

OFFICE OF CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
October 16-17, 2014

OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT

18. Report on the contract with NCS Pearson, Inc., to administer the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Assessments

An emergency contract with NCS Pearson, Inc., has been executed and is effective from September 19, 2014 through June 30, 2015. The contract was submitted to the Personal Service Contract Review Board (PSCRB) on October 1, 2014 for review of technical compliance within ten days of execution as prescribed in the PSCRB rules and regulations.

No Action: Discussion Only

Back-up material attached



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

September 30, 2014

Ms. Teselyn Melton Funches, Director
Personal Service Contract Review Board
210 East Capitol Street, Suite 800
Jackson, MS 39201

Re: NCS Pearson, Inc. Emergency Procurement

Dear Ms. Funches:

As authorized in Personal Service Contract Review Board (PSCRB) regulation 3-206, please accept this letter as my approval of an emergency procurement for the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) to contract with NCS Pearson, Inc. to administer the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Assessments. The contract was originally approved as a sole source procurement by the State Board of Education on May 16, 2014, and subsequently amended and approved by the State Board of Education on September 19, 2014 as an emergency procurement. The term of the contract is from September 19, 2014 through June 30, 2015.

In September 2011, upon signature of the Governor, the State Superintendent of Education, and the State Board of Education Chair, the State of Mississippi entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as a Governing State in PARCC to participate in a multi-state Consortium to support the development of a common assessment system. In December 2013, the state of New Mexico procured assessment services on behalf of the PARCC Consortium through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process. After an extensive evaluation of proposals, NCS Pearson, Inc., was determined the successful bidder and therefore is the contractor MDE has selected for this emergency procurement.

The specific provision for which we are basing our emergency procurement is in accordance with PSCRB Regulation 3-206.02(f):

[W]hen the delay incident to obtaining competitive bids could cause adverse impact upon the governing authority or agency, its employees or its citizens.

The implementation of statewide assessments is a statutory duty of MDE, as prescribed in State law as well as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and those assessments by law must be aligned with the State's College- and Career Readiness Standards. No means to implement assessments aligned with the State's adopted standards is presently available.

All 146 of the public school districts in the State would be affected by any delay in procuring the appropriate assessment. Most importantly, every child who is required to participate in statewide assessments will be directly and negatively affected by any delay in procuring the appropriate assessment.

Over 300,000 public school students in grades 3-12 are expected to participate in statewide assessments in the 2014-2015 school year, with some assessments being completed as early as December 2014 for secondary students. As mentioned earlier, school districts throughout the state have been transitioning to the Common Core State Standards since 2010, so utilizing tests not aligned with Common Core State Standards would be testing students on material different than what they had been taught. Notwithstanding the injustice to the children involved, test scores statewide would not reflect an alignment between curriculum, instruction, and assessments.

Consequently, failure to administer statewide assessment tests aligned with Common Core for the 2014-2015 school year would have a direct adverse impact on the State, MDE, all 146 Mississippi public school districts, and more than 300,000 public school students. If additional information is required, please contact Donna Hales, Director of Procurement, at dhales@mde.k12.ms.us or (601) 359-2331.

Sincerely,



Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education