Additional FAQs

1. **Utah State Office of Education have shared with Superintendents that there is not an item pool of test items available with this testing program, so teachers of our districts across the state must write test items.**

   The RFP has three sections:
   (1) Summative and Interim Technology
   (2) Summative and Interim Test Content (development of test items)
   (3) Formative Assessments
   The RFP included Addendum A that gave very specific requirements for item development.

   The scoring sheet for the proposals had five sections:
   (1) Summative and Interim Technology
   (2) Summative and Interim Test Content Language Arts (development of test items)
   (3) Summative and Interim Test Content Mathematics (development of test items)
   (4) Summative and Interim Test Content Science (development of test items)
   (5) Formative Assessments

   The AIR proposal responded to each of the RFP sections and was scored accordingly. AIR is not an off the shelf assessment system. AIR works with states to develop assessments that meet their requirements. The AIR contract includes development of new items aligned to the Utah Core Standards. Test items may come from multiple sources: other states (Oregon, Hawaii, Delaware), current CRT items aligned to the common core, the assessment consortiums and new development. The current practice of inviting teachers who are interested in developing new items will continue.

2. **Since there are no items in the item bank to be used for our state, there will be no nationally norming of data -- which seems to be an important item for the legislature and has been a strong advantage of the computer adaptive assessment used in the pilots - NWEA.**
   No one – including NWEA has national norms for assessments that are aligned to the common core.

3. **There was great concern that we did not share data learned and recommendations from the several pilot districts who have used Computer Adaptive Assessment for several years.**
   The selection committee was responsible to choose a vendor based on the RFP. The RFP writing committee included the lessons learned from the pilot districts. There was representation of the pilot districts on both the RFP writing committee and the selection committee. All pilot districts had opportunity to participate in the RFP survey and provide input. The RFP writing committee reviewed all LEA input and made adjustments to the RFP.

4. **There still seems to be a focus by USOE to use the paradigms of the CRT manipulation of data to make comparable growth scores.**
   There is no manipulation of data for growth scores in the CRTs and there will not be any in the new assessment system. Growth scores are based on comparing student performance on fall to spring or spring to spring scores.

5. **The lack of a validated test item pool does not provide enough data for an in depth possibility of being adaptive for all students.**
   It is essential that the test item pool include all items that are aligned to the breadth and depth of the Utah Core Standards and designed to measure the full spectrum of student ability. There will be sufficient items to adapt to all students in the new assessment system.

6. **The degree to which the tests are adaptive by design is critical. The number of grade levels that the test adapts across is important and requires a sufficiently high ceiling and a sufficiently low base for all grade levels. One grade level above and one grade level below is not sufficient.**
   The suggestion that the new assessment system adapts one grade level below and one above is false. That has never been stated verbally or in writing anywhere. The new assessment system will adapt for the lowest performing to the highest performing student.

7. **Adaptive testing must be created with a clear intentional articulation of student achievement results rather than relying on statistical manipulation. (Such as has been the growth model with the CRTs.)**
   There has been no statistical manipulation of CRTs. There is nothing inaccurate about the growth model for the CRTs and there will not be anything inaccurate with measuring growth with the new assessment system.

8. **There are also some indication in the Executive Summary of the contract that suggests their might be some burden of cost beyond the base figure that will be the responsibility of districts and/or USOE.**
   There will be no burden of cost beyond the base figure for this contract. If the state determines they want something beyond the contract then there would be an additional state fee for that (for example if the grade range expands from 3-12 to K-12).

9. **If all adaptive testing systems are aligned to the Common Core in Language Arts and Math, and Utah is aligned to the Common Core in Language Arts and Math, doesn't that give you some national comparability regardless of the test used, state to state?**
   Assessment vendors are still in the process of updating/creating assessments that are aligned to the Common Core standards. However, simply measuring the same standards does not produce comparable results. The scaled score and proficiency levels for each of the assessments would need to be psychometrically linked. There is currently no national comparisons for assessments aligned to the common core.

10. **Is the US Department of Education mandating or just suggesting the use of computer adaptive assessment in Language Arts and Math?**
    The US Department of Education has never suggested, recommended or shown a preference for adaptive assessments. The Department did approve the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) proposal (that was initiated and written by Utah and other states) to create an adaptive assessment. The Department also approved the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) proposal to create a fixed form assessment.

11. **The Utah Legislative stated in the last Public Education Appropriations meeting that the matter of the RFP and/or the computer adaptive assessment would still be addressed in a future meeting. What have you heard about their potential action? What actions do you expect? What about action on the RFP process?**
    There has been no information in regards to potential actions from the legislature. Individual legislators that have asked for additional information have been satisfied with the responses. The RFP process was followed exactly as required by State Purchasing.

12. **At what point will the USOE sign any contract for computer adaptive assessment as it relates to legislative discussion/influence?**

    The contract with AIR for computer adaptive assessments was signed by State Purchasing and USOE on December 21, 2012. The State Board of Education will be considering approval of the contract on January 10, 2013.

13. **Who, by name and assignment/position was involved in the evaluation/selection process? Were any statisticians/psychometricians involved and if so, who, representing what group? Were any leaders of pilot districts involved?**

    The State Board of Education Leadership approved the RFP selection committee. The Committee was chaired and managed by Michael Rigby, Purchasing Agent, USOE.
    Dixie Allen, State Board
    Craig Coleman, State Board
    David Brotherson, Superintendent, Duchesne District
    McKell Withers, Superintendent, Salt Lake District
    Steve Hirase, Superintendent, Murry District
    Lynne Baty, Assessment Director, Box Elder District
    Darryl Thomas, Assessment Director, Granite District
    Cory Stokes, IT Manager, SEDC
    Judy Park, Associate Superintendent, USOE
    John Jesse, Assessment Director, USOE
    Jerry Winkler, IT Director, USOE

14. **In what ways, if any, did the specs in the RFP go beyond the legislation for computer adaptive assessment?**

    Utah Statute 53A-1-603
    (3) Beginning with the 2014-15 school year, the State Board of Education shall annually require each school district and charter school, as applicable, to administer a computer adaptive assessment system that is: (a) adopted by the State Board of Education; and (b) aligned to Utah's common core.
    (9) The State Board of Education shall establish a committee consisting of 15 parents of Utah public education students to review all computer adaptive test questions.
    The RFP did not go beyond the legislation.

15. **How many companies/individuals submitted a proposal on the RFP and who were they?**

    American Institutes for Research (AIR)
    Core Education Commission of the States (ECS)
    CTB/McGraw Hill
    Curriculum Associates
    Educational Testing
    Global Scholar
    Kansas University
    Measured Progress
    Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA)
    Pearson
    Riverside
    ACT, Inc.
    Caveon

16. **What is USOE's view of pilots for any project? Will the information on evaluation pilots be used or will USOE put a different plan into place, not related to the pilots?**
A formal third party evaluation has been completed on each pilot. The RFP writing committee included the lessons learned and the success that was achieved by the computer adaptive assessment pilots in the requirements of the RFP.

17. **Why did the USOE determine to select a group that doesn't have a test ready yet instead of one that does?**
There is currently no vendor assessment that is aligned to the common core. All respondents to the RFP required development of a new/adjusted test that is aligned to the common core. The RFP selection committee recommended the proposal that best met all of the RFP requirements.

18. **Were any additional points given in the evaluation process for currently used software in the pilots and if not, why not?**
The RFP encouraged innovation and improved technologies for a computer adaptive system. The software NWEA currently uses in the Utah K-12 pilot was not included as part of their bid.

Was the success of the pilots discussed in any length in the meeting of those evaluating the RFP?
The evaluation committee had opportunity to completely review NWEA's proposal which included such information and their proposal was discussed by the committee.

Did the evaluators see any of the pilots in action or any other demonstrations of services/products by those who submitted proposals to the RFP?
Finalists (which included NWEA) in the RFP process provided live demonstrations to the RFP selection committee.

19. **NWEA was accepted by the US Department of Education some months/years ago. Is that acceptance still in place?**
NWEA received conditional approval from the Department of Education based on their comparison to CRTs and as an alternative to the CRTs. The new assessment NWEA submitted as part of their bid has not been submitted or received federal approval. AIR is currently the only vendor who produces a summative adaptive assessment that has received federal approval. This approval is for three states (Oregon, Hawaii and Delaware).

20. **In what states and how many districts is AIR adaptive testing operating now?**
Three states, Oregon, Hawaii and Delaware

21. **How many states do you anticipate will select AIR for their computer adaptive services?**
Unknown

22. **Who, by name and affiliation, are the chief directors of the American Institute of Research?**
David Myers, President and Chief Executive Officer
AIR is organized administratively into six program areas:
Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research: Jane Hannaway, Vice President and Director
Assessment: Jon Cohen, Executive Vice President and Program Director
Education: Gina Burkhardt, Executive Vice President and Program Director
Health: Marilyn Moon, Senior Vice President and Program Director
Human and Social Development: Cheryl Vince Whitman, Senior Vice President and Program Director and David Osher, Vice President and Program Co-Director
International Development: Jane Benbow, Vice President and Program Director

Workforce: Dwayne Norris, Vice President and Program Director

AIR Board of Directors:
Patricia B. Gurin, Board Chair, Professor of Social Psychology, University of Michigan
Lawrence D. Bobo, Board Vice Chair, W. E. B. Du Bois Professor of the Social Sciences, Harvard Univ.
Greg Baroni, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Attain
Robert F. Boruch, University Chair, Professor of Education and Statistics, University of Pennsylvania
Nancy E. Cantor, Chancellor and President, Syracuse University
Edward Hamburg, Venture Parner, Morgan Stanley Private Equity
Sara Kiesler, Hillman Professor of Computer Science and Human-Computer Interaction, Carnegie-Mellon University
Delano Lewis, Former U.S. Ambassador to South Africa and Past President and CEO of National Public Radio
Andrew Liakopoulos, Principal, Human Capital Practice, Deloitte Consulting LLP
Kathy McKinless, Former Partner, Coordinator of Audit Services, KPMG LLP
David Myers, President and Chief Executive Officer, American Institutes for Research
Manuel Pastor, Professor, Sociology/American Studies & Ethnicity, Director, Program for Environmental & Regional Equity, University of Southern California
Sol H. Pelavin, Former President and Chief Executive Officer, American Institutes for Research

Does AIR receive federal funding for public education-related purposes?
Established in 1946, with headquarters in Washington, D.C., AIR is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts research and delivers technical assistance both domestically and internationally in the areas of health, education, and workforce productivity. AIR has successfully won federal funding for research and services related to public education, all through competitive mechanisms.

What are the other businesses AIR handles besides education?
AIR works in Education, Assessment, Health, Human Development, International Development, and Work and Training.

What has Utah had to do with AIR in the past, if anything?
Utah has never had a contract with AIR, and has never had a conversation or communication with any employees of AIR prior to their proposal submission and subsequent demonstration.

23. What types of reports will AIR produce with their testing service?
FAQ #9

Have you reviewed those reports for usability?
The RFP selection committee viewed a demonstration of the reporting system.

Have teachers and administrators used those reports?
Teachers and administrators in other states have used similar reports. The specific Utah reporting system will be developed for Utah with educator input.

Where have they been used that we could make contact?
The Utah reporting system will be developed for Utah with educator input. AIR does have reporting systems in Oregon, Hawaii, Delaware, Minnesota and Ohio.

24. **Will AIR be using the test items that Smarter Balanced is now producing?**
In the future there may be an opportunity for Utah to access SBAC items – that remains to be seen, but will not be included in the assessment system for the first few years.

Was there active discussion between Smarter Balance and AIR while Utah was a part of Smarter Balance?
Utah resigned from SBAC prior to the RFP process that resulted in AIR receiving any contracts from SBAC.

25. **What is your certainty level about AIR being accepted by the US Department of Education as an authorized testing provider once a test is developed?**
Very high certainty. AIR is currently the only vendor who produces a summative adaptive assessment that has received federal approval. This approval is for three states (Oregon, Hawaii and Delaware).

26. **How much time will development of the AIR test take in terms of teachers/administrators being pulled from classrooms to develop items and check for bias, validation, etc.**
The majority of any new item development will occur outside of school time. Teachers will not be pulled from classrooms. If there is a need to do any development during school time, only those teachers who are interested will participate. The contract will pay for any substitutes that may be required.

27. **How long will development, bias, and validation processes take, and when will AIR be ready for implementation?**
The operational field test is scheduled for spring 2014.

28. **Will districts be reimbursed for substitutes for teacher involvement in such committees?**
Teachers will not be pulled from classrooms. Opportunities will be provided for Utah educators to participate if they choose to do so. Most of this work time would be scheduled outside of the school day. If there is a rare occasion where a teacher substitute is required, there will be a reimbursement.

29. **Is there money already allocated for professional development of AIR? Could that money be used, as well, if the Legislature changes the vendor to NWEA to use for professional development?**
Some training and professional development is included in the AIR contract. The legislature does not select vendors, the RFP process selects vendors.

30. **Is it possible to have AIR provide the test questions (content) and have NWEA be the engine (operating system)?**
The AIR contract includes content and the technology. The AIR engine was a very strong component of the proposal. The technology works on the broadest spectrum of machines (oldest to newest including iPads), the smallest bandwidth, web-based so requires minimal local support and includes a full set of accommodations for students with disabilities.

31. **What is USOE's plan for professional development on computer adaptive assessment?**
The AIR contract includes training and professional development. Once the contract is approved by the Board the professional development plan will be finalized and communicated to LEAs.

32. **What is the computer-student ratio required to handle computer adaptive assessment assuming three administrations each year, per student?**
The Board approved Technology Standards requires a 1:1 ratio. However, as LEAs achieve this goal, USOE will work with LEAs to meet the needs of the assessment system. The testing times and test window are expected to be similar to the current CRTs for the new adaptive summative assessment. Utah is already at

100% computer based testing for CRTs. USOE will work with LEAs to determine any additional computer needs associated with the two optional additional interim testing windows

33. **Have our CRT administration requirements changed at any gra.de level or by type of test?**
Elementary/Secondary language arts and elementary mathematics will continue to be grade based but will measure the new Utah Core Standards with an adaptive assessment. Secondary math will become grade based and measure the new Utah Core Standards indicated below:

7th Grade Utah Core
8th Grade Utah Core
9th Grade Secondary Math 1
10th Grade Secondary Math 2
11th Grade Secondary Math 3

Elementary science will remain grade based measuring the same core with an adaptive assessment.
Secondary science will remain course specific measuring the same core with an adaptive assessment.