

**Growth and Value-Added Methodologies RFP
Q & A Document**

Questions received in the bidder's conference and in the e-mailbox were placed in three categories. Click on the category name to go directly to that section of the document.

[Program Matters](#)

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PROGRAM MATTERS

On page 16, does “student growth percentiles” refer to the exact implementation that is used by the Colorado Growth Model?

In the context described on page 16 of the RFP, we are referencing the advantages of two ways of assessing student growth. The NYSED requires vendors to calculate student growth percentiles for each student that will rank each student's annual growth compared to students with comparable academic history. This calculation will ONLY incorporate a criterion (post-) test toward the end of the school year of interest, along with predictor (pre-) test(s) that may or may not be in the same content area as the criterion test. For NYS purposes these calculations do not take into consideration student, teacher, and/or school characteristics in the model in 2011-12. However, the NYSED would like the option to make post-hoc adjustments for these characteristics in teacher and principal student growth percentile scores.

Additionally, the NYSED is not committed to all components of the Colorado Growth Model, i.e. any component that would be considered proprietary to the state or vendors associated with the state, or visual data representations like the SchoolView website. We request the selected vendor to work with and teach the NYSED staff how to best evaluate and communicate our data.

At the top of page 17, would you only consider a standard multivariate regression approach or would other approaches such as analysis of covariance, linear mixed models, or hierarchical linear models be considered?

The NYSED would consider other higher-order statistical analysis approaches for this work, provided that the proposed approach accounts for multiple student demographics and school characteristics and is suitable for differentiating teacher growth across the state. The approach should also be understood by and easily communicated to all of our constituencies. It is the vendor's responsibility to justify whatever they decide for an approach, and the vendor should not assume the NYSED has background knowledge of all the various statistical modeling approaches to measuring student growth.

Is this project full-funded by NY RTTT funds?

Yes, this project is fully funded by NYS RTTT funds.

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Which section of the NY RttT program does this RFP fall under?

- **Project C1 , Subproject 2, Integration of Growth Model and Creation of Teacher Evaluation System, or**
 - **Project D7, Adoption of Growth Model (IT System Enhancements) Associated with Criteria: (D) (2)**
- If both, do Services 1 and 2 fall under D7 and Service 3 fall under C1?**

This RFP falls under Section D of the NYSED's RTTT application. New York's final scope of work is currently under review by the US Department of Education, so the forms included in the application posted on the NYSED website are in revision. This RFP's scope of work description is considerably more detailed than the NYSED RTTT application and should be considered the primary source of information for this RFP application.

Although there is no provision in the RFP for delays in performance as a result of a force majeure event (events beyond the contractor's reasonable control including without limitation, acts of God; acts or omissions of governmental authorities or NYSED or any third party; strikes, lockouts or other industrial disturbances; acts of public enemies; wars; blockades; riots; civil disturbances; epidemics; floods; hurricanes; tornadoes; and any other similar acts, events, or omissions), does the NYSED acknowledge that such delays in performance would not constitute a breach of the contract?

The NYSED is not opposed to adding a force majeure clause to the resulting contract at the request of the winning bidder.

Service 3 indicates rapid turnaround on evaluation scores in the spring. What is considered "rapid turnaround"?

The NYSED uses the term "rapid-turnaround" because we expect vendors to produce initial teacher and principal scores for evaluation purposes by June 15th of each contract year or within 3 weeks of data availability, whichever is later.

Reporting Questions

Pg. 1 #3 – Design and deliver reports – Are these paper and/or electronic reports? Pg. 31 indicates a web-based secure reporting system.

Reports should be electronic, printer-friendly, and accessible, and be compatible with widely available computing hardware and software.

P. 32—[1st paragraph]—Can NYSED provide a list of formats for information reporting? Or, is vendor expected to propose formats and price accordingly?

It is our expectation that the NYSED and the selected vendor will work together to develop a report format.

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P. 32—[2nd & 3rd paragraphs]—“customized reporting” and “other information and graphics will be included at no cost”—Does NYSED have a recommendation for pricing of these unknowns? Do they need to be included in the cost proposal? Can such items be handled via change order?

Vendors should propose recommended formats using the information provided in Section 3.2 of the RFP and price accordingly.

P. 34—[3.3.a-i]—Can NYSED provide sufficient technical information regarding its data portal so that vendor can make reasonable assumptions about the level of effort to conform its system to the States?

The technical information regarding the data portal will not be available prior to awarding the contract for this RFP. The vendor will need to create, maintain, and host the reporting system and enable secure log on for teachers, principals, district staff, and SED staff until the single-sign-on data portal and integration are available. The reporting system must be compatible with widely available computing hardware and software to ensure ease of use for districts, BOCES, and the NYSED.

P. 37—[4.1.i]—Does NYSED have an estimate of the number, frequency, and nature of materials that the vendor will be expected to review that are intended for non-technical audiences?

The vendor should expect, at a minimum, to prepare presentations, Q&A documents, and FAQ documents on an annual cycle, with a bulk of the work taking place in the first year as we determine the right format and structure for public materials.

Technology/Security Questions

Pg. 6 #4 - Will we be provided with a copy of the NYSED security protocols?

The NYSED will post a copy of the security protocols for transfer and use of information by the vendor to the RFP website: <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/rfp/qt-07/home.html>. Additional security protocols related to the single-sign-on data portal will be provided when the data portal is in place.

Who is responsible for hosting the web based reporting system, the contractor or NYSED?

As stated in Section 3.3 on page 33 of the RFP, the vendor will host the web based system.

P. 16—[1st paragraph]—How will input from Regents Task Force be conveyed to vendor? How often? What are the expectations of the vendor for communication with the Task Force (i.e., frequency, method)?

The NYSED project team will be the interface between the vendor and the Task Force, and will bring the vendor’s work to the Task Force when the analysis is ready for input at key milestones in the process. The vendor may be asked to be present at Task Force meetings, which are held quarterly.

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The Task Force is an advisory group established under Education Law §3012-c. The Department is required to consult with the Task Force in developing the value-added growth model and prior to recommending that the Board of Regents approve its use in evaluations. The NYSED may request that the vendor be present at some of their meetings (maximum 2-3 annually), which are held monthly.

P. 24—[1.4.i-i]—Does NYSED anticipate no more than 1 revision of the value-added methodology? Is there a contingency plan if the revision is also not approved?

For the initial review of the value-added methodology by the Board of Regents, minor modifications may need to be made to the methodology before approval.

Students in NYS are tested annually and teachers will be evaluated on the same cycle, so the expectation is that the vendor and the NYSED will take that opportunity to continually make minor adjustments to the value-added methodology as we collaboratively learn from the data. However, the NYSED does not expect the revisions to be of a magnitude that would require ongoing approval. More significant changes to the methodology that may or may not require approval would be changes to annual assessments or development of new research in the field.

P. 26—Regarding provision of cost for the 6 expansion area, due to a vendor's need to commit resources, can NYSED provide a date/timeline for decisions regarding implementation?

The timeline for the six expansion areas listed in the RFP are the best current estimate we have for implementation. Timelines for the expansion areas would not shorten, but could increase. In the event that an expansion area is behind schedule, the vendor will have additional time to prepare for implementation.

P. 37—[4.1.h]—Can NYSED provide estimates of frequency of communication with the Regents Task Force and Board of Regents, as well as the method(s) of communication?

The NYSED project team will be the interface between the vendor and the Task Force, and will bring the vendor's work to the Task Force when the analysis is ready for input at key milestones in the process. The vendor may be asked to be present at Task Force meetings, which are held quarterly.

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P. 39—[4.3.a]—Is there an estimate of the number of requests for data and analysis the vendor can expect to receive from NYSED? And, in what form should responses be provided?

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The NYSED will work with the vendor to determine the types of data and analytics we will need annually to minimize the number of ad hoc requests for the vendor. In addition, the NYSED expects to receive data files annually from the vendor so that some ad hoc requests can be answered internally. However, the state cannot predict the number of requests we will receive as this has never been done before within the state. For bidding purposes, the vendor is asked to estimate that the NYSED will request data and analysis four times per year. It should also be noted that this is a partnership and the state will collaborate with the selected vendor to determine a mutually agreeable form for requests.

Submission Questions

Does the NYSED have a preference in submittal of proposal regarding font, single or double spaced, margins, in binders, etc. Please provide guidance regarding submittal of proposal.

The NYSED prefers proposals submitted in binders (or bound) and on 8.5" X 11" paper, using Arial font at 11 point size, single-spaced, with 1" margins on all sides. Please include the name of the vendor, RFP #GT-07, and page numbers on the top right corner of each page. Please be sure RFP #GT-07 is visible on the exterior of the package.

If bidder decides to hand deliver the proposal (e.g., FedEx, UPS, etc) please verify the mailing address is the same if hand delivering proposal. Please provide additional guidance if hand delivering.

If proposal will be hand-delivered or mailed, it must be received by 3:00 p.m. on June 17, 2011 at:
NYS Education Department
Bureau of Fiscal Management
Contract Administration Unit
89 Washington Avenue, Room 505W EB
Albany, NY 12234
ATTN: Lynn Caruso

Regarding proposal organization, is it acceptable to place résumés of key staff in an appendix of the Technical Proposal?

Yes, it is acceptable to place resumes of key staff in an appendix.

Bidder's Conference Questions

The 20% locally-selected measures could be the state assessments, correct?

The regulations provide several local options for the 20% based on locally selected measures of student achievement, including the use of State assessments. The choice of whether to use State assessments for this portion of the evaluation is a local decision.

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Will districts be required to use the vendor products produced or will they have discretion to use other vendors who may develop components in the future?

Districts will be required to use measures of growth on state assessments that are produced under this contract for the state growth portion of educator evaluations. Districts will not have the option to substitute different measures for this portion of educator evaluations if a state growth measure is available for use.

Approximately how many teachers and principals will be assessed during the school year?

We have given some volume information under Service 3. Each year of the contract more teachers and principals will be covered by these measures. Page 49 of the RFP has the volume estimates.

Will this presentation be available for review after this session?

Yes, this presentation will be available. We will e-mail it to those of you who registered. If you did not register for this webinar, you will need to send us your e-mail at Valueaddrfp@mail.nysed.gov so we have your accurate contact information.

Must a vendor proposal include all three Service Areas (1-3)?

Yes. We intend to make one award that covers all three service areas. However, we are open to subcontracting, within limits specified in the RFP, where it is necessary to give a complete proposal or where the providers think they can make a more powerful proposal if a portion(s) is subcontracted.

I understood the answer to districts being required to use the state measures, but what about other corresponding products such as those delineated in Service 3?

The Service 3 reports will be the way districts receive the information that is constructed and calculated by the selected providers. It is true that districts may take the data /scores and the results that are calculated and create additional reporting tools. They would still have no way to get the information we are providing unless they are using our reporting.

Will attending the bidders' webinar place the company on future RFP listings in regards to RTTT?

Vendors should frequently visit <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/> where all of the Race to the Top RFPs, RFQs, RFIs are posted . Vendors may also subscribe to E-Alerts from the New York State Contract Reporter (<http://www.nyscr.org/Public/Index.aspx>) to receive procurement information.

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Can you please include a list of webinar attendees/organizations when the presentation is circulated?

The list was distributed via email to bidder's conference attendees.

Will you provide all questions and answers during this webinar?

We will provide as many answers as we can, and we will post all the questions and answers on the O&A on <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/rfp/gt-07/home.html> on June 6, 2011.

Are vendors expected to own or participate in NYSED's communication/community engagement/change management strategies/efforts involving statewide release/implementation of the growth model/VAM data?

In several places in the RFP, particularly Service 3, we do ask for the vendor to provide training and communication materials and to advise the NYSED on support for these efforts. The NYSED is not looking for the vendor to take the primary lead in introducing measures in the reports and the implications and training on how to use them to the general field. We are asking for some training materials and knowledge transfer to the more technical and data oriented people who are involved in this project.

Are there any models that have already been developed (e.g. Colorado) that NYSED is leaning toward?

If you read the RFP carefully, you will discover that the NYSED is actually expecting to include student-level growth percentile calculations using a methodology like the Colorado model as well as using a more complex value-added methodology that adjusts for many variables about students, classrooms, and schools. We are asking for a vendor to be a thought partner in how to best utilize a variety of modeling approaches that are in the industry and will meet all of our requirements.

What is your definition of "dosage data?"

The definition of dosage data is described in the RFP throughout Section 1 where we make references to dosage, which refers to the data we will collect from schools around student enrollment, student attendance, and teacher assignment to specific classes. And through increasingly sophisticated collection of this data by the NYSED, we imagine that it will be possible to represent which teachers and which students were together for a partial period of time, not a whole year of a course. One of our requirements is that our vendor be very up to date on the best practice on using data about partial-year teacher assignments, student enrollment and attendance and help us with the empirically best way to utilize that data in constructing these teacher and principal value-added and growth scores.

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FISCAL/CONTRACTUAL MATTERS

Pg. 7 #9 – Regarding the contractor providing resources to refute a challenge to the validity and reliability of the growth or value-added model with the contractor is associated, what would be a reasonable level of resources and costs that the contractor could expect to budget for this type of activity? Does NYSED expect bidders to provide a budget line item for this type of activity? If so, in which Service(s) should this cost be included?

No, the NYSED does not expect the vendor to provide a budget line item for this possible activity. As stated in the mandatory requirement; if necessary, the vendor will defend their work at no expense to the NYSED.

Regarding Payments and Reports in section 4 on page 39 of 99, what is the expected waiting period for payments to be made to contractor after submission of the quarterly progress reports to NYSED?

Barring any unresolved reporting issues, contractor may expect payment 30 days after the NYSED receipt of quarterly progress reports.

Would subcontractors for the prime contractor be required to complete the vendor responsibility and enroll in the VendRep System before an award is made?

Yes, any subcontractor expected to receive payments of \$100,000 or more are required to complete a vendor responsibility questionnaire and enroll in the VendRep system prior to the execution of the resulting contract.

The RFP states a period of performance of 9/01/2011 to 9/23/2014 on page 40 with only 1-3 month extensions while page 1 states 11/1/2011 through 9/23/2011 and two one year extensions, which is correct?

Page 1 is correct. The contract period will begin in November 1, 2011 (upon receipt of a fully executed contract) and will end September 23, 2014 with an option for the NYSED to contract two one-year renewals, pending agreement by the NYSED and the vendor on scope of work and cost.

Is there a budget amount associated with this RFP?

Yes, but we are not free to share that at this time.

Page 8 of the RFP states that "some uncertainty exists about whether and when all of the following will be implemented". Should vendors provide costs for all tasks specified in the RFP?

Yes. The NYSED is asking that vendors provide costs for all tasks. We have explained that under Service 2 where there are some potential, new state assessments, we will not trigger the beginning of the work on any new assessment until it's clearly in place and we have enough data to begin the modeling work. We want to be sure that we can seamlessly move

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into that work under this contract, and we fully expect to be doing all the tasks being requested here.

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M/WBE MATTERS

Please confirm the M/WBE subcontracting goals.

The bidder is required to use New York State certified Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) for an amount greater or equal to seventeen percent (17%) Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and twelve percent (12%) Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE) of the total dollar amount of the contract.

Can NYSED confirm that a vendor can submit a combination of the two to equal the total 29%? *For example*, could a bidder comply with the M/WBE requirement with a proposal including 20% MBE and 9% WBE?

No, the required goals are an amount greater or equal to seventeen percent (17%) Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and twelve percent (12%) Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE) of the total dollar amount of the contract.

Is the prime contractor required to subcontract the MBE 17% and WBE 12% of the total award amount? Or is the requirement 17% and 12% of the amount subcontracted going to M/WBEs?

The M/WBE goals are based on the total dollar amount of the contract.

Would failure to meet the Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise participating goals adversely affect or disqualify a proposal?

The M/WBE requirements are reasonable attainable in this competitive procurement. M/WBE participation includes any and all services, materials, and supplies purchased from New York State certified minority and women owned firms. Utilizing Minority and Women-Owned firms will be applied toward the goals.

In an effort to prevent the possibility of any adverse affect or disqualification, the M/WBE Coordinator is available to assist bidders in meeting the goals of this RFP. The M/WBE Coordinator can be reached at jramsey@mail.nysed.gov.

Would an organization currently a M/WBE need to seek additional M/WBE subcontractors and comply with the M/WBE subcontracting goals?

No, as of October 1, 2010. The M/WBE firm must be certified with NYS Division of Minority and Women Business Development.

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Would an organization currently in the process of completing M/WBE certification comply with the M/WBE subcontracting goals if bidding as Prime Contractor?

Yes, however, certification must be completed with the NYS Division of Minority and Women Business Development before beginning any work on this contract.

Regarding good-faith effort for complying with requirements of M/WBE, would bidder be required to 1) Advertise in general circulation media, trade association publications and minority-focused media AND 2) Provide written notification to appropriate certified M/WBEs that appear in the Empire State Development Site. Please verify if bidder is required to comply with both good-faith efforts and if failure to meet both adversely affect or disqualify the bidder.

The bidder must communicate with Minority and Women-Owned firms to reach agreements on services, material or supplies to meet the goals of this RFP. The agreements made with M/WBE firms must be documented on the M/WBE Notice of Intent to Participate.

The M/WBE Coordinator is available to assist bidders in meeting the goals of this RFP. The M/WBE Coordinator can be reached at jramsey@mail.nysed.gov.

If the M/WBE subcontractors are not currently NY state approved, will it suffice if they have applied for, and are awaiting, NY State approval?

Yes, however, certification must be completed with the NYS Division of Minority and Women Business Development before beginning any work on this contract.

Are any organizations exempt from the M/WBE requirement and if so, whom?

No.

Can you please provide the address for new forms again; also will an addendum with RFP changes be posted?

The web address for new forms is: <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/rfp/qt-07/home.html> and the forms are located in a link at the bottom of the page. The RFP changes are detailed at the top of this webpage with the associated dates of changes.

Is there a section for interested parties for partnering discussions on the web site?

No, there is no section, but you may contact Joan Ramsey, the M/WBE Coordinator, who has a list of interested M/WBE providers with which you can work. Her e-mail is jramsey@mail.nysed.gov.

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Did you say that you would provide the names of M/WBEs who were interested in this work?

A list of M/WBE organizations will be available by contacting Joan Ramsey, the M/WBE Coordinator, at jramsey@mail.nysed.gov .

Is it required to utilize M/WBEs from inside NY or can we utilize M/WBEs from outside NY?

For this RFP, the M/WBE firms must be certified through New York State's Empire State Development, though the firm does not actually need to be based in New York State.

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