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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PLANNING WORKSHOP

RACE TO THE TOP ASSESSMENT

APRIL 22nd, 2010

MILLENNIUM HOTEL

1313 NICOLLET MALL

FORUM BALLROOM

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55403

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ED Team Introductions

Joanne Weiss, Director, Race to the Top Program

Meredith Farace, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

Jane Hess, Office of the General Counsel

Ann Whalen, Special Assistant to the Secretary

Rachel Peternith, Office of the General Counsel

Jessica McKinney, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (supporting the webinar participants)

1 (Whereupon, the proceeding  
2 commenced at 8:30 a.m.)

3  
4 MS. WEISS: Good morning. We  
5 had a whole speech prepared for you this  
6 morning about how we wanted to make this an  
7 interactive conversation with you about the  
8 regulations and make sure that everybody got  
9 their questions answered and left this  
10 meeting feeling like they understood what  
11 they needed to understand about the notice.

12 And then we received 300 pages  
13 of questions that we need to answer that you  
14 also submitted over the last, oh, 24 hours.  
15 So, this morning we woke up in a much less  
16 charitable mood and....no (Laughing).

17 We actually hope we have answers  
18 to most of the questions that you sent in and  
19 we'll be happy to answer them and really do  
20 want this to be an interactive conversation.  
21 We're actually not even going to get up to  
22 the podium because I think all of us are  
23 going to be chiming in with answers to  
24 different questions that you have throughout  
25 the day.

1                   So, with that, what I'd like to  
2 do is just start by talking a little bit  
3 about the goals of the meeting and the  
4 agenda. And then we'll introduce ourselves  
5 up here and we'll get right into it.

6                   So, what we're hoping to  
7 accomplish today is to provide all of the  
8 folks who are trying to form themselves into  
9 consortia as applicants out there with an  
10 overview, not only of the application, but  
11 also of the notice.

12                   Just how to read this stuff and  
13 how to make sense of all the different parts  
14 of these notices. And then how to think  
15 through the priorities and the criteria that  
16 we've put together. And, certainly, answer  
17 all the questions that we're able to answer  
18 today.

19                   We'll also, I'm sure, be doing  
20 a commercial break constantly for our  
21 frequently asked questions posting on the  
22 web, which will be getting, I think, more and  
23 more robust over the next few days as you  
24 guys continue to ask good questions. Some of  
25 which we probably know the answers to and

1           some of which we'll go, "Huh, that's a good  
2           one. We'll get back to you." Okay.

3                        So this is our agenda for  
4           today. We're going to start, as I said, by  
5           giving you an overview of just what the parts  
6           of this notice are. Then, Ann is going to  
7           talk to you about consortium governance and  
8           project management.

9                        We're going to handle both the  
10          A and the B categories of the competition  
11          together in this section because the  
12          consortium and project management criteria in  
13          the two categories are very similar and they  
14          are pretty complicated.

15                       They have a lot to do with MOUs  
16          and procurements and so we're going to handle  
17          all of that together in the first large  
18          session in the morning. Then we're going to  
19          go from there into a discussion specifically  
20          of the comprehensive assessment system  
21          criteria.

22                       So we'll handle criteria 2  
23          through 7 in that part of the day, including  
24          a bunch of questions about technology that we  
25          got from all of you.

1                   After lunch, we will have the  
2                   always popular budget tutorial, to talk  
3                   through how to do budgets for this. We  
4                   realize that we came up with a slightly  
5                   complicated scheme, especially for the  
6                   Category A part of the competition with this  
7                   Level 1 and Level 2 construct.

8                   We did it for reasons that  
9                   probably already are apparent to you as we're  
10                  trying to figure out how to apportion this  
11                  money in reasonable ways. But we'll sort of  
12                  talk you through how to think about that,  
13                  what level of detail we need and how to  
14                  structure your budgets.

15                  We'll talk through some of the  
16                  other parts of the notice, the program  
17                  requirements, application submission, how  
18                  applications are going to be reviewed.

19                  At that point, if there's  
20                  people who are only interested in Category A,  
21                  you will have heard everything that you need  
22                  to and you would be welcome to leave and we  
23                  will then go into the high school course  
24                  assessment program criteria and talk through  
25                  that toward the end of the day.

1                   And then we do plan to leave  
2                   plenty of time for questions at the end,  
3                   although we do encourage questions throughout  
4                   the entire day. So, we'll see whether we  
5                   need that time or whether other questions go  
6                   so long that we just bleed into that time a  
7                   little bit.

8                   So, we'll be flexible and just  
9                   do our best to accommodate your needs and  
10                  answer your questions. I do ask that you ask  
11                  your questions at the appropriate moment, so  
12                  that when we get to the criteria or the  
13                  requirement or the priority, that you have  
14                  your questions - that's when we talk about it.

15                  So, I know many of you have  
16                  many burning issues and if I could ask you  
17                  to handle them at the point in time where  
18                  they make the most sense, that would be  
19                  great. At that point, there will be slides  
20                  and other words that we all can be looking at  
21                  together on the screen that I think will help  
22                  guide us through the answers to some of those  
23                  questions.

24                  So, with that, let me sort of  
25                  ease into the, one more time, feel free to

1 ask questions as you go. We have people who  
2 are going to be manning mics. So these two  
3 mic stands up here are not places where you  
4 actually need to queue up.

5 We've got folks who will have  
6 mics and just raise your hand anytime that  
7 you have a question and they'll come over to  
8 you with a mic.

9 We do ask that you wait for the  
10 microphone because we're transcribing  
11 everything that happens today and we have  
12 people participating via webinar and they can  
13 only hear if you are speaking into a  
14 microphone. Identify yourself and your State  
15 or affiliation, please, when you ask a  
16 question.

17 Even if you have asked two or  
18 three or ten questions before, please  
19 identify yourself again for the transcriber.  
20 We do welcome a number of folks who are  
21 joining us today via webinar and Jessica is  
22 going to be working with them through chat.

23 If they have got questions,  
24 she'll be asking the questions on their  
25 behalf. So, all of you folks on the webinar



1 don't hesitate to use the chat feature to  
2 chime in and ask the questions that you have  
3 got.

4 We are going to be doing  
5 timekeeping. We may be less rigid than we  
6 normally would be just because we want to  
7 make sure we get your questions answered and  
8 we do have sort of a buffer toward the end of  
9 the day today.

10 If you think of other questions  
11 that you dream of at, you know, six o'clock  
12 at night tonight or 6:00 a.m. tomorrow  
13 morning, please don't call us at that hour.  
14 Send your questions in to our e-mail box.

15 We really do read everything, I  
16 promise, and we will get back to you with  
17 answers and we will also take any question  
18 that is of concern to everybody and put it  
19 out through our frequently asked process.

20 The FAQs will be posted on our  
21 website and will be updated regularly, so  
22 check there. As I said, this session's going  
23 to be transcribed and posted to our website,  
24 together with this presentation that we're  
25 doing today and that will be up briefly.

1           Probably the slides will be up by tomorrow or  
2           Monday and the transcription soon  
3           thereafter. And also, we do ask that you put  
4           your cell phones on vibrate.

5                     One last thing, we do want to  
6           make sure that States in particular get their  
7           questions asked and answered, so we are going  
8           to give preference to States to the extent  
9           that, if we have any conflict or time  
10          pressure, we will be going to States first.  
11          Okay.

12                    With that, let's just do quick  
13          introductions for you up here. My name's  
14          Joanne Weiss and I am the director of the  
15          Race to the Top program at the Department of  
16          Ed.

17                    MS. WHALEN: Ann Whalen, the  
18          Office of the Secretary.

19                    MS. HESS: Jane Hess, Office of  
20          the General Counsel.

21                    MS. PETERNITH: Rachel  
22          Paternith, Office of the General Counsel.

23                    MS. FARACE: Meredith Farace,  
24          Office of Elementary and Secondary  
25          Education.

1 MS. WEISS: All right. So,  
2 with that, we're going to dive into the big  
3 picture of the notice. So, the first thing  
4 that we wanted to talk about, and those of  
5 you who have been with us on our expert  
6 review journey over the past few months have  
7 seen a slide that looks very similar to  
8 this.

9 The big picture goals of this  
10 competition really have not changed  
11 substantially and they are to support States  
12 in their efforts to deliver a more effective,  
13 valid and instructionally useful set of  
14 assessments that measure standards that are  
15 rigorous, globally competitive and consistent  
16 across States.

17 So, standards held in common  
18 across these consortia. To develop accurate  
19 information about what students know and can  
20 do, in particular making sure we understand  
21 student achievement of standards and, in  
22 addition to that, which we have been  
23 measuring for quite some time, being able to  
24 measure in valid, reliable ways student  
25 growth from year to year.



1 instruments that help us make good  
2 instructional decisions. And that we,  
3 therefore, present data to every audience,  
4 whether it's students, parents, teachers or  
5 administrators and policy makers, that we  
6 give them the data that they need in ways  
7 that are clear and useful and, maybe most  
8 important, actionable.

9 So, those were the big picture  
10 goals that we had. We arrived at the  
11 requirements that you see in this notice  
12 through a process of expert and public input  
13 that I won't belabor because many of you, I  
14 know, were there for all or parts of this  
15 with us.

16 But, the normal process for the  
17 Department would have been that we would have  
18 put out a notice as a proposed notice and  
19 gone through a 30-day public comment period  
20 where people wrote their comments to us and  
21 then we read all of those comments and made  
22 changes to the notice and put out the final  
23 regulation.

24 We felt like that wasn't going  
25 to be the way to get the best document out

1 the door, that we at the Department didn't  
2 have enough expertise on our own to design a  
3 notice that was really what we, as a country,  
4 needed this notice to look like.

5 And that if we put something  
6 out, we certainly weren't going to be able,  
7 through a written comment procedure, going to  
8 be able to sort of edit our way there. And  
9 so we developed a different process for this  
10 whereby we went around the country and held a  
11 series of ten different meetings in four  
12 cities, where we asked experts from the  
13 field.

14 Forty-two experts in all came  
15 to these meetings and presented and talked  
16 with us and 91 members of the public, over  
17 the course of a number of days, talked to us  
18 about what they thought we should do.

19 We also received over 200  
20 pieces of written input that we read. And  
21 all of that information together helped to  
22 form the final notice that we came out with.  
23 So, that was the process we went through, oh,  
24 about 900 people attended these meetings,  
25 including I know many, if not all of you,

1 from 37 different States and the District of  
2 Columbia.

3 And this (indicating) is just  
4 sort of a list of the meetings that we held.  
5 We held a meeting, that was a general  
6 meeting, about assessment in each of the  
7 cities and in each city we also held special  
8 meetings on topics that we particularly  
9 needed to get more expertise and dive a  
10 little deeper into, like English language  
11 learners or technology or what have you.

12 So, with that, we came up with  
13 a competition that has two different  
14 categories in it. The first category is kind  
15 of the main event. It's the comprehensive  
16 assessment systems category and it's to  
17 support assessment systems.

18 And we use that word very  
19 purposefully. It's systems of assessments,  
20 not necessarily an individual, once-a-year  
21 assessment event, but systems of assessments  
22 that could include summative, interim or  
23 formative assessments; could include scoring  
24 and moderation systems.

25 Could include professional

1 development wraparound for teachers and  
2 principals that, at a minimum, must be  
3 administered annually in grades 3 through 8  
4 and at least once in high school, so that it  
5 complies with the current requirements of  
6 NCLB.

7 And will support the federal  
8 accountability system. We envision that  
9 these tests developed under this competition  
10 will replace the current tests that States  
11 are using for ESEA accountability purposes.

12 The second category is really  
13 quite different. It's the high school course  
14 assessment program. And it arose as we were  
15 sort of thinking through the implications for  
16 high schools of having, first of all, a  
17 requirement for only one assessment at the  
18 high school level.

19 But also assessment, just  
20 seeing what it had done in the field, as  
21 being quite a powerful lever for change in...  
22 In instruction sort of writ large in high  
23 schools.

24 And so, the second category is  
25 really designed to support efforts for high



1 school improvement, using assessment as a  
2 lever to improve high schools. And we hope  
3 to do this in a number of different ways.

4 First of all, to have  
5 assessments that are rigorous enough that  
6 they really increase or give a lift to the  
7 rigor of high school courses in general, that  
8 by having that level of consistent rigor we  
9 provide an equity of access to consistent  
10 courses that may not exist today.

11 So that Algebra 1 is Algebra 1  
12 is Algebra 1, regardless of what kind of  
13 student you are, taking a course in what kind  
14 of setting, you can count on the fact that  
15 you're getting access to a course that's  
16 providing that sort of rigorous and high  
17 quality level of instruction.

18 And that we did this across  
19 quite a diverse course offering, not just  
20 English and mathematics that are a part of  
21 the main competition, so that we really could  
22 look across the whole spectrum of courses  
23 that students are taking in high school and  
24 provide them, whether it's an academic or a  
25 career or a technical course, with rigorous,

1 high levels of instruction.

2 There's no federal  
3 accountability stakes attached to this, so  
4 this is really purely for instructional  
5 improvement purposes. States, of course,  
6 could attach whatever accountability  
7 standards they wanted to this.

8 But, from a federal point of  
9 view, it's really a pot of money that we're  
10 putting out there to see if we can use it to  
11 really give a lift to what's happening in  
12 high schools across the country.

13 So, a number of key dates. The  
14 first two we get check marks for; April 29th  
15 is when we would like to receive notices of  
16 intent to apply from consortia. This is  
17 something that helps us enormously with our  
18 planning for the competition process.

19 As you can imagine, we have to  
20 pick and train peer reviewers and figure out  
21 where and how we're going to organize this  
22 whole competition and the number of  
23 applicants we have can significantly affect  
24 our planning.

25 It's not required that you do

1           this; it's optional. So, if you send in an  
2           intent to apply and then don't apply, that's  
3           fine. And conversely, if you don't send in  
4           an intent to apply, you can still send us an  
5           application.

6                           But we really would love it if  
7           we could get your intents to apply by April  
8           29th because it helps us for planning  
9           purposes. And those would just, it's just a  
10          one-line e-mail sent to our normal e-mail  
11          box, [RacetoptheTop.Assessment@ed.gov](mailto:RacetoptheTop.Assessment@ed.gov)

12  
13                           And just let us know who the  
14          consortium is and what you call yourselves,  
15          and that you intend to apply. The  
16          applications are due June 23rd by 4:30 p.m.  
17          Eastern time. You'll hear more about that  
18          and how to submit your applications later on  
19          today.

20                           And we expect awards to be made  
21          by September. One more thing that we wanted  
22          to just make clear up front. We do know that  
23          this assessment system, as robust as we hope  
24          it will be, still doesn't meet all the needs  
25          that we have out there, so we want to just

1 sort of acknowledge up front the things it's  
2 not doing, as well as the things that we'll  
3 spend most of the day talking about today  
4 that we hope it will do.

5 The first thing it's not doing  
6 is it's not going to meet the needs of  
7 the -- for the alternate academic assessment  
8 system, the one percent test that's out  
9 there. We do have a separate competition  
10 that is coming shortly on the heels of this  
11 one. It's in the approval process right  
12 now.

13 It's going to be administered  
14 by our Office of Special Education Programs at the  
15 Department and it's being conceived of as  
16 sort of a sister competition to this one, to  
17 develop a one percent assessment for students  
18 who are severely cognitively disabled. And  
19 that is going to be handled as a separate  
20 competition.

21 It's got a separate funding  
22 pool, but we hope it will be well aligned  
23 with the work that you guys are doing as part  
24 of this particular competition. So we do  
25 have a separate pot of money this fiscal year

1           for that which will follow shortly on the  
2           heels of this.

3                         The next thing is an English  
4           language proficiency assessment. So, the  
5           other thing we know is that as the standards  
6           are changing out there in English language  
7           arts, it could well affect how ELA and  
8           English language proficiency standards  
9           dovetail and what it means for your ELP  
10          tests.

11                        We have put aside funding in  
12          our Fiscal '11 budget to help support the  
13          development or adaptation of current  
14          assessments in ELP to make them align better  
15          with what's happening in ELA.

16                        We are loathe to do that before  
17          there's ELP standards that match the new  
18          assessment, so we wanted this one to trail  
19          the main competition by enough to get the ELP  
20          community -- to give the ELP community time  
21          to get the standards all aligned and then we  
22          can follow that up with funding to help build  
23          the assessments that match it.

24                        So, our thought is that should  
25          be in good shape by next year. And by next

1 year we'll be able to put together a  
2 competition for you that helps fund those  
3 assessments.

4 And then, finally, science  
5 assessments are probably in a similar  
6 position, but maybe lag even a year behind  
7 that. It's our hope there, too, that we  
8 would be able to put money together to fund  
9 the development of science assessments. But,  
10 again, we were worried about doing that at  
11 any kind of large scale without any kind of  
12 common standards in place.

13 We do hear that there are  
14 initiatives in place to come together and  
15 build common sets of science assessments.  
16 We've been told that those are probably a  
17 year or two out. And so it would be our  
18 intention and hope that we would be able to  
19 come along with funding to help build those  
20 assessments as soon as there are standards in  
21 place to assess.

22 Okay. One quick commercial for  
23 our website. It's  
24 [www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment](http://www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment). And  
25 you will find up there an executive summary

1 of the notice, the notice itself. There is a  
2 separate application for Category A and for  
3 Category B.

4 So both of those applications  
5 are up there, as well as all of the materials  
6 that were submitted to us or presented to us  
7 at the expert public input meetings. So,  
8 there are a lot of good resources up there.

9 And as the FAQs come out, those  
10 will be published to the same website, so  
11 keep an eye up there. And with that, let me  
12 pause before I get into an overview of the  
13 notice and just see whether there's any  
14 questions so far? Yeah.

15 MR. GALLAGHER: Thank you.  
16 Greg Gallagher, North Dakota. The two  
17 percent or modified assessments is  
18 conspicuously absent here. Has the  
19 Department made a value statement about the  
20 value of the two percent or its legitimacy?

21 This is a greatly debated  
22 area. But for those States that have  
23 invested the time and resources into it, it's  
24 not a small matter.

25 MS. WEISS: Yeah. So, you'll

1 see we actually are going to talk about the  
2 two percent as we get into the comprehensive  
3 assessment system criteria themselves.

4 And let me just sort of give  
5 you the quick answer to it now and then we'll  
6 talk more about it in a few minutes. So, the  
7 quick answer is that it is our hope that  
8 these new comprehensive assessment systems  
9 will meet the needs of all student except the  
10 one percent kids.

11 So that we will be able to  
12 devise these assessments in a way that  
13 accommodates and meets the needs of all the  
14 kids, including the two percent kids, so that  
15 there's not a need in four years for a  
16 separate two percent assessment.

17 Okay. So, with that, what I  
18 want to do here is not actually make you read  
19 this eye chart, but take you through the  
20 different parts of the notice and what each  
21 of them means and how you should interpret  
22 them. This is one of the questions that we  
23 did get sent in to us.

24 The first thing that you'll see  
25 in the notice is eligibility requirements.



1           So, eligibility requirements are things that  
2           a consortium has to meet in order to be  
3           eligible to even compete.

4                        So, that means these are things  
5           that the Department is going to look at in  
6           your application on its way in. These are,  
7           for the most part, yes-no type questions and,  
8           if you have got all the different parts  
9           there, it will go on and be read by the peer  
10          reviewers.

11                       Application requirements are  
12          things that have to be in your application.  
13          So, this is a good checklist to just look at  
14          at the end and make sure that all the  
15          different pieces that we require are actually  
16          in the final package that you send us.

17                       Program requirements are things  
18          that we're giving you a heads-up about now  
19          because, if you are a grantee, these are  
20          things that you're going to have to do once  
21          you're a grantee.

22                       They're not things you have to  
23          do in your application or before you give us  
24          your application, but they are things that  
25          you will have to do in an ongoing fashion if

1           you're a grantee and we want you to know  
2           about them now. So these are things like  
3           technical assistance, a bunch of the  
4           technology requirements are in this category,  
5           and so on.

6                                 Priorities come in -- this  
7           competition, there are two flavors of  
8           priorities. There are absolute priorities.  
9           In fact there is one absolute priority in  
10          each competition. And an absolute priority  
11          are the things that you absolutely have to  
12          address in your application to meet this  
13          priority.

14                                The way this is judged... So,  
15          first of all, we're going to spend some time  
16          on it because the absolute priority of each  
17          competition is kind of the front-end  
18          organizer for the whole competition. It  
19          tells you what we think in the Department are  
20          the most important things about this  
21          competition.

22                                In addition, though, you don't  
23          actually write to the absolute priority. You  
24          write to the selection criteria. And in the  
25          judging of your application, what happens is

1 the peer reviewers score each part of the  
2 selection criteria.

3 They score each criterion and  
4 then, at the end, they look back over the  
5 whole application with the absolute priority  
6 sitting next to them and they make sort of a  
7 yes-no determination about whether the  
8 application has met the absolute priority.

9 So, they're looking  
10 holistically across your application to see  
11 if all the pieces of the absolute priority  
12 have been addressed in your application and,  
13 if so, it gets a yes. If it gets a no, the  
14 application can't be... Can't win.

15 Competitive priorities, on the  
16 other hand, are totally optional. So, this  
17 is something that's optional, but you earn  
18 sort of extra credit or bonus points for it.

19 So, it's scored just like the  
20 selection criteria are scored and we'll talk  
21 through, each competition has a different  
22 flavor of these, and so we'll talk through  
23 these with you in a bit more detail when  
24 we're talking about each of the two  
25 competitions.



1                   Then there are directions to you  
2                   about what it is you need to do. In some  
3                   cases there are tables, or charts, or other  
4                   information that we have specifically  
5                   requested that you provide to us, typically,  
6                   in a pretty standard way.

7                   And we have actually given you  
8                   the table in the application for you to fill  
9                   out. You are welcome to give us more than  
10                  this, but at least we'd like you to give us  
11                  this because it will allow the reviewers to  
12                  sort of look consistently at, from one  
13                  application to another and understand, in the  
14                  same way, from each of you what some of the  
15                  answers to some of these questions look  
16                  like.

17                  There is a recommended response  
18                  length. I want to highlight the word  
19                  "recommended" here. It is not required.  
20                  So, for all of these, we're just doing it to  
21                  give you a sense of about how long and  
22                  relative to other sections about how long we  
23                  think things should be.

24                  It's not a requirement, so the  
25                  reviewers are not going to be instructed to,

1           you know, if the response length is two  
2           pages, the reviewers are not instructed to  
3           stop reading at the end of page two.

4                         The reviewers do, however, and  
5           we can say this with great conviction at this  
6           point, truly appreciate brevity. They are  
7           reading a lot of stuff, so length is not  
8           necessarily your friend. But do take as long  
9           to say something as it takes to make your  
10          point clearly and accurately.

11                        There's one other thing I'll  
12          say and you'll be hearing about it later. We  
13          did ask in this application that you start  
14          your application by giving us an executive  
15          summary.

16                        The reviewers in our other  
17          competitions also -- they asked that we do  
18          this in general because it just helps orient  
19          them at the front end of what you're trying  
20          to accomplish and gives them a big picture  
21          assessment of what you think matters.

22                        That executive summary has no  
23          particular requirements. It's just sort of  
24          wide open. Say whatever you want; it's not  
25          being scored. It's really just for the

1 reviewers to get their heads wrapped around  
2 what you are proposing.

3 That has a required maximum  
4 page length of two pages. So that one we are  
5 telling the reviewers to stop reading after  
6 two pages, so don't exceed two pages on the  
7 executive summary. All the other page  
8 lengths are suggestions.

9 And then, finally, there's a  
10 spot where you literally can just start  
11 typing. Just enter your text and start  
12 typing. Okay. So, that's what the  
13 application looks like.

14 You will see in the application  
15 that there are tables occasionally, like this  
16 one (indicating). When you see a table, fill  
17 it in and also reference it in your  
18 narrative.

19 These tables are not a complete  
20 answer to any of the questions. So, in  
21 almost every case, you'll see that the  
22 criterion asks you for more information than  
23 the table does.

24 It's just that this is the  
25 information that can be represented in a

1 tabular form in a way that might be  
2 comparable across different applications and  
3 will give reviewers a standard way for us to  
4 train them about how to look for  
5 information.

6 But there is -- but please read  
7 the criteria carefully and make sure you're  
8 really answering all parts of the criterion,  
9 not just filling in the table and thinking  
10 you're done. So, the narrative is where you  
11 really want to put the whole big picture  
12 together for the reviewer and then just  
13 reference the table for the information  
14 that's contained in the table.

15 We really do ask that you  
16 connect these dots carefully for reviewers.  
17 In some of the other applications that we  
18 have received, there's tables and there's  
19 narrative and the reviewers can't figure out  
20 what you mean and how you are making these  
21 two things fit together. So you need to  
22 connect those dots for them or they will do  
23 it themselves and they might not do it  
24 right.

25 Okay. So, with that, let me



1 just see if there's any other sort of  
2 big-picture questions before we dive into  
3 consortium issues.

4 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

5 MS. WEISS: All right. Ann?

6 MS. WHALEN: Thank you. Good  
7 morning, everybody. I do want to reiterate  
8 that I welcome questions throughout this  
9 section of the agenda. I do want to say that  
10 we have tried to adjust the talking points to  
11 incorporate questions we received, even the  
12 unnamed seven-page, single-spaced 47 question  
13 document that came in yesterday.

14 I do have one -- yeah. Thank  
15 you. One ground rule. We did receive many  
16 questions on program requirement Number 4. I  
17 am going to ask that you hold that question  
18 as we don't answer it until Slide 37.

19 PARTICIPANT: Which support  
20 program --

21 MS. WHALEN: -- Program  
22 Requirement 4, that's the assurance that  
23 States must adopt the assessments by 2014-15  
24 school year.

25 MS. WEISS: Must implement it.

1 MS. WHALEN: Must implement.  
2 Yes. So, one thing we heard from our expert  
3 panels as we were touring the country was  
4 that governance of the consortium mattered  
5 significantly, that you could have the best  
6 design and best development ideas, but if  
7 your consortium falls apart, you're still  
8 left with nothing.

9 So, we paid particular  
10 attention to how we are asking people to  
11 think about the consortium governance in  
12 project management as part of the application  
13 process. Throughout the section I am going  
14 to be referring to both the Category A and  
15 Category B applications and we'll try to  
16 highlight where they differ. But, for the  
17 most part, they're pretty consistent.

18 So, what we heard for critical  
19 success factors for the consortia is to have  
20 a common vision and goal across members,  
21 clear roles and responsibilities and decision  
22 making processes. That these all should be  
23 codified in writing and they are binding  
24 documents, like an MOU, and procurement  
25 issues should be figured out up front.

1                   And we heard from many people,  
2                   States, people have gone through both  
3                   successful and unsuccessful consortia, the  
4                   more you work out at the front end, the  
5                   better you will be. So, we've tried to keep  
6                   that in consideration in the application  
7                   process.

8                   We also heard that another  
9                   critical success factor is the project  
10                  management partner, that it makes it  
11                  significantly more effective when you have a  
12                  qualified entity that's responsible for the  
13                  day-to-day operations and management of the  
14                  project.

15                  And that they have a real  
16                  defined, specific work plan, time line,  
17                  budget and can really move their projects  
18                  along. But, we also acknowledge that not  
19                  everything can be written in cement by June  
20                  23rd.

21                  So, it is our intent to do a  
22                  cooperative agreement between ED and the  
23                  grantees so we can make some adjustments as  
24                  we go along.

25                  MS. WEISS: So, can I just

1 add one quick thing? There are two different  
2 vehicles we have in the Department for doing  
3 this. One is a grant and one is a  
4 cooperative agreement.

5 So, a cooperative agreement is  
6 different from a grant in that it lets us set  
7 the goals and parameters together, but adjust  
8 things as we go, so that things that change  
9 over time, like, oh, ESEA  
10 reauthorization. And little things like, oh,  
11 finalizing the standards that you're writing  
12 this to.

13 Some of those little things  
14 that are not going to necessarily be  
15 completely locked in by June 23rd, when you  
16 do this application, can be adjusted over  
17 time together mutually.

18 So, a cooperative agreement is  
19 a big deal and is an answer to a lot of the  
20 questions you guys asked that said, "Well, we  
21 don't know this. We don't know that. How do  
22 we handle it?" And the answer's going to be  
23 we're going to ask you to write  
24 it with as much information as you have

1           today, knowing that, through the cooperative  
2           agreement vehicle, we'll be able to actually  
3           make modifications over time as needed, which  
4           we can't do very easily with the grant making  
5           vehicle.

6                       MS. WHALEN:  So, let me pause  
7           just for a quick second.  Any questions about  
8           cooperative agreements that we can then defer  
9           to OGC about?

10                      MR. GALLAGHER:  Greg Gallagher,  
11           North Dakota.  Based on your statement, does  
12           that mean that the States are in binding  
13           agreement with the Department of Education on  
14           issues where the cooperative agreement starts  
15           moving in different directions?

16                      Does this open the door where  
17           now, because of after-the-fact sorts of  
18           discussions between the awardee, that the  
19           U.S. Department of Education's expectations  
20           then become a part of that cooperative  
21           agreement?  Could that be clarified?

22                      MS. WEISS:  So I'm not sure if  
23           it...  So, ask the question one more time to  
24           make sure we...

25                      MR. GALLAGHER:  You're making a



1 period of the grant or the cooperative  
2 agreement, that we would, that we would have  
3 to negotiate some things.

4 So, we would be a party in that  
5 sense, but it's still, you're still  
6 implementing what you propose and what you  
7 agree to at the outset. If there's -- but  
8 one of the elements of the cooperative  
9 agreement might be, if the ESEA is reauthorized  
10 in 2011, we will work together to figure out  
11 if there's something that is just plain  
12 outright wrong in the proposal that you made  
13 now to 2010, we'll work together to fix  
14 that. That's kind of our view of it. Does  
15 that answer your question?

16 MR. GALLAGHER: Yes.

17 MS. WHALEN: So, when we talk  
18 about consortia, there are two different ways  
19 that constitute a consortium. And in the  
20 application you will see that we are asking  
21 you to identify which one you will be  
22 selecting as an applicant.

23 And the consortium can  
24 establish itself as a separate eligible legal  
25 entity and apply for the grant on behalf of

1 the States on its own or one member State of  
2 the consortium may apply for the grant on  
3 behalf of the consortium as a lead State.

4 In either case, every State  
5 member of the consortium must execute an MOU  
6 or other binding agreement that, among other  
7 things, binds the State to every statement  
8 and assurance made in the application. So,  
9 I'm now going to -- oh, I apologize.

10 MS. ELLINGTON: Kris Ellington,  
11 Florida. With these two choices where  
12 management -- may a consortium apply within a  
13 lead State model and then form a legal entity  
14 after the application? Or after the award?

15 MS. HESS: You know, part of  
16 it, I think, would depend on the purposes,  
17 because we have to obligate the money by  
18 2010. You know, by September 30th we have to  
19 obligate it to the entity that is the  
20 grantee.

21 So, if you change the  
22 mechanism, you might have some flexibility to  
23 change your governance, but I'm not sure you  
24 have the flexibility to change your grantee  
25 after September 30th.



1 MS. ELLINGTON: Just not a lot  
2 of time to form a legal entity.

3 MS. WEISS: Right.

4 MR. NORTON: Scott Norton,  
5 Louisiana. I have a similar question and  
6 it's short. In the two bullets about the  
7 separate entity or the lead State, does one  
8 preclude the other? In other words, if you  
9 are a separate entity, does that mean there  
10 is no lead State?

11 MS. WHALEN: There could be,  
12 that could be part of one of the roles and  
13 responsibilities that the consortium lays  
14 out. And we're going to get to that in a  
15 little bit.

16 MS. WEISS: But, you are  
17 picking one or the other of these approaches  
18 to apply. So, you wouldn't pick both to  
19 apply. You apply as one or the other status  
20 and neither status is preferred by us. It's  
21 totally up to you guys. There's no  
22 preference given to one of these approaches  
23 or the other.

24 MS. GENDRON: Sue Gendron from  
25 Maine. Could I ask for a little

1 clarification? If at the time we applied, in  
2 June, and we were in the process of creating  
3 an entity, as long as that was created prior  
4 to an award, would that be an acceptable  
5 adjustment to the award? Just knowing the  
6 legal process to create a 501(c)(3) might take  
7 longer than between now and June.

8 MS. HESS: Probably. But maybe  
9 this is an area that we should do an FAQ on  
10 and give more detail as we go along.

11 MS. GENDRON: Great. Thank  
12 you.

13 MS. VIATOR: Kit Viator,  
14 Massachusetts. Just a slightly different  
15 question, has to do with the... And if you're  
16 going to cover this in just a moment, then I  
17 can wait. But it is to do with the  
18 commitment.

19 I understand governing States  
20 must commit to a single consortium, but I  
21 understand that other States could still  
22 commit to more than one consortium. Is that  
23 true?

24 MS. WHALEN: You're my segue.  
25 Yes. We're getting to this right now. So...

1 MS. VIATOR: So, let me just  
2 ask my question in anticipation. So, the  
3 question is, if it's true that States that  
4 are non-governing States can commit to more  
5 than one consortium, how is that -- how does  
6 one reconcile the other requirement that says  
7 that States that sign a consortium are bound  
8 to each and every statement in the MOU  
9 regarding what the consortium will do?

10 Does that mean that States  
11 would actually be committing to doing both  
12 things, you know, committing... I mean,  
13 essentially could, theoretically that could  
14 mean that States would actually have to  
15 commit to administering two assessment  
16 systems. And I know you don't mean that,  
17 but --

18 MS. WHALEN: -- so, if it's  
19 consistent with its role within the  
20 consortium. So, however that role is defined  
21 within the consortium, what that role --  
22 you're assuring to being consistent with that  
23 role. Does that make sense?

24 MS. VIATOR: Maybe I'll wait  
25 and let you go -- I apologize for jumping the

1 gun on this. Thank you.

2 MS. WEISS: Yep. We're going  
3 to start walking through some of the key  
4 requirements. One of the first ones is the  
5 eligibility requirement, that you be eligible  
6 to receive an award under this category.

7 And right now, we're talking  
8 about Category A, the comprehensive  
9 assessment system, that an applicant must  
10 include a minimum of 15 States, of which at  
11 least five States must be governing States.  
12 Let me just take a moment and highlight what  
13 the definition of 'governing States' is.

14 And that is a State that is a  
15 member of only one consortium that is  
16 applying for the grant in that competition.  
17 So, you may be a governing State in Category  
18 A and only sign on to one application, but  
19 then you may also be a governing State or a  
20 member State in Category B. If that makes  
21 sense to people.

22 As a governing State, you have  
23 an active role in the policy decision making  
24 for the consortium and committed to using the  
25 assessment system or program developed by the

1 consortium. So, you are at the table, making  
2 decisions, in the game.

3 A second eligibility  
4 requirement is that you must come in with a  
5 proposed project management partner, which is  
6 not partnered with another consortium applying  
7 for the award under this category.

8 So, this project management  
9 partner may be a third-party organization,  
10 nonprofit, a university or a State. By  
11 making an assurance that you're not being  
12 part of another application, that's just for  
13 this category, as well. So, you may be a  
14 partner in Category A and a partner in  
15 Category B.

16 The third assurance -- excuse  
17 me, third requirement under this eligibility  
18 requirement is submit assurances from each  
19 State in the consortium to remain in the  
20 consortium, the State will adopt a common set  
21 of college-and-career-ready standards no  
22 later than December 31st, 2011, and common  
23 achievement standards or CUT score no later  
24 than the 2014-15 school year.

25 We do just want to

1 highlight this, because this was a  
2 question that came up in one of the lists of  
3 questions, that the third requirement is just  
4 to remain in the consortium.

5 So, Category B, this is a  
6 little different. In Category B the  
7 eligibility requirement is that it's only a  
8 minimum of five governing States. There is  
9 not a requirement that there are additional  
10 member States. There is a requirement that you also  
11 identify a proposed project management partner. But  
12 that's the only two eligibility requirements.

13 MS. WEISS: And can I just pipe  
14 in here and say a couple of words about this  
15 governing state notion? One of the things  
16 that we heard when we were doing our panel  
17 discussions was that people were thinking  
18 about the role of a vendor, the role of a  
19 project manager and the role of a State.

20 And our concern was that when  
21 consortia get as big as these consortia are  
22 looking to get, that State isn't a good  
23 role. There actually needs to be  
24 differentiation within the State about what  
25 they're doing or you could quickly have a

1 consortium that was not manageable at all.

2 And so, the governing State is  
3 just one role. You and the consortium can  
4 decide whether you want any other roles or  
5 whether everyone has to be a governing State  
6 to be in your consortium.

7 And if you have other roles,  
8 what are they. And one of the things you  
9 will see in the criteria, that we're going to  
10 ask you to talk about, is what are those  
11 roles and how are you thinking about them.

12 But the real thing we wanted to  
13 do was force people to think much more deeply  
14 about the State as not being one, uniform  
15 role, but having different types of roles  
16 that different States could play. So, that's  
17 sort of the intention behind that one and  
18 it's worth thinking about.

19 MR. WILLHOFT: Joe Willhoft,  
20 Washington. Can we go back a slide? Could  
21 you elaborate, please, on the particular  
22 roles and responsibilities of the project  
23 management partner? Or perhaps you're going  
24 to address that in a moment.

25 MS. WHALEN: So, we'll be

1 getting to that.

2 MR. WILLHOFT: Fine. Thank  
3 you.

4 MS. WHALEN: And if I don't  
5 answer your question then, just pipe in  
6 there.

7 MR. WILLHOFT: Okay. Thank  
8 you.

9 MS. WEISS: We're still going  
10 to get to your question. We didn't come to  
11 the whole thing yet. It's coming.

12 MS. WHALEN: Mic in the back?

13 MR. ANONYMOUS: I'll hold off.

14 MS. WHALEN: (No response).

15 MR. ANONYMOUS: I'll hold off.

16 MS. WHALEN: Oh, you'll hold  
17 off. Okay. I'm sorry. So, now we're going  
18 to move into selection criteria and we're  
19 going to talk about (A) (1), Consortium  
20 Governance. In the comprehensive assessment,  
21 Category A, this is worth up to 20 points. But, as  
22 as you see in the arrow in the upper  
23 right-hand corner, in Category B, this is  
24 worth up to 30 points.

25 So, the goal of this criterion



1 is to really focus on the organization of the  
2 governance, structure of the consortium and  
3 whether it will help enable the successful  
4 design and delivery of the proposed  
5 assessment system.

6 So, as part of this, we will be  
7 considering the consortium's vision, goals,  
8 roles and key deliverables, and whether it's  
9 consistent with the consortium's theory of  
10 action. So, Joanne touched on this a little  
11 bit.

12 But, as part of this criterion,  
13 we're really looking at the consortium  
14 structure and operations, including the roles  
15 of the States. So, talking about the  
16 governing States, member States, advisory  
17 States. So how all of these States fit into  
18 a larger organizational structure and their  
19 differentiated roles and responsibilities.

20 And for each role, talking  
21 about the rights and responsibilities  
22 associated with that role. And then talking  
23 about the process that the consortium will  
24 use to make decisions. So, whether, who has  
25 a vote on which types of decisions, how you

1 operationalize this process.

2 Additionally, the protocols in  
3 which the consortium will operate, including  
4 member States changing roles or member States  
5 entering or leaving the consortium.

6 And then, the consortium's  
7 plan, including the process and time lines  
8 for setting key policy and definitions for  
9 the proposed assessment systems, including  
10 the common set of college-and-career-ready  
11 standards; a common set of achievement  
12 standards; common assessment procedures;  
13 common accommodations; common test security  
14 policies, etcetera, etcetera.

15 There's a list that we're about  
16 to tuck into a chart, but I do want to  
17 highlight that, for this criterion, and you  
18 must -- the A(1)(b)(v), we are just asking for  
19 a plan and a time line by which you will  
20 accomplish these.

21 So, we're not asking you to  
22 come up with what is your common definition of  
23 or how you will, as a consortium, administer  
24 this in common. We are asking for the plan  
25 in which you will come to those decisions and

1 then the timeline you anticipate coming to  
2 those decisions with.

3 And then, finally, the  
4 consortium plan for managing funds that you  
5 will receive underneath the grant. For  
6 Category B, these requirements are very  
7 similar, except that we are not asking States  
8 to give us how they're going to come, provide  
9 a plan for how they're going to come with  
10 these common definitions of accommodations or  
11 common administration of  
12 college-and-career-ready standards, because  
13 it's not necessarily applicable in Category  
14 B.

15 So, here (indicating) is the, a  
16 table that we do ask that applicants complete  
17 as part of the Category A and Category B  
18 application, and just ask you to describe the  
19 roles for the member States and a description  
20 of the rights and responsibilities associated  
21 with this role. And then which States fall  
22 into each individual role.

23 And then this chart  
24 (indicating) is just for Category A and this  
25 talks about the policies and key definitions

1           that we are asking you to give us a plan for,  
2           when you anticipate starting that and then  
3           when you anticipate having those adopted.

4                        Again, you are free to add  
5           additional policies or definitions, but these  
6           are the ones that are highlighted within the  
7           application that we ask applicants to  
8           submit. So, we are also going to be  
9           considering -- oh, I'm sorry.

10                      MR. COHEN: Thanks. Mike Cohen  
11           from Achieve. In a previous chart you  
12           indicated there could be different layers  
13           or types of members of a consortium, with  
14           different roles and responsibilities.

15                      Are there any members of the  
16           consortia that would not have the  
17           responsibility of committing to administer  
18           the tests, the assessment system that the  
19           consortium develops and, if so, what type of  
20           member would not have to make that  
21           commitment?

22                      MS. WEISS: So, I think that  
23           would be up to the consortium to figure out.  
24           But we have allowed in the competition, for  
25           example, that members -- that a State could

1 be a member of two consortia if they're not a  
2 governing State.

3 So, in that case, a State may  
4 say that by 2014-15, I'm going to pick which  
5 consortium I stay in and that's the one that  
6 I will adopt the assessment of. But right  
7 now I want to just not commit to adopting  
8 either thing and have a voice at the table  
9 and watch what's happening, but not make a  
10 commitment yet.

11 And if the consortium decided  
12 such a role was fine, there's nothing --  
13 that's fine with us. There's nothing that  
14 we're doing in the notice to prevent that  
15 type of role.

16 And then, when they're making  
17 an assurance, they're making an assurance  
18 that is they're going to be consistent with  
19 the role they signed up to play. So,  
20 consistent with their role, they are  
21 committed to what the application says, but  
22 only in whatever way they have signed up  
23 to be a member of the consortium. Does  
24 that make sense?

25 MR. COHEN: It does. I won't

1 pull it out now, but I think you've got  
2 language in the notice that at least implies  
3 that every State member of a consortia needs  
4 to commit to administer the assessments in  
5 the same --

6 MS. WHALEN: -- slide 37.

7 MR. COHEN: I'll wait.

8 MS. WEISS: Right. We're going  
9 to clarify, because we think we will help  
10 explain how we were thinking about that.  
11 But, in these other places, I do think that  
12 what we say is that you need to do it  
13 consistent with your role or you need to do  
14 if you're going to remain in the consortium,  
15 you need to do it.

16 So, meaning you might need to  
17 drop out of the consortium sometime in the  
18 future when you make a decision not to any  
19 longer sign up to use the same cut scores or  
20 adopt these standards or whatever. So there  
21 might be events in the future that, if they  
22 happen to you, you go, "Okay, in that case,  
23 I'll no longer be in the consortium."

24 MR. COHEN: Thank you.

25 MS. WHALEN: But, I do want to

1 highlight that those are the type of things  
2 that we do want descriptions of as part of  
3 the application and the MOU in terms of the  
4 roles and responsibilities and the conditions  
5 in which States will remain or exit a given  
6 consortium.

7 MS. WEISS: And we want them  
8 not so much... I mean, yes, the peer  
9 reviewers will be looking at them and judging  
10 them, but we also want them because we  
11 really, it was really clear to us that these  
12 are things that all of you should come  
13 together and have the hard conversations at  
14 the beginning of the process, not when you're  
15 smack in the middle of it and no one thought  
16 about it.

17 So, a lot of this is just to  
18 force some of the hard conversations to  
19 happen early on.

20 MS. WHALEN: So, although we  
21 want you to have these conversations early  
22 on, the MOUs are going to be reviewed and  
23 judged and scored by the reviewers. And this  
24 is in A(1)(c).

25 And they are looking at the

1 MOUs and other binding agreements that must  
2 be executed by each member State for  
3 consistency in terms of the terms and  
4 conditions with the consortium governance  
5 structure.

6 And each State's roles in the  
7 consortium; the State's commitment to the  
8 plan for identifying any existing barriers in  
9 the State's laws, regulations or policies to  
10 implementing the proposed assessment system  
11 and addressing such barriers prior to  
12 implementation of the summative assessment  
13 components of the system.

14 And then, additionally, the  
15 consortium governance section also looks at  
16 the consortium's procurement process and each  
17 member State's commitment to that process.  
18 And we'll go into procurement a little bit  
19 later.

20 I do want to flag that, for B,  
21 the MOUs do not have to include the barriers  
22 for adoption and how the States plan to  
23 overcome those.

24 MR. WILLHOFT: Joe Willhoft  
25 from Washington. Could you go back to the



1 slide that displays (B) (6), please? That's  
2 fine.

3 The consortium's plan for  
4 managing funds received under this category.  
5 You have not gone into any detail in  
6 particular about this. Is this a topic to be  
7 addressed at a later time, or is this an  
8 appropriate time for a question?

9 MS. WHALEN: We will address it  
10 later on, as well, but if you want to ask your  
11 question.

12 MR. WILLHOFT: I am just  
13 seeking definition of what you mean by  
14 "managing funds". So it might be different  
15 than --

16 MS. WHALEN: -- we will talk  
17 about that a little later and, if we don't  
18 answer your question then --

19 MR. WILLHOFT: Thank you.

20 MS. WHALEN: -- please let us  
21 know. So, some general requirements  
22 regarding MOUs. As we've mentioned, each  
23 member State must execute an MOU. It should  
24 detail the activities the members of the  
25 consortium will perform as part of the

1 consortium.

2 It must bind each member of the  
3 consortium to every statement and assurance  
4 made in the application. It must include the  
5 procurement assurance that should be signed  
6 by the State's chief procurement officer or  
7 whatever designee.

8 That the State has reviewed  
9 it's applicable procurement rules and  
10 determined that they may participate in and  
11 make procurements through the consortium.

12 They must be signed by the  
13 governor, the State's chief school officer  
14 and, if applicable, the president of the  
15 State's Board of Education. And we do ask  
16 that applicants attach and include MOUs to  
17 the application. Yep?

18 MS. VIATOR: Kit Viator,  
19 Massachusetts. I'm wondering if this is a  
20 time if I can come back and just probe this  
21 question that I posed earlier a little bit  
22 more, Ann, if that's all right?

23 MS. WHALEN: Sure.

24 MS. VIATOR: So, again, I'm a  
25 little bit stuck on this bullet that says,

1 "Binds each member of the consortium to  
2 every statement and assurance made in the  
3 application." I understand that there is a  
4 distinction that you're making where you're  
5 saying that no, the MOU is really about  
6 role.

7 But, if it's only about role,  
8 that seems a little superficial. It seems to  
9 me that the MOU... And maybe I'm just not  
10 getting it, so you help me out.

11 But, I thought that the MOU was  
12 about role, but also about commitment to  
13 doing all the things that the consortium to  
14 executing a theory of the action and all the  
15 substantive things that are actually promised  
16 by the perspective consortium.

17 So, I'm stuck a little bit on  
18 this sort of legalistic splitting of hairs  
19 about, well, you could commit to multiple  
20 consortia if you're not a governing State,  
21 but it's okay that you actually withdraw from  
22 the... That, basically, again how do you  
23 reconcile that with, "Binds every consortium  
24 to every statement and assurance?" Am I, am  
25 I --

1 MS. WEISS: -- so, let me just  
2 take a shot at --

3 MS. VIATOR -- thanks.

4 MS. WEISS: -- painting a  
5 picture that we have in our heads for this.  
6 And I think it could be implemented in a  
7 number of different ways, but here is sort of  
8 a picture that we had in our heads.

9 That there is a memorandum of  
10 understanding that does, indeed, lay out  
11 whatever detail about the design, the  
12 development process, the whatever, that the  
13 consortium has, that then says there's these  
14 different roles, though.

15 There's governing States and  
16 governing States have agreed to do these  
17 things. There's advisory States and advisory  
18 States are going to play a role where they  
19 may or may not sign up to doing this, but  
20 once a year they'll show up, or once a  
21 quarter, or whatever they'll show up and  
22 we'll do briefings for them.

23 And they'll give us input, but  
24 they don't have what, however you have  
25 designed it, and that at the end it says,

1 "And each State is signing up to this vision  
2 and this process and this outcome consistent  
3 with whatever the role is that they have  
4 signed up to play in this consortium and  
5 that's what they're signing off on."

6 So that is sort of how we were  
7 thinking about this. And at least five of  
8 those States are signing off and saying,  
9 "We're governing States. We are committed.  
10 We have skin in the game and this is what we  
11 want to do." Other States could have other  
12 roles, if you define them that way.

13 MS. VIATOR: Kit Viator from  
14 Massachusetts. I'm going to go with the flow  
15 on that one. Can I just ask a follow-up  
16 related to the statement that you must made,  
17 Joanne, about the... And obviously the  
18 condition here about the governing States  
19 needing to remain in the consortium.

20 Does the Department plan to  
21 identify what consequences there would be if  
22 there were to be a governing State that would  
23 drop out of the consortium post facto?

24 MS. WEISS: So, I mean, I think  
25 that's one of the things that we're asking

1           when you think through States staying in or  
2           dropping out of the consortium and under what  
3           conditions is that okay or not okay with the  
4           consortium.

5                        So, we would ask you to address  
6           it within the answer to that criterion, to  
7           the extent that you guys, you know, for  
8           however you want to address it. We don't  
9           have specific rules, like here are the  
10          sanctions that you must have or anything like  
11          that.

12                       So, it's really, I think, up to  
13          the consortia to figure out how it wants to  
14          manage itself. So, Kit, did we answer -- I  
15          mean does that make sense to you? Do you  
16          feel like --

17                       MS. VIATOR: -- let's not make  
18          this about me.

19                       MS. WEISS: No, no. I think --  
20          no, no, no --

21                       [Inaudible]

1 MS. VIATOR: Well, I am curious  
2 about whether everybody else gets it, though,  
3 if I'm the only one that's left behind. I'm  
4 still a little stuck. I don't know if other  
5 people are. If I'm the only one, again, by  
6 all means move on. Greg looks like he has  
7 something to say.

8 MR. WILLHOFT: Joe Willhoft,  
9 Washington. Kit, maybe I can jump on your  
10 train. Most agreements that we're engaged  
11 with, that involve the State as an entity,  
12 include some sort of a dissolution clause.

13 What if this organization  
14 decides to dissolve and no longer exist? How  
15 do we -- should our MOU include those kinds  
16 of features?

17 MS. WHALEN: Oh, yes.

18 MR. WILLHOFT: And, if so, what  
19 does that mean with regard to two and a half  
20 years into a four-year process and we cease  
21 to exist?

22 MS. WHALEN: So, if your  
23 consortium dissolves, the grant funds do get  
24 returned back to the Treasury.

25 MS. WEISS: Yes.

1 MS. VIATOR: Go ahead.

2 MS. WHALEN: Part of it will  
3 depend on what you put in your application  
4 about how this is all going to work and what  
5 your roles are. And part of it, at some  
6 point, is, if it's two years from now, so many  
7 of you drop out, but not all, you may have  
8 significantly altered the scope of the grant/  
9 cooperative agreement.

10 Which could also result in,  
11 you know, the money having to be returned and  
12 all of those kind of things. You know, if  
13 one drops out, would that be a significant  
14 failure, changing the scope? Maybe, maybe  
15 not. Partly it would depend on what you've  
16 put in your plan as to how it's all going to  
17 work and move forward.

18 MS. WEISS: But, yes, these are  
19 the kinds of things that we would expect to  
20 see in an MOU. We're not drafting or  
21 putting -- you know, in the Race to the Top  
22 main competition, we gave a draft of an MOU  
23 because States had to execute them with all  
24 the LEAs.

25 Here, we think it's very



1           particular. One consortium needs one MOU  
2           that's being signed by all the parties  
3           pursuant to their specific roles and  
4           obligations. And we are not giving you  
5           templates because we think it's very specific  
6           to how you're structuring yourselves.

7                           And we also, I mean,  
8           literally the reason we're doing this is to  
9           try to help mitigate the chance of  
10          catastrophic failure, like you're  
11          describing.

12                          That's why we're asking you to  
13          think through all these things at the front  
14          end. But, I don't think we are naive enough  
15          to believe that there is no chance of  
16          catastrophic failure and, yeah, the money  
17          would come back to us and go back to the  
18          Treasury at that point.

19                          And we can't redeploy it or  
20          reuse it, so that's why we really are  
21          interested in everybody thinking through all  
22          the hard stuff at the front end and trying to  
23          make sure that this doesn't happen.

24                          MS. WHALEN: And I think we  
25          also acknowledge that this is really messy

1 and really hard for everybody. And that we  
2 are asking people to do this in a pretty  
3 short time frame.

4 So, I think one of the things  
5 we are trying to articulate are the things  
6 that we think are important to start  
7 addressing earlier than later and to do your  
8 best, as States, to come together to get as  
9 much accomplished before the actual  
10 application is submitted. Yes, go ahead.

11 MR. GANDAL: Yeah, thanks. I'm  
12 Matt Gandal with Achieve and just to try to  
13 follow up, I do appreciate what I'm hearing  
14 on this is you are, in some ways, deferring  
15 to the consortia to put together the most  
16 reasonable approach to State participation  
17 and governance, knowing that the consortia  
18 and the States have to figure it out. I  
19 think that's helpful to know.

20 What I would -- the only follow  
21 up I would ask... And I think all the States  
22 will appreciate that, by the way, and there  
23 may be some very different approaches that  
24 come your way that it sounds like you will  
25 consider equally.

1                   Are there any non-negotiables in  
2                   that respect? Could you remind us if there  
3                   are things that you must see or that you must  
4                   not see in those agreements in terms of State  
5                   participation, black and white. If you could  
6                   be clear about those, then the rest can be  
7                   left for the really thoughtful deliberation  
8                   among the States in the consortia.

9                   MS. WHALEN: So, I think that's  
10                  what we're trying to articulate now, what  
11                  some of these non-negotiables are, that there  
12                  have to be at least five governing States and  
13                  we do have a definition of what that means.

14                  We do say that, in each MOU,  
15                  there has to be these assurances and it has  
16                  to bind each member State to every statement in  
17                  the assurance. So, many of the things that  
18                  we're going through on this slide are some of  
19                  the non-negotiables that we need to see in  
20                  these MOUs.

21                  And then, additionally, there  
22                  are criteria in which the peer reviewers  
23                  will be looking at the MOUs and considering as  
24                  part of their, looking at the strength of  
25                  the MOU in supporting the governance

1 structure and the consortium, as part of its  
2 review. And how it will work points to the  
3 obvious.

4 MS. PETERNITH: And if I could  
5 pipe in here. If you look on Page 22 through  
6 24 of the application, it actually lays out  
7 all of the items that need to be addressed in  
8 the MOU and then other items that you may  
9 choose to address through the MOU. So that  
10 might help.

11 MS. SISKEN: Terry Sisken from  
12 South Carolina. I wanted to follow up. You  
13 said if they're two and a half years in and  
14 the consortium would dissolve, the funds  
15 would come back. Do you mean the entire  
16 funds or the funds that have not been  
17 expended?

18 MS. HESS: Well, at a minimum,  
19 it would be the ones you haven't spent. And  
20 then, depending on what the situation was at  
21 the time, we'd have to see if more of it had  
22 to come back. It's all speculative. Don't  
23 fail and we won't have to deal with it.

24 MS. WHALEN: Yeah. Let's not  
25 have this be a problem.

1 MR. SISKEN: Too big to fail.

2 MS. WEISS: Exactly. Too big  
3 to fail. And then the Department of Treasury  
4 will come knocking.

5 MS. WHALEN: And bail us out.

6 MS. GENDRON: Sue Gendron from  
7 Maine. I just wanted to clarify one of the  
8 statements you made. At 2014 and 15, States  
9 might decide, "Well, this is the consortium I  
10 want to go with based on what has evolved."

11 My question would be, might  
12 there be a situation where a State would say  
13 3 through 8 component is what we want to  
14 commit to, but we want to commit to the high  
15 school version that evolved.

16 Because I remember a statement,  
17 Joanne, you made. You want to, you hoped  
18 that, through all of this work, we identify  
19 what are the best systems to go forward. So,  
20 as we think about our assurances, is that  
21 something we should be contemplating?

22 MS. WHALEN: We were just  
23 saying that's a wonderful question and we  
24 would love to think about it and put it out  
25 in a FAQ, if that's okay. Any other

1 questions?

2 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

3 MS. WHALEN: Okay. So, back to  
4 some of the requirements regarding MOUs. For  
5 just Category A, the MOUs must include an  
6 assurance that, to remain in the consortium,  
7 the States will adopt a common set of  
8 college-and-career-ready standards by  
9 December 31st, 2011. And common achievement  
10 standards by the 2014-15 school year.

11 Now, this is a slide I know we  
12 have all been waiting for. Slide 37. So,  
13 there is a program requirement, Number 4,  
14 that reads, "An eligible applicant awarded a  
15 grant under the category must ensure that the  
16 summative assessment component of the  
17 assessment system in both mathematics and  
18 English language arts are fully implemented  
19 statewide by each State in the consortium no  
20 later than the 2014-15 school year."

21 And we received a number of  
22 questions about how the consortium can ensure  
23 this. So, we are giving the guidance that in  
24 writing to this program requirement, and you  
25 may do it in your MOU, that you describe the

1 process by which your State will adopt and  
2 implement the assessments developed under the  
3 programs by school year 2014-15, if your  
4 State remains in the consortium at that  
5 time.

6 And you may provide additional  
7 explanatory information about how you will  
8 undertake this process consistent with your  
9 State's law. How does that sound?

10 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

11 MS. WHALEN: Fantastic. Oh,  
12 (laughing).

13 MR. WILLHOFT: Joe Willhoft,  
14 Washington. The writing to program  
15 requirement 4 description appears as though  
16 that is a distinct explication from each  
17 State. So it's not necessarily part of the  
18 MOU, which would be across States. This  
19 seems like an attachment to the MOU that is  
20 unique to each State.

21 Is that what you have in mind?  
22 And if so, does that need to be part of the  
23 application and included in the application?  
24 Or can the process by which this will occur  
25 be part of the application?

1 MS. WEISS: There's actually  
2 probably a couple of things in the MOU that  
3 are unique to a particular State. This is  
4 one. Also, in Category A, each State has to  
5 talk about what barriers in law it might  
6 have. It's sort of a companion piece to  
7 that.

8 What barriers in law it might  
9 have to move into these new assessments and  
10 what has to be done over the course of the  
11 four years to get you there. So, we actually  
12 did envision that the MOU would have, for  
13 each State, a couple of things that were  
14 unique to that State on that State's  
15 signature page. So, that would be one way to  
16 handle it.

17 You can handle it in probably  
18 different ways from that, but that just felt  
19 like it would probably be the easiest way to  
20 do it so that one signature just incorporates  
21 all this stuff.

22 But, if you want to, you may  
23 attach it as a separate document to the  
24 application, as long as it's appropriately  
25 assured by the relevant parties.



1 I do want to add that, as a  
2 program requirement, the peer reviewers are  
3 not judging or scoring this part of the MOU  
4 and we will be providing them training on  
5 this.

6 MS. SISKIN: Terry Siskin from  
7 South Carolina. This may be an addendum to  
8 Sue's question. Yesterday, in yesterday's  
9 meeting, the issue of adoption of English  
10 language arts as opposed to mathematics came  
11 up.

12 Would the corollary, in terms  
13 of the assessment, be a possibility, as  
14 well? We don't know what your answer was for  
15 yesterday yet, I don't think.

16 MS. WEISS: But on the  
17 assessment, the absolute priority is very  
18 clearly both ELA and mathematics. And that's  
19 an absolute priority, so it's a firm  
20 requirement of this.

21 MR. MATTSON: Dirk Mattson,  
22 Minnesota. So, I guess someone will think of  
23 this condition, so I guess I'd like to see if you  
24 have an answer for it now.

25 Is it possible, or I assume

1            maybe you would say this would be reflected  
2            back in the various consortia's MOUs, that a  
3            State, for whatever reason, has an affinity  
4            toward mathematics in one consortia and  
5            language arts in the second consortia? Or is  
6            that a condition under which the consortia  
7            must make the governing statement about one's  
8            participation?

9                            MS. WEISS: So, I think I just  
10           sort of added it as a rider to Sue's  
11           question. I do think that, just talking  
12           conceptually for a second, we thought a lot  
13           about how can we break this competition into  
14           small enough chunks that people could handle  
15           things on a smaller basis.

16                            And felt very concerned about  
17           the lack of coherence if we allowed a  
18           consortium to just be elementary versus  
19           secondary or just be ELA versus math and that  
20           it was flying in the face of some of the  
21           coherence that I think we were all seeking  
22           with this new set of assessments.

23                            So, I think from the point of  
24           view of a consortium, the answer is very  
25           clear that it has to be grades three through

1 high school and ELA and math.

2 The question of, in the end we  
3 end up assuming everybody stays together and  
4 produces fabulous assessments and we find two  
5 great consortia and we fund both of them, we  
6 end up with two options in math and ELA and  
7 elementary and high school. And then we have  
8 a marketplace where these things are freely  
9 available.

10 And at that point, could a  
11 State sort of... The grant's over, it's 2015,  
12 can a State pick and choose what they're  
13 going to use in their State as their  
14 accountability system, given that there are  
15 now two sets of assessments that are both  
16 approved for accountability purposes.

17 I mean, at that point, I think  
18 there's a marketplace going and they are  
19 approved, that people are going to be able to  
20 do what they want. From a consortium's point  
21 of view, I'm not totally sure what it means,  
22 during development, to have people all over  
23 the map.

24 So, it might be something that  
25 the consortium just wants to think through

1           about what's going to be productive voices at  
2           the table for you guys in order to get your  
3           work done. Because that really is different  
4           from the question of out in the real world,  
5           later on, who adopts and uses what, which  
6           this competition isn't really concerned  
7           with.

8                           MS. WHALEN: So to get full --  
9           oh, I'm sorry.

10                          MR. GALLAGHER: Greg Gallagher,  
11           North Dakota. It's just a request and I'm  
12           making sure my ears are hearing things  
13           correctly. I'm a mere mortal on these  
14           matters. When we're looking at this sort of  
15           large scale trust, we also have to  
16           communicate back to our governors' offices or  
17           procurement officers.

18                          And in referencing earlier  
19           about the definition of skin in the game and  
20           the binding agreements and making reference  
21           to the role of the State. Now, when we read  
22           this, we read it as the binding assurances  
23           throughout the whole thing, I was hearing  
24           amended language about the role.

25                          Will the Department put that

1 out as clear language within the responses  
2 that follow? Because whatever communications  
3 I take back to the State are going to be  
4 judged against what's written on the page.

5 I want to make sure I'm hearing  
6 correctly that those sorts of amendments and  
7 language that we're hearing about the role  
8 and its relationship to the binding  
9 assurances and the participation that we  
10 have, the last slide was dealing with the  
11 issue of actually administering the  
12 assessment. And then the phrase came out  
13 "based on State law"; and I didn't quite see  
14 that and maybe --

15 MS. WEISS: -- consistent with  
16 State law.

17 MR. GALLAGHER: Consistent with  
18 State law. I can't recall that my eye  
19 catching that at an earlier time. Is there  
20 assurance that there is going to be written  
21 response to that so, in fact, we have  
22 documentation?

23 MS. WHALEN: So, we are in the  
24 process of finalizing guidance to be  
25 made public, and especially slide 37, the

1 additional clarification is part of that  
2 guidance. I believe that we have addressed  
3 what you have highlighted with our, the roles  
4 and responsibilities and how that should be  
5 considered.

6 If, after reading this  
7 guidance, you feel as if you do not have the  
8 clarity that you're looking for in writing,  
9 you should always feel free to e-mail it in  
10 to our e-mail box and we will then proceed in  
11 answering those questions in writing.

12 MS. WEISS: But, Greg, just to  
13 be clear, you're right. It wasn't clear in  
14 what we wrote originally. I think it was  
15 about an hour before we got calls, starting  
16 from Florida and then moving across the  
17 country, on this one. So, we did have plenty  
18 of heads-up that we hadn't been clear  
19 enough.

20 And that slide that we just saw  
21 is our attempt, in writing, officially to say  
22 here's a way you can think about it that we  
23 think meets the requirements of  
24 your State's laws and doesn't sort of  
25 overshoot the mark in terms of what you need

1 to sign up to do. So, these slides are also  
2 part of an official record that you can use.

3 MS. WHALEN: And again, the  
4 slides, as well as the transcript, will be  
5 available on our web page. So, if you need  
6 to download a couple thousand pieces of  
7 paper, it's available.

8 So, to receive full points, the  
9 MOU -- and this is part of how the peer  
10 reviewers are going to be looking at the  
11 MOUs. They must be consistent with the  
12 consortium's governance structure and the  
13 State's role in the consortium be included in  
14 the application. That's always key.

15 And we do ask, as you write  
16 your narrative, that you try to be  
17 descriptive about your rationale and the  
18 points you were trying to make and then be  
19 clear in referencing the MOUs.

20 We are asking that applicants  
21 submit a table of contents for their project  
22 and, as clearly as possible, show where your  
23 supporting documentation and evidence is  
24 going to be as part of your application.

25 I know it feels like a minor

1           thing. But, from a peer reviewer's  
2           perspective, it does make this a lot easier  
3           to review and it's also to your benefit to  
4           insure that the reviewer is capturing your  
5           intent of what you're submitting.

6                           For Category A only, we ask you to  
7           describe the State's plan for identifying any  
8           barriers to implementing the proposed  
9           assessment system, and for directing them, in  
10          the MOUs. This is for receiving full  
11          points.

12                           Procurement. So, when we were  
13          in Boston, Atlanta and Denver, many of our  
14          very wise experts, as well as the States and  
15          public, started asking really thoughtful  
16          procurement questions about how are we going  
17          to do this given the time allowed and what  
18          are the rules that apply.

19                           We came back to the Department  
20          of Education and scratched our heads and then  
21          held another expert panel session just on  
22          procurement to hear what other people's  
23          advice was to us. We tried our best to  
24          capture that in the applications and the  
25          NIA.



1                                   And so this is kind of  
2                                   highlighting some of the things that we  
3                                   learned. And one of them is to think about  
4                                   procurement up front. Think through your  
5                                   processes, who's going to be doing it and the  
6                                   roles and responsibilities.

7                                   We do require that the  
8                                   competitive procurement process be based on a  
9                                   best value selection. And this means that  
10                                  it's not just the lowest bid, but it's  
11                                  also the lowest bid but also the greatest  
12                                  benefit to the consortium.

13                                 Each State's chief procurement  
14                                 officer must assure that the State may  
15                                 participate in and make procurements through  
16                                 a consortium and consider the way the  
17                                 consortium will assign procurement  
18                                 responsibilities.

19                                 For example, a consortium may  
20                                 identify one or more lead States as procurers  
21                                 or they may identify the project management  
22                                 partner as the procurer. But we do say  
23                                 provided that this is clear in the agreement  
24                                 between the partner and the States. And that  
25                                 it is consistent with their articulated roles

1 and responsibilities.

2 So, hang on before we move off  
3 this one, we just want to make sure that this  
4 is clear and I just want to highlight one  
5 thing. How many State procurement officials  
6 do we have in here today? Can you raise your  
7 hand? [No hands are raised].

8 Okay. This was exactly my  
9 point. The first thing that you need to do  
10 is go back and get them involved, because  
11 this little second bullet here, about the  
12 procurement official has to assure that your  
13 State can participate and make procurements  
14 through the consortium, is a multi-, multi-  
15 step process for your procurement officials.

16 It looks easy. It's really  
17 hard in most States and please get them  
18 involved -- and every State has to do this.  
19 Not so the lead procurement State, obviously,  
20 has to sort of take a lead role, but  
21 everybody else has to make sure they can  
22 procure things through that lead State.

23 It's a huge undertaking, so  
24 please, please involve your procurement  
25 officials right away or you might not be able

1 to be a member of a consortium at all because  
2 you just haven't gotten this...or at least in  
3 the application, you could presumably join  
4 later, but this is a real barrier that I just  
5 want to make sure people pay attention to and  
6 start working on right away.

7 MS. WHALEN: I do want to  
8 clarify one point that the lead State that's  
9 applying on behalf of the consortium does not  
10 have to be the lead procurer State. That's  
11 just --

12 MS. WEISS: Another title.

13 MS. WHALEN: -- a different  
14 role or responsibility within the  
15 consortium. And I do want to also flag that  
16 we know that this is extremely difficult,  
17 given State procurement laws, and it's  
18 messy. But I think the good news is that  
19 we're all in the same boat.

20 MS. WEISS: Sue?

21 MS. GENDRON: Sue Gendron from  
22 Maine. Is there any consideration under this  
23 procurement component... The governing States  
24 must implement, therefore they're going to  
25 have to work through that procurement

1           during -- I mean, not implement, but be  
2           working on developing the strategies.

3                           In 2014-15, the States have to  
4           actually change some laws under procurement  
5           in order to participate in the consortium.  
6           For those who are member States or who have a  
7           different role, has there been any thought to  
8           allowing each State to define how they would  
9           get to being able to procure through a  
10          consortium, knowing that the governing States  
11          have to be able to do that up front?

12                          MS. WEISS:  You're like the  
13          queen of our FAQs today.

14                          MS. WHALEN:  They're great  
15          questions.

16                          MS. WEISS:  My first reaction  
17          is, yeah, that's probably all right, but let  
18          us --

19                          MS. WHALEN:  -- yeah --

20                          MS. WEISS:  -- just take that  
21          back and just make sure.  If it's about a law  
22          that has to change, that's certainly a big  
23          deal.  We also think that, in many cases,  
24          it's not about laws that have to change, but  
25          it's about things that, if that lead

1 procurement State doesn't know what State X  
2 needs, they'll do it in a way that won't work  
3 for State X.

4 But it's not a legal issue,  
5 it's a procedural issue and you need to know  
6 the procedures up front. So that was our  
7 main concern. But you're right, if there's  
8 some legal barrier here, that State X should  
9 still be able to...

10 MR. ANONYMOUS: Can you clarify  
11 a bit or expand on your vision of what things  
12 member States might be procuring through the  
13 consortium, particularly --

14 MS. WEISS: -- in the --

15 MR. ANONYMOUS: -- no, no.  
16 Well, particularly if assessments are not  
17 going to be operational in the States in the  
18 grant period. But rather afterwards.

19 I can use a little help  
20 understanding what you think a member State  
21 might be procuring through the consortium, if  
22 they're not purchasing the test to administer  
23 in their State, during this grant period?

24 MS. WEISS: But, they're -- so,  
25 I guess we were thinking that there's still

1 a -- so, assuming that the big procurement is  
2 items around developing an assessment. I  
3 guess we were thinking there still could be  
4 parts of that that would touch on a  
5 particular State's ultimate needs to procure  
6 and might be technology platforms, there  
7 might...

8 There just might be a bunch of  
9 things attended to it that individual States  
10 needed to make sure, in the end, they could  
11 use.

12 MR. ANONYMOUS: So, there might  
13 be, but you're not assuming that there  
14 necessarily is.

15 MS. WEISS: Right. Right.

16 MR. ANONYMOUS: Okay.

17 MS. WHALEN: So, now we're  
18 going to jump to A(8), the project management  
19 section of the notice. And this is in -- I'm  
20 sorry. Go ahead.

21 MR. MARASCHIELLO: Rich  
22 Maraschiello, Pennsylvania. So, that  
23 response leads me to believe that the  
24 consortia would agree that consortia funds to  
25 finance a platform in one State, but not in

1 another, might be a legitimate use of the  
2 funds.

3 MS. WEISS: No. No, that would  
4 not be. That would be the opposite --

5 MS. WHALEN: Right.

6 MS. WEISS: -- of what we were  
7 trying to say.

8 MS. WHALEN: That if every  
9 member State is --

10 MR. MARASCHIELLO: -- oh,  
11 everybody --

12 MS. WHALEN: -- by 2014-15 --  
13 need --

14 MR. MARASCHIELLO: -- needs --

15 MS. WHALEN: -- a platform to  
16 deliver the assessment on.

17 MR. MARASCHIELLO: Okay.

18 MS. WHALEN: From.

19 MS. WEISS: And we're not  
20 saying everything has to be the same  
21 platform. We're going to get to the  
22 technology issues more specifically, so I  
23 don't mean to segue into technology stuff in  
24 a sneaky way through procurement.

25 I think we were just trying to

1 give examples to say why we had assumed that  
2 the more States think through procurement up  
3 front, the better off everybody will be, even  
4 if what you're procuring isn't the  
5 administration of an assessment in an ongoing  
6 fashion, but is the development of  
7 assessment.

8 That even in the act of  
9 procuring the development of assessments,  
10 there could be tentacles that everybody needs  
11 to be aware of and it would just be better to  
12 flesh all of that out at the front end than  
13 to be caught flat-footed at the back end.

14 MS. WHALEN: So, another  
15 example of something that each member State  
16 maybe needs to procure before the end of the  
17 grant period is that you're hiring  
18 consultants or trainers to come in and train  
19 teachers on the administration of the  
20 assessment.

21 Or provide professional  
22 development. Every member State will need  
23 that prior to the actual administration of  
24 the assessment.

25 MR. MARASCHIELLO: Thank you.



1 That's helpful.

2 MS. WHALEN: So, project  
3 management. So, this is about the extent to  
4 which the eligible applicant project  
5 management plan will result in the  
6 implementation of the proposed assessment  
7 system on time, within budget, and in a  
8 manner that is financially sustainable over  
9 time.

10 So, in the Category A, the  
11 comprehensive assessment system, this is  
12 worth up to 30 points. In Category B, this  
13 is worth up to 35 points. And as part of  
14 this component, we're going to be looking at  
15 the quality, qualifications and role of the  
16 project management partner.

17 And we're asking, as evidence  
18 for this, the mission, data foundation, size,  
19 experience of the partner, the key personnel  
20 assigned to the project, including their  
21 names and vitae, their roles, percent of  
22 time dedicated to this project, and  
23 experience in managing similar projects.

24 We know that, if a State ends  
25 up being proposed as the project management

1 partner, not all of these things will be able  
2 to be provided. But, to the extent that it's  
3 not a State, we do ask that this information  
4 be provided.

5 And as part of this, we have a  
6 table where we're asking for the names and  
7 key personnel from the proposed project, the  
8 roles assigned and vitae. I do want to  
9 highlight that, especially under this  
10 section, not every aspect of the criterion is  
11 part of the table. So, please, read it  
12 carefully and, in your narrative, be as  
13 responsive as possible.

14 The project manage... We are  
15 also asking for the project work plan and  
16 time line, including the key deliverables and  
17 the major milestones, deadlines, and entities  
18 responsible for the execution of these  
19 deliverables and their approach to  
20 identifying, managing and mitigating risks  
21 associated with this project. Okay, Kit?

22 MS. VIATOR: Kit Viator,  
23 Massachusetts. So, just a clarifying  
24 question here. Just, I know this is about  
25 project management. But what you are

1 describing certainly is about project  
2 management, but it's as much about contractor  
3 deliverables as it is project management  
4 itself.

5 So, for example, typically,  
6 yes, the manager is responsible for  
7 overseeing the delivery of the deliverables.  
8 But, contractors are responsible for the  
9 actual delivery of the deliverables. Do  
10 you see -- are you going to make a  
11 distinction on that point? Do you see the  
12 distinction I'm drawing?

13 MS. WEISS: Yeah. So, I think  
14 in this case, though, from the federal  
15 government's point of view, the grantee is  
16 this lead State of the consortium and we're  
17 holding that group accountable for the  
18 execution of the plan.

19 And you will be working with  
20 one or many or no, or however you structure  
21 it, vendors to deliver this. One thing we do  
22 know is that all the stuff you're giving us  
23 up front here, and it's gonna be true when we  
24 get into the budget section as well, is your  
25 best estimate.

1                   So these aren't binding like,  
2                   on this date, you better do this or the  
3                   money's going to be pulled kinds of things.  
4                   We're trying to make sure that there really  
5                   has been a plan that's been thought through  
6                   and articulated, knowing that it will change  
7                   as you go through your procurement process  
8                   and pick your vendors and all that kind of  
9                   stuff.

10                   But, still sort of having a  
11                   high level blueprint for the four years and  
12                   how it rolls out and how it looks and that  
13                   that's an important thing for the peer  
14                   reviewers to be able to look at and say,  
15                   "Does this group have a sense of what this  
16                   really takes?"

17                   Do they have the right parts in  
18                   their work plan? Have they thought through  
19                   these issues and, therefore, do I believe  
20                   that they actually know what it takes to  
21                   deliver on this project within four years?"

22                   MS. VIATOR: That's helpful. I  
23                   would just say that the, additionally, what  
24                   would be more compelling as evidence to  
25                   really, to sell you would be to be able to

1 talk about and hear the contractor partners  
2 we've assembled. But, of course, for  
3 procurement reasons, those can't be  
4 identified --

5 MS. WEISS: That's right.

6 MS. VIATOR: -- at this  
7 particular point in time.

8 MS. WEISS: Right.

9 MS. VIATOR: So you're saying  
10 that you're going to be satisfied with the  
11 quality and the experience of the project  
12 management team to know well enough to choose  
13 contractor partners --

14 MS. WEISS: -- or to help lead  
15 the --

16 MS. VIATOR: -- wisely.

17 MS. WEISS: -- the consortium  
18 through the process.

19 MS. VIATOR: Okay. Thank you.

20 MS. WHALEN: Any other  
21 questions?

22 MS. WEISS: Sue has one. I'm  
23 ready to write it down.

24 MS. GENDRON: We actually sent  
25 this one in earlier. And it goes to the

1 project management selection by a consortia.  
2 In the application you talk about an informal  
3 solicitation and how that fits with federal  
4 requirements. Could you speak to that a  
5 little bit, knowing we have a short time line  
6 here.

7 MS. HESS: Well, first of all,  
8 if you have a lead State, under, under the  
9 procurement regulations, one thing you could  
10 do is just follow what your State law would  
11 allow you to do for that. It's under 34 CFR  
12 80.36(a). So, in general --

13 MS. WEISS: -- that's why we  
14 bring her along.

15 MS. HESS: (Laughing). So, in  
16 general, you can follow what the lead State's  
17 law is with respect to that. We also put in  
18 what our informal procedures are in the event  
19 that maybe the lead State's law doesn't speak  
20 to that type of a procurement.

21 And so then you could, you  
22 know, under the rest of the regulation, which  
23 would apply to another type of grantee other  
24 than a State, you could use these informal  
25 procedures.

1                   And I really don't know the  
2                   specifics of what all those informal  
3                   procedures entail. But, a lot of it, I  
4                   think, is just like good record keeping.  
5                   That if you do an informal procedure, you  
6                   keep a record of it, of how you did it and  
7                   all of that and so then, in case there's a  
8                   challenge to the procurement, you have a  
9                   substantiation to show that you did what you  
10                  were supposed to do under those elements. Is  
11                  that what you were looking for? Okay.

12                   MS. ELLINGTON: Kris Ellington,  
13                   Florida. Most State's procurement roles are  
14                   very specific and a little more strict than  
15                   the federal procurement roles.

16                   If a consortium had made  
17                   significant progress towards completing the  
18                   procurement process, using their strict rules  
19                   because we do not have those informal  
20                   processes in our State procurement laws, is  
21                   that sufficient at the time of submission?

22                   Because it's going to be very  
23                   difficult to complete all the required  
24                   reviews and postings and conducting  
25                   evaluation committee reviews of submissions

1 in order to make an award within this period  
2 of time. Almost impossible.

3 MS. HESS: So, you have  
4 followed your State law or you can't follow  
5 your State law with all of the... I'm not  
6 tracking the, I guess, the middle part.

7 MS. ELLINGTON: Okay. Sorry.  
8 We have done an analysis of what it would  
9 take, for example, if Florida or Louisiana or  
10 some other, one of our governing States, were  
11 to conduct this procurement.

12 And the timeframe for doing  
13 this, given all of the steps that must take  
14 place, pushes the boundaries of this  
15 submission process, and I'm not sure we'll be  
16 able to complete it.

17 So, if we had documented all  
18 the steps that had been taken in the time  
19 line that would lead to completion of an  
20 award, that may be after the June 23rd date,  
21 is that sufficient to show compliance with  
22 this requirement?

23 MS. HESS: I think Joanne needs  
24 to write that one down. We'll put it on our  
25 FAQ list. Because off the top of my head, I



1 really don't know what the answer is.

2 MS. WEISS: So, we certainly  
3 want to make sure you can do all of this  
4 within the requirements of your State's law,  
5 so we'll try to figure out how to get the  
6 information that I think we all need to feel  
7 comfortable with how you're going about  
8 finding these partners and who they are.  
9 And, at the same time, do it within your law,  
10 so we'll come back to you.

11 MR. NORTON: Scott Norton,  
12 Louisiana. It's really the same questions  
13 again. I think I hear you saying that at  
14 least one State, the requirements to procure  
15 the partner must meet at least one State's  
16 rules or else they couldn't do it. Or it  
17 could maybe meet the federal government's  
18 informal rules. Is that what you're saying?

19 MS. HESS: That's the part  
20 we'll clarify in the FAQ.

21 MR. NORTON: Okay.

22 MS. HESS: That's the part I'm  
23 not sure about.

24 MR. NORTON: Maybe we'll get  
25 that later then, thank you.

1                   MR. WILLHOFT: Joe Willhoft,  
2                   Washington. Just to lend support to Kris's  
3                   observations, this is a very major barrier  
4                   for us to submit a competitive proposal.

5                   And implicit in Part D, that's  
6                   on the slide now, with regard to all the,  
7                   including the -- well, maybe I'm misreading  
8                   Part D. But, in any case, the requirement  
9                   that the partner be including with the  
10                  staffing and the experience of the partner.

11                  So implicit in that is the  
12                  notion that somehow the Department is going  
13                  to evaluate the quality of the management  
14                  partner. Is that the case? Or if the State  
15                  goes through its procedures, and it's decision  
16                  making process and selects a competitive and  
17                  qualified partner, would that be sufficient?

18                  MS. WHALEN: So, I think the  
19                  answer to your question is that, as part of  
20                  your application, you are submitting the  
21                  quality qualifications of this partner and it  
22                  will be part of A(8)(a), that the peer  
23                  reviewers will be looking at to ensure that  
24                  the consortium's identified project management  
25                  partners that will help result in the

1 implementation of the proposed assessment  
2 system in a timely manner, consistent with  
3 the project design and development.

4 So, to a certain extent, yes,  
5 there will be a review of the qualifications  
6 of the partner. The project management  
7 sections also have the budget review component  
8 of the application.

9 So, the extent to which the  
10 eligible applicant's budget, and this is for  
11 the Category A, clearly identifies the Level  
12 1 budget modules and any Level 2 budget  
13 modules. And we're actually going to ask  
14 that we hold the questions on the budget  
15 until we get to the budget section.

16 I just do want to highlight  
17 that this is where the review and the scoring  
18 will happen for the peer reviewers on the  
19 budget.

20 And they will also be  
21 looking at the -- whether the budget is  
22 adequate to support that development of the  
23 assessment systems that meets the requirement  
24 of the absolute priority at a minimum and  
25 includes the costs that are reasonable in

1 relation to the objective, design and  
2 significance of the proposed project and the  
3 number of students to be served.

4 And then that, for each member  
5 State, that the estimated costs for the  
6 ongoing administration, maintenance and  
7 enhancement for the operational assessment in  
8 the proposed assessment system and plan for  
9 how the States will be funding the assessment  
10 system over time. So, the sustainability of  
11 this program moving forward.

12 REPORTER'S NOTE:

13 [Inaudible  
14 side conversation].

15 MS. WHALEN: Oh. So, we did  
16 receive a question about what people can and  
17 should assume about gradual support for this  
18 moving forward. We do want to highlight  
19 that, in the FY '11 budget, there is the  
20 administration's request to continue funding  
21 Title VI... ? Six, yes.

22 And that, in our blueprint for  
23 the reauthorization, we do have this as an  
24 allowable use of funds. So, there is a  
25 commitment moving toward to continue, from

1 the federal government's perspective, to  
2 support this work ongoing even after the  
3 project period.

4 MS. WEISS: So, even though we  
5 know that you can't do a specific hard and  
6 fast estimate, we're looking for sort of  
7 ballpark sustainability, just to make sure  
8 that, with what we're contributing from the  
9 federal point of view, what you're spending  
10 currently in all your different pots of money  
11 from the State's point of view, however  
12 you're thinking about that, that we're not  
13 designing something here that's  
14 unsustainable.

15 So, we do want States to go  
16 through that process of doing that math for  
17 our peer reviewers and showing how, in an  
18 ongoing fashion, given today's knowledge and  
19 assumptions, it's sustainable.

20 MS. WHALEN: Okay. Was there a  
21 question?

22 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

23 MS. WHALEN: I do want to flag  
24 that, for the Category B, you do not have to  
25 differentiate between Level 1 budget modules

1 and Level 2 budget modules.

2 We will get into this in much  
3 more detail after lunch, but I just wanted to  
4 flag that that will not be part of the  
5 review.

6 MR. MARASCHIELLO: Rich  
7 Maraschiello, Pennsylvania. I want to  
8 clarify that, on Item D, this isn't an  
9 assurance. It's estimate of cost based on  
10 today's numbers of kids, etcetera.

11 MS. WEISS: It's not an  
12 assurance. It's an analysis that... It's not  
13 an assurance, no.

14 MR. MARASCHIELLO: Okay.

15 MS. WHALEN: So, to Joanne's  
16 point, we just want to make sure that we  
17 aren't designing and developing an assessment  
18 system that nobody has the resources to then  
19 implement in five years.

20 We have a table in the  
21 application that addresses (A) (8) (b) and (B) (6) (b)  
22 and that asks applicants to fill out major  
23 milestones, associated tasks, start date, end  
24 date and responsible entities.

25 Again, the summary table only

1 captured that information that can be  
2 reflected in a table format, but there is  
3 additional selection criteria in a narrative  
4 that we would expect to be part of the  
5 application.

6 You, again, should feel free to  
7 attach any additional evidence to your  
8 application that supports your narrative. We  
9 just ask that you describe it, make sure the  
10 peer reviewers know where to find it, and are  
11 as clear as possible about it.

12 MS. WEISS: Which brings us to  
13 a break.

14 MS. WHALEN: Which brings us to  
15 a break. Unless there are any additional  
16 questions before we go to break.

17 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

18 MS. WEISS: Surprisingly close  
19 to on schedule. So we'll take a break until  
20 about -- oh, wait, we've got one webinar  
21 question coming in. Hang on a second.

22 MS. MCKINNEY: So, Mark Collins  
23 asks, "Given that grant funds rather than  
24 State funds are being expended, must the  
25 State work on selecting the project

1 management partner following its own  
2 procurement rules or may instead follow the  
3 Department's rules regarding vendor selection  
4 by grantees?

5 MS. WEISS: Right. So that's  
6 the question that we wrote down and we need  
7 to get back to you all on.

8 MS. ELLINGTON: Kris Ellington,  
9 Florida. I would just like to chime in on  
10 that because we've been thinking deeply about  
11 this.

12 But, any procurement process  
13 that takes place leading up to the award  
14 would really need to comply with whatever the  
15 lead State's procurement processes were or  
16 else we'd be in legal trouble in terms of our  
17 engagement in this activity.

18 MS. WEISS: Right. We hear  
19 you.

20 REPORTER'S NOTE:

21 [Inaudible  
22 side conversation].

23 MS. WHALEN: We're going to be  
24 taking a 15-minute break and return at  
25 10:30.



1                   REPORTER'S NOTE: Whereupon,  
2                   a short recess is taken.

3                   MS. WEISS: Okay. We're about  
4                   ready to get started.

5                   MS. WEISS: So, before we  
6                   launch into the next fairly dense portion of  
7                   our program, we wanted to bring back for your  
8                   consideration an idea that we had over  
9                   the break, because that's what breaks are  
10                  for.

11                  Regarding this question about  
12                  the project management partner, we feel like  
13                  in order to really give you guys a good  
14                  answer to that question, we need a little bit  
15                  more information about what you can and can't  
16                  do in your States.

17                  And what we were thinking that  
18                  we should do is host a conference call early  
19                  next week sometime where we can have a little  
20                  bit of an information exchange and make sure  
21                  we understand what you can and can't do, so  
22                  that we can come out with FAQ guidance that  
23                  actually works properly for you.

24                  But, one thing that we would  
25                  love for you to think about between now and

1 then, in addition to just making sure that  
2 you can tell us what your State's laws are in  
3 which ever States you're thinking about being  
4 lead States on this, in addition to that,  
5 think about the fact that what the language  
6 says is "a proposed project management  
7 partner", and whether that gives you, within  
8 your State's law, the ability to name such an  
9 entity, even though you haven't yet finalized  
10 the procurement process with them or name a  
11 couple of entities.

12 Just like look at what latitude  
13 that might give you in just talking to us  
14 about who you're thinking about or  
15 considering. So, let us know if there is any  
16 latitude there.

17 We're just struggling to make  
18 sure that we have enough information to know  
19 that there's a good strong entity that you're  
20 working with to make sure that this project  
21 will be managed well and certainly doing it  
22 in a way that meets your State's procurement  
23 laws.

24 So, we will set up such a  
25 conference call for early next week, if that

1 sounds like a good idea, and which ever  
2 States are the ones concerned with this or  
3 and whoever else you want to be with you can be  
4 on that call.

5 And we'll just have an  
6 information exchange to see if we can  
7 understand the problem well enough with your  
8 own State's legal points of view that we can  
9 craft an answer that works.

10 Okay. So, with that, we dive  
11 into the Comprehensive Assessment System  
12 criteria and eligibility requirements. So,  
13 let's start with the priorities and then  
14 we'll go into the selection criteria.

15 We already talked about the  
16 fact that the absolute priority is not  
17 something that you write specifically to in a  
18 separate section of the notice -- of the  
19 application. It cuts across the entire  
20 application.

21 And the reviewers, sort of,  
22 look back on your application, after they  
23 have read the whole thing, and make a yes-no  
24 determination about whether you have met the  
25 priority. And the priority really is the big

1 picture of what we're trying to accomplish  
2 with this.

3 So, it starts by saying that  
4 we'll develop new assessment systems that are  
5 going to be used by multiple States, i.e.  
6 consortium, that are valid and reliable and  
7 fair for the intended purposes and student  
8 groups that measure student knowledge and  
9 skills against a common set of  
10 college-and-career-ready standards in  
11 mathematics and ELA.

12 So far no surprises. Then we  
13 get into some of the additional details about  
14 the competition. So, the first one is that  
15 it measures the full range of the  
16 standards, including standards against which  
17 student achievement has traditionally been  
18 difficult to measure.

19 We did get the question about  
20 the common core, I guess, includes speaking  
21 and listening, which are certainly in the  
22 category of traditionally hard to measure.  
23 And yes, this would mean that this assessment  
24 does need to cover the full range of those  
25 standards.

1                   So, yes, it would mean that it  
2                   would cover speaking and listening standards,  
3                   in addition to the other standards. As  
4                   appropriate a list of complex student  
5                   demonstrations or applications of knowledge  
6                   and skills. So, you should read this to mean  
7                   it's not necessarily all multiple choice, but  
8                   it's also as appropriate.

9                   It's not necessarily no  
10                  multiple choice, so it can be whatever  
11                  balance you think is appropriate to measure  
12                  the skills and to make sure that what you're  
13                  really able to show is a student's ability to  
14                  demonstrate or apply those knowledge and  
15                  skills, not just recall them.

16                  Provides an accurate measure of  
17                  student achievement across the full  
18                  performance continuum. So, this is one that  
19                  we got a lot of questions about and let me  
20                  just say a couple of things about this.

21                  This, I mean, first of all, we  
22                  all know that, right now, the assessments are  
23                  very imprecise at the ends of the spectrum.  
24                  And particularly if a student is high  
25                  performing or low performing, we end up with

1 very little knowledge about what that student  
2 actually knows or can do.

3 In this assessment system it's  
4 important for us to be able to measure  
5 student growth and you can't measure student  
6 growth if you don't know really where  
7 students are at each point in time in which  
8 you're measuring them.

9 So, this would allow us to  
10 measure students outside the current grade  
11 level standards in order to know where  
12 they're really, truly functioning and be able  
13 to provide that information back to  
14 teachers.

15 This is not the accountability  
16 system overlay, which indeed, may hold people  
17 accountable for making sure that kids are on  
18 grade level. This is saying the assessment  
19 system's job is to provide real data that's  
20 accurate and tells teachers the truth about  
21 where their students are.

22 So, that's what this one is,  
23 indeed, saying. And finally, provides an  
24 accurate measure of student growth over the  
25 full course of an academic year or course. I

1 know there's going to be a ton of hands and  
2 we'll start right here (indicating).

3 MR. MARASCHIELLO: Rich  
4 Maraschiello, Pennsylvania. I'd like to  
5 direct my question to the definition of  
6 college and career ready that's in the  
7 notice. Where it says, "With respect to  
8 student -- that the student is prepared for  
9 success", dot, dot, dot.

10 And the part that I'm going to  
11 ask you about is as demonstrated by an  
12 assessment score that meets or exceeds the  
13 achievement standard as defined in this  
14 notice for the final high school summative  
15 assessment in math or English language arts.  
16 Does --

17 MS. WEISS: -- so that --

18 MR. MARASCHIELLO: -- that  
19 communicate a preference on the part of the  
20 Department that the high school piece of this  
21 category be a summative assessment, rather  
22 than an end-of-course assessment?

23 MS. WEISS: You mean a  
24 comprehensive assessment, rather than --

25 MR. MARASCHIELLO: --

1 comprehensive --

2 MS. WEISS: -- end-of-course  
3 assessment? Is that what you're asking?

4 MR. MARASCHIELLO: Yes.

5 MS. WEISS: So, no, that is not  
6 what -- that's not an accurate read of it,  
7 because I think that what you could do in an  
8 end-of-course situation, for example, is have  
9 multiple end-of-course data that are rolling  
10 up into one answer at the end about whether a  
11 student is college or career ready.

12 Or you could have one  
13 comprehensive test that tells us the answer  
14 to that. So, no, we're not trying to make  
15 that distinction.

16 MR. MARASCHIELLO: Thank you.

17 MS. WEISS: Joe? And there's a  
18 few questions over here, too (indicating).  
19 Keep your hands up just to make sure the mic  
20 people can find you.

21 MR. WILLHOLT: Joe Willholt,  
22 Washington. The notion of 'covers the full  
23 range of standards' in a question we've  
24 submitted to you earlier, the question was,  
25 currently, under alignment conditions and



1           what is, what can be approved through the  
2           peer review process, is a notion that not  
3           necessarily every standard being assessed  
4           every year, but there is a plan within the  
5           assessment program that, across time, all of  
6           the standards are addressed and those  
7           standards are sampled throughout the  
8           assessment program.

9                           Is this... Is your thinking  
10           consistent with that, namely? Or do we have  
11           to build tests where every single standard  
12           has test items associated with it in every  
13           single year?

14                           MS. WEISS: So, so, let's go  
15           back to some of intentions and uses of this  
16           information. We are trying to get student  
17           level data that really informs and guides  
18           instruction here, so this is not just an  
19           accountability test to determine whether a  
20           school is effective.

21                           This is also meant to really  
22           help teachers guide instruction. And so, I  
23           think it's fair to say that understanding  
24           within which standards students have really  
25           mastered in that year is part of what you

1 would probably end up having to do in order  
2 to meet the requirements under this  
3 priority.

4                   You guys should take a look at  
5 that and see what you think about that, but I  
6 think that some of the goals and outcomes  
7 that...you know, some of the purposes that  
8 are coming up in that priority, that would  
9 probably drive the answer to be you've got a  
10 test at every standard in a particular year  
11 and another reason why fewer standards is a  
12 good thing.

13                   MR. DEAN: Thanks. Vince Dean,  
14 Michigan. Just coming from the perspective  
15 of totality of resources and, you know, bang  
16 for the buck, you know, you mentioned earlier  
17 about the English language proficiency  
18 assessment competition and assessments  
19 designed for that.

20                   But, for these comprehensive  
21 assessments, if we're going to need to do  
22 listening and speaking any way, and we also  
23 have to flesh out the lower end of scale to  
24 address the lower performing students that,  
25 right now, we're trying to address with the

1 modified achievement standards assessments  
2 and help with some of our English language  
3 learners would also be covered under that, do  
4 we really need a separate English language  
5 proficiency assessment?

6 MS. WEISS: So, according to  
7 the... We actually had a long conversation  
8 with our experts about this during our  
9 expert, or during our panel discussions. And  
10 I think the consensus among them was pretty  
11 unanimously yes, that it's a very different  
12 thing to acquire English language skills as a  
13 second language than to measure English  
14 language arts skills.

15 And so, I think they felt like  
16 the answer was yes. But, in any case, in  
17 some ways that doesn't matter for the  
18 purposes of developing this assessment. But,  
19 so I do think there's still a bit of a debate  
20 about that in the ELL community.

21 But I think the people that we  
22 spoke to felt like there were pretty  
23 different requirements for the two tests and  
24 they needed to both exist.

25 MS. WEISS: Who's next?

1 MS. ANONYMOUS: So, just back  
2 to Joe's question about the full range of  
3 standards. Did you suggest that the  
4 consortium could put forward a rationale for  
5 the system to be comprehensively addressing  
6 the full range, not necessarily in a single  
7 year, but over a specified course?

8 For example, you know, rotating  
9 the standards, the assessment of all  
10 standards over the course of one or two  
11 years? Or did you say every year?

12 Because there's, obviously,  
13 there's an internal conflict there to, you  
14 know, keep testing time to a minimum, to  
15 expand the measures that are used for testing  
16 and to cover the full range of every single  
17 standard every year, I think raises some  
18 challenges. So, I thought I heard you say  
19 that the consortium could actually put forth  
20 a plan.

21 MS. WEISS: So, I think... So,  
22 the consortium can put forth a plan and  
23 there's sort of two pieces of this, I think,  
24 to watch for. One is, as you said, it's a  
25 system of assessment. So, it's not each

1 assessment component needs to do all these  
2 things, it's the system as a whole needs to  
3 be able to do this.

4 And what it needs to be  
5 able to do, coming up in a minute, is provide  
6 information that helps inform these different  
7 things. So, different components can be used  
8 for different purposes and might have even  
9 different levels of validity required  
10 depending on what that purpose is.

11 So, you're trying to put  
12 together a complex system here, but the  
13 summative components do need to be valid and  
14 reliable at the student level and above.

15 MS. ANONYMOUS: Thank you.

16 MS. WEISS: Wes and then  
17 Scott. Wes, you're up.

18 MR. BRUCE: Okay. Absolutely  
19 it is. But it's always good that I get to go  
20 before Scott. This is Wes Bruce from  
21 Indiana.

22 So, I want to push a little and  
23 ask the question that I have inferred from  
24 full performance continuum. So, are we  
25 saying off-grade testing? So, if I have an

1 eighth grader and reading on the third grade  
2 level and I'm going --

3 MS. WEISS: -- then your  
4 teacher needs to know that about you, yes.

5 MR. BRUCE: Yes. Okay.

6 MS. WEISS: Anybody else who  
7 would like to go before Scott?

8 PARTICIPANTS: (Laughing).

9 MR. MARION: I waited a long  
10 time. Scott Marion, New Hampshire, for  
11 assessment. I just want to make sure that  
12 we're clear on this covering the full range  
13 and this system.

14 So, it sounds like people, when  
15 they're talking about systems and talking  
16 about multiple assessments, summative  
17 assessments maybe through high school, but  
18 can, when we talk about the full range, I'm  
19 assuming that, for certain types of things,  
20 some interim assessments --

21 MS. WEISS: Yes.

22 MR. MARION: -- or things like  
23 that can qualify and not everything has to  
24 be summative.

25 MS. WEISS: Yes. So, by

1 'system', we mean it might include  
2 formative, interim, as well as summative  
3 components.

4 Okay. So, this next slide is  
5 stuff I think we all know needs to be  
6 administered at least once. The summative  
7 component. So, now we're just talking about  
8 the summative components. The summative  
9 components need to be administered at least  
10 once during the academic year in grades three  
11 through eight and at least once in high  
12 school.

13 We want to note, and this sort  
14 of gets to the question that was asked  
15 earlier, that the summative components at the  
16 high school level could be administered --  
17 well, in fact, all of the summative  
18 components could be administered more than  
19 once during an academic year and that the  
20 high school assessments could be core  
21 specific or comprehensive. Or some  
22 combination of the two.

23 So, we're not trying to imply  
24 one particular answer to this. We're just  
25 trying to say that, under law, it needs to be

1 at least once in high school, but you can  
2 figure out what you want to propose back.

3 And that the summative  
4 assessments need to produce student  
5 achievement data and student growth data that  
6 can be used to determine whether individual  
7 students are college-and-career-ready or on  
8 track to being college-and-career-ready.  
9 Okay?

10 We're going to talk more in a  
11 couple minutes about these definitions. But,  
12 let's go on to this question about the one  
13 percent, two percent. So, it needs to assess  
14 all the students, including English learners  
15 and students with disabilities.

16 So, English learners is defined  
17 in the notice as something the consortium  
18 defines. One of the things that we're trying  
19 to address here is that every State has  
20 different definitions of what it means to be  
21 an English language learner who is not ready  
22 to take these ELA tests and that the  
23 consortium needs to have a common definition  
24 and understanding of that.

25 We're not judging your



1 definition. We don't care what it is, but we  
2 want you to have thought about it -- not  
3 before you apply. This is something you can  
4 do during the process of working together.  
5 It's one of those things that was in the  
6 consortium governance comments, policies,  
7 questions.

8 But, so an English language  
9 learner is whoever you say it is, provided,  
10 obviously, that it's consistent with the  
11 definition in the ESEA.

12 Now, a student with  
13 disabilities, for the purposes of this  
14 competition, is a student who's been  
15 identified as a student with disabilities  
16 under the IDEA act, except for a student who  
17 is one of the kids who's eligible for  
18 alternative assessments.

19 So, basically, that this is  
20 everyone including the two percent students.  
21 Okay? In addition, the assessment system has  
22 to produce data that can be used to inform  
23 determinations of school effectiveness.

24 So, today, this is AYP or  
25 whatever it works into. But, determinations

1 of school effectiveness, determinations of  
2 principal and teacher effectiveness for the  
3 purposes of evaluation and for the purposes  
4 of professional development and support  
5 needs, and teaching, learning and program  
6 improvement.

7 Okay? So, these are the  
8 different goals. Again, this is the whole  
9 system of assessments needs to, in aggregate,  
10 be able to inform these kinds of decisions.  
11 So, before I go on to the competitive  
12 priority, let me make sure that we have  
13 gotten all the questions related to this  
14 one. Yeah?

15 MS. ELLINGTON: Kris Ellington,  
16 Florida. This is something that's occurred  
17 to me a few times, but never at the right  
18 moment. But, luckily, it occurred to me  
19 while we're here, but probably not at the  
20 right moment.

21 It seems as though in advance,  
22 and maybe in the expert panel and sessions  
23 there was a lot of focus on international  
24 comparisons. And I don't see that in the  
25 selection criteria. Is that deliberate? Or

1 did you just... it was so much that you  
2 said, "Let's set this one aside."

3 MS. WEISS: So, where it shows  
4 up and one reason that we're not really  
5 highlighting it for you as you're writing  
6 your applications is that we do expect that  
7 we will do all kinds of validity and linking  
8 studies and external to what the consortium  
9 is doing.

10 And so one of the program  
11 requirements that we have is that the  
12 consortia will participate in these kinds of  
13 studies as the Department comes to you and  
14 requests it, but that that would happen  
15 outside the work that you're doing.

16 So, we're assuming that, by  
17 having college-and-career-ready standards  
18 that you're developing this against, that  
19 that's the real benchmark for our country,  
20 but that we as the Department would be  
21 funding external validity studies and other  
22 things to make sure that we were  
23 understanding how we fell internationally.

24 MS. WHALEN: Program  
25 Requirement 3. "Work with the Department to

1           develop a strategy to make student level data  
2           that results from the assessment program  
3           available on an ongoing basis for research,  
4           including prospective linking, validity, and  
5           program improvement studies." So that's in  
6           an attempt to encompass everything like  
7           that.

8                           MR. GALLAGHER: Greg Gallagher,  
9           North Dakota. I want to go back to the two  
10          percent.

11                          MS. WEISS: Back to the?

12                          MR. GALLAGHER: Two percent.

13                          MS. WEISS: Okay.

14                          MR. GALLAGHER: It is to be  
15          included. Is the intent prohibitive of a  
16          separate two percent strand?

17                          MS. WEISS: So, our definition  
18          of a system is broad enough that I would hate  
19          to say it's 'prohibited'. It's certainly not  
20          how we were thinking about it. We were  
21          thinking about it more in terms of  
22          accommodations and modifications than we were  
23          a separate strand.

24                          But I'm not sure there is  
25          anything that would prohibit it from being an

1 approach that would suggest it to us.

2 MR. GALLAGHER: Okay. Follow  
3 up. The use of accommodations is one thing.  
4 Use of the term 'modifications' is another  
5 thing. Which has been one of the key issues  
6 that drove the modified achievement standards  
7 themselves. Which effectively defined a  
8 separate strand.

9 MS. WEISS: Right.

10 MR. GALLAGHER: With the  
11 modification language that has been included  
12 in here, my first read that it would not be  
13 prohibitive of the two percent.

14 MS. WEISS: So, it wouldn't be  
15 prohibitive --

16 MS. WHALEN: -- It would not --  
17 we are not requesting information on a  
18 modified achievement standard. So, if you  
19 would like to accommodate or modify it within  
20 the defined term of accommodations within the  
21 NIA. But we are not saying that a modified  
22 achievement standard is appropriate for this  
23 system of assessments.

24 MR. GALLAGHER: And that could  
25 be a disadvantage to a consortium that would

1 advance that.

2 MS. WHALEN: Can we think about  
3 that and put it out on an FAQ?

4 MR. GALLAGHER: Very good. I  
5 have one other caveat. For States that have  
6 currently a two percent assessment to become  
7 engaged in this sort of activity, does that  
8 effectively say the State is stepping away  
9 from the two percent, even though its intent  
10 is not to (inaudible) current accountability  
11 is this grant is effectively forcing, without  
12 it being stated, that the State has elected  
13 to walk away from two percent, when that was  
14 not the intent of the State, to be engaged in  
15 a partnership like this.

16 And then, as a perceived  
17 unintended consequence, wake up one day and  
18 then the Department says you have effectively  
19 signed away your ability to have a two  
20 percent assessment?

21 MS. WHALEN: So, right now,  
22 there isn't any proposal underway or any  
23 public document about reregulating around the  
24 two percent option.

25 So, I cannot speak to what

1 signals it sends internally to your State.  
2 Right now the Department currently does not  
3 have plans to eliminate the two percent  
4 option.

5 MS. WEISS: The other thing  
6 I'll say is that this, participating in a  
7 consortium like this, obviously, it, again,  
8 it puts out signals within your State that you  
9 will understand way better than we do.

10 But, this assessment system is  
11 about designing assessments against a new set  
12 of standards that, if you stay in the  
13 consortium your State is presumably moving to  
14 and to support you in moving to those  
15 standards.

16 So, that clearly is the intent  
17 of this competition. It's not really  
18 speaking to the two percent question, other  
19 than that we really want to see if we design  
20 an effective system from the beginning with  
21 as broad an inclusion framework as possible.  
22 How far can we reach?

23 MS. VIATOR: Kip Viator,  
24 Massachusetts. While I have some concerns  
25 about putting additional pressure on the

1 funds, I'm actually going to speak in strong  
2 support of the inclusion of or certainly the  
3 lack of prohibition on considering the two  
4 percent model within the system.

5 I'll just give you, just as a  
6 point of illustration, in Massachusetts, our  
7 ALT sits within our system. It is part and  
8 parcel of M-CAS. In fact, the performance  
9 continuum that is used to report MCAP scores  
10 accommodates an expanded -- an expansion of  
11 performance at the lower level for students  
12 who participate in ALT.

13 And speaking of a system, that  
14 system is the system that ultimately leads to  
15 the graduation requirement. Okay. So, it's  
16 an integrated system. Well, there are some  
17 students who participated in the M-CAS ALT  
18 who don't have a severe cognitive  
19 disability.

20 And, in fact, qualify for a  
21 high school diploma in Massachusetts via the  
22 M-CAS ALT. So, to segregate it, I actually  
23 was going to raise this and Greg gave me the  
24 perfect segue. But, at the beginning, when  
25 you said that you were thinking about grants



1                   separately, that really made me sad.

2                                 Because I see them, I see this  
3                   as really critical to the transparency of the  
4                   systems for students and their parents. And  
5                   again, for leaving the crumbs out for them to  
6                   progress along the performance continuum  
7                   that's been defined.

8                                 I know that's probably more  
9                   detail than you need. But the bottom line is  
10                  I'm struggling, advocating for you to not  
11                  offer a prohibition on including the two  
12                  percent ALT program within the system. Thank  
13                  you.

14                                MS. WHALEN: So, can I just say  
15                  that I think one thing that we heard from the  
16                  expert panel when we convened on assessing  
17                  students with disabilities is that this is such an  
18                  opportunity at this point in time to think  
19                  about designing and developing a system of  
20                  assessment with these students, taken into  
21                  consideration from the beginning and given  
22                  the new technology that is currently and  
23                  could be available and how we think about  
24                  inclusion, that it would be a missed  
25                  opportunity not to begin developing these

1 assessment systems from the beginning with  
2 these students in mind.

3 Instead of already going back  
4 to retrofit assessment system or immediately  
5 carving out a separate system for them. I  
6 think what we struggled with around the one  
7 percent assessment was that we know the  
8 standards need some work before the  
9 assessment system around the standards can be  
10 developed for the alternate, standards for  
11 the alternate assessment system. So that's  
12 why it is a sister notice and is trailing a  
13 little bit behind to allow that work to  
14 happen.

15 MS. WEISS: Yes?

16 MR. GALLAGHER: Greg Gallagher,  
17 North Dakota. I appreciate those comments.  
18 Along the same lines there is this element of  
19 humility about what we know and what we do  
20 not know. And the relative standing of much  
21 of this work is still very much in its  
22 infancy, but it's producing incredible  
23 results.

24 MS. WEISS: Yep.

25 MR. GALLAGHER: And it's very

1 much open for scrutiny. As long as that can  
2 still be open for advancement before closing  
3 the book, that there was presumed knowledge  
4 when there is not, that's where I think that  
5 sense of humility requires that there not be  
6 prohibition and that the two percent, at  
7 least in principle, be allowed to be  
8 explored.

9 MS. WEISS: Okay. So, let's go  
10 on to the competitive priority and take this  
11 apart for you a bit. The basic idea here is  
12 one that you probably got the gist of from  
13 reading this.

14 We're really trying to  
15 encourage students, through this competitive  
16 priority, the collaboration between the  
17 consortia and higher ed around this question  
18 of what does it really mean to be, in this  
19 case, college ready in particular. Although  
20 this does include two and four year IHEs in  
21 the definition.

22 So, the vehicle for doing this  
23 is to say, if you in your States can get your  
24 IHEs to sign a letter of intent, so even  
25 though each of these bullets starts with the

1 word, "commits", remember the stem is a  
2 letter of intent to commit.

3 So, it's not that the IHEs need  
4 to sign up at the front end. It's that they  
5 need to say in good faith, "I want to sit at  
6 the table and see if we can work this out."  
7 And what they're saying they would work out  
8 is, A) can I participate with the consortium  
9 to make sure that at least whatever this  
10 college-and-career-ready assessment is saying  
11 actually matches what I need my incoming  
12 students to be able to do.

13 And B) I'm going to prove that  
14 to you by saying that, if those kids meet  
15 your proficiency level on that test, I'm not  
16 going to give them a whole separate placement  
17 test to see whether they could go into  
18 remedial or college credit-bearing courses.

19 I'm going to use your test as  
20 my placement test. It does not mean  
21 admissions. That's a whole separate thing.  
22 It's just about placement within remedial or  
23 college credit-bearing courses.

24 So, that's the idea that the  
25 IHEs will sign a letter that says, "I'll sit

1 at the table and help make sure this is  
2 true. And if it's true, I'm going to stop  
3 giving them a separate placement test because  
4 your results are as good as my results and  
5 I'll accept them."

6 So that's what this is saying  
7 and now there's a vehicle for how we're going  
8 to score that work. And the way that the  
9 peer reviewers are going to score that is by  
10 saying, basically, what percentage of the  
11 kids in the consortium are actually covered  
12 by IHEs that have agreed to this with you.

13 So that's what some of these  
14 direct matriculation things were about. We  
15 have defined 'direct matriculation' in the  
16 notice. It's really only used in this  
17 competitive priority.

18 The concept is not relevant  
19 anywhere else. But it's basically saying  
20 we're not talking about how many returning  
21 students and all kinds of other students your  
22 community colleges are serving. We're  
23 talking mainly about the kids who are going  
24 directly, within two years of graduating from  
25 high school, into college.

1                   So, how many of those kids are  
2                   being served by the IHEs with signed  
3                   letters? And how many of those kids are  
4                   there in your member States? So, let me come  
5                   back to this in a minute and just show you.  
6                   So, this is the table that I think helps make  
7                   the point clear about what we're looking  
8                   for.

9                   So, you know, for each State in  
10                  the consortium, you list who the  
11                  participating IHEs are that signed up to this  
12                  stuff and just, yeah, here's all these three  
13                  pieces are there and they cover, you know, a  
14                  thousand direct matriculation kids in my  
15                  State.

16                  There are 2,000, so 50 percent  
17                  of the kids in my State are covered by the  
18                  IHEs that signed up. So, that's the way of  
19                  looking at this. We're not looking at it  
20                  State by State. We're really just looking at  
21                  the bottom line, so an aggregate across the  
22                  consortium.

23                  So, if one State has fewer and  
24                  one State has more, that's fine. And the  
25                  peer reviewers then will be awarding up to 20

1 points. So this one is not an all or  
2 nothing.

3 This is zero to 20 points that  
4 you'll be able to earn based on the strength  
5 of the commitments and the percentage of  
6 direct matriculation students who were  
7 served. And if you've got strong commitment  
8 and 30 percent of the kids covered, that  
9 would earn 20 points.

10 And then you sort of ratchet  
11 down from there. If you have fewer than ten  
12 percent of the kids covered, that doesn't  
13 earn points. So, between ten percent and  
14 above, you start earning points  
15 for this competitive priority. Does that  
16 make sense to folks? Did you have a  
17 question, Matt?

18 MR. GANDAL: Just want to make  
19 sure I heard you right. You said 30 percent  
20 across the States, not within each State?

21 MS. WEISS: Yes. Right.  
22 Across the whole consortium, not each State.

23 MR. GANDAL: Thank you.

24 MS. WEISS: Okay. Oops,  
25 Kristen.

1 MS. AMUNDSON: Some States have  
2 university or college systems that have a  
3 governing agency that can commit the colleges  
4 and universities to have the signature of the  
5 State university system, in Florida it's the  
6 division of colleges, rather than individual  
7 institutions.

8 MS. WEISS: Yes. And so -- and  
9 in the stem, I think we say IHE or IHE  
10 systems. So, yes, if you have a system, one  
11 signature will do it.

12 Okay. So, now we can get into  
13 the meat of what you're writing to. So,  
14 we're going to talk now about Criteria 2  
15 through 7 in this competition. Those of you  
16 who are only interested in Competition B,  
17 still listen closely because there are really  
18 a lot of things that are the same in both.

19 And, when we go through the B  
20 section later, it's gonna be much faster  
21 because we're going to be able to just say,  
22 "same as we said earlier today." So,  
23 hopefully, this will not be of no interest to  
24 anyone. That was a complicated sentence, I  
25 realize.



1                   Okay. So, first let me start  
2                   by saying that these goal statements at the  
3                   beginning are actually important statements.  
4                   These are how each, each of the criteria  
5                   begins with these and had so much to talk  
6                   about around consortium governance, project  
7                   management, that she didn't particularly  
8                   highlight these, but the same thing I'm  
9                   saying here is true of those, as well.

10                   This is sort of the big picture  
11                   of what we're asking the peer reviewer to  
12                   judge. So, the peer reviewers in this  
13                   competition, we are hoping to get a small  
14                   number of really expert people. I believe  
15                   some people in this room have applied to be  
16                   peer reviewers and that's great. We need  
17                   you.

18                   Needless to say, you can't be  
19                   helping a consortium and also be a peer  
20                   reviewer. So, please think carefully about  
21                   how much your government needs you before you  
22                   start helping.

23                   MS. WHALEN: This government.  
24                   Not that government.

25                   MS. WEISS: Yeah. Right. The

1 power of the microphone? "We want you."  
2 But, the reviewers are not scoring at the abc  
3 level here. They're looking at a whole  
4 criterion and each criterion has a number of  
5 points that it's worth.

6 And they're looking across the  
7 whole criterion and making a judgment call  
8 about the extent to which the applicant  
9 addressed the issues in that criterion and  
10 met this sort of goal statement at the  
11 beginning of each criterion. So, from a big  
12 picture point of view, are you, have you  
13 crafted a response that is responsive to this  
14 criterion?

15 So, with that, we're starting  
16 with one that's worth a measly five points,  
17 but we want to do a little commercial for  
18 theory of change. Because one reason it  
19 scores a measly five points is because you  
20 will see it cropping up in almost every other  
21 criterion as one of the goal -- part of the  
22 goal statement.

23 So, did you have a design that  
24 matches your theory -- sorry, theory of  
25 action. Do you have a design that matches

1           your theory of action? Do you have  
2           validity? Is it valid for the purposes that  
3           you said in your theory of action?

4                       So, the theory of the action is  
5           going to come into play throughout your  
6           entire rest of your proposal. But, the  
7           theory of the action section asks whether you  
8           have got a theory of action that's logical,  
9           coherent and credible and is likely to result  
10          in improved student academic outcomes.

11                      And what we're asking you to  
12          provide is a description of and rationale for  
13          what are the different components in your  
14          proposed assessment systems? How do they  
15          relate to one another? How are the  
16          assessment results produced by each  
17          component?

18                      Broadly used, how will the  
19          assessment results be incorporated into a  
20          coherent educational system? So, what role  
21          do assessments play relative to standards of  
22          instruction, professional development.

23                      How do you see this whole  
24          system fitting together coherently in order  
25          to, in the end, improve student achievements

1 and college-and-career-readiness. So, it's  
2 your sort of front-end organizer for how  
3 you've thought about the whole design part of  
4 what you're trying to produce here. So,  
5 that's what this one is about.

6 The next one is about system  
7 design. This is really the sort of meat of,  
8 of the, of this part of the proposal. It's a  
9 long one. And it is the extent to which the  
10 design is innovative, feasible and, as I  
11 said, consistent with the theory of action.

12 And there's a whole lot of  
13 pieces to this and we got asked a whole lot  
14 of detailed questions about what we meant  
15 about, "all of these pieces".

16 I'm going to talk you through  
17 them now, but I want to just give a sort of  
18 big picture answer to that before we dive  
19 into the weeds, because you will notice  
20 shortly that we will be up to our eyeballs in  
21 weeds.

22 Again, the peer reviewers are  
23 looking at this holistically. So, they're  
24 not giving you points for (A) (3) (a) or (A) (4) (b).  
25 They're giving you points for the design.

1           And here are the kinds of information that we  
2           would like you to provide, consistent with  
3           what you know at the beginning.

4                       One of the things that we  
5           wanted to do in this was partly allow you to,  
6           basically, give us your preliminary RFP, if  
7           you will.

8                       These are the kinds of things  
9           that we think will be good for the consortium  
10          to have some sense of agreement and alignment  
11          around in order to then turn to vendors and  
12          get help in building what you intend to  
13          build, as opposed to what they want to  
14          build.

15                      And so, this is your chance, at  
16          the front end, to frame what it is you want  
17          to create. What's the system look like?  
18          What are the different components? What is  
19          the kind of data that each needs to produce?  
20          And what's the nature of the assessments in  
21          these?

22                      How are you handling multiple  
23          choice versus different kinds of items? How  
24          are you distributing them? When are you  
25          giving the assessments throughout the year?

1           What's the frequency of assessments?  What's  
2           the use of each component?

3                       So, to tell us, at the front  
4           end, as much as you know now about the  
5           vision.  The more specific and focused and  
6           clear you can be, the better from the point  
7           of view, I think, both of the consortium,  
8           knowing what it's really building, and the  
9           peer reviewers judging it.

10                      But we do not expect, when we  
11           ask for, right here (indicating), the number  
12           of items, we're talking broadly about how  
13           many items does somebody have to go build for  
14           you because it's going to play into,  
15           presumably, how you're gonna put your budgets  
16           together later.

17                      It's not some binding number of  
18           items.  But it's an order of magnitude so  
19           that we know that your ballpark budget and  
20           time frames and all those things actually are  
21           coherent and make sense.  So, it's that level  
22           of scrutiny that this will be put under, not  
23           a microscopic one.  Scott?

24                      MR. MARION:  Scott Marion,  
25           Center for Assessment.  I think this was

1 Question 672 on the list, but this is  
2 actually one of the most challenging  
3 aspects.

4 And so I... And Joanne, I  
5 really appreciate the way that you just  
6 framed that. And that actually helps a lot.  
7 What I'm worried about, two things -- well,  
8 I'm worried about more than two things. But,  
9 for now, two things.

10 The peer reviewers, that you  
11 just made an impassioned advertisement for,  
12 will have the NIA and some very specific  
13 criteria here to review from. And so, where  
14 it says numbers of types of items, you know,  
15 per component and the cost for that.

16 Now, I could see one or both or  
17 more than two, if there are, consortia  
18 putting together a very detailed explanation  
19 of a process that really matches theory of  
20 action well for how they were going to make  
21 these decisions.

22 But I could then see them  
23 getting hurt in the review because they  
24 didn't have specifics. On the other hand, I  
25 could see a consortium trying to be as

1           specific as possible here and stifle  
2           potential innovation. And so, I --

3                       MS. WEISS: -- so, this will be  
4           sort of a happy medium.

5                       REPORTER'S NOTE:

6                       [Inaudible  
7                       side conversation].

8                       MR. MARION: Yeah. Goldilocks?

9

10                      MS. WEISS: You're right. We  
11           don't want it to be so specific that we  
12           stifle innovation or that you pre-make  
13           decisions that really you weren't ready in  
14           the process to make yet.

15                      On the other hand, just talking  
16           about how we're going to work together in the  
17           future but we can't tell you anything right  
18           now, I think would possibly hurt. Because it  
19           won't give -- I mean, I think what we're  
20           trying to do is make sure that you've created  
21           a picture in the reviewer's head of what this  
22           system is going to look like, so that they  
23           are actually...

24                      So that, A, they know you have  
25           a picture, and B, they are able to make some



1 sense of all the, you know, a theory of  
2 action's not enough.

3 MS. WHALEN: I do want to  
4 describe that it is our intent to train peer  
5 reviewers similar to what we are doing now,  
6 walking through what the NIA says, walking  
7 through the application and talking to the  
8 guidance, as well.

9 So, it's not as if they will  
10 just start reading. They will go through a  
11 similar type of session that we are going  
12 through with you now.

13 MR. MARION: Thanks.

14 MS. WEISS: And what we do with  
15 them truly is modeled on this. We try to  
16 tell them exactly the same things we're  
17 telling you so that they know exactly what  
18 you've been told. And we go through the FAQs  
19 that will follow this so that they understand  
20 all of that, as well.

21 Okay. So, we just wanted to  
22 highlight, because maybe there's less  
23 confusion than there was about this in the  
24 past, but there's this newish term that was  
25 coined over the last few months, I think,

1 around through-course summative assessments  
2 that we just wanted to highlight because I  
3 think we've been confused about interim  
4 assessments and summative assessments and all  
5 these things.

6 And what we have said in here  
7 is that it's possible to have a summative  
8 assessment that's given multiple times  
9 throughout the year and whose results roll up  
10 over the course of a year into a final  
11 summative score for that year.

12 And that will be an acceptable  
13 type of component. It is not something that  
14 we're giving extra points to or whatever. We  
15 just wanted to clarify what that means  
16 because it's not exactly a commonly used  
17 term.

18 MS. WHALEN: Nor is it common.

19 MS. WEISS: Yes. Okay. So,  
20 then there's a couple different parts. One  
21 is tell us the big picture and then it's tell  
22 us component by component what you're doing.  
23 So, for the big picture, and some of it's a  
24 little bit redundant and so you can choose in  
25 your answer to be less redundant than we are

1 in the criteria, but there are sort of the  
2 big picture things and then the small picture  
3 things.

4 And we wanted to just make sure  
5 that we were clear that we wanted both. So,  
6 at the big picture level, we want to know how  
7 the assessment system is going to measure all  
8 these things that we've talked about in the  
9 absolute priority and we're going to talk in  
10 a second about some of these definitions.

11 And how, as a whole, the  
12 assessment system is going to produce the  
13 required student performance data, the  
14 achievement data and the growth data, that  
15 are used to determine whether students who  
16 are college-and-career-ready are on track.

17 So, we take and unpack some of  
18 these words. So, student achievement data,  
19 as we're using it in this notice, means that  
20 individual student's mastering of tested  
21 content standards.

22 Obviously, these can be tested  
23 at different levels of validity and  
24 reliability and what you do in a formative  
25 assessment might be very different than what

1           you do in a summative assessment.

2                           The student achievement data  
3           from summative assessment components,  
4           however, does have to be recorded in a way  
5           that can be reliably aggregated up from the  
6           student level to make determinations at the  
7           school level, the district level, and teacher  
8           level or the subgroup level, and all the  
9           different ways that we might want to  
10          aggregate that data.

11                          Similarly, student growth data  
12          means data regarding the change in student  
13          achievement data between two or more points  
14          in time and, again, for summative assessment  
15          components this data needs to be  
16          aggregateable, if there is such a word.  
17          Okay?

18                          College-and-career-ready means,  
19          with respect to a student, that that student  
20          is prepared for success without remediation  
21          in credit-bearing, entry-level courses in an  
22          IHE, as demonstrated by an assessment score  
23          that meets or exceeds the achievement  
24          standard for the final high school  
25          assessment.

1                   So, in other words, you're  
2 going to validate, ultimately, that that  
3 achievement standard that you've set, the cut  
4 score you've set for proficient, actually  
5 means that a student who achieves that would  
6 be prepared for college and career.

7                   Obviously, in the competitive  
8 priority, we're trying to get a bunch of  
9 colleges to buy in to that metric, as well.  
10 But, sort of separate from that, we want to  
11 make sure that you're doing validity studies  
12 around this that would say, "Yeah, we've got  
13 this cut score about right."

14                   This is a cut score, remember,  
15 that everyone in the consortium is going to  
16 be using. 'On track' means, then, presumably  
17 that -- yeah, I'll get to it in one second.  
18 'On track' means, then, that you've  
19 backwards mapped through, presumably, from  
20 that point back through the grade levels to  
21 figure out whether students are on track at  
22 each point in time at each grade level to  
23 being college-and-career-ready by the time  
24 they graduate.

25                   So that you have taken that cut

1 score and been able to backwards map it for  
2 the different grades so that, all the way  
3 through, you know whether a student who is  
4 proficient at their grade level really means  
5 that they're on track to being college and  
6 career ready, if you followed them.

7 MR. COHEN: Just a question  
8 about the use of the term, "final high school  
9 assessment", in the context of college and  
10 career readiness. The common core math  
11 standards, in draft form now, presume that  
12 there is a set of standards that are more  
13 advanced than where the bar is set for  
14 college and career readiness.

15 If you look at how it's been  
16 articulated into courses, you can anticipate  
17 that a student might meet the college and  
18 career ready standard in tenth or eleventh  
19 grade. And they take additional math courses  
20 afterwards for which there might be  
21 additional exams. Do you literally mean the  
22 final exam?

23 MS. WEISS: Oh, no. We mean  
24 the final exam in the -- or no, final -- we  
25 actually struggled with how to convey this.

1 We mean at whatever point you're saying, this  
2 is the test of college and career readiness,  
3 that's the, that's -- and that might not be  
4 one exam.

5 It might be three or four  
6 things but it rolls up into one score. But  
7 whatever you called that last score we want  
8 them to really match being college and career  
9 ready.

10 MR. COHEN: But it might not be  
11 the last exam a student takes --

12 MS. WEISS: -- it might not be  
13 the last exam the student takes. The student  
14 might then keep staying in high school and  
15 keep doing calculus and other things in  
16 mathematics or whatever, absolutely.

17 So, for some kids, they might  
18 take this test in 12th grade and some kids,  
19 for some kids they might take it in 10th  
20 grade. And that's fine. And even if you  
21 take it in tenth grade, you're allowed to  
22 stay in high school (laughing).

23 Okay. A couple more things for  
24 the assessment system as a whole. We want to  
25 understand your approach to English language

1 learners and students with disabilities. And  
2 we also want to understand how and when,  
3 during the academic year, you're putting all  
4 these different pieces together so that the  
5 people who need the information when they  
6 need it are getting it.

7                   So how are you getting  
8 information to different stakeholders at  
9 appropriate points in time for them to act on  
10 the data in whatever ways are appropriate for  
11 their role.

12                   And then we start asking  
13 questions about each component. So, a  
14 component might be a summative assessment. A  
15 component might be an end-of-course  
16 assessment, if that's how you're designing  
17 your high school program.

18                   Or a component might be, there  
19 might be multiple components in your  
20 summative assessment system. And a component  
21 might be an interim assessment or a formative  
22 assessment.

23                   A component... Anyway. So,  
24 however your design works, you're going to  
25 have to sort of tell us what the pieces are



1 in a way that makes sense for you to describe  
2 your system to the peer reviewers. Call on  
3 Scott to raise his hand high.

4 MR. MARION: So, quickly on  
5 this one. Scott Marion, Center for  
6 Assessment. Again, I'm assuming, so  
7 hopefully not incorrectly, but within a  
8 single consortium there can be multiple  
9 approaches to high school assessment where  
10 they could be sort of an end-of-domain group  
11 of States, an end-of-course group of States.  
12 Is that -- you're shaking your head in a way  
13 that says that maybe --

14 MS. WEISS: -- well --

15 MR. MARION: -- my assumption  
16 is incorrect.

17 MS. WEISS: No, I don't think  
18 your assumption is incorrect. You could do  
19 that.

20 MS. WHALEN: Can I just ask you  
21 to clarify something? Are you saying in a  
22 consortium with 20 States, ten would do the  
23 comprehensive assessment for the one required  
24 annual assessment of high school and the  
25 other ten would use an end-of-course series?

1 MR. MARION: Yeah. That would  
2 be a good example.

3 MS. WEISS: It's just more and  
4 more complex, so I was going, "Oh, my god."  
5 And that's what you... But there's nothing in  
6 the notice, I don't think, that would  
7 prohibit.

8 MS. WHALEN: No. But I guess I  
9 would remind that there are requirements  
10 around commonality and specifically around  
11 proficiency cut scores. So thinking how that  
12 would actually play out, I imagine, would be  
13 more difficult when you --

14 MR. MARION: -- we've got that  
15 figured out already.

16 PARTICIPANTS: (Laughing).

17 MS. WHALEN: Oh. Great.

18 MR. SMITH: Scott Smith,  
19 Kansas. You mentioned some time ago you were  
20 looking at potentially the entire suite of  
21 assessments, whatever they may be, formative,  
22 interim, as sufficient to the purpose of  
23 measuring the full range of standards. Is  
24 that correct?

25 So that we wouldn't be looking

1           just at the summative assessment. I thought  
2           I heard that, although I may be wrong.

3                       MS. WEISS: Right. So, you  
4           have to also just look back to the absolute  
5           priority and make sure that the summative  
6           assessment is providing all the information  
7           that is necessary for making sure that you  
8           could make good determinations about whether  
9           a student is on track to be college and  
10          career ready by the time of high school  
11          graduation.

12                      So, just sort of read the  
13          absolute priority pieces that have to do with  
14          summative assessments and make sure that  
15          you're complying with those.

16                      MR. SMITH: Okay. But what I  
17          was getting at was I thought I heard earlier  
18          that there may be some potential, for  
19          example, some indicators, although we may not  
20          end up using that word, taken up or measured  
21          with interim assessments, formative  
22          assessments, that might lie outside the  
23          summative.

24                      But that, because they were  
25          taken care of, so to speak, those

1 assessments, the system as a whole would be  
2 looked upon favorably.

3 MS. WEISS: Yes. That could be  
4 true, but you could do that in a way that  
5 also wasn't true. So you just --

6 MR. SMITH: -- that was my  
7 concern --

8 MS. WEISS: -- complicated.

9 MR. SMITH: And it had to do  
10 specifically with --

11 MS. WEISS: -- but --

12 MR. SMITH: -- the definition  
13 of 'formative assessment', given that very  
14 often, at least in Kansas' formative  
15 assessment, its nature is to support or  
16 reinforce. It wouldn't be looked at as a  
17 discrete assessment that could potentially  
18 measure other indicators.

19 It would support instruction on  
20 other indicators. So, really, I'm sorry,  
21 it's a long-winded way of asking whether or  
22 not there is a particular definition of  
23 formative assessment that you think would be  
24 assumed or presumed? For example, CCSSOs.  
25 You know, there's been national, nationally,

1 debate as to exactly what a formative  
2 assessment is. It's very much a function of  
3 the --

4 MS. WEISS: -- so the --

5 MR. SMITH: -- behavior.

6 MS. WEISS: -- that we took in  
7 here... because, because formative  
8 assessments and interim assessments and  
9 benchmark assessments and all these words are  
10 swirling, the approach we took was to say  
11 what does the summative assessment have to  
12 do?

13 Because at the end of the day,  
14 the one thing that we have to pay for out of  
15 this is a summative assessment system that  
16 can replace the current assessments under  
17 ESEA.

18 MR. SMITH: Right.

19 MS. WEISS: So we have taken  
20 the approach of you can figure out what the  
21 rest of your system looks like. There's some  
22 specific requirements we're placing on that  
23 summative component.

24 And we're making sure that  
25 that's the piece that absolutely gets done

1 with these dollars, so that's the piece that  
2 we've been more specific about. So, watch  
3 for what the summative components have to do  
4 and what the absolute priority says that the  
5 summative components have to do.

6 MS. WHALEN: And I just want to  
7 add that, I believe on the slide that's up  
8 right now, it talks about, we don't care what  
9 you actually call it. You can call it  
10 formative, interim, benchmark, whatever you  
11 want, but describe what you're planning to  
12 design.

13 So, for each component, we want  
14 you to tell us what data it's going to  
15 produce and how it is going to be used.

16 So, if it's going to be  
17 formative, describe how you are proposing  
18 that component and then how the information  
19 from that component is going to be used  
20 within your entire system. So, less about  
21 labels and more about what the information  
22 you're gathering and how you're going to use  
23 it.

24 MR. SMITH: Thank you.

25 MR. GALLAGHER: Greg Gallagher,

1 North Dakota. I'd like to follow up on  
2 that. Proposition: A proposal comes in and  
3 the summative approach is to say during the  
4 course of year of formative instruction, a  
5 variety of assessment opportunities arise.

6 And that we have a variety of  
7 tools that we can flesh this out from the  
8 students during the course of the year and  
9 that, as they make gains on particular  
10 benchmarks within a standards, they have  
11 achieved that. They have achieved this, they  
12 have achieved that.

13 It's summed up at the end of  
14 the year and it's now put forth as a  
15 summative report on what the student has done  
16 progressing toward the goal. In the  
17 background of all this, we're in a No Child  
18 era, and we have accountability rules, and who  
19 knows with AYP...will it go away?

20 I don't know. No one knows.  
21 Are we in a position now of having to... is  
22 there a secret handshake that's going on  
23 under that we can't see about what the  
24 expectations of what a summative assessment  
25 would mean in terms of accountability?





1 achievement and student improvement in this  
2 country that the current investments aren't  
3 doing.

4 It's not in any way out of sync  
5 with what NCLB asks people to do, but it is a  
6 different way of thinking about it, than most  
7 of our current assessments are thinking about  
8 it. But, I mean, I certainly don't think  
9 there's anything secret handshake about it.

10 We've been pretty up front with  
11 what we're trying to do and there is  
12 certainly nothing that the peer reviewers  
13 will be trained in that you haven't seen just  
14 now.

15 Probably the biggest thing  
16 that's different from this and what NCLB requires  
17 is, under NCLB if a school makes AYP, it's all  
18 about achievement only. Under our public blueprint  
19 for reauthorization, we talk about student  
20 growth, in addition to student achievement,  
21 as being a critical piece of data that the  
22 country needs in order to manage  
23 instructional improvement. Yeah.

24 MS. CHOU: Fen Chou from  
25 Louisiana. My question is, if the State has

1           its own formative assessment or interim  
2           assessment, do you expect to see the linking  
3           starting in the application to link the  
4           formative assessment data with the summative  
5           assessment data?

6                           MS. WEISS: Not necessarily.  
7           It really would depend, again, on your theory  
8           of change and if there is a reason that you  
9           wanted to include such a thing in the study,  
10          to make sure that whatever you were doing now  
11          was staying in sync and in line and use that  
12          data to help improve the formative assessment  
13          as part of your proposal, that would be  
14          fine. But that's not a requirement of this.  
15          Okay.

16                           So then, getting to the weeds I  
17          promised. For each component, we love to  
18          know as much as you know about the types of  
19          data that it will produce, how you're going  
20          to use that data and all these bullets are  
21          just regurgitating the sort of list of  
22          purposes that we talked about earlier.

23                           So, which of these purposes is  
24          being served by the data produced by which of  
25          the... by this component. When is the

1 component going to be administered and how  
2 frequently? Is it once a year? Is it every  
3 quarter? Is it whatever? What does the  
4 assessment look like?

5 That's the number and types of  
6 items problem. And really, you can think of  
7 that more as what does the assessment look  
8 like, give us a tangible feel for what types  
9 of items and what the distribution of those  
10 items looks like.

11 And to the extent possible, if  
12 you want to include a concrete example of a  
13 particular item type, especially if what  
14 you're proposing is something that the  
15 reviewer might picture wrong in their heads  
16 if you didn't give it to them, you can  
17 certainly include and we would encourage you  
18 to include a concrete example.

19 We're going to later tell you  
20 that, if your concrete example isn't  
21 something that's easy to represent on a piece  
22 of paper, we're going to tell you how you can  
23 submit that to us so that the reviewers can  
24 look at it on-line. So, that's what this  
25 section is about.

1                   We also would want to know how  
2                   you picture it being administered. You'll  
3                   also hear from us that we're asking you to  
4                   use technology to the extent feasible, but we  
5                   don't expect that every single assessment in  
6                   your system necessarily is administered by a  
7                   technology, so tell us what the  
8                   administration looks like.

9                   Tell us how you're going to  
10                  score student performance and what you think  
11                  the turnaround time looks like and how that  
12                  turnaround time is okay, given what the  
13                  purpose of this particular data is and what  
14                  kind of reports you're going to be producing  
15                  for whom out of this.

16                  So, it's a lot of stuff, but  
17                  we're just trying to say for each component  
18                  to help make this as concrete as possible for  
19                  your reviewers and for yourselves so that you  
20                  just sort of talk through at the front end  
21                  what these designs really look like and how  
22                  they'll work. And who the intended audience  
23                  is, what you wanted to do with it.

24                  To help make this clearer for  
25                  our reviewers we've included a table that you

1 can fill in. Again, the table does not  
2 include every single piece of information,  
3 but we hope will help sort of draw a picture  
4 for your reviewers of what it is the system  
5 your proposing should look like.

6 If there are things that work  
7 together across rows, you could merge a  
8 couple cells and tell it to us once that  
9 way. So, you should take this table as not a  
10 hard and fast thing that you can't modify at  
11 all.

12 You could a little bit if you  
13 want to. But, in general, we would like peer  
14 reviewers to get the information in generally  
15 this format from each applicant because it  
16 will just help them understand in a  
17 consistent way what it is that you have in  
18 mind.

19 MS. ANONYMOUS: Joanne, just  
20 wanted to ask you about the, if you would  
21 just go back one slide, if you would be so  
22 kind, to the point that talks about the  
23 methods for scoring and the estimated  
24 turnaround time.

25 Is there, implicit in that, is

1           there going to be extra points assigned for  
2           expedited return? And is there a minimum  
3           threshold for returning results?

4                       MS. WEISS: So, no, there's  
5           no -- so, there's no extra points anywhere  
6           unless we said it. So, really, this is just  
7           part of this whole big rubric and I think  
8           what we came away believing from our panel  
9           discussions was that the turnaround time  
10          that's necessary for a particular component  
11          is really dependent on what the purpose of  
12          that component is.

13                      So, if it's something that's  
14          going to impact only your school  
15          assessment data, it might be fine to have  
16          that take longer to come. If it's something  
17          that you want a teacher to use to inform  
18          instruction, it might need to come faster.

19                      So, it was really having you  
20          just tie the purposes together with the  
21          turnaround time to make sure that you had a  
22          system that actually was going to be able to  
23          do what you wanted it to do.

24                      MS. WHALEN: Was there another  
25          question?

1 MS. WEISS: Okay. So then we  
2 get into the development part. And the  
3 development part is probably best thought of  
4 as the people in the process, so who is  
5 involved and what processes are you using.

6 So, do you have an assessment  
7 system that will actually be ready for  
8 administration in a manner that's timely,  
9 cost effective, consistent with the proposed  
10 design and also knowing that, over time and  
11 given all of the uncertainty in this, things  
12 will change as we get out there.

13 Do you also have a development  
14 process that incorporates the possibility for  
15 ongoing feedback and improvement. Can you  
16 learn as you're going throughout these  
17 four years and make the course corrections as  
18 needed.

19 So that's, again, the big  
20 picture of what the reviewer is going to look  
21 at. And in order to help the reviewers make  
22 that determination, we've asked you to tell  
23 us what's your approach for developing the  
24 assessment system.

25 If you have got a specific

1 methodology you're using, like evidence  
2 centered design. If you're planning to use  
3 universal design for learning, like cut, feel  
4 free to talk about that.

5 And how you're thinking through  
6 your development phases and the different  
7 kinds of people that you have involved at the  
8 different points and why.

9 Also, what's your approaching  
10 strategy for designing and developing the  
11 accommodations into this. And here  
12 accommodations is defined pretty broadly as  
13 the changes in the administration of the  
14 assessment, including by not limited to  
15 changes in the assessment setting,  
16 scheduling, timing, presentation, format,  
17 response mode, combinations of these changes,  
18 these are just examples, not an exhaustive  
19 list.

20 But the main thing is that they  
21 don't change the construct that's intended to  
22 be measured by the assessment or the meaning  
23 of the scores. Accommodations are used for  
24 equity purposes and not for advantaging a  
25 particular set of kids. Okay?



1                   We also would like to  
2                   understand the approach and strategy for the  
3                   parts of your system. So how are you going  
4                   to score things? We're particularly here  
5                   concerned with the question of how you're  
6                   going to score items that need human scoring  
7                   and can't be scored by technology.

8                   What's your system and approach  
9                   for doing that, particularly for the  
10                  summative assessment component, and do you  
11                  have a plan, or not, we're not requiring you  
12                  to do this, but that involves teachers in the  
13                  training and scoring of the system.

14                  So, tell us how you're going to  
15                  score the stuff that the computer can't score  
16                  for you. And how we're going to do it in a  
17                  way that's scalable after everything else.

18                  The last couple pieces of the  
19                  system: Tell us your approach and strategy  
20                  for developing the reporting engine part of  
21                  what you're building. And then tell us your  
22                  overall approach to quality control,  
23                  particularly your strategy for field  
24                  testing.

25                  And, again, making sure that

1 we've represented all the different types of  
2 student populations, including high  
3 performing, low performing kids, different  
4 types, kids with different types of or  
5 different levels of English proficiency.

6 And students with different  
7 types of disabilities so that you're really  
8 making sure when you do your field testing  
9 that you have sampled all the different types  
10 of students that we've designed the  
11 assessment to include. Okay. The next  
12 section is research and evaluations. Yeah,  
13 Joe?

14 MR. WILLHOFT: We may get there  
15 in the research -- Joe Willhoft, Washington  
16 State. We may get there in the research  
17 evaluation part that's coming up, Joanne.  
18 But, I think the experience of all of us with  
19 regard to assessment programs is this notion  
20 of field testing is an ongoing --

21 MS. WEISS: Yes.

22 MR. WILLHOFT: -- activity, not  
23 a let's do it once to prepare for 2014-15 and  
24 then we're done. So, are we to include, not  
25 only a description of field testing in an

1 anticipation of 2014-15, but also the overall  
2 plan for how this is a sustainable program?

3 MS. WEISS: Yeah. And this is  
4 gonna -- this does sort of dovetail right  
5 into the next set of questions on research  
6 and evaluation because, obviously, the  
7 research and evaluation is something that  
8 will outlive the end of this four-year  
9 period.

10 So, we can pay for the expenses  
11 related to these things within the four-year  
12 period, so be as specific as you can within  
13 the four-year period about what you're gonna  
14 do and how you're gonna do it and be sure to  
15 include those things in your budget.

16 But, it's fine in the  
17 application to explain that, in an ongoing  
18 fashion, here's what algebra will be doing,  
19 it's outside the scope of this particular  
20 budget and contract, but these are the kinds  
21 of activities that still will have to be  
22 ongoing after-the-fact.

23 And that segues into that  
24 [Inaudible]

1           there is a big emphasis on validity, not just  
2           reliability.

3                       So, we really, really want to  
4           make sure that the assessments strand -- oh,  
5           I'm sorry, the research and evaluation strand  
6           of your proposal is really focused on making  
7           sure that it's valid for the intents and  
8           purposes and those were the things that you  
9           sort of laid out in your theory of change and  
10          have been talking to us about all along.

11                      And we're concerned about all  
12          different types of validities, so construct  
13          validity, consequential validity, predictive  
14          validity, just think of it as more  
15          comprehensive about validity, comprehensively  
16          about validity, than I think we have had to  
17          in the assessments that we've been using so  
18          far.

19                      Obviously, still reliability  
20          and fairness matter. This question of are we  
21          actually being accurate across the  
22          performance continuum we've talked about. We  
23          got questions about comparability and it's a  
24          big word and what does it mean within this  
25          context.

1                   And to some degree, we need  
2                   you, in your proposals, to sort of tell us  
3                   back, because it depends on what item types  
4                   you're talking about including, particularly  
5                   in your summative assessments, how big the  
6                   issues of comparability are and how much is  
7                   known or not known about how to figure out  
8                   how to make things comparable across  
9                   performance tasks that are given through  
10                  different forms of a test or over the course  
11                  of a year or whatever.

12                  So, you need to tell us,  
13                  consistent with whatever your design is,  
14                  which of these issues matters and how you're  
15                  going to address them. And then, B is really  
16                  something that's going to probably fall way  
17                  outside the scope of this time period, so  
18                  it's, what's your plan in the future for  
19                  thinking about whether the assessments really  
20                  are being implemented as you designed and  
21                  your theory of action is being realized,  
22                  including whether the intended effects on  
23                  kids in school are being achieved.

24                  So, what's the bigger picture  
25                  plan for stepping back and looking at this

1 and making sure that it's all working the way  
2 you thought. Okay. Professional capacity  
3 and outreach is about two different but sort  
4 of interrelated parts of this.

5 The first is making sure that  
6 teachers and administrators, this is  
7 professional development, making sure  
8 teachers and administrators really understand  
9 how to implement and use the assessments that  
10 are coming down.

11 And, certainly, it is an  
12 acceptable use of funds under this grant, if  
13 you have money and would like to do so, to  
14 include professional development.

15 We know there's a lot of other  
16 sources of funding potentially for this, as  
17 well, but certainly these grant funds could  
18 be used to support teachers and  
19 administrators during the grant period, as  
20 you're rolling out the new assessments or  
21 doing the field testing on them to make sure  
22 that they have the capacity to use the  
23 assessments the way you intend.

24 The other thing that's really  
25 important here that we, I think, all have

1           gotten... or we have all gotten a lot smarter  
2           about listening to your stories from some of  
3           your States over the past, well, these many  
4           years as you have tried to roll out different  
5           types of assessment systems, that a  
6           communication strategy in your State is  
7           really important for making sure that  
8           parents, that key stakeholders, members of  
9           your legislature, that everybody really is  
10          brought along over the course of this four  
11          years and understands why these assessments  
12          are good for the kids in your State.

13                         And for the teachers in your  
14          State and are on board with doing this work.  
15          And so, this B question is about what's your  
16          communication strand, uh, strategy and plan  
17          for these different stakeholders to bring  
18          them along with you on this journey. Okay.

19                         Technology approach. I feel  
20          like we need a seventh inning stretch to go  
21          along with (A) (7) because, although this is  
22          the last one, there's a whole lot of stuff in  
23          this technology section to deal with.

24                         So, let's see if we can plow  
25          through it or if we need to get up and do ten

1           jumping jacks in the middle of it or  
2           something. So, the technology goal is pretty  
3           straightforward. We want to use technology  
4           effectively to improve the quality,  
5           accessibility, cost-effectiveness and  
6           efficiency of the assessment system and to  
7           help the reviewers judge that.

8                         Technology, we're guessing,  
9           will have been touched on all throughout  
10          the -- or throughout many of the other  
11          criteria. This is just one place to bring it  
12          together for the reviewers so that they can  
13          make sure that they understand the big  
14          picture of how you're thinking of doing  
15          this.

16                        So, how is technology going to  
17          be used? What kinds of technology are you  
18          using? And how much of it needs to be  
19          invested versus how much of it already  
20          exists? How is this technology gonna be able  
21          to be reused in the future?

22                        And then, the B question is  
23          really say if we're going to have a  
24          technology-based assessment four years from  
25          now, some States have infrastructures already



1 in place to let them do this, others do not.

2 In each State, what's the plan  
3 for figuring out what the barriers are to  
4 doing this and having a four-year strategy  
5 for addressing those barriers so that, when  
6 it comes time for these assessments to be  
7 operational, the infrastructure's not the  
8 problem that you're suddenly starting to  
9 battle with. So, that's what the criterion  
10 is about.

11 Then there's a whole bunch of  
12 program requirements that caused several other  
13 pages of questions to be delivered to our  
14 doorstep that I will try to take you through  
15 now.

16 The first one is a program  
17 requirement, for the A Category only, that  
18 says use technology to the maximum extent  
19 appropriate to deliver, administer and score  
20 assessments and report assessment results.

21 This is not to say that the  
22 Category B applicant can't also do this.  
23 It's just a requirement for A. So, again,  
24 just to be clear, this really is us saying  
25 that, four years from now as a country, we

1 believe we ought to be able to deliver  
2 assessments primarily via technology, with  
3 paper and pencils the accommodation instead  
4 of the reverse.

5 So, yes, that is what we're  
6 actually saying here. All these requirements  
7 apply to both the A and the B Categories and  
8 this was the source of many questions. So,  
9 let us try to sort of unpack this for you and  
10 take you through the big-picture thinking  
11 that we had behind this.

12 The first thing is that, unless  
13 otherwise protected by copyright, IP  
14 agreements, whatever, when it was on its way  
15 in to you, you need to make assessment  
16 content (so the assessments and the  
17 assessment items that are developed with  
18 funds under this grant category) freely  
19 available to States, to technology platform  
20 providers and to others who request it for  
21 purposes of administering these assessments,  
22 provided they comply with your requirements  
23 for test items security and privacy laws.

24 So, one is other people can get  
25 access to the test items that you have

1 developed. And I'm gonna put these  
2 pieces together for you in a second. And the  
3 second is that they're developed in a way  
4 that maximizes interoperability.

5 So that States can switch from  
6 one technology platform provider to another  
7 without all the barriers that today are in  
8 place and prevent you from doing that, by  
9 making sure that these assessment items and  
10 student data are written to industry  
11 recognized interoperability standards.

12 I'm going to go into that  
13 second piece a little bit more in a second,  
14 but the big picture idea here is there was a  
15 lot of talk about should there be one  
16 technology platform for the entire country?  
17 And is it an open-source platform? And that  
18 is not the direction that we have gone with  
19 this notice.

20 There is nothing that would  
21 prevent that from being the outcome, I guess,  
22 but the direction that we have gone is to say  
23 the content layer that we're developing with  
24 funds from this grant need to be available to  
25 technology providers so that we can have a

1 vibrant and competitive technology  
2 marketplace underlying this work.

3 So that if, for example, three  
4 or four years after the end of this grant,  
5 somebody has a system that is cheaper, faster  
6 turnaround time, better at scoring stuff, has  
7 better reporting features.

8 Whatever it is, you can say  
9 here's my test that I need to deliver; I'm  
10 going to give all of these items to you, oh,  
11 new technology provider, for free and you now have  
12 access to all my content and you can deliver  
13 for me the tests I need to deliver but in a  
14 cheaper, better, faster way.

15 So, we want to enable that kind  
16 of market to happen so that you guys, four  
17 years from now, are not necessarily stuck  
18 with whatever solution you came up with,  
19 which as technology is moving forward, might  
20 be obsolete baggage pretty quickly.

21 It doesn't mean you can't use  
22 funds to support technology. So, it is an  
23 allowable use of funds under this grant to  
24 support technology platform stuff, if that's  
25 what you want to do. But we wanted to not

1 make it so that we killed innovation in this  
2 marketplace and whatever you did four years  
3 from now is what you're going to live with  
4 for the next 40 years.

5 So, one more thing about this  
6 interoperability standard. You've all done a  
7 great job of barraging us with all these --  
8 well, with the same interoperability  
9 standards paper, we just have indeed received  
10 many copies of the standard stuff that's  
11 going on in the Department.

12 And it's good that you did that  
13 because, you know, a number of us are new to  
14 the administration and don't always know what  
15 the Department is funding out of other  
16 places. So, it was a good exercise for us to  
17 read that and we did.

18 But the paper was also a good  
19 reminder to us that the reason that we have  
20 put this figuring out the interoperability  
21 standards problem into the future, instead of  
22 saying here's the standard to comply with, is  
23 because the standards part of this  
24 marketplace is still a little bit in flux and  
25 doesn't quite meet all the needs that I think

1           you might have for your assessment system.

2                         So, when we said it meets a  
3           standard that is approved by the Department,  
4           we do not mean approved before you submit  
5           your application.

6                         It's a program requirement that  
7           will happen after the grant is given, so it's  
8           something that we expect to work out with you  
9           through the cooperative agreement and make  
10          sure that, whatever standard everybody uses,  
11          is a standard that really works for them.

12                        We're not looking to approve  
13          any standards before you submit your  
14          applications, nor do we impute that from your  
15          application, saying here's the standard I am  
16          going to use, is that okay with you?

17                        So, we think that this is  
18          something that we can sort of work with  
19          together when we have got a little more time  
20          to make sure that we're making good decisions  
21          and that the needs that you have for your  
22          assessment system are accurately and fully  
23          reflected in whatever that standard is.

24                        So, that's sort of a  
25          down-the-road thing from our point of view.

1           So, with that mouthful, let's see what  
2           questions you have. Joe?

3                       MR. WILLHOFT: Since you gave  
4           permission to get into the weeds -- Joe  
5           Willhoft, Washington State. On the first  
6           priority on this slide, with regard to making  
7           assessment items or assessments freely  
8           available to States, I know that many of us  
9           use existing text for our reading  
10          assessments, which are copyrighted.

11                      And for which the copyright  
12          permission is granted, given certain  
13          conditions of use and certain extent of  
14          exposure, for example.

15                      Would it be an expectation that  
16          the consortium should anticipate this freely  
17          available issue and then arrange copyright  
18          agreements for a much broader potential use  
19          than -- and which would be more expensive,  
20          than the relatively more limited use that the  
21          consortium could anticipate and describe?

22                      MS. WEISS: So, by saying  
23          unless otherwise protected by law or  
24          agreement, I think any reading packages, for  
25          example, that came in to you with copyright

1 would be in that category and we would not  
2 expect you to make them freely available  
3 beyond the consortium necessarily.

4 But, it certainly would be nice  
5 for the field in general to think about newly  
6 written packages, public domain packages,  
7 fair use packages, any of those things that  
8 really could be traded around.

9 So, I think it's just in the  
10 public interest to do that wherever we can,  
11 but this would not require you to purchase  
12 copyright permissions for the nation.

13 MS. HESS: Although, if you're  
14 willing...

15 PARTICIPANTS: (Laughing).

16 MS. WEISS: Whew. I think we  
17 might have made it to lunch, which is all  
18 that stands between you and the exciting  
19 budget tutorial, so I know you'll be rushing  
20 back from lunch.

21 We'll start at 1:00. And when  
22 you think of all the questions you wished you  
23 had asked, we can start with that and then  
24 dive into the budget tutorial. So, thanks,  
25 we'll see you back here at 1:00.



1                   REPORTER'S NOTE: Whereupon,  
2                   a short recess is taken.

3                   MS. WEISS: So, thank you. I  
4                   know actually that it's hard to get out, get  
5                   lunch and get back here in the time given the  
6                   lunch accommodations.

7                   So, thank you for rushing back  
8                   and we will get started on the budget  
9                   tutorial. Before we do, I just wanted to see  
10                  whether there were any over-lunch questions  
11                  that were raised that people wanted to ask us  
12                  about before we get into budget land.

13                  PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

14                  MS. WEISS: Okay. So,  
15                  budgets. We're going to start by talking  
16                  about Category A. The budgets for Category B  
17                  are significantly simpler because they don't  
18                  have all these different levels of modules.  
19                  But, otherwise, they work similarly.

20                  So, we'll hit on those quickly  
21                  at the end of this budget session. But,  
22                  first of all, let me just give you a little  
23                  background in our thinking.

24                  The problem we were wrestling  
25                  with is that we hope to fund up to two

1 applications in the Category A section. But,  
2 again, we will only fund applications that  
3 are strong enough to warrant funding. So, we  
4 don't really know how many applications we'll  
5 fund.

6 And don't know if we're gonna  
7 fund anything in Category B. There, we hope  
8 to fund up to one application. So, we  
9 weren't quite sure how much money we had to  
10 spend and we wanted to be able to spend it as  
11 wisely as possible. So we came up with this  
12 construct that was the simplest one we could  
13 think of that still worked.

14 And I say "simple" in quotes  
15 because, of course, you all have already  
16 noticed that it's really not that simple.  
17 So, the idea is that, in order to fund as  
18 fully as possible all of the requests that we  
19 end up deciding are worthy of funding, we  
20 asked you to organize your budgets into two  
21 types of budgets, Level 1 and Level 2 budget  
22 modules.

23 And I'm just going to sort of  
24 walk you through what each of those means and  
25 how to think about filling out the tables and

1 background, background information on each in  
2 a second.

3 One thing I did want to point  
4 out, because sometimes it's hard to see  
5 what's missing in a notice; if you are  
6 familiar with the Race to the Top fund, where  
7 there is a requirement that 50 percent of the  
8 funds be passed through to LEAs who are  
9 participating in your application.

10 Congress did, in the late fall,  
11 waive that provision for this particular  
12 competition, so there is no requirement to do  
13 that in this competition.

14 Okay. So, Level 1 budget  
15 modules. So, Level 1 budget modules are  
16 designed -- are defined as budget modules  
17 that are necessary to delivering operational  
18 summative assessments in math and ELA no  
19 later than the 2014-15 school year.

20 Or, are otherwise part of your  
21 proposed project and consistent with your  
22 theory of action. So, a few more  
23 things. A Level 1 budget module -- or a  
24 Level 1 budget can consist of one or more  
25 modules which, in aggregate, can't exceed 150

1 million dollars in total funds requested.

2 So, this notion of a module,  
3 why not just have one budget equaling \$150  
4 million, you can do that if you want to.

5 But, if you're organizing the  
6 work in your consortium and sort of  
7 apportioning it out across different parties,  
8 we thought you might want to have budgets for  
9 each of them so you can hold them accountable  
10 and get the roll-ups and have this whole  
11 thing work in your application the same way  
12 it was working in the real world.

13 And, if you want to do that,  
14 that's fine. Have multiple modules and add  
15 them up to equal no more than \$150 million.  
16 Whether you do them in multiple modules or  
17 one module is not really going to affect your  
18 scoring, but how you talk about and justify  
19 the costs will and we'll talk about that in a  
20 minute.

21 All of the budget items that  
22 are required to meet the absolute priority  
23 and deliver these operational assessments do  
24 have to be within the 150 million. So,  
25 basically, for 150 million, you do have to be

1           able to administer and deliver these  
2           operational assessments. So, it's both  
3           necessary and sufficient for Level 1.

4                         If you are able to do all of  
5           that in less than 150 million, you can also  
6           put into the 150 million any other components  
7           or pieces of your project that you think are  
8           really high priority and you would like to  
9           make sure definitely get funded if you win,  
10          because this 150 is the part that will  
11          definitely get funded if you win. Okay?

12                        So, it's everything in the 150  
13          has to be necessary and sufficient to deliver  
14          operational summative assessments. And then,  
15          if you've still got space left, put in other  
16          things that you think are really critical to  
17          your cause.

18                        Everything else... That's the  
19          official definition of Level 2, everything  
20          else is level 2. So, Level 2 budget modules  
21          are the place where you can say, "If you guys  
22          have money left over because you didn't fund  
23          anything in Category B or you only funded one  
24          applicant in Category A, then here's all the  
25          other stuff consistent with my proposal that

1 I would like to do.

2 And I'm giving it to you in  
3 chunks of up to 10 million dollars and I'm  
4 going to prioritize it in order of importance  
5 to my project so that you have that  
6 information as you're figuring out how to add  
7 on additional budget modules that you will  
8 fund as part of this proposal."

9 So, it's basically a way for  
10 you to say, "In addition, I want to do..."  
11 You know, I'm making it up, "this formative  
12 assessment thing that I couldn't afford to do  
13 within my base you proposal."

14 Or, "I want to do this  
15 professional work." Or, "I want to this  
16 additional communications work." Or whatever  
17 it is, put it into these budget modules,  
18 order it in priority -- give us the priority  
19 importance of each of those, where one is the  
20 highest priority.

21 And as we're figuring out in  
22 the end what, in addition to your Level 1  
23 budget modules we'll fund, we'll use that  
24 information to help us sort of fund down  
25 these slates, if you will.

1                   So, before I get into the now  
2                   what do you submit to tell us the  
3                   information, let me just make sure that it's  
4                   clear where this construct comes from and  
5                   what it means. Okay. So, the budget formats  
6                   then -- oops, Joe? Sorry. It's the post  
7                   lunch mic's moving slowly problem.

8                   MR. WILLHOFT: Okay.  
9                   (Laughing) Joe Willhoft, Washington. Two  
10                  questions, actually. Could we go back to  
11                  Level 1?

12                  In the text box at the top is  
13                  the notion of necessary to delivering  
14                  operational summative and assessments. Can  
15                  you help us understand the boundary of  
16                  delivering operational. Does that include  
17                  scoring in the first year?

18                  MS. WEISS: No.

19                  MR. WILLHOFT: So, so, what's  
20                  the --

21                  MS. WEISS: -- it's not the  
22                  administration --

23                  MR. WILLHOFT: -- what's the  
24                  time --

25                  MS. WEISS: -- it's all the

1 development -- yeah. It's all the  
2 development up through the point where you're  
3 ready to sort of go live statewide.

4 MR. WILLHOFT: So, if there are  
5 paper and pencil versions, it's not... Is it  
6 printing those things and putting them on a  
7 bus to get to the school district? Or just  
8 having something that somebody could print  
9 thing?

10 MS. WEISS: Yes. The latter.  
11 So, costs related with the actual  
12 administration of operational assessments are  
13 not eligible costs under this competition.

14 MR. WILLHOFT: Is there a  
15 common --

16 MS. WEISS: -- there are field  
17 testing and those things in the earlier  
18 years, but once you're ready to go live those  
19 costs for administration need to be paid for  
20 through other money.

21 MR. WILLHOFT: I'm not sure  
22 there's a commonly understood or agreed upon  
23 definition of what's on one side of that  
24 fence and what's on the other side of that  
25 fence. Are we to tell you what we think is



1 on one side and the other, or can you help us  
2 and tell us?

3 MS. WHALEN: So, we do have  
4 some guidance coming out that does speak to  
5 what it means to be... Have an operational  
6 assessment system.

7 If, at the time you see this  
8 guidance, and it doesn't sufficiently answer  
9 your questions, please submit more questions  
10 so that we can respond to them because I'm  
11 sure it's not just one State that would have  
12 that issue.

13 MR. WILLHOFT: Second question,  
14 if I may? With regard to Category, uh, Level  
15 2. Looking at this, it looks and sounds like  
16 modules are like components of the assessment  
17 system. But, it might be possible, because  
18 many of these costs are dependent on how many  
19 youngsters and States you have and how much  
20 field testing has to go on, can be driven by  
21 just simply the number of States and children  
22 in the system.

23 Would it be possible for a  
24 Level 2 budget module to be an opportunity  
25 for States at a lesser level of participation

1 to more fully participate?

2 MS. WEISS: Yes. So, they're  
3 not meant to necessarily be components. They  
4 are organized in whatever budget ways you  
5 want to think about. So, right, it could be  
6 an opportunity to involve move States in  
7 field testing, more whatever. Yeah.  
8 Absolutely.

9 Okay. So, the budget formats  
10 then. You have to submit a detailed budget  
11 table and narrative for each of your proposed  
12 Level 1 and Level 2 budget modules. In  
13 Category B, you don't do all these different  
14 modules, you just give us one budget for the,  
15 up to 30 million and one set of narratives.

16 The budget tables and  
17 narratives are really designed to allow you  
18 to describe how your budgets align with your  
19 proposed tasks and activities.

20 And we're going to talk a  
21 little bit about this, but it really is  
22 important for you to connect the dots for  
23 reviewers between, first of all, in your  
24 Level 1 budgets. What it is from your whole  
25 big-picture application that you have

1 written, which are the parts that you think  
2 are the Level 1 parts.

3 Because one of the things is  
4 have you identified in sort of core set of  
5 what must happen in a way that's consistent  
6 with your proposal. So, it's very important  
7 that you make those connections very clear  
8 and that you make the connections between  
9 what you think of as Level 2 and what you've  
10 said in your proposal as... Make those  
11 connections clear also.

12 So, we are going to ask you,  
13 and see this in the narrative, to just  
14 connect back to the criteria and the work  
15 plans which things are Level 1 and which  
16 things are Level 2 and why.

17 The other thing that I wanted  
18 to spend a minute talking about is this  
19 question of using other federal, State or  
20 philanthropic funds toward the design,  
21 development, evaluation of your proposed  
22 systems.

23 So, the way this is written,  
24 first of all, to just be clear there is no  
25 matching requirement, so some of you may have

1           been looking at I-3 proposals where there is  
2           one, there's no matching requirement here.  
3           However, we have provided a vehicle for  
4           States to say either we want to contribute  
5           some of our own State funding to this.

6                           Or we have philanthropic funds  
7           that we want to contribute to this and that  
8           will offset the total funds requested, so the  
9           total cost of our Level 1 modules may be in  
10          the 155 million, but we have got 5 million in  
11          firm contributions coming from other places,  
12          therefore, the total funds requested is 150.

13                           You'll see it in a minute, and  
14          we'll talk more about where you show this on  
15          your budget and how you show it, but that's  
16          the concept. You could put them toward Level  
17          2 budget modules or Level 1 budget modules in  
18          this competition.

19                           So, if you found a foundation  
20          who wanted to fund you to develop something  
21          in your Level 2 plan, in your Level 2 plan  
22          and they were contributing a bunch of money  
23          toward that, you can show it there and that  
24          would be appropriate.

25                           We will ask you to provide

1 evidence that this is real funding. So, this  
2 isn't about potential things that might  
3 happen. You only get to deduct it from the  
4 total request if it's a real firm commitment  
5 of funds. Okay?

6 So, Category A budget formats  
7 then. There's a bunch of different pieces to  
8 this. There's a budget summary, which is  
9 just one table that summarizes every, all the  
10 modules, the bottom line from each module for  
11 Level 1 and Level 2. I'm going to show you  
12 each of these. We're going to just walk  
13 through these tables and narratives in a  
14 second.

15 Then, for the Level 2 budget  
16 module, for each budget module there's a  
17 summary table and narrative -- or there's a  
18 detailed table and detailed narrative and  
19 then we give you one place to summarize. And  
20 for the budget 2 modules, there's just a  
21 detailed table and narrative for each.

22 So, we're going to first walk  
23 through the details. We're going to sort of  
24 go backwards and start with the, with the  
25 ground floor and then roll it up, so we're

1 going to start with looking at the detailed  
2 narrative and table.

3 Then we'll look at the summary  
4 for Level 1. Then we'll look at the detailed  
5 narratives for Level 2, and then we'll look  
6 at the summary for the whole application.  
7 Okay?

8 So, the detailed narrative for  
9 your Level 1 budget modules. The narrative  
10 that accompanies each budget module should  
11 say, should include the name, whatever the  
12 identifier is that you use in your  
13 application to talk about this thing.

14 Again, just helping the  
15 reviewers connect the dots between how you're  
16 funding your work and what the work is that  
17 you've been talking about in your proposal.  
18 The associated work plan. So, this,  
19 depending how you structure this, you might  
20 use the criteria numbers to anchor this.

21 You might use something in your  
22 work plan to anchor this, but some way of  
23 making it a really clear identifier between  
24 the work you have described in your  
25 application narrative and this budget. And

1 the rationale for why this work is part of  
2 your Level 1 budget module.

3 So, why it's either necessary  
4 to developing the summative assessments or  
5 it's otherwise an important piece of the  
6 work. So, after you have kind of given that  
7 lead-in to your budget narrative, then you  
8 need to provide a detailed explanation of  
9 each expenditure that you have requested in  
10 each budget category.

11 In the application, we give you  
12 detailed guidance about what each budget  
13 category means. These are really standard  
14 Department budget categories. There's  
15 nothing particularly notable in these  
16 categories that's something that you wouldn't  
17 already be familiar with in other grant  
18 writing that you have done.

19 We have also provided in the  
20 application, and this is just an excerpt from  
21 the application, examples of the level of  
22 detail that we need. The more detail you can  
23 provide us, the better it is for us as we're  
24 going through and doing all of the reviews on  
25 your budget that we have to do.

1                   So, let me just stop here for a  
2                   second and tell you that, from the reviewer's  
3                   point of view, the budget is judged, if you  
4                   will, as part of the project management  
5                   criterion.

6                   So, the reviewer is reading  
7                   your budget from the point of view of making  
8                   sure that everything that you said was  
9                   necessary and sufficient to developing your  
10                  Level 1... To developing your assessment  
11                  system is included in your Level 1 modules  
12                  and that you've done an adequate, and I can't  
13                  remember all the words from that criterion,  
14                  you can look back at it, but job of putting  
15                  all of that together into a budget.

16                  The Department -- but they  
17                  don't - the reviewers are not the ones who actually  
18                  approve your budget. They're just sort of  
19                  looking at it as part of the big picture of  
20                  what it is you are proposing.

21                  If you are a grantee, the  
22                  Department -- or proposed grantee, the  
23                  Department will go through your budget,  
24                  together with you. And we're going to do a  
25                  review for necessary, reasonable, allowable



1 expenses and the more information you can  
2 give us the better.

3 We're going to talk about  
4 contractor lines specifically in a minute.  
5 But, for everything other than the contractor  
6 lines, the more you know, the better off it  
7 will be because we do worry that.

8 Because of the September 30th  
9 obligation date, we're all going to be  
10 running like crazy in the month of September  
11 to make sure that we can do all of these  
12 reviews and the more information you provide  
13 us in your application, the fewer questions  
14 we'll have for you and the less back and  
15 forth at the back end.

16 The fear, of course, is that if  
17 we end up doing a lot of back and forth, if  
18 we don't get good answers, we have no choice  
19 at that point but not to fund a whole module  
20 that you might need because we just don't  
21 have enough information to know if it's  
22 really necessary, allowable and reasonable.  
23 So, please do put as much information as  
24 you can into these budgets when you give them  
25 to us.

1                   So, contractors are, obviously,  
2                   going to be a big line item in this proposal,  
3                   assuming that you're all not sitting around  
4                   with teams of assessment writers, that you're  
5                   hiring for this, but you're actually going to  
6                   go through some procurement process that's  
7                   going to happen after you do the, the  
8                   proposal to us.

9                   So, what happens with these  
10                  contractors lines? The answer is we need as  
11                  much information as you can possibly provide  
12                  to us about the basis for these costs. So,  
13                  whatever estimates you have tying back  
14                  together the picture of your design in your  
15                  components to what your analysis says the  
16                  approximate ballpark costs of these things  
17                  should be to develop.

18                  We assume you have had to do a  
19                  bunch of that in order to even come up with a  
20                  design that is implementable, is doable  
21                  within these budgets. We need you to expose  
22                  all of that analysis to us so that we're  
23                  getting as much of a justification for these  
24                  contractor lines as possible.

25                  Because it's going to show up

1 as just one line item on the summary, but we  
2 need, in this detail section, in this  
3 narrative section, as much detail as you can  
4 give us so that we actually have some insight  
5 into what would otherwise look like a black  
6 box that's probably a huge piece of the  
7 expense of this particular grant.

8 So, your analysis of how you  
9 think these costs ought to shake out when you  
10 go out to do your procurements. And if you  
11 anticipate doing two or three different  
12 procurements or having different vendors work  
13 on different pieces, whatever insights you  
14 can provide into that.

15 Again, none of this is going to  
16 be totally binding on you. You don't have to  
17 implement it exactly the way you say and,  
18 certainly, when the vendors come back to you  
19 with their proposals, the whole thing, we  
20 realize, will be negotiated again between you  
21 and the vendors.

22 But as much insight as you can  
23 give us at the front end into how you thought  
24 about estimating the costs, the better.

25 Yeah?

1 MS. VIATOR: Kit Viator,  
2 Massachusetts. Joanne, just in terms of the  
3 review of the budget, I believe you said that  
4 the peer reviewers are not going to evaluate  
5 the reasonableness of the budget. Did I  
6 misunderstand?

7 The point that you made about  
8 that? I guess my bigger question is who,  
9 actually, how would these budgets be  
10 evaluated and who will be the people  
11 evaluating the reasonableness of the cost  
12 projections?

13 MS. WEISS: So, what the peer  
14 reviewers have to look at, what we ask them  
15 in the criterion to look at is whether they  
16 think the budget is adequate to support the  
17 development of the assessment system, the  
18 assessment system that meets the requirements  
19 set forth.

20 And includes costs that are  
21 reasonable in relationship to the objective,  
22 design and significance of the project and  
23 the number of students served. So, they're  
24 looking at it from that high level and they  
25 will make those judgment calls as they're

1 giving you scores for the project management  
2 section.

3 If you then win, then the  
4 Department comes behind and does the more  
5 detailed line-item review, using our  
6 regulations too, and coming back and  
7 forth with you on questions. And it's that  
8 process that will be a lot shorter if you  
9 have put more detail in your narrative.

10 MS. WHALEN: That's why we look  
11 at Slide 42 and Slide 43 in your handouts for  
12 Category A and Category B that shows where in  
13 the criterion you can find the budget  
14 language.

15 MS. WEISS: That's what I was  
16 just reading to you.

17 MS. WHALEN: Right.

18 MS. VIATOR: Okay. Thank you.  
19 So, with regard to that first pass by the  
20 peer reviewers, would it be reasonable to  
21 assume that the individuals who are doing the  
22 evaluations will have a broad range of  
23 experience and knowledge about actual costs  
24 of running large scale programs so that --

25 MS. WEISS: Yes.

1 MS. VIATOR: -- their judgments  
2 will be sound?

3 MS. WEISS: Yeah. I mean,  
4 that's one of the criteria that we were  
5 looking for when we did our peer reviewer...  
6 Our call for peer reviewers. That is a big  
7 part of the qualifications that we  
8 requested.

9 Okay. So, that's the  
10 contractual piece. Then, this is the other  
11 funds allowable piece (indicating). So, this  
12 is where we say any contributions being made  
13 by the States, any contributions being made  
14 by third parties, like foundations, any  
15 in-kind contributions, all can go on this  
16 Line 12 of your budget, other funds allocated  
17 toward this work.

18 And in the narrative detail, we  
19 would love for you to explain the funding  
20 source, what work they're providing, any  
21 requirements they've placed on the funds that  
22 we should know about and give us the evidence  
23 that the funding commitment is real.

24 And this is the way you're then  
25 going to summarize it and put it on to the

1 budget module detailed table. So, you're  
2 going to complete one table and narrative set  
3 for each budget module that you have in your  
4 program.

5 And, you know, put the name of  
6 the budget module at the top for each  
7 category, fill in for each year of the grant  
8 the amount you're anticipating spending. You  
9 can include indirect costs and just use your  
10 negotiated rate with the Department of Ed  
11 there.

12 If, by chance, you are a...  
13 You're organizing yourselves as a separate  
14 legal entity and you, therefore, don't have  
15 an direct cost negotiated with the  
16 Department, we do have some rules under our  
17 regulatory guidelines for what you use as an  
18 estimate in your application.

19 So, just send us a note if  
20 you're in that situation and you need more  
21 guidance on that. Deduct, on Line 12, any of  
22 the funds that you are receiving from other  
23 sources and then you'll arrive at the total  
24 funds requested line. Okay?

25 So, that's what the budget

1 tables look like for each budget module table  
2 and narrative pair. Then there's a summary  
3 table for Level 1, which says take all of  
4 your Level 1 detailed tables and total them  
5 up for us on this chart.

6 And don't forget that this very  
7 bottom Line 13, the total funds requested  
8 can't exceed \$150 million. What I'm about to  
9 say sounds really dumb, but trust us; we  
10 received a ton of applications in Race to the  
11 Top that did not do this.

12 Please foot and tie these  
13 numbers so they actually add up. And please  
14 make sure your narrative, the numbers you put  
15 in your narrative are the same numbers that  
16 you put in your table. It's just the little  
17 things that make a lot of difference when  
18 we're trying to get down to actually writing  
19 checks.

20 MR. WILLHOFT: Joe Willhoft,  
21 Washington. Could we return for a moment to  
22 Slide 85? I'm sorry. With regard to the  
23 bullet just above the word "explain", "any  
24 in-kind contributions being made by third  
25 parties, such as foundations or professional



1 service firms."

2 You know, it's quite likely  
3 that the States themselves, as members of the  
4 consortium, may be contributing items from  
5 their own item bank that had previously been  
6 developed in the State. Can that be  
7 considered as an in-kind contribution and, if  
8 so, how might we estimate the cost value of  
9 that?

10 MS. WEISS: (No response).

11 MR. WILLHOFT: Sitting next to  
12 Sue, it's okay if you write it down and get  
13 back to us.

14 MS. HESS: But, the big one is  
15 these are parties.

16 MS. WEISS: Right. But, so  
17 you, so I guess I'm not sure how -- so, I  
18 think that's a -- I mean, I think that's a  
19 great thing to do, to say that there's a  
20 bunch of items that we're bringing to the  
21 table.

22 I'm not -- I'm trying to decide  
23 whether it's really... Like, I don't know  
24 that it's going to score more points for you  
25 to assign a dollar value to it, as opposed to

1           just say in your application, "We're  
2           contributing all of this intellectual  
3           property to this project and so we're  
4           starting way ahead."

5                         Like, I think just saying it is  
6           fine. I'm not sure you have got to go to all  
7           the work of assessing a value so that you can  
8           put it on this line so that somebody notices  
9           it and says, "That's great."

10                        If there's a reason that people  
11           feel they need to do that, I guess I can take  
12           it up, but I'm not totally sure that it  
13           matters enough to warrant all the work that  
14           might go into actually figuring out that  
15           number. But, you certainly could say it and  
16           talk about it. And the reviewers, I'm sure,  
17           will pay attention to it.

18                        MS. HESS: It has a lot of  
19           value.

20                        MS. WEISS: It has a lot of  
21           value, yes. No, I'm not saying it doesn't  
22           have value. I'm saying the process of  
23           assessing the value feels like it might be a  
24           lot of work and I'm not sure...

25                        MS. HESS: I mean, one of the

1 places you could, that it might show up is  
2 the role where each State is listing out what  
3 their role is. That could be, without  
4 assessing the value, you could say that  
5 that's part of what the role is.

6 REPORTER'S NOTE:

7 [Inaudible  
8 side conversation].

9 MS. WEISS: So, one of the  
10 things Ann was saying is that you could come  
11 in with a significantly lower budget to  
12 develop a... Component or a bunch of  
13 components because of the work that you're  
14 contributing.

15 So, certainly, you can make at  
16 that point in your budget by saying, "One  
17 reason we're able to be this efficient is  
18 because we're contributing all of this  
19 in-kind intellectual property to this project  
20 and, therefore, not only are we able to  
21 deliver all this stuff within the \$150  
22 million, but also we've added these three  
23 other things in that you might not have  
24 thought we could afford but now we can."

25 So, I think you can use the

1 narrative to make your case in a way that the  
2 reviewers will value without putting a dollar  
3 figure on it, although, if you wanted to  
4 figure out how to assess a dollar figure,  
5 that's okay, too. But I don't know that we  
6 particularly have guidance on how to do  
7 that.

8 MR. MATTSON: Dirk Mattson,  
9 Minnesota. Just trying to think of, again,  
10 we've talked about tight time line and so  
11 on. And if folks are looking for other third  
12 party funders, or let's say some entity  
13 becomes interested in what's being done and  
14 says, "We'd like to contribute to that."

15 Has there been any thought or  
16 is there any procedure for we didn't put that  
17 in the line item of third party or additional  
18 costs when originally submitted. But now  
19 we're six months into this and somebody likes  
20 the work and would like to contribute. Is  
21 there a deduction at that point? Or have you  
22 thought about that procedurally?

23 MS. WEISS: So, I would say  
24 that, to some degree, that's the cooperative  
25 agreements. It would let us do that.

1           Probably at that point, we would -- yeah.  
2           So, that conversation, I think, you could  
3           bring to us at any point in the process.

4                       MR. NORTON:  Scott Norton,  
5           Louisiana.  Could you say a little bit more,  
6           please, about the size of the award?  We saw  
7           the limit that you can ask for as a  
8           consortium.

9                               And there's a one to two  
10          consortium range and an estimated size of \$160  
11          million.  Might it be higher or lower when  
12          the numbers come back?  And what if only one  
13          is funded?  Have you spoken to that at all?

14                       MS. WEISS:  Right.  So, yeah, I  
15          tried to, but let me just be even more  
16          specific and do the numbers.  So, if we fund  
17          two in Category A and one in Category B, all  
18          of whom push right against the limit, we  
19          would fund a \$30 million in Category B and two  
20          at \$160 [million] in Category A.

21                               Meaning we fund, you know, one  
22          Level 1 module -- we fund Level 1 and then  
23          one Level 2 module for each applicant in that  
24          scenario.  But if, for example, we don't fund  
25          anything in Category B because we don't get

1 any applications that we feel are worthy of  
2 funding, we'll have \$30 more million we can  
3 throw in to Category A.

4 Or if we only get one good  
5 application in Category A, we have a whole  
6 lot more money that we can throw into it. So  
7 that's the idea of sort of funding down your  
8 list of Level 2 modules.

9 MS. WHALEN: But,  
10 theoretically.

11 MS. WEISS: Yes. So,  
12 theoretically, we could have one applicant  
13 that gets \$350 million. But only in Category  
14 A. Category B couldn't look like that, but  
15 we could have one Category A winner, period,  
16 who gets the whole \$350 [million]. In theory.

17 MR. NORTON: Just one more  
18 piece though.

19 MS. WEISS: Yeah.

20 MR. NORTON: Even though you  
21 didn't ask for it, because you can't ask for  
22 more than \$160 [million], you could get more?

23 MS. WEISS: You don't --  
24 -- you can't ask for more  
25 than \$150 million in Level 1. But in Level 2,

1 in 10 million dollar chunks, you can ask for  
2 as much more as you want, up to the max of \$350  
3 [million] if you want to. Does that make sense?

4 MS. WHALEN: I do want to  
5 highlight, though, that even if we get one  
6 winner, we may not fund all the way down to  
7 \$350 [million]. We may choose to import some of  
8 that money over to the Race to the Top State  
9 competition instead, depending on how useful  
10 or how valuable those modules could be to the  
11 project.

12 MS. WEISS: Yes. So just what  
13 Ann is saying is that we do have the  
14 flexibility in this competition if we don't  
15 find enough good applications to fund, to use  
16 this money, we can put this money back into  
17 the main Race to the Top State competition  
18 pool and spend it there.

19 Okay. Let's see if I can  
20 remember which piece and any pictures I was  
21 at. Okay. So, now Level 2. Level 2 looks  
22 very similar to what we just went through in  
23 Level 1. Here you just need to name or  
24 identify your module at the beginning of your  
25 narrative.

1                                   Again, tie it back very clearly  
2                                   to what part of your application this module  
3                                   is the budget for. And here you need to tell  
4                                   us what the priority is, as well as the  
5                                   rationale for that.

6                                   The priorities should be  
7                                   unique, starting with 1 as the highest  
8                                   priority and just however many 10 million  
9                                   dollar chunk Level 2 budgets you have got for  
10                                  us, just tell us what your priority order is for  
11                                  them so that we know that when we're looking  
12                                  at which ones to fund.

13                                  And again, the table looks just  
14                                  like the Level 1 detail table and you would  
15                                  create one of these narratives and one table  
16                                  for each 10 million dollar-ish increment.  
17                                  Okay?

18                                  Then there is a summary table  
19                                  for all of Category A and the summary table  
20                                  is by modules. So, here's all the Level 1  
21                                  modules (indicating) at the top and the total  
22                                  here can't exceed \$150 [million] and here's  
23                                  (indicating) each of the Level 2 modules.

24                                  And, in total, our project  
25                                  equals 340 million dollars, or 160 million



1 dollars or whatever you have proposed in your  
2 application. Okay? Clear as mud? Okay.

3 Then Category B works very,  
4 very similarly to all of that. Here you just  
5 need to make sure that for each item in your  
6 budget you're associating it back with the  
7 work plan, again, so we can connect the dots  
8 between the things you proposed in your  
9 application and the work you need to do and  
10 the rationale for that work.

11 And you fill out a table that  
12 looks just the same as the summary table that  
13 we just looked at, only there's just one of  
14 these. There's not a whole sort of cascading  
15 series of summaries. There's just one table  
16 and one narrative.

17 And that's the budget stuff.  
18 Any questions on that before we go into...

19 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

20 MS. WEISS: So, then we're  
21 turning it over to Meredith to talk about all  
22 the other parts of the application that you  
23 need to be aware of if you're applying for  
24 Category A, or B.

25 MS. FARACE: Good afternoon.

1 Joanne has already talked about some of the  
2 program requirements, but I'm going to cover  
3 a few others and a little bit more about  
4 application submission and how this  
5 application review process is going to work.  
6 Okay.

7 And again, I think Joanne  
8 covered this, but I'll talk again about it  
9 since we had a couple questions. The page  
10 length and formatting, we do have recommended  
11 page lengths for this, as Joanne mentioned.

12 The only thing that is not  
13 recommended but required is the two-page  
14 executive summary. But, other than that, the  
15 page lengths are recommended. And for the  
16 comprehensive assessment systems, the  
17 recommendation, the recommended page length is  
18 60 total pages. And for the high school  
19 course assessment programs, 45 pages.

20 We do have some formatting  
21 recommendations, as well. Again, they are  
22 recommendations. We do get a lot of  
23 questions on this sort of thing about do we  
24 have to do 1.5 line spacing in tables? No.  
25 You know, do what makes the most sense for

1           you, but please do try to stick to the  
2           recommendations as you best can to make it  
3           simpler for the peer reviewers.

4                       Okay. So, we're going to go  
5           over a couple of program requirements that we  
6           haven't touched on yet. An applicant that's  
7           awarded a grant has to actively participate  
8           in any applicable technical assistance  
9           activities conducted or facilitated by the  
10          Department.

11                      And that might include expert  
12          reviews, collaboration with other consortia,  
13          other activities as determined by the  
14          Department. Some of you might have been here  
15          yesterday for the main RTT technical  
16          assistance and we did have Delaware and  
17          Tennessee here.

18                      And so that's part of what, you  
19          know, an awardee will be doing is coming to  
20          meetings and working together. We want to  
21          make sure that there's, amongst consortia  
22          that, if there's more than one, so that they  
23          can work together.

24                      Also, the applicants would work  
25          with the Department to develop a strategy to

1           make student level data that results from the  
2           assessment system available on an ongoing  
3           basis for research. And we do recommend that  
4           there are FERPA issues with this, so an  
5           applicant would still comply with FERPA.

6                         An eligible applicant would use  
7           the funds from this grant category only for  
8           design, development and evaluation of the  
9           assessment system. As we talked about just a  
10          little bit earlier, that this grant can not  
11          be used for funds for the administration of  
12          operational assessments.

13                        And we talked about that a  
14          bit. Let us know if our FAQs cover what you  
15          need on that. And as you're developing this,  
16          you may identify current assessment or  
17          accountability requirements in Title I of the  
18          ESEA that would need to be waived in order  
19          for your member States to fully implement the  
20          proposed assessment system for purposes of  
21          assessment under Title 1.

22                        So, if you could indicate to us  
23          what you think those waivers might be, this  
24          wouldn't be an essential waiver request, but  
25          it would help to know what those challenges

1 are with the existing law and whether you  
2 would need any particular waivers in order to  
3 implement that assessment system.  
4 Questions?

5 REPORTER'S NOTE:

6 [Inaudible  
7 side conversation].

8 MS. VIATOR: Kip Viator,  
9 Massachusetts. I'm not sure if I missed a  
10 previous discussion about this, but could you  
11 talk more about what, you know, what does  
12 the policy state regarding  
13 potential waivers to ESEA?

14 MS. FARACE: We hadn't talked  
15 about this before. And we haven't seen what  
16 those waivers might be, so we really don't  
17 want to make any determinations right here  
18 until we see what they look like.

19 But what we're concerned about  
20 is whether your system is going to run into  
21 roadblocks with the existing Title I, so  
22 would want to hear from you. But, Ann has  
23 got more about that.

24 MS. WHALEN: I think that, as  
25 you're thinking about the design and

1 development of your system, in order to meet  
2 our absolute priorities and in order to  
3 execute against what you're proposing, what  
4 existing would you need waived or think you  
5 may need waived just so, as we and as  
6 reviewers look at the context of your  
7 application, we're able to see what you're  
8 taking into in your design.

9 I don't think anything is  
10 potentially off the table right now. And any  
11 State at anytime is always welcome to submit  
12 a waiver request to the Department, both  
13 inside and outside of this assessment  
14 structure.

15 So you are always welcome to do  
16 that. There is no one type of waiver we are  
17 affirmatively soliciting as part of this  
18 application.

19 MS. WEISS: We also didn't want  
20 you to be bound by what you think you have to  
21 do today and, therefore, not put in some  
22 feature that you thought was really important  
23 to your application.

24 So, I guess what we're saying  
25 is put that feature in and then just flag for

1 us that you would need a waiver in order to  
2 make that work.

3 MS. VIATOR: Okay. And so,  
4 basically, you're saying nothing's off the  
5 table. There just has to be a strong  
6 rationale for the proposal?

7 MS. WHALEN: Yes. And it would  
8 have to be anchored in what you're proposing.

9 MS. VIATOR. Of course. Fine.  
10 Connected to your proposal.

11 MS. WHALEN: And I would also,  
12 you know, try to think about what's actually  
13 an assessment requirement versus what we  
14 think are accountability requirements also.

15 MS. VIATOR: Okay. So these,  
16 you're speaking only of waivers to the  
17 assessment system. But, in so much as the  
18 assessment system is linked to the  
19 accountability requirements -- I mean, could  
20 you give me a for example --

21 MS. WHALEN: -- just flag --

22 MS. VIATOR: -- could you give  
23 me --

24 MS. WHALEN: -- just flag which  
25 one you think it falls under.

1 MS. VIATOR: Okay. Okay.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. WHALEN: Wes?

4 MR. BRUCE: So, since you have  
5 brought up the F word, this has little to do  
6 with this competition so --

7 MS. WEISS: -- which F word?

8 We get so many.

9 PARTICIPANTS: (Laughing).

10 MR. BRUCE: I suppose.

11 (Laughing). I mean it's a much larger issue  
12 in terms of SLDS, in terms of Race to the  
13 Top. You know, just sort of a pitch for  
14 would be a huge lift, but, if FERPA could be  
15 blown up and something that had some ties to  
16 the 20th century, in terms of protection of  
17 privacy, be put into place, that would be a  
18 wonderful thing.

19 And if you could even bring it into  
20 the 21st century, it would be better. But,  
21 many much us struggle to take advantage of  
22 technology based on, you know, current  
23 interpretations of a paper-bound world. So  
24 it's just little to do with this. But, since  
25 you mentioned it, it rang a bell.



1 MS. WEISS: Duly noted.

2 MS. WHALEN: (Laughing).

3 MS. WEISS: We'll take it back  
4 as part of the conversation we also have  
5 about why the Paperwork Reduction Act adds 20  
6 pages to every noticee that we put out. Yes,  
7 Greg.

8 MR. GALLAGHER: Greg Gallagher,  
9 North Dakota. The definition of operational  
10 assessment is not funny though. Is the first  
11 administration the first iteration ever to  
12 attempt to gather the data that becomes the  
13 basis this understood as an operational  
14 assessment. The prospect could be that you  
15 could go so far as to develop a test.

16 And then with certain  
17 components of this, States have to make a  
18 decision. To the degree... Will they opt out  
19 at certain points along the way. I don't  
20 know what happens here. You may end up not being  
21 able to get the kind of quality data that you  
22 would want within a true operational  
23 situation if you don't have kind of  
24 foundation. Is that first iteration an  
25 operational assessment?

1 MS. WHALEN: So, I was  
2 wondering if you could just say more about  
3 what you're thinking. Are you thinking would  
4 field testing, or piloting, or are you  
5 saying, in each member State, they are fully  
6 implementing the full summative assessment  
7 suite of components to gather the required  
8 information for the absolute priority?

9 MR. GALLAGHER: Well, I think  
10 the definitions of what we talked about in  
11 terms of highlighting are clearly on the  
12 table here. If you are moving forward as a  
13 consortium and working with States and there  
14 is a point where you want to be able to see  
15 exactly what is going to happen across all  
16 the States in the consortium.

17 Whatever one has done in terms  
18 of certain piloting is that first iteration  
19 on something as new as this, because there  
20 could be some new paradigms that are being  
21 put forth on assessments, that there is a  
22 possibility that, if it becomes too  
23 conservatively defined as an operational  
24 assessment, we may fall sort of being able to  
25 really get the full benefit of this effort.

1                   It's that final phase that  
2                   becomes critical to make this thing really,  
3                   truly operational for the future. That could  
4                   become an impediment. And for those of us  
5                   States that are trying to decide whether we  
6                   want to go with this gig or not --

7                   MS. WEISS: So...

8                   MR. GALLAGHER: -- that becomes  
9                   a real concern.

10                  MS. WEISS: So, I think you're  
11                  asking in a different way a similar question  
12                  to the one that Joe asked, which is where do  
13                  we draw this line, because it's actually  
14                  gray, it's not a very bright line.

15                  So, one thing that would help  
16                  us to consistently define terms in the  
17                  notice, and we'll have to issue guidance  
18                  around it to help make this clearer is, if  
19                  you guys write in, not only the question, but  
20                  also if you've got thoughts on where we could  
21                  help draw this line so that it's clear...

22                  I mean, obviously, we're saying  
23                  that the ongoing administration costs,  
24                  ongoing over the course of many years, the  
25                  annual costs of administering are not part of

1           this grant.

2                           But, the question of how far  
3           does this grant take you within this  
4           four-year scheme through the process is a  
5           good question. And if you guys have thoughts  
6           on how you think it would help us to define  
7           or not define where that line is, certainly  
8           put those into our mailbox when you give us  
9           the question, as well.

10                           Because we're happy to hear how  
11           you think we could define it in a way that  
12           would be the most beneficial. We certainly  
13           do want to pay for the costs of making sure  
14           that this an assessment that works as  
15           promised. And I realize that's a fuzzy  
16           definition at the moment.

17                           MR. WILLHOFT: Thank you,  
18           Joanne. Joe Willhoft, Washington. A 'for  
19           instance' that comes immediately to mind is,  
20           for example, standard setting. Which happens  
21           after the assessment has been given and after  
22           the assessment has been scored.

23                           But, in a sense, it's a  
24           development cost. It's not really an ongoing  
25           cost. But it is, it resides out -- so these

1 aren't necessarily time bound, they are event  
2 bound. It's possible to imagine a situation,  
3 as Greg's comments make me think, a system  
4 where there's a large-scale operational  
5 involvement in the year before 14-15, in  
6 which items become calibrated and --

7 MS. WEISS: Yep.

8 MR. WILLHOFT: -- standards  
9 become set.

10 MS. WEISS: Right.

11 MR. WILLHOFT: And it might  
12 generate a waiver of some State chooses, you  
13 know, "I'll, yes, I'll play in third and  
14 fourth grade, but nowhere else", kind of a  
15 thing. Just to --

16 MS. WEISS: Yep.

17 MR. WILLHOFT: -- take... But  
18 that is a, that would be a development cost  
19 that --

20 MS. WEISS: Right.

21 MR. WILLHOFT: -- would not be  
22 an operational cost.

23 MS. WEISS: Correct.

24 MR. WILLHOFT: So, help with  
25 this boundary would be very useful for us.

1 MS. FARACE: Scott had a  
2 question.

3 MR. MARION: Thanks. Scott  
4 Marion, Center for Assessment. I want to go  
5 back to follow up on Kit's ESEA question.  
6 So, the way that I -- and maybe this will  
7 help clarify a little bit, but it... I hope.

8 So, we actually, the only way  
9 we can interpret that is the current  
10 iteration of the ESEA. And I'm thinking  
11 about what kind of waivers we would need  
12 under NCLB because we don't have anything  
13 else --

14 MS. WEISS: Yep. Right.

15 MR. MARION: -- to replace it.  
16 But, we're guessing by 2014-15 there will be  
17 a replacement for NCLB or the next version of  
18 ESEA. We can't write to that. We can only  
19 write as if NCLB is carried forward. But, so  
20 that's one piece of it that's pretty clear.

21 But then these waivers would  
22 be -- I think about it in two phases, as the  
23 way Joe just talked about it, during the  
24 proposal -- or not proposal phase, but during  
25 the development phase of the consortium

1 materials, you might need a waiver to do the  
2 studies, the pilot testing or something like  
3 that.

4 But then, also, I think we need  
5 to anticipate after operational, if NCLB  
6 doesn't get reauthorized, if that carries  
7 forward, what kind of waivers would we need  
8 once it's operational?

9 Is that two parts, during the  
10 development and then during the operational?  
11 Or how are you seeing that?

12 MS. WEISS: So, I think we were  
13 thinking that it was primarily the second  
14 question in an NCLB world, since that's the  
15 one we know today. Once these were  
16 operational are there things about your  
17 design that you're proposing that require a  
18 waiver in that world.

19 I do think you're right that,  
20 during the field testing and other parts of  
21 this, as you're sort of getting close to  
22 scale, there may well be a State that wants  
23 to do sort of a large-scale field test that  
24 would require them to want to waive something  
25 else that year.

1                   I think, as Ann said, we can  
2 entertain waivers anytime. It's not like  
3 this is your only shot to ask for a waiver.  
4 Really what we're trying to do here is just  
5 make sure that, if there's something in your  
6 design that you know right now would be a  
7 problem under NCLB, you just let us know that  
8 you know that and here's what it is so that  
9 we can just see it up front.

10                   To the extent that you know  
11 that's built into your design. So, we're not  
12 going to have peer reviewers evaluate or  
13 judge this in any way. It's a sort of  
14 heads-up FYI, so that we all know what we're  
15 saying. Okay.

16                   MS. FARACE: Okay? Anything  
17 else?

18                   PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

19                   MS. FARACE: Okay. Let's go on  
20 to application submission. Not the sexiest  
21 part of the day, but very important. Because  
22 all of you are going to have questions the  
23 day before, I know it. So, submit the  
24 applications in paper copy, including one  
25 original and one copy.



1                   We need to make sure that there  
2                   is, the original and copy includes signed  
3                   original versions of your signature pages and  
4                   one copy of that original. And I want to  
5                   make one point that we've had questions about  
6                   this in the past, is a faxed signature an  
7                   original and it is not.

8                   So, think about that as you're  
9                   getting signatures across your consortium.  
10                  You should indicate the CFDA number, which we  
11                  have listed here, on a mailing envelope. And  
12                  then we have two options. You can look on  
13                  the NIA, either for overnight mail or hand  
14                  delivery.

15                  And they are different places,  
16                  so make sure you get the right address for  
17                  whichever option that you're going to  
18                  choose. You may want to... You may be  
19                  tempted to do it both ways. We prefer you  
20                  just pick one because we will have people  
21                  there waiting for it. We will make sure that  
22                  it gets there as long as you mail it by the  
23                  deadline. Yes.

24                  MR. GALLAGHER: Greg Gallagher,  
25                  North Dakota. I thought I'd never say this,

1 but you had mentioned that the waivers  
2 themselves would not be scoreable by the  
3 peers.

4 And I'm wondering if that's  
5 maybe not exactly what they should score. A  
6 waiver is, when you start talking about the  
7 systemic concept of what you're trying to  
8 achieve, waivers cut to the core of your  
9 world view.

10 It becomes inherently a part of  
11 your application, your core proposal. An  
12 example, if we were to address the system  
13 that entertained the prospect, because of  
14 higher and lower achieving students, the need  
15 to deal with out-of-level testing, that's a  
16 waivable issue under the current rules.

17 MS. WEISS: Right.

18 MR. GALLAGHER: That goes right  
19 to the core. Now, that would go a long way  
20 to establish that kind of trust among the  
21 States --

22 MS. WEISS: Right.

23 MR. GALLAGHER: -- to the  
24 degree that we are moving, in fact, toward a  
25 new perspective of accountability. I'm just

1           wondering if that is, in fact, something that  
2           should be reviewed by peers.

3                   MS. WEISS:  So, it will be in  
4           your application, but because it's in the  
5           program requirement section, it's not built  
6           in to the selection criteria.

7                   But, certainly, that's a  
8           perfect example of the kind of dots that we  
9           would like you to connect in your application  
10          to just make clear the philosophy.  And I  
11          think there are plenty of places in the  
12          selection criteria where you will say that  
13          and make it clear and, in those places, the  
14          peer reviewers will clearly see it.

15                   MS. WHALEN:  And I do just want  
16          to say that in terms of the merit of the  
17          individual waiver, a peer reviewer doesn't  
18          actually have the authority to play that  
19          role.  So that is the authority of the  
20          Secretary.

21                   MS. WEISS:  To actually grant a  
22          waiver.

23                   MS. FARACE:  Okay.  So, we did  
24          ask for your application to be hard copy, but  
25          we do recognize that there might be certain

1 things that, certain content that can not be  
2 submitted in paper form.

3 For instance, certain test  
4 items or simulations, that kind of thing.  
5 So, we've provided you the ability to submit  
6 on a CD ROM or a DVD ROM and gave you some  
7 file types that you need to use for those.  
8 And if you do that, you need to send ten  
9 copies of those CDs or DVDs.

10 MR. KINGSTON: Neal Kingston,  
11 Kansas. And as we think of internet-based  
12 assessments, no URLs are allowed as a way of  
13 doing anything. That seems a little  
14 inconsistent.

15 MS. WEISS: Well, the reason  
16 for that is because, by the time the peer  
17 reviewers review the information, it's  
18 possible that website has changed and the  
19 content has changed or you get a link that  
20 also links you to a lot of different things.

21 MR. KINGSTON: No. I was  
22 thinking, more specifically, if a proposal  
23 wanted to create a website as part of the  
24 proposal to demonstrate new interactive item  
25 types of something like that.

1 MS. WEISS: So... So, right.  
2 And so that's what -- and so, I know this is  
3 a little -- I grant you this is a tiny bit  
4 nuts. But, we need to ask you to put that  
5 website on to a CD and send it to us that  
6 way. As opposed to just give us the URL.

7 Because, again, the hard and  
8 fast deadline is June 23rd. If you sent us a  
9 URL, who is to say that on June 24th or July  
10 1st or July 7th, you didn't keep changing it  
11 and all the peer reviewers who looked at it  
12 at different times saw different things.

13 So, it's just the only way we  
14 can consistently know that what you sent us  
15 is what everyone is looking at. But, I grant  
16 you that you will be putting a website on a  
17 CD and that's kind of a nutty thing to do.

18 MS. FARACE: Okay.  
19 Applications must be received, not postmarked,  
20 by 4:30 on June 23rd. And we can not accept  
21 late applications. And then let's go into  
22 how applications will be reviewed. The  
23 consortium may apply for a grant in either or  
24 both of the categories.

25 We've talked about that

1           before. The Department will have  
2           applications reviewed separately in each grant  
3           category. But there's likely going to be  
4           just one panel of peer reviewers who will  
5           review all applications in both competition  
6           categories.

7                         Now, that depends on how many  
8           applications we get. We need to make sure  
9           that the panel doesn't have so much to read  
10          that they can't get that done in that period  
11          of time. So, depending on how many we get,  
12          we'll likely have one panel and that panel  
13          will be reviewing all applications and all  
14          parts of the applications.

15                        So, how it's going to work is  
16          very similar to RTT, if anyone was here  
17          yesterday. Reviewers will review  
18          applications independently first. They'll  
19          write their preliminary comments and assign  
20          preliminary scores and they do this from home  
21          during the month of July.

22                        And then they will convene  
23          in early August to review and discuss their  
24          applications. So, as a panel, they will  
25          discuss each one individually and then they

1 will take some time after that to  
2 individually revise or not, if they choose  
3 not to, and finalize their comments and  
4 scores.

5                   There's not going to be a State  
6 presentation the way we had in RTT, so this  
7 will be the application only. Then the  
8 Department averages the reviewers' scores and  
9 rank orders them and we create a slate for  
10 each category of the competition.

11                   And then we present that to the  
12 Secretary and he makes a final determination  
13 of the winner in each category. Any  
14 questions on that piece? Scott? And just to  
15 let you know, we're still in the process of  
16 finalizing who those panel reviewers are.

17                   MR. MARION: Scott Marion,  
18 Center for Assessment. So, I think it's  
19 great that, if it works out, that you had one  
20 common panel. It would be an advantage.

21                   It will be nice to know how  
22 many you are thinking about for a panel and  
23 then, with that, the reason I stated it is  
24 your second to last bullet, one of the things  
25 those of us who like to deal with things like

1 averages and measures of variability, think  
2 that not always a simple average is the best  
3 way to get at things.

4 And one way you can sort of  
5 check the validity of their ratings, I'm sure  
6 there's -- is try another way of (inaudible),  
7 even like a median as opposed to a  
8 mathematic average. So, just something to  
9 think about for that as a way to do that.

10 The other part, though, and I  
11 think more direct question is some of us who  
12 have been sort of witnesses to the peer  
13 review process under the standards of  
14 assessment systems have had some concerns of  
15 the ability of the peers to run amuck, for  
16 lack of a better term.

17 And we're hoping with this  
18 application review that, since there will  
19 likely be not very many applications.  
20 Guessing. That the folks, like you folks,  
21 the Department staff who are so well versed  
22 in this, can actually... I don't want to say  
23 take over the review, but at least...

24 PARTICIPANTS: (Laughing).

25 MR. MARION: Constrain it --



1 MS. FARACE: -- strike that  
2 from the record, please (laughing).

3 MR. MARION: -- constrain it a  
4 little bit more than we've seen in the past.  
5 Some of us have had concerns with the quality  
6 of the reviews.

7 MS. FARACE: Okay. Duly  
8 noted. I'll tell you a little bit more about  
9 our roll in this, in a competitive, you know,  
10 competition setting, which is a little bit  
11 different than the situation that you're  
12 talking about with the assessment reviews.

13 We do have a fairly detailed  
14 and lengthy process for choosing who they are  
15 and making sure that they have the  
16 qualifications that we need. You can see  
17 what we're looking for in the call for  
18 reviewers. And then we're doing an extensive  
19 conflict of interest check on that.

20 Then, when they are back at  
21 home reviewing, we do have panel monitors who  
22 are Department career staff, who are assigned  
23 to work with the experts. And what they do  
24 is make sure that the comments and the scores  
25 that the peer viewers are writing up are

1 justified.

2                   So, is a score justified by the  
3 comments? Are the comments based on the  
4 criteria? So, they're not getting  
5 substantively involved in, you know, what the  
6 content is of that. And actually we make a  
7 concerted effort not to review the  
8 application beforehand so that any of our  
9 judgment doesn't get, you know, into that  
10 mix.

11                   But we do make sure that there  
12 are extensive comments that are justified and  
13 will help, you know, make everyone understand  
14 why we chose who we did. And then, when the  
15 peer reviewers are on site, those panel  
16 monitors are in the room with them. So,  
17 there will likely be one or two panel  
18 monitors.

19                   And we haven't made a final  
20 decision on how many peer reviewers, but it's  
21 going to be more than a handful. I mean, it  
22 won't be a large crowd, but it will  
23 definitely be enough to have a good  
24 conversation.

25                   And the role of the panel

1 monitors in that conversation is to  
2 facilitate that conversation, to know where  
3 the different comments come out and show them  
4 where there are differences in the comments  
5 and the scores.

6 Not to say you have to come to  
7 consensus, but rather to say do you all have  
8 the same understanding of this criterion? Do  
9 you all have the same understanding of the  
10 application, because you seem to have a  
11 different point of view?

12 If, in the end, they still have  
13 a different point of view, that's  
14 acceptable. And there might be wide  
15 variation even after that conversation. But  
16 the panel monitor's responsibility is to make  
17 sure that everyone has that conversation and  
18 has a chance to talk.

19 So, there is a facilitating  
20 role, but it is, in a competition, not  
21 allowed for a panel monitor to actually  
22 insert themselves and make any determinations  
23 about that application. No one at the  
24 Department will be judging that, beyond, you  
25 know, are they consistent with the criteria.

1                   MR. MARION: That is -- that  
2                   does help and that facilitative role, that's  
3                   encouraging.

4                   MS. FARACE: And we choose  
5                   panel monitors that have experience in doing  
6                   that and having that role, as well as people  
7                   who understand the criteria themselves. They  
8                   also go through the training that the peers  
9                   go through.

10                   So we have quite a detailed  
11                   process for keeping track of all that and we  
12                   have done that with RTT and we will do, you  
13                   know, a similarly extensive training for this  
14                   one. Okay. Other questions on the  
15                   application review?

16                   PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

17                   MS. FARACE: And the last slide  
18                   I have here, just so that you understand what  
19                   the scoring rubric is because it's important  
20                   that you and the panel of peers know how  
21                   exactly... Both know exactly how these things  
22                   are going to be scored.

23                   As Joanne said, these are not  
24                   scored at a very minute romanette level.  
25                   Rather, they have the large criteria. They

1           have a holistic, holistic response for the  
2           peers.

3                           And what they're looking at is,  
4           is it a low, medium or high quality  
5           response. And there are point values  
6           associated with each of the criteria and then  
7           these different ranges do show you exactly  
8           how many points you might get if you have low,  
9           medium or high, depending on the point  
10          value.

11                          So, keep that in mind as you're  
12          thinking about how many points each category  
13          gets and what that might mean as far as the  
14          scoring rubric goes. Questions on that?

15                          MR. KINGSTON: Neal Kingston,  
16          Kansas. I'm actually more confused now that  
17          I have seen this chart. I look at the range  
18          of medium 16 to 44.

19                          Are people saying this is  
20          medium and then picking a number between 16  
21          to 44? And that seems just a little wide, to  
22          reduce the variability and increase the  
23          reliability of the process.

24                          MS. WEISS: Yeah. And  
25          actually, we have a slightly different -- so,

1           our goal here is to allow reviewers to really  
2           discriminate pretty broadly across the  
3           quality of the different responses that  
4           they're seeing in this and to give them, you  
5           know, we expect to get a panel of highly  
6           qualified people.

7                         We don't need to search out  
8           tons of these experts. We can get one or  
9           possibly two panels of really, highly  
10          qualified people to use their expert judgment  
11          and look across these applications and just  
12          exercise that judgment.

13                        So, we've designed a scoring  
14          rubric that favors that over tightly  
15          controlling for specifically telling them  
16          tight ranges within which they need to judge  
17          things. Scott? I know this is going to lead  
18          to tons of hands going up around the room  
19          now. But, Scott?

20                        MS. FARACE: There's one right  
21          here (indicating).

22                        MS. WEISS: Yeah.

23                        MR. SMITH: Just so, I'm  
24          sorry. But this is a, this kind of stuff  
25          makes some of us a little nutty. And so, and

1 building off of Neal's point, just by adding  
2 more points won't necessarily allow them to  
3 be more discriminate. It could actually  
4 introduce more error.

5 So, one of the things I'm  
6 worried about, though, as we're thinking  
7 about this is with the Race to the Top, we  
8 saw the language.

9 And I don't know if it was a  
10 direct quote from you guys or somebody in the  
11 papers picked it up, this notion of a natural  
12 break between, you know, where things fell  
13 off between 16 and 17 or 2 and 3 in the way  
14 the scores fell out. Well, if we're looking  
15 for a natural break and there is only two  
16 applicants we're --

17 MS. WEISS: -- we're not --

18 MR. SMITH: -- in trouble. So,  
19 one of the things that we, for instance like  
20 with the journal reviews, the reviewers often  
21 say, you know accept, accept with revision,  
22 you know, reject and resubmit or reject and  
23 on.

24 Well, will you ask the  
25 reviewers to do anything like that to come to

1           some global statement of, you know, accept or  
2           accept with negotiations and things like  
3           that?

4                           MS. WEISS:  Yes.  The absolute  
5           priority functions in a fashion similar to  
6           that in this competition.  It's ultimately  
7           the Secretary's decision about whether he  
8           funds 0, 1, 2 applications.

9                           But, yes, we can and intend to  
10          use the absolute priority in this competition  
11          as sort of a high bar that allows reviewers  
12          to give us that kind of feedback.

13                          We also think that the comments  
14          that they have given throughout all of the  
15          scoring that they do can help us figure out  
16          the, you know, your part that was with  
17          revisions, as we're getting into talking  
18          about a cooperative agreement.

19                          We're hopeful that those  
20          comments will give us some guidance about  
21          areas in which the application can be  
22          improved as we go into the process of talking  
23          about a cooperative agreement.  So, we do  
24          hope all that information will help inform  
25          those decisions.  You had a question?



1                   MR. SMITH: I do. Scott Smith  
2                   from Kansas. And actually, I apologize, it  
3                   may not be a question. The maximum point  
4                   value. I'm looking at Slide 100.

5                   MS. WEISS: Is 200 for each  
6                   competition.

7                   MR. SMITH: Actually, my  
8                   question is if you look at the maximum point  
9                   value, 60, that particular section. Is that  
10                  a matter of a relative estimation of the  
11                  sections importance? And, if so, the wider  
12                  range, then, is meant to reflect the  
13                  significance?

14                  Or, is it that there's a wider  
15                  range there and also subsequent larger value  
16                  because of the length of the material? In  
17                  other words, I guess my question is, are we  
18                  trying to measure the significance and  
19                  importance of something relative to the  
20                  overall application or the number of discreet  
21                  pieces that we're looking at? This is a  
22                  follow up on Neal's question.

23                  MS. WEISS: So --

24                  MR. SMITH: -- that would merit  
25                  a range of 16 to 44.

1 MS. WEISS: So, let me just see  
2 if this answers your question. So, go  
3 forward, Meredith and click up a Slide 113,  
4 quickly. So... Oh. Yeah. So, see how  
5 this... So, we're in Category B now. This is  
6 giving you a little teaser for what happens  
7 after the break.

8 So, each of the criteria that  
9 we just went through in Category A and will  
10 go through in Category B has a point value  
11 associated with it that is, indeed, our  
12 judgment call of the weight of that  
13 particular criterion, either because of the  
14 scope of the criterion and it just includes a  
15 lot of stuff and/or the importance of the  
16 criterion.

17 So, these are the sort of  
18 policy decisions that we made about how much  
19 each of the different criteria are worth in  
20 the total score.

21 And then that chart that you  
22 saw is just guidance to the reviewers that  
23 says, in general, here's how to think about  
24 how to chunk this out when you're assigning  
25 the points because we're not going down to

1 the detailed abc level and assigning points  
2 at that level for the reasons that we talked  
3 about earlier. We want to give them a  
4 more...

5 MR. SMITH: So, as a reviewer,  
6 and I don't want to put words in your mouth,  
7 but as a reviewer say is working or thinking  
8 about a span of 16 to 44, what they're  
9 actually thinking about is relative weight  
10 of the section?

11 MS. WEISS: The 60 points range  
12 gives the reviewer the relative weight and,  
13 within that, they're saying how well does it  
14 accomplish that.

15 MR. SMITH: That's what I was  
16 asking.

17 MS. WEISS: Yes.

18 MR. SMITH: Okay.

19 MS. WEISS: Okay.

20 MS. FARACE: Questions about  
21 anything I talked about?

22 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

23 MS. FARACE: Okay.

24 MS. WEISS: Great. So, let's  
25 take a break. We're running a little ahead

1 of schedule, just a few minutes. Should we  
2 take like a 15-minute break and come back  
3 around 2:35?

4 And if we can get you out of  
5 here early, we will be happy to do that. I  
6 will say that the rest of the session that  
7 we're doing after the break is specifically  
8 around Category B. So, if people are not  
9 applying for Category B, they're only  
10 interested in Category A application, you are  
11 welcome to take off if you'd like to.

12 If you have got any last  
13 questions, let's just give you a few minutes  
14 to ask those now before we disappear just to  
15 make sure that you have got your last  
16 questions answered. Joe?

17 MR. WILLHOFT: Joe Willhoft,  
18 Washington. Thank you. Joanne, I just, many  
19 of us or several of us are going to have to  
20 catch flights out and so forth and so on.

21 I want to take this opportunity  
22 to speak for myself and I know for some  
23 others to thank you for a well-coordinated  
24 workshop here and also for the overall  
25 coordination of the application form and

1 everything. You all have done a very good  
2 job. So, thank you for your assistance.

3 PARTICIPANTS: (Applause).

4 MS. WEISS: Thanks. And for  
5 those of you not coming back, have a good  
6 flight home. And we really are watching this  
7 mailbox closely and will get answers to you  
8 as quickly as we can.

9 And know that there's some  
10 things we already wrote down that we need to  
11 get back to you on, that there's some things  
12 that you can help us do a better job of  
13 defining if we understand your context and  
14 needs a little better.

15 So, don't hesitate to give us  
16 your thoughts and advice, as well as your  
17 questions. So, thank you and have a good  
18 trip back. We'll be scheduling that  
19 conference call for the States that need to  
20 talk to us about the procurement issues that  
21 we spoke about.

22 We'll send an e-mail out  
23 scheduling that for early next week, so watch  
24 for that. And we'll see you back here, if  
25 you're coming back to meet with us, at around

1 2:35 and feel free to move forward because I  
2 have a feeling we're going to have a less  
3 crowded room when we come back. Thanks.

4 MS. FARACE: Thanks.

5 REPORTER'S NOTE: Whereupon,  
6 a short recess is taken.

7 MS. WHALEN: So, for the next  
8 little bit, I think we're going to be  
9 focusing on Category B, the high school  
10 course assessment program.

11 And a lot of this is going to  
12 look very familiar to what we went through in  
13 the morning around Category A, the  
14 comprehensive assessment system. But I do  
15 want to reiterate some of the comments Joanne  
16 made this morning around the why associated  
17 with the high school course assessment  
18 program.

19 So, I think when we were  
20 thinking about these funds and how they can  
21 be used and their best use, one of the  
22 feedback we received from experts and from  
23 the public, as well, is that high schools are  
24 really a hard nut to crack.

25 With courses, with assessments,

1 with students, with teachers, it's very  
2 complex and it deserves a lot of time and  
3 attention. So, we elected to devote 30  
4 million dollars associated just with high  
5 school course assessments.

6 And what we are thinking around  
7 this program is that it's about increasing  
8 the rigor and quality of high school courses  
9 and that the assessments that go with those  
10 courses, increase equity around these courses  
11 in assessments, so that means Algebra 1 means  
12 Algebra 1 means Algebra 1 no matter where you  
13 are within member States.

14 And that we're supporting a  
15 diverse course offering. So, it's not just  
16 about math and ELA. But it's also about  
17 foreign language, about social studies, about  
18 science, about college and career technical  
19 education.

20 So it's a real opportunity to  
21 kind of broaden the curriculum and how we  
22 bring rigor and equity to that. I do want to  
23 flag also that, from our perspective, this  
24 is not about federal accountability.

25 So, we will not be requiring

1           that this be used for AYP or for school  
2           effectiveness determination. States may  
3           elect to use this for their State  
4           accountability systems, but that's not  
5           something we will be requiring.

6                         We're going to review both the  
7           priorities, the absolute and competitive  
8           priorities, as well as the selection  
9           criteria.

10                        I am just going to race through  
11           the things that are very common with the  
12           comprehensive assessment system, since we  
13           went through them in detail, and just  
14           highlight the things that are different as  
15           part of this part of the Category B  
16           competition.

17                        Again, don't hesitate to raise  
18           your hands if you have questions, need  
19           clarification or anything like that. And I  
20           know that there are a number of questions that  
21           came in to us about how these two potential  
22           competitions overlap or dovetail together, so  
23           we will get to that, as well.

24                        So, the high school course  
25           assessment program goal is for the Department



1 to support the development work of new or  
2 adapted assessments for high school courses.  
3 So, not everything has to be made from  
4 scratch.

5 If you have current assessments  
6 within your States or from other countries,  
7 or off the shelf, that can be adapted to meet  
8 your design of a high school course  
9 assessment program, that's allowable use of  
10 these funds.

11 It has to be used across  
12 multiple States, so we are asking that  
13 eligible applicants be a consortium, again,  
14 of States. And that they're valid, reliable  
15 and fair for the intended purposes and  
16 students. So, the absolute priority for the  
17 high school course assessment is written  
18 similar to what we did in the Category A.

19 You don't write specifically to  
20 the absolute priority. You write it across  
21 the criterion. And then, at the end, the  
22 peer reviewers will go back and make sure  
23 that you met all the requirements within the  
24 absolute priority.

25 And we're asking that for each

1 course assessment in the program that it  
2 measures student knowledge and skills against  
3 standards from a common set of college and  
4 career standards, where these exist. So, if  
5 the consortium has common math and ELA  
6 standards, you should be developing  
7 assessments to those.

8 But, if common standards don't  
9 exist, that's fine, you can build assessments  
10 against common expectations of rigor or  
11 rigorous standards.

12 As appropriate, these  
13 assessments show elicit complex student  
14 demonstrations or applications of knowledge  
15 and skills, produce student achievement data  
16 and student growth data over a full academic  
17 year or course that can be used to inform  
18 determinations of individual, principal and  
19 teacher effectiveness and development of  
20 support needs, and teaching and learning and  
21 program improvement.

22 So, again, I want to flag that,  
23 in terms of our requirements, you don't  
24 have to use this for school effectiveness  
25 determinations. Or measure students on track

1 to being college and career ready.

2 These assessments must be  
3 designed to include the broadest range of  
4 students possible, including English  
5 learner's and students with disabilities.

6 The applicant can demonstrate  
7 that it will develop and implement a high  
8 school course assessment program that  
9 includes assessment from multiple courses,  
10 that will be implemented in each member State  
11 at a scale that will enable significant  
12 improvements in student achievement outcomes  
13 statewide.

14 And includes a process for  
15 certifying the rigor of each assessment in  
16 the assessment program, and for assuring the  
17 assessment for the courses covering similar  
18 content have common expectations for rigor.

19 So, I want to flag here that  
20 part of what we are doing, because this is not  
21 using this for a federal accountability tool, we  
22 are looking at the impact of these assessments.  
23 So, we don't want to use federal resources  
24 and tax payer money to pay for boutique or  
25 niche assessments.

1                   So, we are looking for how the  
2 consortium is going to come with a program  
3 that demonstrates the scale and impact of  
4 students across all member States. And that  
5 there is an ongoing processing body that can  
6 continue to certify the rigor of  
7 assessments even past the end of the program  
8 grant.

9                   And I know that one question  
10 that we did receive was does each State have  
11 to administer every assessment within the  
12 assessment program? The answer is no, it  
13 does not.

14                   This is just part of what can  
15 be articulated in the MOU or in the  
16 application is how different States are going  
17 to take on different roles and which  
18 assessments are going to be used in which  
19 States, as well. We have two competitive  
20 preference priorities in this competition,  
21 the first one focusing on STEM-related  
22 fields.

23                   And the goal is to develop,  
24 with input from one or more four-year degree-  
25 granting IHEs assessments for high school

1 courses that comprise a rigorous course of  
2 study that is designed to prepare high school  
3 students for postsecondary study and careers  
4 in the STEM fields.

5 Any courses of study may  
6 include crosscutting and interdisciplinary  
7 STEM courses. So, it's not just math,  
8 science, engineering. We do think  
9 information like computer science,  
10 bioengineering, such things as that, should  
11 be, could be an integral part of what this  
12 priority is made up.

13 And the way one writes to this  
14 priority is that they, an applicant must  
15 address the priority throughout the  
16 application narrative, but also provide a  
17 separate plan that describes the courses for  
18 which assessments will be developed, how the  
19 courses provide a rigorous course of study  
20 that is designed to prepare high school  
21 students for postsecondary study and careers  
22 in STEM fields.

23 And how input from one or more  
24 four-year degree-granting IHEs will be  
25 obtained, and develop assessments for these

1 courses. So, as part, just to reiterate  
2 this, when you apply for this grant, if you  
3 choose to apply for this grant.

4 And you're developing  
5 assessments and courses in science and math,  
6 as you write for it across your full  
7 application, you should be representing that  
8 you are applying for courses in science and  
9 math.

10 And then as you write to the  
11 specific competitive priority, you discuss  
12 that in your narrative, as well. We will be  
13 granting points in this  
14 competitive priority in an all-or-nothing  
15 basis and that will be determined by the peer  
16 reviewers. So, there won't be kind of a  
17 medium range or a low range. It's either  
18 zero or ten.

19 MS. WEISS: Another thing we  
20 should point out about this competitive  
21 priority and the next one is that, while in  
22 the main part of the competition you can  
23 pick, you know, whatever courses you want to  
24 pick to develop your assessments around.

25 Here, we really are targeting a

1 rigorous course of study, so it's a fully  
2 articulated system. It's necessarily not all  
3 four grade levels, if that doesn't make sense  
4 for the particular area, but it is a rigorous  
5 course of study that takes kids from where  
6 they may be when they enter high school to  
7 the point at which they're ready.

8 So, it's a series of courses,  
9 as opposed to individual courses in the  
10 curriculum that you might have.

11 MS. WHALEN: I'm going to stop  
12 just for a quick second to see if anybody has  
13 any questions on this competitive priority.  
14 Nope? Yep?

15 MR. KINGSTON: The emphasis --  
16 Neal Kingston, Kansas. The emphasis on STEM  
17 makes it sound like, although you did not  
18 mention specific subjects, that you're  
19 interested in science math, not reading,  
20 English language, arts, history or anything  
21 else. Is that a correct assumption on my  
22 part?

23 MS. WHALEN: So, can I just  
24 check what your question is? Is it within  
25 this competitive priority or across the

1 Category B competition.

2 MR. KINGSTON: Well, yes,  
3 across.

4 MS. WHALEN: No. So, as part  
5 of the Category B competition, a consortium  
6 may apply for any types of courses. We do  
7 not value one course over another. What we  
8 are valuing is impact.

9 So, in a little bit we'll go to  
10 that, but it's about how many high schools  
11 are included, how many students you are  
12 touching with these assessments. What we  
13 have elected to do is we know that both  
14 STEM-related fields, as well as career and  
15 technical education represent two really  
16 vital pipelines for students right now, that  
17 we believe deserve our attention and  
18 investment.

19 And bringing IHEs to the table  
20 and business partners to the table, as we  
21 develop these assessments, add value to where  
22 we are going as a nation.

23 So, that's why we elected to  
24 move forward to competitive priorities around  
25 these two different strands. But, that does



1 not mean that we devalue foreign language or  
2 social studies. We do value those very  
3 much.

4 MR. KINGSTON: Okay.

5 MS. WHALEN: So, we began  
6 talking about this a little bit, but the  
7 Competitive Priority 2 is looking at a  
8 rigorous course of study in the career and  
9 technical education fields that prepare high  
10 school students for success for a technical  
11 certification examination or postsecondary  
12 education or employment in that field.

13 And writing to this competitive  
14 preference priority, the applicant will again  
15 identify a rigorous course of study in that  
16 specific field that they elect in the career and  
17 technical education strand and, with business  
18 community partnership, design assessments for  
19 that rigorous course of study.

20 This will be, again, awarded on  
21 a zero or ten point basis, all or nothing. I  
22 do want to flag that, if a consortium elects  
23 to apply under both competitive priorities,  
24 it cannot double count course assessments.

25 So, even if Algebra 2 is part

1 of the rigorous course of study in the STEM  
2 priority and in a CTE priority, it can only  
3 be for one or the other. Does that make  
4 sense?

5 MS. WEISS: Yeah. So, we did  
6 get some questions saying does this mean you  
7 think that things that are STEM aren't also  
8 career technical? And it doesn't mean that.  
9 It just means we don't want you to have one  
10 course of study and get 20 points for it.

11 So, pick where you're putting  
12 it and allows us to give you ten points for  
13 it in that area and then you've got to earn  
14 those points in the other area  
15 independently.

16 MS. WHALEN: Let me pause here  
17 to see if there are any questions about  
18 Competitive Priority 2.

19 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

20 MS. WHALEN: So, we're now into  
21 the selection criteria in Category B. The  
22 theory of action is worth up to five points  
23 and the goal is the extent to which the  
24 eligible applicant's theory of action is  
25 logical, coherent, credible and will result

1 in improved academic outcomes for high school  
2 students across the States in the  
3 consortium.

4 As part of this theory of  
5 action we'll be looking for the description  
6 of and rationale for how their proposed high  
7 school course assessments programs will be  
8 incorporated into a coherent high school  
9 educational system.

10 How the assessment program  
11 rigor will be demonstrated and maintained  
12 over time. How the assessment program will  
13 cover diverse course offerings that provide a  
14 variety of pathways for students.

15 And how the assessment program  
16 will be implemented at a scale, that across  
17 States in the consortium, increases access to  
18 rigorous courses for students who have not  
19 typically had such access. And how broadly  
20 it improves student achievement and college  
21 and career readiness.

22 So, this is a little different  
23 from Category A. We combined the course  
24 assessment -- the design and the development  
25 part of this category into one criterion

1           around course assessment, program design and  
2           development and this is worth up to 60  
3           points.

4                       So, to the extent to which the  
5           design and development of the eligible  
6           applicant's proposed high school assessment  
7           program is feasible, scalable and consistent  
8           with the theory of action.

9                       And we're looking at the high  
10          school courses for which the consortium will  
11          implement these assessments and the rationale  
12          for selecting those courses.

13                      And how those courses will  
14          include access to rigor for students who  
15          have not typically had such access and the  
16          processes for which new high school courses  
17          assessments will be added to the assessment  
18          program, over time existing course  
19          assessments will be updated and refreshed.

20                      So, again, this is not just  
21          about a point in time developing new or  
22          adapting new assessments, but how you are  
23          developing a system to continue to certify  
24          the rigor of your assessments over time and  
25          into the future and add new courses to your

1 program. We will also consider how these --

2 MS. WEISS: -- oops, there's a  
3 question.

4 MS. VIATOR: Kit Viator from  
5 Massachusetts. And do you mind if I just go  
6 back just a smidge?

7 MS. WEISS: (Indicating).

8 MS. VIATOR: And this might be  
9 obvious to everyone, but I'm sorry it's not  
10 to me, and the question is about for the  
11 competitive preference priority.

12 Is it, is it possible for a  
13 subset of members of the consortium to commit  
14 to a competitive preference priority, for  
15 example, you know, Consortium X pursues the  
16 core part of this, but a -- sorry. The whole  
17 consortium pursues the --

18 MS. WHALEN: Oh.

19 MS. VIATOR: -- do you follow?

20 MS. WHALEN: Yes. Yes.

21 MS. VIATOR: So, a subset wants  
22 to, for example, develop the -- a CTE  
23 approach. Is that something that can be done  
24 and could you talk a little bit about that,  
25 what the parameters for that participation

1           might be? Thank you.

2                       MS. WHALEN: So, one of the  
3 things that is different from Category A to  
4 Category B is that not every member State in  
5 Category B has to implement all of the  
6 assessments developed by the consortium.

7                       So, it would be feasible that  
8 the consortium, or a subpart of that  
9 consortium, and that has to be articulated in  
10 the governance structure and, potentially,  
11 the MOUs, would pursue the development of a  
12 rigorous course of study and the assessments  
13 associated with that course of study around  
14 one of the competitive priorities and commit  
15 to implementing those assessments. So, I  
16 think I do see that --

17                      MS. VIATOR: -- so these --

18                      MS. WHALEN: -- as a feasible  
19 way for that to happen.

20                      MS. VIATOR: Okay. So that the  
21 over arching structure or structural  
22 guidelines you gave to us apply to this and  
23 that would be an example --

24                      MS. WHALEN: Correct.

25                      MS. VIATOR: -- of where --

1 MS. WHALEN: -- so, everything  
2 that we discussed around the consortium  
3 governance structure, and I apologize, I just  
4 should have reiterated that, the governance  
5 structure, as well as the program management  
6 pieces, are applicable to this Category B, as  
7 well.

8 So you describe the  
9 organization, the members' roles and their  
10 responsibilities, as well as the decision-  
11 making structure. And the MOU -- we also  
12 need MOUs for category B that articulate that  
13 and assure the people's commitment to the  
14 vision of the consortium.

15 MS. WEISS: But and let me just  
16 sort of pile on to that by saying that the  
17 goal here is to help States produce a good  
18 sort of library or catalog of these rigorous  
19 assessments that could help guide what those  
20 courses look like across multiple States.

21 And if certain States or high  
22 schools choose to use things in that catalog  
23 and others don't, that's okay under this  
24 competition, provided there's enough scale  
25 and adoption to get the points in that

1 category coming up.

2 But so, building sort of a wide  
3 library that's accessible to all these States  
4 and to all the high schools of these States  
5 and then having some adopt and some not, is  
6 perfectly fine in this competition.

7 We're really hoping to build  
8 sort of an ethic of creating sort of widely  
9 adopted and understood levels of rigor and  
10 using assessments as a tool at the State  
11 level for helping guide what a rigorous  
12 course looks like in all these different  
13 areas.

14 The other thing that maybe is  
15 worth saying around the career technical  
16 piece. I think we got a question that almost  
17 sounded like we weren't thinking of somehow  
18 tracking with the career technical ed and  
19 it's actually -- well, we got a question  
20 submitted to us before this meeting about  
21 that.

22 And it's actually the  
23 opposite. We want to make sure that, A, the  
24 career technical education programs are sort  
25 of fully included as part of the high school



1 catalog of things that we're thinking about  
2 and are included in ways that really are  
3 rigorous and provide high quality education  
4 to the kids taking those courses.

5 And also, the career technical  
6 education community happens to have some  
7 phenomenal assessment protocols and getting  
8 them more folded into this whole community,  
9 because they have a lot of really great  
10 expertise to offer, also felt like a good  
11 thing to do.

12 And so, the goal was to bring  
13 it in, not to sort of separate it as we put  
14 them into a competitive priority here.

15 MS. VIATOR: Thank you. And on  
16 that last point, I very much agree. That  
17 there's a whole legacy of knowledge that we  
18 can tap.

19 MS. WHALEN: So, let me just  
20 reiterate something that we mentioned this  
21 morning, that in Category B, the eligibility  
22 requirement is, the eligible applicant is a  
23 consortium of States, but it's only five  
24 governing States.

25 So, it's not the same threshold

1 as five plus ten. You only need five  
2 governing States to be an eligible applicant  
3 for Category B. You do have to identify a  
4 proposed project management partner. But,  
5 it's not the same level of scale that we're  
6 asking for in Category A. And this is back  
7 on Slide 27.

8 MR. JOHNSON: Mark Johnson from  
9 Massachusetts. I wanted to go back to the  
10 double-dipping prohibition on Slides 107 and  
11 109. And the asterisk is on Part A, which  
12 leads us to believe that the prohibition is  
13 actually on the courses for which assessments  
14 are developed for them.

15 I'm wondering if, let's take  
16 life sciences for example, if a life sciences  
17 assessment was developed that was purely  
18 academic, for college readiness, STEM  
19 preparation, and then a life sciences  
20 assessment was developed as part of a career  
21 vocational technical education that supported  
22 a field like health careers or something like  
23 that, I was wondering if that would be  
24 considered double-dipping?

25 MS. WEISS: Yeah. What we're

1           saying up here is, you're right, we wouldn't  
2           necessarily want you to artificially develop  
3           a whole new assessment for something that  
4           should actually be the same course used in  
5           both tracks.

6                         So, we probably need to get  
7           back to you and clarify that in guidance,  
8           because it was really like you can't count a  
9           whole course of study in two places. But, if  
10          an individual course is the right thing for  
11          two different courses of study, there's no  
12          reason to reinvent that wheel.

13                        MS. WHALEN: Any other  
14          questions?

15                        MR. COHEN: Thank you. Cohen  
16          from Achieve. I have a question about the  
17          relationship between the comprehensive  
18          category and the high school category. So,  
19          one could imagine that a group of States in  
20          one of the comprehensive consortium want to  
21          develop end-of-course mathematics exams as a  
22          way of measuring college readiness.

23                        One can imagine some of those  
24          States might also be in a high school  
25          consortium, but there's no necessary

1           correspondence between all of the States in  
2           those two consortia.

3                           How does the State think about  
4           end-of-course mathematics exams if it's got  
5           one foot in the comprehensive and one foot in  
6           the high school competition? How do they  
7           think about -- how many end-of-course exams  
8           do they get to develop in mathematics or how  
9           do they create some intelligent relationship  
10          between the two efforts?

11                          MS. WHALEN: So, where common  
12          standards exist, we are asking in Category B  
13          that you develop the end-of-course against  
14          the common standard. So, in math and ELA,  
15          potentially that's where you would still be  
16          developing the end-of-course exams in  
17          Category B.

18                          Again, in Category B, an  
19          individual member State does not have to  
20          implement every assessment that's developed  
21          under that consortium.

22                          So, where there is not  
23          alignment, a State may elect to just  
24          implement the end-of-course assessment for  
25          math from a comprehensive assessment system

1 and then elect to implement end-of-course  
2 assessments in other different disciplines as  
3 part of Category B.

4 MR. COHEN: One could still  
5 imagine both the Category B consortium and a  
6 Category A consortium, to which a single  
7 State was in both, you could imagine each  
8 consortia developing end-of-course exams in  
9 mathematics which would be based on the same  
10 standards but may be the same exam.

11 MS. WHALEN: Correct.

12 MR. COHEN: Okay.

13 MS. WHALEN: And I do... We'll  
14 get to this a little later, too. But the  
15 expectations around the assessments as part  
16 of Category B isn't necessarily the  
17 expectations around Category A, due to the  
18 fact of the federal accountability role.

19 So, some of the reliability,  
20 validity and fairness, it exists, but  
21 potentially at a lighter level in Category  
22 B. So, it's also acknowledging the intended  
23 purposes of these assessments as part of the  
24 proposal, as well. Any other questions?  
25 Matt?

1                   MR. GANDAL: Just a follow-up  
2 clarifying question. Category A, consortia,  
3 make sure I get this right, are very much  
4 able to develop end-of-course tests in high  
5 school in English and math. They wouldn't be  
6 looked unfavorably upon for using Category A  
7 for that purpose?

8                   MS. WHALEN: Looked unfavorably  
9 upon? No.

10                  MR. GANDAL: It would not be.

11                  MS. WHALEN: No. So, in  
12 Category A, it is 100 percent up to the  
13 consortium whether it is end-of-course  
14 assessment or comprehensive assessment at the  
15 high school level.

16                  Neither one is favored in the  
17 competition at all. It's whatever best meets  
18 the theory of action and the design and  
19 development of those member States.

20                  MR. GANDAL: Okay. That's what  
21 I was... Even though there's a separate high  
22 school end-of-course assessment competition,  
23 States are fully able to use Category A for  
24 that purpose in those two subject areas?

25                  MS. WHALEN: Correct.

1 MS. WEISS: Is this clear to  
2 folks? Because this is a question that we  
3 got just how these two --

4 MS. WHALEN: -- overlap or --

5 MS. WEISS: -- overlap or,  
6 yeah, interconnect.

7 MR. MARASCHIELLO: Hi. Rich  
8 Maraschiello, Pennsylvania. With regard to  
9 Category A, didn't you go one step further  
10 and say that one single consortia could also  
11 develop both end-of-course and a  
12 comprehensive exam?

13 MS. WEISS: Sure.

14 MR. MARASCHIELLO: Okay.

15 REPORTER'S NOTE:

16 [Inaudible  
17 side conversation].

18 MS. WEISS: Exactly what we  
19 were wondering.

20 MR. MARASCHIELLO: I'm clear on  
21 the answers you have given so far, but I have  
22 an additional question as I think about the  
23 reading, writing, listening and speaking  
24 common core standards for English language  
25 arts, science and history.





1                   What those common standards are  
2                   measuring or wouldn't only look like that.  
3                   So, they might be handled under Category B as  
4                   just, you know, I don't know, American  
5                   history course standards.

6                   On the other hand, within  
7                   Category A, for the ELA test, you might well  
8                   have big portions of a literacy assessment  
9                   that use passages that were very content  
10                  heavy, so you were reading for information  
11                  and understanding in the sciences, in social  
12                  studies, but you were doing that within the  
13                  context of the ELA assessments in Category A.

14                  MR. MARASCHIELLO: You have to  
15                  include those in the -- if you did  
16                  end-of-course exams, you would have to  
17                  include those, literacy and other content  
18                  areas, in the ELA exams.

19                  MS. WEISS: (Indicating).

20                  MR. MARASCHIELLO: That will be  
21                  an interesting job.

22                  MS. WEISS: And I'm honestly  
23                  like that, from 20,000 feet, that's kind of  
24                  how I was thinking about it, but you might  
25                  have way better ideas than that.

1                   MR. MARASCHIELLO: I'm closer,  
2                   but the ideas aren't any better.

3                   MS. BOOTSMA: I'm Helen, from  
4                   Phoenix, Arizona and I have a question from  
5                   the Federal Register that just has been  
6                   bugging me for a while and I might get tuned  
7                   in clearer in my understanding.

8                   So, B is for, specifically, for  
9                   those courses in high schools that do not  
10                  necessarily align with English language arts  
11                  and math, for which there are common core  
12                  standards.

13                  MS. WHALEN: So, we are not  
14                  saying that. We are saying you don't have to  
15                  develop an end-of-course assessment for math  
16                  or English language arts courses. But, if  
17                  you choose to, and common standards do exist,  
18                  the assessment should be developed against  
19                  those common standards.

20                  MS. BOOTSMA: Thank you.

21                  MS. WEISS: (Indicating). If  
22                  you could imagine doing a high school course,  
23                  end-of-course assessment for Shakespeare, for  
24                  you know, all those literature courses that  
25                  kids take in high school, that are not part

1 of the common core, but are still English  
2 courses in the high school curriculum that  
3 are widely taken and whatever.

4 MS. WHALEN: So, similar to  
5 Category A, in Category B when we are asking  
6 about the design and development approach for  
7 the course assessment, we ask for the number  
8 and types of components in the high school  
9 course assessment system, so that could be  
10 mid-term tests, through-course summative  
11 assessments, end-of-course assessments.

12 The extent to which and, where  
13 applicable, the approach for ensuring that  
14 assessment items are varied and elicit  
15 complex student demonstrations, applications  
16 of knowledge and skills. How the assessment  
17 will produce student achievement data and  
18 student growth data.

19 The approach and strategy for  
20 ensuring scalable, accurate and consistent  
21 scoring of assessments. And the extent to  
22 which teachers are trained and involved in  
23 the scoring of the assessments. So, again,  
24 that's not a requirement, but we do ask,  
25 where they are involved, that you describe

1           how they are involved and why.

2                           How the course assessments will  
3           be accessible to the broadest possible range  
4           of students, including English language  
5           learners, students with disabilities and  
6           include the appropriate accommodations for  
7           students with disabilities and English  
8           learners.

9                           I do want to flag that there is  
10          slightly different language in Category B and  
11          in Category A around students. So, in  
12          Category A, we do say all students. And in  
13          Category B we do say accessible to the  
14          broadest possible range of students.

15                          MS. WEISS: Can I just do a  
16          quick commercial for the legend for these  
17          slides and how to read them? So, in the  
18          first slide for Category A, all the red text,  
19          it doesn't necessarily mean that that stuff  
20          is more important than the other things, but  
21          it was just sort of a way to anchor like what  
22          the big picture is in these slides.

23                          The only stuff we turned red is  
24          the stuff that's different from Category A.  
25          So, as we're sort of reading through some of

1                   this stuff, to you most of it is very similar  
2                   to what Category A had to say.

3                                 Except in a minute you're gonna  
4                   see some slides that are all red because that  
5                   is a place where this competition differs  
6                   quite dramatically from the other one, so.

7                                 MS. FARACE:  You mean red on  
8                   the slide --

9                                 MS. WEISS:  -- yeah, R-E-D, the  
10                  color.

11                                MS. WHALEN:  And it's gonna be  
12                  on the overhead.

13                                MS. FARACE:  But not on here  
14                  (indicating).

15                                MS. WHALEN:  But I do want to  
16                  say that, although that's true, there are  
17                  elements that are missing from Category B,  
18                  that we cannot make red.  (Laughing).  So,  
19                  we have attempted to flag where we're being  
20                  lighter or I'm trying to talk through where  
21                  things are different.

22                                But, if you choose to apply for  
23                  Category B, just you know pay special  
24                  attention to this.  Look at the application.  
25                  It is a separate application package and it

1 does use different language. So, in terms of  
2 the research and evaluation.

3 MS. WEISS: There's a question.

4 MS. WHALEN: Oh, I'm sorry.

5 MR. DEAN: Thank you. Vince  
6 Dean, Michigan. Will the sister competition  
7 you mentioned from earlier have a Part B for  
8 maybe altering assessments for  
9 end-of-course?

10 MS. WHALEN: No. Any other  
11 questions?

12 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

13 MS. WHALEN: So, for the  
14 research and evaluation component, the goal  
15 is the extent to which the eligible  
16 applicant's research and evaluation plan will  
17 ensure that the assessments developed are  
18 valid, reliable and fair for their intended  
19 purposes and for all students.

20 And we will be, or the  
21 reviewers will be looking at the plan for  
22 verifying validity, reliability and fairness  
23 and the plan for determining whether the  
24 assessments are being implemented as designed  
25 and the theory of action is being realized,

1 including whether the intended effects on  
2 students and schools are being achieved.

3 So, again, this is lighter than  
4 Category A. I do want to mention also, as a  
5 key to how you negotiate the different  
6 documents in the NIA, in the application  
7 package, we don't use the term, "goal". It's  
8 just a stem leading to the criterion.

9 So if you're -- just as you  
10 read it, just know that. So, this is where  
11 we start with some red. Course  
12 assessment program implementation. So, as I  
13 mentioned earlier, because there isn't  
14 federal accountability.

15 There is no ESEA enforcing that  
16 every student in grades three through eight  
17 and once in high school take this annually.  
18 Part of this competition is really asking the  
19 consortium to describe to us how they will  
20 ensure that the courses they select to  
21 develop assess -- or adopt assessments that  
22 will impact the broadest number of students  
23 possible across the broadest number of  
24 schools possible.

25 So that, again, we're not

1 funding, you know, Shakespeare's books and  
2 ribbons and four different novels, but more  
3 of a how we're going across a larger field of  
4 courses.

5 So, we are looking at the  
6 extent to which the eligible applicants plan  
7 for implementing the proposed high school  
8 assessment program results in increased  
9 student enrollment in courses and in each  
10 member State.

11 And we're asking that, as part  
12 of the application, that you describe the  
13 approach used in each member State for  
14 promoting participation in high school course  
15 assessment programs by high schools, by  
16 teachers and by students.

17 For example, voluntary  
18 participation, mandatory participation,  
19 etcetera. And the plan for implementing  
20 these approaches, including the goals, major  
21 activities, timelines and entities  
22 responsible for the execution and the  
23 expected participation levels in each member  
24 State and across the consortium overall.

25 So, jump to the chart. So,



1 similar to what we did kind of with the  
2 higher ed competitive priority in Category A,  
3 we are asking for the number and  
4 percent participation.

5 So, we are looking at the  
6 number or percent of high school's  
7 implementing at least one of the  
8 assessments. And then we're looking at, for  
9 each assessment, the number or percent of  
10 high schools implementing them.

11 And then we are asking for the  
12 unduplicated number of high school students  
13 expected to take at least one assessment in  
14 the assessment program. And for each of  
15 these, we're looking at it for each year over  
16 the next five consecutive years, beginning in  
17 the 2013-2014 school year.

18 So, I apologize, this is a  
19 little difficult to read on the overhead and  
20 even in the slide. But, it's, in the  
21 application, it's pretty clear.

22 MS. QUENEMOEN: Rachel  
23 Quenemoen from the National Center on  
24 Educational Outcomes, with the University of  
25 Minnesota. And this is, and I'm here as an

1           observer and hearing some of this for the  
2           first time. It's pretty interesting and  
3           exciting stuff.

4                           For at least evaluation, in the  
5           fine print, is there any place where it talks  
6           about tracking student subgroups in  
7           participating in these courses that have a  
8           high school assessment combined or -- yeah, I  
9           guess it would be participation of kids from  
10          the various subgroups and how that increases  
11          over time.

12                           MS. WEISS: So, I'm sorry.  
13          It's hard to hear you up here. Can you just  
14          say that one more time?

15                           MS. QUENEMOEN: If you're  
16          encouraging States to show how they will  
17          increase the participation of students, the  
18          bottom line, is there anything in the  
19          evaluation or in the data that's required?

20                           I understand this isn't a  
21          requirement like those of subgroup reporting  
22          under NCLB, but it would be interesting to  
23          watch how the various subgroups start and  
24          increase over time and I wondered if there  
25          was any kind of data requirement to track

1           that.

2                           MS. WEISS:  So, there's not a  
3           specific data requirement or row on the  
4           chart, but we have asked you generally to  
5           show how it will increase the access to these  
6           courses for students who traditionally have  
7           been denied such access.

8                           So there is, I think, ample  
9           opportunity in responding to the criteria to  
10          make that case.  And if you want to do it  
11          numerically by breaking it out, by adding  
12          another chart that breaks that out by  
13          subgroups, that would be perfectly fine and  
14          great evidence to support how you were  
15          thinking about it.

16                          So, we're not requiring it, but  
17          I think there's places we ask the questions  
18          that could lend themselves to that kind of  
19          analysis.

20                          MS. QUENEMOEN:  So the purpose  
21          is to increase underserved --

22                          MS. WEISS:  Yes.

23                          MS. QUENEMOEN:  --  
24          underserved.  So, then, it seems to me that's  
25          an implicit understanding that you would be

1 tracking that that was occurring.

2 MS. WEISS: Yes. And we do  
3 explicitly ask you for it. But you're right,  
4 we didn't break it out on these tables. But  
5 we do explicitly, in these criteria, ask you  
6 to talk about how you're increasing access  
7 for those kids who haven't had it.

8 MS. VIATOR: Kit Viator,  
9 Massachusetts. On slide -- would you be so  
10 kind to go back to Slide 118, where you  
11 ask -- it's related to what we're talking  
12 about not, but it's just I'm looking at the  
13 text where you are asking for evidence about  
14 the approach that will be taken to promote  
15 more participation of greater number of  
16 students, particularly the subgroups, per  
17 Rachel's comment.

18 Are you looking for evidence,  
19 such as State regulation that has been  
20 adopted that mandates participation? Or  
21 what, sort of what are the, what guidelines  
22 do you have for what evidence you would find  
23 compelling?

24 Because, honestly, that's gonna  
25 vary by State what, how you, what authority

1           you have to promote or encourage or require  
2           more students to take particular courses.  
3           Thank you.

4                         MS. WHALEN:  So, a State  
5           regulation or policy or law mandating  
6           participation could be evidence for this.  
7           Again, that's not a requirement.  What we are  
8           looking at and what the peer reviewers will  
9           be scoring against is the level of  
10          participation of each member or State.

11                        So, your ability to say this is  
12          how we're going to do it and how we think  
13          we're gonna deliver upon that and make a  
14          compelling narrative around that will enable  
15          you to potentially score higher under this  
16          criterion.

17                        MR. JOHNSON:  Mark Johnson,  
18          Massachusetts.  The Slides 118 through 120  
19          that break down Slide 118 or 117, all refer  
20          to promoting participation in assessments.  
21          But, if you look at Slide 117, it refers to  
22          in enrollment in courses.  Would you just  
23          clarify the difference, please?

24                        MS. WHALEN:  So, the tool that  
25          we are going to be funding is the

1           assessment. So what we are looking at is the  
2           participation in the assessments. We don't  
3           think that a student will necessarily take  
4           the assessments without first enrolling in  
5           the courses.

6                         So I think that's why we talk  
7           about increasing enrollment of students in  
8           these courses and then also being  
9           administered the assessments as part of the  
10          assessment program.

11                        MR. JOHNSON: Okay. So, the  
12          reviewers will be looking at both a plan for  
13          increasing course enrollment, as well as  
14          participation.

15                        MS. WEISS: It's for increasing  
16          enrollment -- it's for having students taking  
17          the courses for which you have these  
18          assessments in place. So, it's attracting  
19          kids to these more rigorous courses is the  
20          question that we're trying to ask. Is that  
21          what --

22                        MR. JOHNSON: (Inaudible. No  
23          microphone).

24                        MS. WHALEN: But it's also --  
25          so, AP biology, we want more kids taking AP

1 biology, but we also want them then taking AP  
2 biology to be able to sit for the AP  
3 assessment, as well.

4 So we are looking at those that  
5 actually sat -- this is just a hypothetical.  
6 This is not we're going to be funding AP  
7 biology. But, who sat for the AP biology  
8 test because that adds value for that  
9 individual child, as well.

10 MS. VIATOR: Kit Viator,  
11 Massachusetts. It's splitting hairs, but I  
12 think what Mark is getting at is, and I agree  
13 that it's an important point to raise, for  
14 those States that have end-of-course tests,  
15 it's crazy.

16 But not, unfortunately, in not  
17 every case where a student takes  
18 end-of-course assessment has the student  
19 taken the corresponding course. And this is  
20 particularly a problem for students who have  
21 traditionally underserved.

22 So, it's a last minute, you  
23 know, kind of panic at the high school, "Oh,  
24 my God, we have to have the student take, you  
25 know, the biology test to qualify for the

1 Massachusetts high school diploma, but they  
2 haven't enrolled in a biology course.

3 They may be outliers. But so,  
4 it's just -- I know. It's crazy. You go,  
5 how can that be? So, I think --

6 MS. WHALEN: -- I'm thinking  
7 that poor child.

8 MS. VIATOR: Exactly. So, the  
9 point is to thread the needle through both  
10 and I think that's why Mark raises the point.

11 MR. JOHNSON: We're going to  
12 tag team here. And vice versa, as well. We  
13 have many kids who take AP courses that don't  
14 necessarily sit for the exam. So, looking at  
15 it both ways.

16 MS. WEISS: Yeah. And it's one  
17 reason that I think, in this criterion on  
18 118, said so what's the approach that's going  
19 to be used in each State for increasing  
20 participation in this program by high school  
21 teachers, high school students and by high  
22 schools themselves.

23 So, it's trying to allow you to  
24 look at it in a more realistic way and say  
25 we're going to have incentive programs in



1 place. We're going to do some kind of  
2 voluntary enrollment.

3 We're going to require it for  
4 some kind of degree that we're conferring.  
5 Whatever it is. So that you can use this as  
6 the incentive that... It's trying to give you  
7 a tool. You're going to have to wrap a policy  
8 around it to make it a tool that's used well  
9 and not abused.

10 MS. WHALEN: And in your  
11 narrative, I encourage you to talk about how you  
12 may use this as a tool for increasing access  
13 to courses, even if it's not access to the  
14 assessment part of those courses, or vice  
15 versa.

16 MR. WRIGHT: All right. Jim  
17 Wright from Ohio. We have got credit flex  
18 coming at us a little bit, where we have  
19 people that want to test out.

20 So, would this be expectation  
21 that these tests are rigorous and also  
22 summative enough that, like in AP courses,  
23 the student passes that AP course, they get  
24 the credit whether they sat in the course or  
25 not. So, the same thing would be expected of

1 the testing regimen that it would be rigorous  
2 enough to give the student a credit in a  
3 credit flex idea without sitting for the  
4 course.

5 MS. WEISS: So, we haven't made  
6 that a requirement. But, certainly, the  
7 consortium could agree that that's one way  
8 they're going to think about certifying  
9 rigor.

10 That's one of the criteria  
11 that they're thinking about when they're  
12 certifying rigor and they expect it to be  
13 such that a State could use that as their  
14 policy in place of seat time if they wanted  
15 to.

16 So we're not certifying --  
17 we're not, we're not specifying any of that.  
18 But, it's certainly yet another tool that you  
19 would have in your arsenal as you're sort of  
20 thinking about how to wrap the whole program  
21 around these tools.

22 MS. WHALEN: Other questions?

23 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

24 MS. WHALEN: So, similar to  
25 Category A, we also are looking at how the

1 applicant proposes to support teachers and  
2 administrators in implementing the new high  
3 school course assessments and for developing  
4 an ongoing manner of professional capacity to  
5 use the assessments and results to inform and  
6 improve instructional practice. We actually  
7 blew through that one. Oh, there's a  
8 question from the chat.

9 MS. MCKINNEY: Jim Hartzog asks  
10 if we can be assured that these assessments  
11 will be available to States that are not part  
12 of a consortium.

13 MS. WHALEN: So, similar to  
14 Category A, there the requirement for these  
15 courses to be open and to be developed in  
16 interoperable standards apply to Category B,  
17 as well.

18 MS. WEISS: And to be made  
19 freely available.

20 MS. WHALEN: So, I don't know,  
21 I just want to kind of reiterate the point  
22 that, in Category B, it does not have to be  
23 just for terminal courses or AP courses or  
24 for twelfth grade courses.

25 But, one could look at this as

1 a way to strengthen the rigor of courses in  
2 ninth grade, tenth grade and eleventh grade,  
3 as well, and really looking at high school  
4 more holistically and how students develop  
5 different tracks in order to graduate from  
6 high school college and career ready. Any  
7 other questions, concerns about Category B?

8 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

9 MS. WEISS: All right. So then  
10 we have successfully exhausted you. We just  
11 wanted to once again wrap up by reminding you  
12 of the different resources that we have  
13 available on the website.

14 Not to show any disrespect to  
15 our own notice inviting applications. But,  
16 because of the way we have to organize those,  
17 when we have two categories applying within  
18 one thing, it's actually quite a confusing  
19 document.

20 So, there, I just said it. So,  
21 it's not a bad idea to take a look at the  
22 executive summary, which is an excerpt from  
23 the notice, but put into a more  
24 straightforward, I think, organizational  
25 structure.

1                   Certainly, the notice of  
2                   writing applications is absolutely the ruling  
3                   document and you should look at that and make  
4                   sure you know what it says. The applications  
5                   we divided into an application for each  
6                   category, just to make it easier for you and  
7                   those, too, have all the information in them  
8                   that you need in order to complete an  
9                   application.

10                   So, they include all of the  
11                   program requirements, application  
12                   requirements, all of that, out of the notice,  
13                   but is in the applications. So that's why we  
14                   say that each of the applications, the  
15                   executive summary and the FAQs are probably,  
16                   if we were giving you advice, the places we  
17                   would say to start.

18                   The FAQ document, having done a  
19                   commercial for it, is actually not on-line  
20                   yet. We do have an initial document that is  
21                   going through our internal approval process  
22                   right now on questions that we have received  
23                   from you guys, or thought we would get.

24                   So, that should be coming out  
25                   in the next few days. We've got, obviously,

1 a bunch more questions today that we'll add  
2 to that and do feel free, of course, to use  
3 our e-mail box to send us questions, or  
4 there's the phone number for the assessment  
5 competition, and our website address.

6 So, with that, let's just see  
7 if there's any last wrap-up questions that  
8 you have got and, otherwise, we'll get you  
9 out of here early. Yeah?

10 MS. ELLINGTON: Kris Ellington,  
11 Florida. Regarding the follow-up on  
12 procurement for a managing entity. I'm not  
13 quite sure, will it be sent to all the people  
14 participating? How will that come?

15 MS. FARACE: Usually, when we  
16 send around a notice for a conference call,  
17 we send it to all chiefs and hope that that  
18 gets filtered down. We also can send it to  
19 your Title I assessment director, Mr. Nikolai.

20 MS. WEISS: We could also send  
21 it to all the participants here.

22 MS. ELLINGTON: Yeah. That  
23 would be great. Also, we have done a  
24 side-by-side of two of the governing States  
25 in our partnership's procurement rules that

1 are relevant to this procurement, as well as  
2 a sample time line.

3 And if that would be helpful,  
4 we could send that to you in advance and it  
5 might be something that would sort of help to  
6 bring specificity to the discussion, if  
7 that's of interest to you.

8 MS. WHALEN: Sure. Just e-mail  
9 it to the Race to the Top assessment.

10 MS. ELLINGTON: Assessments.  
11 Okay.

12 MS. WEISS: Will do. Thank  
13 you. Anything else?

14 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

15 MS. WEISS: All right, then.  
16 We'll get you out of here early. Thank you  
17 so much for joining us today. We really  
18 appreciate it and have a safe trip home.  
19 Thank you.

20 (Whereupon, the proceedings  
21 ended at 3:30 p.m.)  
22  
23  
24  
25

1 STATE OF MINNESOTA )  
2 ) ss.  
3 COUNTY OF CASS )  
4

5 I, Nathan D. Engen do hereby certify  
6 that the foregoing transcript, in the matter  
7 of the Race to the Top Technical Assistance  
8 Planning Workshop is true, correct and  
9 accurate:

10 That said transcript was prepared under  
11 my direction and control from my stenographic  
12 shorthand notes taken on the 22nd day of  
13 August, 2010:

14 That I am not related to any of the  
15 parties in this matter, nor am I interested  
16 in the outcome of this action.

17  
18  
19 Witness my hand and seal this 11th day of  
20 May, 2010.

21  
22  
23 Nathan D. Engen  
24  
25