



BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SPECIFICATIONS

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS **EV00007954**

EXAM SCHOOLS ADMISSION ASSESSMENT

City of Boston - Procurement Office

One City Hall Square

Boston, MA 02201

RFP #EV00007954 Exam Schools Admissions Assessment (BPS)

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

Until: 12 Noon on Friday, May 15, 2020

NO LATE PROPOSALS WILL BE ACCEPTED

PLEASE NOTE ONLY THE NAMES OF PROPOSERS WILL BE READ AT THE OPENING

This Request for Proposals is issued on behalf of:

Boston Public Schools

Office of Welcome Services

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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SECTION 1. PURPOSE OF THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) AND GENERAL INFORMATION

A. PURPOSE OF THE RFP

The Boston Public Schools (“BPS” or “District”) desires to contract with a vendor to provide and administer an assessment in the fall of 2020 for admission to its three exam schools: Boston Latin Academy, Boston Latin School, and John D. O’Bryant School of Mathematics and Science. Test candidates include in-district “BPS” and out-of-district “non-BPS” (charter, private, parochial, and METCO) Boston residents in grades 6, 8, and 9. BPS seeks a rigorous high quality assessment that is bias-free and fairly assesses the academic achievement and potential of a diverse population of students.

The goal of a new assessment is to create a rigorous admissions process that is equitable, ensuring that the racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the District is reflected in the three exam schools. For reference, according to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, BPS serves a student body that is roughly 42% Latinx, 31% Black, 15% White, 9% Asian, 3% Multi-race, 0.3% Native American, and 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. English is not the first language for 48% of BPS students. Thirty-two percent of BPS students are English learners, and 20% are students with disabilities. A new assessment would be part of the District’s ongoing efforts to close opportunity gaps for students who have been historically marginalized. For this reason, the assessment must be validated for use with diverse populations.

There will be approximately 5,500 test candidates in grades 6, 8, and 9 who will be tested in about 90 different test sites in the 2020-2021 school year. An assessment must be provided for each of the various grade levels. The assessment should be able to appropriately measure the content knowledge for students at the beginning of the school year in grades 6, 8, and 9, as well as be able to differentiate among testers with varying content knowledge. The assessment should be aligned to MA Curriculum Frameworks standards in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. The assessment is one component of the admission criteria to each of the exam schools (listed above).

The test will be administered on four different days in the fall of 2020. If the contract is extended into future years, these test dates would be set and determined by BPS in collaboration with the vendor. Test dates from the 2019-2020 school year are given below for example:

1. Thursday, November 7, 2019 (school-based testing for BPS students)
2. Saturday, November 9, 2019 (main test day for non-BPS students)
3. Sunday, November 10, 2019 (for those with religious obligations on Saturdays)
4. Saturday, November 23, 2019 (“make-up” or “walk-in” test)

School-based testing will be administered in Boston Public Schools’ sixth and eighth grade classrooms. The number of test sites for this administration will be determined by Boston Public Schools, and will likely be around 75 sites. Weekend administrations of the exam will be for sixth, eighth, and ninth grade students at approximately 10-15 sites. BPS reserves the right to expand the number of testing sites in future years of the contract.

BPS understands that this vision may not be fulfilled through one solitary vendor or product. Therefore, the District is seeking proposals from vendors to provide the required components and as many of the preferred components as they offer. This RFP is for a three-year contract for test administration beginning in school year 2020-2021. A contract will be awarded to the vendor that provides the needed services effectively, efficiently, and economically.

The exam school admissions assessment is intended to:

1. Provide an assessment that inclusively allows students to demonstrate their knowledge and competency on MA Curriculum Framework-aligned content
2. Provide item-level and summary information that may be utilized as a core criterion for determining exam school invitations

B. GENERAL INFORMATION

Vendors are advised to conduct a thorough review of the RFP. Strict compliance with and adherence to the terms, conditions, specifications and all other provisions of this RFP are mandatory. This RFP includes the Standard Contract documents for the City of Boston / County of Suffolk that will be part of the Contract of the successful vendor.

C. QUESTIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

RFP CONTACT

With the release of this RFP, all communications must be directed in writing via email to the contact person below. No other City employee, consultant, or contractor is empowered to speak for the City with respect to this RFP. Any oral communication is considered unofficial and non-binding to the City.

After the proposal deadline, Vendors should not contact the RFP Coordinator or any other City official or employee, except to respond to a request by the RFP Coordinator.

The RFP contact is:

Boston Public Schools

Attn: Devon McCarley

Email: examschoolsrfp@bostonpublicschools.org

The website for this RFP and related documents is the City of Boston Supplier Portal which you can access via boston.gov/departments/procurement. All project correspondence will be posted on the Supplier Portal website. It is the responsibility of Vendors to check regularly for updates and any RFP addenda.

All questions must reference the complete RFP section number. All emailed questions must include in the subject line: "RFP: Exam Schools." BPS will not respond to oral questions regarding this RFP. Only written questions received before 12 o'clock PM on April 24, 2020 (EST), will be accepted. Written answers to questions will be posted on the supplier portal boston.gov/procurement. BPS shall not respond to any communication that is not submitted in writing to the above email address or mailing address. **Any other communication between a vendor and an employee of BPS may cause the vendor's bid to be rejected. Answers to oral questions shall not be binding on the BPS.**

1. Addenda

Any supplemental instructions, amendments, or changes to the RFP, or attached documents, shall be in the form of written addenda to this RFP. If issued, such addenda shall be sent by first class mail to all parties on record as having received an RFP at the address listed herein. Such addenda, if any, will be sent no later than five (5) business days prior to the deadline for submission of proposals.

Failure of any vendor to acknowledge receipt of any such addenda shall not relieve such vendor from any obligation under the proposal as submitted. At the time of the opening of proposals, each vendor shall be conclusively presumed to have received and understood all RFP documents, including all addenda, and the failure of any vendor to examine any form, instrument, or other document which is part of the RFP shall in no way relieve such vendor from any obligation arising under law from the submission of a proposal. Failure of any vendor's proposal to address any addendum or addenda may also result in the rejection of the entire proposal.

2. Other Information

Proposals not received by the deadline set forth below will not be accepted. Any proposal not completed in a manner specified in this RFP will not be evaluated.

A register of proposals with the name of each vendor will be open for public inspection following the opening of the technical proposals. The contents of each proposal submitted shall remain confidential, and will not be made available to competing vendors. Vendors wishing to review the contents of competing vendors may do so only after a contract has been awarded.

3. Timetable

Monday, April 20, 2020	Request for Proposals available
Friday, April 24, 2020	Deadline to submit questions
Wednesday, April 29, 2020	BPS responds to all questions
Friday, May 15, 2020	Technical and price proposals submission deadline
On or about May 27 - May 29, 2020	Vendor demonstrations
On or about Friday, July 17, 2020	Award contract

Proposals received after the specified date and time will not be considered. BPS reserves the right to decide how many vendors it would like to invite to provide demonstrations of their proposals.

4. Terms and Conditions

All contracts resulting from this RFP shall be subject to the General Terms and Conditions, Standard Contract – City of Boston/County of Suffolk (Form CM 10 and CM 11).

5. Contract Award

BPS reserves the right to award a contract to a vendor other than the vendor offering the lowest overall cost. The contract resulting from this solicitation shall be awarded to the qualified vendor whose proposal the BPS has determined to be the most advantageous, based on the evaluation criteria set forth in the Request for Proposals (RFP). BPS may choose to offer a partial or complete contract to any vendor. All contracts resulting from this RFP shall be signed by the vendor within a reasonable time upon receipt, which period shall not exceed 90 days. Thereafter the vendor’s proposal may be rejected.

6. Contract Term

The successful vendor will be awarded a three-year contract.

7. Termination of Contract

Any contract resulting from this RFP may be terminated at any time upon seven (7) days written notice, by the Superintendent, and/or her designee, upon the recommendation of the Senior Director of Welcome Services. No claim for damages will be made by, or allowed to, the Contractor because of such termination.

SECTION 2. SCOPE OF SERVICES

BPS is seeking the services of a qualified vendor to provide a secured assessment with related materials and services that may be used flexibly for the purpose of exam school admissions testing. The assessment must be aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The assessment will enable users to gather feedback to be used by the District to make exam school admissions decisions. Documentation must be provided by the vendor to support the psychometric soundness of the test instrument including reliability, content and construct validity, and evidence that the assessments are appropriate for a diverse student population. Proposal evaluation decisions depend on the assessment’s level of alignment to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics and the extent to which the vendor is able to provide the preferred components. The District is seeking proposals from vendors to provide the required component (Component 1) and as many of the preferred components (Components 2-4) as they offer. The vendor is responsible for ensuring that the assessment and related services are of the highest quality.

Component 1: Assessment Specifications (Required)

Assessment Description

- A. Description of the rigor and use of the vendor’s assessment.
- B. Description of each test section as well as the length in terms of number of items and/or testing time for the assessment per subject and test grade. The vendor must provide suggested timetables for each of the test sections with a total standard test time of no more than three hours. The vendor must also provide suggested timetables for students with accommodations and English learners (including the option to increase time by up to 100%). BPS reserves the right to amend or expand the time schedule of the assessment.

- C. Documentation to verify that items are aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, such as an alignment analysis, standards mapping, or crosswalk.
- D. Documentation to verify that items have been validated for use with diverse populations, ideally through statistical tests of assessment bias, specifically for Latinx students, Black students, students with disabilities, and English learners.
- E. Documentation to support the psychometric soundness of the test instrument including reliability and content and construct validity.
- F. Description of the vendor’s process for item development, including standards alignment and equity validation, item writing, field testing new items, content and copy editing, quality control, and review. The District expects to receive only high-quality items.

Item Development

- G. **Bias-free and fair:** The assessment should be free from bias and fair across race, religion, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and gender. At a minimum, proposals must include analysis regarding how the vendor has established that items are bias-free and specifically validated for use with Latinx students, Black students, students with disabilities, and English learners. The results of bias analysis should also be available and made transparent to BPS educators who seek this information.
- H. **Rigorous Massachusetts Curriculum Framework-Aligned Items:** The proposal will, at a minimum, include high-quality items aligned to the [Massachusetts Curriculum Framework \(MCF\)](#) standards appropriate for the testing population at the time of testing. The vendor must provide high quality items aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (MCF), standards and strands. Items must be provided in [Mathematics](#) and [English Language Arts](#) for fall testers in grades 6, 8, and 9. The assessment should evaluate depth of knowledge of standards.
- I. **Differentiation among testers:** The assessment should be able to differentiate among testers with varying content knowledge. The vendor must describe how the assessment is appropriate for the testing population’s grade, and describe how the assessment will differentiate among testers with varying content knowledge.
- J. **Item types:** The items will be multiple choice items.
- K. **Item descriptions:** At a minimum, proposers must describe the number of items aligned to the Massachusetts content standards, per subject and grade. The proposal must identify a sufficient number of assessment test items available to test each standard in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

Test Population Specific Needs

- L. **Students with Disabilities (SWD) Accommodations:** Assessments should include universal accommodations as well as accommodations/modifications for students with disabilities, with attention to necessary visual and audio support tools. The vendor should note that the Boston Public Schools will offer accommodations according to test candidates’ Individualized Education Plans and/or 504 Plans. The vendor’s proposal will, at minimum, articulate what accommodations are available to meet the following needs:
 - a. Read-aloud
 - b. Braille
 - c. Large print
 - d. Extended time testing
 - e. Breaks from testing
 - f. Basic 4-function calculator
- M. **English Learners (ELs) Accommodations:** Assessments should also include accommodations/modifications for English learners with attention to relevant audio support tools. The vendor should note that the Boston Public Schools will offer accommodations for eligible English learners in the form of word to word dictionaries and/or extended time for testing. The vendor’s proposal will, at minimum, articulate what accommodations are available to meet the needs of English learners.

Ongoing Support

- N. Timely Communication:** The vendor will provide a point of contact for the District with a dedicated phone number available for BPS staff to contact the vendor with any questions or issues before, during, and after the test administration.

The Exam Schools Admission assessment solution will, at a minimum, include Component 1 (Assessment Specifications). In addition to Component 1, proposals should clearly indicate the vendor's ability to provide the additional goods and services, or some combination therein, as described in Components 2-4. Provision of these Components is preferred, but not required.

Component 2: Paper Based Testing (Preferred)

For vendors providing a solution that includes a paper-based test (PBT), the proposal may include the following:

- O. Isomorphic Versions:** Paper-based assessments should include a minimum of three (3) but ideally 4 equivalent, isomorphic versions to be given over the course of 4 testing dates in about 90 testing sites.
- P. Printed Registration Packets:** The vendor will print comprehensive information packets with instructions for registration, instructions for requesting accommodations, instructions for non-BPS candidates to verify residency, and registration forms. BPS will collaborate with the vendor on producing content for printed registration materials. The proposal should indicate the number or range that the vendor is able to provide.
- Q. Unique Identifiers:** The vendor will create unique identifiers such as registration ID numbers that will be assigned to each candidate for the test administration. Unique identifiers must accurately correspond to the test candidate's registration information and be available for advance or same-day "walk-in" registrants.
- R. Test Registration:** The vendor will receive and scan completed test registration forms, and provide a file to BPS to include specific candidate registration information, including unique identifiers (i.e. registration ID numbers).
- S. Test tickets/labels:** The vendor will create a test ticket in collaboration with BPS to include specific candidate information for admission to the test administration session. Test tickets will be mailed directly to families or schools as designated by the district.
- T. Test Security:** The vendor will secure delivery and return of test books, answer sheets, manuals and other directives in sealed cartons to the locations specified by Welcome Services with a clear directive that the test center supervisor is designated as the only recipient of these documents, including the signature and printed name of the person signing for each delivery. Packages cannot be left at school buildings without a signature.
- U. Scanning and Scoring:** The scanning solution will include the use of pre-slugged answer sheets. Responses to machine-scored items will be automatically scored by BPS returning paper answer sheets to the vendor via overnight mail or BPS digitally capturing paper answer sheets into the system.
- V. Analysis and Reporting:** The vendor must return a secured data file on or before December 15th of each year of the contract, containing all of the test records for students, student information, item-level test responses, summary test information (including any standard-level subtest information, norms, percentiles, etc.).
- W. Test Preparation Materials:** The vendor will provide preparation materials, including a pacing guide and/or practice tests with sample assessment items to be published by the vendor and made available free of charge for test candidates, families, and educators. The proposal should include the format of the preparation materials, quantity and suggested use.

X. Ongoing Support

- a. Assigned Project Manager:** The proposal must assign a Project Manager to work with the district throughout all phases and create a project plan and timeline for the test administration process through the receipt of student scores. The portion of the Project Manager's time dedicated to this project must be sufficient to ensure a successful implementation.
- b. Planning Sessions:** The vendor will convene planning sessions and meetings as needed in conjunction with the Boston Public Schools (Welcome Services) to coordinate all activities for test administrations. With the proposal, the vendor will include the number of planning sessions to convene and the means through which these sessions will be conducted (in person, webinar, etc). BPS reserves the right to request additional planning meetings as needed.

- c. **Timely Communication:** The vendor will have a dedicated phone number available for central office and school-based staff to contact the vendor with any questions or issues before, during, and after the test administration. Such assistance should be available between 7:00am through 5:00pm eastern time (EST), Monday through Friday. All users must have access to technical support. The vendor must agree to respond in a timely fashion to requests for data files which include, but are not limited to, student data and student assessment results, with file descriptions. The vendor must agree to transfer all content and data, including assessments, results, and reports, to the district within 3 days, in the event of termination of this contract.

Y. Training Resources

- a. **In-Person Training:** The vendor will provide at least one in-person training annually to appropriate BPS personnel, including but not limited to Welcome Services staff, school-based administrators and teachers, onsite at a location within and designated by BPS. Training will be used for the preparation, organization, and staffing of test centers for administrations of the assessment. The vendor will focus on tasks to be completed prior to, during, and after the test administration.
- b. **Training Materials:** The vendor will develop, in collaboration with the District, training manuals for staff members serving as test administrators. All training materials (including webinars, presentations, manuals, etc.) will be made available electronically. The test manual should include, but not be limited to, overall best testing practices, testing protocols, instructions for test delivery, return of test materials, and recommendations for a positive test environment with suggested ratio of test administration staff to testers.

Z. Additional Assessment Items and Materials

- a. **Assessment Items for Other Subject Areas:** The proposal includes high-quality assessments and items aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework (MCF) standards and evaluates depth of knowledge in all subjects.
- b. **Assessment Materials in Additional Languages:** For a District where nearly 50% of students' first language is a language other than English, the vendor should provide any and all information regarding their ability to provide translated materials.

Component 3: Computer-Based Testing (Preferred)

For vendors providing a solution that includes a computer-based test (CBT), The proposal may include provisions for CBT administration, and a description of the assessment content and technical specifications for administration, including whether the assessment may be administered via the vendor's platform or may be administered via another online assessment platform. The vendor's solution for CBT must include a provision for students who require a paper-based test accommodation according to their Individualized Education Plan or 504 Plan.

- AA. Unique Identifiers:** The system must be able to produce unique identifiers such as registration ID numbers that can be utilized by each candidate to access a secured assessment at the time of the administration. Unique identifiers must efficiently and accurately correspond to the test candidate's registration information and be available for advance or same-day "walk-in" registrants.
- BB. Test Registration:** The vendor will provide options for both online and paper-based registration, and indicate the process by which paper registration forms will be accepted and processed. Both registration options will be developed in collaboration with BPS.
- CC. Test tickets/Labels:** The system must be able to produce printable test tickets or printed labels with specific test candidate information for secured admission to the test administration session.
- DD. Analysis and Reporting:** The vendor must return a secured data file on or before December 15th of each year of the contract, containing all of the test records for students, student information, item-level test responses, summary test information (including any standard-level subtest information, norms, percentiles, etc.).
- EE. Scanning and Scoring:** The scanning solution will include machine-scored items by students entering their responses directly using a computer.

FF. Ongoing Support

- a. Assigned Project Manager:** The proposal must assign a Project Manager to work with the district throughout all phases and create a project plan and timeline for the system's design/customization, implementation, training, and support. The portion of the Project Manager's time dedicated to this project must be sufficient to ensure a successful implementation.
- b. Planning Sessions:** The vendor will convene planning sessions and meetings as needed in conjunction with the Boston Public Schools (Welcome Services) to coordinate all activities for test administrations. With the proposal, the vendor will include the number of planning sessions to convene and the means through which these sessions will be conducted (in person, webinar, etc). BPS reserves the right to request additional planning meetings as needed.
- c. Timely Communication:** The vendor will have a dedicated phone number available for central office and school-based staff to contact the vendor with any questions or issues before, during, and after the test administration. Such assistance should be available between 7:00am through 5:00pm eastern time (EST), Monday through Friday. All users must have access to technical support. The vendor must agree to respond in a timely fashion to requests for data files which include, but are not limited to, student data and student assessment results, with file descriptions. The vendor must agree to transfer all content and data, including assessments, results, and reports, to the district within 3 days, in the event of termination of this contract.

GG. Test Prep Materials

- a. Content Preparation:** The vendor will provide preparation materials, including a pacing guide and/or practice tests with sample assessment items to be published by the vendor and made available free of charge for test candidates, families, and educators.
- b. Student Platform Navigation Tutorial:** The vendor will provide a brief tutorial of the assessment platform so that test candidates may familiarize themselves with all of the system's navigation functions and buttons such as 'next page' button, 'zoom/ magnify', and 'line guide' feature. The tutorial must be available online as soon as the contract is finalized for the 2020-2021 testing administration and by the spring for all subsequent years, and remain available through the last test administration.

HH. Training Resources

- a. In-Person Training:** The vendor will provide at least one in-person training annually to appropriate BPS personnel, including but not limited to central office staff, school-based administrators and teachers, onsite at a location within and designated by BPS. Training will be used for the preparation, organization, and staffing of test centers for administrations of the assessment. The vendor will focus on tasks to be completed prior to, during, and after the test administration.
- b. Training Materials:** The vendor will develop, in collaboration with the District, training manuals for staff members serving as test administrators. All training materials (including webinars, presentations, manuals, etc.) will be made available electronically. The test manual should include, but not be limited to, overall best testing practices, testing protocols, instructions for test delivery, return of test materials, and recommendations for a positive test environment with suggested ratio of test administration staff to testers.

II. Additional Assessment Items and Materials

- a. Assessment Items for Other Subject Areas:** The proposal includes high-quality assessments and items aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework (MCF) standards and evaluates depth of knowledge in all subjects.
- b. Assessment Materials in Additional Languages:** For a District where nearly 50% of students' first language is a language other than English, the vendor should provide any and all information regarding their ability to provide translated materials.

Component 4: Online Assessment Platform (Preferred)

The proposal may include the provision of an online platform for administering the assessment and retrieving results that is menu-driven and simple to use. The proposal will include a paper-based test option for students whose IEP requires this accommodation.

JJ. Rostering: Single-user and batch rostering capabilities must be available at the district-level, allowing all students to be uploaded to the system in a single csv, identifying student-school-teacher-test session relations within it. This includes ease of uploading student profiles, assigning students to teachers/test sessions, and printing test tickets.

KK. Interoperable, Efficient Technology

- a. The system must allow for web-based testing and administration without the need to download additional software (with the exception of Chrome extensions).
- b. Vendors must provide a description of the network bandwidth requirements, whitelisting, and any additional hardware requirements (i.e. caching server).
- c. Vendors must provide a description of the hardware and software configuration for the operation of the application and storage of the data. This should also include a description of the hosting environment.
- d. Online assessments should be optimized for ChromeOS with compatibility on all major browsers on Macs and PCs.
- e. Authentication into the testing platform by staff must be managed by one of the following methods. The Boston Public Schools strongly encourages the same authentication for students unless the use of a single-use password is required for test administration.
 - Google Apps
 - SAML
 - Clever SSO
 - Active Directory

LL. Test Security: The vendor should describe options for lock-down browsers, such as Chromebook kiosk apps, to prevent students from accessing other materials during testing. Proposals should include a description of the various user roles including district, school, classroom, test session, and individual levels. Proposals should include:

- a. descriptions and screenshots displaying common capabilities for each user role
- b. description of the process to update student information via an import or API call from the District student information system. This description should include how the system imports student demographic information, class rosters and educator information from the systems used by the District
- c. explanation of how the system enables educators to add and delete users and update test sessions
- d. provide the District with a written policy that ensures that the system is secure and that only authorized personnel, identified by BPS, are able to access data and reports which are submitted to or produced by the vendor. Agree, in writing, to adhere to all federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding the privacy of student and teacher data.
- e. The vendor will notify Boston Public Schools of any irregularities and subsequent action necessary as a result of the vendor's responsibility.

MM. Online Proctoring: The assessment platform will have online proctoring capabilities which allow test proctors to start test sessions, resume test sessions, monitor testing progress, and complete tests.

NN. Test Registration: Students will have the option to register in advance or on the day of testing. For vendors providing a solution that includes registration products, the vendor should indicate a description of the options available for student registration. BPS will collaborate with the vendor on producing content for registration.

OO. Analysis and Reporting

- a. Proposals should include a list of the reports currently available within the vendor's application, including screenshots of the various reports. Reports will be accessible online and should be available for printing or saving in an electronic format outside of the platform. All reports will also be printable, individually and in batches, in an easy-to-read format. The reports will not have awkward page breaks, orphaned paragraphs or orphaned answer choices. Proposals should indicate in what format reports are printed (e.g., PDF).
- b. The system should allow various levels of users to have access to reports. The system will allow the District to determine who has access to which reports and when they have access.
- c. Reports should display overall assessment performance as well as performance by standard.
- d. The reporting system must be menu-driven and simple to use. Where appropriate, graphic elements will be used to create a more user-friendly format for analyzing the data and to highlight areas in need of focus.

PP. Systems Support: Provide the District with information detailing specifications of any hardware or any other technology resources that the District will need in order to implement the vendor’s assessment solution. Provide ongoing maintenance and upgrades once the new system is successfully rolled out throughout the District. Provide the District with a plan for backup and archiving of the assessment data, which is consistent with all pertinent federal and Massachusetts laws, rules, and regulations.

SECTION 3. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

A. Minimum Requirements

1. The proposal must address all of the items listed under Section 2, “Scope of Services” listed below in the **Proposal Responses Table**, which should be completed by the vendor. The response descriptions for the table are as follows:

Response Descriptions

Y: Yes	The vendor’s solution includes the item.
N: No	The vendor’s solution will not include the item.
CR: Customization Required	The item can be provided, but customization is required. <i>Note: if it is stated that customization is required, the vendor, in the Comments/Clarification section must explain/describe:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The customization ▪ Who will do the customization ▪ How long it is anticipated to take, and <i>In addition, please specify in the Price Proposal:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What additional charges will be required, if any.
UD: Under Development	The item is not part of the current release, but is under development and will be provided in a future release. <i>Note: If the vendor identifies the item as Under Development, the vendor must, in the comments/Clarification section, note when the item is expected to be released, and whether or not procuring it will require an additional payment from the Boston Public Schools.</i>

Notes:

- Blank responses will be interpreted as a “No” response.
 - Only one response is permitted per item. Vendors may provide explanations and/or clarifications to responses for specific items.
 - Costs associated with “Customization Required” and “Under Development” responses must be included in the Cost Proposal.
2. **Vendor includes required documents identified in Sections 3 through 6 of the RFP including:**
 - Program Plan/Narrative
 - Demonstration of Organizational Capacity
 - Additional Materials
 - Overview of Product Background
 - Separate Envelope Containing Price Information
 3. Vendor agrees to be the primary contractor for the purposes of implementation and support of services delivered under any contract entered into pursuant to this RFP.
 4. Vendor submit separate, sealed price and technical proposals as required by law and the RFP.
 5. Vendor accepts responsibility for all work outlined in Section 3, part B, “Program Plan/Narrative”.
 6. Vendor signs and accepts Standard Contract City of Boston/County of Suffolk (Form CM 10 and 11). In fact, the submission of a proposal shall constitute an acceptance of all provisions of the RFP documents by the offer to perform all specified work, provide all specified supplies/services, and anything incidental thereto.

Component 1: Assessment Specifications

Item	Description	Y	N	CR	UD
<i>Assessment Description</i>					
A	Description of the rigor and use of the vendor’s assessments.				
B	Description of each test section as well as the length in terms of number of items and/or testing time for the assessment per subject and test grade. The vendor must provide suggested timetables for each of the test sections with a total standard test time of no more than three hours. The vendor must also provide suggested timetables for students with accommodations and English learners (including the option to increase time by up to 100%). BPS reserves the right to amend or expand the time schedule of the assessment.				
C	Documentation to verify that items are aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, such as an alignment analysis, standards mapping, or crosswalk.				
D	Documentation to verify that items have been validated for use with diverse populations, ideally through statistical tests of assessment bias, specifically for Latinx students, Black students, students with disabilities, and English learners.				
E	Documentation to support the psychometric soundness of the test instrument including reliability and content and construct validity.				
F	Description of the vendor’s process for item development, including standards alignment and equity validation, item writing, field testing new items, content and copy editing, quality control, and review. The District expects to receive only high-quality items.				
<i>Item Development</i>					
G	Bias-free and fair: The assessment should be free from bias and fair across race, religion, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and gender. At a minimum, proposals must include an analysis regarding how the vendor has established that items are bias-free, and specifically validated for use with Latinx and Black students, students with disabilities, and English learners. The results of the bias analysis should also be available and made transparent to BPS educators who seek this information.				
H	Rigorous Massachusetts Curriculum Framework-Aligned Items: The proposal will, at a minimum, include high-quality items aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework (MCF) standards appropriate for the testing population at the time of testing. The vendor must provide high quality items aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (MCF), standards and strands. Items must be provided in Mathematics and English Language Arts for fall testers in grades 6, 8, and 9. The assessment should evaluate depth of knowledge of standards.				

I	Differentiation among testers: The assessment should be able to differentiate among testers with varying content knowledge. The vendor must describe how the assessment is appropriate for the testing population’s grade, and describe how the assessment will differentiate among testers with varying content knowledge.					
J	Item types: The items will be multiple choice items.					
K	Item descriptions: At a minimum, proposers must describe the number of items aligned to the Massachusetts content standards, per subject and grade. The proposal must identify a sufficient number of assessment test items available to test each standard in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.					
<u>Test Population Specific Needs</u>						
L	Students with Disabilities (SWD) Accommodations: Assessments should include universal accommodations as well as accommodations/modifications for students with disabilities, with attention to necessary visual and audio support tools. The vendor should note that the Boston Public Schools will offer accommodations according to test candidates’ Individualized Education Plans and/or 504 Plans. The vendor’s proposal will, at minimum, articulate what accommodations are available to meet the following needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Read-aloud b. Braille c. Large print d. Extended time testing e. Breaks from testing f. Basic 4-function calculator 					
M	English Learners (ELs) Accommodations: Assessments should also include accommodations/modifications for English learners with attention to relevant audio support tools. The vendor should note that the Boston Public Schools will offer accommodations for eligible English learners in the form of word to word dictionaries and/or extended time for testing. The vendor’s proposal will, at minimum, articulate what accommodations are available to meet the needs of English learners.					
<u>Ongoing Support</u>						
N	Timely Communication: The vendor will provide a point of contact for the District with a dedicated phone number available for BPS staff to contact the vendor with any questions or issues before, during, and after the test administration.					

Component 2: Paper Based Testing (Preferred)

Item	Description	Y	N	CR	UD
O	Isomorphic Versions: Paper-based assessments should include a minimum of three (3) but ideally 4 equivalent, isomorphic versions to be given over the course of 4 testing dates in about 90 testing sites.				
P	Printed Registration Packets: The vendor will print comprehensive information packets with instructions for registration, instructions for requesting accommodations, instructions for non-BPS candidates to verify residency, and registration forms. BPS will collaborate with the vendor on producing content for printed registration materials. The proposal should indicate the number or range that the vendor is able to provide.				
Q	Unique Identifiers: The vendor will create unique identifiers such as registration ID numbers that will be assigned to each candidate for the test administration. Unique identifiers must accurately correspond to the test candidate’s registration information and be available for advance or same-day “walk-in” registrants.				
R	Test Registration: The vendor will receive and scan completed test registration forms, and provide a file to BPS to include specific candidate registration information, including unique identifiers (i.e. registration ID numbers).				
S	Test tickets/labels: The vendor will create a test ticket in collaboration with BPS to include specific candidate information for admission to the test administration session. Test tickets will be mailed directly to families or schools as designated by the district.				
T	Test Security: The vendor will secure delivery and return of test books, answer sheets, manuals and other directives in sealed cartons to the locations specified by Welcome Services with a clear directive that the test center supervisor is designated as the only recipient of these documents, including the signature and printed name of the person signing for each delivery. Packages cannot be left at school buildings without a signature.				
U	Scanning and Scoring: The scanning solution will include the use of pre-slugged answer sheets. Responses to machine-scored items will be automatically scored by BPS returning paper answer sheets to the vendor via overnight mail or BPS digitally capturing paper answer sheets into the system.				
V	Analysis and Reporting: The vendor must return a secured data file on or before December 15th of each year of the contract, containing all of the test records for students, student information, item-level test responses, summary test information (including any standard-level subtest information, norms, percentiles, etc.).				

W	<p>Test Preparation Materials: The vendor will provide preparation materials, including a pacing guide and/or practice tests with sample assessment items to be published by the vendor and made available free of charge for test candidates, families, and educators. The proposal should include the format of the preparation materials, quantity and suggested use.</p>					
X-a.	<p>Ongoing Support - Assigned Project Manager: The proposal must assign a Project Manager to work with the district throughout all phases and create a project plan and timeline for the test administration process through the receipt of student scores. The portion of the Project Manager's time dedicated to this project must be sufficient to ensure a successful implementation.</p>					
X-b.	<p>Ongoing Support - Planning Sessions: The vendor will convene planning sessions and meetings as needed in conjunction with the Boston Public Schools (Welcome Services) to coordinate all activities for test administrations. With the proposal, the vendor will include the number of planning sessions to convene and the means through which these sessions will be conducted (in person, webinar, etc). BPS reserves the right to request additional planning meetings as needed.</p>					
X-c.	<p>Ongoing Support - Timely Communication: The vendor will have a dedicated phone number available for central office and school-based staff to contact the vendor with any questions or issues before, during, and after the test administration. Such assistance should be available between 7:00am through 5:00pm eastern time (EST), Monday through Friday. All users must have access to technical support. The vendor must agree to respond in a timely fashion to requests for data files which include, but are not limited to, student data and student assessment results, with file descriptions. The vendor must agree to transfer all content and data, including assessments, results, and reports, to the district within 3 days, in the event of termination of this contract.</p>					
Y-a.	<p>Training Resources - In-Person Training: The vendor will provide at least one in-person training annually to appropriate BPS personnel, including but not limited to Welcome Services staff, school-based administrators and teachers, onsite at a location within and designated by BPS. Training will be used for the preparation, organization, and staffing of test centers for administrations of the assessment. The vendor will focus on tasks to be completed prior to, during, and after the test administration.</p>					
Y-b.	<p>Training Resources -Training Materials: The vendor will develop, in collaboration with the District, training manuals for staff members serving as test administrators. All training materials (including webinars, presentations, manuals, etc.) will be made available electronically. The test manual should include, but not be limited to, overall best testing practices, testing protocols, instructions for test delivery, return of test materials, and recommendations for a positive test environment with suggested ratio of test administration staff to testers.</p>					
Z-a.	<p>Additional Assessment Items and Materials - Assessment Items for Other Subject Areas: The proposal includes high-quality assessments and items aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework (MCF) standards and evaluates depth of knowledge in all subjects.</p>					

Z-b.	Additional Assessment Items and Materials - Assessment Materials in Additional Languages: For a District where nearly 50% of students' first language is a language other than English, the vendor should provide any and all information regarding their ability to provide translated materials.					
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Component 3: Computer-Based Testing (Preferred)

Item	Description	Y	N	CR	UD	
AA	Unique Identifiers: The system must be able to produce unique identifiers such as registration ID numbers that can be utilized by each candidate to access a secured assessment at the time of the administration. Unique identifiers must efficiently and accurately correspond to the test candidate's registration information and be available for advance or same-day "walk-in" registrants.					
BB	Test Registration: The vendor will provide options for both online and paper-based registration, and indicate the process by which paper registration forms will be accepted and processed. Both registration options will be developed in collaboration with BPS.					
CC	Test tickets/Labels: The system must be able to produce printable test tickets or printed labels with specific test candidate information for secured admission to the test administration session.					
DD	Analysis and Reporting: The vendor must return a secured data file on or before December 15th of each year of the contract, containing all of the test records for students, student information, item-level test responses, summary test information (including any standard-level subtest information, norms, percentiles, etc.).					
EE	Scanning and Scoring: The scanning solution will include machine-scored items by students entering their responses directly using a computer.					
FF-a	Ongoing Support - Assigned Project Manager: The proposal must assign a Project Manager to work with the district throughout all phases and create a project plan and timeline for the system's design/customization, implementation, training, and support. The portion of the Project Manager's time dedicated to this project must be sufficient to ensure a successful implementation.					
FF-b	Ongoing Support - Planning Sessions: The vendor will convene planning sessions and meetings as needed in conjunction with the Boston Public Schools (Welcome Services) to coordinate all activities for test administrations. With the proposal, the vendor will include the number of planning sessions to convene and the means through which these sessions will be conducted (in person, webinar, etc). BPS reserves the right to request additional planning meetings as needed.					

FF-c.	<p>Ongoing Support - Timely Communication: The vendor will have a dedicated phone number available for central office and school-based staff to contact the vendor with any questions or issues before, during, and after the test administration. Such assistance should be available between 7:00am through 5:00pm eastern time (EST), Monday through Friday. All users must have access to technical support. The vendor must agree to respond in a timely fashion to requests for data files which include, but are not limited to, student data and student assessment results, with file descriptions. The vendor must agree to transfer all content and data, including assessments, results, and reports, to the district within 3 days, in the event of termination of this contract.</p>					
GG-a.	<p>Test Prep Materials - Content Preparation: The vendor will provide preparation materials, including a pacing guide and/or practice tests with sample assessment items to be published by the vendor and made available free of charge for test candidates, families, and educators.</p>					
GG-b.	<p>Student Platform Navigation Tutorial: The vendor will provide a brief tutorial of the assessment platform so that test candidates may familiarize themselves with all of the system’s navigation functions and buttons such as ‘next page’ button, ‘zoom/magnify’, and ‘line guide’ feature. The tutorial must be available online as soon as the contract is finalized for the 2020-2021 testing administration and by the spring for all subsequent years, and remain available through the last test administration.</p>					
HH-a.	<p>Training Resources - In-Person Training: The vendor will provide at least one in-person training annually to appropriate BPS personnel, including but not limited to central office staff, school-based administrators and teachers, onsite at a location within and designated by BPS. Training will be used for the preparation, organization, and staffing of test centers for administrations of the assessment. The vendor will focus on tasks to be completed prior to, during, and after the test administration.</p>					
HH-b.	<p>Training Resources - Training Materials: The vendor will develop, in collaboration with the District, training manuals for staff members serving as test administrators. All training materials (including webinars, presentations, manuals, etc.) will be made available electronically. The test manual should include, but not be limited to, overall best testing practices, testing protocols, instructions for test delivery, return of test materials, and recommendations for a positive test environment with suggested ratio of test administration staff to testers.</p>					
II-a.	<p>Additional Assessment Items and Materials - Assessment Items for Other Subject Areas: The proposal includes high-quality assessments and items aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework (MCF) standards and evaluates depth of knowledge in all subjects.</p>					
II-b.	<p>Additional Assessment Items and Materials - Assessment Materials in Additional Languages: For a District where nearly 50% of students’ first language is a language other than English, the vendor should provide any and all information regarding their ability to provide translated materials.</p>					

Component 4: Online Assessment Platform (Preferred)

Item	Description	Y	N	CR	UD	Comments
JJ	Rostering: Single-user and batch roosting capabilities must be available at the district-level, allowing all students to be uploaded to the system in a single csv, identifying student-school-teacher-test session relations within it. This includes ease of uploading student profiles, assigning students to teachers/test sessions, and printing test tickets.					
KK-a.	Interoperable, Efficient Technology The system must allow for web-based testing and administration without the need to download additional software (with the exception of Chrome extensions).					
KK-b.	Interoperable, Efficient Technology Vendors must provide a description of the network bandwidth requirements, whitelisting, and any additional hardware requirements (i.e. caching server).					
KK-c.	Interoperable, Efficient Technology Vendors must provide a description of the hardware and software configuration for the operation of the application and storage of the data. This should also include a description of the hosting environment.					
KK-d	Interoperable, Efficient Technology Online assessments should be optimized for ChromeOS with compatibility on all major browsers on Macs and PCs.					
KK-e.	Interoperable, Efficient Technology Authentication into the testing platform by staff must be managed by one of the following methods. The Boston Public Schools strongly encourages the same authentication for students unless the use of a single-use password is required for test administration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Google Apps ■ SAML ■ Clever SSO ■ Active Directory 					
LL-a.	Test Security: descriptions and screenshots displaying common capabilities for each user role					
LL-b.	Test Security: description of the process to update student information via an import or API call from the District student information system. This description should include how the system imports student demographic information, class rosters and educator information from the systems used by the District					
LL-c.	Test Security: explanation of how the system enables educators to add and delete users and update test sessions					
LL-d.	Test Security: provide the District with a written policy that ensures that the system is secure and that only authorized personnel, identified by BPS, are able to access data and reports which are submitted to or produced by the vendor. Agree, in writing, to adhere to all federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding the privacy of student and teacher data.					

LL-e	Test Security: The vendor will notify Boston Public Schools of any irregularities and subsequent action necessary as a result of the vendor's responsibility.					
MM	Online Proctoring: The assessment platform will have online proctoring capabilities which allow test proctors to start test sessions, resume test sessions, monitor testing progress, and complete tests.					
NN	Test Registration: Students will have the option to register in advance or on the day of testing. For vendors providing a solution that includes registration products, the vendor should indicate a description of the options available for student registration. BPS will collaborate with the vendor on producing content for registration.					
OO-a.	Analysis and Reporting: Proposals should include a list of the reports currently available within the vendor's application, including screenshots of the various reports. Reports will be accessible online and should be available for printing or saving in an electronic format outside of the platform. All reports will also be printable, individually and in batches, in an easy-to-read format. The reports will not have awkward page breaks, orphaned paragraphs or orphaned answer choices. Proposals should indicate in what format reports are printed (e.g., PDF).					
OO-b.	Analysis and Reporting: The system should allow various levels of users to have access to reports. The system will allow the District to determine who has access to which reports and when they have access.					
OO-c.	Analysis and Reporting: Reports should display overall assessment performance as well as performance by standard.					
OO-d	Analysis and Reporting: The reporting system must be menu-driven and simple to use. Where appropriate, graphic elements will be used to create a more user-friendly format for analyzing the data and to highlight areas in need of focus.					
PP	Systems Support: Provide the District with information detailing specifications of any hardware or any other technology resources that the District will need in order to implement the vendor's assessment solution. Provide ongoing maintenance and upgrades once the new system is successfully rolled out throughout the District. Provide the District with a plan for backup and archiving of the assessment data, which is consistent with all pertinent federal and Massachusetts laws, rules, and regulations.					

B. Program Plan/Narrative

1. The program plan must be a clear, detailed, rationale, and concise description of how the vendor's program will provide the services requested in the Scope of Services in Section 2. Proposals should clearly identify the component(s) and related features and functionality, subject and grades for which the proposal is being submitted.
2. Proposals should indicate all equipment or facilities that the District and/or the schools will need in order to administer the proposed assessment offering(s).
3. Proposals should provide a specific timeline or schedule for the implementation of each activity outlined in Section 2 (Scope of Services).
4. Proposals should indicate personnel available for the different components of the implementation plan.
5. Proposals should specify any other assumptions to support implementation and deployment.

C. Organizational Capacity

The organizational capacity should show evidence of adequate human, organizational and technical resources, and have the professional ability to meet the needs of this RFP. The organizational description must include an organizational chart for the overall company responding to the RFP, showing an organizational chart in detail of the staff that would be implementing the various aspects of the services. Until contract award and acceptance, if a proposed team member is no longer available for any reason, then a letter shall be sent to the District designated contact for this project advising District of the event and the proposed substitute. The vendor will include the names and position titles of staff members assigned by the vendor to oversee the administration of the test.

D. Demonstrated Effectiveness

1. The proposal must include an overall description of all prior experience in the provision of admissions assessments. BPS reserves the right to verify any experience presented.
2. The vendor may be invited to perform an in-person demonstration as part of the award determination process.
3. The vendor must include the names of each school district with which they have contracted.
4. The vendor must indicate whether they have failed to complete any work awarded in the last 5 years.

E. Additional Materials

1. For the standards-aligned items:

- a. Vendors must submit at least 5 sample items aligned to Massachusetts content standards in English language arts and 5 sample items aligned to Massachusetts content standards in Mathematics, for each of the following testing grades: 6, 8, and 9. The vendor should also provide any related passages, images, or diagrams that students would access to answer the items.
- b. The sample items should convey the full range of item types and functionality available within each grade band.
- c. All items should be accompanied by the following information:
 - i. The standard and skill(s) being assessed by each item
 - ii. The depth of knowledge and/or level of difficulty of the item
 - iii. An explanation of the correct answer
 - iv. Scoring rubrics and exemplars for all constructed response items

F. Total Cost, Cost Breakdown, and Payment Structure

The pricing proposal must include a detailed cost breakdown including all products and services. **NO PRICING INFORMATION IS ALLOWED IN THE TECHNICAL PROPOSAL.**

SECTION 4. PROFILE OF PROPOSER

A. Vendor Information

Provide, as applicable, the following information about the vendor's organization, company, partnership, coalition, or unincorporated association:

- Vendor's name
- Federal Identification Number
- Office address and telephone number
- Name, email, and telephone number of vendor's contact person. *This person must be capable of committing the vendor to an agreement with the City.*
- Number of years vendor has operated under this name.
- Year vendor was founded and the number of years vendor has been in continuous operation.
- Number of full-time employees in the business organization.
- Number of full-time employees who will be servicing this contract.
- Racial demographics of the employees who will be developing the assessment and servicing this contract represented by percentages.

- Brief description of the nature of vendor's business.
- Type of business organization and where the organization is registered or incorporated
- The names and addresses of all parent corporations, officers, general and/or limited partners. If the vendor has conducted any business under any name other than the current name of the organization/company, state the time when, and place where, the certificate required by M.G.L.c 110, §5, was filed.
- Brief historical information about the vendor;
- Concise description of the test instrument;

B. Vendor Experience and References

As part of the Comparative Evaluation Criteria, the Evaluation Committee reserves the right to contact customer references to assess and validate the client's satisfaction with the vendor's services, if any; and to verify the successful performance of substantially similar work as claimed by the vendor.

SECTION 5. PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCEDURE

All proposals received by the BPS will be reviewed to determine if the proposal meets all of the minimum submission requirements referenced in Section 3 of the Request for Proposals. If a proposal meets these requirements, then an Evaluation Committee will evaluate and rate all such proposals, applying the evaluation criteria prescribed below. The BPS reserves the right to conduct site visits to verify facilities or other information contained in a proposal and may require a vendor to provide a demonstration of their services or an additional written presentation in support of a proposal.

A. Minimum Evaluation Criteria

Minimum evaluation criteria reflect those standards or attributes that the BPS considers essential to the satisfactory performance of the contract. The BPS will evaluate each proposal to determine whether it meets all minimum evaluation criteria:

1. Have the documents identified in sections 2 through 6 of the RFP been included in the proposal?
2. Has the vendor provided a scope of work for providing a bias-free and rigorous Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks standards-aligned items for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics for fall testers in grade 6, 8, and 9?
3. Has the vendor agreed to be the primary contractor for the purposes of implementation and support of services delivered under any contract entered into pursuant to this RFP?
4. Has the vendor submitted separate, sealed price and technical proposals as required by law and this RFP?
5. Has the vendor signed and accepted all Standard Contract City of Boston/County of Suffolk contract forms?

B. Comparative Evaluation Criteria

Only proposals determined by BPS to meet all minimum evaluation criteria, and to be otherwise legally responsive, shall be evaluated pursuant to the comparative evaluation criteria below. An evaluation committee designated by a BPS official shall prepare written evaluations for each responsive proposal. BPS will apply comparative evaluation criteria in deciding which proposal to select from among those that meet the minimum evaluation criteria. One of three (3) different ratings will be given for each criterion: "Highly Advantageous;" "Advantageous;" or "Not Advantageous." The more a proposal achieves the desired characteristics, the higher rating it will receive. The contract shall be awarded to the most advantageous proposal from a responsible and responsive vendor taking into consideration price and the evaluation criteria set forth in the RFP. The comparative evaluation criteria are:

A. Vendor Experience with Similar Projects

- A rating of **Highly Advantageous** shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating six (6) or more years of verifiable experience successfully providing goods and/or services to public school districts similar in size (i.e., 30,000+ students) and with similar student demographics as BPS for work substantially similar to the work described in this RFP.
- A rating of **Advantageous** shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating four (4) to five (5) years of verifiable experience successfully providing goods and/or services to public school districts similar in size (i.e., 30,000+ students) and with similar student demographics as BPS for work substantially similar to the work described in this RFP.
- A rating of **Not Advantageous** shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating three (3) years or less of verifiable experience successfully providing goods and/or services to public school districts similar in size (i.e., 30,000+ students), similar student demographics and with similar student demographics as BPS for work substantially similar to the work described in this RFP.

B. Item Quality: Bias-free and Fair

- A rating of **Highly Advantageous** shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating deep understanding and ability to create items that are culturally responsive for racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse testing populations, and inclusive of students regardless of socioeconomic status. A wide range of items and tasks reflecting inclusion of diverse experiences, perspectives and cultures.
- A rating of **Advantageous** shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating understanding and ability to create items that are culturally responsive for racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse testing populations, and inclusive of students regardless of socioeconomic status. A moderate range of items and tasks reflect inclusion of diverse experiences, perspectives and cultures.
- A rating of **Not Advantageous** shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating minimal understanding and ability to create items that are culturally responsive for racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse testing populations, and inclusive of students regardless of socioeconomic status. A limited range of items and tasks reflect inclusion of diverse experiences, perspectives and cultures.

C. Item Quality: Standards Alignment

- A rating of **Highly Advantageous** shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating deep understanding and ability to create items that are uniquely aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for ELA and Mathematics, not simply the generic Common Core Standards. As evidence, the vendor provides affirmative findings from an independently-conducted alignment analysis. Item tasks in Mathematics also demonstrate strong awareness of, and alignment to, the Mathematical Practice Standards.
- A rating of **Advantageous** shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating understanding and ability to create items that are uniquely aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for ELA and Mathematics. As evidence, the vendor provides affirmative findings from an internally-conducted item-standard crosswalk or an internally-conducted alignment analysis.
- A rating of **Not Advantageous** shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating minimal understanding and ability to create items that are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for ELA and Mathematics. As evidence, the vendor provides insufficiently compelling findings from an internally-conducted item-standard crosswalk or an internally-conducted alignment analysis.

D. Item Quality: Cognitive Demand/Rigor

- A rating of **Highly Advantageous** shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating a collection of items that represent a wide range of cognitive demand/rigor. All items are aligned to a specific level of rigor (e.g., Bloom's and/or Depth of Knowledge). Items and tasks reflect the rigor necessary to meet Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Across content areas, item responses require that students demonstrate conceptual understanding in addition to specific skills and knowledge domains.

- A rating of *Advantageous* shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating a collection of items that represent a moderate range of cognitive demand/rigor. All items are aligned to a specific level of rigor (e.g., Bloom’s and/or Depth of Knowledge). Items mostly reflect the rigor necessary to meet Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Across content areas, item responses require that students demonstrate conceptual understanding in addition to specific skills and knowledge domains.
- A rating of *Not Advantageous* shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating a collection of items that represent a limited range of cognitive demand/rigor. Some items are aligned to a specific level of rigor (e.g., Bloom’s and/or Depth of Knowledge). Items and tasks somewhat reflect the rigor necessary to meet Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

E. Accommodations/Modifications for Students With Disabilities

- A rating of *Highly Advantageous* shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating the provision of almost all of the accommodations/accessibility features that students receive in computer-based and paper-based test settings during state assessments. Vendors should consult the Next Gen MCAS accommodations manuals for the full list of accessibility features, which include magnification, large print, text to speech, answer masking, audio amplification, bookmark icon, color contrast, highlight tool, headphones, line reader, pop-up glossary, etc.
- A rating of *Advantageous* shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating moderate provision of the accommodations/accessibility features that students receive in computer-based test settings during state assessments.
- A rating of *Not Advantageous* shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating limited provision of the accommodations/accessibility features that students receive in computer-based test settings during state assessments.

F. Accommodations/Modifications for English Learners

- A rating of *Highly Advantageous* shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating provision of almost all of the modifications that English learners receive in computer-based and paper-based test settings during state assessments according to their language acquisition. Vendors should consult the Next Gen MCAS and ACCESS for ELLs accommodations manuals for the full list of accessibility features. These modifications include the option for a student to have audio support at any time during the assessment and word translation available in multiple languages.
- A rating of *Advantageous* shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating moderate provision of the modifications that English learners receive in computer-based test settings during state assessments according to their language acquisition. These modifications include the option for a student to have audio support at any time during the assessment and word translations available for questions and reading passages.
- A rating of *Not Advantageous* shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating provision of limited modifications for English learners according to their language acquisition.

G. User Interface and Usability of Products

- A rating of *Highly Advantageous* shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating—via account access to a trial demonstration site—a user interface that requires minimal clicks/navigation on the part of the user. The teacher and administrator portal has easy-to-use and intuitive menus, which are available on every page either in a sidebar or a title bar. Use of color, graphics, and space produce a clean and straightforward user interface. The user experience is consistent across multiple devices and platforms (e.g., Chromebooks, iPads, MacBook, etc.).
- A rating of *Advantageous* shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating—via account access a trial demonstration site—a user interface that requires moderate clicks/navigation on the part of the user. The teacher and administrator portal has easy-to-use menus, which are available on most pages either in a sidebar or a title bar. Use of color, graphics, and space produce a clean and straightforward user interface. The user experience is consistent across multiple devices and platforms.

- A rating of *Not Advantageous* shall be assigned for this category to a vendor demonstrating—via account access to a trial demonstration site—a user interface that requires considerable clicks/navigation on the part of the user. The teacher and administrator portal has unintuitive menus, which may not be available on every page either in a sidebar or a title bar. The user experience is variable across multiple devices and platforms.
- H.** Utilizing the **Proposal Responses Table** in Section 3 and the descriptions in Section 2, BPS will assess how well the vendor’s product/service meets the requirements of the District’s need for an admissions assessment.
- A rating of *Highly Advantageous* shall be assigned for this category when the vendor’s admissions assessment solution, based on review by the BPS evaluation committee, shows that the proposed solution substantially meets BPS requirements, as indicated by an overwhelming preponderance of “Yes” responses in the proposal responses table.
 - A rating of *Advantageous* shall be assigned when the vendor’s admissions assessment solution, based on review by the BPS evaluation committee, shows that the proposed solution meets BPS requirements, as indicated by a preponderance of “Yes” responses in the proposal responses table as well as select “CR”/“UD” responses with short implementation timelines.
 - A rating of *Not Advantageous* shall be assigned when the vendor’s admissions assessment solution, based on review by the BPS evaluation committee, shows that the proposed solution does not substantially meet BPS requirements, as indicated by “No” responses in the proposal responses table as well as “CR”/“UD” responses with extended or unclear implementation timelines.

Component 1: Assessment Specifications	(A. - N.)
Component 2: Paper Based Testing (Preferred)	(O. - Z.)
Component 3: Computer-Based Testing (Preferred)	(AA. - II.)
Component 4: Online Assessment Platform (Preferred)	(JJ. - PP.)

SECTION 6. PROPOSAL PACKAGE FORMAT

SUBMITTING PROPOSAL VIA BOSTON’S SUPPLIER PORTAL

<https://www.boston.gov/departments/771/how-use-supplier-portal>

The Supplier Portal provides vendors the ability to submit a proposal electronically, and is accessible from boston.gov/procurement at the Supplier Portal link. You’ll need to register with us in order to submit your proposal electronically; doing so will also allow you to receive email updates regarding this RFP and other opportunities. Please visit boston.gov/departments/procurement/how-use-supplier-portal for step-by-step instructions to register.

Upon logging in under your account, look for the event **EV00007954 “EXAM SCHOOLS ADMISSION ASSESSMENT (BPS).”** When responding, you will see specific places to upload your non-price Technical Proposal and other required forms. The Price Proposal must be submitted separately from the Technical Proposal according to statute. This is critically important. The evaluation team will complete its evaluation of the Technical Proposals prior to reviewing the Price Proposals. Attachments containing price information, including the Price Proposal, should only be attached to the price line and not in the Event Header attachments section. By uploading your file to the price line, the information will remain sealed and separated from the technical proposals until that evaluation has been performed.

In the section of **EV00007954** labeled "Step 2: Enter Line Bid Responses", please enter the total cost-per-student that also includes a detailed cost breakdown including all staff, services, equipment, and supplies price under the line “**EV00007954 “EXAM SCHOOLS ADMISSION ASSESSMENT (BPS).”** Next, click the icon on the far right of the screen labeled "View/Add Question Comments and Attachments." There you will find the proper location to upload your Price Proposal. Please visit boston.gov/departments/procurement/how-use-supplier-portal for step-by-step instructions

Submitting your proposal via the Supplier Portal can streamline the entire process, but please allow extra time to become familiar with the system. Upload any applicable documents into the Supplier Portal and SUBMIT your submissions well before the deadline so that you have enough time to make a physical paper submission if you have any issues with the City's Supplier Portal. We recommend submitting your proposal at least 24 hours prior to the deadline. Please note that Supplier Portal file uploads are limited to a 59 character file name length.

SUBMITTING VIA MAIL/ DELIVERY

Online responses via the City of Boston Supplier Portal are strongly encouraged, as there is limited building access due to COVID-19. However, hard copies of the Technical and Price Proposals may be submitted by mail, delivery service, or in person. Vendors submitting a hard copy must submit a complete Technical Proposal in a sealed envelope along with one (1) digital copy (thumb drive), and a Price Proposal in a separate sealed envelope along with one (1) digital copy (thumb drive). **The envelopes should be clearly marked as follows:**

Each proposal must be submitted in two (2) separate sealed envelopes, one containing only technical information and marked "TECHNICAL PROPOSAL", and the other containing only price information and marked "PRICE PROPOSAL". ***Under no circumstances shall any price information be included with a technical proposal.***

The vendor should submit one original and twelve (12) copies of the Technical Proposal, and one original and twelve (12) copies of the Price Proposal.

- A. **The Technical Proposal** shall be submitted in a sealed envelope marked:

City of Boston - Procurement Office
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201
RFP #EV00007954 Exam Schools Admissions Assessment (BPS)
TECHNICAL PROPOSAL
Submitted by: (Name of vendor)
(Date Submitted)

- B. **The Price Proposal** shall be submitted in a separate sealed envelope marked:

Boston Public Schools
RFP #EV00007954 Exam Schools Admissions Assessment (BPS)
PRICE PROPOSAL
Submitted by: (Name of vendor)
(Date Submitted)

- C. **Page Limit and Formatting**

Proposals must include a cover letter, table of contents, and page numbers. There is no specific limit on the number of pages that proposals may contain, but PLEASE BE CONCISE.

SECTION 7. PRICE PROPOSAL

Please include a detailed program budget. The pricing proposal must include a cost-per-student proposal that also includes a detailed cost breakdown including all staff, services, equipment, and supplies. **No pricing information is allowed to be included in the technical proposal for providing the service(s).**

The vendor will state the fee to be charged, if any, for service rendered for candidates registered but not tested for each year of the contract.

The vendor will rebate the Boston Public Schools for test scores requested by candidates to be sent to other schools. This rebate will be provided regardless of any fee waiver agreement granted through the vendor.