1. The descriptions of your proposed data collection methodology reflect primarily qualitative and self-reported approaches. Please explain how APA will utilize these approaches to collect the quantitative data necessary for the study, including costs and testing time. Please explain which quantitative data elements from what sources will be included in data collection and, how APA anticipates using such data in cost analyses.
2. The cost determination for the proposal reflects a long working relationship with CDE. For this study APA will be reporting to and preparing the study for the Assessment Task Force which is comprised of a diverse group of individuals. Will this change affect APA’s estimate of the time/budget needed to prepare, complete, and present the study?
3. The proposal reflects a heavy reliance on CDE, past qualitative analysis, and study. If a request for more quantitative analysis is requested by the Task Force (Charge 1 & 2 ~ Summary of Duties), will APA be able to complete the work within the time/budget framework?
4. APA’s proposal is based upon an assumption that survey instruments developed for previous studies will meet the requirements of this work with only minor modifications. Please describe how APA will adjust plans and staff time allocations should early stakeholder reviews, including Task Force review, of those previous surveys determine that they do not provide an adequate base to meet the requirements of this Contract.

Taking the prior question into consideration, will APA be able to perform a broad view qualitative analysis to obtain parent and teacher input for items 3 – 6?

1. Your proposal did not provide details as to how key metrics such as “impact on instruction”, “diversion of resources”, and “assessment preparation” will be defined, instrumented, or calculated. Please provide additional details of how APA proposes to validate assumptions and establish agreement with the Task Force on the framing of the core factors under study through this Contract.
2. The proposal states that past studies would be used as part of this analysis, with an update to the past work (page5). These studies seemed to have a “readiness” lens, answering the question “will we (educational systems) be able to do this (state testing changes)?” The difference for this cost analysis is a “return on investment” lens, answering the question “should we be doing this?” How will you be able to ensure that the shift from readiness to return on investment is made from past studies to this cost/time impact analysis?
3. How is the “assessment use study” completed in 2012 similar or different from the West Ed study that was completed this past year?
4. How will your survey be different from the one used in 2012?
5. What will you do to ensure large enough responses for statistically useful data?
6. Based on the proposed approach described on pages 10-14, it seems that the research methodology is the Professional Judgment approach. Could a cost-effectiveness approach be used instead to link the cost and time impact portion of the analysis to the intended outcomes portion of the analysis?
7. How will you define cost? What data will you collect that pertains to cost?
8. From schools, charter schools, schools districts, the “department”, how will you collect data on cost? Who will you ask in districts for data on costs?
9. Based on the proposed tasks and proposed budget (pages 12-14), the emphasis of the analysis seems to be on the qualitative aspects of the statement of work (#3-6). How would you adjust the work so that the emphasis is shifted to prioritizing the quantitative aspects of the statement of work (#1 -2)?
10. How will your help “identify competitors” (page 3 of your response) and alternatives?
11. What are the “multiple perspectives” you referred to on page 1 of your response?
12. Statue requires the Task Force to investigate and report the actual time students spend taking state and local assessments. Student testing time is never mentioned in the scope of proposed work. Can you gather this information within the current budget and timeline?
13. How will you define “time spent preparing for tests?
14. How will you define “opportunity costs”? What data will you collect pertaining to “time spent preparing for tests” and “opportunity costs”?
15. How will you collect data on “time” and “opportunity costs” and who will you ask for data on “time” and “opportunity costs”?
16. How will you ensure that you receive data from the “front lines”, students, parents, and teachers?
17. How will you ensure that your data includes diverse response from: districts (urban, suburban, rural; large and small), racial and ethnic groups, students with learning differences and disabilities, students living in poverty (i.e., groups represented by disaggregated data that is provided by CDE on accountability reports)?
18. The Task Force is concerned that the State of Colorado conflict of interest policies will require APA to remove the proposed subcontract to Colorado League of Charter Schools from all project plans and budgets prior to contracting. Please provide insight regarding this concern? Do you think it is necessary to provide a stipend to the Colorado League of Charter Schools? Will you be able to ensure an adequate number of responses from charter operators without the stipend?
19. The proposed sample sized for all data collection activities described by APA appears small, particularly because the proposal does not thoroughly discuss difficulties to participant recruitment and likely survey non-response rates. Please provide an amended plan for increasing sample sizes for all data collection areas, or provide justification that the proposed sample sizes throughout the plan are statistically valid and will provide adequate evident to address the focus questions of the study – adequate enough for the Task Force to make well-informed decisions and recommendations to the State of Colorado.
20. Generally, can you ensure that the final product provided to the Task Force is based primarily (or exclusively) on objective data and information and provided within the current timeline and budget? Tell us how you are going to avoid subjective responses from school and district leaders.
21. Tell us how you will engage school-level administrators - rather than relying solely on district personnel - to gain a full understanding of the impact of state and local assessments. In addition to district personnel, can you interview school-level administrators for the “opportunity costs” portion of task 4 within the current budget and timeline?
22. Will the statewide survey (Task 2) include questions relating to state and local assessment? Will the questions disaggregate between the two?
23. In each of the types of interactions with the public and school/district personnel, what steps do you take to assess and insure reliability of the process and outcomes?
24. Does the time frame of this project pose any difficulties in obtaining sound data that accurately reflects the views of our population? If so, what adjustments might you make to your typical process to ensure reliability of the data you provide?
25. How do you see this work as similar or different than work you have done previously for the Colorado Legacy Foundation?
26. How will your staff and group engage diverse groups?
27. Please confirm that the composition of the Review Groups described on page 12 will be approved by the Task Force before recruitment begin and that the final slate of participants will be approved by the Task Force prior to initiating the work of the Review Group?
28. Please confirm that the project plans and schedules need to accommodate APA’s direct interaction and communication with the Task Force as the decision making authority for the project, rather than the Colorado Department of Education as described in the proposal. These activities will include Task Force validation of project requirements and assumptions at Contract initiation, Task Force confirmation of APA’s task definitions and plans, Task Force approval of research instruments and protocols, and Task Force review and approval of deliverables.
29. Who do you see as determining the “desired outcomes” on page 2 of your response?