Addendum 1 SBAC RFP-15
Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium
Reporting System, Questions & Answers

PROJECT TITLE: SMARTER Balanced Assessment CONSORTIUM to Develop the Reporting System for the Summative and Interim Assessments

Q1. What are the different formats of data that is being captured in the source systems (OLTP applications)?

Answer: Vendors should reference section 8 of the Smarter Balanced IT Systems Architecture for information regarding data formats; the Consortium is looking at the Assessment Interoperability Framework and its incorporation into CEDS using a combination of SIF and QTI with APIP enhancements, in addition to other data formats described in the Systems Architecture. Vendors should reference sections 4.4, 8, and 11 of the Systems Architecture for information regarding data transport. Vendors should make explicit their assumptions regarding additional details that have not yet been described in the Systems Architecture.

Q2. What are the different types of technologies/applications used to capture the source systems?

Answer: Where known, source applications and data flows (to data warehouse) are described in the Smarter Balanced IT Systems Architecture. Vendors will have to make explicit their assumptions regarding additional details that have not yet been described in the Systems Architecture.

Q3. How often we should extract the data from source systems into the Data warehouse? Will it be on Daily basis or Weekly basis monthly basis or Real time basis?

Answer: During testing windows, data should be extracted on a nightly basis at a minimum. Vendors should propose their recommended solution based upon their experience with similar projects in the past. Vendors should consider variables such as efficiency, system load, and likely reporting needs (e.g., recently) as well as impacts on source systems. Vendors should make explicit any additional assumptions that are relevant to their proposal.

Q4. Please state the number of source systems?

Answer: Where known, source applications and data flows (to data warehouse) are described in the Smarter Balanced IT Systems Architecture. Vendors will have to make explicit their assumptions regarding additional details that have not yet been described in the Systems Architecture.

Q5. In order to build the successful Data warehouse and BI reporting application, it is our assumption that the common standards are followed by the participating states, otherwise there will be an impact on the project delivery. Please correct if otherwise.

Answer: If the question refers to the content standards: vendors should propose a system based on implementation of the Common Core State Standards as written but should include a means by which variations in implementation might be incorporated.

If the question refers to data standards: vendors should assume uniform adherence to data standards but should include a method to conduct quality control checks that identify and correct likely deviations from data standards. In addition, there should be a system of errors and warnings that help to improve data quality.

Q6. What will be the expected volume of data (Sizing of data) that will be extracted into the Data warehouse on daily basis?

Answer: The data that will be imported into the data warehouse on a daily basis will include item responses (upwards of 60-70 items per content area test), student and test demographics (on the order of 75 bytes/student), and item metadata (on the order of 50 bytes per item). Vendors should include data volume assumptions as a part of their response and include these assumptions in developing their budget proposal.

Proposals should leverage scalable architectures that can be adjusted to efficiently store more or less data than estimated.

Q7. What will be the expected growth of the Data warehouse for the next three years – in terms of the volumes of data? We would like to know as new states added are added to this application, the users and the volumes of data will change.

Answer: This information should not affect development. Proposals should assume large-scale implementation with scalable architectures that can be adjusted to efficiently store more or less data than estimated.

Q8. Is it mandatory to use only open source technologies to propose this solution? Can we propose a mix of open source and proprietary tools for this solution? Do we need to prepare a road map on how we are going to implement a complete open source solution may be in next 5-6 years?

Answer: Proprietary tools to which the Consortium does not have rights will be considered undesirable, but if included, the proposal will not be considered non-responsive. Proposals that include an approach that is aligned with the goals of open source will be considered more desirable. The Consortium will select proposals based in part on the degree to which they provide a road map to open source and low total cost of ownership.

Q9. Does the cost proposal need to include hardware and software costs as well?

Answer: Yes. All components necessary for the design and implementation of the Reporting System.

Q10. Can SBAC clarify what the difference is between the following deliverables: (a) the "report mock-ups" referenced on page 10 in the fourth and fifth bullet under the Reporting System Requirements that are supposed to be delivered between 7/2012 and 10/2012, (b) the "report designs" referenced in the second bullet under Design Beta Reports on page 11 that are delivered between 8/2012 and 11/2012, (c) the "mock-up reports" referenced in the third bullet under Design Beta Reports on page 11 that are delivered between 8/2012 and 11/2012, (d) the "beta reports" referenced in the fourth bullet under Design Beta Reports on page 11 that are delivered between 8/2012 and 11/2012? They all "feel" like the same deliverable but if would be helpful if SBAC could either confirm if report mock-ups, report designs, mock-up reports and beta reports and indeed one in the same and if not, what are the differences. Likewise, can SBAC clarify when each is expected to be delivered?

Answer: The fourth bullet on page 10 references navigation and flow. We expect an initial proposal of navigation and flow to address the deliverable in the fourth bullet.

The fifth bullet on page 10 references report mock-ups, by which we mean an initial example of specific report designs (content and appearance) based on requirements defined in the test specifications and reporting categories. Examples must include visual representations such as screenshots or sample pages and user interfaces.

On page 11, the second bullet under "Design Beta Reports" requires the contractor to develop a design document or set of documents that cover a range of reports and requirements. The document(s) must describe the processes, flows, and functionalities (including data inputs and outputs) of the entire Reporting System based on "report mock-up" feedback. The contractor will be required to provide a functioning beta Reporting System as specified in the sub-bullets beneath the second bullet.

The third bullet under "Design Beta Reports" requires the contractor to refine system requirements based on feedback gathered on initial report mock-ups.

The fourth bullet under "Design Beta Reports" requires the contractor to generate a simulated data set. This data set will be the basis for working beta reports that can be used for beta testing.

Q11. Can SBAC clarify and define the scope of a "small-scale user acceptance test" referenced in the first bullet under Conduct Small Scale User Acceptance Testing on Beta Reporting System on page 11 that is to occur between 11/2012 and 3/2013? How many users does SBAC expect to be part of that group? What will be the geographic locations of those users?

Answer: Smarter Balanced would like a representative sample composed of districts across member states within the Consortium to be included in the small-scale user acceptance work. The size and method of the small-scale UAT, to be included in the vendor's proposal, should be designed to yield sufficient and adequate feedback. For more information, please see the RFP-15 addendum.

Q12. How many "designated languages" should the Vendors assume as referenced in the second bullet under Design Beta Reports on page 11 that are delivered between 8/2012 and 11/2012? Is this the same four (4) languages, three (3) languages beyond English, that is referenced on page 14?

Answer: Parent and student reports (and associated parent and student interpretive guides) should be produced in the same language that is used in the test administered; at this time Smarter Balanced has funding to support four non-English languages. All other reports (non-parent/student) need to be available in English (vendors can propose costs for production in additional languages).

Q13. Relative to the seventh bullet under Determine Reports and Reporting System for Large-Scale User Acceptance Testing on page 12 that occurs between 4/2013 and 8/2013, can SBAC define portability in the context of this bullet? What are the specific portability requirements?

Answer: Eligible data viewers should be able to see longitudinal data for the students who are currently enrolled at their authorized institution level (e.g., classroom, school, district, and state) for tests administered prior to the date they leave that institution.

The Reporting System must include a method for reconciling multiple student IDs generated for a single student (i.e., a common error when students move) to a single student ID.

Q14. At the bottom of page 12, under the section titled "Background", the RFP indicates that the "reporting system will be based on psychometrically sound scaling and equating procedures." Much of the psychometrics around the SBAC assessments should occur in the test authoring, test design, test scoring and test delivery systems which produce results and data on which the reporting will be based but which are outside the scope of the reporting solution outlined in this RFP. Can SBAC elaborate on the specific psychometric requirements that must be met by the reporting vendor in response to this RFP?

Answer: The Reporting System vendor will need to design the system to suppress data within reports and entire reports in cases where they do not meet the minimum psychometric and/or confidentiality requirements (e.g., instances where there are not enough students in an aggregation group to warrant aggregate summary scores.) The RFP-15 vendor will need to coordinate with the psychometrics and validation vendor to establish these rules.

Q15. There are only two references in the RFP around "ad hoc" analysis (pages 15 and 102). And, in both cases it is as a requirement that the data warehouse delivered as part of this RFP can support ad hoc analysis. What ad hoc analysis tools does SBAC expect to use to do this ad hoc analysis? Who is supplying those tools?

Answer: In consultation with other work groups, such as Technology Approach and Validation and Psychometrics, and the associated vendors for those groups, the Reporting System contractor will propose what it believes to be the best solution that leverages the IT Systems Architecture, meets all of the technology requirements, and--most importantly--addresses the questions of end users. The contractor should be prepared to address how it will handle ad hoc analyses based on this input as well. Anything going beyond a query of the database (which may or may not house group aggregates) is considered an ad hoc analysis.

Q16. There is only a single reference to data mining in the RFP. On page 14 the RFP says "CONSORTIUM reporting will support both static report displays and dynamic customized reports based on data-mining tools." Can SBAC elaborate on the data-mining tools that they will use? It is typical in data mining RFPs that specific data mining requirements, algorithms, techniques, etc. to be supported would be documented as requirements. Can SBAC elaborate on what data mining functionality the vendor is expected to deliver, if any?

Answer: See response to #15.

Q17. Can SBAC clarify what activities are expected to be performed by the vendor in the time period from March 2014 (which is the end of the Large Scale UAT as indicated on page 12) and September 2014 (which is the completion date indicated in the Period of Performance on page 17)?

Answer: The vendor will need to resolve any issues identified with the Reporting System and update report templates based on user feedback gathered from the large-scale UAT in spring 2014. Reports will need to be tested in real-time scenarios during spring 2014. Any issues identified during this UAT must be resolved no later than September 2014.

Q18. (Pg 9/Sec 4) When will the Digital Library contractor be identified?

Answer: Work on the digital library will begin in fall 2012, and so the digital library contractor will be identified before then.

Q19. (Pg 10/Sec 4) When will the Portal and Single Sign-On (SSO) Service contractor be identified?

Answer: Proposals for RFP-11 are currently being evaluated. The contractor will be identified when the contract begins (currently scheduled for early July 2012).

Q20. (Pg 11/Sec 4) "Develop sustainability model that is consistent with the Sustainability Task Force recommendations."

What are these recommendations?

Answer: The vendor should describe how their approach minimizes the Total Cost of Ownership such that the Consortium may successfully implement the Reporting System in 2014, 2015, and beyond. The sustainability model will be a detailed implementation plan that will use the Sustainability Task Force recommendations as a basis, when they are available.

Q21. (Pg 14/Sec 4) "The reporting system will develop reports that meet the needs of states by reporting student performance using Total Score and Claims definitions for English language arts/literacy and mathematics adopted by the CONSORTIUM."

What are the Claims definitions adopted by the Consortium?

Answer: The claims definitions are found within the ELA/Literacy and Mathematics Content Specifications found online at: http://www.smarterbalanced.org/smarter-balanced-assessments/

Q22. (Pg 14/Sec 4) "Interim assessment reports will be able to provide more precise student-level information. The results will be of immediate value to students, parents, teachers, and school and district administrators."

In what way(s) are these reports expected to be more precise? In what way(s) are these reports expected to be more precise?

Answer: Interim assessments provide a more comprehensive look at a smaller grain size level of analysis than do the summative assessments. Additional precision of the interim reports may include, but is not limited to, target-level reports and specific information about the items administered to specific students, including an analysis of their correct and incorrect answers.

Q23. (Pg 14/Sec 4) Between emphasizing the construction of common report templates and building tools to generate customizable reports, which would SBAC view as the greater investment priority?

The winning vendor would attempt to build powerful capabilities in both areas, but please comment on the relative value of each paradigm of report generation.

Answer: The Consortium has a responsibility to produce valuable standard reports. Customizable reports should add value to the foundation of standard reports.

Q24. (Exhibit K) Page 75 lists a process for SBAC review of deliverables.

If the reviewer groups provide contradictory feedback on deliverables, does SBAC have a process for resolution?
Is there an individual or entity that will be charged with resolving internal disagreements in relation to deliverables?

Answer: A leadership and decision-making structure will be determined during the contract kickoff. This contract will have a contract lead who is authorized to resolve any contradictory feedback on deliverables.

Q25. Page 15: Data Warehouse and Data Aggregation Services and
Page 77: Appendix A-Key Technical Priorities

What are the data retention expectations for the data warehouse for historical reporting needs?

Can you provide further details on the storage requirements and amount of data expected to be housed within the data warehouse?

Answer: What should be proposed within this contract is the concurrency and data storage necessary to support beta testing, user acceptance testing, and possibly participation reports during the life of the contract. The contractor for RFP-15 will not be expected to host the operational system, but will be expected to build the application so that it can support a large number of users after the contract. Vendors should provide estimates for operational costs (such as hardware necessary to support operational concurrency and data storage) to help the Consortium understand the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) after the contract.

The contractor is expected to retain all data gathered during the course of this contract until requested to purge or permanently destroy such data (see RFP requirement below). The data system needs to be designed to retain records after 2014 in perpetuity. If the question is regarding retention periods past the contract date, extraction tools, or backup tools, vendors should propose an enterprise-level solution based on best practices in educational data.

RFP requirement: "Data stored in the Data Warehouse will be owned by the CONSORTIUM or its member states. Upon request from an authorized CONSORTIUM representative, the CONTRACTOR will be required to provide data from the Data Warehouse to the CONSORTIUM and its member states at no additional cost beyond the cost of the contract. Upon request from an authorized CONSORTIUM representative, the CONTRACTOR will be required to purge or permanently destroy data in the Data Warehouse at no additional cost beyond the cost of the contract. The CONTRACTOR may not use data or provide data to any other persons or entities, unless explicitly authorized by an authorized CONSORTIUM representative."

See response to #6 for data volume.

Q26. Pages 26-27:
Please clarify the difference and expectations for B. Work Plan and Schedule, and C. Project Schedule of the Technical Proposal response. Both sections require a detailed project schedule to be provided, and based on the Work Plan guidelines given in the Contractor Orientation presentation, the Work Plan also appears to be a comprehensive project schedule.

Answer: The Work Plan and Schedule section is comprehensive to provide information for a variety of audiences during the evaluation. The Project Schedule section identifies elements of work and delivery. The project schedule should include a very specific listing of the detailed milestones, deliverables, and associated dates.

Q27. Page 40; 4. Staff Qualifications/Experience:
Resumes are requested under A. Project Management, which is a scored proposal section. Would it be acceptable to provide resumes in an appendix? Do resumes count toward the 250-page limit?

Answer: Résumés will not be counted as part of the 250-page limit.

Q28. Page 67 - Exhibit F-Evaluation Criteria:
One of the scored evaluation criteria for D. Experience of the Vendor is: "Provided samples of work clearly illustrate that the proposed list of deliverables will meet requirements." Is it acceptable to include samples of work for this requirement in the non-scored appendices?

Answer: Yes

Q29. Exhibit I (page 70) & Exhibit J (page 73):
Exhibit J indicates that a Deliverable Matrix should be submitted with the proposal. Please confirm whether or not this is a requirement for this proposal. If yes, should vendors use the sample template provided in Exhibit I? Would the matrix count toward the proposal page limit?

Answer: A deliverables matrix must be submitted with the proposal. The vendor may include the template in Exhibit I or another one that communicates the same information. This material will not count toward the 250-page limit.

Q30. Page 76; Appendix A-Key Reporting Priorities:
Is it the expectation that all reports are to be delivered online or printed via the online system?

Answer: All reports, either secure or public, will need to be delivered online, via secure protocol. All reports will need to be available in a PDF file. The end-user needs assessment will determine which reports will have additional export options (e.g., comma-separated, batch downloads).

Q31. Page 77; Appendix A-Key Technical Priorities:
The hosting option bullet suggests that each of the member states' can integrate the system into their own system. Is it the intent of the SBAC that the system be used centrally by all member states or to have various states host the solution independently? If the solution is not centrally hosted, all states might not have access to the same data. Is this the desire of the SBAC for the summative reports that ask for consortium level summarized reports?

Answer: For the purposes of this RFP, the intent of the Consortium is to develop, deploy, and host one instance of the system for the duration of the contract. This system should be open source and meet the requirements of the IT Systems Architecture, so that states may deploy and host their own separate instances and so that the open-source community may enhance and extend components.

Q32. Page 80; Appendix A-Report Requirements:
The RFP has a requirement labeled 1.c that indicates that connections should be provided to the Digital Library. Do you have further information about the Digital Library and the expected interaction to this system if the system is hosted by each member state individually? This requirement occurs in multiple sections within the overall requirements.

Answer: At a minimum, the Reporting System will need to provide links to pages and resources in the digital library and enable users to access these pages and resources without having to log in separately. Beyond this minimum, Smarter Balanced expects to see resources dynamically selected based on report contents.

As stated in section 2.C of RFP-15, “the CONTRACTOR will be responsible for supporting the Lead Systems Integrator (RFP-11) in ensuring Reporting Systems component interoperability with other CONSORTIUM systems components, as specified in compliance with the IT Systems Architecture.” This includes import and export to and from state systems.

Q33. Page 101; Appendix A-Report Requirements:
Do you have further information on the non-English keyboard requirements as well as the language support required for the reporting application?

Answer: The Reporting System must support non-English characters including non-ASCII-based languages. See response to #12. It is not a requirement that the Reporting System function with non-English keyboards. This requirement will be removed in the Amendment 2.

Q34. Page 102; Appendix A-Report Requirements:
Is the expectation that the hosting provider provides the data optimizations or is it expected that the system have an interface to perform the optimizations as indicated in the last requirement about database performance?

Answer: Vendors should propose an enterprise-level solution that is efficient, based on best practices in reporting and in educational data. If optimization is required, then vendors should propose where and how such optimization would occur based upon their experience and expertise.

Q35. Page 26-27 Section 2.B and 2.C, WORK PLAN AND SCHEDULE and PROJECT SCHEDULE:
The schedule requested in Section 2.B: Work Plan and Schedule appears to be the same information requested in Section 2.C: Project Schedule - “The first six (6) months of the project schedule should include a very specific listing of the detailed application functionalities that will be delivered.”

Would it be acceptable to SBAC for the respondents to only provide the Project Schedule information in one of these two sections?

Answer: This would not be acceptable. See response to #26.

Q36. Page 31 Section1.E Report Deployment and User Acceptance Testing:
Regarding the Beta and Large-Scale User Acceptance Testing: Will it be the contractor’s responsibility to solicit UAT participants or will it be the consortium’s responsibility to provide a list of UAT participants to the contractor?

Answer: The contractor is responsible for the development of a plan for recruitment of UAT participants and implementation of the plan. The plan will be reviewed and approved by the Consortium.

Q37. Page 79 Appendix A, Section 1.b, Student Self Reports: INTERIM STATUS REPORTS, (3rd and 4th requirements):
3. Interim status reports will support connecting content to other grade levels (e.g., learning progressions) for remediation and enrichment purposes. If possible, interim status reports will support student self-

assessment of student knowledge.
4. Student interim status reports will leverage incentives (e.g., points, levels, rewards) to encourage student investment in self-analysis.

Does SBAC intend for the Reporting System to support having students login to view their assessment reports?

Would it be acceptable to SBAC for the Reporting System to provide PDF reports that could easily be printed and distributed to students instead of giving the students access to the Reporting System?

Answer: Smarter Balanced intends that the Reporting System can support student/parent access to student data and reports, consistent with district and state confidentiality constraints. The local schools and districts will have responsibility for delegating access and/or delivering the reports. It would be preferable for students to have access via logon and via PDFs distributed by schools or districts. However, it may be sufficient to provide either one of those solutions. Vendors should propose their solution and describe its advantages.

Q38. Page 81 Appendix A, Section 2.a, Student Reports for Teachers: SUMMATIVE STATUS REPORTS (5th requirement):
Student status reports for teachers must support ongoing communication between students and parents.

Does SBAC intend for the Reporting System to support having parents login to view their student's assessment results?

Did SBAC intend to utilize this requirement to also help facilitate communication between teachers and parents?

Answer: See response to #37.

Q39. Page 99 Appendix A, Section 10.c, All Applications: ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT (1ST requirement):
System must allow administrative users to access user IDs and passwords and email them to authorized recipients.

It is our understanding that the core functionality of user access management is to be handled by the Portal and Shared Services as part of RFP-11. We understand the need to have a federated security system to manage permissions, but the requirement stated above appears to be a core Portal functionality and not one belonging to the Reporting System. This same question is applicable to requirements mentioned in Section 10.b and 10.c of Appendix A.

Please confirm that SBAC intends this to be a core Portal functionality or a feature of the Reporting System. If this is indeed intended as a feature of the Reporting System, please provide clarification on how this would be used specifically in the Reporting System.

Answer: The core functionality of user access management will be handled by the Portal and Shared Services as a part of RFP-11. Specific implementation details are pending the conclusion of the RFP-11 procurement contract and the beginning of work on this effort. RFP-15 vendors should propose a solution that integrates with the Portal and Shared Services on an enterprise level. Vendors should propose a solution that is efficient and based on best practices in educational reporting systems. Depending on the scope of the proposed solution, the RFP-15 vendor may be responsible for developing any specific modules or data structures required to implement authentication for parent and student access.

Q40. Page 99 Appendix A, Section 10.d, All Applications: ACCESIBILITY AND SECTION 508 COMPLIANCE (4th requirement):
System supports refreshable Braille, text-to-speech tags, text magnifying software, and speech-to-text tags. Braille support must include contracted, uncontracted, and Nemeth Braille.

In reference to the support for refreshable Braille displays, could we infer this as a requirement for supporting accessibility standards such as WAI-ARIA? The reporting system is a web based system and it is contingent upon the user-agent/browser to support such accessibility features. Can you confirm if this is the intent of this requirement?

Answer: The Reporting System must be compliant with typical tools that support these types of accessibility features. Use cases in the requirements process should address stakeholders that might use these tools.

Q41. Page 102 Appendix A, Section 12, Data Warehouse and Data Aggregation Services (2nd requirement):
System has the ability to import from external systems to support different import needs (e.g., data cleansing, psychometric analysis).

Would you please elaborate on this requirement and provide a valid use case for clarification?

Answer: By definition, all data warehouses have an import capability. As one potential use case, the psychometrics vendor would download student response data, perform psychometric analyses, and upload student results to the warehouse.

Q42. Page 15; Data Warehouse and Data Aggregation Services:
Is there a preference for the SQL server that the system should use?

Answer: Vendors should propose the most efficient approach consistent with the IT Systems Architecture. Vendors may propose any SQL server as long as the solution meets all of the technical objectives described in this request. If vendors propose a deviation from the Smarter Balanced Systems Architecture, they should provide a rationale for the deviation.

Q43. Page 102; Appendix A -12. Data Warehouse and Data Aggregation Services:
Can you provide more detail on the requirement to “trigger ETL processes” based on unscheduled system events?

Answer: See “Section 8 – Interoperability” in the IT Systems Architecture. While some import/export processes may be run on a scheduled basis, other processes may need to be triggered based upon unscheduled events. For example, there may be a scenario in which data needs to be reimported after an error is found in the original import.

Q44. Pg 11 – Conduct…UAT:
Will SBAC be providing any test cases?

Answer: The vendor should gather and define test cases as a part of the requirements gathering effort, and review them with Consortium stakeholders.

Q45. Pg 12 Design Support Materials (Bullet 1):
What printed and digital materials does SBAC envision will need to be produced?
What quantities are printed?

Answer: Smarter Balanced will need an electronic, print-ready version of all user guides and example standard score reports. The user guide should provide assistance for interpreting the reports and the appropriate use of this information, including a description of all reports, information on how to access all reports, and instructions for providing feedback. Additional digital materials, such as a FAQ or Quick Start Guide, may have to be produced to assist end users in working with the Reporting System. No paper copies will be required.

Q46. Although there is no provision in the RFP for delays in performance as a result of a force majeure event (events beyond the contractor's reasonable control), does OSPI acknowledge that such delays in performance would not constitute a breach of contract? Additionally, we presume that the Contractor will not be responsible for delay or default to the extent caused by the State or third parties contracted to the State. Is this correct?

Answer: Yes.

Q47. Will the questions submitted by potential vendors and OSPI's responses be incorporated into the final contract?

Answer: Yes.

Q48. Appendix A:
Can you elaborate on the expected integration with the Digital Library component?

Answer: See response to #32.

Q49. Appendix A:
Can you elaborate on the expected integration (import/export) with the State Systems?

Answer: See "Section 8 - Interoperability in the Systems Architecture." In addition to the data flows identified in the IT Systems Architecture, other processes (e.g., import/update student information) may require additional data flows with state information systems. State systems should be addressed in requirements gathering.

Q50. Appendix A:
Is there an agreed upon points/levels/rewards system to implement for the consortium?

Answer: We understand this question to refer to student incentives that encourage student investment in self analysis. See page 80 of the RFP, Appendix A: "Points, levels, and rewards of any such incentive system would need to be determined by the CONTRACTOR, with review and approval by Smarter Balanced."

Q51. Appendix A:

Is it expected that student and parent reports will be accessed through the portal used for the delivery system, including the single sign on component?

Answer: See response to #37.

Q52. Page 39; 3.E Annual Contractor Meetings:

The CONTRACTOR will be responsible for CONTRACTOR travel costs associated with the twice-annual, CONSORTIUM-wide WorkGroup/Contractor Collaboration Conferences, convened to support project-specific and across-consortium contractor engagements. CONTRACTOR will be expected to propose additional meeting(s) necessary to support its work, and to allocate a reasonable sum of the proposed budget to support this task, to include travel and accommodations for work group and CONSORTIUM leadership.

Question 1:

For the twice-annual CONSORTIUM-wide WorkGroup/Contractor Collaboration Conferences, are contractors to include only travel costs for contractor staff assuming such Collaboration Conferences will be organized by the Consortium? Or are contractors to also to include costs for Consortium members?

Question 2:

The second sentence in 3.E above indicates for additional meeting(s) proposed necessary to support its work, contractors are to include travel and accommodations for work group and Consortium leadership. Can contractors propose additional meetings with a smaller number of consortium members, e.g. 5 vs. 10 or 25 to optimize productivity and minimize costs?

Answer: SMARTER anticipates convening a kick-off meeting where bidder would be responsible for all costs of kick-off meeting participants. SMARTER will attempt to coordinate the kick-off meeting with the twice annual collaboration meetings to leverage other collaborative efforts.

Requirements for additional, smaller meetings may be discussed during contract negotiations but those costs would be part of the responsibility of the contractor for budgeting purposes. The contractor may propose additional meetings with a smaller number of Consortium members.

Q53. Pg 26; A. Vendor expertise and Proposal Solutions:

Incremental cost estimates are requested for incremental levels of concurrency. Please expand on this requirement.

- With the contract ending in September of 2014, are there anticipated needs beyond 2014 for maintenance, support and hosting?
- If inaccurate, can Smarter Balanced provide additional context to understand these estimates in relation to costs within the proposal?

Answer: The application needs to be built to eventually support a large number of users; however, during the contract, the hosting only needs to support a small number of users to facilitate beta tests, UAT, and possible participation reports.

See also response to #25, first paragraph.

Q54. Pg 30; 1.C. Report Development:

Translations: Please clarify the expectations and specifications related to translations.

• Are there specific reports that need to be translated, or is it the entire reporting system?
• Do the user manuals for the reporting system need to be translated?
• When would Smarter Balanced anticipate having the other two languages identified?

Answer: See response to #12.
All languages will likely be identified by summer 2013.

Q55. Pg 30-31; 1.D. Quality Assurance and Testing & 1.E. Report Deployment and User Acceptance Testing:

Please clarify the number of stake-holders input needed for Beta and Large-Scale UAT - page 31 states 200/2000 for Beta, but page 30 indicates 200 for Large-Scale.

Answer: Please see the addendum for further clarification on this issue.

Q56. Pg 30; 1.D. Quality Assurance and Testing:

Is the vendor expected to provide payment to the participants in the focus groups and the Beta and Large-Scale UAT?

• If so, does Smarter Balanced have a suggested payment figure that the vendor can use in pricing?
• Will Smarter Balanced provide the vendor assistance/access to recruiting positions such as governors, parents, etc?

Answer: Compensation for participation in small-scale and large-scale UAT will be up to the discretion of the vendor. The Consortium reimbursement protocol supports travel and substitute costs as needed for teachers during the school year, and travel and per diem stipends as established by states/districts during non-school months. Low-cost methods, such as online meetings and surveys, should be used when practical. Smarter Balanced will assist the vendor to establish contacts with relevant state and district personnel.

Q57. Pg 55-56; Exhibit D:

As stated in the Preamble to a GPL (one of the well-known and widely used open source licensing frameworks), the licenses for most software are designed to substantially restrict users' freedom to share and change the software.

The philosophy of open source software is different – the users are encouraged to share and change the software, freely. But as part of this type of bargain, where the user community contributes to development and free distribution, open source licenses expressly disclaim warranties and provide that the software is provided "as is."

SBAC RFP No. 15 expressly encourages the use of open source software to develop the Reporting System, but Exhibit D (General Terms and Conditions) includes clauses that seem inconsistent with open source licenses – specifically, clauses requiring warranties (see clause 11, on p. 55 of the RFP) and indemnification (see clause 16, on p. 56 of the RFP).

• Can potential Contractors assume that those standard template clauses will not be applicable to any and all open source software used in connection with the Reporting System?

Answer: Yes.

Q58. Deliverables Matrix – Exhibit 1:

- Which cells are expected to be completed for the proposal?
- Should we assume that Reviewers column and Communication Plans column would not be needed for the proposal, as that would be part of contract planning with the Program Management Partner?

Answer: Smarter Balanced expects each column of the Deliverables Matrix to be completed in the proposal. It is expected that this information will be reviewed and confirmed by Smarter Balanced and the contractor during final negotiations for this contract.

Q59. 2.1. Business Issues:
With a large number of concurrent users please categorize and clarify what kind of concurrent users as power users, casual users, and privileged users, and etc.?

Answer: This information is not known, and the user definitions listed are ambiguous. It is expected that the majority of concurrent users will be building/LEA/SEA administrators, teachers, parents, and students interested primarily in viewing reports. Some users at each level will be performing administrative functions (i.e., power users). Vendors should use their relevant experience and expertise and make explicit any assumptions. However, the requirements gathering sessions with the end users will help to determine this and fine tune the estimations.

Q60. What are the current key performance measures (KPI) – (optional)? Can they be obtained from the existing data warehouse? Are they presented in a format that is easy to understand?

Answer: Any necessary performance measures will need to be determined during the requirements gathering process. Development of the Consortium data warehouse will occur as part of RFP-15.

Q61. What kind of reporting tools the schools/organizations are currently using?

Answer: There is a wide range of reporting systems. Each state has its own reporting system to meet federal and state reporting requirements. Additionally, individual districts within each state may be using additional data collection and reporting tools.

Q62. How many users (sys admin, DBA, power users) will connect to the servers (database servers, reporting servers, and domain servers)? Please provide an estimate total.

Answer: See response to #59.

Q63. Once the data warehouse meets the success criteria, what other business problems might it solve?

Answer: No response provided; this question is unclear to the Consortium.

Q64. Report Design Elements:
What existing system does every school have? Does the CONCORTIUM expect vendor to make change(s) on the existing system of every school?

Answer: The Consortium does not know what systems every school has.

The Consortium does not expect the vendor to modify hardware or software on existing school systems.

Vendors must be explicit about hardware and software requirements necessary to implement and utilize their solution at the school, district, and state levels. The RFP does require that vendors "Describe the proposed browsers and operating systems on which reports can be displayed." Proposals that work on a wide range of commonly used browsers and operating systems will be considered more favorably, as this will minimize the impact on local systems.

Q65. Is the "CONSORTIUM Theory of Action" document available to be reviewed? If so please provide.

Answer: The Smarter Balanced Theory of Action is available on the Smarter Balanced website at http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Smarter-Balanced-Theory-of-Action1.pdf

Q66. What are the sizes of the user group defined in the RFP: teachers, students, parents, administrators and stakeholders? What is considered a reasonable sample of these groups considered by OSPI for interviews and active research participation in the project?

Answer: Please see the addendum for further clarification on this issue.

Q67. Are the "Sustainability Task Force recommendations" available for review. If so please provide.

Answer: No. This will be developed as an outcome of RFP-22. For further details, please see RFP-22 at http://www.k12.wa.us/RFP/pubdocs/SBAC-RFP-22.pdf

Q68. Is a user guide already used by OSPI available for review? If so please provide.

Answer: No user guide is available for review.

Q69. How is the complexity of the report structure and report design? Please specific.

Answer: Reports are yet to be designed, as that is part of the services requested in the RFP. The contractor will be responsible for developing the report structure and design, and thus the complexity is to be determined.

Q70. What kind of applications that the schools and organization are currently using to access reports, create reports, create measurements for students?

Answer: The Consortium does not have this information.
Requirements gathering will help to answer this question; however, the technology readiness survey will give some of this information but not all. States vary because they use different vendors now, and there is an existing mix of vendor and homemade solutions.

Q71. 2.2 Data Warehouse Architecture:
What is the "AS IS" follow of information that the Consortium and the Schools have? Using web for each Schools, Using sending files over FTP and etc.

Answer: The Consortium does not have this information.

Q72. Is the CONSORTIUM running data warehouse? What is the current "AS IS" size (data volume) of the data warehouse? What are the growth statistics – i.e. how much it grows, for the current warehouse? How about other connectivity points to the warehouse? This question is to check whether the existing system can handle the amount of data to be downloaded to client.

Answer: See response to #6.

Q73. What is the ETL Framework that data is operating in the proposed data warehouse structure?

Answer: The question is unclear to the Consortium.
The specifications that are available are included in the IT Systems Architecture. Vendors should propose any additional solutions that need to be added.

Q74. Does the school/organization require vendor to install hardware for each School under the administration of the Consortium?

Answer: Schools are not under the administration of the Consortium. Vendors do not need to install hardware or software for schools, unless that is part of the proposed vendor approach.

The RFP does require that vendors "Describe the proposed browsers and operating systems on which reports can be displayed" (see #64).

Q75. Can we use Amazon Web Services (AWS) for accessing and managing of infrastructure of compute, storage, and other cloud resources?

Answer: Vendors should propose the most efficient approach consistent with the IT Systems Architecture and the technical objectives described in this request. Vendor solutions must be compliant with the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Q76. 2.3 Data Source Architecture - 2.3.1 External Data Sources:
How will these data be transferred to the data warehouse? Who will initiate these processes?

Answer: For more information on data import/export, see Appendix A of the RFP, as well as the IT Systems Architecture. The vendor will need to collaborate with the RFP-11 vendor.

Q77. Which data source and system source that has been using? Please details

Answer: No response provided; this question is unclear to the Consortium.

Q78. What kind of data sources and source systems problems we have encountered problems in the past year? Please specific.

Answer: No response provided; this question is unclear to the Consortium.

Q79. 2.3 Data Source Architecture - 2.3.2 RDBMS Data Sources:
How will these data be transferred to the data warehouse? Which school or organization will initiate these processes?

Answer: See response to #77.

Q80. What kind of data sources have been using?

Answer: No response provided; this question is unclear to the Consortium.

Q81. 2.4 Population Architecture:
What data extraction, cleansing and transformation (ETL) tools are currently being used?

Answer: None.

The Consortium does not currently have a reporting system or ETL tools.

Q82. What are mechanisms for data extraction? From what data and system sources?

Answer: The question is unclear to the Consortium.

If the question is related to requirements for updates to the data warehouse, vendors may either propose an approach based upon their expertise, or determine this during the requirements gathering phase.

Q83. Why is the current design loading the complete superset of data into the data warehouse instead of delta changes?

Answer: The Consortium does not currently have a reporting system. Each instance of loading data into the system represents a unique assessment/data collection event for a student.

If the question is related to requirements for updates to the data warehouse, vendors may either propose an approach based upon their expertise, or determine this during the requirements gathering phase.

Q84. What is the timing of the load from data sources to DW and is this automated? How often is the load process run? What is the time window available to perform the load?

Answer: See #3. For more information on data flows, see the IT Systems Architecture.

Q85. What are the types of loading jobs running? What are the current timings of these loading jobs? Do these loading jobs depend on other processes to run first before they themselves are run?

Answer: The Consortium is not currently loading data.

For the future system, vendors should determine this as a part of the requirements gathering phase.

Q86. How many legacy systems will be used in creating the data warehouse?

Answer: The question is unclear to the Consortium.

If the question is about systems necessary to house the data warehouse, the vendor is expected to determine this as a part of the requirements gathering phase.

Q87. What are the levels of aggregation (if any) that are being performed during the load process?

Answer: The vendor is expected to determine this as a part of the requirements gathering phase. Whenever possible, we prefer a solution that leverages stored data rather than active analytics/aggregation as the latter will lead to system slow-downs/lags. The vendor should provide a cost/benefit matrix outlining different options while considering storage costs.

Q88. How "clean" are the data? Do they need to be transformed or cleansed before they are uploaded to the data warehouse?

Answer: The vendor is expected to determine this as a part of the requirements gathering phase. The vendor is expected to provide plain language descriptions of any problems with data.

Q89. How many indexes are there and what are their sizes? Are these indexes drop before each loading process?

Answer: The question is unclear to the Consortium.

The Consortium does not currently have a legacy data warehouse system. The vendor is expected to determine this in the course of building the data warehouse.

Q90. How are integrity constraints being maintained in the system? Are the constraints drops before each loading process?

Answer: The question is unclear to the Consortium.

The Consortium does not currently have a legacy data warehouse system. The vendor is expected to determine this in the course of building the data warehouse.

Q91. 2.5 Operations Architecture:
How much time does it take to backup the entire data warehouse? How about incremental backup?

Answer: This information is not known. This will depend upon the volume of data (see #3) and the volume of updates to data.

The vendor is expected to determine this as a part of the requirements gathering phase.

Q92. What is the time window available for backup?

Answer: The vendor is expected to determine this as a part of the requirements gathering phase.

Vendors should take into account different time zones, and when stakeholders are likely to use the data. For example, if the window is 6 hours, Hawaii might be impacted. Vendors should include their strategy in their proposal.

Q93. If the data warehouse is down or corrupted, what is the recovery time needed?

Answer: Immediately (5 minutes or less). The data warehouse system should be capable of having instant failover.

Q94. What is the management tools used for managing the data warehouse? What about the load process?

Answer: The Consortium does not currently have a data warehouse system. Vendors should propose management tools as a part of their response.

Q95. 2.6 Training:
How many people (manager, supervisor, and key members) will get trained?

Answer: As part of the transition activities, the RFP-15 vendor will need to work with the RFP-19 vendor to ensure both parties have the necessary information needed to create training modules for test administrators.

Q96. What requirements for the trainee?

Answer: As part of the transition activities, the RFP-15 vendor will need to work with the RFP-19 vendor to ensure both parties have the necessary information needed to create training modules for test administrators.

Q97. Will the training take place in WA State only?

Answer: There are no specific training locations at this point. The vendor should be working with the RFP-19 vendor to coordinate training to delivered test coordinators. Due to the scale and geographic distribution of the Consortium, training may not be face-to-face.

Q98. What is the management tools used for managing current applications and tools? Also data warehouse? Please details.

Answer: See response to #95.

To help provide further clarification to possible vendors, more information is provided in relation to the requirements gathering activities. Of particular note is the change in scope for the field test survey which was inadvertently left out of the original RFP-15. All other details are further clarifications of expectations within 1.E.

There will be two User Acceptance Testing (UAT) periods that will need to occur within the context of carrying out the duties stated in RFP-15. Both will require the vendor to demonstrate and/or allow users to manipulate a working version of the reporting system. Both will also require qualitative data collected from a smaller group and quantitative data collected from a larger group with the latter built on data derived from the former. (Deliverable 1.E)

Small Scale UAT (Nov. 2012-Mar.2013) – The first user acceptance testing window will occur after the vendor develops a functional Beta-reporting system that can be shared with end users for feedback.

- Qualitative Data (>200 users) – The first round of qualitative feedback could include, but is not limited to, interviews, focus groups, and online demonstrations. A majority of feedback collected in the small scale UAT can be collected using technology to keep costs down. This could include online focus group demonstrations and phone interviews.
- Quantitative Feedback (>2000 users) – Surveys can be sent to a larger sample of end users to collect quantitative feedback. As is standard practice, the qualitative data is very likely to elicit themes which will be useful in developing appropriate probes for the larger scale data collection. The vendor should consider a stratified random sampling technique to gain information from a representative sample of the consortium users. The vendor should also consider oversampling (~4000) to anticipate an approximate 50% completion rate. If appropriate, the vendor may contact selected participants directly, or work with Consortium staff if help from state staff is needed. Surveys may use static screen shots and imbedded video demonstrations as a method to show the survey functionality. It is expected that the vendor follow appropriate survey methodologies consistent with principles of educational and psychological measurement.

Large Scale UAT (Mar. 2014-Jun.2014) – The second year acceptance testing will occur approximately the same time as the field test of the assessment engine. The vendor will need to coordinate work with relevant vendors administering the field test.

- Qualitative Data (>200 users) – The second round of qualitative feedback will include more “in-person” contact time with end users testing a revised reporting system. Part of the feedback part of the feedback should include “real-time” administration where reports are generated after student field testing data is collected to simulate expected conditions during the full administration.
- [NEW REQUIREMENT] Quantitative Testing (>4000 users) – Similar stratified random sampling techniques should be used to identify a survey sample approximately two times larger than the pilot test. Again, oversampling should be considered to ensure that the desired number survey responses can be collected. Surveys may be step up in a similar format as the small scale UAT with new demonstrations of the reporting functionality. As in the first phase, it is expected that the instrument be constructed using sound principles of educational and psychological measurement and that the qualitative information be a driver of the content for the survey tool.