

RFP #23-018

Performance-Based Learning and Assessment Networks Professional Learning Providers

Questions and Answers **REVISED 07/19/2023 as follows:**

- Additions:
 - Questions: Q5, Q12, Q18, Q19
 - Subsection: New York State Requirements for Business
- Edits:
 - Links added to answer for Q45

Proposals and Submission Documents

1. **Q.** Please clarify whether separate proposals are required if responding to more than one Focus Group.
 - A. Yes, separate proposals are required if an entity is responding to more than one Focus Area. Please refer to the notice on page 2 of [RFP #23-018](#), that states: “An entity may submit separate and complete proposals, each for a different Focus Area. Each separate proposal submitted in response to this RFP should be clearly labeled with the Focus Area for that proposal.”
2. **Q.** Regarding the narrative portion of the application, are there minimums or maximums for length?
 - A. There are no minimum or maximum word counts or page lengths required for the narrative portions of the proposal. However, we encourage proposals to “be prepared simply and economically, avoiding the use of elaborate promotional materials beyond those sufficient to provide complete presentation” (p. 26). Please refer to the description on page 26 of [RFP #23-018](#), that explains: “The proposal must communicate an understanding of the deliverables of the RFP, describe how the tasks are to be performed and identify potential problems in the conduct of the deliverables and methods to identify and solve such problems.”
3. **Q.** Is the signatory attestation required for wet signature that are scanned? Please clarify how the Signature Attestation should be used and/or placed.
 - A. The signature attestation, included under “Instructions for Submitting an Electronic Bid” on page 2-3 of [RFP #23-018](#), should be included for each submission document requiring a signature, when an electronic signature is used to fulfil this requirement. The attestation should either be provided next to the signature on the applicable submission documents, or be provided by email.
4. **Q.** Regarding Form #ST-220-CA, it requests the name, address, phone and ID, contract # for a “covered agency,” who does the “covered agency” refer to?
 - A. The “Covered Agency” is referring to the New York State Education Department. The Contract # is to be filled in by the Covered Agency.

5. **Q.** On page 28 of the RFP, you indicate that the action plan is worth 20 points. You include a link to an action plan template as well as four questions that seem to scaffold what you want in the template that was attached. Do you want responders to answer in chart format and narrative format or do you prefer we use the action plan template that is linked?
- A.** Please use the Action Plan Template (Attachment A) when completing this section of the Technical Proposal, as noted on page 18 of [RFP #23-018](#). The scored elements of the Action Plan listed on page 28 of the RFP correspond with fields in the template and should be addressed in chart format.

MWBE

6. **Q.** How do we connect with organizations submitting PLAN-TAC proposals?
- A.** At the end of the Q&A, a list of certified M/WBE vendors from the Empire State Development Directory for possible subcontracting opportunities is available. However, MWBE-certified firms interested in serving as partners can also reach out to MWBE@nysed.gov to provide your contact information.
7. **Q.** In addition to our outreach to businesses listed in the M/WBE Directory, we'd like to connect with associations and publications with M/WBE members and audiences that offer professional development to teachers and school leaders—especially around change management, shifting pedagogical practice, competency-based learning and the like. Could you suggest any NYS-based associations and/or publications that fit this description?
- A.** See Question #1
8. **Q.** If we hire consultants who are women and/or minorities, and are not listed in the NYS M/WBE Directory, would those subcontracts apply to the M/WBE requirement?
- A.** No. The consultants must be certified by the New York State Division of Minority and Women-Owned Business Development.
9. **Q.** Will NYSED be willing to list the following contact information in the Answers to Questions?
- A.** See Question #7
10. **Q.** Will you be collecting and making known WBEs who are interested and qualified to support a prime? How might I submit my information?
- A.** See Question #7
11. **Q.** I am reaching out as a NYS Certified MWBE to ask if there is a way to express interest in this RFP? With experience providing professional development in the areas of project-based learning and inquiry-based learning, I would love to express interest in partnering with organizations who will be submitting applications for this and am wondering if there is a way to 'get the word out' that I am qualified (especially in the areas of PBL and inquiry-based learning) and available as a MWBE, especially for applicants who

may be struggling with meeting the MWBE requirement. While I am not applying for this RFP, I am still very interested in partnering with providers who are applying to this RFP. Is there a way for me to express that interest to potential applicants/providers?

A. See Question #7

12. I didn't see an MWBE Goal Sheet in the Submission Documents. Can we use a computation sheet from another NYSED Grant. I am assuming as is allowed for NYS grants we can also deduct salaries and benefits of non-profits.

A. No. The M/WBE Goal Calculation sheet does not apply to this procurement. You may not deduct salaries and benefits.

General

13. Q. How do you define technical assistance?

A. For purposes of this RFP, NYSED is defining "technical assistance" as the process of providing targeted consulting support to an organization to meet a need and build organizational capacity. Appropriate activities of a TAC include: training and staff development; technical assistance through on-site visits, distance learning techniques, and/or written or verbal communications; evaluations; and the dissemination of information needed by the constituency served to achieve goals and standards established by the Commissioner and the Board of Regents.

Ownership and Branding of Materials

14. Q. "All materials created under this RFP shall be branded according to NYSED standards. All materials shall clearly be labeled as being developed with funding from New York State Education Department's Performance-Based Learning and Assessment Networks Program, through the United States Department of Education's Competitive Grants for State Assessment (CGSA) Program." Are we able to use these materials independently of the TAC?

A. Any materials created under this RFP may be used independently of the TAC, so long as the materials are branded and labeled according to NYSED standards (see page 17 of [RFP #23-018](#)). Branding and labeling may not be removed from the materials for use independent of the TAC.

15. Q. Regarding ownership/branding—it says all materials created shall be branded under NYSED, but how does that work for materials that have already been created? This proposal uses developed, branded, and proprietary materials. Does this section refer to materials produced in the process of executing this grant? How can we handle the use of these materials as it relates to the branding requirement?

A. Please refer to pages 17 and 49 of [RFP #23-018](#), where it explains that NYSED shall own all materials "developed under this RFP" and that the branding requirement applies to "all materials created under this RFP." The ownership and branding requirements are not intended to apply to already-created materials that were produced without funding from this RFP.

16. Q. Is it acceptable for the provider to retain full IP ownership in its Background IP, and NYSED to receive a non-exclusive license? Will NYSED accept a non-exclusive license as opposed to exclusive ownership of the PLAN Pilot materials?

A. Pursuant to the terms on pages 17 and 49 of the RFP, NYSED shall own all materials *developed under this RFP for the PLAN Pilot* (emphasis added). Those terms are not intended to impact the provider's ownership rights to any "Background IP" developed without funding from this RFP.

NYSED will only own materials that are developed under this RFP. NYSED will not "accept a non-exclusive license" in lieu of ownership of such materials. However, the provider will be free to use such materials independently of the TAC, so long as they are branded and labeled according to the terms on page 17.

Data Privacy Appendix

17. Q. Can the TAC make changes to data privacy clauses? For example, the data at the end of the contract term will not be destroyed, but rather it will be retained in a secured format. This request is in line with language utilized by the provider in contracts with New York State school districts.

A. No. Please refer to Appendix R of [RFP #23-018](#) and see "Data Return and Destruction of Data" on page 58, where it explains that the contractor "is prohibited from retaining Disclosed Information or continuing to Access Information...beyond the term of this contract unless such retention is expressly authorized for a prescribed period by this contract, necessary for purposes of facilitating the transfer of Disclosed Information to NYSED, or expressly required by law."

New York State Requirements for Business

18. Q. Business in Russia: Would the IB be asked to remove IB authorization from IB schools residing in Russia to be in compliance with NY state requirements?

A. Potential bidders are advised to reference the language of Executive Order No. 16 Prohibiting State Agencies and Authorities from Contracting with Businesses Conducting Business in Russia. Pursuant to Executive Order No. 16, SED must "refrain from entering into any new contract or renewing any existing contract with an entity conducting business operations in Russia." Executive Order No. 16 defines "an entity conducting business operations in Russia" as an institution or company, wherever located, conducting any commercial activity in Russia or transacting business with the Russian Government or with commercial entities headquartered in Russia or with their principal place of business in Russia in the form of contracting, sales, purchasing, investment or any business partnership. Further guidance for Executive Order No. 16 can be found [here](#).

19. Q. Licensing: It is our current understanding that the IB under this RFP would need a NY business license, which the IB does not currently have, as we reside in Washington, D.C. as well as other places around the world as a registered international organization. Is it accurate that the IB would need to obtain a NY business license to be eligible for this grant?

A. Yes, bidders must obtain the proper Certificate of Authority to do business in New York State through the New York State Department of State, Division of Corporations prior to executing a contract with

NYSED. It is recommended that bidders begin the process to obtain the Certificate either prior to or at the time of application submission to assist with a timely contracting process.

Program

Number of Schools to be Supported

- 20. Q.** If the minimum required number of 10 schools per TAC is not reached, would the TAC still function with the smaller group?
- A.** It's unclear from where the idea of "minimum required number of 10 schools per TAC" is being drawn. As stated on page 11 of the RFP, all TACs will provide general PBLA technical assistance to all Pilot Schools (approximately 30) and all Mentor Schools (approximately 10), for a total of approximately 40 participating schools. Page 11 of [RFP #23-018](#) further explains that each TAC will provide Focus-Area-specific services to a smaller subset of this total number, which could give each TAC a possible total of 16 schools for Focus-Area-specific services. Depending on the results of the school selection and matching process, it is likely that the number of participating schools and/or the number of Pilot Networks will not be exactly evenly split across the three Focus Areas.
- 21. Q.** Regarding the number of schools, would it be possible to bring in six (6) schools in Year 1 or 2 instead of 3 schools per year? The project we're proposing has a 2-year runway, so we would ideally hope all students could be set up by Year 2, taking no new students in Year 3.
- A.** It's unclear from where the idea of bringing in "3 schools per year" was drawn. According to NYSED's current vision, a full cohort of approximately 30 Pilot Schools and 10 Mentor Schools will begin in Year 1, following an application and selection process that NYSED will manage. Please refer to the "Timeline Excerpt from NYSED's Funded CGSA Grant Proposal" on pages 9-10 of [RFP #23-018](#), where it explains that the Pilot Networks will be formed and professional learning providers will begin working with the Pilot Schools and Mentor Schools during the 2023-24 academic year and begin "Initial Implementation" in September 2024.

Technical Assistance Center Location and Staffing

- 22. Q.** The application states that TACs must be located in New York. Is it anywhere in New York State? Will a home office in NY state belonging to a current employee of the provider meet the requirement of maintaining an office in NY state?
- A.** Page 11 of [RFP #23-018](#) explains: "Contractors must maintain an office in New York State where project staff will be located throughout the term of the contract. The office may be located in any area of the state." A home office would meet this requirement if project staff will be located there throughout the term of the contract.
- 23. Q.** Can TACs be located in close proximity in New Jersey?
- A.** No, contractors must maintain an office in New York State where project staff will be located (page 11 of [RFP #23-018](#)).

- 24. Q.** Will the TAC have access to BOCES sites to conduct training? Will the TAC have access to video conferencing at BOCES sites? Will BOCES sites be available for the TAC to deliver training? If so, is there a fee for the use of this space?
- A.** BOCES are not required to provide access or supports to providers contracted under this RFP. If providers are interested in working with a BOCES or utilizing their services to any extent, they would be responsible for submitting the request to a BOCES. Decisions of whether to grant access would be at the discretion of that BOCES's leadership, and under their terms. As noted on page 16 of the [RFP](#), contractors are expected to establish collaborative working relationships with the educational community—including local BOCES—for the Pilot Networks that they are assigned to support.
- 25. Q.** As we think about designation of FTE, can we split FTE across different people, potentially subcontractors and staff, to accomplish the structure we feel works best for our agency and for our application? Can this be the equivalent of an FTE spread across multiple team members, or are you expecting one single full-time staff to be designed? Can the FTE position be split between two or three people so that existing expertise can be utilized as cross-training requirements to properly develop expertise in one person may cause PBLA implementation delays.
- A.** Yes, the designation of one FTE staff position could be split across more than one individual if (a) such division of responsibilities best supports the work of the TAC within the structure laid out in [RFP #23-018](#), and (b) each individual meets the requirement of being experienced in providing professional learning and/or technical assistance (as outlined on page 12). The bidder should provide a strong rationale in the proposal for splitting the FTE across more than one individual that underscores the importance of working together as a team to ensure support is delivered in a cohesive manner.

Services to be Provided

- 26. Q.** Regarding the timeline (implementation starts in Fall 2024), is the goal to have schools trained and active in year 1? If so, we would hope to have time to work with schools before the start of the school year. Will this be possible?
- A.** We encourage you to refer to the anticipated timeline of activities for the TACs with the Pilot Networks and Schools on pages 9-10 of [RFP #23-018](#). Year 1 of the RFP corresponds with the Installation Phase of the PLAN Pilot program (SY 23-24). NYSED expects to convene PLAN Pilot Networks with the contracted TACs early in Year 1 to establish norms, shared goals, and expectations, and position the TAC to begin working with each Pilot School's designated PBLA Transition Leader to create plans to support Initial Implementation for SY 24-25. We additionally expect TACs to identify time during the summer of 2024 for intensive training with school and district leaders to help them understand and plan for implementation.
- 27. Q.** What is the timeframe and when is the provider required to confirm training/professional learning modes of delivery?
- A.** Training and professional learning activities, goals, modes of delivery, benchmarks, implementation schedules, and staff assignments should be outlined in the provider's annual Action Plan, as explained on page 18 of [RFP #23-018](#). In addition, to ensure that the supports and

services to be provided will be responsive to the specific needs it has identified in consultation with its assigned Pilot Networks and Schools, the Contractor will have 30 days after being matched with Pilot Networks and Schools to consult with them in developing a Coordination Plan, as explained on page 17 of [RFP #23-018](#).

28. Q. Can there be clarification around the meaning and expectations of “elements of PBLA installation”? Is there a set menu of activities that is to be implemented or can it be co-created between TACs and participating mentor and pilot schools?

A. Elements of PBLA installation refers to those foundational components required for schools to be positioned to begin the initial steps of implementing PBLA. The exact nature of these elements, as well as the exact combination of supports needed and activities pursued, “will vary, depending on the characteristics of each Pilot School community—their context, existing strengths, and goals—and the model they choose to pursue” (page 9 of [RFP #23-018](#)). We envision that many activities will be co-created between TACs and participating mentor and pilot schools, to best align with the needs and assets of the diverse school communities participating.

29. Q. “Installation of elements required for implementation and Mentor Schools in providing customized support.” Considering schools are innovating and trying things out during this “installation”, will there be flexibilities around accountability, curriculum, and compliance regulations? Is this prescriptive or adaptable to how the specific elements can be rolled out or implemented?

A. Contractors will need to ensure that their activities align with all applicable laws and regulations. NYSED intends to foster a supportive policy environment, within the limits of the Department’s discretion (see FAQ entitled “How will the PLAN Pilot support schools and teachers in transitioning to performance-based learning and assessment?” on NYSED’s [website](#)). The policy environment comprises statutes, regulations, and non-regulatory guidance at federal, state, and local levels. Statutory amendments are not within Department’s ambit and are not contemplated in connection with PLAN Pilot. As stated on page 35 of [New York’s CGSA grant application](#), “NYSED will propose pilot regulations to the NYS Board of Regents that will provide schools participating in the PLAN Pilot with flexibilities designed to support a multiple measures approach.” It is important to note, however, that the content of such proposal has not been determined, and the Department cannot get ahead of the Board of Regents to speculate what those regulations will ultimately provide. Finally, NYSED intends to require prospective Pilot Schools to apply in partnership with their District (or Board of Trustees, as applicable) and for the District/Board partner to commit to providing a supportive policy environment with regard to policies under their control, such as curriculum decisions.

30. Q. “Facilitate Communities of Practice (CoPs); Support Mentor Schools in providing peer support to Pilot Schools.” Will there be guiding documents from NYSED that provides expectations around these structures? Or will the PLP’s have the flexibility to design?

A. PLPs will be afforded flexibility in the design of these activities, within the parameters defined in the RFP. For example, PLP’s will be required to address feedback and guidance provided by NYSED following its review of Coordination and Action plans, in order to ensure that all activities are aligned with PLAN project goals, objectives, and outcomes, and to meet the requirement of collaboration with “Mentor Schools and their associated PBLA school support organization(s), if any, to facilitate and support the provision of high-quality learning opportunities to Pilot School

educators” (RFP p. 16). Additionally, “[a]ll professional learning experiences provided by TACs need to incorporate, be consistent with, and advance the commitments and values outlined” in the documents listed on page 11.

- 31. Q.** Can NYSED provide references for the ‘Plan-Do-Study-Cycle’?
- A.** Yes, the National Implementation Research Network outlines the [Plan-Do-Study Act \(PDSA\) Cycle](#) as a model of continuous improvement in their Active Implementation Framework. (See [“Improvement Cycles Overview”](#)).
- 32. Q.** “The PLAN project is based on an “implementation science” approach that will support networks of Pilot Schools—at the high school and middle school levels—to adopt, adapt, and implement evidence-based performance-based learning and assessment (PBLA) approaches.” Are there required tools that will be implemented as part of the “implementation science” approach?
- A.** No, NYSED has not set forth any requirements for specific tools to be implemented as part of the PLAN Pilot.
- 33. Q.** Will the TAC be able to organize site visits with schools other than those selected as ‘Mentor’ schools? Will the TAC be able to utilize staff from schools other than those selected as ‘Mentor’ schools to provide technical support and/or training/professional learning?
- A.** Yes. TACs will not be restricted to solely working with selected Mentor Schools and may subcontract with other schools. However, schools not formally part of the Pilot Networks would not be considered “participating schools”; therefore, the allowable expense of “support for educators in participating schools” described on page 20 would not apply to these schools. Bidders wishing to propose the utilization of other sites and staff should explain their rationale in the proposal.
- 34. Q.** “PLAN Leadership Academy—week-long intensive training and support for school and district leaders to understand and plan for Full Implementation by SY 25-26.” Who is this led by? Will the week-long, time and labor consuming “intensive training” scheduled for July-August 2024 have a separate budgetary allotment? Can NYSED provide examples of “alternative timing and format”?
- A.** The PLAN Leadership Academy is one of the activities expected to be led by the PLPs in the summer of 2024 (see table of PLP activities on page 9-10 of [RFP #23-018](#)). There is no separate budgetary allotment for this activity, but “bidders may propose an alternative timing and format” for this activity, as noted on page 15. For example, in NYSED’s funded CGSA proposal, this activity was listed as a “week-long event in August 2024”, however bidders may propose a shorter or longer event, a different month, and/or hybrid formats for delivery of the training and support. A rationale for any alternative timing and/or format should be clearly explained in the proposal.
- 35. Q.** “PLPs will work in partnership with NYSED staff to provide technical assistance and professional learning to PLAN Pilot School, Mentor Schools, and Networks, through the operation of three TACs.” Will NYSED be providing services and doing work with schools in addition to the PLP’s? Does this mean the NYSED will also be providing services and support to schools/network? What role does the TAC and what role does NYSED have?

- A. If this question is specifically about whether NYSED will provide any of the services and support outlined in the RFP as being the responsibility of the contracted provider, the answer is no. The RFP sets forth an expectation for a collaborative partnership among NYSED and the contracted providers that ensures that duplication of work is avoided, no gaps in coverage of Pilot-Wide supports exist, and services and supports are responsive to the needs of the participating schools (see page 16-17 of [RFP #23-018](#)). The TACs will serve a specific role within the PLAN Pilot while NYSED is responsible for all aspects of the PLAN program, including oversight of the contracted providers. The role of the contracted providers is to operate the TACs in order to provide professional learning and technical assistance on PBLA to participating schools in the PLAN Pilot, according to the parameters outlined in the RFP.

36. Q. Will NYSED provide additional guidance on the requirements of the Coordination Plan?

- A. Yes, NYSED will provide additional guidance on the requirements of the Coordination Plan to winning providers.

Scope of Work

37. Q. What are the deliverables that you are looking for at the end of the 5-year grant cycle?

- A. If this question is referring to deliverables at the end the full term of the federal grant funding the PLAN program, then it is outside the scope of work for contractors under this RFP. TACs will be contracted to provide professional development and technical assistance for a 3-year period. Deliverables for the TACs are outlined in the “Project Description and Scope of Services to be Performed” section of [RFP #23-018](#), beginning on page 11.

38. Q. Are TACs responsible for tracking Pilot Schools required submissions?

- A. No, TACs will not be responsible for tracking Pilot School required submissions.

39. Q. Can you provide clarity on how schools would be matched with providers? Do PLP’s have choice or input in the selection and matching of networks and schools? NYSED prescribes which schools? Or do schools apply? What process will be used to ensure the networks of schools are complementary? How will the process ensure that the networks that are formed are each composed of complementary schools that share similar goals?

- A. The processes for school selection and network matching are outside the scope of work for contractors under this RFP. In furtherance of the PLAN Pilot’s research aims, NYSED intends to purposefully select a diverse sample of schools. See NYSED’s [website](#) for additional background on how NYSED is developing the PLAN Pilot School Application Process. NYSED will form selected Pilot Schools and Mentor Schools into Pilot Networks that correspond with the 3 Focus Areas described in the RFP, based on information gathered in connection with the application and selection processes for such schools. After TAC contracts are awarded, NYSED will match each TAC with the schools for which it will provide Focus-Area-specific services.

40. Q. Will the TACs have a role to play in the selection of pilot and mentor schools? If so, what will that role be? How will schools be selected?

- A. See answer to previous question.

- 41.** How will you ensure that schools are ready to do this work? How will you determine whether faculty and administration at the pilot schools are committed to full participation in the pilot and implementation of PBLA?
- A.** In furtherance of the PLAN Pilot’s research aims, NYSED intends to purposefully select a sample of schools that is diverse in terms of stages of readiness for PBLA implementation (i.e., from schools starting with only the essential pre-implementation conditions to schools already implementing some PBLA practices). As explained in a video entitled "NYSED PLAN Pilot School Application Process Background and Considerations" on NYSED’s [website](#), commitment to a shared vision and buy-into the aims of PBLA are some of the most important pre-conditions for successful implementation. School leadership needs to have a vision that aligns with the purpose and goals of PBLA, and the school leader needs to be cultivating relationships and buy-in throughout the school community in support of that vision. NYSED will assess schools’ readiness to participate in the PLAN Pilot based on information gathered in connection with the Pilot School application and selection processes.
- 42.** What role will TAC partners have in ensuring that the schools are ready for implementation of their PBLA model?
- A.** TAC contractors will support Pilot Schools after they have been selected, formed into networks, and matched with the TACs for their Focus Areas. TAC contractors’ role in supporting them is detailed in the “Project Description and Scope of Services to be Performed” section of [RFP #23-018](#), beginning on page 11.
- 43. Q.** “NYSED and its research partners will conduct a rigorous evaluation of the PLAN Pilot.” What are the elements of the evaluation and what will indicators of success look like? “Will look at how successful PBLA approaches can be implemented in diverse types of schools.” Does this include a rubric designed to capture “success” or is it trying to figure out the components of a possible rubric that defines “successful” PBLA approaches? What are the criteria for “successful implementation?” and for “success” of an approach?
- A.** NYSED has already identified several promising PBLA models operating in New York; a selection of extant research on those models is posted on the Resources & Guidance page of the PLAN Pilot [website](#). As depicted in multiple PowerPoint presentations posted in the [PLAN Pilot Video Gallery](#), the research design for the PLAN Pilot focuses on the following questions: Under what conditions can promising PBLA approaches be adapted and implemented in a diverse range of schools? And, in transitioning schools to a PBLA-driven system of instruction, what supports and other factors appear most important to ensure positive student outcomes? NYSED’s funded CGSA proposal explains that, in seeking to determine whether PBLA is being implemented successfully in Pilot Schools, the research team will look for increases in stakeholder awareness, understanding of and support for PBLA; changes in professional practices—leadership and instructional—that are supportive of PBLA; and evidence of increases in student skills and competencies associated with readiness for postsecondary success. NYSED will continue to seek input from the PLAN Pilot’s Advisors and collaborate with its research partners on the specifics of the research and evaluation plan for upcoming phases of the project, such as whether to utilize a “rubric” of success.

- 44. Q.** It seems like middle schools are also able to participate; how do the middle school state exams play a part in being part of this pilot if they were to implement performance assessments?
- A.** This question is not entirely clear. If the question is asking whether the administration of performance assessments in middle schools participating in the pilot would obviate the need to administer the NYS Assessments in math, English language arts, and science to students in middle school grades, the answer is no. New York schools are required to administer NYS Assessments in ELA, math, and science to students in middle school grades pursuant to the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.
- 45. Q.** What protocols are there to request waivers from one or more of the Regents exams for schools that are piloting the IBPLC [International Big Picture Learning Credential]?
- A.** See the response to Q29, above. Pursuant to [New York State’s Approved Plan under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act](#), New York schools are required to administer Regents exams (or [NYSED-Approved Regents Examination Alternatives](#)) in ELA, math, and science to students in high school grades, and there is no provision for requesting waivers from those testing requirements under the CGSA program funding this RFP.
- 46. Q.** Will NYSED consider pilot regulations for meeting graduation standards and/or 6-8 annual testing for pilot and mentor schools?
- A.** See response to Q29, above.
- 47. Q.** “NYSED convenes PLAN Pilot Networks with PLPs to establish norms, shared goals, and expectations.” Who in NYSED will be leading this? The current team?
- A.** While specific plans have not been made for that particular convening, we can share the names of current project staff. Allison Armour-Garb is the Project Director for the PLAN program. Ms. Armour-Garb will be supported by Project Coordinator Nicole Lennon, PhD, and receive direction from the Department’s senior leadership. Deputy Commissioner of P12 Instructional Support, Angelique Johnson-Dingle, and Deputy Commissioner of P12 Operational Support, Jason Harmon, are leading this project.

Budget, Cost, and Payments

- 48. Q.** How is the money distributed? We report quarterly but does this mean that we get some money upfront and then more as we report or are the funds not released until all expenses are reported?
- A.** There is no advance payment with this procurement. Payments will be made to the contractor based on NYSED’s approval of timely submitted quarterly programmatic and fiscal reports with an accompanying voucher.
- 49. Q.** Will there be an opportunity to adjust funding line items for year 1 (for example, travel) once the geographic location of the specific schools in each network are known?

- A.** See Item B under Payment and Reporting of the Appendix A-1: Variations in each budget category not exceeding ten percent (10%) of such category may be approved by the Commissioner of Education. Any such variations shall be reflected in the final expenditure report and filed in the Office of the State Comptroller. Variations in each budget category which do exceed ten percent (10%) of such category must be submitted to the Office of the State Comptroller for approval.
- 50. Q.** If the TAC is matched with less than the number of participating schools approximated for Focus-Area-specific services in the RFP, would that incur a decrease in the annual budget allowance?
- A.** If the TAC is matched with fewer schools than anticipated, this would not automatically trigger a decrease in the annual budget allowance.
- 51. Q.** What is the expectation for overhead? What should the percent be, and do we calculate that and include in the budget, or is it already calculated and provided on top of our provided budget?
- A.** All costs must be reflected in the budget submitted with the bid. There is no specified percentage for overhead. Because this is a competitive, best-value RFP, NYSED cannot direct bidders on how to prepare their budgets. Each bidder needs to submit their best price for the work being performed.
- 52. Q.** Appendix C is referenced in alignment with payment/reporting schedule, but we could not find the actual evaluation, can you provide that?
- A.** Appendix C will be included in contracts for winning bidders that result from this RFP. Please see page 18 of [RFP #23-018](#) for the Payment and Reporting Schedule.
- 53. Q.** The RFP states: “Note that the Technical Assistance Center guidelines, located in 5. Submission Documents (separate document), must be followed regarding allowable expenses.” We did not find those guidelines in the submission documents. Can you please provide?
- A.** Please disregard that section. See pages 19 and 20 of [RFP #23-018](#) for allowable expenses.
- 54. Q.** Regarding payment for mentor schools/principals, is there a plan for NYSED to compensate them for their work and time? Will NYSED cover substitute teacher expenses when teachers are attending site visits? Are additional grants from NYSED going to be made available to high needs districts to cover personnel costs (overtime, coverage) associated with professional development?
- A.** Support for educators in Pilot Schools and Mentor Schools—including stipends to compensate educators in Mentor Schools for their work and time, and reimbursing participating schools for substitute teacher coverage to enable educators to participate in activities such as site visits—is an allowable cost for bidders to include in their budget proposals (see page 20 of [RFP #23-018](#)).
- Additionally, the University of the State of New York-Regents Research Fund has a small budget earmarked for PLAN Pilot educator stipends and is continuing to explore possibilities for braiding additional funding into the PLAN program, particularly to support educators in Pilot Networks.
- 55. Q.** How much funding are pilot schools / districts going to be expected to put aside for participation in this project?

- A. NYSED’s [posted guidance](#) to schools and districts interested in participating in the PLAN Pilot states, “Consider incorporating plenty of funding for professional development into the district’s budget for the coming year.” However, this is not a requirement, and a dollar amount has not been specified.
- 56. Q.** Regarding convening, travel, materials, are there expectations and support for schools participating in the pilot and participation—for example, are there collaborative meetings they should expect to attend, if we are one of 3 pilots with 9-10 schools—is NYSED providing any kind of support or expectations across all of the pilot schools?
- A. Bidders should not conceive of each TAC as running a separate pilot. The role of the TACs in the PLAN Pilot is to support “capacity building and improvements in instructional and assessment practice in Pilot Schools” (page 11). This includes Pilot-Wide and Focus-Area-specific professional learning and technical assistance services outlined in [RFP #23-018](#), beginning on page 14, but does not include responsibility (fiscal or otherwise) for the requirements or expectations of individual schools as they relate to broader pilot participation.
- 57. Q.** Will the pilot and mentor schools be eligible for BOCES Cosar [CO-SER] for substitute coverage when attending training under the grant?
- A. BOCES CO-SERs only cover services provided by BOCES to schools and districts who participate in specific, NYSED-approved shared services agreements. Therefore, if the PLP is a non-BOCES entity, schools would not be eligible for substitute coverage under a CO-SER. BOCES may provide training relevant to this RFP for component school districts via an existing school improvement or other professional development CO-SER. School district expenses beyond the actual cost of training (e.g., CO-SER base service expenses or substitute/teacher coverage expenses) may generate BOCES Aid, consistent with the CO-SER criteria guidelines. However, the following would not be eligible for substitute reimbursement via these CO-SERs: Big 5 and other non-component districts, charter schools, and nonpublic schools. For more information on BOCES CO-SERs, see Help on the NYSED [website](#).
- 58. Q.** Our project includes fees for credentialing from the credential-granting organization. Will the schools be expected to provide for the fees, is there additional funds available for that, or should we include those fees in our budget?
- A. Credentialing fees are outside the scope of work for contractors under this RFP.
- 59. Q.** Will the provider’s network of educational practitioners and consultants (who receive stipends), who are part of an existing network of educators that provide support for schools, be considered sub-contracted vendors? Would the provider’s educational practitioners and consultants (who receive stipends) currently working in selected Mentor school be considered sub-contractors? If New York State public school teachers are used to provide peer-to-peer and peer-to-school services, would they be considered subcontractors? Will the provider’s educational practitioners and consultants (who receive stipends), who register with the state of NY, be considered sub-contracted vendors?
- A. There are no restrictions on who can be considered a subcontractor as long as the provider follows the definition of a subcontract laid out on page 1 of [RFP #23-018](#): “Subcontracting is

defined as non-employee direct personal services and related incidental expenses, including travel.”