



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

RACE TO THE TOP ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

CATEGORY A:
COMPREHENSIVE
ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS



Selection Criteria			
(A)(1) Consortium Governance	Available	Ranges	Score
<p>The extent to which the consortium’s proposed governance structure will enable the successful design, development, and implementation of the proposed assessment system. In determining the extent to which the consortium’s proposed governance structure will enable the successful design, development, and implementation of the proposed assessment system, we will consider—</p> <p>(a) The consortium’s vision, goals, role, and key deliverables (<i>e.g.</i>, assessment components, scoring and moderation system, professional development activities), and the consistency of these with the consortium’s theory of action;</p> <p>(b) The consortium’s structure and operations, including—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The organizational structure of the consortium and the differentiated roles that a member State may hold (<i>e.g.</i>, lead State, governing State (as defined in the NIA), advisory State); and (ii) For each differentiated role, the rights and responsibilities (including the level of commitment to adopting and implementing the assessment system) associated with the role; (iii) The consortium’s method and process (<i>e.g.</i>, consensus, majority) for making different types of decisions (<i>e.g.</i>, policy, operational); (iv) The protocols by which the consortium will operate, including the protocols for member States to change roles or leave the consortium and for new member States to join the consortium; (v) The consortium’s plan, including the process and timeline, for setting key policies and definitions for the proposed assessment system, including a common set of college- and career-ready standards (as defined in the NIA), a common set of performance level descriptors (as defined in the NIA), a common set of achievement standards (as defined in the NIA), common assessment administration procedures, common item release and test security policies, a common definition of “English learner,” and a 	20	L: 0-5 M: 6-14 H: 15-20	

<p>common set of policies and procedures for accommodations (as defined in the NIA) and student participation; and</p> <p>(vi) The consortium’s plan for managing funds received under this grant category;</p> <p>(c) The terms and conditions of the Memoranda of Understanding or other binding agreements executed by each member State, including—</p> <p>(i) The consistency of the terms and conditions with the consortium’s governance structure and the State’s role in the consortium; and</p> <p>(ii) The State’s commitment to and plan for identifying any existing barriers in State law, statute, regulation, or policy to implementing the proposed assessment system and to addressing any such barriers prior to full implementation of the summative assessment components of the system; and</p> <p>(d) The consortium’s procurement process, and evidence of each member State’s commitment to that process.</p>			
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(A)(2) Theory of Action	Available	Ranges	Score
<p>The extent to which the eligible applicant’s theory of action is logical, coherent, and credible, and will result in improved student academic outcomes. In determining the extent to which the theory of action has these attributes, we will consider the description of, and rationale for—</p> <p>(a) Each component of the proposed assessment system and the relationship of the component to other components in the system;</p> <p>(b) How the assessment results produced by each component will be used;</p> <p>(c) How the assessments and assessment results will be incorporated into a coherent educational system (<i>i.e.</i>, a system that includes standards, assessments, curriculum, instruction, and professional development); and</p> <p>(d) How the educational system as a whole will improve student achievement and college- and career-readiness (as defined in the NIA).</p>	5	L: 0-1 M: 2-3 H: 4-5	

(A)(3) Assessment System Design	Available	Ranges	Score
<p>The extent to which the design of the eligible applicant’s proposed assessment system is innovative, feasible, and consistent with the theory of action. In determining the extent to which the design has these attributes, we will consider—</p> <p>(a) The number and types of components (<i>e.g.</i>, through-course summative assessments (as defined in the NIA),</p>	55	L: 0-14 M: 15-40 H: 41-55	

end-of-year summative assessments, formative assessments, interim assessments in mathematics and in English language arts in the assessment system);

(b) For the assessment system as a whole—

- (i) How the assessment system will measure student knowledge and skills against the full range of the college- and career-ready standards, including the standards against which student achievement has traditionally been difficult to measure; and provide an accurate measure of student achievement, including for high- and low-performing students, and an accurate measure of student growth over a full academic year or course;
- (ii) How the assessment system will produce the required student performance data (*i.e.*, student achievement data and student growth data (both as defined in the NIA) that can be used to determine whether individual students are college- and career-ready (as defined in the NIA) or on track to being college- and career-ready (as defined in the NIA));
- (iii) How the assessment system will be accessible to all students, including English learners and students with disabilities, and include appropriate accommodations (as defined in the NIA) for students with disabilities and English learners; and
- (iv) How and when during the academic year different types of student data will be available to inform and guide instruction, interventions, and professional development; and

(c) For each component in mathematics and in English language arts in the assessment system--

- (i) The types of data produced by the component, including student achievement data (as defined in the NIA), student growth data (as defined in the NIA), and other data;
- (ii) The uses of the data produced by the component, including determining whether individual students are college- and career-ready (as defined in the NIA) or on track to being college- and career-ready (as defined in the NIA); informing determinations of school effectiveness for the purposes of accountability under Title I of the ESEA; informing determinations of individual principal and teacher effectiveness for the purposes of evaluation; informing determinations of principal and teacher professional development and support needs; informing teaching, learning, and program improvement; and other uses;
- (iii) The frequency and timing of administration of the component, and the rationale for these;
- (iv) The number and types of items (*e.g.*, performance tasks, selected responses, brief or extended constructed responses) and the distribution of item types within the component, including the extent to which the items will be varied and elicit complex student demonstrations or applications of knowledge and skills (descriptions should include a concrete example of each item type proposed); and the rationale for using these item types and their distributions;

<p>(v) The component’s administration mode (<i>e.g.</i>, paper-and-pencil, computer-based, or other electronic device), and the rationale for the mode;</p> <p>(vi) The methods for scoring student performance on the component, the estimated turnaround times for scoring, and the rationale for these; and</p> <p>(vii) The reports produced based on the component, and for each report, its intended use, target audience (<i>e.g.</i>, students, parents, teachers, administrators, policymakers), and the key data it presents.</p>			
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(A)(4) Assessment System Development	Available	Ranges	Score
<p>The extent to which the eligible applicant’s plan for developing the proposed assessment system will ensure that the assessment system is ready for wide-scale administration in a manner that is timely, cost-effective, and consistent with the proposed design and incorporates a process for ongoing feedback and improvement. In determining the extent to which the development plan has these attributes, we will consider—</p> <p>(a) The approaches for developing assessment items (<i>e.g.</i>, evidence centered design, universal design¹) and the rationale for using those approaches; the development phases and processes to be implemented consistent with the approaches; and the types of personnel involved in each development phase and process (<i>e.g.</i>, practitioners, content experts, assessment experts, experts in assessing English learners, experts in assessing students with disabilities, psychometricians, cognitive scientists, IHE representatives, career and technical education experts);</p> <p>(b) The approach and strategy for designing and developing accommodations (as defined in the NIA), accommodation policies, and methods for standardizing the use of those accommodations for—</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(i) English learners; and</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(ii) Students with disabilities;</p> <p>(c) The approach and strategy for ensuring scalable, accurate, and consistent scoring of items, including the approach and moderation system (as defined in the NIA) for any human-scored items that are part of the summative assessment components and the extent to which teachers are trained and involved in the scoring of assessments;</p> <p>(d) The approach and strategy for developing the reporting system; and</p> <p>(e) The overall approach to quality control; and the strategy for field testing assessment items, accommodations, scoring systems, and reporting systems, including, with respect to assessment items and accommodations, the use of representative sampling of all types of student populations, taking into particular</p>	35	L: 0-9 M: 10-25 H: 26-35	

¹ Universal design for learning” is used as that term is defined in section 103(24) of the HEA.

account high- and low-performing students and different types of English learners and students with disabilities.			
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(A)(5) Research and Evaluation	Available	Ranges	Score
<p>The extent to which the eligible applicant’s research and evaluation plan will ensure that the assessments developed are valid, reliable, and fair for their intended purposes and for all student subgroups. In determining the extent to which the research and evaluation plan has these attributes, we will consider—</p> <p>(a) The plan for identifying and employing psychometric techniques suitable to verify, as appropriate to each assessment component, its construct, consequential, and predictive validity; external validity; reliability; fairness; precision across the full performance continuum; and comparability within and across grade levels; and</p> <p>(b) The plan for determining whether the assessments are being implemented as designed and the theory of action is being realized, including whether the intended effects on individuals and institutions are being achieved.</p>	30	L: 0-8 M: 9-21 H: 22-30	

(A)(6) Professional Capacity and Outreach	Available	Ranges	Score
<p>The extent to which the eligible applicant’s plan for implementing the proposed assessment system is feasible, cost-effective, and consistent with the theory of action. In determining the extent to which the implementation plan has these attributes, we will consider—</p> <p>(a) The plan for supporting teachers and administrators in implementing the assessment system and for developing, in an ongoing manner, the professional capacity to use the assessments and results to inform and improve instructional practice; and</p> <p>(b) The strategy and plan for informing the public and key stakeholders (including legislators and policymakers) in each member State about the assessment system and for building support for the system from the public and those stakeholders.</p>	15	L: 0-4 M: 5-10 H: 11-15	

(A)(7) Technology Approach	Available	Ranges	Score
<p>The extent to which the eligible applicant is using technology effectively to improve the quality, accessibility, cost-effectiveness, and efficiency of the proposed assessment system. In determining the extent to which the eligible applicant is using technology effectively, we will consider—</p>	10	L: 0-2 M: 3-7 H: 8-10	

<p>(a) The description of, and rationale for—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The ways in which technology will be used in assessment design, development, administration, scoring, and reporting; (ii) The types of technology to be used (including whether the technology is existing and commercially-available or is being newly developed); and (iii) How other States or organizations can re-use in a cost effective manner any technology platforms and technology components developed under this grant; and <p>(b) How technology-related implementation or deployment barriers will be addressed (<i>e.g.</i>, issues relating to local access to internet-based assessments).</p>			
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(A)(8) Project Management	Available	Ranges	Score
<p>The extent to which the eligible applicant’s project management plan will result in implementation of the proposed assessment system on time, within budget, and in a manner that is financially sustainable over time. In determining the extent to which the project management plan has these attributes, we will consider—</p> <p>(a) The quality, qualifications, and role of the project management partner, as evidenced by its mission, date of founding, size, experience (including past success in implementing similar projects), and key personnel assigned to this project (including their names, curricula vitae, roles, percent of time dedicated to this project, and experience in managing similar projects);</p> <p>(b) The project workplan and timeline, including, for each key deliverable (<i>e.g.</i>, assessment component, scoring and moderation system, professional development activities), the major milestones, deadlines, and entities responsible for execution; and the approach to identifying, managing, and mitigating risks associated with the project;</p> <p>(c) The extent to which the eligible applicant’s budget—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Clearly identifies Level 1 budget modules (as defined in the NIA) and any Level 2 budget modules (as defined in the NIA); (ii) Is adequate to support the development of an assessment system that meets the requirements of the absolute priority; and (iii) Includes costs that are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the proposed project and the number of students to be served; and <p>(d) For each member State, the estimated costs for the ongoing administration, maintenance, and enhancement</p>	30	L: 0-8 M: 9-21 H: 22-30	

of operational assessments in the proposed assessment system and a plan for how the State will fund the assessment system over time (including by allocating to the assessment system funds for existing State or local assessments that will be replaced by assessments in the system).			
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Competitive Preference Priority: Collaboration and Alignment with Higher Education	Available	Range	Score
<p>The Department gives eligible applicants competitive preference points based on the extent to which they have promoted collaboration and alignment between member States’ public elementary and secondary education systems and their public IHEs (as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA)) or systems of those IHEs. Eligible applicants addressing this priority must provide, for each IHE or IHE system, a letter of intent that—</p> <p>(a) Commits the IHE or IHE system to participate with the consortium in the design and development of the consortium’s final high school summative assessments in mathematics and English language arts in order to ensure that the assessments measure college readiness;</p> <p>(b) Commits the IHE or IHE system to implement policies, once the final high school summative assessments are implemented, that exempt from remedial courses and place into credit-bearing college courses any student who meets the consortium-adopted achievement standard (as defined in the NIA) for each assessment and any other placement requirement established by the IHE or IHE system; and</p> <p>(c) Is signed by the State’s higher education executive officer (if the State has one) and the president or head of each participating IHE or IHE system.</p> <p>All letters of intent must provide the total number of direct matriculation students (as defined in the NIA) in the partner IHE or IHE system in the 2008-2009 school year. An eligible applicant must also provide the total number of direct matriculation students (as defined in the NIA) in public IHEs in the consortium’s member States.</p> <p>The Department will award up to 20 competitive preference points based on the strength of commitment demonstrated in the letters of intent and on the percentage of direct matriculation students in public IHEs in the member States who are direct matriculation students in the partner IHEs or IHE systems. To receive full competitive preference points under this priority, eligible applicants must provide letters of intent that demonstrate strong commitment from each partner IHE or IHE system and that represent at least 30 percent of direct matriculation students in public IHEs in member States. No points will be awarded for letters of intent that represent fewer than 10 percent of direct matriculation students in public IHEs in member States.</p>	20	0-20	

Absolute Priority: Comprehensive Assessment Systems Measuring Student Achievement Against Common College- and Career-Ready Standards	Yes/No	
<p>Under this priority, the Department supports the development of new assessment systems that will be used by multiple States; are valid, reliable, and fair for their intended purposes and for all student subgroups; and measure student knowledge and skills against a common set of college- and career-ready standards in mathematics and English language arts. To meet this absolute priority, an eligible applicant must demonstrate in its application that it will develop and implement an assessment system that—</p> <p>(a) Measures student knowledge and skills against a common set of college- and career-ready standards (as defined in the NIA) in mathematics and English language arts in a way that—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Covers the full range of those standards, including standards against which student achievement has traditionally been difficult to measure; (ii) As appropriate, elicits complex student demonstrations or applications of knowledge and skills; (iii) Provides an accurate measure of student achievement across the full performance continuum, including for high- and low-achieving students; and (iv) Provides an accurate measure of student growth over a full academic year or course; <p>(b) Consists of assessment components in mathematics and in English language arts that include, for each subject, one or more summative assessment components that—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Are administered at least once during the academic year in grades 3 through 8 and at least once in high school; and (ii) Produce student achievement data and student growth data (both as defined in the NIA) that can be used to determine whether individual students are college- and career-ready (as defined in the NIA) or on track to being college- and career-ready (as defined in the NIA); <p>(c) Assesses all students, including English learners (as defined in the NIA) and students with disabilities (as defined in the NIA); and</p> <p>(d) Produces data, including student achievement data and student growth data, that can be used to inform—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Determinations of school effectiveness for purposes of accountability under Title I of the ESEA; (ii) Determinations of individual principal and teacher effectiveness for purposes of evaluation; (iii) Determinations of principal and teacher professional development and support needs; and (iv) Teaching, learning, and program improvement. 		

Level 1 and Level 2 Budget Modules		
<p>Budgets and budget narratives should provide a detailed description of how the applicant plans to use their Federal Race to the Top Assessment grant funds, and how they plan to leverage other Federal, State, or philanthropic funds toward the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed Comprehensive Assessment System.</p> <p>Applicants must identify and develop budgets for all Level 1 budget modules (as defined in the NIA). A Level 1 budget module means a budget module that (a) is necessary to delivering operational summative assessments in both mathematics and English language arts no later than school year 2014-2015, or (b) is otherwise necessary to the eligible applicant’s proposed project and consistent with the eligible applicant’s theory of action. The total requested funds for all Level 1 budget modules (as defined in the NIA) may not exceed \$150 million. If an applicant can design, develop, implement, and evaluate its proposed Comprehensive Assessment System with total requested funds of \$150 million or less, then the applicant should include only Level 1 budget modules (as defined in the NIA) and should not include any Level 2 budget modules (as defined in the NIA).</p> <p>However, if an applicant cannot fully fund its proposal within \$150 million, the applicant may identify Level 2 budget modules (as defined in the NIA). In the event that there is funding available, the Department will fund Level 2 budget modules (as defined in the NIA) in priority order. Thus, in order to ensure that Level 2 budget modules (as defined in the NIA) are funded in the order of importance, the Department is asking all applicants to prioritize their Level 2 budget modules (as defined in the NIA). Each Level 2 budget module (as defined in the NIA) may not exceed \$10 million in total funds requested.</p> <p>Applicants must submit a detailed budget table and narrative for each proposed Level 1 and Level 2 budget module (both as defined in the NIA); these are designed to allow applicants to describe in detail how their budgets align with their proposed tasks and activities and how their proposed budgets support the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed Comprehensive Assessment System.</p>		

DEFINITIONS

Accommodations means changes in the administration of an assessment, including but not limited to changes in assessment setting, scheduling, timing, presentation format, response mode, and combinations of these changes, that do not change the construct intended to be measured by the assessment or the meaning of the resulting scores. Accommodations must be used for equity in assessment and not provide advantage to students eligible to receive them.

Achievement standard means the level of student achievement on summative assessments that indicates that (a) for the final high school summative assessments in mathematics or English language arts, a student is college- and career-ready (as defined in the NIA); or (b) for summative assessments in mathematics or English language arts at a grade level other than the final high school summative assessments, a student is on track to being college- and career-ready (as defined in the NIA). An achievement standard must be determined using empirical evidence over time.

College- and career-ready (or readiness) means, with respect to a student, that the student is prepared for success, without remediation, in credit-bearing entry-level courses in an IHE (as defined in section 101(a) of the HEA), as demonstrated by an assessment score that meets or exceeds the achievement standard (as defined in the NIA) for the final high school summative assessment in mathematics or English language arts.

Common set of college- and career-ready standards means a set of academic content standards for grades K-12 that (a) define what a student must know and be able to do at each grade level; (b) if mastered, would ensure that the student is college- and career-ready (as defined in the NIA) by the time of high school graduation; and (c) are substantially identical across all States in a consortium. A State may supplement the common set of college- and career-ready standards with additional content standards, provided that the additional standards do not comprise more than 15 percent of the State's total standards for that content area.

Direct matriculation student means a student who entered college as a freshman within two years of graduating from high school.

English learner means a student who is an English learner as that term is defined by the consortium. The consortium must define the term in a manner that is uniform across member States and consistent with section 9101(25) of the ESEA.

Governing State means a State that (a) is a member of only one consortium applying for a grant in the competition category, (b) has an active role in policy decision-making for the consortium, and (c) is committed to using the assessment system or program developed by the consortium.

Level 1 budget module means a budget module for which an eligible applicant is seeking funds under the Comprehensive Assessment Systems grant category that (a) is necessary to delivering operational summative assessments in both mathematics and English language arts

no later than school year 2014-2015, or (b) is otherwise necessary to the eligible applicant's proposed project and consistent with the eligible applicant's theory of action.

Level 2 budget module means any budget module for which an eligible applicant is seeking funds under the Comprehensive Assessment Systems grant category other than a Level 1 budget module. An eligible applicant must prioritize Level 2 budget modules in the order of importance to the implementation of the proposed project.

Moderation system means a system for ensuring that human scoring of complex item types, such as extended responses or performance tasks, is accurate, consistent across schools and States, and fair to all students.

On track to being college- and career-ready² means, with respect to a student, that the student is performing at or above grade level such that the student will be college- and career-ready (as defined in the NIA) by the time of high school graduation, as demonstrated by an assessment score that meets or exceeds the achievement standard (as defined in the NIA) for the student's grade level on a summative assessment in mathematics or English language arts.

Performance level descriptor means a statement or description of a set of knowledge and skills exemplifying a level of performance associated with a standard.

Student achievement data means data regarding an individual student's mastery of tested content standards. Student achievement data from summative assessment components must be reported in a way that can be reliably aggregated across multiple students at the subgroup, classroom, school, LEA, and State levels.

Student growth data means data regarding the change in student achievement data (as defined in the NIA) between two or more points in time. Student growth data from summative assessment components must be reported in a way that can be reliably aggregated across multiple students at the subgroup, classroom, school, LEA, and State levels and over a full academic year or course.

Student with a disability means, for purposes of this competition, a student who has been identified as a student with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as amended (IDEA), except for a student with a disability who is eligible to participate in alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards consistent with 34 CFR 200.6(a)(2).

Through-course summative assessment means an assessment system component or set of assessment system components that is administered periodically during the academic year. A student's results from through-course summative assessments must be combined to produce the student's total summative assessment score for that academic year.

² The term on track to being college- and career-ready is used in place of the term "proficiency" that is used in section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA.