

# Northampton County Schools

PO Box 158, Jackson, NC 27845

## Advertised Bid No: 0100

### District Benchmark and Formative Assessment Services

The Northampton County Schools will accept sealed bid proposals in the Office of Testing & Accountability, subject to the attached conditions, until **August 27, 2021, at 12:00 PM** Eastern Standard Time for the acquisition of the products and/or services described below.

### District Benchmark and Formative Assessment Services

The Company/Vendor must submit bid proposals to:

**Northampton County Schools  
Office of Testing & Accountability  
ATTENTION: Dr. Amy L. Draper, Testing & Accountability  
PO Box 158  
Jackson, NC 27845**

The Company/Vendor may submit direct inquiries to:

**Dr. Amy L. Draper**  
[drapera@northampton.k12.nc.us](mailto:drapera@northampton.k12.nc.us)

To prevent opening by unauthorized individuals, all copies of the proposal must be sealed in the package. The following must be clearly typed on a label affixed to the package in a clearly visible location:

PROPOSAL, SUBMITTED IN RESPONSE TO  
**ADVERTISED BID No. 0100**  
August 27, 2021 at 12:00 PM  
ATTENTION: **Dr. Amy L. Draper**

The Northampton County Schools School Board reserves the right to accept or reject any part of a bid, any and all bids and waive formalities.

If the agency is closed for any reason, including but not limited to: acts of God, strikes, lockouts, riots, acts of war, epidemics, governmental regulations superimposed after the fact, fire, earthquakes, floods, or other natural disasters (the "Force Majeure Events"), which closure prevents the opening of bids at the advertised date and time, all bids received shall be publicly opened and read aloud on the next business day that the agency shall be open and at the previously advertised time. The new date and time of the bid opening, as determined in accordance with this paragraph, shall not be advertised, and all bidders, upon submission of a bid proposal, shall be deemed to have knowledge of and shall have agreed to the provisions of this paragraph. Bids shall be received by the agency until the new date and time of the bid opening as set forth herein. The agency shall not be held responsible for the receipt of any bids for which the delivery was attempted and failed due to the closure of the agency as a result of a Force Majeure Event. Each bidder shall be required to ensure the delivery and receipt of its bid by the agency prior to the new date and time of the bid opening.

For Northampton County Schools Use Only	
Date Received	Time Received
Received By (Print)	Received By (Signature)

**Northampton County Schools**  
**Advertised Bid No: 0100**

SECTION I

Provide the following information regarding the person responsible for the completion of this bid proposal. This person will be the individual that the Northampton County Schools should contact for questions and/or clarifications.

<b>Company/Vendor</b>	
Organization Name	Federal Tax ID Number
Contact Person	Phone Number
Physical Address	Mailing Address
E-mail Address	Fax Number
<p>I, hereby, declare that the information provided in this bid proposal is active, valid and a full disclosure of requested information. I am fully authorized to represent the organization listed above, to act on behalf of it, and to legally bind it in a matter related to this bid proposal.</p> <p>Subject to the acceptance by the Northampton County Schools, the Company/Vendor acknowledges that by submitting a bid proposal and signing in the space indicated below, the vendor is contractually obligated to comply with all items in this bid advertisement. If no Proposal Exception Form is included, the company/vendor indicates that there are no exceptions to the bid proposal being submitted.</p> <p>The Company/Vendor further certifies that the organization represented here is an authorized dealer in good standing of the products/services included in this bid proposal.</p>	
Name	Title
Authorized Signature	Date

**Configuration Summary**

In 100 words or less, provide a summary of the main components of products/services offered in this proposal.

## SECTION II

### PROPOSAL GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

This is an open and competitive bid process.

#### Schedule of Bid Advertisement Activities

ACTIVITY	DATE
Advertisement	August 12, 2021
Bid Proposals Opened	August 13, 2021
Notification of Award by	Following the next school board meeting

The proposal submission must be sealed and consist of one (1) complete original (marked) bid proposal and three (3) copies of the proposal. Proposals must be mailed or hand-delivered with the following label in a clearly visible location:

PROPOSAL, SUBMITTED IN RESPONSE TO  
ADVERTISED BID No. 0100  
August 27, 2021 at 12:00 PM  
ATTENTION: Dr. Amy L. Draper

Proposals submitted electronically or by facsimile (fax) will not be accepted.

The Northampton County Schools will not be responsible for mail delays or lost mail. Therefore, it is suggested that mailed bid proposals be sent as certified mail with a return receipt guarantee.

All proposals must be received by the Northampton County Schools' Office of Testing & Accountability no later than **August 27, 2021 at 12:00 PM** Eastern Standard Time. Any bid proposals received subsequent to the specified date and time will not be accepted and will remain unopened on file for a period of 90 days.

The bid proposal must be signed by a company official authorized to bind the organization to its provisions.

Receipt or acceptance of a proposal does not imply commitment or obligation on the part of the Northampton County Schools to fund any bid proposal submitted.

#### Pricing

The price quoted in the proposal should be inclusive. Quoted prices should include applicable fees, maintenance costs, professional development as well as a detailed list of excluded fees with a complete explanation of the nature of the fees. The Northampton County Schools is seeking proposals for one (1) year as well as a three (3) year proposal. The Northampton County Schools will provide tax exemption certificates for state and federal taxes when applicable.

All bids should include item unit prices and total prices. Discrepancies between unit price included in bid proposal and total prices extension will be resolved by considering the unit price as binding and will adjust the total price accordingly. The Northampton County Schools reserves the right to accept bid proposals on the basis of individual line item or total bid price, whichever will provide the maximum benefit to the school district.

**Standard of Quality**

Programs and features that refer specifically to certain educational companies are used to convey to prospective bidders the desired feature. However, prospective bidders may submit features and/or programs in lieu of those that may be mentioned, provided that such program or feature is similar in design and purpose and equal in quality unless otherwise indicated. Complete descriptions and specifications must be included for all substitutions. The Northampton County Schools will be the sole judge as to whether or not the program or features offered are equal to that specification.

**Right to Adjust or Reject Bid Proposals**

The Northampton County Schools reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals of any company or vendor and waive formalities. Furthermore, the Northampton County Schools reserves the right to adjust quantities of materials/resources involved under any item in accordance with the unit prices submitted as part of the proposal.

All awards will be based upon availability of funds. The Northampton County Schools reserves the right to terminate or modify any part of this procurement process at any time and for any reason; to award one (1) contract or multiple contracts; to negotiate changes; to make no awards; and to issue new and/or revised policies and clarifications at any time. If it becomes necessary to revise any part of the advertised bid, addenda will be provided to all companies/vendors who received the original advertised bid packet through written communication delivered by the United States Postal Service and/or by e-mail.

**Delivery of Services**

All programmatic components and services to be furnished shall be installed on or before September 15, 2021.

**Presentations**

Vendors may be required to make an oral presentation to the Northampton County Schools evaluators if clarification of a bid proposal is necessary to make a proper evaluation. A company's original bid proposal cannot be changed in any aspect as a result of an oral presentation. The oral presentation is only intended to provide an opportunity for vendors to clarify specific portions of their proposal. Oral presentations will be arranged at the discretion of the Northampton County Schools and will be by invitation only.

**References**

References from three (3) K-12 educational institutions currently being serviced for which comparable products or services have been provided and/or performed must be included in the proposal. The reference list must include the organizations' names, contact persons, addresses, and phone numbers.

**Evaluation and Awarding of Bid**

The bid award will be based on quality of response, company/vendor qualifications and references, proposal plan, and cost with priority given to best values considering price, conformance to specifications, and ability to deliver products, features, and services within the allotted time-frame. All submitted proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by school district officials who have a legitimate interest in the products and/or services.

All prospective vendors will be notified of the decision regarding the bid award.

**Period of Performance**

Offerer agrees to supply services and items contained in this proposal for a period beginning September 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, or July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023 based on the decision by the Northampton County Schools to go with a one (1) year agreement or a two (2) year agreement, with an option to renew for three (2) additional years upon mutual agreement of both parties.

## SECTION III

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### **Web-Based ELA and Mathematics Assessment and Instruction Program Specifications**

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The Northampton County Schools is seeking a vendor that will assist the district in development and administration of its summative and formative assessment programs in ELA and mathematics for grades K-8, science grades 5 and 8, Algebra I, Biology, US History, and English II, and cost options for ACT Test Prep Assessments. These tests will be based on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and must be fully aligned to them. Northampton County Schools is requesting that each interested vendor prepare a response to this proposal in the following manner:

Design of the Assessment Program

Development of New Items and Test Banks

Online Assessment and Technology Delivery System

Test Administration

Production of Support Materials

Processing of Scoring of Test Materials

Psychometric Analysis

Reporting

Training

Customer Support

Management of the Assessment Program

Cost Proposal Format

Northampton County Schools' primary goal with respect to test design is ensuring that the assessments measure student mastery of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, and accomplishes this in the most cost effective way. NCS requires that the test administration mirrors the amount of time currently allotted for testing in the state.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) include programmatic, technical, and psychometric activities for each of the following components of the Districts assessment programs:

#### **Comprehensive Benchmark Assessments**

**Window: January 24 – 28, 2022 and April 25 – 29, 2022**

- English Language Arts (ELA) Grades 4-8
- Mathematics Grades 3-8
- Science Grades 5 and 8

**Window: February 15 – 16, 2022 and April 25-29, 2022**

- English Language Arts (ELA) Grade 3

**Window: Semester 1 November 8 – 10, 2021 and Semester 2 April 25-29, 2022**

- Biology
- Math I and Math III
- English II

The vendor must address the work requirements for all components and provide pricing for each component. The vendor will need to address all the work activities

required for these components, and costs must be provided for each component along with a total cost for the entire program.

All services related to test design, item development and review, item banking, test production, online administration, data files and score reports for the NCS are the responsibility of the vendor selected under the RFP.

The following areas of support must be addressed in your proposal as it pertains to the District Benchmark and Formative Assessment Services and professional development.

- Grades 2-8, Algebra I, English II, and Biology shall consist of a combination of multiple-choice (MC), constructed response (CR), writing tasks, and technology enhanced (TE) items, as well as performance tasks (PT) types of items that measure student knowledge, skills, and abilities in depth. The representation of higher cognitive complexity should be in sync with the complexity level of the standards.
- The tests for Social Studies shall consist of multiple choice (MC) items. The representation of higher cognitive complexity should be in sync with the complexity level of the standards. Test forms will include single item types while bearing in mind the length of time to administer the assessments must not be longer than the amount of time currently spent for testing in the state.
- The vendor will create a customized plan that includes timelines for professional development and support that includes recommendations for training of NCS Principals and School Test Coordinators, technical onboarding assistance, online job-embedded resources, and easy online access of chat with support professionals. Please make sure the plan addresses professional development by elementary, middle, and high school division.
- The vendor must have an online student testing interface that directly mirrors high stakes testing experiences:
  - Online tools (i.e. four function calculator, graphing calculator/tool, highlighter, compass, ruler, straightedge, protractor, eliminator, pencil, strikethrough, reset, etc.)
  - Part A, part B, and multi-select questions.
  - Split screen support for reading selections and associated test items.
  - Review item flag and assessment summary screen.
  - Writing tools including cut, paste, copy, undo, redo, font format, spell check, and paragraph format among other basic word processing functionalities.
  - Audio accommodations either through text to speech or through recorded audio.
  - Visual accommodation tools including magnification, reverse contrast, selection of foreground and background colors.
- At least twice a year, NCS conducts a formal training session for school test coordinators. The initial Face-to-Face training, facilitated by the vendor, must occur early in the first nine weeks using a demo site. Based upon this training, the school test coordinators provide training within the school to school-level personnel (principals, school test coordinators, test administrators, proctors). The vendor will provide a Google Slide presentation for the district test coordinator training sessions twice a year. The presentations will provide program updates on all test administrations. The second Face-to-Face follow-up training will occur after the first semester assessment results are received. Training sessions shall be recorded and archived as a potential future training or reference resource. NCS will approve all materials.
- The vendor must submit a proposal that includes examples of assessment items for Grades 3-8, Math I, Math III, English II, and Biology that is aligned with North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

- A comprehensive pre-test must be provided for Grades 3 – 8 ELA, Grades 3 – 8 Math, Middle Grades Math I.
- A comprehensive post-test must be provided for Grades 3 – 8 ELA, Grades 3 – 8 Math, Middle Grades Math I (yearlong), English II, Math I (semester long), and Biology fully aligned to the state’s blueprint.
- The vendor must provide blueprints that identify the number and types of items used to measure the targeted content standards. The vendor must also provide information regarding item characteristics (e.g., difficulty, discrimination, cognitive demand, etc.) must be provided for each assessment given.
- The writing component of the ELA assessment for English II must be administered online with the exception of those with specific disabilities or accommodations that don’t allow for online testing. The writing component must be fully aligned to the state practice test, rubric, and blueprint.
- The vendor shall be responsible for providing and developing appropriate items in sufficient quantities to produce an appropriate number of tests.
- The vendor must provide dedicated technical support. The vendor must provide full contact information for the specific person(s) who will be responsible for this contract, including name, address, telephone number(s), and email address along with vendor’s company contact information at no additional cost. Support services also must be provided in the form of guidance documents (FAQs, troubleshooting guides, etc.) that address logistical and administrative needs.
- The vendor must be able utilize Clever as a platform to manage state and student logins and enrollment.
- The first online administration of the assessments must be in place by November 2021, and ongoing psychometric work must be done to ensure the reliability and validity of all assessments. The NCS will specify a testing window for all benchmarks. Make-up dates are included in the testing window.
- The vendor must provide items and an item bank that has the following:
  - Preferred more than 60,000 test items.
  - Includes items that are multiple choice (MC), constructed response (CR), writing tasks (English II), and technology enhanced (TE) items (Science).
  - Developed by content specific item development specialists

- Aligned to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and Testing Specifications

- Strict, proven privacy practices to secure student data results must be reported to NCS no later than three (3) business days for formative assessments and five (5) business days for benchmark assessments after the close of the assessment window. Test results will be reported at the district, school, classroom, and student level. Test results will include frequencies, proportions, mean/standard deviation of scaled scores, and standard errors where appropriate.
- For proposal development purposes, the vendor shall assume that each benchmark assessment form will contain at least 50-60 items total and each formative assessment will contain at least 20-30 items total. A variety of item types are required for all benchmark and formative assessments and all assessments will be the property of NCS.
- All tests will become the property of the NCS and have the rights to the item bank that is developed for ELA, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies, and increase its size in future years.
- The vendor shall accommodate the assessment of students with disabilities (SWD) and students with an established 504 plan. Allowable and non-allowable accommodations shall be identified in publications provided by the vendor. Current accommodated materials include large print forms, teacher read directions, and Read Aloud Forms (oral scripts that are exact copies of the test to be read aloud to students with reading accommodations). NCS plans to use the student's IEP to identify appropriate accommodations for individuals that need them.
- For cost estimation purposes, the vendor shall assume a total of ten (10) copies of the large print edition for each administration of the ELA, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies assessments. Cost proposals should indicate the cost for the development of large-print booklets.
- For cost purposes, the vendor shall plan to deliver enough items for teachers to create ELA, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies biweekly assessments. For future years, item development will be needed to replenish the item bank from usage of items in new forms to include a variety of item types.
- The vendor will provide test administration manuals that will be used by test administrators and proctors during the actual administration of the tests to students. The manuals shall contain detailed information regarding the following: pre-testing activities, conducting standardized administrations of the assessments via online testing, and solving any problems that arise. The vendor must submit the manual to the NCS for approval prior to finalization.
- NCS requires the successful vendor to provide a hosted infrastructure service solution that integrates with existing NCS data systems. Ideally, the successful vendor will host an end-to-end online testing service, give pre-loaded student demographic data from the state and/or district systems. The system shall be fully functional and capable of independent operation between NCS and the successful vendor. The system proposed for use in the RFP shall have been in place at least two (2) years and have a track record of operational excellence in delivering high stakes assessments for school districts. In addition, the system must include front-end data validation (e.g., the same student identification number cannot appear in multiple locations for administrations occurring on the same day; if the data from the district SIS package and NCS Data Management System are not consistent then there should be rules to reconcile the data, etc.).

### 3.0 Reporting

- The vendor must post all reports to a secure website/portal hosted by the vendor in an easy to read format and



the reporting system shall be designed to complement and improve classroom instruction. The vendor must be able to provide a consolidated Excel/CSV file that contains all information for the district per test. Ex. All grade 3 ELA student responses by test item and student ID in one CSV file for the entire district.

- The vendor's system will include the ability to manage pre-formatted reports, generate custom reports, and create teacher comparison reports to compare performance by teacher, and target professional development.
- The benchmark score reports will provide a measure of each student's performance as aligned with pacing documents for the tested content area AND provide a projection of the anticipated performance level on the NC state EOC or EOG assessment.
- Specific information to be included on score reports shall be determined and approved by the NCS. Formats for score reports shall be developed and/or revised. Individual score reports shall be available for each student, and summary reports shall be printed at the classroom, school, area, and district levels. The exact format of the score reports will be determined in meetings between the vendor and the NCS prior to printing and distribution. After the report formats have been determined, the vendor shall prepare accurate printed examples of the reports using mock data. The vendor shall submit the report mockups to the NCS for approval.
- Following each test administration, the vendor shall ensure that the data on all reports are accurate and correct. This quality control of data/reports and approval process shall be designed to be completed within a very short time frame, five (5) days. Score reports are deliverable to the district no later than five (5) days after the close of the testing window for benchmark assessment.
- The vendor shall maintain security of all individual test results. Individual test information shall be made available only to NCS, authorized school district personnel, and other entities identified and authorized by NCS. The vendor shall indicate how it proposes to do this.

Information of the types of score reports and recipients are provided below:

<b>Reports</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>School</b>
Item Analysis	X	X
Standards Analysis	X	X
Class and Summary Report	X	X
Demographic Summary Report	X	X
Student Data File (post to secure file transfer site)	X	X
Performance Level Report	X	X
Comprehensive Student Responses by item	X	X

#### 4.0 Pricing and Fee Structure

All annual costs for the proposal should be calculated using the numbers below. The following table is based on spring 2021 student enrollment which provides information on the expected number of test takes each year for grades 3-8.

Number of students for ELA, mathematics, and science assessments by grade.

**Table A**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Student Count</b>	<b>Unit Cost</b>	<b>Extended Cost</b>
Grade 3	116		
Grade 4	75		
Grade 5	113		
Grade 6	120		
Grade 7	90		
Grade 8	81		
Middle Math I	25		
Total	620		\$

The following table provides information on the expected number of test takers each year by Semester

**Table B**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Student Count</b>	<b>Unit Cost</b>	<b>Extended Cost</b>
Math I- Semester 1	18		
Math III- Semester 1	26		
Biology – Semester 1	62		
English II – Semester 1	37		
Math I- Semester 2	105		
Math III- Semester 2	67		
Biology – Semester 2	86		
English II – Semester 2	70		
Total	471		\$

Grand Total of Tables A and B

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** These numbers should be used as estimates for the expected number of test takers in the different assessments.

## 5.0 Corporate Capacity

- The vendor must present a description of their corporate capabilities and experiences. The vendor shall provide the company's history, including the number of years that it has been in business, buyouts, takeovers, IPO's, bankruptcies, litigations and claims, etc. within the last five (5) years, or for that period which the firm has been in business, if less than five (5) years. The vendor shall provide their principal place of business and, if different, the place of performance

of the proposed contract. The vendor shall also provide the age of their business and average number of employees within the last five (5) years.

- A general description of the vendor's capabilities and capacities related to development, production, administration of online assessments, scoring, data processing, reporting and psychometric activities shall be included. Responses must demonstrate that the vendor meets at a minimum, the mandatory qualifications presented at the beginning of this component. The description shall also identify the number of employees in the company and the company's location(s) including any presence in North Carolina. The overall capacity of the vendor's organization(s) and the resources that it will commit to the work for the project (by name and role in the project) shall be provided.
- The vendor must submit a proposal that includes examples of assessment items for Grades 2-8, Algebra I, English II, US History, and Biology that are aligned with North Carolina Standard Course of Study.
- Organizational Structure: Organizational charts, including identification of executive and key personnel for the vendor as a whole and for the NCS project team specifically, including subcontractors where applicable, must be provided. The charts shall clearly indicate lines of authority and communication within and among the vendor's departments and subcontractors, where appropriate. The vendor shall also describe its escalation process for resolving and vendor/client disagreements.
- The vendor must provide dedicated technical support. The vendor must provide full contact information for the specific person(s) who will be responsible for this contract, including name, address, telephone number(s), and email address along with vendor's company contact information at no additional cost. Support services also must provide in the form of guidance documents (FAQs, troubleshooting guides, etc.) that addressed logistical and administrative needs. Changes to the assigned executive team member, except for those resulting from separation of services, require prior written consent by the Assistant Superintendent. The replacement shall have qualifications which meet the original staff members proposed or the staff member holding the position previously and shall be approved by NCS.
- Risk Management and Quality Assurance: Vendor shall specifically address timeline issues, risks, and mitigation and contingency plans for all aspects of the project. These plans should refer to more than just "communication". Additional details may be provided in the response to relevant requirements and specifications.
- The vendor should highlight its proposed subcontractors proven ability to document and enact risk management strategies—especially as they relate to the development, production, administration (online assessments), scoring, data processing, reporting, and psychometric activities for high stakes assessments.
- The vendor should submit sample Risk Assessment documentation used in an existing program to demonstrate the comprehensiveness of its ability to conduct contingency planning for a variety of conditions. This Risk Assessment documentation may be submitted as an attachment to the proposal. This documentation should also highlight internal procedures and protocols for quality assurance in all aspects of delivering large scale, district wide assessments—including test development, production, and administration of online assessments, scoring, data processing, and reporting.
- The vendor shall ensure that all data operations are subject to multiple checks for accuracy before data, files, and reports are released. The vendor shall include in its proposal a full and complete description of its quality control (QC) procedures used in the reporting process, for NCS review. The procedure shall include hand calculations of a sample of student reports, and aggregation of student results from the school level to the district level. This should first take place with a test deck of mock student data when the scoring and reporting system is first finalized and then be repeated when the first live student data is received. The goal is to demonstrate that the scoring and reporting system is error-free. The vendor shall indicate in detail how it proposes to do this.
- Cost Management: The vendor must discuss how they will monitor and maintain cost control in the project. Specific information on procedures used for cost management is encouraged. The following items need to be addressed in the Vendor's proposal.
  - A. Assessment Costs: The evaluation process is designed to award this procurement to the vendor whose proposal best meets the requirements of this RFP, and is most advantageous to NCS, not necessarily to the vendor with the lowest cost. However, vendors are encouraged to submit proposals that are consistent with state

government efforts to conserve district resources.

- B. Other Information: The NCS may conduct discussions with vendors in the acceptable pricing range for the purpose of promoting understanding of the NCS's requirements and the vendor's proposal, to clarify requirements, and make adjustments in services to be performed, and in prices. Best and final offers may, in the district's discretion be requested. Changes to proposals, if permitted by NCS, will be requested by the NCS in writing from vendors.
  - C. Scope Changes: Any and all scope changes related to the contract arising from the RFP will be completed at the same rates as proposed by the vendor in its response to the RFP.
- The vendor shall include a plan that specifically identifies the name of the online platform that will be used to administer assessments. The online platform must be able to accommodate NCS's existing infrastructure and be the same for all assessments. The NCS must approve the online delivery system to be used for the online testing, including by not limited to a review of tests of the system, (including unit/regression tests if requested), security of the system, stress tests of the system, validation procedures for students to participate in the online administration, the school/district level management of the system, and the procedures in place by the vendor to monitor each administration.
  - The vendor should assume that NCS's technology architecture and computing hardware will not be replaced. The online testing system design must be flexible so that the software modifications, database changes, and reporting requirements can be made efficiently and cost effectively. The online testing system must be scalable to accommodate, over time, testing of additional students.
  - The vendor will comply with the following technical specifications:
    - Open, flexible browser-based platform certified by IMS Global Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI)
    - Data export to build customizable reports
    - Single sign-on integration with Clever
  - The vendor must describe or attach any SSO options available for students and/or staff members if any are available. If no SSO options are currently available, please describe or attach the recommended methodology for user account creation including the creation and management of user accounts and passwords. The district currently uses Clever, but may be amenable to other options. The district has no desire to manually create and manage user accounts or user passwords.
  - Access to Data Collection System: The successful vendor shall provide NCS and selected technical advisors with a secure, password protected web based system for the purposes of analyzing the assessment processes and the resultant data. NCS shall have access to and oversight of all aspects of online performance during the data collection windows and access to captured data after the data collection window closes. The vendor shall indicate how it proposes to do this.
  - The data file shall be transmitted to NCS. The exact content, naming conventions, definitions of data elements, and file type shall be clearly documented and agreed upon by the vendor and NCS at least two (2) months prior to test administration. At a minimum, the district file must include all elements that have been used in reporting, as well as a CSV (MS-DOS) format version of the district file must be provided to NCS on the secure FTP site.

## **6.0 Processing and Scoring of Assessment Materials**

- Equating and Scaling: The successful vendor shall work with NCS to implement a scaling procedure that will result in scaled scores and an equating procedure that will ensure that the scores are comparable across years and different test forms.
- The selected vendor shall describe their plan for accomplishing all tasks related to scoring MC items, writing prompts,

merging of student score data for selected response and open response items, resolution of data errors, and quality control.

- Scoring of Constructed Response Items: Vendor are to propose a scoring approach for open ended items and performance tasks that best suits the needs of NCS. The selected vendor must provide accurate and reliable scores in a timely manner. The vendor shall describe how the following requirements will be met for scoring open-ended items:
  - Development and providing of training procedures for scorers of open-ended items and constructed response to mirror state testing. A description of the training process and protocol and procedures to qualify scorers shall be included. Protocols used to ensure consistency in the work of scorers must be included in proposals.
  - Providing summary reports from the open-ended scoring sessions to NCS.
  - The contents of such reports will be identified jointly by the vendor and NCS.

## **Component 2-Overview of the Cost Options for ACT Test Prep Assessments**

### **Overview**

The NCS is also requiring competitive written proposals from qualified vendor to provide cost options for ACT Test Prep assessments. The successful vendor will develop and/or provide items for ACT Test Prep assessments that are completely aligned with the ACT College and Career Readiness Standards. The standards encompass the many paths available to students after high school.

#### **1. Test Development**

- a. The ACT Test Prep Assessments developed under the RFP must be completely aligned to ACT College and Career Readiness Standards. The vendor may propose a customized assessment, and/or products and services derived from existing products developed and published by the vendor or another provider or developed as part of other initiatives. It is crucial that test forms for the ACT Test Prep assessments be ready for use in the 2020-2021 school year. Off the shelf products will not be considered acceptable by NCS unless they are aligned with ACT College and Career Readiness Standards and all requirements are specified in this RFP.
- b. For a custom-developed assessment, the successful vendor for this RFP will begin item development for ACT Test Prep assessments immediately upon execution of the contract with NCS in order to have the required number of items ready for testing.

#### **2. Training and Materials**

- a. The vendor will provide training materials that will include the combined District Test Coordinator Manual/School Test Coordinator Manual, Test Administrator Manuals, and other training materials necessary to prepare district and school personnel to administer the ACT Test Prep assessment according to standardized procedures. The vendor will also provide an Interpretive Guide to assist NCS educators in interpreting and using test results for instructional improvement.
- b. All manuals will be developed by the vendor in electronic format and will be delivered to the district. This includes Online Test Coordinator Manuals, Online Test Administrator Manuals, and the Interpretive Guide.
- c. The vendor shall also provide sample items, or an item bank, that includes items that cover the objectives specified in each reporting category listed in the test blueprints. These items will be representative of all items used on the test forms for the assessments.

#### **3. Test Administration**

- a. The tests that are developed by the vendor will be administered to students who are preparing for the ACT,

including students with disabilities and students with an established 504 plan, and will be administered twice each year.

4. Test Results and Reporting

- a. NCS wishes to have equating and scaling done in a manner that produces accurate results. The vendor will be responsible for proposing a methodology for this.
- b. Any changes to items or scores in a previously submitted results file must include a new submission of the entire corrected results data file to NCS. The vendor will confirm these requirements in their proposal.

- c. Following each test administration in August and January, the vendor will generate score reports for schools and submit these reports to the NCS for approval before any other reports are produced.
- d. NCS will continue to use the same process and timelines for reporting scores and results from the ACT Test Prep Assessments as are currently used. Score reports for the computer based assessment administrations of the tests will be provided to NCS according to the following specifications:
  - Online reports will provide information that indicates areas of weakness to be used for remediation and instructional purposes.
  - The Student Data File will be transmitted to NCS via a secure SFTP site no later than two (2) weeks after the last scheduled date of the online administration.
- e. For the ACT Test Prep Assessment, reports will be delivered in electronic format (PDF). Information on the types of score reports and recipients are provided below:

Reports	District	School
Student Report		X
Class Performance Report	X	X
Standards Analysis	X	X
Class and School Summary Report	X	X
District Summary Report	X	
District Summary Report by Area Report	X	
Student Data File (post to secure file transfer site)	X	

NOTE: This overview is not intended to encompass all elements and details of the ACT Test Prep assessment. Interpretive and Teacher's Guides must be delivered by electronic format only. The district must be able to download and print summary data files. Downloaded files should be PDF, Excel and delimited format.

#### **Additional Information:**

NCS reserves the right to accept, reject, or negotiate any or all offers on the basis of the evaluation criteria contained within this document. The awarding of the contract will be subject to budget availability and school board approval. The final decision to execute a contract with any party rests solely with NCS.

The proposal shall be prepared in 12-point font with single spacing; bound with no staples, and clips or rubber bands.

Contract Term: Northampton County Schools is looking to enter into an agreement with the vendor to perform the services for up to a three (3) year base term with the option to renew each year, unless either party gives notice of non-renewal not less than 60 days prior to the expiration of any one (1) year term.

#### **Proposal Contents and Evaluation Criteria**

- A. The vendor's overall qualification and experience with designing and creating formative assessments.
- B. The vendor's specialized experience, qualifications, competence in the administration of similar services for school districts over the last three (3) years and accomplishments.
- C. Describe the vendor's experience in developing assessments fully aligned to North Carolina's Standard Course of Study for English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and the NC Test Specifications

- D. List key individuals who would be assigned to work with the vendor. Please include professional resumes.
- E. The fee or fee structure for the designated services.
- F. The capacity and capability of the vendor to perform the work within the time limitations.
- G. At least three (3) references must be included. References must be for assessment development. General references for vendor will not be considered.

The specific criteria that will be used in evaluating the merits of the proposals are listed below.

Category	Description	Point Value
Scope of Proposal	The plan must lay out in detailed manner how the vendor will perform the duties in the RFP. Each duty must be addressed specifically.	25
Assigned Personnel	Do the persons who will be working on the project have the necessary skills?	10
Vendor Capability	Does the vendor have the support capabilities required? Does the vendor have previous relevant and positive experience in jobs of this type and scope and success in planning? Does the vendor have prior experience in working with similar organizations?	35
Budget	Price or cost of the services.	25
References	Vendor must provide documentation of past performance that proves ability to successfully manage the printing needs of the NCS. This requires specific references to substantiate past and current performance.	5

### Proposal Exception Summary Form

List and clearly explain any exceptions for all specifications and sections in the table below.

✓	Bid Advertisement Reference (Reference the specification number and/or section number)	Vendor Proposal Reference (Reference page, section, and items in bid proposal where exception is explained)	Brief Explanation of Exception	NCS Acceptance (NCS signature if accepted)
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### Management Responsibilities

The Northampton County Schools will designate one representative who will act as the primary contact for this project. The representative will be responsible for conferring with any and all parties necessary to resolve unanticipated issues or requirements that might occur during the course of the RFP. If you have any questions, please contact:

Dr. Amy L. Draper,  
Northampton County Schools  
PO Box 158  
Jackson, NC 27845  
Phone: (252) 534-1371  
Email: [drapera@northampton.k12.nc.us](mailto:drapera@northampton.k12.nc.us)

### Format and Procedures for Delivery of Proposal

The proposal shall consist of six parts.

1. Proposal Cover Sheet
2. Project Overview, Training, and Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals (include an overview of the programs and support services proposed which will allow the district to determine the quality of services provided).
3. Cost (provide a specific description of your pricing structure)
4. Assurances and Signature Form
5. Proposal Form

#### Procedures for Delivery of Proposals

One (1) original and (1) copy of the proposal must be received on or before 12:00 PM on August 27, 2021 to the address listed above.

**Proposals received after the due date and time will NOT be considered. Incomplete proposals will not be accepted and will not be returned for revisions. No faxed or emailed copies will be accepted. The proposal must be signed by an authorized official to bind the vendor to the proposal provisions. Proposal must be in a sealed envelope with the RFP number, title, and vendor's return address listed on the outside of envelope for proper log in.**

RFPs have been opened publicly as of the above date and time at Northampton County Schools, PO Box 158, Jackson, NC 27845.

## **7.0 Acceptance of Proposals**

The Northampton County Schools reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to waive minor irregularities in proposals. A minor irregularity is a variation from the proposal that does not affect the proposal, or gives one vendor an advantage or benefit not enjoyed by other vendors, or adversely impacts the interests of the school district.

## **8.0 Rejection of Proposals**

Proposals may be rejected for reasons that include, but are limited to, the following:

1. The proposal contains unauthorized amendments to requirements as outlined herein.
2. The proposal is conditional.
3. The proposal is incomplete or contains irregularities that make the proposal indefinite or ambiguous.
4. The proposal is not signed by an authorized representative of the applicant.
5. The proposal contains false or misleading statements or references.
6. The proposal price is clearly unreasonable.
7. The proposal is not responsive (i.e. does not conform in all material respects to the RFP).
8. The supply or service item offered in the proposal is unacceptable by reason of its failure to meet the requirements of the specifications or permissible alternates or other acceptability criteria set forth in the RFP.

## **9.0 Disposition of Proposals**

All proposals become the property of Northampton County Schools.

## **10.0 Conditions of Solicitation**

The release of the RFP does not constitute an acceptance of any offer. Northampton County Schools reserves the right to accept, reject, or negotiate any or all offers on the basis of evaluation criteria contained within this document.

The vendor shall assure compliance with the following conditions of solicitation:

1. Any proposal submitted in response to the RFP is in writing.
2. The NCS will not be liable for any costs associated with the preparation of proposals or negotiations of contract incurred by any party.
3. Discussions may be conducted with vendors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for the purpose of clarification to assure full understanding of, and responsiveness to, the solicitation requirements, but proposals may be accepted without such discussions.
4. Any proposal received after the time and date set for receipt of proposals is late. Any withdrawal or modification of a proposal received after the time and date set for receipt of proposals at the place designated for receipt is late. No late proposals or late modification will be considered unless receipt would have been timely but for the action or inaction of school district personnel directly serving the procurement activity.
5. The vendor represents that it has not retained a person to solicit or secure this agreement for a commission, percentage, brokerage, or contingent fee.
6. The vendor certifies that the prices submitted in response to the solicitation have been arrived at independently and without (for the purpose of restricting competition) any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other bidder or competitor relating to those prices, the intention to submit a proposal, or the methods or factors used to calculate the price proposal.

## **11.0 Standard Terms and Conditions**

Certain items and conditions are required. Therefore, the vendor shall assure agreement and compliance with the following Standard Terms and Conditions.

1. **INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR**

The vendor shall perform all services as an independent contractor and shall discharge all of its liabilities as such. No act performed or representation made, whether oral or written, by the contractor with respect to third parties shall be binding on Northampton County Schools.

2. **ACCESS TO RECORDS**

The vendor agrees that the Northampton County Schools, or any of its duly authorized representatives, at any time during the term of this agreement, shall have access to, and the right to audit/examine any pertinent documents, paper, and records, related to change and performance under this agreement. Such records shall be kept for a period of three years after final payment under this agreement, unless the Northampton County Schools authorizes earlier disposition. Vendor agrees to refund to the district any overpayments disclosed by any such audit. However, if litigation, claim, negotiation, audit or other action involving the records had been started before the expiration of the three (3) year period, the records shall be retained until completion of the action and resolution of all issues, which arise from it.

3. **APPLICABLE LAW**

The contract shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of North Carolina, excluding its conflicts of law provisions, and any litigation with respect thereto shall be brought in the courts of the State of North Carolina. The vendor shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. In compliance with state law, the vendor, if employed by a public entity, must make arrangements with his/her employer to take the appropriate leave (annual, professional, compensation, etc.) during the period of service covered by the contract.

4. **AUTHORITY TO CONTRACT**

Vendor warrants (a) that it is a validly organized business with valid authority to enter in this agreement; (b) that it is qualified to do business and in good standing in the State of North Carolina; (c) that entry into and performance under this agreement is not restricted or prohibited by any loan, security, financing, contractual, or other agreement of any kind, and (d) notwithstanding any other provision of this agreement to the contrary, that there are no existing legal proceedings or prospective legal proceedings, either voluntary or otherwise, which may adversely affect its ability to perform its obligations under this agreement.

5. **COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS**

The vendor understands that the Northampton County Schools is an equal opportunity employer and therefore maintains a policy which prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, physical handicap, disability, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. All such discrimination is unlawful and the vendor agrees during the term of the agreement that the vendor will strictly adhere to this policy in its employment practices and provision of services. The vendor shall comply with, and all activities under this agreement shall be subject to all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, as now existing and as may be amended or modified.

6. **PERSONNEL**

Vendor agrees that, at all times, the employees of vendor furnishing or performing any of the services specified under this agreement shall do so in a professional manner.

7. **CERTIFICATION OF INDEPENDENT PRICE DETERMINATION**

The vendor certifies that the prices submitted in response to the solicitation have been arrived at independently and without any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other bidder or competition relating to those prices, the intention to submit a bid or the methods or factors used to calculate the prices bid.

8. **AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS**

It is expressly understood and agreed that the obligations of the district to proceed are conditioned upon the appropriation of funds by the North Carolina State Department of Education and the receipt of state and/or federal

funds. If the funds anticipated for the continuing fulfillment of the agreement are, at any time not forthcoming or insufficient, either through the failure of the federal government to provide funds or the State of North Carolina to appropriate funds or the discontinuance or material alteration of the program under which funds were provided or if funds are not otherwise available to the State, the district shall have the right upon ten (10) working days written notice to the vendor, to terminate or modify the agreement without damage, penalty, cost of expenses to the state or district of any kind whatsoever. The effective date of termination or modification shall be specified in the notice of termination or modification.

9. **PUBLICATION OF DATA**

The contractor must agree to student performance outcomes and evaluation data being published on the District's website and/or annual data publication of programs used by NCS.

**ASSURANCES AND SIGNATURE FORM**

In submitting this application, I certify that:

1. The organization will comply with applicable federal, state, and local policies and procedures.
2. Services will be provided under the supervision of highly qualified teachers and/or administrators.
3. The organization will maintain professionalism and confidentiality.

4. The organization is fiscally sound and will be able to complete services to the local educational agency.
5. The organization will ensure that the services provided are aligned the North Carolina Curriculum Frameworks and scientifically research-based practices.
6. The organization will comply with applicable federal, state and local health, safety, and civil rights laws.
7. Provisions that subject all individuals employed by or otherwise associated with the approved provider, including volunteers, support staff, etc., who have direct contact with students, to the fingerprint and criminal history record check contained in law, including, Education Laws 305(30), 1125(3), 1604(39), 1604(40), 1709(39), 1709(40), 1804(9), 1804(10), 1950(4)(11), 1950(4)(mm), 2503(10), 2554(25), 2554(26), 2590-h(20), 2854(3)(a-2), 2854(3)(1-3), and 3035.
8. All services will be secular, neutral, and non-ideological.
9. The organization will provide the local educational agency with information regarding implementation of proposal initiatives in increasing achievement, in a format, and to the extent practicable, a language or other mode of communication such that district personnel, parents/legal guardians and community members can understand.

The undersigned hereby certifies that I am an individual authorized to act on behalf of the organization in submitting this application and assurances. I certify that all the information provided herein is true and accurate, to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the discovery of deliberately misrepresented information contained herein may constitute grounds for denying the applicant's request for approval.

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Name of Organization

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Printed Name of Authorized Representative

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Signature of Authorized Representative

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Date Signed