

AOE ASSESSMENT PROJECT

RISK REGISTER DESCRIPTION:

1. Risk Description: Provide a description of what the risk entails
2. Source of Risk: Project, Proposed Solution, Vendor or Other
3. Risk Rating: Risk ratings to indicate: Likelihood and probability of risk occurrence; Impact should risk occur; and Overall risk rating (high, medium or low priority)
4. Risk Strategy: State's Planned Risk Strategy: Avoid, Mitigate, Transfer or Accept
5. Timing of Risk Response: Describe the planned timing for carrying out the risk response (e.g. prior to the start of the project, during the Planning Phase, prior to implementation, etc.)
6. State's Planned Risk Response: Describe what the State plans to do (if anything) to address the risk
7. Reviewer's Assessment of State's Planned Response: Indicate if the planned response is adequate/appropriate in your judgment and if not what would you recommend.

NOTE: Hyperlinks are used on the Risk ID. From the Risk Register, CTL-CLICK on a link to see the Risk Response, or from the Risk Response, CTL-CLICK on a link to go back to the Risk Register.

RISK REGISTER:

Risk #:	Risk Description	Source of Risk	Risk Rating: Impact	Risk Rating: Probability	Risk Rating: Overall Risk	State Risk Strategy Summary	Timing of Response	Reviewer Assessment of Response
1	Budget/Funding: The Source and Use of Funds allocated to this project are clear. Ensuring the Source of funds are not also allocated elsewhere due to another yet to be named mandate, is important to manage.	Federal Dept. of Education	Low	Low	Low	Accept	Continue to manage During Project	Risk Adequately Mitigated
2	Lack of Solution Adoption: It is not yet clear that the schools will adopt this method of test delivery (computer vs. paper). There are no precedence(s) referenced where computer-based testing has replaced paper based testing and on the surface, it appears easier to teachers to place a paper-based test on a student desk vs. coordinating the effort involved with ensuring the appropriate room, computer devices, wireless capacity, and internet bandwidth.	Proposed Solution	Low	Low	Low	Accept	Prior to project initiation	Risk Adequately Mitigated

3	Scope: It is not yet clear whether every school has adequate room, computer devices, wireless capacity, and internet bandwidth to administer the test.	Project	Low	Low	Low	Mitigate	During Project	Risk Adequately Mitigated
4	Project Governance and Management: Considering this project is a 3 state consortium, consortium governance is an important component of consortium success and project success. The consortium governance model has yet to be defined.	Project	Medium	Medium	Medium	Mitigate	During the Planning Phase (Phase 1)	Risk Not Adequately Mitigated
5	Support: AIR has proposed their standard Service Level Agreement, but an SLA was not clearly defined in the RFP, so evaluating how AIR's SLA meets Vermont SLA requirements has not been done.	Project	Low	Low	Low	Accept	N/A	Risk Adequately Mitigated
6	Schedule: The project is now expected to begin later than the originally scheduled date of ~7/1. If the project can start on 9/1, which is optimistic, given the respective contracts needing to be completed, the project is at risk of making up 2 months of a 9 month effort. As a 20% schedule adjustment, making up this gap is aggressive.	Project	High	High	High	Mitigate	Prior to project initiation	Risk Not Adequately Mitigated
7	Contract: There is a "Liquidated Damages/Penalties" clause in the RFP, and AIR agreed to this language. What is yet to be defined is what constitutes "non-performance or breach of contract". One example of what needs to be defined is the System Availability Service Level Agreement during the Test period. 99.5% seems adequate. What is the remedy for non-performance?	Project	High	Low	Medium		Prior to project initiation	

RISK RESPONSE:

Risk #:	State’s Planned Risk Response and Reviewer’s Assessment of State’s Risk Response
1	<p><u>STATE’S RISK RESPONSE:</u> Heretofore, AOE has successfully managed funding uses and sources for similar projects, such as NECAP, and expects to continue in this fashion for the Smarter Balanced implementation. Because the project is designed to fulfill a major requirement in the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and because the Act includes funding for these activities, the lack of funds to support the project is not likely. However, to protect the interests of the state, the vendor contract will include language that will permit termination of the agreement in the event that Federal funds become unavailable. This strategy has been the Agency’s standard practice for projects that are dependent on Federal funds. There is always the possibility that a change of administrations could result in a change of federal priorities and some funding could be lost. However, the Federal assessment dollars have been consistent since about 2002 and there is no indication that either political party has statewide assessment in its crosshairs. Therefore, we would rate the risk for this factor as moderate to low.</p> <p><u>REVIEWER’S ASSESSMENT:</u> Accepted.</p>
2	<p><u>STATE’S RISK RESPONSE:</u> As a matter of policy, the paper pencil version of the test will only be available for schools that lack the technology infrastructure necessary to deliver the web-based assessments. Schools will NOT be permitted to select between the two options, and in fact, the paper-pencil test will only be available for the first two test administrations, giving the least prepared schools the opportunity to upgrade their systems. This risk is further reduced because the vast majority of schools in the state currently have the required infrastructure (see #3, below). Therefore, we would rate the risk for this factor as very low.</p> <p><u>REVIEWER’S ASSESSMENT:</u> Accepted. The schools don’t really have alternative options beyond year 2.</p>

<p>3</p>	<p><u>STATE’S RISK RESPONSE:</u> For the past two years the 25 states that are members of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium have implemented a technological readiness survey of all the schools in the Consortium states. Therefore, we have reliable data that catalogs the numbers and kinds of devices, quality of internet access, and availability of local technological support for each Vermont elementary, middle and high school. Based on the results of the survey, now including a third round of data collection, we are confident that all but 3 or 4 schools have sufficient capacity to implement the on-line assessment. Also, this spring, 27 Vermont elementary, middle and high schools, representing nearly six thousand students, participated in a field test of the operational system, with only one of the schools reporting a lack of technological readiness. Therefore, we would rate the risk for this factor as very low.</p> <p><u>REVIEWER’S ASSESSMENT:</u> There are four variables here: Room space, wireless or wired local area network bandwidth, devices (computers/tablets), and broadband bandwidth. When issuing paper tests, room space was a constraint, as the tests needed to be given simultaneously, as the test content was the same and therefore, test security could be compromised with differing testing times. Local and broadband bandwidth, and devices were not constraints, as they were not part of the testing process.</p> <p>In the new computer-based testing process, room space, local and broadband bandwidth, and devices are all constraints, should the number of students being tested simultaneously exceed the capacity for one or more of these items.</p> <p>A good point has been made to mitigate this constraint: The new testing process includes a test bank of questions, such that tests should be variable, and as such, give test administrators more options for spreading out when the tests are administered. NECAP required not more than a 10 day window, while SBAC has a 3 month window. Given these facts, this risk is adequately mitigated.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p><u>STATE’S RISK RESPONSE:</u> Although our NECAP project survived and thrived without a formal governance structure, we admit that much of the success can be attributed to beginner’s luck. All three states are in agreement that we need to fund a common project manager and one of the project manager’s first duties will be to guide the states through the process of developing a governance document. Although this will be a relatively formidable task, we will have the Smarter Balanced Consortium Governance Plan as a template for NEAC’s policies. Therefore, we agree that proceeding without a formal governance structure would constitute a moderate to high risk, but we plan to mitigate that risk during the initial planning stages of the project by developing and implementing governance policies and procedures.</p> <p><u>REVIEWER’S ASSESSMENT:</u> Until the governance structure is put into place, this remains a risk.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p><u>STATE’S RISK RESPONSE:</u> AIR’s Service Level Agreement was thoroughly reviewed as part of our proposal review process and is consistent with our expectations. AOE accepts the proposed Service Level Agreement as presented by AIR.</p> <p><u>REVIEWER’S ASSESSMENT:</u> AOE has reviewed the SLA proposed by AIR, and deems it adequate. I agree that the SLA will meet the needs stated by AOE, specifically that AIR commits to providing a toll-free customer support line, chat, and e-mail for state users, educators, and administrators Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm EST, outside of the testing windows, and between 7:00 am and 7:00 pm EST during the testing window.</p>

<p>6</p>	<p><u>STATE'S RISK RESPONSE:</u></p> <p>If we had selected any of the proposals other than AIR's, the ambitious timelines for this project would present a nearly insurmountable risk. However, AIR has the distinct advantage of being the vendor responsible for developing the Smarter Balanced Test Delivery System, which was modeled on AIR's proprietary test engine, and successfully delivered the Smarter Balanced Field Test to over 7 million students in 250,000 schools in 22 states. This means that they have already completed the work that would be the first order of business for the other vendors. During our proposal review, we asked each vendor to address its organization's readiness to deliver the project on time and to specifications. Following is a quote from AIR's response:</p> <p><i>Not only can we assure NEAC that our staff and systems are prepared to deliver fully operational Smarter Balanced assessments within the tight timelines, we could in fact deliver them tomorrow, just as we did last week and every day from March 25 until June 13 to students all over the country, including students in Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Vermont.</i></p> <p>We are confident that AIR's quote is more than marketing bravado and that they will be able to deliver on these assurances. Clearly the short timelines are an obstacle to the success of the project, but because of AIR's prior involvement and experience with the SBAC tests, we believe the risk is moderate to low.</p> <p><u>REVIEWER'S ASSESSMENT:</u></p> <p>While I agree that AIR stands a higher likelihood of success than probably all other vendors, pending AIR not being stretched too thin, AIR still proposed 9 months, with a completion date of March, 2015. We cannot meet that March date unless we shave 2 months off of the project.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p><u>STATE'S RISK RESPONSE:</u></p> <p><u>REVIEWER'S ASSESSMENT:</u></p>