
Request for Proposals

VALIDATION OF OBSERVATION PROTOCOLS AND ONGOING CALIBRATION FOR EVALUATORS: TALENT OFFICE

RFP# 14SDE0017-RFP

Connecticut State Department of Education

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Date Issued: April 7, 2014

Due Date: April 30, 2014



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Levy Gillespie
Equal Employment Opportunity Director/American with Disabilities Act Coordinator
State of Connecticut Department of Education
25 Industrial Park Road
Middletown, Connecticut 06457
(860) 807-2071.
levy.gillespie@ct.gov

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

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BACKGROUND

Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)

On May 15, 2012, Governor Malloy signed [Public Act 12-116](#), An Act Concerning Education Reform, which was recognized by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, who commended Connecticut for “coming together to enact meaningful education reforms that will benefit students.” The success of Connecticut schools depends upon skillful teaching. Teacher quality is one of the most significant contributors to student learning and achievement. High quality evaluations are necessary to inform the individualized professional development and support that an educator may require. Such evaluations also identify professional strengths which should form the basis of new professional opportunities. High-quality evaluations are also necessary to make fair employment decisions based on teacher and leader effectiveness. Used in this way, high-quality evaluations will bring greater accountability and transparency to schools and instill greater confidence to employment decisions across the state. Connecticut is committed to ensuring that all students achieve and develop the skills that will enable them to become lifelong learners and productive citizens in a global world.

The primary goal of the educator evaluation and support system is to strengthen individual and collective educator practice so as to increase student learning and development. The Guidelines for Educator Evaluation are based, in part, on the *Connecticut Common Core of Teaching (CCT)* (2010), which articulates requirements across a teacher’s career and serve as the foundation for teacher practice, evaluation and professional development and the *Common Core of Leading: Connecticut Leadership Standards*, adopted in June of 2012 which incorporate the national Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards and define effective administrator practice. The Guidelines require that 40% of a teacher’s evaluation be based on observation of teacher performance and practice employing a standards-based model, aligned to the CCT. Likewise, the Guidelines require that 40% of an administrator’s evaluation be based on observation of administrator performance and practice employing a standards-based model, aligned to the CT Leader Standards.

Beginning in 2013, the CSDE in collaboration with representatives from the regional educational service centers (RESCs), the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS), pilot districts and the two statewide teachers’ unions developed and has continued to refine an instrument for observation of teacher performance and practice based on the CCT, entitled the *CCT Rubric for Effective Teaching*. The *CCT Rubric for Effective Teaching* articulates the knowledge, skills and qualities that Connecticut teachers need to demonstrate to prepare students to meet the challenges of the 21st century and to be college and career ready.

In addition, the CSDE, in partnership with Student and Educator Support Specialists (SESS) representatives, developed the *CCT Rubric for Student and Educator Support Specialists*, an adapted version of *The CCT Rubric for Effective Teaching*, for use with School Psychologists, Speech and Language Pathologists, Comprehensive School Counselors and School Social Workers.

A reliable system of teacher evaluation and support requires a valid instrument to assess teacher performance and practice and evaluators who possess high levels of proficiency in the use of such an instrument. Evaluators must be able to document classroom and non-classroom examples of the various domains of practice across the continuum of performance and interpret that evidence against specific criteria (i.e. indicators). In 2013-14, the CSDE in collaboration with the RESCs, CAS and Teaching Learning Solutions provided training for evaluators, as well as an opportunity for them to demonstrate initial proficiency using the *CCT Rubric for Effective Teaching*.

The Guidelines for Educator Evaluation require that “local or regional boards of education shall ensure that processes related to observation of teacher practice and performance provide **ongoing calibration** of evaluators in the district.” Some of the major sources of systematic error that can occur during an observation caused by the observer(s) include the error of leniency, the error of central tendency, and the halo effect (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). These errors/biases can change the score a person should receive because the observer marks too highly, marks most scores around the middle point, or is influenced by early impressions of an individual’s performance (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). For this reason, observer/evaluator engagement in continuous calibration is equally as important as a well-developed rubric.

To allow evaluators the opportunity to calibrate their judgments against those of their colleagues and ensure their judgments are fair, reliable and valid, training must extend beyond initial training and proficiency. Ongoing calibration is essential in order to strengthen the skills and deepen the expertise of evaluators so that the evaluation system produces accurate, consistent, fair and reliable results. Additionally, strategies to communicate meaningful and actionable feedback based on observation data provide tangible opportunities for educators to learn from, and grow from, observations and are critical to raising student achievement.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Interested parties may respond with proposals to provide services for either or both of the parts below, each of which is represented individually in the Product and/or Services Specification in the next section.

1. Validation of Rubrics:

Develop and facilitate a process to validate three separate rubrics used for the observation of educators: *CCT Rubric for Effective Teaching*, the *CCT Rubric for Student and Educator Support Specialists* and the *Connecticut Leader Evaluation Rubric*;

2. Calibration:

Develop a process to provide ongoing calibration for school and district administrators/observers executing formal and informal teacher and administrator observations;

PRODUCT AND/OR SERVICES SPECIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR PROPOSAL

Please identify clearly which of the following two parts are addressed in the submitted proposal. If submitting for both, please note that Part 4, Organizational Information, identified in the "Submittal Requirements" section below, only needs to be submitted once.

1. Validation of Rubrics:

The provider must work in collaboration with Talent Office staff and other CT stakeholders and partners to conduct validation studies of the observation rubrics (*CCT Rubric for Effective Teaching*, *CCT Rubric for Student and Educator Support Specialists* and the *Connecticut Leader Evaluation Rubric*) to ensure that each rubric measures, as accurately as possible, the knowledge, skills and abilities required for effective practice and to determine whether the interpretation, use and consequences of decisions made using the rubrics are reliable and valid measurements of educator performance and practice. The validation process should include, but not be limited to the following:

- a. Specific questions that will be addressed and the overall approach to the validation study;
- b. A process to engage stakeholders at multiple levels and at various stages of the validation study;
- c. Examination of the properties of key quality measures, e.g., inter-rater reliability on observational measures, scoring of evidence, training and proficiency to determine if measures are psychometrically sound;
- d. Analysis of whether the process used to document and tag evidence for each indicator of the rubric yields accurate results;

- e. Validation that the evidence gathered through the observation process supports the decisions made and ratings assigned to educators;
- f. An examination of the clarity, accuracy, absence of bias and/or appropriateness of the rubric language;
- g. Recommendations for future improvements;
- h. A description of the strategies that will be used to report on and disseminate the findings and use of the findings in a feedback loop to inform continuous quality improvement; and
- i. A process for sharing the findings from the validation study with stakeholders.

2. Calibration:

The provider(s) must work in collaboration with Talent Office staff and other CT stakeholders and partners to develop training and strategies to assist districts in providing ongoing calibration for evaluators/observers of both teachers and administrators. Training and strategies should stress the importance of building inter-rater reliability within the observation process (i.e. increasing the likelihood that another evaluator/observer would make the same judgment, based upon the same evidence) and the ability to communicate meaningful and actionable feedback based on observation data. Inter-rater reliability does not represent a one-time event, but reflects an ongoing process. The provider(s) should provide a description of the systems and tools to support an ongoing process of calibration that includes, but is not limited to the following:

- a. A description of formative exercises designed to confirm that observers are accurately and consistently applying the district rubric(s);
- b. A description of ongoing activities designed to refine the observers' ability to identify appropriate, objective evidence, consistently align the evidence to appropriate performance indicators and standards and uniformly score each rubric indicator in alignment with other observers within and across schools in the district;
- c. A description of a process for ensuring that evidence/data gathered from observations are used to provide accurate, meaningful feedback regarding educators' strengths, weaknesses and professional development needs to boost educator practice, student learning outcomes, and school efficacy;
- d. A process for identifying areas of alignment and misalignment, reaching consensus on some of the areas of misalignment and discussing situations that are the most challenging to score or data that may be interpreted differently;
- e. Videos and/or other methods that will allow observers to norm within and across schools and participate in norming conversations about effective teaching/administrative practices;
- f. A process to examine videos of teaching/administrative practice focused on non-traditional content areas or an area of the rubric that building and/or district administrators identify as being most challenging to score; and
- g. A process to identify components that present the most challenge in reaching consensus, identifying the causes of the challenge and developing solutions.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposers must address each of the items detailed below.

1. **Qualifications and Experience**

a. Demonstrated ability to provide services: Experience

Please provide a detailed explanation of the experience you or your organization has to support the CSDE as requested.

b. Demonstrated ability to provide services: Staff (working on project)

Please provide a detailed explanation of your experience to support the CSDE as requested.

2. **Methodology**

a. Proposed method of providing service

Please provide a detailed explanation of the methodology you will use in order to provide the services requested.

b. Proposed resources providing services

Please provide a detailed explanation of the resources you will use in order to provide the services requested.

3. **Pricing**

a. Proposed Pricing

Please provide detailed budget.

b. Additional Savings and/or Increased Revenues and/or Sustainability Plan

Please provide an explanation of additional savings and/or increased revenues and/or logic for how your proposal will be sustainable.

4. **Organizational Information**

a. Financial Stability

b. References

c. Quality Assurance

d. Appropriate Insurance/Bonding

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

1. **Contract Period**

The State intends that this contract shall be in effect for a period of 1 year, beginning on July 1, 2014, and ending June 30, 2015. The State reserves the right to extend this contract

for a period up to the full original contract term or parts thereof with mutual consent between both parties.

2. Quantities and/or Usages

These are estimated quantities and/or usages only and in no way represent a commitment and/or intent to purchase. Actual quantities may vary and will be identified on individual purchase orders issued by the requesting state entity.

3. Brand Name Specifications and/or References

The use of the name of a manufacturer or of any particular make, model or brand in describing an item does not restrict proposers to that manufacturer or specific article unless limited by the term "no substitute". However, the article being offered must be of such character and quality so that it will serve the purpose for which it is to be used equally as well as that specified, and the proposer shall warrant to the State that it is fit for that purpose. Proposals on comparable items must clearly state the exact article being offered including any and all applicable options and the proposer shall furnish such other information concerning the article being offered as will be helpful in evaluating its acceptability for the purpose intended. If the proposer does not indicate that the article offered is other than as specified, it will be understood that the proposer is offering the article exactly as specified. Proposers must submit complete documentation on the specifications and quality levels of the proposed products. Proposals submitted that do not contain this documentation are subject to rejection.

4. Contract Award

The State reserves the right to award this Contract in a manner deemed to be in the best interest of the State and may include, but not be limited to:

- A. by item, group of items, or in its entirety
- B. geographic location to adequately service the entire State of Connecticut in the best possible manner
- C. Multiple Vendor Awards

5. Stability of Proposed Prices

Any price offerings from proposers must be valid for a period of 120 days from the due date of the proposals.

6. Amendment or Cancellation of the RFP

CSDE reserves the right to cancel, amend, modify or otherwise change this RFP at any time if it deems it to be in the best interest of the State to do so.

7. Proposal Modifications

No additions or changes to any proposal will be allowed after the proposal due date, unless such modification is specifically requested by CSDE. CSDE, at its option, may seek proposer retraction and/or clarification of any discrepancy or contradiction found during its review of proposals.

- 8. Proposer Presentation of Supporting Evidence**

Proposers must be prepared to provide any evidence of experience, performance, ability, and/or financial surety that CSDE deems to be necessary or appropriate to fully establish the performance capabilities represented in their proposals.
- 9. Proposer Demonstration of Proposed Services and or Products**

At the discretion of CSDE, proposers must be able to confirm their ability to provide all proposed services. Any required confirmation must be provided at a site approved by CSDE and without cost to the State.
- 10. Erroneous Awards**

CSDE reserves the right to correct inaccurate awards. This may include, in extreme circumstances, revoking the awarding of a contract already made to a proposer and subsequently awarding the contract to another proposer. Such action on the part of CSDE shall not constitute a breach of contract on the part of CSDE since the contract with the initial proposer is deemed to be void and of no effect as if no contract ever existed between CSDE and such proposer.
- 11. Proposal Expenses**

Proposers are responsible for all costs and expenses incurred in the preparation of proposals and for any subsequent work on the proposal that is required by CSDE.
- 12. Ownership of Proposals**

All proposals shall become the sole property of the State and will not be returned.
- 13. Ownership of Subsequent Products**

Any product, whether acceptable or unacceptable, developed under a contract awarded as a result of this RFP shall be the sole property of the State unless otherwise stated in the contract.
- 14. Oral Agreement or Arrangements**

Any alleged oral agreements or arrangements made by proposers with any State agency or employee will be disregarded in any State proposal evaluation or associated award.
- 15. Subcontractors**

CSDE must approve any and all subcontractors utilized by the successful proposer prior to any such subcontractor commencing any work. Proposers acknowledge by the act of submitting a proposal that any work provided under the contract is work conducted on behalf of the State and that the Commissioner of CSDE or his/her designee may communicate directly with any subcontractor as the State deems to be necessary or appropriate. It is also understood that the successful proposer shall be responsible for all payment of fees charged by the subcontractor(s). A performance evaluation of any subcontractor shall be provided promptly by the successful proposer to CSDE upon request. The successful proposer must provide the majority of services described in the specifications.

CONTRACT

This RFP is not a contract and, alone, shall not be interpreted as such. Rather, this RFP only serves as the instrument through which proposals are solicited. The state will pursue negotiations with the highest scoring proposal. If, for some reason, CSDE and the initial proposer fail to reach consensus on the issues relative to a contract, then CSDE may commence contract negotiations with other proposers. Thereafter, Proposers will be required to sign a formal contract.

CSDE may decide at any time to start the RFP process again.

SELECTION CRITERIA

A selection committee will review and score all proposals. The following information, in addition to the requirements, terms and conditions identified throughout this RFP Document, will be considered as part of the Selection process.

Selection Criteria:

1. **QUALIFICATIONS/ EXPERIENCE**
2. **METHODOLOGY**
3. **PRICING**
4. **ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION**

INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

I. Proposal Schedule

Release of RFP:	April 7, 2014
Mandatory Site Visit:	Not Applicable
Receipt of Questions:	April 17, 2014
Answer to Questions will be Posted as an Addendum:	April 21, 2014
Proposal Due Date:	April 30, 2014

During the period from your receipt of this Request for Proposals, and until a contract is awarded, you shall not contact any employee of the State of Connecticut for additional

information, except in writing, directed to the "Department Contact" listed on the cover page of this document.

II. Bidder Information

Company/Vendor

Bidder's Address

Bidder's Representative

Telephone #'s:

Email Address

III. Questions

Questions for the purpose of clarifying the RFP must be submitted in writing and must be received no later than 12:00 p.m. (noon) on Thursday, April 17, 2014 to:

Claudine Primack, CSDE Talent Office, claudine.primack@ct.gov

Answers to questions received will be posted as an Addendum.

IV. Proposal Submission

All responses to this solicitation must be submitted as follows:

Proposal must include 5 complete copies and must be stamped in as received, by 4:00 p.m. eastern time on Wednesday, April 30, 2014, at:

**The Connecticut State Department of Education
C/o Georgia Stathoulas
Talent Office, Room 235
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106**

****Expedited services (Fed Ex, USPS, and UPS) are acceptable providing a signed receipt identifies the delivery time prior to the above stated time.**

APPENDICIES

Appendix A

Statement of Assurances

PROJECT: VALIDATION OF OBSERVATION PROTOCOLS AND ONGOING CALIBRATION AND COACHING
FOR EVALUATORS: TALENT OFFICE

THE APPLICANT, _____, HEREBY ASSURES THAT:
(Insert Name)

1. The applicant has the necessary legal authority to submit a proposal in response to this RFP and to contract for the provision of the services described therein.
2. The filing of this application has been authorized by the applicant's governing body, and the undersigned official has been duly authorized to file this application for and on behalf of said applicant, and otherwise to act as the authorized representative of the applicant in connection with this application.
3. The activities and services for which assistance is sought under this RFP will be administered by or under the supervision and control of the applicant.
4. The project will be operated in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and in compliance with the regulations and other policies and administrative directives of the Connecticut State Board of Education and the State Department of Education; Fiscal control and accounting procedures will be used to ensure proper disbursement of all funds awarded.
5. The applicant will submit a final project report (within 60 days of the project completion) and such other reports, as specified, to the State Department of Education, including information relating to the project records and access thereto as the State Department of Education may find necessary;
6. The Connecticut State Department of Education reserves the exclusive right to use and grant the right to use and/or publish any part or parts of any summary, abstract, reports, publications, records, and materials resulting from this project;
7. The applicant will protect and save harmless the State Board of Education from financial loss and expense, including fees and legal fees and costs, if any, arising out of any breach of the duties, in whole or in part, described in the application;
8. Required Contract Language:
 - (1) For the purposes of this section, "Commission" means the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities. For the purposes of this section, "minority business enterprise" means any small contractor or supplier of materials fifty-one percent or more of the capitol stock, if any, or assets of

which is owned by a person or persons: (a) who are active in the daily affairs of the enterprise, (b) who have the power to direct the management and policies of the enterprise and (c) who are members of a minority, as such term is defined in subsection (a) of Connecticut General Statutes Section 32-9n; and "good faith" means that the degree of diligence which a reasonable person would exercise in the performance of legal duties and obligations. "Good faith efforts" shall include, but shall not be limited to, those reasonable initial efforts necessary to comply with statutory or regulatory requirements and additional or substituted efforts when it is determined that such initial efforts will not be sufficient to comply with such requirements.

For the purposes of this section, "sexual orientation" means having a preference for heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality, having a history of such preference or being identified with such preference, but excludes any behavior which constitutes a violation of part VI of chapter 952 of the general statutes.

(2) (a) The contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the contract such contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, mental retardation or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by such contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or the State of Connecticut. If the contract is for a public works project, the contractor agrees and 20 warrants that he will make good faith efforts to employ minority business enterprises as subcontractors and suppliers of materials on such project. The contractor further agrees to take affirmative action to insure that applicants with job related qualifications are employed and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, mental retardation, or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by the contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved; (b) the contractor agrees, in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the contractor, to state that it is an "affirmative action-equal opportunity employer" in accordance with regulations adopted by the commission; (c) the contractor agrees to provide each labor union or representative of workers with which such contractor has a collective bargaining agreement or other contract or understanding and each vendor with which such contractor has a contract or understanding, a notice to be provided by the commission, advising the labor union or worker's representative of the contractor's commitments under this section and to post copies of the notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment; (d) the contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this section and Connecticut General Statutes Sections 4a-62, 32-9e, 46a and 46a-68b to 46a-68k, inclusive and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said commission pursuant to said sections; (e) the contractor agrees to provide the commission on human rights and opportunities with such information requested by the commission, and permit access to pertinent books, records, and accounts, concerning the employment practices and procedures of the contractor as related to the provisions of this section and section 46a-56.

(3) Determination of the contractor's good faith efforts shall include but shall not be limited to the following factors: the contractor's employment and subcontracting policies, patterns and practices; affirmative advertising; recruitment and training; technical assistance activities and such other reasonable activities or efforts as the commission may prescribe that are designed to ensure the participation of minority business enterprises in public works projects.

(4) The contractor shall develop and maintain adequate documentation, in a manner prescribed by the commission, of its good faith efforts.

(5) The contractor shall include the provisions of subsection (2) of this section in every subcontract or purchase order entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a contract with the state and such provisions shall be binding in a subcontractor, vendor or manufacturer unless exempted by regulations or orders of the commission. The contractor shall take such action with respect to any such subcontract or purchase order as the commission may direct as a means of reinforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance in accordance with this section and Connecticut General Statutes Sections 4a-62, 32-9e, 46a-56 and 46a-68b to 46a-68k, inclusive; provided if such contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with litigation with a subcontractor or vendor as a result of such direction by the commission, the contractor may request the State of Connecticut to enter into any such litigation or negotiation prior thereto to protect the interests of the state and the state may so enter.

(6) The contractor agrees to comply with the regulations referred to in this section as the term of this contract and any amendments thereto as they exist on the date of the contract and as they may be adopted or amended from time to time during the term of this contract and any amendments thereto.

(7) (a) The contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the contract such contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of sexual orientation, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or the State of Connecticut, and that employees are treated, when employed, without regard to their sexual orientation; (b) the contractor agrees to provide each labor union or representative of workers with which such contractors has a collective bargaining agreement or other contract or understanding and each vendor with which such contractor has a contract or understanding, a notice to be provided by the commission on human rights and opportunities advising the labor union or workers' representative of the contractor's commitments under this section, and to post copies of the notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment; (c) the contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this section and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said commission pursuant to section 46a-56 of the Connecticut General Statutes; (d) the contractor agrees to provide the commission on human rights and opportunities with such information requested by the commission and permit access to pertinent books, records and accounts, concerning employment practices and procedures of the contractor which related to the provisions of this section and section 46a-56 of the general statutes.

(8) The contractor shall include the provisions of subsection (7) of this section in every subcontract or purchase order entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a contract with the state and such provisions shall be binding on a subcontractor, vendor, or manufacturer unless exempted by regulations and orders of the commission. The contractor shall take such action with respect to any such subcontract or purchase order as the commission may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance in accordance with section 46a-56 of the general statutes; provided, if such contractor or vendor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor or vendor as a result of such direction by the commission, the contractor may request the State of Connecticut to enter into any such litigation or negotiation prior thereto to protect the interests of the state and the state may so enter.

The signature of the authorized official on the Statement of Assurances Signature Page indicates the intent to comply with the provisions referenced in each section. Assurances not agreed to by the authorized official must be identified on a separate sheet with a rationale for the disagreement.

I, the undersigned authorized official, hereby certify that these assurances shall be fully implemented.

Signature _____

Name (typed) _____

Title (typed) _____

Name of Organization _____

Date _____