

RFP 25-005 - Scoring of Pilot and Field Tests

Questions & Answers Summary

- 1. If vendor does not have an individual with the title "Chief Administrative Officer" at their company, can vendor just ensure that they have an individual sign who has the authority to bind the company?**

Answer: Yes, an authorized individual can do so.

- 2. Are the machine-scannable answer documents custom formatted by NYSED?**

Answer: NYSED will use either the answer sheet shown in Attachment 3 or NYSED-developed and formatted answer sheets.

- 3. Is Attachment 3 Scorable Answer Sheet the only scannable form code that will be used by NYSED?**

Answer: Certain field tests (e.g., science) use NYSED-developed and formatted answer sheets. These are developed in Microsoft Word with bubble fields.

- 4. What format are the constructed response documents? Do they include tracking marks, document IDs, etc., that "could" lend them to be a scannable document?**

Answer: Depending on the content area, students will record their constructed responses within the test booklet or use a separate answer document (RFP page 10). NYSED creates these documents in Microsoft Word. The answer booklets have corner cut marks and page numbers on each page, in addition to an Alpha-numeric code that tells the subject area, form number, and field test year (i.e., ELSF-7XX-2024). If practicable, features to aid in scanning could be added.

- 5. Can a vendor create a scannable answer document to be used with the constructed response test books?**

Answer: This is not a service that NYSED is seeking to contract for in this RFP.

- 6. Are all of the machine-scannable answer documents and constructed response documents printed on 50-60 lb. paper (i.e., answer documents is very bright, most often 20-24 lb. opaque or occasionally 50 or 60 lb. opaque)?**

Answer: The typical specifications of the test booklets and NYSED-developed answer sheets are 60 lb. Finch Opaque Ink Jet Digital Paper. The machine scorable answer sheet shown in Attachment 3 is 60 lb. Mark Reflex.

- 7. Are there any accessible or accommodated versions of the audit materials?**

Answer: Section 5 requires a Contractor to provide SED with policies and procedures for that; we do not have additional guidance. The remainder of the section refers to NYSED requiring an audit that would be done by a third party and the substitution of the results of an independent auditor's audit of the Contractor's privacy and security practices that was conducted within the 12 months prior to the request.

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Article II Section 5 reads:

Right of Review and Audit.

Upon NYSED's request, Contractor shall provide NYSED with copies of its policies and related procedures that pertain to the protection of Information. In addition, NYSED may require Contractor to undergo an audit of its privacy and security safeguards, measures, and controls as they pertain to alignment with the requirements of New York State laws and regulations, NYSED's policies applicable to Contractor, and alignment with the NIST Cybersecurity Framework. Any audit required by NYSED must be performed by an independent third party at Contractor's expense and the audit report must be provided to NYSED. In lieu of being subject to a required audit, Contractor may provide NYSED with an industry standard independent audit report of Contractor's privacy and security practices that was issued no more than twelve months before the date that NYSED informed Contractor that it required Contractor to undergo an audit.

8. Are FT and PT items repeated across forms or all the items unique?

Answer: The FT and PT items are typically unique. Rarely, there may be a minimal number of items repeated on more than one form.

9. Attachment 4, bullet 5: Will the contractor be required to receive and return NYSED's locked boxes with shipments from the schools? And return them empty to NYSED?

Answer: The vendor will not be receiving lock boxes from the schools, as field test materials are shipped in cardboard boxes. The bullet in question pertains to transporting materials to rangefinding committee meetings, etc. Any time lock boxes are needed for secure shipments, the vendor will communicate with NYSED regarding the number of materials they will be sending, and NYSED will provide lockboxes. It is expected that lockboxes are returned to NYSED at the conclusion of the contract.

10. What is the file size limitation for emails?

Answer: 25MB. It is preferred that bids be received as one email with four attachments. However, a second email could be used if the attachments were to exceed that total.

11. In order for potential vendors to ensure successful scanning of the test materials on their equipment, minor updates to the materials may be required. We understand that the opportunity for changes to the test materials is limited, but will NYSED be open to working with the vendor to adjust paper weight and/or add the necessary information (e.g., barcodes, document IDs, T marks) to the booklets? This will enable more fair and open competition for this project across the assessment industry and will ensure that the State receives the highest quality services at the most reasonable cost.

Answer: NYSED creates these documents in Microsoft Word. The answer booklets have corner cut marks and page numbers on each page, in addition to an Alpha-numeric code that tells the subject area, form number, and field test year (i.e., ELSF-7XX-2024). If practicable, features to

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aid in scanning could be added. Paper specification is not something that can be changed, as NYSED prints the materials in-house.

- 12. Can it be assumed that the number of rangefinding days can be negotiated upon contract award or is it the intent of NYSED to keep rangefinding for all subjects no longer than 5 days?**

Answer: Bidders should use the information in Attachment 2 in developing their proposals.

- 13. Does NYSED have different expectations for the composition/makeup of pilot rangefinding/training materials than for field test rangefinding/training materials?**

Answer: No.

- 14. Would NYSED please share the expectations for the composition/makeup of both pilot and field test rangefinding and training materials?**

Answer: Rangefinding materials are intended to facilitate the provision of feedback to the vendor that will inform the scoring of the field tests. To prepare for the rangefinding meetings, the vendor will identify a sample of student responses to every constructed-response and essay question. Each sample set should include sufficient student papers to illustrate the multitude of ways that students responded to the question, including both correct and incorrect answers. In past years, NYSED has found that samples of 20-40 papers are necessary to meet this goal, although the number of needed papers is dependent on the point-value of the question. The vendor will need to bring materials to the Rangefinding site as appropriate to the needs of each content area. This will include the test forms, rubrics/scoring guides, and other scoring materials identified by NYSED.

For scoring, the training aspects are left to the vendor with the assumption that procedures will be robust and produce accurate and reliable results. NYSED does dictate that, for each item, the vendor will record anecdotal reports of how students appear to relate to the stimulus, any problems the students appear to have in undertaking the task, items that were misunderstood, and comments on the effectiveness of the training materials.

- 15. Is NYSED open to the vendor printing and distributing the test materials to schools as a time saver for NYSED? If so, how should that option be costed?**

Answer: This is not a service that NYSED is seeking to contract for in this RFP.

- 16. Can NYSED confirm that the multiple-choice option will only be in the machine-scorable answer sheet, and not also embedded in any of the Regents pilot test booklets?**

Answer: NYSED will use either the answer sheet shown in Attachment 3 or NYSED-developed and formatted answer sheets; however, none of the multiple-choice answers will be embedded in the test booklets. Any questions embedded in the test booklets will be considered a constructed response item.

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- 17. Please confirm that no Education Specialists are expected to participate in rangefinding meetings. And should vendors' costs assume that every committee member will receive an honorarium and travel expense reimbursement?**

Answer: Bidders should assume that every committee member will receive an honorarium and travel expense reimbursement, regardless of status as an Education Specialist (i.e., educator paid by NYSED for work on state assessment development). If Education Specialists participate, it is expected that the vendor will be responsible for their costs, consistent with other participants.

- 18. Can NYSED confirm what elements are part of the answer documents design (corner cut marks, barcodes, page numbers, etc.)?**

Answer: The answer booklets have corner cut marks and page numbers on each page, in addition to an Alpha-numeric code that tells the subject area, form number, and field test year (i.e., ELSF-7XX-2024)

- 19. Does NYSED require that used materials be held in storage for an expected period of time if they are not immediately sent to NYSED? If so, how long should they be stored?**

Answer: NYSED does not have a requirement for storage once the work is completed. Upon approval from NYSED, the vendor will securely destroy all used and unused test booklets and answer documents. Should NYSED request, the vendor will arrange for return shipment of the used test booklets, at NYSED's expense.

- 20. Please confirm if the intention is for the physical test materials to be returned to NYSED.**

Answer: Upon approval from NYSED, the vendor will securely destroy all used and unused test booklets and answer documents. Should NYSED request, the vendor will arrange for return shipment of the used test booklets, at NYSED's expense.