, reading, and science. This computer-based system will provide diagnostic reports in a manner consistent with the reporting categories of the Minnesota Academic Standards and MCAs. It will provide predictive information for student performance on the MCAs in the three content areas for each grade level in which they are administered (e.g., the predictive information in science would only be necessary in grades 5, 8, and high school). MDE does not require this formative assessment to be custom-built for Minnesota. However, it must be diagnostic, predictive, and strongly aligned with its current standards and assessments in these three content areas.

Value-added Model (VAM)

This is a component of Minnesota's assessment system that is required to be developed under [Minnesota Statute 120B.362](#) as well as other related statutes.

The statute requires that the program use the math and reading MCA series of assessments "to assist school districts, public schools, and charter schools in assessing and reporting individual students' growth in academic achievement" using the "assessments of individual students' academic achievement to make longitudinal comparisons of each student's academic growth over time." The VAM "reliably estimates school and school district effects on students' academic achievement over time."

Responders should submit a proposal in the manner outlined in this RFP to fulfill the tasks related to all eight assessments, the formative assessments, and the value-added model.

Criterion #1 for Responsiveness – ENTIRE SCOPE:

A proposal must address all eight assessments, a formative assessment system, and the value-added model. Proposals not meeting this criterion shall be deemed “non-responsive” and not be evaluated by the reviewers for further consideration.

The Adobe PDF version of this RFP contains multiple hyperlinks to information on the Internet. Use the PDF version of this RFP to utilize the linked documents provided as a reference.

1.2 Timelines

1.2.1 Year One Timeline

Contracts will be continued contingent upon funding from the Minnesota Legislature as well as federal appropriations to the State as determined under NCLB. Individual components of the contract may be eliminated during any particular year(s) if funding expectations do not meet costs. The cost for the total project over the one-year initial term with up to four, one-year extension options should not exceed \$121.4 million for all tasks. Funding for this program is available through legislatively appropriated state funds, federal funds made available through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and federal funds made available through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Section 611 Grants to States.

MDE reserves the right to negotiate additional work tasks into this contract during the course of the expected term if/when NCLB is reauthorized and the reauthorization requires additional tasks of Minnesota to maintain federal approval of its assessment system (e.g., science assessments become a requirement in grades 3-8 and high school). Additional tasks and monies must be set forth in an amendment to be signed in the same manner as the contract.

Attachments 25.1 through 25.11 to this RFP contain secure test design information, MDE internal information, as well as examples of live items. These attachments provided in relation to this RFP are considered secure documents by MDE and should be given the same security precautions as the responder would use with operational items. A demonstrated failure to do so may result in disqualification from this proposal process.

Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by the time and date given for submission of such questions in the Table of Significant Dates for Responders in Section 24 in the format listed in Section 4.

This request for proposal does not obligate the state to award a contract or complete the project. The state reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest. All expenses incurred in responding to this notice are solely the responsibility of the responder.

1.2.2 Calendar of Standards and Assessments Revision

The revision schedule established by the Minnesota Legislature ([M.S. 120B.023 as amended in Minnesota Session Law 2006 – Chapter 263; Subd. 2b](#)) is listed in the following table. The school years in gold are those administration years that are included in the contract in the event all extension options are exercised. If the contract is executed according to Section 24 in the Significant Dates for Responders, the contract is a one-year initial term with up to four, one-year extension options.

This contract spans a potential of five years. Note that this equates to four school year administrations of Minnesota assessments. The final year of the anticipated five-year contract does not include school year 2011-2012 (SY2011-2012) administration of Minnesota assessments. Fiscal year 2011 (FY11) includes item development and advisory panel meetings for field testing in the spring of 2012. The fiscal year 2012 (FY12) allocated funds includes July 2011 BST administration and reporting for the spring

2011 Minnesota Assessments. The final administration under this anticipated five-year contract would be the summer 2011 Basic Skills Test (or any GRAD assessments through August 31, 2011).

	Mathematics	Science	Language Arts
2006-2007	Standards revision		
2007-2008	MCA-III Test Specifications		
2008-2009	MCA-III Items Developed	Standards revision	
2009-2010	MCA-III Items Field Tested	MCA-III Test Specifications & Items Written	Standards revision
2010-2011	MCA-III Operational	MCA-III Items Field Tested	MCA-III Test Specifications & Items Written
2011-2012		MCA-III Operational	MCA-III Items Field Tested
2012-2013			MCA-III Operational

1.3 Intent to Respond OR Appeal of Review Procedures

By the date listed in Section 24 in the Significant Dates for Responders, the responder must send a letter via registered mail (or similar delivery service that requires delivery verification by signature) indicating the responder's intent as described below in Section 1.3.1 or 1.3.2. The letter shall address the conditions of only 1.3.1 or 1.3.2, but not both.

The letter must be signed, preferably in blue ink, by the individual authorized to make the offer to perform the work described in this RFP. In the case of organizations, individuals signing this letter must indicate their position title and certify that they are authorized to offer a response on behalf of the organization.

1.3.1 Intent to Respond

If the responder accepts the terms set forth in this RFP, then the authorized individual will send this letter specifically stating the following:

- The organization intends to respond to this RFP by the date indicated.
- The organization accepts the methodology for determining the awarded proposer and all conditions set forth in this document that are related to the awarding of the contract. (This does not include negotiation issues such as specific language of insurance requirements or similar topics agreed upon after the contract is awarded to a responder in the normal course of negotiations.)
- The organization acts on behalf of all sub-contractors listed in the intended proposal, and therefore this letter serves as the sub-contractors' agreement to these conditions as well.

1.3.2 Appeal of Review Procedures

If the responder does not accept the terms set forth in this RFP, then the authorized individual will send this letter specifically stating the following:

- The organization is formally appealing MDE's procedures set forth in this RFP.
- The organization takes issue with specific conditions of the RFP related to scope of work, security of attachments, named reviewers of proposals, methodology for determining the awarded proposal, or any other condition set forth in the RFP and names those conditions in detail.
- The organization lists specifically the remedy requested for the appealed issue(s) in the RFP.

1.3.3 Continuation of RFP

If no appeals of the review procedures as listed in Section 1.3.2 are received by the date listed in Section 24 in the Significant Dates for Responders, this RFP will continue with the next scheduled task listed in Section 24 in the Significant Dates for Responders.

1.3.4 MDE Evaluation of RFP Status

If one or more appeals of the review procedures as listed in Section 1.3.2 are received by the date listed in Section 24 in the Significant Dates for Responders, MDE will consider a course of action that is in its best interest. This may include, but is not limited to, the following actions:

- Continuing the RFP with the next scheduled tasks
- Addressing the appeal through communication to all potential responders
- Canceling the RFP to address the issue(s) raised by the appeal and re-issuing at a later date

1.3.5 Address for Letter

The letter fulfilling either Section 1.3.1 or 1.3.2 shall be sent via registered mail (or similar delivery service that requires delivery verification by signature) to the following address:

Deputy Commissioner Chas Anderson
Minnesota Department of Education
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113

Criterion #2 for Responsiveness – INTENT TO RESPOND:
A proposal received by MDE for consideration must be prefaced by the letter required in Section 1.3. Both the letter and proposal must meet the timelines set forth in Section 24 in the Significant Dates for Responders. Proposals not meeting this criterion shall be deemed “non-responsive” and not be evaluated by the reviewers for further consideration.

2.0 SCOPE OF WORK

2.1 Work Task Statements

The tasks to be performed by the responders are detailed in the Baseline Scope of Work of Attachment 25.1. Some of the tasks listed recur throughout the life of the contract (e.g., item development, passage selection, item analysis, technical manuals). Other tasks will be completed once in the life of the

contract (e.g., GRAD writing field testing). It is the responder's duty to fully understand the Baseline Scope of Work and project the scope through the potential five years of the contract.

The responder should make the following determinations about each work task statement:

- A.** Is the task something the responder is currently doing in other contracts or has the capability of doing today? For example, "Vendor will utilize its Content Management System in the development of the tests so all test construction capabilities will be available through a browser interface utilizing hyperlinks, drop-down menus, and drag-and-drop functionality." If yes, the responder would place an "X" in column A next to that work task statement.
- B.** Is the task something the responder can implement fully within the 2007-2008 testing cycle? For example, "Vendor will utilize its Content Management System in the development of the tests so all test construction capabilities will be available through a browser interface utilizing hyperlinks, drop-down menus, and drag-and-drop functionality." If yes, the responder would place an "X" in column B next to that work task statement.
- C.** Is the task something that the responder cannot currently do, or cannot implement within the 2007-2008 testing cycle, or is not willing to do? If so, the responder would place an "X" in column C next to that work task statement.

In the narrative, responders may address those tasks marked in column C of the Baseline Scope of Work and propose alternate ways of performing the work that lead to the same outcome.

The columns A, B, and C are mutually exclusive. There will be an "X" in only one column for each of the work tasks. If a deliverable in the Baseline Scope of Work is not applicable to the 2007-2008 program, the responder should mark the appropriate column based on current capability (e.g., the responder can perform the task now, mark "A"; the responder can perform the task by the time required, mark "B").

Criterion #3 for Responsiveness – PERCENTAGE OF SOW:
Responders must place an "X" in column A or B for at least 80% of the original total work task statements (total $n = 589$). Proposals not meeting this criterion shall be deemed "non-responsive" and not be evaluated by the reviewers for further consideration.

The responder may propose additional or revised work task statements to any of the 16 sections that will facilitate the Baseline Scope of Work. Additional or revised work task statements the responder chooses to list in the Scope of Work shall be clearly identified in the proposed Scope of Work and be numbered sequentially in appended tasks at the end of that section. These additional work task statements must also indicate an "X" in column A or column B as detailed above. Additional work task statements proposed by the responder will not be included in the total when MDE determines if the responder has met Criterion #3 for Responsiveness as described above. These additional work tasks statements will, of course, be considered in the qualitative evaluation of the responder's ability to provide the State the best value for this contract as reflected in the Marked Scope of Work line item for the Technical Proposal Evaluation (Attachment 25.19).

Criterion #4 for Responsiveness – "C" EXEPTIONS:
Several work task statements in the scope of work are bolded and shaded: these tasks are considered essential. If a bold and shaded work task statement is marked in column C, the responder should clearly identify the page number in the proposal where a viable alternative to the work task statement is explained. Marking an "X" in column C for these essential work statement tasks, without a viable alternative presented in the narrative, shall be deemed "non-responsive" and not be evaluated by the reviewers for further consideration.

3.0 NARRATIVE

After the marked Scope of Work is presented, the responder should explain in detail how work will be completed in a narrative. The Baseline Scope of Work contains 15 sections that span the implementation of the Minnesota assessment system. Additional questions to which the responder must provide comprehensive solutions are listed in Section 16.0 and its subsections.

The responder should organize a written response for each of the 15 sections in the Baseline Scope of Work. The 15 sections of the narrative correspond to the Baseline Scope of Work sections. The responder must describe and detail how they will design, develop, implement, or complete the tasks in each of the 15 sections and indicate milestones that will be achieved by the responder in carrying out these tasks.

The responder must indicate throughout the narrative those components of the proposal which will aid the state in reaching full approval of its statewide assessment system from the United States Department of Education (ED) peer review. The responder may use an icon, graphic, call-out box, gloss, or other notation of its choosing within the page limits specified to indicate when specific text of the proposal narrative will aid the State in meeting its peer review obligations as outlined in [ED's letter to the Commissioner](#) dated June 22, 2006.

- The responder is **not required** to highlight proposal elements that would assist MDE for the areas addressed in Sections 1.0 and 2.0 of the letter. These are the sole responsibility of MDE.
- The responder is **required** to highlight proposal elements that would assist MDE for the areas addressed in Sections 3.0, 4.0, 5.0, 6.0, and 7.0 of the letter. (In Section 5.0, ED peer review criteria do not allow the large-scale contractor to conduct alignment reviews of its own custom-produced tests for a state. However, the responder should recommend ways in which it can assist the state in meeting the requirements of this section. Note that MDE expects to issue a separate RFP for an alignment contractor to conduct the work required in Section 5.0 of ED's letter.)

The responder may also wish to review MDE's Timeline for ED Rolling Peer Review submitted to ED on July 31, 2006. See Attachment 25.2.

Criterion #5 for Responsiveness – PEER REVIEW:

The responder's narrative must highlight (in a manner chosen by the responder and within the page limit prescriptions of this RFP) the approach the responder would use to assist Minnesota with the peer review issues in the identified sections of the letter listed under Section 3.0 of this RFP. Proposals not meeting this criterion shall be deemed "non-responsive" and not be evaluated by the reviewers for further consideration.

The narrative to the Baseline Scope of Work should be clear and succinct, avoiding marketing language and unessential photographs or graphics. Bulleted lists and tables are encouraged when

appropriate. Font size must be a minimum of 11 point. Margins must be at least one inch on all sides.

Criterion #6 for Responsiveness – PAGE LIMITS:

The responder’s narrative is limited to the page number allowances listed in Section 7.1 of this RFP. Proposals not meeting this criterion shall be deemed “non-responsive” and not be evaluated by the reviewers for further consideration.

The responder is required only to divide the narrative into the 22 main sections listed below (e.g., 1: Project Planning and Communication; 2: Test Design) which include the 15 Baseline Scope of Work sections and Sections 16.1-16.7 for the Additional Questions as outlined and organized exactly as described in Section 7.1 of this RFP. The subsections established underneath each of these main headings below within Section 3.0 of this RFP are intended only to provide clarity to the responder in identifying the elements that should be addressed in that section.

The 1-16.7 sections (22 sections total) along with their narrative requirements are listed below:

3.1 Project Planning and Communication

Describe the manner in which the responder will facilitate planning and communication to meet the timelines and requirements of Minnesota’s assessment program. Include how the tasks listed in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 1.0 will be completed in a fashion that demonstrates the responder’s project management capability, as well as customer service responsiveness to schools and school districts during ordering, test administration, and reporting, and assistance to the public at large. The responder should address its ability to service both additional material requests as well as technical questions related to computer-based testing.

The responder should highlight its proven ability to meet requirements and deadlines using a planned approach to project management. Describe how the responder is able to effectively plan its projects within the course of normal business hours without creating a flurry of activity for either the responder or MDE just before the deadline that can lead to sacrificed quality.

Section 1.0 should be general in focus and provide information on the responder's standard operating procedures for planning and communication. (More specific information about individuals' skills and experience should be provided in the Management & Staffing Section (7.1.5 of this RFP) of the Technical Proposal).

Section 1.0 should also highlight the relationship of MDE with sub-contractors. This relationship should describe the responder's ability to provide a seamless interaction between MDE and the prime contractor and the responder's assumption of full responsibility for the quality of deliverables from any sub-contractors.

The responder should keep in mind when crafting the narrative for Section 1.0 that Human Research and Resources Organization (HumRRO) is presently contracted as MDE's provider of Quality Control and Verification for the Minnesota assessment system and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) data under NCLB.

Describe your experience and plan in coordinating with other state-contracted organizations assigned to work on the same program. All vendors will be required to share information regarding item parameters, data files, command files, and other information that ensures the reliability, validity, and quality of the assessment system.

3.2 Test Design

The responder should articulate the manner in which it will fulfill the test design objectives listed in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 2.0 for each of the relevant assessments.

3.2.1 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (Series II & III)

3.2.1.1 MCA-II for Math in Grades 3-8 and 11

Describe how the responder will maintain and/or strengthen the horizontal and vertical linking designs established for the MCA-II in math. MDE currently uses "common item non-equivalent groups" for its vertical linking design.

3.2.1.2 MCA-II for Reading in Grades 3-8 and 10

Describe how the responder will maintain and/or strengthen the horizontal and vertical linking designs established for the MCA-II in reading while addressing the challenges of a permissioned, passage-based assessment. MDE currently uses "common item non-equivalent groups" for its vertical linking design.

3.2.1.3 MCA-II for Science in Grades 5, 8 and High School

Describe how the responder will maintain and/or strengthen the horizontal linking designs established for the MCA-II in science while addressing the challenges of a scenario-based assessment. This content area does not have a vertical linking design. A vertical linking design is not expected unless ED requires science assessments in similar grades to reading and math (e.g., grades 3-8 and high school).

3.2.2 Graduation-Required Assessment for Diploma (GRAD)

3.2.2.1 GRAD for Math in Grade 11 and retests

Describe how the responder will maintain the test design established for the GRAD component of the MCA-II in math. See Attachment 25.3 for the GRAD Test Design.

3.2.2.2 GRAD for Reading in Grade 10 and retests

Describe how the responder will maintain the test design established for the GRAD component of the MCA-II in reading. This test is a permissioned, passage-based test. See Attachment 25.3 for the GRAD Test Design.

3.2.2.3 GRAD for Written Composition in Grade 9 and retests

Describe how the responder will maintain the test design established for the GRAD for Written Composition. Test design is found within [GRAD Test Specifications](#) on the MDE website.

3.2.3 Basic Skills Test (BST)

The Basic Skills Tests in math, reading, and writing are the graduation exit exams that are being retired under [M.S. 120B.30](#). These are static forms that do not require test design maintenance.

3.2.4 Test of Emerging Academic English (TEAE)

The current version of the TEAE in reading and writing skills are static forms that do not require test design maintenance.

The next version of the TEAE (Series II) will be revised for an operational administration in the spring of 2009 and be expanded to include grades Kindergarten through grade 2. A separate Additional Question in Section 3.16 asks the responder to address in detail the test design considerations for the TEAE-II. This design does not need to be addressed within the narrative for Section 3.2.

3.2.5 Test of Emerging Academic English: Listening & Speaking (TEAELS)

TEAELS is a static form that does not require horizontal linking design maintenance. Test design is found within [TEAELS Test Specifications](#) on the MDE website.

MDE currently uses a teacher checklist to rate proficiency in English language speaking skills (called the [MN SOLOM](#)).

The next version of the TEAELS (Series II) will be revised for an operational administration in the spring of 2009. A separate Additional Question in Section 3.16 asks the

responder to address in detail the test design considerations for the TEAELS-II. This design does not need to be addressed within the narrative for Section 3.2.

3.2.6 Mathematics Test for English Language Learners

Describe how the responder will maintain and/or strengthen the test design for this accommodated form for ELL students.

3.2.7 Mathematics Test for English Language Learners – GRAD

The responder may wish to include what considerations must be made for the MTELL-GRAD Version test design as the specifications are developed.

3.2.8 Minnesota Writes!

The current version of the Minnesota Writes! test is a static form that does not require test design maintenance. It contains a single prompt selected at random from three genres within the grade 6 Minnesota Academic Standards. MDE currently holds 29 unexposed prompts from previous field tests and does not anticipate the need for a field test during the course of this expected five-year contract.

(Policy makers may be interested in integrating this elementary/middle level writing skills assessment into the MCA-III if they desire to include language arts standards when the reading MCA-III becomes operational in 2013. If this option were chosen, this most likely would eliminate Minnesota Writes! at that time.)

3.3 Item Development

The responder should articulate the manner in which it will fulfill the item development objectives listed in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 3.0 for each of the relevant assessments.

Describe the electronic item management system used by the responder in developing items and maintaining quality control from item development to publication for both paper and

electronic assessments. Provide a demonstration CD or guest log-in for this item management system for each reviewer so a prescribed functionality evaluation can be conducted. This functionality evaluation is a secure component of this RFP evaluation process and shall only be made public upon request only after the contract has been executed.

Criterion #7 for Responsiveness – ITEM MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:

The responder must have a working electronic item management system in place that meets MDE’s requirements in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 3.0 at the time the proposal is submitted. Demonstration CDs or guest log-ins are required. Screenshots of proposed systems in lieu of this requirement are not acceptable. Proposals not meeting this criterion shall be deemed “non-responsive” and not be evaluated by the reviewers for further consideration.

Minnesota’s current contractor will complete item development tasks for the summer of 2007, to be field tested in 2008. Therefore, the first item development necessary for the responder to consider are the item development tasks in 2008 to be field tested in 2009.

All teacher committees that review items at any stage of test construction shall be conducted according to MDE’s Vendor Guide to Advisory Panels (current edition). If desired, responders may request specific attachments to the MDE Vendor Guide to Advisory Panels when they submit their questions to MDE by the dates listed in Section 24 in the Significant Dates for Responders. See Attachment 25.4 for this information. See Attachment 25.5 for the MDE Advisory Panel Calendar. This calendar is created in collaboration with MDE. Note that it is the contractor’s responsibility to maintain this calendar on behalf of MDE.

3.3.1 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (Series II & III)

Describe how the responder will fulfill or enhance the item development plans for the MCAs listed in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 3.0. When the MCA-III in mathematics, science and reading becomes operational in their various years, the item development will need to reflect a flexibility to be realigned to the revised

Minnesota Academic Standards. See Attachment 25.6 for the MCAs Item Development Plan.

3.3.2 Graduation-Required Assessment for Diploma (GRAD)

Describe how the responder will fulfill or enhance the item development plans for the GRAD listed in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 3.0. When the MCA-III in mathematics and reading becomes operational in their various years, the item development will need to reflect a flexibility to be realigned to the revised Essential Learnings of the GRAD test. See Attachment 25.6 for the GRAD Item Development Plan.

3.3.3 Basic Skills Test (BST)

The BSTs in math, reading, and writing are the graduation exit exams that are being retired under [M.S. 120B.30](#). These are static forms that do not require additional item development.

3.3.4 Test of Emerging Academic English (Series I & II)

The TEAE-I are static forms that do not require additional item development.

Propose item development plans for the 2009 operational TEAE-II. Once constructed, TEAE-II is expected to consist of at least three static forms or a sufficient number of items to support an adaptive test.

3.3.5 Test of Emerging Academic English: Listening & Speaking

The TEAELS are static forms. MDE currently has one form built and expects to build an additional static form for 2008 using the existing item pool prior to TEAELS-II in 2009.

Propose item development plans for the 2009 operational TEAELS-II. Once constructed, TEAELS-II is expected to consist of at least three static forms or a sufficient number of items to support an adaptive test.

3.3.6 Mathematics Test for English Language Learners (Series II & III)

The MTELL-II is a static test that does not require additional item development in its alignment to the MCA-II in mathematics.

When the MCA-III in mathematics becomes operational in 2011, the MTELL-III will need to follow the same schedule of tasks as an accommodated form for ELL students. Describe how the responder will fulfill or enhance the item development plans for the MTELL-III listed in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 3.0. See Attachment 25.6 for the MTELL-III Item Development Plan. Once constructed, MTELL-III is expected to consist of at least three static forms.

3.3.7 Mathematics Test for English Language Learners – GRAD

Describe how the responder will fulfill or enhance the item development plans for the 2009 operational MTELL-GRAD listed in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 3.0. The MTELL-GRAD will also need additional item development for 2011 when the MCA-III and GRAD are revised based on the content standards revision during the 2006-2007 school year. See Attachment 25.6 for the MTELL-GRAD Item Development Plan. Once constructed, MTELL-GRAD is expected to consist of at least five static forms.

3.3.8 Minnesota Writes!

MDE currently holds 29 unexposed prompts from previous field tests and does not anticipate the need for a field test or prompt development during the course of this expected five-year contract.

3.4 Test Construction

Describe the manner in which the responder will facilitate test construction to meet the timelines and requirements of

Minnesota's assessment program. Include how the tasks listed in the Scope of Work Section 4.0 will be completed in a fashion that demonstrates the responder's commitment to a well-facilitated test construction process with MDE content and psychometric staff. The narrative should use the MDE Guidelines for Test Construction-Current Edition (Attachment 25.7) and MDE Test Form Construction Process-Current Edition (Attachment 25.8) as a reference. The narrative should highlight the specific benefits offered through its test construction process that increase quality, allow for substantive and professional conversations between the responder and MDE related to form construction, and demonstrate a proven history of efficiency for State Department staff.

3.5 Materials Production

The responder should articulate the manner in which it will fulfill the materials production objectives listed in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 5.0.

Describe the manner in which the responder will facilitate the materials production to meet the timelines and requirements of Minnesota's assessment program. Include how the tasks listed in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 5.0 will be completed in a fashion that demonstrates the responder's commitment to quality and efficiency.

Reference the MDE Assessments Materials List (Attachment 25.9) for *n*-counts and a comprehensive list of materials. For complete Minnesota student demographic information, see the [Minnesota Department of Education](#) website.

3.6 Distribution & Collection

Describe the manner in which the responder will facilitate the distribution and collection to meet the timelines and requirements of Minnesota's assessment program. Include how the tasks listed in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 6.0 will be completed in a fashion that demonstrates the responder's commitment to quality and efficiency not only to MDE, but more importantly, to the clients it serves.

The [2007-2008 testing calendar](#) can be found on the MDE website.

[MDE's current minimum platform requirements for on-line assessments](#) on which the user interface will run can be found on MDE's website.

Each assessment below identifies the expected format of the test and for what years of the contract. The responder is welcome to propose a computerized test administration mode for additional or all assessments listed in Section 1.0 of this RFP that are outside MDE's implementation schedule for online testing as described in Section 3.6 of this RFP and its [Five-Year Plan](#). The responder may propose delivering additional or all tests via computer when addressing Section 3.6 of this RFP. It is expected that the responder's narrative will then address each of the findings and recommendations from the [Online Assessment Initiative Advisory Committee Report](#) drafted by an MDE stakeholder committee in April of 2006.

3.6.1 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (Series II & III)

3.6.1.1 MCA-II for Math in Grades 3-8 and 11

Consider the MCA-II in mathematics to be a paper-based test in grades 3-8 and high school until it becomes the MCA-III in 2011. (At that time, equated and comparable Braille and large-print paper forms will still be required. However, these may be a set number of static forms.) Describe how the responder will deliver these paper-based materials.

3.6.1.2 MCA-II for Reading in Grades 3-8 and 10

Consider the MCA-II in reading to be a paper-based test in grades 3-8 and high school until it becomes the MCA-III in 2013. (At that time, equated and comparable Braille and large-print paper forms will still be required. However, these may be a set number of static forms.) Describe how the responder will deliver these paper-based materials.

3.6.1.3 MCA-II for Science in Grades 5, 8 and High School

Describe how the responder will deliver the computer-based science tests. Equated and comparable Braille and large-print paper forms will still be required. However, these may be a set number of static forms.

3.6.2 Graduation-Required Assessment for Diploma (GRAD)

3.6.2.1 GRAD for Math in Grade 11 and retests

Describe how the responder will deliver the computer-based math tests when launched in 2009 for retests. The responder should assume a minimum of 5 retest opportunities (preferably more) with unique forms starting the summer after the student's grade 11 school year. Include considerations that will allow schools multiple testing windows or a continuous testing window for retests to increase flexibility for additional retests beyond the minimum required. Equated and comparable Braille and large-print paper forms will still be required. However, these may be a set number of static forms.

3.6.2.2 GRAD for Reading in Grade 10 and retests

Describe how the responder will deliver the computer-based reading tests when launched in 2008 for retests. The responder should assume a minimum of 5 retest opportunities (preferably more) with unique forms starting the summer after the student's grade 10 school year. Include considerations that will allow schools multiple testing windows or a continuous testing window for retests to increase flexibility for additional retests beyond the minimum required. Equated and comparable Braille and large-print paper forms will still be required. However, these may be a set number of static forms.

3.6.2.3 GRAD for Written Composition in Grade 9 and retests

Describe how the responder will deliver the materials for this writing test. MDE expects to begin piloting the writing test on computer in the summer of 2007 with interested school districts. The responder should indicate how this pilot work can be maintained and/or enhanced. However, assume writing to continue to be paper-based until the test becomes computer-delivered starting in the spring of 2009. The responder should assume a minimum of 5 retest opportunities (preferably more) with unique forms starting the summer after the student's grade 9 school year. Include considerations that will allow schools multiple testing windows or a continuous testing window for retests to increase flexibility for additional retests beyond the minimum required. Equated and comparable Braille and large-print paper forms will still be required. However, these may be a set number of static forms.

3.6.3 Basic Skills Test (BST)

The Basic Skills Tests in mathematics and reading will be delivered via computer starting in the summer of 2007. MDE expects to begin piloting the writing test on computer in the summer of 2007 with interested school districts. The responder should indicate how this pilot work can be maintained and/or enhanced. However, assume writing to continue to be paper-based until the summer of 2009. Describe how the responder will provide materials for this test. Include considerations that will allow schools multiple testing windows or a continuous testing window for retests to increase flexibility. Braille and large-print paper forms will still be required. However, these may be a set number of static forms.

It is expected that the BST will need to maintain the retest opportunities for the length of the expected five-year contract. The number of students needing to take the retest is expected to diminish with each administration. The table below provides a rough

estimate of the number of retests for the following four operational administration years.

School Year	Valid Scores Math	Valid Scores Reading	Valid Scores Writing
07-08	19,500	11,100	14,800
08-09	9,000	5,000	5,800
09-10	4,500	2,250	2,900
10-11	2,250	1,125	1,450

3.6.4 Test of Emerging Academic English (TEAE)

Consider the TEAE to be a paper-based test until it becomes the TEAE-II in the spring of 2009. Until this time, TEAE static forms are currently in PDF format. Braille and large-print paper forms will still be required. However, these may be a set number of static forms.

Describe how the responder will deliver these materials for paper through 2008 and via computer starting in the spring of 2009.

3.6.5 Test of Emerging Academic English: Listening & Speaking (TEAELS)

Describe how the responder will deliver the computer-based ELL listening and speaking tests. When the TEAELS-II is developed for 2009 operational administration, MDE may consider combining it with the TEAE-II to develop a comprehensive reading, writing, listening, and speaking adaptive assessment of English language proficiency for Title III requirements, as well as an on-grade Title I assessment for reading/language arts as described in Section 3.16.

3.6.6 Mathematics Test for English Language Learners

Describe how the responder will deliver the computer-based math tests. Braille and large-print paper forms will still be required. However, these may be a set number of static forms.

3.6.7 Mathematics Test for English Language Learners – GRAD

Describe how the responder will deliver the computer-based math graduation tests for ELL students. Braille and large-print paper forms will still be required. However, these may be a set number of static forms.

3.6.8 Minnesota Writes!

Consider the Minnesota Writes! to be a paper-based test for the life of the contract. Describe how the responder will deliver these materials.

3.7 Materials Processing

Describe the manner in which the responder will facilitate materials processing to meet the timelines and requirements of Minnesota’s assessment program. Include how the tasks listed in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 7.0 will be completed in a fashion that demonstrates the responder’s commitment to quality and efficiency. The MDE Retention Schedule referenced in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 7.0 (Attachment 25.1) is Attachment 25.10.

3.8 Handscoring

Describe the manner in which the responder will facilitate handscoring of constructed responses to meet the timelines and requirements of Minnesota’s assessment program. Include how the tasks listed in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 8.0 will be completed in a fashion that demonstrates the responder’s commitment to quality and efficiency. The responder may wish to include proposed solutions that increase the speed of handscoring without sacrificing reliability such as use of the responder’s computerized (non-human or non-human in part) response scoring system for constructed-response items and any reliability and validity evidence of that system.

See the [Minnesota Writes! Test Specifications](#) and [GRAD Test Specifications](#) for further details about scoring requirements for Minnesota’s writing assessments.

3.9 Scoring

Describe the manner in which the responder will facilitate scoring to meet the timelines and requirements of Minnesota's assessment program. Include how the tasks listed in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 9.0 will be completed in a fashion that demonstrates the responder's commitment to quality, accuracy, and efficiency.

3.10 Standard Setting

Describe the manner in which the responder will facilitate standard setting for any new or revised assessment that becomes operational during the course of this contract term. Include how the tasks listed in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 10.0 will be completed in a fashion that demonstrates the responder's commitment to quality, efficiency, and a technically sound methodology for setting performance standards. Expected new or revised assessments include the following:

- 2008: MCA-II Science
- 2008: GRAD Reading
- 2009: TEAE-II
- 2009: TEAELS-II
- 2009: GRAD Mathematics (includes MTELL-GRAD)
- 2011: MCA-III Mathematics (includes MTELL)
- 2011: GRAD Mathematics (includes MTELL-GRAD)

The responder's proposal should include a technically-sound standard setting process for all of the above. The responder may propose alternate methods of matching a subsequent version of a test to its predecessor if the standards for that assessment have not changed substantially. However, for costing purposes, consider all of the above as necessary and comprehensive as MDE cannot predict the extent of each of the content standards revisions.

3.11 Reporting

Describe the manner in which the responder will facilitate scoring to meet the timelines and requirements of Minnesota's assessment program. Include how the tasks listed in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 11.0 will be completed in a fashion that demonstrates the responder's commitment to quality, accuracy, and efficiency.

The [2007-2008 testing calendar](#) can be found on the MDE website. The responder may wish to include proposed solutions that increase the speed of final reports without sacrificing quality or accuracy. MDE shall give strong consideration in Section 11.0 to a responder who can publish final reports for MCA-IIs early in the summer. Other smaller n-count assessments may be published later. However, MDE shall give strong consideration in Section 11.0 to a responder who can publish final reports for the other spring-administered assessments as close as possible to the MCA-II report release date – especially those assessments used for NCLB accountability purposes (e.g., TEAE having a higher priority than MCA-II science). (If the TEAE-II does not become a dual-purpose administration for both Title I and Title III accountability, then the TEAE-II administration will remain in March and results are expected earlier in the year than those of the MCA-IIs.)

To achieve this, the responder may wish to propose solutions that eliminate paper reports and yet still make results accessible to all stakeholders without increasing the work or cost to schools.

MDE desires to provide districts with a more user-friendly format for analyzing district-level assessment data provided by the state than currently available in its [Universal File Format](#). The responder should provide a Web-based (or other user-friendly) utility for districts to access data files via the Web-based reporting system to create ad-hoc queries, filtering, and similar analysis. MDE envisions this to look something similar to the [Customized NAEP State and National Comparisons Feature](#).

3.12 Technical Support and Analysis

MDE uses a 3-PL measurement model for its main census tests (e.g., MCA-IIs) and a Rasch model for smaller n-count

assessments (e.g., TEAE). Describe the manner in which the responder will facilitate technical support and analysis to meet the timelines and requirements of Minnesota's assessment program. Include how the tasks listed in the Baseline Scope of Work Section 12.0 will be completed in a fashion that demonstrates the responder's capacity to offer MDE expert advice on advanced measurement topics and the responder's ability to call upon its experience in large-scale, high-stakes K-12 assessment setting so as to provide MDE with potential solutions to complex measurement issues, including the advantages and disadvantages of those solutions. Specific examples from other clients are encouraged.

The responder should also identify how it envisions its technical support and analysis to be advantageous to MDE in conducting studies for which it is allowable (e.g., non-alignment studies) to establish the strongest evidence possible to ED in fulfilling its peer review requirements. See MDE's Timeline for ED Rolling Peer Review submitted to ED on July 31, 2006 (Attachment 25.2). The responder should recommend additional or alternative studies to MDE that would support the development of strong research base for its assessments in support of its peer review. The responder should also suggest how these studies also can be made useable to laypersons in Minnesota such as teachers, administrators, or legislators.

3.13 Technology Enhancements

3.13.1 Classroom-level Rerostering Tool

MDE desires to provide teachers more useful data in the fall when they return to their classrooms. Provide a description of a computer-based (preferably web-based) solution that will allow a classroom teacher to create a class list with students' test scores from the previous year(s). This class list roster would be available for the teacher to create on the same day that published results are released. (The responder is not responsible for creating the classroom-based grouping; however, the teacher should have user-based rights to a secure access to retrieve these students to a classroom list based on the students who tested in the previous year in that school.) Describe how this data tool can hold longitudinally both the formative assessment information described in Section 3.14 as well as the summative assessment

information of the MCAs. Screenshots of a proposed system in lieu of a working system will be accepted; however, demonstration CDs or guest log-ins for such a tool are preferred and shall be given stronger consideration in the evaluation.

3.13.2 Instructional Database

Once teachers have this rerostered information listed in 3.13.1, MDE desires to provide teachers with appropriate instructional strategies for the strands, sub-strands, and/or benchmarks of the Minnesota Academic Standards. These instructional strategies should be research-based and provide reference to that research. The instructional strategies will provide effect size on student learning for each teaching method and rank these strategies by this effect size. Provide a description of a computer-based (preferably web-based) solution that will allow teachers to access this information. Screenshots of a proposed system in lieu of a working system will be accepted; however, demonstration CDs or guest log-ins for such a tool are preferred and shall be given stronger consideration in the evaluation.

3.13.3 Item Release System

MDE desires to provide teachers more useful item release tools than its current system of PDF, downloadable paper [Item Samplers](#) created using the Item Sampler Specifications (Attachment 25.11). MDE's next item release is scheduled for the 2007-2008 school year. Describe the capabilities that the responder has to construct a web-based item release bank in which teachers will be able to access specific items to build their own sample tests according to the benchmark classifications of the Minnesota Academic Standards. MDE envisions this release tool to have similar functionality to the [NAEP Questions Tool](#), which may include useful data for teachers (e.g., percentage of student selection of distractors, distractor rationales). Screenshots of a proposed system in lieu of a working system will be accepted; however, demonstration CDs or guest log-ins for such a system are preferred and shall be given stronger consideration in the evaluation.

3.14 Formative Assessment

Describe the manner in which the responder will provide a formative assessment system that is aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards. Describe how an independent alignment from a third-party entity has been or will be conducted.

The formative assessment system must be a companion to the MCA-II in mathematics, reading, and science. It must be computer-based and allow for at least three administrations during the school year with minimal technical support needed for schools. It should be available for grades 3-8 and at least once in high school for all three subjects. It should provide diagnostic reports in a manner consistent with the reporting categories of the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments. It should provide predictive information for student performance on the MCA-IIs in the three content areas for each grade level in which they are administered (e.g., the predictive information in science would only be necessary in grades 5, 8, and high school).

The responder should propose different modes of administration that would be available (e.g., district-wide administration and/or classroom-level administration). The system must be able to handle imports of student data from district student information systems (SIS) and exports to those systems and/or data analysis tools to analyze results and monitor progress.

Describe what steps the responder will take to revise this formative assessment and/or demonstrate alignment when the MCA-IIIs become operational in the various years for mathematics and science. Reading is outside the timeframe of the expected five-year contract.

3.15 Value-added Program

This is a component of Minnesota's assessment system that is required to be developed under Minnesota Statutes [120B.35](#); [120B.36](#); and [120B.362](#). For the purposes of this RFP, "value-added" is defined as the estimate of the contribution that

teachers, schools, and districts make to the growth of individual student achievement over time.

Describe the responder's expertise in assisting states in developing both growth-based accountability for NCLB and value-added models (VAMs) that are

- transparent and understandable to the general public, and
- technically sound in the validity of inferences about the contributors to student growth.

Describe what technical support and analysis the responder can offer to Minnesota in developing growth-based accountability and a value-added model for its Minnesota Assessments in reading and math. Consider also what role the revision of standards and the MCA-III's/MTELL and TEAE-II for these two content areas will play in establishing a valid and reliable value-added model. The narrative in this section should describe the work task statements in Section 15 and include the following elements:

- How the responder would design the feasibility study evaluating the State's current longitudinal data base to support growth-based accountability and a VAM to be completed by June 30, 2007.
- How the responder would form a plan for the State's consideration that provided a variety of growth-based accountability and VAMs for consideration and a reasonable timeline for implementation that addresses the needs of policy makers without creating an unacceptable real or perceived delay in that implementation.

Note that because of the revision to the Minnesota Academic Standards and subsequent development of the MCA-II's to measure those standards, Minnesota is already behind in the timeline of the statutory language required under Minnesota Statutes [120B.35](#); [120B.36](#); and [120B.362](#). Policy makers in Minnesota are aware of the revisions in the standards and assessments and recognize the delay; however, an extensive delay in the implementation of the VAM will be perceived by policy makers as an unwillingness to fulfill state statutes, a condition in which MDE could be seen as using complex psychometric justifications as excuse for the delay.

3.16 Additional Questions

In addition to responding to the Scope of Work and Narrative described in the preceding sections, responders are to answer the following questions within the page limits specified in Section 6.1 of this RFP.

3.16.1 Minnesota MCA-III in Mathematics

In mathematics, the Minnesota legislature will approve a revision of the Minnesota Academic Standards in May of 2007 ([M.S. 120B.023 as amended in Minnesota Session Law 2006 – Chapter 263; Subd. 2b](#)). These new standards require (1) students to satisfactorily complete an algebra I credit by the end of eighth grade starting in 2010-2011; and (2) students scheduled to graduate in the 2014-2015 school year or later must satisfactorily complete an algebra II credit or its equivalent. While not a part of the legislation, stakeholders also have an expectation that the high school level MCA-III serve as a placement test or similar coordinated assessment of predicted student performance at the post-secondary level within Minnesota colleges and universities. In addition, stakeholders will expect the MCA-III to be able to continue to demonstrate growth via the test design's vertical scale in grades 3-8 and a predictive component for performance on the grade 11 test established by that time.

The mathematics MCA-III will become operational during the expected five-year contract. New test specifications for the next edition of the mathematics assessment (MCA-Series III) will be developed by MDE during the 2007-2008 school year. MDE will take primary responsibility for producing the test specifications for the MCA-III in mathematics and its accommodated ELL test, MTELL-III, as well as the graduation exam based on the new standards (GRAD and MTELL-GRAD). All three will become operational in the spring of 2011.

Describe what support and assistance the responder can provide in the following elements:

- Developing MCA-III, MTELL-III, and GRAD test specifications that will produce valid and reliable results
- Maintaining a growth score for grades 3-8 as the state moves from MCA-II/MTELL-II to MCA-III/MTELL-III in mathematics
- Developing a grade 11 MCA-III test that serves as a post-secondary level placement that suites the needs of the P-16 stakeholders who represent Minnesota colleges and universities
- Revising the predictive element on the grade 8 MCA-III and MTELL-III for student performance on the grade 11 MCA-III, MTELL-III, and GRAD
- Developing a grade 8 assessment that can serve as both an end-of-course algebra I assessment and as an assessment to cover the depth and breadth of all other grade-level standards
- Developing an on-line version of the MCA-III for all grades 3-8 and 11 in 2011 that will not place undue technology burdens on schools and districts

3.16.2 Minnesota MCA-III in Science

In science, the Minnesota legislature will approve a revision of the Minnesota Academic Standards in May of 2009 ([M.S. 120B.023 as amended in Minnesota Session Law 2006 – Chapter 263; Subd. 2b](#)). These new standards require the state assessments to measure these standards starting in 2011-2012; and (2) students scheduled to graduate in the 2014-2015 school year or later must satisfactorily complete a chemistry or physics credit.

The science MCA-III will become operational during the expected five-year contract. New test specifications for the next edition of the science assessment (MCA-Series III) will be developed by MDE during the 2009-2010 school year. MDE will take primary responsibility for producing the test specifications for the MCA-III in science. It will become operational in the spring of 2012.

Describe what support and assistance the responder can provide in the following elements:

- Developing MCA-III test specifications that will produce valid and reliable results
- Developing a high-school level test that includes earth/space science and physical science in addition to the current life science standards
- Developing an on-line version of the MCA-III for grades 3, 5, and high school that will not place undue technology burdens on schools and districts
- Suggesting strategies for developing assessments (paper and/or on-line) in grades 3-8 and high school if NCLB is reauthorized with this requirement

3.16.3 Minnesota MCA-III in Reading/Language Arts

In language arts, the Minnesota legislature will approve a revision of the Minnesota Academic Standards in May of 2010 ([M.S. 120B.023 as amended in Minnesota Session Law 2006 – Chapter 263; Subd. 2b](#)). The reading/language arts MCA-III will become operational during the first school year of the next expected five-year contract (i.e., not within this contract). New test specifications for the next edition of the reading/language arts assessment (MCA-Series III) will be developed by MDE during the 2010-2011 school year. MDE will take primary responsibility for producing the test specifications for the MCA-III in reading/language arts and its aligned English language proficiency and reading/language arts test, the TEAE-III. Both will become operational in the spring of 2013.

MDE is preparing for the potential that policy makers will desire the new MCA-III to test a greater number of the reading/language arts standards (i.e., assess other language arts standards as well as the historically-assessed reading standards of previous MCA series).

Describe what support and assistance the responder can provide in the following elements:

- Developing MCA-III and GRAD test specifications that will produce valid and reliable results
- Maintaining a growth score for grades 3-8 as the state moves from MCA-II to MCA-III in reading/language arts

- Obtaining permissions for passages in an efficient manner so that a passages and items will be viable after the contract terminates and a potential transition to a new vendor
- Revising the MCA-III to assess (potentially) a larger number of content standards which may then encompass the GRAD Writing test while anticipating the concern for longer tests
- Revising the predictive element on the grade 8 MCA-III for student performance on the grade 10 MCA-III and GRAD
- Developing an on-line version of the MCA-III for all grades 3-8 and 10 for 2013 that will not place undue technology burdens on schools and districts

3.16.4 TEAELS Speaking Component

The TEAELS assessment was originally envisioned to assess both listening and speaking using the computer. When the assessment was field tested, MDE determined that the technology to capture the speech of ELLs and consequently score their performance was not yet sophisticated enough to provide reliable information. MDE reverted to a teacher observation rating and uses the computer to collect these teacher ratings. However, MDE still envisions a fully-implemented, computer-scored listening **and** speaking component (ideally computer-adaptive) for this test when the TEAELS-II is developed for operational administration in 2009.

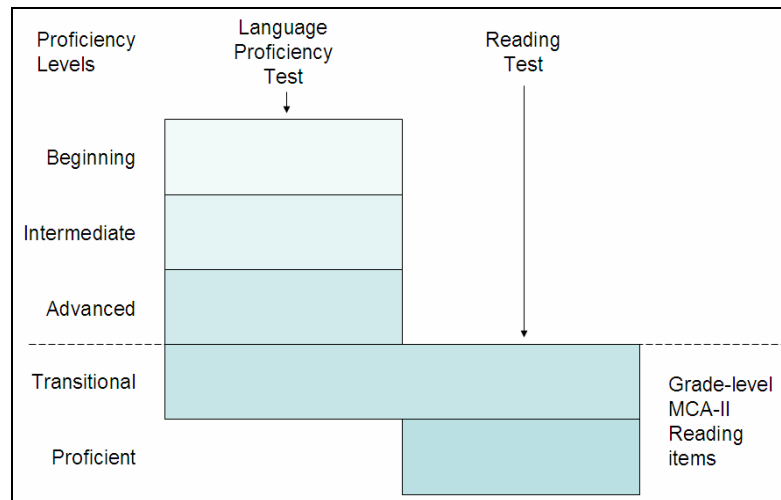
Describe what support and assistance the responder can provide in the following elements:

- Experience in capturing and scoring student speaking samples that will produce valid and reliable results
- Developing a technology solution for capturing and scoring ELL speech samples
- Setting standards for student speech samples in a large-scale assessment

3.16.5 TEAE-II & TEAE-III Test Design

MDE expects to deliver a revised TEAE (Series II) as an operational assessment in 2009. Minnesota is currently participating in ED's [LEP Partnership](#) and is one of the states in this partnership pursuing a combined test that assesses both English language proficiency (ELP) for Title III as well as reading content proficiency for Title I. MDE envisions a combined assessment that adapts to student skill level for the ELP evaluation and then provides an on-grade-level assessment of student performance for reading content knowledge.

The graphic below illustrates MDE's current vision for this assessment. The responder should comment upon this design's feasibility or suggest an alternative.



MDE expects to build a TEAE-III to be operational in 2013 as a companion to the MCA-III that year. The TEAE-III will assess ELP skills in the following grades and contents:

- Reading: Grades K-12
- Writing: Grades K-12

If feasible and not an undue testing burden, MDE may include a comprehensive ELP test that adaptively tests all four modalities of reading, writing, listening, and speaking before advancing to a non-adaptive, grade-level assessment of reading. If feasible, this would combine the TEAE-II, TEAELS-II, and MCA-II tests for the ELL in 2009. The responder should to comment on the feasibility of this concept. The responder may also

propose a current off-the-shelf assessment it may have available which can be modified to suit the future goals of MDE.

Describe what support and assistance the responder can provide in the following elements:

- Experience in developing adaptive assessments for ELLs that will produce valid and reliable results
- Developing a technology solution that can provide an adaptive component for ELP standards
- Delivering a combined assessment that serves two purposes for the same population (ELP assessment and on-grade level reading assessment)

3.16.6 Blind/Visually Impaired Considerations

MDE works to develop assessments that are fair and appropriate for all students while at the same time using its resources as efficiently as possible. Minnesota has a strong coalition of educators for blind/visually impaired students who may have a differing view of how resources should be appropriately allocated to provide their students an equal opportunity.

Describe what support and assistance your organization can provide in the following elements:

- Developing assessments that are fair and reliable for this population
- Using resources as efficiently as possible while maintaining equal results for all populations
- Using technology to provide efficient accommodations that students are likely to use as a regular part of their instruction.

3.16.7 On-line Initiative

MDE began an initiative in 2005 called "On Line in '09." When this initiative began, it was intended to provide a timeline for schools and districts to transition to on-line testing for all grades and contents. To this end, some of Minnesota's recent assessments have been built from

the ground up as a computer-based test: no paper companion forms have been developed (except for Braille or other visual impairments).

In 2006, MDE worked with a committee of stakeholders to draft the [Online Assessment Initiative Advisory Committee Report](#). This report included a list of findings and recommendations. Many districts do not have a sufficient number of computers to administer high-stakes assessments within a three-week test window, a timeframe already at its maximum according to Minnesota's National Technical Advisory Committee.

Assuming little to no additional funds will be provided by the state legislature for on-line testing, the responder should provide a reaction to the [Online Assessment Initiative Advisory Committee Report](#). The responder should comment on what experiences it has in migrating paper-based assessments to a computer-based system and how this experience could help the State address the recommendations of this report.

The responder may wish to propose effective and proven strategies to help schools, districts, and MDE in allowing for a pilot or transition when the MCA-III's in mathematics and reading/language arts (and their companion assessments) come on line in their various years as identified in this RFP.

4.0 DEPARTMENT CONTACT

4.1 Submission of Questions to MDE

Prospective responders who have questions regarding this RFP may send an e-mail or fax ONLY to the following contact:

Dr. Dirk P. Mattson
Director of Research & Assessment
dirk.mattson@state.mn.us
Fax: (651) 582-8874

Fax and e-mail submissions must be clearly labeled in the subject line with "Questions on the Minnesota Assessments RFP." Inquiries pertaining to the scope of work should refer to the specific task number(s) under question. Questions must be received by the date and time given in the Table of Significant

Dates for Responders in Section 24. MDE reserves the right to refrain from responding to questions submitted after that date and time.

The question(s) must contain the following information, preferably in a table similar to the format below.

Page	RFP Section or Scope Task ID	Question
6	2.6	[Text of responder's question is presented here.]
8	2.7	[Text of responder's question is presented here.]

Other MDE personnel, other named reviewers, or other named observers are not allowed to discuss this project with responders before the proposal submission deadline. Contact with any of these personnel regarding this RFP could result in disqualification.

4.2 Responders' Teleconference

After reviewing the MDE responses to questions sent by the date and time given in the Table of Significant Dates for Responders in Section 24, MDE will entertain further questions about the RFP during a teleconference. These may be additional questions beyond those originally submitted via email/fax or requests for clarifications of MDE responses to the questions submitted via email/fax. The date and time of this responders' teleconference are provided in the Table of Significant Dates for Responders in Section 24.

MDE will provide connection information for the responders' teleconference in the addendum used to distribute MDE responses to questions. MDE reserves the right to have additional staff present for the conference call that are not listed as named evaluators so that the most accurate information can be provided and questions can be answered clearly. MDE also reserves the right to delay a response to a question for internal discussion and distribute its official response via email within a reasonable amount of time from the conclusion of the teleconference.

5.0 SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

5.1 Procedure for Submission

- All proposals must be sent to the following individual:

Dr. Dirk P. Mattson
Director of Research & Assessment
Minnesota Department of Education
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113-4266
Phone: (651) 582-1611

- Proposals are due by the date and time given in the Table of Significant Dates for Responders in Section 24.
- Proposals sent by fax or e-mail will not be considered.
- Late proposals will not be considered.
- Proposals are preferred to be received via a delivery service that requires a confirmation signature before release to MDE.
- Proposals must be signed for and released to a Research & Assessment staff member when delivered to MDE.
- Proposals cannot be left with the receptionist in the main lobby of the Department. The lobby receptionist will contact a Research & Assessment staff member to sign for and receive the proposals as they arrive.
- Prices and terms of the proposal as stated must be valid for the length of any resulting contract(s) and subsequent amendments.
- All costs incurred in responding to this RFP will be borne by the responder.

5.2 Packaging of Technical Proposal

- Submit one original and thirteen identical, signed paper copies of the Technical Proposal.
- An authorized member of the responding organization must sign all proposals in ink.
- Technical Proposals must be sealed in a mailing envelope or package with the Department's name and address and "Minnesota Assessments Proposal" clearly written on the outside.

5.3 Packaging of Cost Proposal

- Provide two copies of the Cost Proposal in a separate, sealed envelope that is clearly marked “Minnesota Assessments Cost Proposal” clearly written on the outside along with the responder's name and address.
- The Cost Proposal should reflect the Department’s fiscal year of July 1 to June 30.
- The Cost Proposals will not be opened until the evaluation of all Technical Proposals has been completed as described in Section 8.2.3 of this RFP.
- The final evaluation of each proposal will be on a “best value” basis, taking into account the quality of the technical proposal and the costs in the cost proposal as described in Section 8.3 of this RFP.

6.0 PROJECT COSTS

The Department has estimated the total costs of this project should not exceed \$121.4 million over the term of the project (the initial one-year plus four, one-year extension options) if all elements are enacted and no test reductions occur. The Department’s Fiscal Year is from July 1 – June 30.

	SY2007-08	SY2008-09	SY2009-10	SY2010-2011		Total
FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	
\$1,400,000	\$27,000,000	\$30,000,000	\$30,000,000	\$30,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$121,400,000

This contract spans a potential of five years. Note that this equates to four school year administrations of Minnesota assessments. The final year of the anticipated five-year contract does not include school year 2011-2012 (SY2011-2012) administration of Minnesota assessments. Fiscal year 2011 (FY11) includes item development and advisory panel meetings for field testing in the spring of 2012. The fiscal year 2012 (FY12) allocated funds includes July 2011 BST administration and reporting for the spring 2011 Minnesota Assessments. The final administration under this anticipated five-year contract would be the summer 2011 Basic Skills Test (or any GRAD assessments through August 31, 2011).

Project costs must be based on requirements set forth in this RFP and costs should cover the term of the Department’s fiscal year.

7.0 PROPOSAL SPECIFICATIONS

7.1 Technical Proposal Sections

Responders are required to follow the proposal format and content requirements detailed in this section.

Except for the checked columns in the Marked Scope of Work, the Technical Proposal must be presented in narrative format and demonstrate the responder's ability to meet all qualifications, requirements, and standards specified in this RFP. The proposal must be clearly organized and easy to follow. ALL pages of the proposal, including pages with charts and the Marked Scope of Work, must be numbered sequentially.

The proposal must use the section headings and numbering system used in the table below so that reviewers can easily identify the presence of required materials. The proposal must be submitted in this order and no additional sections may be included. **Use this order and these headings exactly. Use headings only when headings are listed alone. Use Scope of Work Section numbers when listed along with the heading.**

Do not attach pamphlets, letters of support (except from any proposed subcontractor), or other items that are not specifically requested. Clarity and brevity of narrative is encouraged. Do not exceed the page limits set forth in the table below. One page is considered one side of an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper. Two pages is considered the front and back of an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper.

Technical Proposal Sections	Page Limit
Cover Letter	2 pages
Table of Contents	As needed
Executive Summary	5 pages
Gantt Chart	As needed
Management and Staffing	10 pages
Marked Scope of Work	As needed
Scope of Work Narrative	
1.0 Project Planning & Communication	5 pages
2.0 Test Design	10 pages
3.0 Item Development	10 pages
4.0 Test Construction	10 pages
5.0 Materials Production	5 pages
6.0 Distribution & Collection	10 pages
7.0 Materials Processing	5 pages
8.0 Handscoring	10 pages
9.0 Scoring	5 pages
10.0 Standard Setting	10 pages
11.0 Reporting	10 pages
12.0 Technical Support and Analysis	15 pages
13.0 Technology Enhancements	10 pages
14.0 Formative Assessment	15 pages
15.0 Value-added Model	15 pages
16.1 MCA-III Mathematics	10 pages
16.2 MCA-III Science	5 pages
16.3 MCA-III Reading/Language Arts	5 pages
16.4 TEAELS Speaking Component	10 pages
16.5 TEAE-II & III Test Design	10 pages
16.6 Blind/Visually-Impaired Considerations	10 pages
16.7 On-line Initiative	10 pages
Related Organizational Experience and Capacity	10 pages
Performance Indicators	As needed
Appendices	As needed

Cost Proposal	Page Limit
Cover Sheet	1 page
Cost/Price Proposal	As outlined

7.1.1 Cover Letter

The Cover Letter must be signed, preferably in blue ink, by the individual qualified to make the offer to perform the work described. In the case of organizations, individuals signing this letter must indicate their position title and certify that they are authorized to make the offer on behalf of the organization. In addition, the Cover Letter must:

- Identify any proposed subcontractors and their primary duties.
- Present a short summary of the responder's qualifications and unique strengths related to project tasks.
- Be included in each copy of the Technical Proposal.
- Include the mailing address and fax number of the authorized Representative who signed the Cover Letter.

7.1.2 Table of Contents

The Table of Contents must identify, by page number, all technical proposal sections listed in Section 7.1 of this RFP.

7.1.3 Executive Summary

The Executive Summary must review the following:

- Present an overview of the plan for providing the services and products for the appropriate goal.
- Identify and discuss the key developmental issues to be faced in the implementation of the proposed work plan.
- Highlight in table format the responder's ability to fulfill all of the Criteria for Responsiveness to the RFP as listed in this document. Use a table format similar to the one below.

Fulfillment of Responsiveness Criteria

Criterion	Element	Y/N or Page(s)
1	ENTIRE SCOPE	Yes
2	INTENT TO RESPOND LETTER	Yes (12/5/06)
3	PERCENTAGE OF SOW A/B	Yes
4	"C" EXCEPTIONS	12,15,87
5	PEER REVIEW	3,8,12,22,25,27,35,49,51,55
6	PAGE LIMITS	Yes
7	ITEM MANAGEMENT SYSTEM	Enclosed CD
8	PMI-CERTIFIED SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER	58

7.1.4 Gantt Chart

A Gantt chart must be provided that depicts the responder's vision of the timeline for all major tasks and subtasks, including deliverables, key activities, and the person(s) directly responsible for achieving a successful assessment program in the spring 2008. The Gantt chart must include the tasks and activities to be undertaken to accomplish the purpose of the project and produce the required final products. Attachment 25.5 is the MDE Advisory Panel Schedule to aid in preparation of the Gantt chart. Keep in mind teacher committee members usually cannot leave their classrooms at the beginning or end of the school year. The chart must be organized using the numbering system and headings that are in this RFP's Scope of Work sections.

7.1.5 Management and Staffing

For a successful outcome, this project requires an effective management system that enables the responder to complete tasks on schedule and within budget. The management system must include clearly identified procedures for the following:

- Managing project personnel, subcontractors, and tasks
- Ensuring adherence to schedule and deadlines
- Ensuring high-quality products and outcomes
- Identifying potential problems early
- Maintaining close communication with the Department
- Controlling project expenditures

The Department retains the right to approve any changes to any of the following personnel assigned to the project:

1. Project Manager
2. Lead Psychometrician
3. Lead IT Manager
4. Lead Reading Content Specialist
5. Lead Mathematics Content Specialist
6. Lead Science Content Specialist
7. Lead ELL Content Specialist

List proposed staffing for each area below along with proposed time on task and specific duties. There must be sufficient detail to allow an evaluation of the person's competency, experience, and expertise. The proposal must include a chart that lists the total number of FTE assigned to this project using the staff listed for this project.

The responder should include a vita in the appendix of the proposal for each person named. This appendix must also include curricula vita for the responder's management team and other proposed professional staff, including subcontractors. The vita must clearly show years of experience by stating educational background and degrees, the beginning and ending dates for all positions, training, roles played in related projects, and publications. Primary areas of expertise must be clearly described. All staff must have qualifications appropriate for the tasks they are to perform. Vita should also include any credentials or experience related to work in the fields of English language learners or students with special needs – even if these two areas are not the primary role of the individual.

In the narrative for this section, include an organizational chart indicating reporting relationships, intra-communication and level of decision-making authority for each organizational level. Include a detailed communication plan, specifying your expectations of communication with the Department staff. This section may not exceed ten pages including the organizational chart; a bulleted list is preferred. Include the following:

- a. **Project Management:** For the project, identify the Senior Project Manager/Director, Project Manager/Coordinator(s) and Assistants, Customer Service Representative(s) and company officer supervising this area

Criterion #8 for Responsiveness – PMI

Certification:

The responder's Senior Project Manager must be Project Management Institute (PMI) certified on the date the proposal is submitted. Proposals not meeting this criterion shall be deemed "non-responsive" and not be evaluated by the reviewers for further consideration.

- b. **Item/Test Development:** For *each* subject (math, reading, writing, science, ELL), identify the Senior Item Developer, Item developer(s), Item editor(s), Graphic design/publication specialist(s) and company officer supervising this area
- c. **Psychometrics:** For the project, identify the Senior Psychometrician, Psychometrician(s) performing work, Statistical Analyst(s), and company officer supervising this area
- d. **Information Technology:** For the project, identify the Senior Programming Staff, Programmer(s), System Analyst(s), Online specialist(s), and company officer supervising this area
- e. **Logistics:** For the project, identify the Manager and/or senior staff of shipping/receiving, Manager and/or senior staff of scanning (Specify OMR and/or image scanning), and company officer supervising this area
- f. **Handscoring:** For *each* subject area (mathematics, reading, writing, science, ELL), name the staff assigned. Indicate whether scoring will be image- and/or paper-based. Include the Project Director(s), Scoring leader(s), and company officer supervising this area

A *company officer* is defined as a Divisional Vice President or other officer empowered to make high-level decisions quickly on behalf of the organization.

This section of the proposal must also identify all proposed subcontractors and their assigned duties.

Subsidiaries that are separately incorporated must be clearly identified as such and must be treated as subcontractors.

The responder must submit letters of agreement from proposed subcontractors.

7.1.6 Marked Scope of Work

Insert the marked Baseline Scope of Work as described in Section 2.1 of this RFP.

7.1.7 Scope of Work Narrative

Insert the narrative how the responder will accomplish the work in the Baseline Scope of Work as described in Sections 3.0 – 3.15 and their subsections of this RFP.

7.1.8 Additional Questions

Insert the responder's answers to the additional question presented in Sections 3.16.1 – 3.16.7 of this RFP.

7.1.9 Related Organizational Experience and Capacity

This section must *briefly* describe the responder's past experience in conducting projects similar to the contract applied for in the RFP. This section also requires the responder to describe its required hardware and software capacities.

7.1.10 Performance Indicators

The proposal must provide a list of all major errors that occurred in work associated with contracts over the past four years including significant rework of items, test forms, software deliverables that impacted schedules, costs, or quality of a testing program as well as any publicly acknowledge errors such as fines/penalties, and/or scoring/reporting problems. Please present in a table format.

MDE acknowledges that delays in performance as a result of a force majeure event does not constitute the breach

of the contract. The responder may propose language to this effect.

7.1.11 Attachments

This section must include the following completed documents:

- Affidavit of Noncollusion (Attachment 25.12)
- Affirmative Action Certification (Attachment 25.13)
- Certification Regarding Lobbying (Attachment 25.14)
- Location of Service Disclosure and Certification (Attachment 25.15)

Failure to include the required attachments may be an indication of non-compliance and the proposal may be rejected.

The State reserves the right to seek clarifications and waive any and all informalities.

7.2 Cost Proposal

The Cost Proposal shall be delivered in a separate, sealed envelope that is clearly marked as indicated within Section 5.3 of this RFP.

The Cost Proposal for this RFP is worth 30% of the total points available (240 points of the 800 points total).

The responder shall NOT package any non-cost proposal materials in the Cost Proposal package. The Department will not open a sealed Cost Proposal package for any reason during the Technical Proposal review process. Cost Proposals will be opened in the manner indicated in Section 8.2.3 of this RFP.

7.2.1 Cover Sheet

The first page of the Cost Proposal must be a Cover Sheet. The Cover Sheet must indicate the TOTAL amount

of the proposal for the overall contract (five years) without any cost breakdowns. The Cover Sheet must state the following:

"[Name of responder/organization submitting the proposal] proposes to conduct the work of the expected five-year contract for \$_____."

The resulting contract will be a Cost Reimbursement contract based on the Cost Proposal submitted and actual expenses documented for payment.

7.2.2 Cost/Price Proposal

The Cost Proposal must contain a detailed line-item budget for completion of the work outlined in the Technical Proposal using the spreadsheet provided by MDE (See Attachment 25.16).

7.2.3 Review of Cost Proposal

Minnesota uses the "Best Value" approach to select vendor. "Best Value" is quantified for the purposes of this RFP in Section 8.0 and its subsections.

8.0 EVALUATION

All proposals received by the deadline will be evaluated on best value (as defined in [Minnesota Statute Section 16C.06, subd. 6](#)) by representatives of the Minnesota Department of Education and its named designees. This evaluation will have three components, with the possibility of a fourth component if required.

8.1 Participants

8.1.1 Evaluators

All evaluators will sign a Conflict of Interest memo certifying they have no conflict of interest as an evaluator. This memo is provided as Attachment 25.17 for the reference of the responder. The following individuals will review and evaluate all proposals in their entirety.

None of the MDE staff listed in this review process has previous work history with a large-scale testing company.

If a substitution or elimination of a named reviewer is necessary, MDE shall use the same criterion as stated in the above paragraph. MDE will notify responders of the substitution(s) within a reasonable timeframe.

8.1.1.1 Minnesota Department of Education

Ms. Cheryl Alcaya
Acting Supervisor, Specialty & Technical
Innovations
Division of Research & Assessment

Ms. Kate Beattie
Project Manager, Program Management
& Quality Control
Division of Research & Assessment

Dr. Margaret Biggerstaff
Supervisor, Research, Reporting, and
Psychometrics
Division of Research & Assessment

Ms. Anita Dualeh
ELL Assessment Specialist, Specialty &
Technical Innovations
Division of Research & Assessment

Ms. Rosemary Heinitz
Math Assessment Specialist, Test
Development
Division of Research & Assessment

Dr. George Henley
Data Analyst, Research, Reporting, and
Psychometrics
Division of Research & Assessment

Ms. Patricia King
Director
Division of School Improvement

Dr. Dirk P. Mattson
Director
Division of Research & Assessment

Dr. Denise Roth
Reading Assessment Specialist, Test
Development
Division of Research & Assessment

8.1.1.2 MDE National Technical Advisory Committee

Dr. Susan Phillips

Dr. Roger Trent

8.1.2 Observer

The following individual will observe the evaluation process to ensure that the state has conducted a fair and unbiased evaluation of proposals.

Ms. Michelle Weber
Director
Division of Program Accountability and Improvement
Minnesota Department of Education

8.1.3 Technical Advisor of State Procurement Process

MDE reserves the right to consult with and request observation of processes and procedures related to State requirements of contract procurement by staff of the Minnesota Department of Administration during the course of this RFP process.

8.2 Process

Because of time and distance considerations, MDE reserves the right to hold teleconferences to allow those evaluators outside the Twin Cities metro area (e.g., National Technical Advisory Committee Members) to participate in the evaluation.

If circumstances require an evaluator(s) to be absent for a meeting, the meeting may still continue as long as

arrangements have been made to have the evaluator(s) documentation present at the meeting and the documentation remains in the custody of an observer or other appropriate custodian during the meeting.

8.2.1 Pass/Fail Criteria for Responsiveness to the RFP

In the first meeting of the evaluators, the group will receive an orientation to the review process from the Director of Research & Assessment and the Director of Program Accountability and Improvement. The tasks involved in this orientation include the following:

- Distribution of the proposals
- Distribution of the evaluation sheets
- Secure assignment of evaluator identification numbers
- Signature of state-required Conflict of Interest Memo (Attachment 25.17)
- Orientation to the review process

Evaluators independently will complete "Pass/Fail Criteria for Responsiveness to the RFP" (Attachment 25.18) after this meeting. Their evaluation forms shall be returned in sealed envelopes (or secure faxed) that include their evaluation numbers to the Director of Research & Assessment.

The Director of Research & Assessment shall open the sealed envelopes and review the evaluations in the presence of the Director of Program Accountability and Improvement or other appropriate staff member. At least three-fourths of the evaluators must agree that a proposal has met the pass/fail criteria to continue in the evaluation process. Those proposals that do not meet these criteria shall not advance for further consideration.

The Director of Research & Assessment shall notify the evaluators via email of those proposals that shall further be considered. In this email, they will be instructed to read the proposals in detail as outlined in 8.2.2.

8.2.2 Technical Proposal Evaluation

FIRST: Evaluators review proposals according to the point system on the rating form "Technical Proposal Evaluation" (Attachment 25.19). Each evaluator will separately evaluate all proposals in their entirety.

SECOND: Their evaluation forms shall be returned in sealed envelopes (or secure faxed) that include their evaluation numbers to the Director of Research & Assessment.

THIRD: The Director of Research & Assessment shall open the sealed envelopes and review the Technical Proposal Evaluations in the presence of the Director of Program Accountability and Improvement or other appropriate staff member. Each evaluator's points will be entered into a spreadsheet and crosschecked for accuracy. Each proposal will receive an average score from the total of all evaluators prior to opening the cost proposals and including them in the total points awarded.

The technical proposal evaluation total is the AVERAGE points awarded to the proposal from all evaluators. Thus, the total available points within the technical proposal to any responder are 560 points.

8.2.3 Cost Proposal

The evaluators and the observer will meet at MDE (and/or teleconference). At this meeting, they will receive copies of the following:

- Their own Pass/Fail Evaluation sheets
- Their own Technical Proposal Evaluation sheets
- The master spreadsheet tabulating Technical Proposal evaluations completed by the Director of Research & Assessment and the Director of Program Accountability and Improvement

Evaluators will be required to verify the following:

- Their Pass/Fail Evaluation was properly recorded on the Master Spreadsheet.
- Their Technical Proposal Evaluation was properly recorded on the Master Spreadsheet.

- Spreadsheet software correctly averaged the technical evaluation score for each responder.

Prior to this meeting, the Director of Research & Assessment shall open the sealed cost proposals in the presence of the Director of Program Accountability and Improvement. Each responder's cost proposal will be entered into the Master Spreadsheet according to the following formula and crosschecked for accuracy:

- The lowest priced proposal will receive the maximum number of 240 points (30% of the RFP total points of 800 – excluding WebEx presentation if necessary).
- The other proposals will then be scored in proportion to the lowest-priced proposal by –
 - dividing the dollar figure of the lowest proposal by the dollar figure of the responder being evaluated,
 - then taking that quotient and multiplying it by the number of points available for pricing.
- Points will also be deducted for cost cells left incomplete for work marked in columns A or B on the scope of work at a rate of two points per empty cell.
- If left blank, MDE will assume the costs are included in the total for that section.
- The resulting costing points will be added into the spreadsheet with the technical points, verified, and total scores will be computed.

Evaluators will be required to verify the following:

- The cost proposal calculation was properly applied.
- Spreadsheet software correctly computed the total score for each responder.

Each evaluator will certify that the cost proposal was calculated and applied correctly by completing the Cost Proposal Certification (Attachment 25.20).

If a highest-point total responder is at least 5% of the total available points above all other responders, then that highest-point total responder shall be selected to begin negotiations. Negotiations shall commence, and the WebEx presentation will not take place.

Negotiations will commence immediately with the top scorer. If satisfactory negotiations cannot be concluded within a reasonable time as determined by MDE, negotiations will commence with the next highest scorer.

If any other responder is within 5% of the total available points at the conclusion of Cost Proposal Evaluation, then the highest-point total responder – along with any other responders within 5% of the total available points – shall advance to the WebEx presentation.

8.2.4 WebEx Presentation (if necessary)

Responders shall be notified if they are advanced to the WebEx presentation. MDE will not divulge the point totals to any responder at this time.

The responder will make up to a 60-minute WebEx presentation to the evaluators. This presentation will be organized through and at the expense of the responder.

A minimum of four business days prior to the WebEx presentation, MDE will notify these responders of their interview time and date. The responder shall make the connection details known to the Director of Research & Assessment at least 48 hours prior to the presentation. The connection time must be at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled presentation time. At least 48 hours prior to the presentation, the Director of Research & Assessment will email these responders the same four questions which they must address within the 60 minutes. The responder may use the 60 minutes to address all four questions in any proportion of time allotment it chooses.

One of the named observers in this RFP shall keep the time for this presentation. The presentation will be no more than 60 minutes: the start time will be announced by MDE when all connections are ready, and MDE will discontinue its connection exactly 60 minutes later unless the presentation ends earlier.

Responders shall send no additional documentation for the WebEx presentation. All information must be presented either on screen through WebEx or orally in

the presentation. No follow-up materials may be sent after the presentation.

FIRST: Each evaluator will complete the rating form "WebEx Presentation Evaluation" (Attachment 25.21). Each evaluator will independently evaluate the presentation based on the four questions. The response to each question is worth 10 points.

SECOND: Their evaluation forms shall be returned in sealed envelopes (or secure faxed) that include their evaluation numbers to the Director of Research & Assessment.

THIRD: The Director of Research & Assessment shall open the sealed envelopes and review the WebEx Presentation evaluations in the presence of the Director of Program Accountability and Improvement.

The WebEx Presentation evaluation uses all points from all evaluators to be added to the responders' totals to this point: they shall not be averaged. Thus, the total available points to a responder in the WebEx presentation that may be added on to its previous total is 440 points (4 questions x 10 points x 11 evaluators). In the event the number of evaluators should change, this total would be adjusted accordingly.

Negotiations will commence immediately with the top scorer. If satisfactory negotiations cannot be concluded within a reasonable time as determined by MDE, negotiations will commence with the next highest scorer.

9.0 AFFIDAVIT OF NONCOLLUSION

Each responder must complete the attached Affidavit of Noncollusion and include it with the response.

10.0 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Responder must provide a list of all entities with which it has relationships that create, or appear to create, conflict of interest with the work that is contemplated in this request for proposals. The list

should indicate the name of the entity, the relationship, and a discussion of the conflict.

11.0 PROPOSAL CONTENTS

By submission of a proposal, Responder warrants that the information provided is true, correct and reliable for purposes of evaluation for potential contract award. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the award as well as subject the responder to suspension or debarment proceedings as well as other remedies available by law.

12.0 DISPOSITION OF RESPONSES

All materials submitted in response to this RFP become the property of the State and will become public record in accordance with Minnesota Statutes section 13.591 after the evaluation process is completed. Pursuant to the statute, completion of the evaluation process occurs when the government entity has completed negotiating the contract with the selected vendor. If the responder submits information in response to this RFP that it believes to be trade secret materials, as defined by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minn. Stat. §13.37, the responder must:

- Clearly mark all trade secret materials in its response at the time the response it submitted;
- Include a statement with its response justifying the trade secret designation for each item; and
 - Defend any action seeking release of the material it believes to be trade secret, and indemnify and hold harmless the State, its agents and employees, from any judgments or damages awarded against the State in favor of the party requesting the materials, and any and all costs connected with that defense. This indemnification survives the State's award of a contract. In submitting a response to this RFP, the responder agrees that this indemnification survives as long as the trade secret materials are in possession of the State. The State will not consider the prices submitted by the responder to be proprietary or trade secret materials. Responses to this RFP will not be open for public review until the state decides to pursue a contract and that contract is awarded.

13.0 CONTINGENCY FEES PROHIBITED

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 10A.06, no person may act as or employ a lobbyist for compensation that is dependent upon the result or outcome of any legislation or administrative action.

14.0 SAMPLE CONTRACT

You should be aware of the State's standard contract terms and conditions in preparing your response. A sample State of Minnesota Professional/Technical Services Contract is attached for your reference (Attachment 25.22). Much of the language reflected in the contract is required by statute. If you take exception to any of the terms, conditions or language in the contract, you must indicate those exceptions in your response to the RFP; certain exceptions may result in your proposal being disqualified from further review and evaluation. Only those exceptions indicated in your response to the RFP will be available for discussion or negotiation.

15.0 REIMBURSEMENTS

Reimbursement for travel and subsistence expenses actually and necessarily incurred by the contractor as a result of the contract will be in no greater amount than provided in the current "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the commissioner of Employee Relations. Reimbursements will not be made for travel and subsistence expenses incurred outside Minnesota unless it has received the State's prior written approval for out of state travel. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.

16.0 ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The responder warrants that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, and except as otherwise disclosed there are no relevant facts or circumstances which could give rise to organizational conflicts of interest. An organizational conflict of interest exists when, because of existing or planned activities or because of relationships with other persons, a vendor is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the State, or the vendor's objectivity in performing the contract work is or might be otherwise impaired, or the vendor has an unfair competitive advantage. The responder agrees that, if after award, an organizational conflict of interest is

discovered, an immediate and full disclosure in writing must be made to the Assistant Director of the Department of Administration's Materials Management Division which must include a description of the action which the contractor has taken or proposes to take to avoid or mitigate such conflicts. If an organizational conflict of interest is determined to exist, the State may, at its discretion, cancel the contract. In the event the responder was aware of an organizational conflict of interest prior to the award of the contract and did not disclose the conflict to the contracting officer, the State may terminate the contract for default. The provisions of this clause must be included in all subcontracts for work to be performed similar to the service provide by the prime contractor, and the terms "contract," "contractor", and "contracting officer" modified appropriately to preserve the State's rights.

17.0 PREFERENCE TO TARGETED GROUP AND ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS AND INDIVIDUALS

The Department of Administration has set a one-quarter of one percent (0.25%) subcontracting goal for this contract. Prime contractors are required to subcontract at least a one-quarter of one percent (0.25%) of their contract to certified Targeted Group businesses or individuals. A complete listing of certified Targeted Group businesses is available on the Materials Management Division website at www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us. This provision does not apply to prime contractors that are certified Targeted Group businesses.

In order for the proposal to be considered, a list of the Targeted Group businesses or individuals to be used and the percentage of use on this contract must be submitted with the proposal. The total percent to be subcontracted must be equal to or in excess of the stated goal.

Prime contractors may request a waiver from this subcontracting goal by submitting documented unsuccessful efforts to obtain certified subcontractors to the Materials Management Division, 112 Administration Building, 50 Sherburne Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55155.

18.0 HUMAN RIGHTS REQUIREMENTS

For all contracts estimated to be in excess of \$100,000, responders are required to complete the attached Affirmative Action Data page and return it with the response. As required by Minn. R. 5000.3600, "It is

hereby agreed between the parties that Minn. Stat. § 363A.36 and Minn. R.5000.3400 - 5000.3600 are incorporated into any contract between these parties based upon this specification or any modification of it. A copy of Minn. Stat. § 363A.36 and Minn. R.5000.3400 - 5000.3600 are available upon request from the contracting agency.”

19.0 CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Federal money will be used to pay for all or part of the work under the contract; therefore the responder must complete the Certification Regarding Lobbying and submit it as part of its proposal.

20.0 CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, INELIGIBILITY, AND VOLUNTARY EXCLUSION

Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion

The agency has determined that federal funds will be used to pay for all or part of the proposed contract; therefore prospective responders must certify the following, as required by the regulations implementing Executive Order 12549.

Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion -- Lower Tier Covered Transactions

Instructions for Certification:

1. By signing and submitting this proposal, the prospective lower tier participant is providing the certification set out below.
2. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was entered into. If it is later determined that the prospective lower tier participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.
3. The prospective lower tier participant shall provide immediate written notice to the person to which this proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective lower tier participant learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or had become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.

4. The terms *covered transaction, debarred, suspended, ineligible, lower tier covered transaction, participant, person, primary covered transaction, principal, proposal, and voluntarily excluded*, as used in this clause, have the meaning set out in the Definitions and Coverages sections of rules implementing Executive Order 12549. You may contact the person to which this proposal is submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.
5. The prospective lower tier participant agrees by submitting this response that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the department or agency with which this transaction originated.
6. The prospective lower tier participant further agrees by submitting this proposal that it will include this clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion--Lower Tier Covered Transaction," without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.
7. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that it is not proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals. Each participant may, but is not required to, check the List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Nonprocurement Programs.
8. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.
9. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 5 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is proposed for debarment under 48 C.F.R. 9, subpart 9.4, suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the federal government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transactions

1. The prospective lower tier participant certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.
2. Where the prospective lower tier participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

21.0 STATE OF MINNESOTA LOCATION OF SERVICES DISCLOSURE AND CERTIFICATION FORM

Each responder must complete the attached State of Minnesota Location of Service Disclosure and Certification Form (Attachment 25.15) and include it with the proposal.

22.0 INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

- A. Contractor shall not commence work under the contract until they have obtained all the insurance described below and the State of Minnesota has approved such insurance. All policies and certificates shall provide that the policies shall remain in force and effect throughout the term of the Contract.
- B. Contractor is required to maintain and furnish satisfactory evidence of the following insurance policies:
 1. **Worker's Compensation Insurance:** Contractor must provide Worker's Compensation insurance for all its employees and, in case any work is subcontracted, Contractor will require the subcontractor to provide Workers' Compensation insurance in accordance with the statutory requirements of the State of Minnesota, including Coverage B, Employer's Liability. Insurance **minimum** amounts are as follows:
 - \$100,000 – Bodily Injury by Disease per employee
 - \$500,000 – Bodily Injury by Disease aggregate
 - \$100,000 – Bodily Injury by Accident

2. Commercial General Liability: Contractor is required to maintain insurance protecting it from claims for damages for bodily injury, including sickness or disease, death, and for care and loss of services as well as from claims for property damage, including loss of use which may arise from operations under the Contract whether the operations are by the contractor or by a subcontractor or by anyone directly or indirectly employed under the contract. Insurance **minimum** amounts are as follows:

\$1,000,000 – per occurrence
\$2,000,000 – annual aggregate
\$2,000,000 – annual aggregate – Products/Completed Operations

The following coverages shall be included:

Premises and Operations Bodily Injury and Property Damage
Personal and Advertising Injury
Blanket Contractual Liability
Products and Completed Operations Liability
Other; please list _____
State of Minnesota named as an Additional Insured

3. Commercial Automobile Liability: Contractor is required to maintain insurance protecting the contractor from claims for damages for bodily injury, including sickness or disease, death, and for care and loss of services, as well as from claims for property damage including loss of use which may arise from operations under the Contract whether such operations were by the contractor or by a subcontractor or by anyone directly or indirectly employed under the contract. Insurance **minimum** amounts are as follows:

\$1,000,000 – per occurrence Combined Single limit for Bodily Injury and Property Damage

In addition, the following coverages should be included:

Owned, Hired, and Non-owned Automobile
State of Minnesota named as an Additional Insured

4. Professional/Technical, Errors and Omissions, and/or Miscellaneous Liability Insurance (if applicable)

Contractor is required to carry the following minimum amounts:

\$1,000,000 – per claim or event

\$1,000,000 – annual aggregate

Any deductible will be the sole responsibility of the Contractor and may not exceed \$10,000 without the written approval of the State.

The retroactive or prior acts date of such coverage shall not be after the effective date of this Contract.

This policy will provide coverage for all claims the contractor may become legally obligated to pay resulting from any actual or alleged negligent act, error, or omission related to Contractor's professional services required under the contract, and include an extended reporting period of a minimum of five (5) years following the completion of the work.

CONTRACTOR will be required to:

- Contractor's policy (ies) shall be primary insurance to any other valid and collectible insurance available to the State of Minnesota with respect to any claim arising out of this contract;
- Contractor will provide the State of Minnesota with thirty (30) days advance notice of cancellation, non-renewal, or reduction in limits of coverage or other material change;
- Contractor is responsible for payment of Contract related insurance premiums and deductibles;
- If Contractor is self-insured, a Certificate of Self-Insurance must be attached;
- Include legal defense fees in addition to its liability policy limits, with the exception of B.4 above; and
- Obtain insurance policies from an insurance company having an "AM BEST" rating of A-(minus); Financial Size Category

(FSC) VII or better and must be authorized to do business in the State of Minnesota.

- C. The State will reserve the right to immediately terminate the contract if the contractor is not in compliance with the insurance requirements and retains all rights to pursue any legal remedies against the contractor. All insurance policies must be open to inspection by the State, and copies of policies must be submitted to the State's Authorized Representative upon written request.

The successful responder is required to submit acceptable evidence of insurance coverage requirements prior to commencing work under the contract.

23.0 STATE CONTRACT LANGUAGE

The State's contract language includes the following terms and conditions summarized below. A sample state contract is attached (Attachment 25.22). Responders should be aware of the following when preparing proposals:

Compensation will be for all services performed, unless a specified payment schedule is mutually agreed upon. The state does not pay any funds in advance or make regular payments based on the passage of time; it only pays for services performed or work delivered after it is accomplished.

Payment is only made after the submission of an authorized invoice to the state, and the state must pay its invoices within 30 days of receipt, unless they are formally contested.

Reimbursement for travel and subsistence expenses actually incurred in performance of a contract is limited to the current Commissioner's Plan promulgated by the Commissioner of Employee Relations. Travel outside Minnesota must have received prior written approval of the agency Authorized Representative before it takes place. You can contact the Commissioner of Employee Relations to get a copy of this plan.

- No more than 90% of the full amount due under a contract may be paid until the final product(s) of the contract have been reviewed by the agency head and the agency has determined that the contractor has satisfactorily fulfilled all the terms of the contract.

- **Liability** -- The Contractor must indemnify, save, and hold the State, its agents, and employees harmless from any claims or causes of action, including attorney's fees incurred by the State, arising from the performance of this contract by the Contractor or the Contractor's agents or employees. This clause will not be construed to bar any legal remedies the Contractor may have for the State's failure to fulfill its obligations under this contract.

Much of the language reflected in the contract is required by statute. If you take exception to any of the terms, conditions or language in the contract, you must indicate those exceptions in your response to the RFP. Certain exceptions may result in your proposal being disqualified from further review and evaluation. Only those exceptions indicated in your response to the RFP will be available for discussion or negotiation.

24.0 SIGNIFICANT DATES FOR RESPONDERS

The following table includes all the significant dates related to the submission of the RFP. Responder action items are indicated in **CAPS**.

Event	Date	Time (Central Standard Time)
RFP published in State Register	November 13, 2006	8:00 a.m.
SUBMISSION OF QUESTIONS FROM POTENTIAL RESPONDERS	November 22, 2006	3:00 p.m.
MDE emails answers to questions	November 29, 2006	5:00 p.m.
INTENT TO RESPOND OR APPEAL OF REVIEW PROCEDURES	December 5, 2006	3:00 p.m.
RESPONDERS' TELECONFERENCE	December 6, 2006	10:00 a.m.
SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS	January 9, 2007	3:00 p.m.
Completion of evaluations (if no WebEx)	January 23, 2007	
Expected awarding of contract	January 24, 2007	
Contract executed	February 20, 2007	
Contract must be fully executed in time for work to begin as scheduled below		
Expected date for work to start	February 21, 2007	

25.0 ATTACHMENTS

- 25.1 Baseline Scope of Work
- 25.2 MDE's Timeline for ED Rolling Peer Review
- 25.3 GRAD Test Design
- 25.4 MDE Vendor Guide to Advisory Panels
- 25.5 MDE Advisory Panel Calendar
- 25.6 Minnesota Assessments Item Development Plan
- 25.7 MDE Guidelines for Test Construction
- 25.8 MDE Test Construction Procedures
- 25.9 MDE Assessments Materials List
- 25.10 MDE Retention Schedule
- 25.11 MDE Item Sampler Specifications (paper-based)
- 25.12 Affidavit of Noncollusion
- 25.13 Affirmative Action Certification
- 25.14 Certification Regarding Lobbying
- 25.15 Location of Service Disclosure and Certification
- 25.16 Cost Proposal Spreadsheet
- 25.17 Evaluator Conflict of Interest Memo
- 25.18 Pass/Fail Criteria for Responsiveness to the RFP
- 25.19 Technical Proposal Evaluation
- 25.20 Cost Proposal Certification
- 25.21 WebEx Presentation Evaluation
- 25.22 Sample Contract for Inclusion with Informal Solicitation or RFP