



A r i z o n a
Department of Education
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

RFI # ADED16-0002

Issue Date: May 31, 2016

Description: Arizona School Accountability Components & System

Due date: **June 21, 2016** **Time: 3:00 p.m. (MST)**

General Information:

In accordance with ARS §41-2555, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) hereby gives notice via this Request for Information (RFI), of its desire to receive responses, feedback, suggestions and comments regarding the items set forth herein.

In accordance with R2-7-G301, responses to the RFI are not offers and cannot be accepted to form a binding contract. To the extent allowed by law, information contained in a response to an RFI may be considered confidential until the procurement process is concluded or two (2) years from when the RFI's due date has elapsed, whichever occurs first. Responders are solely responsible for expenses associated with responding to the RFI. The State is under no obligation to the responders in so far as the next steps to this process are concerned.

Responders are invited to respond to one, any, or all of the questions contained in the RFI.

Responses to the RFI shall be submitted as follows:

All informational documents in text or PDF format shall be submitted directly to ADE's Accountability Unit through its [online collection system](#) on or before July 15, 2016. Respondents shall receive a copy of their submission as successful receipt by ADE's Accountability Unit.

Confidentiality:

Any submitted materials considered by the respondent to be proprietary or confidential shall be clearly marked as such and provided as a separate section in your response. In response to such requests, the State will make reasonable efforts to maintain confidentiality of these materials to the extent permissible by law. However, should the State be required to release these materials, the State will provide the respondent reasonable notice in advance of doing so in order to allow the respondent time to take any action to prevent these materials from being released.

Clarification of Solicitation Requirements:

It is the responsibility of all Offerors to examine the RFI and seek clarification of any item or requirement that may be clear or unclear to them and to check all offers for accuracy before submittal to ADE.

Any questions regarding this solicitation can be answered by emailing the Arizona Department of Education Office of Procurement at Procurementinbox@azed.gov. All questions must be in writing. The ADE Chief Procurement Officer is the only authorized person to give information as to the requirements of the solicitation in addition to that contained in the written

	<h2>Request for Information</h2>	<p>State of Arizona Department of Education 1535 W. Jefferson Street Phoenix, AZ 85007</p>
RFI No.: ADED16-0002 Description: Statewide School Accountability System		

documents. **Questions should be emailed and received by Office of Procurement no less than seventy-two hours before the RFI due date and time.**

All questions must reference the page and item that is to be addressed.

Purpose:

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) must develop and administer a fair and systematic high stakes accountability system using multiple measures adherent to state and federal requirements. This process will provide ADE and its group of technical and policy stakeholders access to innovative and diverse considerations in order to develop and recommend an accountability system with the highest level of integrity and transparency. **This RFI solicits feedback from interested parties with any relevant expertise, systems, or methodology they have developed or conceptualized which meet the intent of any one or more of the components described below.** If appropriate, ADE may include non-proprietary responses to this RFI as documented stakeholder engagement tools used to develop Arizona’s State Plan required by ESSA and/or a final A-F Letter Grade Accountability System Recommendation.

	<h1>Request for Information</h1>	<p>State of Arizona Department of Education 1535 W. Jefferson Street Phoenix, AZ 85007</p>
RFI No.: ADED16-0002 Description: Statewide School Accountability System		

Instructions for Responding:

Please frame responses to address requirements outlined by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), A.R.S. 15-241, SB1430, the State Board of Education’s Principles of Agreement, Superintendent Diane Douglas’ *AZ Kids Can’t Afford to Wait* Plan, and other historical documentation (i.e. subcommittee minutes, archived materials, publicly available data sets, presentations, White Papers, etc.) which might impact the recommendation and/or adoption of any proposed system of holding Arizona schools and districts accountable.

All stakeholders with shared interest in the State of Arizona’s method of holding schools and districts accountable are encouraged to submit responses to one or all of the items below. Please provide answers to as many of the questions as possible and provide supporting materials that describe the proposal and any other related considerations. Partial responses must identify the specific item(s) the submission will address. The Department of Education will not grant access to student-level information for this RFI; respondents should reference existing publicly available aggregated data sets if needed. With the exception of proprietary or confidential information, all submissions to this RFI shall be made publicly available by the Department. Consequently, the Department will use peer review and/or statistical modeling to assess the fairness and viability of each relevant submission before inclusion in a high stakes accountability system.

This RFI is being issued to obtain information only and may or may not result in contracts or vendor agreements with any respondent. Respondents to this RFI will not be excluded from eligibility to participate in any future requests for proposals (RFPs) based on their decision to respond to this RFI or on the content of their responses to this RFI; however, respondents to this RFI will be excluded in evaluating and integrating responses which may or may not result in a high stakes accountability system and related competitions.

Information Being Requested:

1. Demonstration of values

- a) How does a transparent and fair accountability system define an “excellent” school in regards to:
 - i. Preparing all students for College/Career readiness
 - ii. Improving achievement and outcomes among student subgroups
 - iii. Graduating students prepared for postsecondary workforce and/or education
 - iv. Demonstrating growth on standardized assessments aligned to Arizona’s standards
 - v. Providing a high-quality, well-rounded education to families regardless of income
 - vi. Meeting the needs of parents and students in the community

- b) How does a transparent and fair accountability system define a “failing” school in regards to:
 - i. Preparing all students for College/Career readiness
 - ii. Improving achievement and outcomes among student subgroups
 - iii. Graduating students prepared for postsecondary workforce and/or education
 - iv. Demonstrating growth on standardized assessments aligned to Arizona’s standards
 - v. Providing a high-quality, well-rounded education to families regardless of income
 - vi. Meeting the needs of parents and students in the community

	<h1>Request for Information</h1>	<p>State of Arizona Department of Education 1535 W. Jefferson Street Phoenix, AZ 85007</p>
RFI No.: ADED16-0002 Description: Statewide School Accountability System		

- c) How does a transparent and fair accountability system differentiate among schools that are neither “excellent” nor “failing”?

2. Background

- a) Provide a brief history of the organization and its governance structure, if applicable, or provide a brief overview of the individual’s experience with accountability of K-12 public schools and districts
- b) Identify the individuals from the organization that will be working with Arizona officials on all aspects of the accountability system’s implementation.
- c) Disclose and discuss the organization’s work within and around Arizona’s state education agency, local education agencies, and/or public education agencies including assurance any work or deliverables produced by the organization will exclude bias or undue influence, if applicable.

3. Overview of System

- a) List and define the metrics included in a potential accountability system which meets the needs of Arizona’s various school types and uses multiple measures. Please highlight the extent to which academic achievement on Arizona’s statewide assessments (i.e. AzMERIT, NCSC, AIMS, etc.) and/or results from a menu of assessment can be meaningfully integrated in the proposed system.
- b) Describe how the proposed metrics are aligned to college / career expectations and include any alignment studies, if available.
- c) Describe how differentiated weights and metrics resulting in an overall letter grades can be compared between schools and across years to inform the following:
 - i. Achievement of all students and progress of student subgroups
 - ii. Information needed by parents/communities to inform school choice
 - iii. Improvement of various types of schools within Arizona
 - iv. Construct relevant components of school quality
- d) Describe how the proposal may reduce administrative burden for LEAs and the SEA given the variation in accountability requirements related to applicable federal laws, state laws, State Board of Education rules, charter school authorizers, and other regulatory bodies.

4. Measuring Student Growth

- a) What are the advantages of utilizing this measure of growth on Arizona’s statewide assessments and in Arizona’s new A-F Letter Grade Accountability System?
- b) Please discuss evidence of technical appropriateness and statistical robustness to support the validity and reliability of student-level growth scores based on each of the following assessment scenarios:
 - i. Vertically scaled assessments of grades 3 through 8 ELA standards
 - ii. Vertically scaled assessments of grades 3 through 8 Mathematics standards



Request for Information

State of Arizona
Department of Education
1535 W. Jefferson Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007

RFI No.: ADED16-0002

Description: Statewide School Accountability System

- iii. Vertically scaled, non-sequential with extreme variability in the instructional format for end of course assessments of high school ELA and Mathematics standards
 - iv. Across test administration modality (Paper and computer-based) equated on a common vertical scale in each of the subjects above
 - v. Varying assessments selected off of a menu of assessments potentially available in high school grades and administered in various modalities
 - vi. Varying assessments selected off of a menu of assessments potentially available to students in elementary grades and administered in various modalities
 - vii. Annual tests of English language proficiency as measured by AZELLA administered in Grades K through 12
 - viii. Summative assessments of Science standards administered to students enrolled in grades 4, 8, and high school
- c) Please describe the organization's professional experience and technical capacity for conducting this type of work on behalf of education agencies locally, nationally, and/or internationally.
- d) Describe any services or assistance the vendor might provide to expedite the calculation of student growth scores so they are available to ADE, schools, students, and parents via student score reports produced by Arizona's test vendor(s).
- e) How can parents, teachers, students, and schools use growth score(s) to interpret individual student trajectory relative to Arizona's academic standards?
- f) How can growth scores be aggregated and integrated into accountability determinations which may include varied weighting of proficiency results and other indicators of school performance?

5. Other Technical Considerations

- a) Describe any detailed analyses currently available or could be conducted to support the validity, reliability, and fairness of a proposed system as well as the methodology and validation process for standard setting the overall A-F letter grade determinations. The ADE will model all components for possible inclusion in a final accountability system.
- b) Describe the timeline necessary to produce school accountability ratings which will differentiate and support the variety of public schools and districts within Arizona.
- c) Describe the level of complexity and ability to replicate the statistical techniques which may be utilized throughout the system to differentiate school performance.
- d) Describe any resources related to personnel, data, and/or technology the proposal may require, including any additional resources, data collection, management, and storage needed by the Department.
- e) Please highlight any significant deviations from previous practice or changes to operational definitions currently utilized within Arizona's system of holding schools accountable.



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RFI No.: ADED16-0002

Description: Statewide School Accountability System

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND SUBMIT THE COMPLETED FORM WITH YOUR RESPONSE TO THE RFI.

I/We _____ the undersigned, do hereby submit this response for information with regard to Arizona’s Statewide School Accountability System in accordance with ARS §41-2555 Request for Information specification contained herein.

Name

Date

Company Name

Title

Address

Telephone Number