



# LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

June 30, 2014

Marsha V. Guedry, Internal Audit Administrator  
Office of the Commissioner  
Division of Administration  
1201 North Third Street  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Ms. Guedry:

Your letter dated June 25, 2014, requested certain documentation and information related to state academic assessments. In response to your request, the Department has compiled the enclosed information.

As you know, the Louisiana Constitution creates the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and obligates BESE to “supervise and control” the state’s public schools, pursuant to laws set forth by the Legislature. Regarding standards-based tests, the Legislature requires that BESE maintain a “Louisiana Education Assessment Program” to measure student performance in grades 3-11. As of the 2014-2015 school year, the law states, the state’s content standards in English and math shall be “nationally recognized.” Regarding testing, the law requires that “[r]igorous student achievement standards shall be set with reference to test scores of students of the same grade level levels nationally.”

For years, BESE has maintained testing services contracts to assist the board and Department of Education in meeting these legal requirements. Vendors holding these contracts provide a wide array of services, including identifying test questions, assembling test forms, delivering forms, collecting forms, scoring student results, analyzing results, training administrators, monitoring for security issues, and creating reports based on results. Each contract has been conducted through the state’s legally prescribed procurement process, and each has received the approval of the Office of Contractual Review.

In 2010, recognizing a common need for high-quality standardized tests that would allow for the valid comparison of student achievement across states, a group of states formed the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). PARCC is not a testing services vendor. Instead, PARCC is a voluntary collaborative effort to design test questions and policies; it is not itself a provider of testing services. Participation by states in the consortium’s design process, as indicated by the 2010 MOU signed by the Governor, BESE President, and State Superintendent, neither necessitated nor guaranteed that participating

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states would acquire the services of any particular vendor. The Department has expressed its intention, for the 2014-2015 school year, to sustain contracts that have been procured and amended per Louisiana state law through their termination dates, to continue developing, delivering, collecting, scoring, analyzing, and reporting tests.

On every test the state administers, questions change from year to year. Also, test questions are often acquired from sources other than the primary testing services vendor. Much of the state's ongoing work with its testing services vendor involves identifying appropriate, new test questions. This year, as in past years, grade 3-8 tests will involve some questions developed with the primary vendor and some acquired from other sources.

The development of PARCC test questions required no expenditures beyond those associated with typical, ongoing test question development activities. It further required no additional contractual obligations by the state. In fact, developing test questions through a consortium of states, as demonstrated in attached charts, reduces the state's expenses for testing, as it spreads the cost of annual test question development across multiple organizations.

Thus, for the 2014-2015 school year, until its current testing services contracts come to a conclusion, the state intends a course of action consistent with past years, a cost no greater than in past years, and no additional testing services contracts.

#### Requests for Documentation

1. Attached is a listing of contracts with Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) and other test vendors for testing services. A copy of each of these contracts can be found on the enclosed compact disk.
2. No documentation exists relative to procuring the PARCC Technology Readiness Tool survey because there was no cost to the State of Louisiana and therefore no procurement related to it. Information relative to the potential price of PARCC assessments is attached.
3. While Louisiana is a member of the PARCC consortium, the Department has not negotiated with any vendors for the purchase of any new assessment services.
4. The Department intends to continue working with its current approved testing services contractor, DRC, under existing contracts to administer assessments in the 2014-2015 school year. However, please refer to Addendum 3 of Louisiana's Memorandum of Understanding with PARCC in which Louisiana's chief procurement officer represented to the Department and to PARCC that "Louisiana may, consistent with the procurement laws and regulations of Louisiana, participate in the Consortium procurement processes."
5. Attached is my signed recommitment page in Louisiana's PARCC MOU, which was submitted to PARCC on January 27, 2012.

#### Questions

- a. Your question regarding agreements in place or in negotiation for assessments is answered above and by referring to the attached documentation.

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- b. The Department has not procured any Common Core aligned assessment product. Instead, as part of its ongoing implementation of the Louisiana Education Assessment Program (R.S. 17:24.4), the Department and DRC developed transitional test questions that were substantially, but not fully, aligned with the Common Core State Standards. The attached includes a summary of the process followed.
- c. Any questions regarding steps taken by PARCC with regard to procurement would need to be directed to PARCC, Inc.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your questions and to clarify these issues.

Sincerely,



John C. White  
State Superintendent of Education

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**Request #1: Assessment contracts**

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Vendor</b>	<b>Contract #</b>
Teaching Strategies GOLD	Teaching Strategies, LLC	723855
DSC	Ready Set Grow (14-15)	3942489
DIBELS	Univ of Oregon	726993
3-8 ELA and Math	DRC	603573
Grade 4 and 8 Science and Social Studies	DRC (item development) PM (field testing & administration)	704708/724769
Grade 3, 5, 5, and 7 Science and Social Studies	DRC (item development) PM (field testing & administration)	704708/724769
LAA2 HS Pre-14-15 Cohort Only	DRC	704708
LAA1	DRC	704708
ELDA	DRC	704708
5th and 9th Placement Test	Riverside	3920620
Aspire/Explore/Plan	ACT	3965175
ACT	ACT	3965175
WorkKeys	ACT	3965175
GEE	DRC developed district version	704708
<b>End of Course Tests:</b>		
Algebra I	Pacific Metrics	724769
Geometry	Pacific Metrics	724769
English II	Pacific Metrics	724769
English III	Pacific Metrics	724769
Biology	Pacific Metrics	724769
US History	Pacific Metrics	724769

**Please see the attached compact disk for a copy of each contract.**

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## Request #2a: Assessment Costs

The projected costs of administering a full suite of assessment services that contain test questions and features designed by the PARCC consortium are presented below. Costs to include such test questions and features in Louisiana’s assessment through DRC will not exceed those costs.

	13-14	14-15		15-16 and beyond	
	Transitional 3-8 tests	State-specific 3-8 questions	PARCC questions	State-specific 3-8 tests*	PARCC questions
Projected total cost to the state as of April 2014	\$10,261,033	\$13,261,033	\$9,086,258	\$16,446,843	\$10,185,833
Projected average cost per assessment as of April 2014	\$28.86	\$37.30	\$28.04	\$46.25	\$28.65

\*Estimate based on historical costs

For the 2014-2015 school year, Louisiana will continue working with its current approved test vendor under existing contracts to administer assessments. As has been the case previously, the test will include questions developed by vendors other than DRC. Some material will have been developed through the PARCC process; other materials will have been developed through other processes.

However, variable costs for PARCC assessments based on the volume of state participation are shown below.

### PARCC Student Testing Volume Tiers for an Annual Assessment Period

Low Volume	Medium Volume	High Volume
5,500,000 to 7,000,000 Students	7,000,001 to 8,500,000 Students	8,500,001 to 10,000,000 Students

### Per-Student Price for Grade 3-8 Assessments (2 Tests = 1 Student)

	Low Volume	Medium Volume	High Volume
<b>Computer Based Test</b>	\$23.97	<b>\$19.97</b>	\$18.97
<b>Paper Based Test</b>	\$32.97	<b>\$28.97</b>	\$27.97

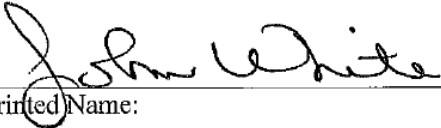
Developing new Louisiana-specific test questions for 2014-2015 would cost the state between \$3 million and \$4.4 million more per year in order to create additional test questions and forms to continue a valid test. It would necessitate test question development, field testing of new questions, and psychometric activities as are required any time new items or forms of a test are constructed. Such activities have already been completed for the test questions developed by the PARCC consortium; therefore, those costs do not exist when using those test items for part of the state’s grade 3-8 tests in 2014-2015.

It should also be noted that the cost of developing new Louisiana-specific standards and assessments would cost the state additional \$25.2 million over the next five years.



**Request #5: Recommitment page of PARCC MOU**

*Signature Block for Recommitment to Participation as a Governing State in PARCC  
as outlined in the*  
**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING for  
PARTNERSHIP FOR ASSESSMENT OF READINESS FOR COLLEGE AND  
CAREERS MEMBERS (June 2010)**

<b>State of:</b> <b>LOUISIANA</b>	
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: 	
Printed Name: <b>John White</b>	Date: <b>4/27/12</b>

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### Question b: Development of transitional assessment questions

Spring 2011	Completed crosswalk documents to identify differences between CCSS and the Grade Level Expectations
Summer 2011	Analyzed crosswalk to determine what assessment content remains the same, what needs to be added, and what needs to be deleted
Summer/ Fall 2011	Finalized test blueprints for the 2012-2013 assessments Began work to develop new aligned items for spring 2012 field testing
Spring 2012	Conducted field testing for new English language arts writing prompts and math items
Summer/ Fall 2012	Conducted field test analysis, reviewed data, and constructed new forms
Winter 2012/2013	Analyzed item banks to determine alignment to new standards Finalized test blueprints, identified new item development needs, and began item development
Spring 2013	Conducted online field test for new CCSS-aligned items
Spring 2014	Administered CCSS aligned test forms

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