

TO: Roger Breed, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Pat Roschewski, Director of Statewide Assessment

SUBJECT: Data Recognition Contract 2011 - 2012

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

Review and approve the executive summary and budget of the Data Recognition Contract for year four: 2011-2012. The contract includes the printing, online administration, and technical validation of the Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) tests in reading and mathematics. Science tests will be fully operational under this contract in grades 5,8, and 11. Added this year is a “Check 4 Learning” feature that will allow districts to generate interim assessments built from a state-developed item bank. Use of the interim system will allow districts the opportunity to monitor student performance on standards throughout the year prior to the administration of the summative NeSA tests.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Quality Education Act requires the development and administration of state tests in grades 3-8, and 11 in the subjects of reading and mathematics. Science tests are required in three grade levels, determined by the State Board of Education to be in grades 5,8, and 11. The development of the NeSA tests began with reading in 2008-09, mathematics in 2010-11, and science in 2011-2012. The 2012 year will be the first year when all tests are fully operational.

Data Recognition Corporation and its subcontractor Computerized Assessments and Learning (CAL) have been under contract since 2008-09 to assist the department in test development, publication, and administration.

Added to the contract in 2011-2012 year is an “option” for use of the CAL interim assessment online delivery system. Districts may elect to participate in the development of a state-generated item bank supported by the CAL system. An interim assessment process will allow districts to “check 4 learning” on the state standards throughout the year prior to the spring administration of the summative NeSA tests. Combining both interim and summative assessments will allow Nebraska to build a complete system of assessment and will provide needed support to districts in improving student achievement.

The addition of the interim “Check 4 Learning” system adds \$655,000 to the cost of the contract and will accommodate up to 150,000 students. If fewer than 150,000 students participate, the cost of the interim assessment system will be less as the cost will be

based upon the number of students participating. The budget sheet provides additional detail.

Cost: Up to \$5,006,090 (Federal funds: 3,600,000 State Funds: 1,406,090)

Supporting Documentation Included: Executive Summary and Budget Page.

For additional information on this item: Call Pat Roschewski 402-471-2495,
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NeSA Revised Year 4 Contract (July 1, 2011– June 30, 2012)

Executive Summary

At Data Recognition Corporation (DRC), we are proud of our reputation for providing customized, innovative solutions to the complex challenges facing state departments of education as they implement the requirements of state and federal legislation. Throughout our history, we have demonstrated an unparalleled record in the K–12 assessment industry for meeting timelines and delivering high-quality products and services.

Under the direction of the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), DRC's team of experienced professionals provides high quality services for the Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) assessment system. For the online versions of the NeSA assessments, we continue to offer the eTesting services of Computerized Assessments and Learning, LLC (CAL). As a pioneer in developing, implementing, and delivering online assessment solutions to K–12 education systems, CAL is one of the online testing leaders in terms of quality, security, reliability, capacity, and innovation. DRC has utilized CAL successfully for online assessment programs in states such as Kansas, Alaska, Idaho, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Washington.

Understanding of the Continuing Project

Based on our experience working with NDE since the fall of 2008, and our long history of working on large-scale assessment programs, we support and partner with the NDE in the following goals for the NeSA program:

Goals of the Nebraska State Accountability System

- Provide for a single, statewide, criterion-referenced assessment system for public K–12 schools that is based on the Nebraska academic content standards.
- Assist educators, school and district personnel, and NDE staff in the transition from teacher-developed, classroom-based assessments to the statewide assessment program.
- Ensure that the new assessments meet the state and federal requirements for accountability, as well as support instruction and accountability through clear communications with students, educators, and the greater public regarding assessment results.
- Work closely with stakeholders in the state, including educators and advisory groups, so that they continue to participate in the development of the new assessment program.
- Implement the Nebraska State Accountability assessment system following the implementation schedule described on pages 28–29 of the RFP (Implementation LB1157).
- Implement online and paper-and-pencil testing to enable schools to choose which mode of test delivery best suits their needs.
- Construct, print, distribute, collect, score, analyze, and report results of the new assessments, including both operational and field tests, for both online and paper-and-pencil assessments.
- Ensure validity and reliability of the assessment systems through technically sound test construction and psychometric practices.

The DRC Approach

Highlights of DRC's approach in helping NDE achieve these goals include:

- Importing items written by Nebraska educators into our state-of-the-art item banking system.
- Working with NDE to construct high-quality, technically sound test forms for grades 3–8 and high school in reading, mathematics, and science.
- Administering standalone field tests and subsequent operational tests in both online and paper-and-pencil formats using a phased-in approach over the contract term.
- Analyzing test results at both the item and student level, including calibrating, scaling, and equating.
- Leading the standard setting process with Nebraska educators for each of the content areas following the first operational administration.
- Providing accurate and timely scoring and reporting of test results, including parent/guardian reports; school, district, and state level summary reports; and data files.
- Supporting NDE and school and district personnel through personalized customer service and resources, such as procedure manuals and in-state and online test administration and reporting workshops.

Summary of Major Milestones as originally proposed for 2012

- Annual planning meeting
- Fall 2011 – release online Science Practice Test
- Spring 2012 - operational administrations of reading, mathematics, and science (online and paper and pencil)
- Standard Setting for science
- Reporting for reading, mathematics, and science

Modifications to Original Contract for Year 4 (2012)*

DRC has modified the base prices originally provided in the five-year contract for the NeSA around the following main modifications for the fourth year of the contract:

- The process for review and editing of items in reading, mathematics, and science has been modified to better address timelines, resources, and reviews.
- All NDE travel costs, meeting facilities and logistics, committee member expenses, and other travel/meeting expenses other than DRC personnel travel have been assumed by NDE.
- Comparability Study for science to be assumed by NDE.

In addition, the following additions in scope have been requested by NDE for this contract year:

- Immediate online results for the reading, mathematics, and science operational online administrations
- Post-test corrections system for the reading, mathematics, and science operational administrations
- Science alignment study
- Alternate Assessment multiple forms and subjects

NDE accepts the Cost Option of Spanish for the mathematics and science operational administrations and reporting.

The Cost Option of the CAL Formative Assessment has been revised to show incremental pricing.

*Unless identified in the section above as an addition or change in scope, the prices originally provided for 2012 will be honored.

Experience with the Evolving Needs of Assessment

DRC understands the goals of NDE and its constituents throughout the State of Nebraska. Throughout our many years of experience in large-scale assessment, working side-by-side with educators, schools, districts, and state departments of education, we have assisted our clients through numerous transitions in assessments. These experiences have included phasing out old testing programs, augmenting existing assessment systems, and implementing completely new testing programs. Each situation has been unique, and DRC has used our experience to work with our state clients in customizing the solution to meet their unique circumstances.

Meeting the Continued Needs of the NeSA

Our processes, products, and services continue to provide unparalleled benefits to NDE for the successful implementation of the NeSA, in both traditional paper-and-pencil format and online administration.

Skilled Project Management: Our Nebraska team will continue to be led by Ms. Patricia Johnson as Program Director. Ms. Johnson has worked in educational assessment for the past twelve years and has led large-scale assessment programs for Alabama, Arkansas, and South Carolina. In addition, she is supported by Mr. John Born, who will continue to serve as the Senior Project Manager for the NeSA. He has eleven years of experience managing complex, large-scale assessment projects customized to meet the unique needs of individual states. Ms. Rachel Lappe, Project Manager, is the newest member of the DRC Nebraska team, will also provide support across a variety of areas. A valued and integral member of this team is Ms. Valerie Cook, Associate Project Manager. Ms. Cook is already well-known to most district assessment contacts, and is responsible for managing the customer service aspects of the program.

Mr. Dennis Ortman of CAL serves as the Project Manager for the online administration of the NeSA delivered through the CAL system.

Our Project Management staff is supported by a team of seasoned assessment professionals that ensure the success of the program and provide excellent customer service to NDE and the educators and students of Nebraska.

An Outstanding Online Testing Plan: For the online administration of the NeSA, DRC and CAL provide one of the most advanced computerized testing applications available. The CAL system is easy to use for administrators and intuitive for students, yet powerful enough to provide solutions for all of Nebraska's online assessment needs. CAL provides a straightforward testing interface for students, while offering an extensive array of online training tools, tutorials, and practice tests for each subject area to educate and prepare administrators and students for online testing.

DRC and CAL have a proven track record of success in providing innovative online assessment solutions to support large-scale, standards-based testing programs. The CAL system has the power to host the highest number of concurrent test-takers of any online assessment engine and has never experienced a system failure or related testing delays.

Sound Technical Analysis: DRC's staff have already demonstrated their extensive experience in delivering a psychometrically sound program for the NeSA.

Our Nebraska psychometric team is led by Dr. Ronald Mead, and supported by David Chayer, Vice President of Psychometrics. Dr. Mead has more than 30

years of experience in psychometric research and activities related to statewide testing programs. In this role, he directs and oversees all technical analysis performed by DRC and ensures that all psychometric quality control measures are followed throughout test form construction, calibration, scoring, scaling, equating, and standard setting. He will also be available to advise NDE on technical issues, including guidance through the federal peer review process. Dr. Mead is a nationally-recognized expert in Rasch measurement; his past accomplishments include seminal research with Drs. Benjamin Wright, Geoffrey Masters, David Andrich, and Joseph Ryan.

Customized Test Development and Forms Construction: DRC’s Test Development professionals are experts in their content areas, and most are former educators who spent many years in the classroom, bringing a deep understanding of students and schools to their work. They are also experienced in test form construction, standards alignment, committee reviews, bias/sensitivity issues, and Universal Design.

Our test development team, lead by Ms. Jessica Tickle and supported by Ms. Patricia McDivitt, Vice President of Test Development, will act in support of NDE as they work with educators in Nebraska to develop test blueprints and high-quality items. We are also pleased to offer NDE access to our state-of-the-art item banking system, IDEAS (Item Development and Educational Assessment System, patent pending). With real-time, online access to IDEAS, DRC and NDE will be able to work together effectively throughout the test development process.

DRC proposes the following overall plan for all reading, mathematics, and science items written by Nebraska educators. Because NDE has requested that additional field testing be worked into the plan, DRC has provided the following revised testing cycle:

NeSA Testing Cycle	Reading	Mathematics	Science
Year 3: 2011	Operational with embedded field test FORM B	Operational with embedded field test FORM A	Stand-alone field test
Year 4: 2012	Operational with embedded field test FORM C	Operational with embedded field test FORM B	Operational with embedded field test FORM A
Year 5: 2013	Recycled form	Operational with embedded field test FORM C	Operational with embedded field test FORM B

Superior Technology Solutions: DRC's Information Systems Department offers customized technology solutions to our state department clients, such as electronic image scoring, software development, and web-based product design. Our wealth of experience has enabled us to master the complex technology needed for today's assessment programs and provide states with secure, efficient, and reliable technology products.

DRC will continue the use of our flexible web-based online enrollment system and our secure web report delivery system for the NeSA. Both systems provide schools and districts with easy-to-use tools for managing the assessment at a local level.

High-Quality Materials Production: DRC's **ISO 9001:2008-certified Printing Department** produces scannable forms for our education clients, printing over 200 million documents a year. These in-house printing capabilities offer our clients technical accuracy, design options, and greater scheduling flexibility. In addition, our Document/Graphic Design Group provides in-house publishing capabilities. Our Design Group, Project Management, and Test Development staff also has expertise in creating accommodated materials. Our industry-leading experience in materials production and our stringent quality control processes will continue to be applied to the NeSA assessment system to ensure the delivery of accurate printed test materials.

Reliable Distribution and Collection: DRC is familiar with the challenges of delivering materials to and collecting materials from states with a high rural population, such as Nebraska. We will work with NDE to create processes that meet the needs of the schools and districts in the State. Our **ISO 9001:2008-certified distribution and collection process** underscores the importance of quality standards; we take all necessary precautions to ensure accurate packaging and timely delivery of all materials.

Knowledgeable Subcontractors: In addition to CAL, DRC is partnering with TRI-LIN Integrated Services. TRI-LIN will provide the optional ELL/Spanish test-related materials, along with the optional Spanish translation of the parent/guardian report templates and interpretive materials for the NeSA. TRI-LIN has been serving the educational community in translation and transadaptation services since 1997.

A Supportive Team of Executives: DRC's Executive Team is always accessible to our Project Managers. Through cross-functional project teams and project review meetings, Ms. Johnson, Program Director, will foster an ongoing and consistent line of communication with DRC's senior management and the leaders of all areas of DRC. She is empowered to make decisions on behalf of DRC and will also have immediate access to a higher level of authority and issue resolution whenever necessary. This management structure offers NDE an unsurpassed level of responsive and dedicated service.

The DRC Team—Success of the NeSA

DRC has crafted the best solution for the implementation of the new assessment system in Nebraska. We are confident that our strong foundation in the first three years of the program, combined with the excellent qualifications of our staff and subcontractors and our superior corporate capabilities and experience, will continue to meet or exceed the contract requirements for this program.

With the constantly evolving nature of the *No Child Left Behind* legislation and the recent changes to Nebraska legislative requirements, it is especially crucial that NDE staff be able to focus on new and ever changing assessment and accountability elements, rather than on the minute details of the program. This focus is possible only through a partnership with an assessment team on which NDE can fully rely.

We look forward to our continued relationship and joint commitment with NDE to the students, families, and educators of Nebraska.



	Description	Year 4 Cost - Nov 2008	Year 4 Cost - 2011 Revision
a1	Project Management and Planning		
a1a	General Project Management Support	\$ 566,612	\$ 566,612
a1b	Meetings	\$ 94,671	\$ 83,300
	Subtotal	\$ 661,283	\$ 649,912
a2	Assessment System Development		
a2a	General Development Support	\$ 159,255	\$ 461,144
a2b	Item Bank	\$ 101,935	\$ 101,935
a2c	Practice Tests	\$ 986	\$ 986
a2d	Online Assessment Design/Functionality	\$ 306,622	\$ 306,622
a2f	Paper/Pencil Assessment Style Guide	\$ -	\$ -
a2g	Test Construction	\$ 186,309	\$ 177,759
	Subtotal	\$ 755,107	\$ 1,048,446
a3	Delivery of Assessments		
a3a	General Delivery Support	\$ 23,693	\$ 23,693
a3b	Evaluation of District Technology Capacity	\$ -	\$ -
a3c	Student Identification and Tracking (Precode)	\$ 9,703	\$ 9,703
a3e	Online Enrollment System	\$ 46,032	\$ 46,032
a3f	Test Booklets/Answer Documents	\$ 162,209	\$ 162,209
a3g	Ancillary Materials	\$ 35,009	\$ 35,009
a3i	Large-Print - Operational	\$ 37,063	\$ 37,063
a3k	Braille - Operational	\$ 25,438	\$ 25,438
	Subtotal	\$ 339,147	\$ 339,147
a4	Administration of Assessments		
a4a	General Administration Support	\$ 9,041	\$ 9,041
a4b	Online Administration	\$ 723,334	\$ 723,334
a4c	Material Packaging, Shipping, Return & Check-in	\$ 201,069	\$ 201,069
a4d	Customer Service	\$ 144,597	\$ 144,597
a4e	Test Administration Workshops	\$ 11,222	\$ -
	Subtotal	\$ 1,089,263	\$ 1,078,041
a5	Scanning/Imaging		
a5a	General Scanning/Imaging Support	\$ 81,957	\$ 81,957
a5b	Damaged Materials Report	\$ -	\$ -
	Subtotal	\$ 81,957	\$ 81,957
a6	Scoring		
a6a	General Scoring Support	\$ 28,688	\$ 28,688
a6b	Irregular Response Report	\$ 9,376	\$ 9,376
	Subtotal	\$ 38,064	\$ 38,064
a7	Analysis		
a7a	General Analysis Support	\$ 190,438	\$ 190,438
a7b	Calibration, Scaling, and Equating	\$ 92,371	\$ 92,371
a7c	Comparability Studies	\$ 60,989	\$ -
a7d	Field Test Item Analysis	\$ 122,362	\$ 122,362
	Subtotal	\$ 466,160	\$ 405,171
a8	Reporting		
a8a	General Reporting Support	\$ 96,464	\$ 96,464
a8b	Parent/Guardian Reports	\$ 51,159	\$ 51,159
a8c	Summary Reports	\$ 17,124	\$ 17,124
a8d	Data Files	\$ 22,810	\$ 22,810
a8e	Interpretive Materials	\$ 5,048	\$ 5,048
a8f	Item Samplers (Fall Practice Test)	\$ 77,165	\$ 77,165
a8g	Technical Report	\$ 81,660	\$ 81,660

	Description	Year 4 Cost - Nov 2008	Year 4 Cost - 2011 Revision
a8j	Reporting Workshops	\$ 11,222	\$ -
	Subtotal	\$ 362,652	\$ 351,430
a9	Standard Setting		
a9a	General Standard Setting Support	\$ 57,918	\$ 57,918
a9b	Standard Setting Meetings	\$ 120,360	\$ 62,536
a9c	Written Report	\$ 47,985	\$ 47,985
	Subtotal	\$ 226,263	\$ 168,439
	Subtotal Base Costs	\$ 4,019,896	\$ 4,160,607
	Needed Additions from 2008 to Present		
a3d	Online Precode	No Charge Option	No Charge Option
a3m	OPTION - ELL (Spanish) - Operational	\$ 35,492	\$ 35,492
a8i	OPTION - Spanish language report materials	\$ 3,760	\$ 3,760
10	Immediate Online Results		\$ 85,527
11	Post-test Corrections Process - Reading, Math, and Science Operational		\$ 17,957
12	Science Alignment Study		\$ 30,664
14	Alternative Assessment - Multiple Forms and Flagged by Subject		\$ 17,083
	Total Cost	\$ 4,059,148	\$ 4,351,090
	Optional Items		
	Description	Year 4 Cost	Year 4 Cost
OP2	OPTION - Online Formative Assessment*	\$ 749,579	\$ 655,000

subtotal

* Formative Assessment - Costs include testing of 50,000 students

Variable Pricing for additional students:

0 - 50,000 students	295,000
50,001 - 100,000 additional students	495,000
100,001 - 150,000 additional students	655,000