

California Department of Education

Executive Office

SBE-003 (REV. 11/2017)

imb-adad-jul21item02

# California State Board of Education July 2021 Agenda Item #04

## Subject

The California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress and the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California: Request for Approval to Proceed with the California Assessment System Request for Qualifications, Stage Four—Negotiations.

## Type of Action

Action, Information

## Summary of the Issue(s)

The California Department of Education (CDE) seeks approval to proceed with the California Assessment System Request for Qualifications (RFQ), Stage Four—Negotiations with the highest ranked potential contractor Educational Testing Service (ETS). This item provides a summary of the procurement process for the next assessment contract to develop and administer the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) and English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC), collectively known as the California Assessment System.

## Recommendation

The CDE recommends that the California State Board of Education (SBE) approve the request to begin negotiations with ETS for the California Assessment System contract to cover five administrations of the CAASPP and ELPAC, beginning July 1, 2022 through December 31, 2027.

## Brief History of Key Issues

The following section details the CDE’s proposed recommendation to the SBE.

### Procurement Process Status

The CDE issued an RFQ as a four-stage process to procure its next assessment contract for five administrations of the California Assessment System—the CAASPP and the ELPAC. This contract is projected to begin July 1, 2022, allowing for a six-month overlap with the current contract for transition activities, and continue through December 31, 2027. The four-stage approach to procuring the contract allows the CDE to identify an assessment contractor with the proven capacity and expertise to successfully implement the California Assessment System.

On April 20, 2020, the CDE released the California Assessment System RFQ, Stage One—Qualification, which began the procurement process for the next assessment contract. The complete set of the California Assessment System RFQ, Stage One—Qualification documents is available at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/r19/caaspp20rfq.asp>. In June 2020, an evaluation team, composed of staff from different divisions of the CDE and staff from local educational agencies (LEAs) from different regions across the state, met to score the California Assessment System RFQ, Stage One—Qualification submissions. Two potential contractors successfully met the evaluation criteria to progress to stage two of the RFQ.

In early August 2020, the CDE provided the California Assessment System RFQ, Stage Two—Mandatory Demonstrations criteria, to the two potential contractors who passed stage one. An evaluation team, composed of staff from different divisions of the CDE and staff from LEAs from different regions across the state, met in November 2020 to score the California Assessment System RFQ, Stage Two—Mandatory Demonstrations submissions, using an evaluation process similar to that which was used for stage one. The two potential contractors that passed both stages one and two and moved forward to stage three were Educational Testing Service (ETS) and National Computer Systems (NCS) Pearson, Inc.

At the January 2021 meeting, the SBE authorized CDE for stage three to request from the potential contractors a formal written submission containing a proposed scope of work, a draft proposed budget, and a transition plan, contingent on the availability of an appropriation for this purpose. The CDE received approval from the SBE to include the following goals and priorities in the stage three draft scope of work from the potential contractors:

1. Enhance the development and administration of high-quality assessments of the California Assessment System through the 2022–27 school years (e.g., summative, interim, and formative assessments).
2. Continue to improve the robust assessment system to ensure efficient, effective, and accurate results with enhancements to support multiple administration modes.
3. Explore and advance technology solutions that meet system capacity, performance, and usability to the greatest extent possible.

On February 5, 2021, the CDE provided the California Assessment System RFQ, Stage Three—Formal Written Submission criteria to ETS and NCS Pearson. The formal written submission requirements included a proposed scope of work, a draft proposed budget, and a transition plan. The formal written submissions were received by May 3, 2021.

As was done for stages one and two, an evaluation team, composed of staff from different divisions of the CDE and staff from LEAs from different regions across the state, met to score the RFQ Stage Three submissions. First, the evaluation team rated each proposal for pass or fail on whether the submission met the RFQ Stage Three criteria. Then, the evaluation team scored the technical proposal for each potential contractor. Following that step, the evaluation team scored the budget proposal for each potential contractor. After the RFQ, Stage Three submissions were scored, the evaluation team added the total scores for stages one, two, and three to reach an overall technical score. Lastly, the evaluation team took each potential contractor’s overall technical score and overall budget score and combined them to get an overall submission score. Potential contractors were then ranked on the basis of the outcome of this process. As a result of the California Assessment System RFQ, Stage Three—Formal Written Submission evaluation, ETS is the highest ranked potential contractor, as shown in Attachment 1. Attachment 1 also includes the breakdown of scores for stages one, two, and three.

The CDE is requesting approval from the SBE to begin contract negotiations with ETS. With approval, staff from the SBE, the Department of Finance, and CDE will commence contract negotiations and bring a recommendation to the SBE at the November 2021 SBE meeting. As required by statute, staff from the SBE, CDE and Department of Finance will participate in the contract negotiations.

## Summary of Previous State Board of Education Discussion and Action

In January 2021, the CDE received approval of the proposed goals and priorities to be included in the California Assessment System RFQ—Stage Three, Formal Written Submission (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr21/documents/jan21item03.docx>).

In March 2020, the CDE presented the four-stage procurement process for the California Assessment System RFQ (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr20/documents/mar20item07.docx>).

In November 2018, the SBE approved the contract amendment with ETS’s CAASPP contract to include the integration of the ELPAC (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr18/documents/nov18item08.docx>).

In March 2015, the SBE designated ETS as the CAASPP contractor, subject to conditions made in the SBE’s motion (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr15/documents/mar15item04.doc>).

## Fiscal Analysis (as appropriate)

The 2021–2022 Budget Act provides a total of $86,977,000 for CAASPP contract activities and $23,720,000 in funding for ELPAC contract activities. Funding for 2022–2023 and beyond will be contingent on an annual appropriation being made available from the Legislature in future fiscal years.

## Attachment(s)

* Attachment 1: Summary of the Evaluation Results of the California Assessment System Request for Qualifications, Stage One, Two, and Three (10 Pages)

## Summary of the Evaluation Results of the California Assessment System Request for Qualifications, Stages One, Two, and Three

The evaluation results of the first three stages of the California Assessment System Request for Qualifications (RFQ), a four-stage procurement process, are summarized in below. The California Department of Education (CDE) is providing the results to the California State Board of Education (SBE) as part of the recommendation to approve the request to begin contract negotiations with the highest ranked potential contractor for the next assessment contract to cover five administrations of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) and the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC), collectively known as the California Assessment System, beginning on July 1, 2022, and continuing through December 31, 2027.

### California Assessment System Request for Qualifications—Stage One

The evaluation rubric that the evaluation team used to score the California Assessment System RFQ—Stage One submissions is provided in table 1. Table 2 displays the results for each of the 10 qualification requirements of the Stage One evaluation for submissions provided by Educational Testing Service (ETS) and National Computer Systems (NCS) Pearson, Inc.

#### Table 1. Stage One: Evaluation Rubric

| **Percentage of Earned Points per Qualification** | **Category** | **Description** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 90–100% | Exceeds | The response is comprehensive, providing exceptional details and supporting evidence that the contractor thoroughly understands, meets, and exceeds the evaluation factors of the qualification. |
| 80–89% | Fully Meets | The response provides sufficient details and supporting evidence that the contractor understands and meets the evaluation factors of the requirement. |
| 70–79% | Partially Meets | The response provides some detail and evidence of how the contract will meet some of the evaluation factors. It does not provide sufficient detail and supporting evidence that the contractor fully understands and can meet all the evaluation factors of the requirement. |
| 1–69% | Does Not Sufficiently Meet | The response is inadequate, providing no or limited detail or supporting evidence that the contractor understands the evaluation factors of the requirement. |
| 0 | Not Addressed | The contractor did not provide a response to the evaluation factors of the requirement. |

#### Table 2. Stage One: Evaluation Results by Qualification Submission for ETS and NCS Pearson, Inc.

| **Qualification** | **Subject** | **Points Possible** | **Rated Score for ETS** | **Rated Score for NCS, Pearson, Inc.** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| One | Computer-based and adaptive assessments | 100 | 94 | 86 |
| Two | System access through a single  sign-on | 100 | 96 | 97 |
| Three | Test delivery | 100 | 93 | 90 |
| Four | Scoring and reporting | 100 | 94 | 83 |
| Five | Secure browsers | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Six | Reporting of test results | 100 | 94 | 81 |
| Seven | Item types and standards | 100 | 94 | 93 |
| Eight | Item bank and test forms | 100 | 87 | 91 |
| Nine | Item development and review process | 100 | 93 | 94 |
| Ten | Universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations | 100 | 91 | 92 |
| **N/A** | **Contractor Submission for Qualifications Total** | **1,000** | **936** | **907** |

### California Assessment System Request for Qualifications—Stage Two

The evaluation rubric that the evaluation team used to score the California Assessment System RFQ—Stage Two submissions is provided in table 3. Table 4 displays the results of the Stage Two evaluation for each of the five mandatory demonstration submissions provided by ETS and NCS Pearson, Inc.

#### Table 3. Stage Two Evaluation Rubric

| **Percentage of Earned Points per Mandatory Demonstration** | **Category** | **Description** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 90–100%  (180–200) | Exceeds | The response is comprehensive, providing exceptional details and supporting evidence that the contractor thoroughly understands, meets, and exceeds the evaluation factors of the mandatory demonstration. |
| 80–89%  (160–179) | Fully Meets | The response provides sufficient details and supporting evidence that the contractor understands and meets the evaluation factors of the mandatory demonstration. |
| 70–79%  (140–159) | Minimally Meets | The response provides acceptable details and supporting evidence that the contractor understands and meets the evaluation factors of the mandatory demonstration. |
| 1–69%  (<140) | Does Not Sufficiently Meet | The response is inadequate, providing no or limited detail or supporting evidence that the contractor understands the evaluation factors of the mandatory demonstration. |
| 0 | Not Addressed | The contractor did not provide a response to the evaluation factors of the mandatory demonstration. |

#### Table 4. Stage Two Evaluation Results by Mandatory Demonstration Submission for ETS and NCS Pearson, Inc.

| **Mandatory Demonstration** | **Subject** | **Points Possible** | **Rated Score for ETS** | **Rated Score for NCS Pearson, Inc.** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Attachment One | Capacity and Performance | 200 | 181 | 163 |
| Attachment Two | Item Types, Item Functioning and Rendering, and Item Banking | 200 | 187 | 187 |
| Attachment Three | Accessibility Resources | 200 | 188 | 188 |
| Attachment Four | Capture, Scoring, and Reporting | 200 | 199 | 194 |
| Attachment Five | Single Sign-on | 200 | 198 | 160 |
| **N/A** | **Submission for Mandatory Demonstrations Total** | 1,000 | 953 | 892 |

### California Assessment System Request for Qualifications—Stage Three

The evaluation rubric that the evaluation team used to score the California Assessment System RFQ—Stage Three submissions is provided in table 6. Table 7 displays the results of the Stage Three technical evaluation for each of the task submissions provided by ETS and NCS Pearson, Inc.

The number of points assigned for each task of the budget submission was a percentage of the overall available points similar to that used for technical scoring. For each task, the potential contractor with the lowest cost for the task received 100 percent of the points. Potential contractors with higher costs received fewer points on a prorated basis.

For example, task Y is worth 42 points. Potential contractor A submitted a bid of $1,000; potential contractor B submitted a bid of $1,500; and potential contractor C submitted a bid of $2,000. In this scenario, potential contractor A would receive 100 percent of the 42 points possible for the task. Potential contractor B, whose bid is 66 percent higher than the lowest bid, would receive 28 points. Potential contractor C, whose bid is 100 percent higher than the lowest bid, would receive 21 points. This scoring calculation example is shown in table 5.

#### Table 5. Stage Three Budget Scoring Sample Calculation

| Potential Contractor | Task Y Low Bid/Potential Contractor Bid | Percent of Low Bid | Percent x Task Y Total Points | Task Y Points Earned |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | 1000/1000 | 1 | 1 x 42 = 42 | 42 |
| B | 1000/1500 | .66 | .66 x 42 = 28 | 28 |
| C | 1000/2000 | .5 | .5 x 42 = 21 | 21 |

The actual budget scores for both ETS and NCS Pearson, Inc., are displayed in table 8. Table 9 displays the combined technical submission evaluation scores from Stages One, Two, and Three; and table 10 displays the final ranking of the submission results.

#### Table 6. Stage Three Evaluation Rubric

| **Percentage of Earned Points per Mandatory Demonstration** | **Category** | **Description** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 90–100% | Exceeds | The submission is comprehensive, providing exceptional details and supporting evidence that the contractor thoroughly understands, meets, and exceeds the evaluation factors of the task. |
| 80–89% | Fully Meets | The response provides sufficient details and supporting evidence that the contractor understands and meets the evaluation factors of the task. |
| 70–79% | Minimally Meets | The response provides acceptable details and supporting evidence that the contractor understands and meets the evaluation factors of the task. |
| 1–69% | Does Not Sufficiently Meet | The response is inadequate, providing no or limited detail or supporting evidence that the contractor understands the evaluation factors of the task. |
| 0 | Not Addressed | The contractor did not provide a response to the evaluation factors of the task. |

#### Table 7. Stage Three Technical Scoring Evaluation Results by Task for ETS and NCS Pearson, Inc.

| **Task** | **Subject** | **Points Possible** | **Total Rated Score for ETS** | **Total Rated Score for NCS Pearson, Inc.** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Task 3.1. | Comprehensive Plan and Schedule of Deliverables | 100 | 95 | 86 |
| Task 3.2. | Program Support Services | 100 | 93 | 77 |
| Task 3.3. | Technology Services | 400 | 378 | 353 |
| Task 3.4. | Test Security | 100 | 97 | 87 |
| Task 3.5. | Accessibility and Accommodations | 100 | 96 | 83 |
| Task 3.6. | Assessment Development | 500 | 480 | 424 |
| Task 3.7. | Test Administration | 500 | 484 | 403 |
| Task 3.8. | Scoring and Analysis | 400 | 379 | 336 |
| Task 3.9. | Reporting Results | 400 | 391 | 348 |
| N/A | Staffing | 400 | 381 | 315 |
| **N/A** | **Formal Written Submission Total** | **3,000** | **2,874** | **2,512** |

#### Table 8. Stage Three Budget Scoring Evaluation Results by Task for ETS and NCS Pearson, Inc.

| **Task** | **Description** | **Budget Points per Task** | **ETS** | **NCS Pearson, Inc.** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Task 3.1. | Comprehensive Plan and Schedule of Deliverables | 42 | 28 | 42 |
| Task 3.2. | Program Support Services | 42 | 18 | 42 |
| Task 3.3. | Technology Services | 167 | 50 | 167 |
| Task 3.4. | Test Security | 42 | 15 | 42 |
| Task 3.5. | Accessibility and Accommodations | 42 | 8 | 42 |
| Task 3.6. | Assessment Development | 207 | 149 | 207 |
| Task 3.7. | Test Administration | 207 | 207 | 140 |
| Task 3.8. | Scoring and Analysis | 167 | 167 | 149 |
| Task 3.9. | Reporting | 167 | 132 | 167 |
| N/A | Staffing | 167 | 114 | 167 |
| **N/A** | **Formal Written Submission Total** | **1,250** | **888** | **1,165** |

#### Table 9. Stage Three Overall Technical Scores for ETS and NCS Pearson, Inc.

| **Contractor Name** | **Stage One Score** (1,000 points possible) | **Stage Two Score**  (1,000 points  possible) | **Stage Three Score** (3,000 points possible) | **Total Score** (5,000 points possible) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ETS | 936 | 953 | 2,874 | 4,763 |
| NCS Pearson, Inc. | 907 | 892 | 2,512 | 4,311 |

#### Table 10. Stage Three Final Ranking Determination

| **Contractor Name** | **Technical Score**  (5,000 points  Possible) | **Budget Score** (1,250 points possible) | **Overall Solution  Score** | **Potential Contractor Ranking** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ETS | 4,763 | 888 | 5,651 | 1 |
| NCS Pearson, Inc. | 4,311 | 1,165 | 5,476 | 2 |