

Questions and Answers

RFP # SA-06

Curriculum Modules and Statewide Professional Development for New York State English Language Arts & Literacy and Mathematics

NOTE: Potential bidders should pay particular attention to the response to Question 25 as it includes additional information to clarify NYSED's expectations for vendor-provided professional development.

1. **Question:** Will NYSED provide feedback to previous bidders regarding the decision to reissue the RFP for grades 6-12 ELA and mathematics?

Answer: The New York State Education Department (NYSED) will not award the 6-8 ELA bid from RFP # SA-03 due to determination that grades 6-12 must be an integrated service unit for professional development and curriculum in English Language Arts and Mathematics for Common Core aligned programming and materials as articulated by the Common Core State Standards.

2. **Question:** Will NYSED provide feedback to previous bidders that identifies previous bidders?

Answer: Information on bidders for SA-03a may be found at <http://www.nyscr.org/Public/Index.aspx>.

3. **Question:** What is the budget for this RFP?

Answer: NYSED will not divulge its budget for this RFP.

4. **Question:** It appears to be similar in many ways to a recent New York RFP, number 5487. Could you please explain the context for the new RFP (SA-06), and how it is related, if at all, to the previous 5487? Also, what the status is of RFP 5487?

Answer: RFP#SA-03A, Curriculum Modules and Statewide Professional Development for New York State English Language Arts & Literacy and Mathematics

has been awarded and information on bidders for SA-03a may be found at <http://www.nyscr.org/Public/Index.aspx>.

5. **Question:** The company I represent is evaluating options to either submit a response to SA-06 as either prime or a sub-contractor. It would be most helpful to this company if we could know which other companies submitted responses to RFP 5487 in order determine potential options for possibly collaborating on SA-06. Is there a list available showing which companies or organizations submitted responses to previous RFPs (such as 5487)? If this list is not available currently, is there a process we could undergo to obtain such a list?

Answer: Information on bidders for SA-03a may be found at <http://www.nyscr.org/Public/Index.aspx>.

6. I'm wondering if you have any winning proposals from the past that can be shared or if you can let us know of people who have been successful that we can contact. Also, will only one be awarded?

Answer: Information on bidders for SA-03a may be found at <http://www.nyscr.org/Public/Index.aspx>. NYSED plans to award one contract per Competitive Priority Area.

7. **Question: Section 1.3.1 (page 20):** Does NYSED have in mind an optimal number of optional texts? And would successful applicants be expected to provide all the range of supporting documents for the optional texts as well as for the base texts or may applicants provide approved lists of optional texts to which similar exercises or strategies could be applied?

Answer: Optional text, by definition, are at the discretion of the vendor as substantiated by their proposal to meet the quality and rigor required by this RFP.

8. **Question: Section 1.3.7 (page 23):** If the modules are to be sequenced and coherent, it will be especially difficult for them to be interchangeable. For instance, if teachers decided to eliminate the middle two modules and use modules 1, 2, 5, and

6, the middle intellectual ground of modules 3 and 4 would be wiped out. The differences might seem minuscule, but they could prove significant. On the other hand, if the modules were truly self-contained modules, any module could in effect be plugged in at any point in the year—although our project would want to suggest best times of the calendar to teach the modules. Please advise to what extent we should consider the modules truly self-contained.

Answer: The idea of the interchangeability of the two ELA modules is that they would cover the same intellectual ground of modules 3 and 4, but simply would cover different texts so that teachers can have a variety of modules to choose from. The modules should not be self-contained in nature, as that removes the benefit of coherence and the value-add of learning progressions developing over the course of the academic year.

9. **Question: Section 1.5.9 (page 40):** If student classwork or artifacts are to be included, does this mean that student products must be included for every assignment? That will mean that we will have to field-test every assignment during the year that the curriculum is being written—and that might be logistically very challenging. We will have several teachers on our team, but the timing of the team's finishing the curricular product and the teachers' being able to do field-testing could be problematic. We anticipate that it will be a challenge to provide exemplars for all the classwork.

Answer: Student products do not need to be included for every assignment.

10. **Question: Section 1.5.17 (page 45):** We are prepared to create a flexible professional development plan, but we cannot quite imagine how to anticipate exactly who will be involved in the feedback loop mentioned in this item. Scheduling formal times for gathering feedback data may be an exercise in guesswork at this point. Can you provide guidance or more information about how NYSED anticipates managing feedback on PD?

Answer: Please see section 1.6.2 Specific Products Being Solicited for Statewide

Professional Development of the RFP, requirement number 4 and section 1.7.3 Project Director Responsibilities number 1 and the following under the section as well:

For all written deliverables (not including actual delivery of training), NYSED intends to adhere to the following process and vendor contractual work plans should incorporate this process for each deliverable:

1. Vendor submits deliverable on date determined by NYSED
2. NYSED will review deliverable and comment within ten (10) business days
3. Vendor will revise outline to reflect (where appropriate) NYSED comments
4. Vendor submits a draft of the work product no later than five (5) business days from vendor outline submission
5. NYSED will review and comment within two (2) business days
6. NYSED accepts deliverable within fifteen (15) business days. If for any reason NYSED fails to accept the deliverable, the process will recommence with Step Four (4), incorporating the reasons for revision by NYSED.

11. **Question: Section 1.6.2 (page 52):** We understand that the vendor will be charged with delivering professional development to the network teams rather than actually traveling the state to deliver PD statewide. Is this correct?

Answer: The vendor will be required to deliver curriculum based professional development to teacher leaders and district personnel in Albany, though this group of individuals may be different than individuals who comprise the NTI. The vendor will not be required to travel around the state to deliver PD.

12. **Question: Section 1.7.1 (page 54):** We would like to have co-Project Directors. The university has allowed us to be co-Principal Investigators on past projects, and this has proven to be a sound arrangement. It's a means of providing backup for

attending meetings and for getting documents signed and taken care of expeditiously. May we write our proposal with co-Project Directors?

Answer: Yes, NYSED will allow a proposal with co-Project Directors.

13. **Question:** Regarding the M/WBE provisions in the RFP, can you please advise us regarding how to weigh cost and convenience against the requirements of the mandate?

For instance, should we use an M/WBE contractor if we can have the work done significantly less expensively and conveniently on campus? There may be considerable photocopying during this process, for instance, but if we have to have a sub-contractor come to campus, retrieve our documents, take them away to be copied, and then return them to us, that may cost us time—and from what we have learned so far, extra money. Please advise regarding this priority: how should we weigh convenience and cost against this mandate, with which we are trying mightily to comply?

Answer: Bidders are required to comply with NYSED's Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE) participation goals. (see Page 3) Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) participation includes any and all services, materials or supplies purchased from New York State certified minority & women owned firms. The contact person on M/WBE matters is available throughout the application and procurement process to assist bidders in meeting the M/WBE goals. (See Page 18)

14. **Question:** Sorry I was unable to attend your pre-bidder's meeting yesterday. I'm hoping you could help us determine where, if at all, we would fit in this RFP and how to respond. Since we could provide only the technology component resources (below), is it possible that we just respond to only that area ? Or, do we look at partnering with another vendor or BOCES, to be included as part of their response? Any suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

Req (#) Description of the REQUIRED Products for 6-12 ELA & Literacy and 6-HR
Mathematics Curriculum Modules ELA Math

Technology Use

The use of the latest instructional technologies as tools that will ensure New York State students graduate college- and career-ready. Vendors are invited to propose technology components that they believe would enhance the curriculum modules in valuable ways. Expected uses of technology include, but are not limited to:

- Making content more engaging;
- Giving students extra time and support to build skill and fluency;
- Helping teachers give students more effective and timely feedback on their work;
- Providing differentiated instruction for Students with disabilities, s, ELLs, and students performing above and below grade level;
- Providing diagnostic information about students' prerequisite knowledge and skills;
- Enhance modules in other valuable ways as provided by vendors.

Answer: NYSED can not recommend the best approach for your particular firm; however, if your company can provide only the technology component, to be able to successfully complete the submission elements/requirements, it is likely that you would have to partner with a curriculum vendor.

15. **Question:** For Competitive Priority Area 2, the curriculum module and PD is listed for grades 6- HS Mathematics. There have been discussions around splitting up the content for 6-8 and HS, what level of discretion is there in choosing a grade level focus for the curriculum modules and PD? Additionally, should grade 12 be addressed, given the intent is to align with Common Core State Standards and these are addressed through grade 11?

Answer: The grade level focus for the curriculum modules and PD should be driven by the NY Content Emphases, as referred to throughout RFP. This document can be located here: <http://engageny.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/nys-math-emphases-k-hs.pdf>. The document refers to Pre-K through high school and grade 12 is included in the high school section.

16. **Question:** In addition to central texts, are there expectations that the vendor will obtain permissions for secondary texts that are part of units of study if the texts are not OER?

Answer: Any texts included in the ELA modules should have permissions obtained by the vendor, whether they are primary or secondary texts.

17. **Question:** Are the winning proposals for K-5 publicly available? If so, please provide information as to where they may be found.

Answer: The winning proposals for K-5 are not publicly available, but the press release is located here:

<http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/ELAMathCurricula.SEDAwardsContractsForDevelopment.htm>

18. **Question:** For 2.5.3C - ELA, 6-12, please confirm that NYSED requires an outline of one complete module for one grade in the 6-12 grade span.

Answer: Yes, NYSED requires an outline of one complete module for one grade in the 6-12 grade span as the submission requirement.

19. **Question:** Many contemporary, full-length texts are not available as OER. What are the expectations for obtaining permissions to use contemporary texts representing diverse cultures?

Answer: Expectations for obtaining permissions is the same for contemporary texts representing diverse cultures, as outlined in the mandatory contract requirements, attachment 2, see items 1 and 2.

20. **Question:** How will the field testing with NYC schools be coordinated? Will vendor be responsible for identifying school districts to participate, or will NYSED select them?

Answer: NYSED will recommend and select teachers with whom vendors can work with to accomplish field testing as defined in the RFP.

21. **Question:** Please clarify exactly how many days of PD are required for this proposal.

Answer: As listed in Section 1.6 of the RFP, 24 days of PD will be required from the vendor during academic years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

22. **Question:** Can you clarify whether the newly added ELL and SWD "team of experts" are different individuals from the curriculum specialists with expertise in working with SWD, ELLs, students above, and students below grade level? Section 2.5.1 (B) suggests two different groups of individuals but the functions appear to overlap. If different, can you please distinguish their roles?

Answer: The vendor must demonstrate the ability to provide expertise and guidance by providing a plan that includes scaffolding resources for ELLs, Students with disabilities, accelerated students, and students performing above and below grade level, both in curriculum materials and professional development.

Narrative should:

- detail internal expertise and/or a subcontracting plan to bring in curriculum and instruction experts of each of these student populations
- detail how such experts will be part of the curriculum development process from the outset to completion of the modules

- provide a plan for consultation with individuals who are widely respected in the fields of special education or English language learning, and approved by NYSED, to develop embedded resources and scaffolding.

It is expected that your team of experts in the education of ELLs and students with disabilities will work with their writing team at the outset of the work to help provide as much access for these populations as possible in the frameworks and development of the curriculum. Once draft modules are created, NYSED requires that the vendor work with those experts to incorporate student scaffolding, strategies and support for each population.

23. **Question:** If applying for the M/WBE waiver can you please clarify whether a vendor must provide an example of each one of the good faith efforts documents list (#1-6) from form 105 (pg 17) or whether these are suggested documents to provide. Additionally, are copies of emails sent to M/WBE providers considered sufficient forms of solicitation which would qualify as a "good faith effort"?

Answer: The contractor must document its good faith efforts toward meeting certified minority- and women-owned business enterprise utilization plans by providing, at a minimum, #1-6. (See Page 116) Additionally, the contractor must document M/WBE unavailability on M/WBE Form 105A (See Page 117)

Copies of emails sent to M/WBE providers are not sufficient to demonstrate good faith effort. The contractor must provide additional information including the responses, estimated budget and reason for non-selection (see Page 117). The contact person on M/WBE matters is available throughout the application and procurement process to assist bidders in meeting the M/WBE goals. (See Page 18)

24. **Question:** In section 2.5.3 (D) subsection (a) of the 6-12 RFP there is a requirement that vendors supply a high level draft scope and sequence chart that outlines the

number of modules for each grade level, the standards to be covered in each module, and the rationale substantiating the scope, process, and procedure. Is it acceptable for a vendor to submit a scope a sequence chart which outlines all of these requirements for a different group of grades than 6-12 if they are of equal number and meet the expectations laid out in the application?

Answer: The submission requirement for the scope and sequence chart must be for the grades requested in this RFP, grades 6-12.

25. **Question:** Do the in-person training days described on page 51 include all 500 attendees at the same time and in the same single space? If not, roughly how many attendees should we assume will be in the same space at the same time? I'm asking because of the budget implications. We need to know how many trainers we'll need at one time.

Answer: Yes, the in-person training days for each Competitive Priority Area will service all 500 participants at the same time (i.e. training for a cohort not to exceed 500 participants, over five, eight-hour, days in Summer 2013) at a single location (i.e. Albany in Summer 2013).

Each bid proposal should include the cost of 24 total days (8 hours of training each day) of curriculum-based PD, as well as two trainers per grade (for a total of 12 trainers per Competitive Priority Area). The delivery of the vendor's curriculum-based professional development may be presented by the vendor to all attendees in one room (plenary session) or by targeted "breakout sessions" (multiple rooms) where the total population would be divided into smaller groups.

The ultimate delivery PD configuration will be reflected in the final, NYSED- approved vendor PD design, the process for which is detailed in section 1.7.3 of the RFP.

26. **Question:** The 5-day in-person summer trainings are targeted to "teacher leaders, principals, and network team members," among which we're told we should expect

500 people. For budgeting purposes, how many people should we expect in the school-year in-person trainings which are targeted to "teacher leaders only"?

Answer: The in-person training days for each Competitive Priority Area during the school year will service 500 participants each session.

27. **Question:** Can NYSED confirm that applications for Literacy & ELA (Grades 6-12) should only include one sample module?

Answer: All ELA & Literacy applications only need to include the outline of one grade level in the 6-12 grade band.

28. **Question:** Can NYSED please elaborate on the level of student disability that should be addressed in the Students with Disabilities Scaffolds?

Answer: The definition of Students with Disabilities in the RFP states Term used to describe students who are classified as having a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act. All modules must be designed with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles as a framework. Additional methods of scaffolding instruction to support learning for students with disabilities must include teacher-led systematic and explicit instruction, with examples of use of teacher-led strategies such as modeling of proficient problem solving, verbalization of thought processes, use of mnemonics, visual imagery, word mapping, guided practice and corrective feedback.

29. **Question:** The RFP states that contracts will begin July 1, 2012 and Section 1.8 indicates that the first modules for Grades 6-8 must be completed by August 31, 2012 with additional modules due in October and December. Would NYSED consider postponing these deadlines in order to allow the selected vendor to provide the best possible content?

Answer: At this time, NYSED does not anticipate postponing deliverable deadlines.

30. **Question:** Can a bidder propose only one curriculum?

Answer: Yes, the bidder may submit a proposal for Curriculum Modules and PD- 6-12 NYS CCLS for ELA & Literacy or Curriculum Modules and PD - 6-HS NYS CCLS for Mathematics.

31. **Question:** Is the bidder able to bid independently

Answer: NYSED is not requiring any specific work of the RFP be done by a subcontractor if the bidder has sufficient support within the organization to meet the requirements. Bidders are however required to comply with NYSED's Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE) participation goals. The goals are **12%** Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and **8%** Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE). Please see the section on M/WBE Compliance Requirements for information regarding NYSED's Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprise Procurement Policy.