**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFP SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

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| **RFP NUMBER AND TITLE:** | 202406122 - Statewide Reading and Mathematics Assessments in Grades 3 – 8 and High School |
| **RFP ISSUED BY:** | Department of Education |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | October 3, 2024 |
| **QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | October 10, 2024 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | November 14, 2024 no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **PROPOSALS DUE TO:** | [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov) |

**Provided below are submitted written questions received and the Department’s answer.**

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| **1** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I  p.6 | Do you plan on awarding one vendor for the math and reading assessment or will you award one vendor for math and one vendor for reading? |
| **Answer** | |
| The Maine Department of Education’s (Maine DOE) Office of Federal Programs/Assessment Team will make one award to one vendor for a statewide reading and mathematics assessment in grades 3 through 8 and high school as defined in this Request for Proposal (RFP) document. | |

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| **2** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section A. 8a (page 10) | Can the Maine DOE provide all bidders count totals upon which to cost for comparability of price for the paper-based forms of standard print, large print, and braille? |
| **Answer** | |
| The number of paper-based forms required, including braille, large-print and standard print, varies from year-to-year dependent upon student need. In Spring 2024 those counts were as follows:  Braille – 3  Large-print – 12  Standard print - 4 | |

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| **3** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section II and Appendix E | Is it the intent of the RFP for prospective vendors to respond to each bullet point in section Part II, Scope of Services to be Provided, or respond with our solution in Appendix E? Or both? |
| **Answer** | |
| Bidders should respond with the proposal via Appendix E. | |

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| **4** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section B.3.c.(4) (page 11) | Can the Maine DOE provide the threshold value referenced in this requirement? Should the bidder expect to address future requirement languages through a contract amendment? If not, can the Maine DOE provide a count of new languages for all bidders upon which to cost for comparability of price? |
| **Answer** | |
| Currently, the state assessment in math and reading is not available in any language other than English. Maine’s population of students identified as multilingual learners consistently continues to grow. As our ML population increases and diversifies, Maine needs an assessment vendor who can proactively meet the need for translated assessment forms, if it arises in the future.  Maine DOE is seeking a vendor that can provide translations of the assessment into any languages other than English most commonly spoken by Maine Families, if and when determined necessary per Maine DOE and/or the State’s ESSA plan. Information about Maine’s ESSA State Plan can be located at: [ME\_Amendment \_VF\_2.23.2024.pdf (maine.gov)](https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/ME_Amendment%20_VF_2.23.2024.pdf)  More information about home languages of Maine’s multilingual learners and their families can be found at: [Multilingual Learner (English Learner) Dashboard | Department of Education (maine.gov)](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Multilinguallearnerdatadashboard) | |

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| **5** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section B.3.c.(4) (page 11) | The text reads “the Awarded Bidder will provide the assessment in the required language/s other than English” but this is within the section on Reporting. Is the expectation that reports may be needed in other languages or the assessment itself? What are the required languages? |
| **Answer** | |
| Currently, the state assessment in math and reading is not available in any language other than English. Maine’s population of students identified as multilingual learners consistently continues to grow. As our ML population increases and diversifies, Maine needs an assessment vendor who can proactively meet the need for translated assessment forms, if it arises in the future.  Currently, Maine DOE provides Individual Student Report (ISR) templates in the nine languages other than English most commonly spoken by Maine families.  Maine DOE is seeking a vendor that can provide translations of the assessment and as necessary the reports into any languages other than English most commonly spoken by Maine Families, if and when determined necessary per Maine DOE and/or the State’s ESSA plan. Information about Maine’s ESSA State Plan can be located at: [ME\_Amendment \_VF\_2.23.2024.pdf (maine.gov)](https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/ME_Amendment%20_VF_2.23.2024.pdf)  More information about home languages of Maine’s multilingual learners and their families can be found at: [Multilingual Learner (English Learner) Dashboard | Department of Education (maine.gov)](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Multilinguallearnerdatadashboard) | |

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| **6** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section B.8.a. & b. (page 13) | Can the Maine DOE provide the number of standard setting activities expected in this contract term with all possible extensions including what content and which year(s) for all bidders upon which to cost for comparability of price? |
| **Answer** | |
| An initial standard setting following Year 1 will be required. Additionally, subsequent standards validation or validations may become necessary at the determination of Maine DOE. Standards validation may become necessary periodically through events such as, but not limited to:   * changes to the achievement level descriptors * updates to academic content standards * fluctuations in the item pool | |

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| **7** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section B.8.a. & b. (page 13) | For equity in cost proposals, what is the daily stipend rate for educators participating in Standard Setting activities? |
| **Answer** | |
| The daily stipend rate for educators participating in Standard Setting activities is $150 per day, and additionally the cost of a substitute being reimbursed to the educator’s Maine SAU. The cost of a substitute teacher to the SAU is between $175-$200 per day. | |

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| **8** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section C.8.a & b (page 14) | This section on Development of Assessment Items, including educator involvement, is within section C on Through Year Interim Assessment. Is the intent that item development (and alignment to Maine standards) and educator involvement is for the interim assessment, the summative assessment, or both? |
| **Answer** | |
| The intent is that item development and educator involvement is for both the interim and summative components of the assessment. If an existing item bank is proposed, verification of alignment to Maine’s academic content standards will be required. With the development of future items to refresh and grow the bank for both the interim and summative items, the involvement of Maine educators in the item review process for content and potential bias will be necessary. | |

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| **9** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section C.8.a.ii (page 14) | Is the refresh rate only needed for the interim bank, or does MDE also want that for the summative? |
| **Answer** | |
| Development and refresh of assessment items will be necessary for both the interim and summative components of the assessment. | |

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| **10** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section C.8.a (page 14) | “Provide evidence of assessment item alignment with Maine’s content standards…” For equity in cost proposals, does the Department wish bidders to cost for an external alignment study? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, an external alignment study should be included in the Bidders’ proposals. | |

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| **11** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section C.8.a.v (page 14) | “Costs associated with item development”: Does Maine DOE expect to own items developed under this contract? Is this intended for the Interim (section C) or should it be in the section on summative (section B)? |
| **Answer** | |
| Bidders should include in the proposal a cost comparison of owning items versus not owning items, for section B only. | |

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| **12** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section C.8.b.(i) (page 14) | If a responder expects to propose an existing item bank, can the MDE further describe its vision of including a minimum of three (3) educators per grade level in the phase of item development? |
| **Answer** | |
| If an existing item bank is proposed, verification of alignment to Maine’s academic content standards will be required. With the development of future items to refresh and grow the item bank, the involvement of Maine educators in the item review process for content and potential bias will be necessary. | |

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| **13** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section C.8.b.(i) (page 14) | What is the minimum number of items that are expected in the item development process? Does MDE require these items to be owned by the State of Maine at the end of the contract term? |
| **Answer** | |
| Maine DOE is open to a range of proposed items in the development process, and Bidders shall determine how to respond to these requirements. Sufficient items to replace any released items would need to be developed. Bidders should include in the proposal a cost comparison of owning items versus not owning items, for section B only. | |

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| **14** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section C.8.b.(i) (page 14) | For equity in cost proposals, does the Department expect the vendor to pay stipends to educators? If so, what is the daily amount? |
| **Answer** | |
| Bidders’ proposals should include the cost of stipends to educators and reimbursement for substitutes to the Maine SAU. The daily stipend rate for educators participating in Standard Setting activities is $150 per day, and additionally the cost of a substitute being reimbursed to the educator’s district. The cost of a substitute teacher to the district is between $175-$200 per day. | |

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| **15** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section F.6 (page 15) | Is the MDE using “Diagnostic” in this case as synonymous with the interim assessment of this RFP? If not, would the MDE further articulate this data management requirement? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, Maine DOE is using diagnostic in this case as synonymous with the interim assessment of this RFP. | |

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| **16** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section G.2.(ii) (page 16) | Does MDE hold its national TAC meetings virtually or in-person for costing purposes? Is payment and expenses of TAC members an expense expected of the bidder in this contract? |
| **Answer** | |
| The Maine DOE has implemented Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings both virtually and in-person. There are points when holding the TAC convening in person is more beneficial, based on the stage of program development and necessary topics. Bidders should include costing for both in-person and virtual convenings of the TAC. | |

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| **17** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section H.3.g. (page 17) | Would the MDE further describe the use cases and expectations of payment processing with PayMaine II with a COTS-SaaS Product? |
| **Answer** | |
| Secure interface with Treasury payment portal, PayMaine, to capture payments and/or refunds. Currently the system allows two forms of payment: credit card and ACH debit. Information captured for payments would include but not limited to: Customer Information, Payment Information and Invoice/Product Information | |

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| **18** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section B.1.a/B.2.a (page 10,11) and | Would MDE please clarify if the standards to be assessed are those found in the ALD Explorer Tool (Common Core) or the Maine Learning Results? |
| **Answer** | |
| The Maine Learning Results are the standards to be assessed. Please note that the current revision of the Maine Learning Results were revised from the Common Core and remain closely aligned. | |

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| **19** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix E Section B.2 | In the statement in Appendix E Section B.2, please clarify the expectations around which standards are included as “reading standards only” and which would be considered “other content area standards.” |
| **Answer** | |
| For more information about Maine’s English Language Arts Standards in reading, please reference: [Reading Standards | Department of Education (maine.gov)](https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/content/ela/standards/reading). | |

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| **20** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section B Summative Assessment, page 11, and Section C Through Year Interim Assessment, page 13 | Development of assessment items is described for the Through Year Interim Assessment, but not for the Summative Assessment.  Does the Department expect similar assessment item development for the summative assessment, especially to support the required released item rate under section B.2.b (page 11)? |
| **Answer** | |
| Development of assessment items will be necessary for both the interim and summative components of the assessment, if the Bidder is not proposing an existing item bank aligned to Maine’s academic content standards. | |

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| **21** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix E, Section C.6 Through-Year Interim Assessment – Scoring and Scaling, page 44 | Please confirm that the requirement should read “Below discuss the Scope of Services referenced in C.6. Through Year Interim Assessment, **Scoring** **and Scaling**” instead of “Below discuss the Scope of Services referenced in C.6. Through Year Interim Assessment, **Training and Support**.’ |
| **Answer** | |
| The first sentence in Section C.6 should reference “Scoring and Scaling” and not “Training and Support.” | |

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| **22** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix E, Section D. Training and Professional Development, page 44 | Should the requirement be edited to remove mention of “Summative Assessment, Time Schedule?” |
| **Answer** | |
| Section D Training and Professional Development should read, “Below discuss the Scope of Services referenced in D. Training and Professional Development. Response should be no longer than **three (3) pages.”** | |

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| **23** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix I, State Administration Support, page 49 | Please provide situational examples that would require vendors, at no extra cost to the Department, to update the Statewide Reading and Mathematics Assessments in Grades 3 through 8 and High School to synchronize with new program requirements of the State. |
| **Answer** | |
| Per Maine statute, Maine’s content standards are reviewed on a five-year cycle and depending upon the review committee’s determination, may be revised or updated. Recognizing states are required to administer an assessment that is aligned to state academic content standards, the assessment may also need to be revised in order to demonstrate said alignment. | |

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| **24** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II.B.2, page 11 | How many Maine-owned items are in the current bank for the summative assessments for each grade/subject? |
| **Answer** | |
| There are currently no Maine-owned items in the item bank for summative assessment. | |

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| **25** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II.B.4., pages 11-12 | Please confirm that paper accommodated materials are required for the spring summative assessment.  If confirmed, please provide specifications for the paper/pencil test forms required for the summative assessments so that bidders are costing consistently.   * Material types (e.g., standard paper form, Braille, large-print) * Material quantities (e.g., quantities of each material type) * Material specifications (e.g., page counts) |
| **Answer** | |
| Paper accommodated materials would be needed for all administrations of the interim and summative assessments. The number of paper-based forms required, including braille, large-print and standard print, varies from year-to-year dependent upon student need. In Spring 2024 those counts were as follows:   * Braille – 3 * Large-print – 12 * Standard print - 4 | |

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| **26** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II.B.3.c.4, page 11 | In what languages (other than in English) are the assessments currently provided?  Are any reporting materials provided in this language?  If no languages besides English are currently provided, what guidance does the Department have for vendors for costing purposes to ensure comparable bids? |
| **Answer** | |
| Currently, the state assessment in math and reading is not available in any language other than English. Maine’s population of students identified as multilingual learners consistently continues to grow. As our ML population increases and diversifies, Maine needs an assessment vendor who can proactively meet the need for translated assessment forms, if it arises in the future.  Currently, Maine DOE provides Individual Student Report (ISR) templates in the nine languages other than English most commonly spoken by Maine families.  Maine DOE is seeking a vendor that can provide translations of the assessment and as necessary, the reports into any languages other than English most commonly spoken by Maine families, if and when determined necessary per Maine DOE and/or the State’s ESSA plan. Information about Maine’s ESSA State Plan can be located at: [ME\_Amendment \_VF\_2.23.2024.pdf (maine.gov)](https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/ME_Amendment%20_VF_2.23.2024.pdf)  More information about home languages of Maine’s multilingual learners and their families can be found at: [Multilingual Learner (English Learner) Dashboard | Department of Education (maine.gov)](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Multilinguallearnerdatadashboard) | |

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| **27** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II. 5., page 12 | What are the other Student Information Systems used within the State? |
| **Answer** | |
| The following five Student Information System vendors are currently known to be working with Maine SAUs.  There may be others SIS systems in limited use and there are very small SAUs in Maine with no SIS.   * Wicked Good Software * PowerSchool Group LLC * Infinite Campus, Inc * Edupoint Educational Systems, LLC * Rediker Software | |

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| **28** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II.C.3.b., page 13 | Please provide specifications for the paper/pencil test forms required for the interim assessments so that bidders are costing consistently.   * Material types (e.g., standard paper form, Braille, large-print) * Material quantities (e.g., quantities of each material type for fall, quantities of each material type for winter) * Material specifications (e.g., page counts) |
| **Answer** | |
| The number of paper-based forms required, including braille, large-print and standard print, varies from year-to-year dependent upon student need. In Spring 2024 those counts were as follows:   * Braille – 3 * Large-print – 12 * Standard print - 4 | |

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| **29** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II.C.8.a.ii, page 14 | What are the department’s expectations for item refresh rates for the interim assessments? |
| **Answer** | |
| Maine DOE is open to a range of proposed item refresh rates for interim assessments, and Bidders shall determine how to respond to these requirements. | |

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| **30** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II.C.8.a.v, page 14 | How many Maine-owned items are in the current bank for the interim assessments for each grade/subject? |
| **Answer** | |
| There are currently no Maine-owned items in the item bank for interim assessment. | |

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| **31** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II. H.1.a and vi, page 16 | Please provide more detail on the expectations for migration of legacy data. What is the intent behind having legacy data included in the system if a new assessment is being offered? What specific legacy data needs to be migrated?  How many years? |
| **Answer** | |
| The intent of legacy data would be to provide Maine SAUs the opportunity to measure performance over time as applicable. The bidder should include costing with and without migration of legacy data of up to three years. The legacy data would need to be both achievement and growth data. | |

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| **32** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part III.C.3.b, page 24 | Under the File 1 requirements, it says to include Appendix A (Proposal Cover Page), Appendix B (Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification), and all required eligibility documents stated in Part IV. Section 1.    Part IV. Section 1 includes references to both appendices, but there are not any additional requirements provided in that section. What are the eligibility documents the Department is referring to? |
| **Answer** | |
| There is no eligibility documents required for this RFP. | |

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| **33** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part III.C.3.b, page 24 | Under File 4 requirements, it says that a PDF is preferred. Please confirm the Department is asking for Appendix F (Cost Proposal) in a PDF format rather than the Excel file. |
| **Answer** | |
| The Department will accept Appendix F as PDF format only. | |

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| **34** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part III.C.3.b, page 24 | Under File 4 requirements, it says to include Appendix F (Cost Proposal Form) and all required information and attachments stated in Part IV. Section IV.    In Part IV. Section IV, there are no additional requirements or attachments other than Appendix F (Cost Proposal Form). What additional attachments is the Department referring to? |
| **Answer** | |
| The Department is requesting only Appendix F, and no additional attachments are required. | |

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| **35** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part IV, page 25 | What are the Department’s preferences for vendors submitting confidential/proprietary information (e.g., sample items, company financials for a private company) in their proposals?  Should they submit a redacted version of the proposal that removes this information? |
| **Answer** | |
| Please ensure any information the Bidder considers proprietary is clearly labeled as such. In addition, a redacted version may also be submitted. | |

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| **36** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix E. Section H, page 45 | There is no page limit listed for Section H. Technical Requirements. Please confirm there is no page limit for this section. |
| **Answer** | |
| There is no page limit for Section H Technical Requirements. | |