



COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

201 East Colfax Avenue • Denver, Colorado 80203-1799
303.866.6600 • www.cde.state.co.us

Robert K. Hammond
Commissioner of Education

Keith Owen, Ph.D.
Deputy Commissioner

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To Whom It May Concern:

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) contracted with Assessment Solutions Group (ASG) to provide a variety of services spanning calendar years 2011 and 2012 as CDE was in the process of designing and developing its future state assessment system. These services consisted of up-front design assistance and estimated pricing of the assessment system, writing the RFP for assessment services and evaluating the cost proposals from the different vendors responding to the RFP. In each instance, we found ASG's work to be top notch and extremely valuable to CDE in the assessment development, procurement and approval process.

First, CDE utilized ASG services in assessment design and costing to assist us in designing the new assessment system and estimating its likely cost. Using ASG to estimate the costs of the assessment system allowed us to present a fair, unbiased outside opinion of these costs which were conveyed to the State Board of Education (ASG presented to the Board), Legislative Research, Joint Budget Committee and Governor's offices. ASG was able to deliver the cost estimates for many different assessment designs quickly and allowed us to design an assessment system that met our needs AND was within our budget constraints. Using ASG allowed us to design the assessment system we wanted at an affordable price.

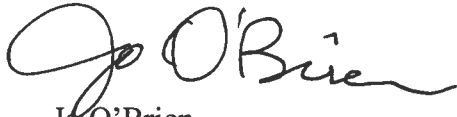
CDE then used ASG to draft the RFP for assessment services. Since we wanted to procure summative, alternate and interim assessments, as well as a new dashboard system for reporting, the RFP was detailed and complex. ASG understood the detailed requirements and drafted an RFP that offered the right balance of specific program requirements and vendor solution flexibility. Having ASG write the RFP saved us significant, valuable staff time and resulted in a clear RFP for vendors to read and respond.

Finally, we used ASG to evaluate the cost proposals submitted by the different vendors responding to the RFP. Again, we found ASG's work in this area to be exemplary. Including ASG's cost sheets in the RFP allowed them to evaluate each vendor's cost submission and tell us whether: a) the vendor understood the program, b) was bidding "apples to apples" solutions vs. the other vendors, and c) was submitting appropriate pricing for the work they were proposing to perform. We were able to use the results of ASG's pricing analysis to negotiate more favorable pricing terms with the selected vendor.

We were able to issue our state RFP on time because of this intensive and substantive business relationship. Additionally, the clarity of the proposal meant that we received clear and detailed responses from the vendors. In the end, the price spread from the highest to lowest vendor response only differed by about 12%. Most important, the submitted prices for all vendors came in within 7% of ASG's original estimates.

We recommend Assessment Solutions Group (ASG) services to all states without reservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jo O'Brien". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "O".

Jo O'Brien
Assistant Commissioner
Colorado Department of Education