

3. Organizational Capacity and Plans

3.A. Organizational Structure

The organizational structure of the Offeror's staff as it relates to the delivery of services for proposed assessments. Include details regarding help desk availability for tests administered online.

Renaissance Learning™, Inc., is a financially stable organization with extensive experience delivering quality programs on a large scale—including projects at the state level and with some of the nation's largest districts, as well as smaller private and charter schools. We are an international firm with subsidiaries in Toronto and London as well as six operating facilities in the United States. Our parent company, Raphael Holding Company, is owned by funds advised by Permira Advisers LLC. Permira operates out of 12 locations worldwide, including offices in Frankfurt, Guernsey, Hong Kong, London, Luxembourg, Madrid, Menlo Park, Milan, New York, Paris, Stockholm, and Tokyo.

Renaissance Learning employs approximately 900 people worldwide, including hundreds of employees dedicated to customer support, ensuring that sufficient resources are available for any implementation project. Renaissance Learning employees include accomplished educators, skilled computer technicians, a knowledgeable product development team, and a team of psychometricians experienced in the technical aspects of test design and analysis, among many other experts who hold advanced degrees in their fields.

Further, Renaissance Learning is a corporate partner with the newly formed SchoolView® Foundation, an interstate collaboration initiated by the Colorado Department of Education that has resulted in the statewide deployment of a common growth model in numerous states around the country (SchoolView, 2012)¹. Renaissance Learning and SchoolView are collaborating on several projects.

Drawing from this extensive network of resources, Renaissance Learning is committed to providing high-quality, industry-leading service and support to ensure a complete and successful implementation of your Renaissance™ programs. Renaissance Learning is no stranger to small- or large-scale implementations. We have the background and years of experience necessary to secure our services in large, urban districts across the country, as well as with state-level projects.

Over the past quarter century, we have also played a leading role in a number of state-level adoptions and initiatives. We are recognized for expertise in content and assessment alignment, with a dedicated division of content experts who create alignments for Renaissance Learning and other educational publishers. It is this leadership and expertise that Renaissance Learning brings to schools and districts nationwide as they transition to new standards and implement innovative educational initiatives. We invite you to contact the references we have listed later in section 3.F to learn more about our work with similar implementations.

¹ SchoolView® Foundation. (2012, August). *State-based data analytics, visualization, system design, and collaboration*. Denver, CO: Author.

3.A. Organizational Structure (continued)

Superior Customer and Technical Support

Renaissance Learning has built a reputation for providing the finest technical and help desk support in any field. Our call center is based in the US, and customers never talk to a machine when calling us. Renaissance technical support representatives assist between 1,500 and 2,000 customers daily from schools and districts around the world. We take pride in answering every call and live chat request in person, because we know that classroom time is valuable and that educators need help right away. Our technical support representatives are experts with extensive knowledge of Renaissance software. They answer each call promptly and walk customers through the answers they need.

Schools and districts with a current Renaissance Place Real Time™ subscription receive unlimited toll-free calls, e-mail, and live chat support with our team of technical experts from 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (central time), Monday through Friday. These experts provide a variety of services to help with setup, implementation, support, and troubleshooting of Renaissance programs. A Real Time subscription also automatically provides you with 24/7 access to an online help menu, teacher resources, and software and technical manuals as well as the online Renaissance Training Center™ (www.renlearn.com/training) and the Renaissance Learning Knowledge Base (<http://support.renlearn.com/techkb/>).

Additionally, with the STAR software hosted on Renaissance Learning's servers, schools and districts do not need to purchase, install, or maintain separate server hardware and software. Schools and districts also receive secure student information storage in our state-of-the-art data center—with records backed up regularly to ensure data integrity—and our technicians continually optimize the software for peak performance at all times at no additional cost. Meanwhile, school and district technical staff are free to handle other important projects, secure in the knowledge that the software will perform optimally.

3.B. Comprehensive Plan for Confidentiality

A comprehensive plan to be implemented by the contractor that establishes necessary safeguards to maintain the confidentiality of all student data and any other materials deemed to be confidential by VDOE or the Offeror.

Any data collected by Renaissance Learning products used by Virginia school divisions is treated as confidential information and is not disclosed or shared with other entities unless such disclosure is approved in writing by both parties. In accordance with FERPA, Renaissance Learning does not and will not release any student data except if required to by law or valid court order or if directed to do so in writing by an authorized district or school official. Access to student information is only granted to authorized employees on a need-to-know basis. In addition, employees are required to adhere to Renaissance Learning's privacy policy, which prohibits the outside release of any student data.

Renaissance Learning practices industry-standard procedures to maintain optimal security once customers are ready to create user accounts in Renaissance Place. These practices include defining user permissions based upon individuals' roles within the school district, authenticating users to guarantee that only authorized individuals gain access to the system, and encouraging users to follow recommended password security protocols.

3.C. Comprehensive Training Plan

A Comprehensive Training Plan for central office staff, school administrators and teachers.

Renaissance Learning is committed to providing professional services that promote high standards and strong leadership for learning and that build every implementation on a foundation of best classroom practices. Renaissance Learning professional development guides and empowers educators as they collect, analyze, and use data to facilitate instruction and assessment, personalize practice, and increase academic learning time.

Our customized professional development and support packages ensure that districts, schools, and educators get the most from our research-proven software tools. We offer a full line of professional services to our customers, including support plans for our software, on-site and web-based professional development opportunities, and consulting and technical services. Below is a look at the foundational training plan we provided for this project. The services described provide the key information and support needed for educators to administer STAR with fidelity and understand the data the assessments provide. Districts also have the option to purchase additional coaching and consulting services to deepen data literacy and support long term sustainability.

For each event in the training plan below, we indicate the purpose and the services provided. The table at the end of this section gives a more detailed look at the activities and rationale for each service.

Critical Assumptions

Successful implementations combine quality services with strong school leadership. Participating schools should be prepared to do the following:

- Commit to having staff complete an online course within a designated time frame.
- Work with the program manager to establish screening windows, communicate expectations to staff, and resolve any barriers to success that are identified as the implementation progresses.
- Identify a school “data leader” who will serve as a key project contact for Renaissance Learning.

Year 1 Services

Following are descriptions of the key elements of the professional development plan to be delivered during Year 1.

Implementation Management Services

Purpose

Promote a successful implementation in each school by monitoring progress toward effective use of the assessment based on a recommended sequence of activities and specifically defined outcomes. Provide guidance and support in resolving any barriers to success.

3.C. Comprehensive Training Plan (continued)

Services

- Facilitate communication between Renaissance Learning and school and/or district technology staff to resolve any setup or technical problems.
- Establish a schedule to ensure that teachers complete the online course and participate in data review activities.
- Facilitate online staff development and data review activities as needed.
- Monitor the status of the implementation using a descriptive progression of necessary activities to support effective assessment and use of data. (This includes completion of the online course, assessing students within specific testing windows, and scheduling data discussions with teachers.)
- Provide regular updates to school and/or district leaders regarding progress of the implementation and guide principals in taking any steps needed to ensure success.
- Assist principals in identifying any additional support needed to enhance implementation.

Dedicated Coaching Line

Purpose

Ensure that any questions about best practices for using the assessment or interpreting data provided by the reports are answered quickly by a Renaissance Learning coach with deep knowledge of the STAR assessments.

Services

A dedicated online coaching service will be established for Virginia schools participating in the program. When questions arise about best practices for administering the assessment, running reports, interpreting the data, etc., educators may call, e-mail, or use online chat for immediate assistance.

Online Course

Purpose

Provide online staff development that presents the essential information educators need to understand the assessments. This includes how to administer the assessments with fidelity, run reports, interpret report scores, and use STAR data for multiple purposes including screening, progress monitoring, instructional planning, and reporting student growth.

Services

- Deliver a series of short, sequenced, incremental learning activities based on the same instructional design framework used for on-site training.
- Provide 24/7 access to the course through the online Renaissance Training Center.

3.C. Comprehensive Training Plan (continued)

- Allow each teacher to progress through the course at a self-determined pace; however, there will be certain milestones in the course which all staff will be expected to attain at specified times. This will enable teachers to participate in group activities such as data reviews.
- Provide teachers a downloadable course guide containing activities associated with the course sessions, and allow them to track their progress throughout the course.
- Deliver the majority of sessions that make up the course as recorded webinars, online modules (self-guided tutorials), or documents to read.
- Provide two live webinars during which a coach will answer questions and facilitate review of reports with data from the school.

Subsequent Years

Following are descriptions of the key elements of the professional development plan to be delivered during Year 2 and beyond.

Implementation Management Services

Purpose

Provide ongoing support and assistance in sustaining an effective implementation.

Services

These services will mirror those described in the Implementation Management Services section in Year 1 above.

Dedicated Coaching Line

Purpose and Services

The purpose and services will mirror those described in the Dedicated Coaching Line section in Year 1 above.

Online Course

Purpose and Services

Schools will continue to have access to the online course, which will support new teachers who need to learn the system as well as provide review opportunities for teachers who are familiar with the assessments. The course topics will also be updated to reflect any added features in the assessments.

3.C. Comprehensive Training Plan (continued)

Activities and Rationale

The table on the following page offers more details about key activities of the professional development plan according to these categories:

- Management and ongoing support
- Staff development

Note: The table outlines our minimum recommendations. Other professional development options are also available for purchase.

3.C. Comprehensive Training Plan (continued)

Activities and Rationale	
MANAGEMENT AND ONGOING SUPPORT	<p>Program Management Services</p> <p>Program management services are designed to ensure that all aspects of the initiative (including installation and setup of software, professional development, student assessment, and use of data) proceed according to the recommended schedule. This ongoing implementation support will ensure that barriers to success are addressed proactively and that the implementation moves forward as expected. The program manager will coordinate the efforts of all Renaissance Learning, district, and school staff to ensure that any technical issues are resolved quickly and that ongoing professional development and support activities are scheduled and completed efficiently and effectively. The program manager will work with school and district leaders to ensure that a clear implementation strategy is defined and that clear expectations are communicated to staff and parents.</p> <hr/> <p>Online Coaching and Support</p> <p>A dedicated online coaching service will be set up for Virginia educators using the STAR Enterprise assessments. When questions arise about administering the assessment, running reports, interpreting the data, etc., teachers and administrators may call, e-mail, or use live chat for immediate assistance.</p>
STAFF DEVELOPMENT	<p>STAR Enterprise Online Course</p> <p>Teachers and principals or other school data leaders will complete an online course of study that incrementally builds the knowledge required to administer the assessment with fidelity, interpret the data provided, and apply the data to key instructional decisions. The online course will provide support for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the uses of STAR and the importance of administering the assessment with fidelity. • Understanding the science behind the assessment and how to interpret various data provided. • Understanding how to use various reports to guide instructional decisions. <p>The online course will include self-guided tutorials, recorded web-seminars, and two opportunities for data reviews with a coach. Participants will track their progress through the course using an activity guide that will promote active engagement in the course activities. While most of the activities in the course are designed to permit each individual to progress at a self-determined pace, there are various checkpoints along the way that require all staff to be at the same point to allow for group activities.</p>

3.D. Evidence of Experience

Evidence of experience in providing assessments that include measures of growth for local or state education agencies.

Currently, approximately 30,000 schools use the STAR assessments on the Renaissance Place Real Time platform, including many schools in Virginia. During the 2011–2012 school year alone, more than 38 million STAR assessments were taken by students on this platform, demonstrating their classroom utility. And because the STAR Enterprise assessments are efficient, accurate, and versatile, educators can use them for a variety of purposes, including gauging student performance in relation to state standards, deciding what to teach tomorrow and in the coming weeks, and measuring growth within the school year as well as over a period of years.

STAR Enterprise assessments have been approved for use as growth measures specifically for educator evaluation in New York, Ohio, and Tennessee, giving us valuable experience helping educators work through some possibilities for using STAR for this purpose. In addition, STAR Enterprise has been approved for use in the state of Wisconsin as an effective Response to Intervention (RTI) measure, and STAR Math Enterprise has been approved in Kansas for use within the state’s multi-tier system of support (MTSS). With STAR as part of these frameworks, educators establish goals for growth and then monitor progress toward these goals. And with the valuable reporting available with STAR, educators have enough time to provide the deliberate, personalized practice and feedback students need for growth.

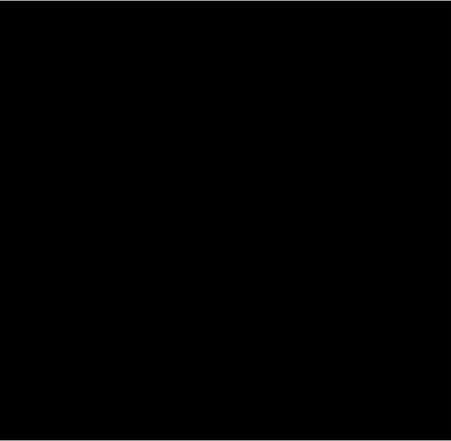
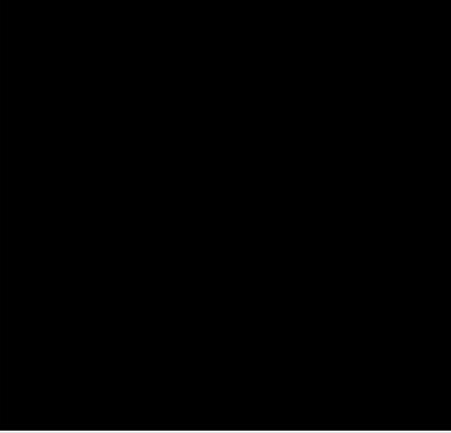
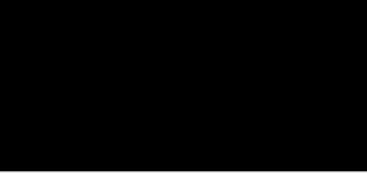
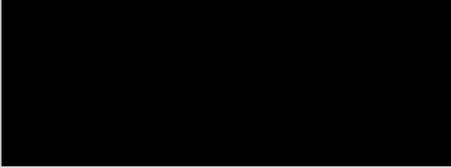
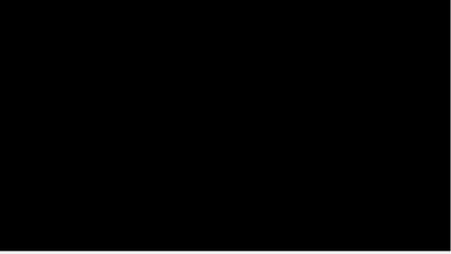
3.E. List of Local and State Agencies **CONFIDENTIAL**

A list of the local and state education agencies contracted with for similar services within the last three years. Include a brief summary of the services provided.

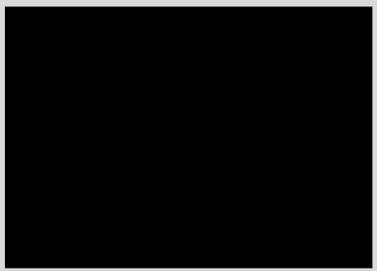
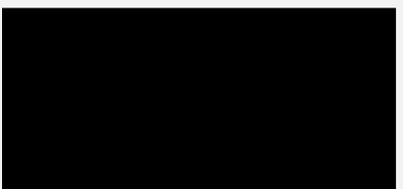
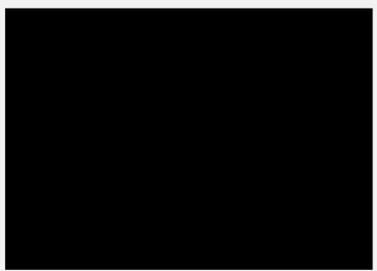
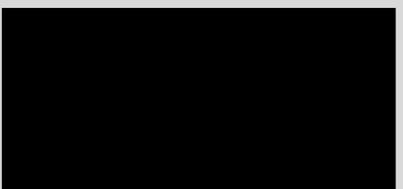
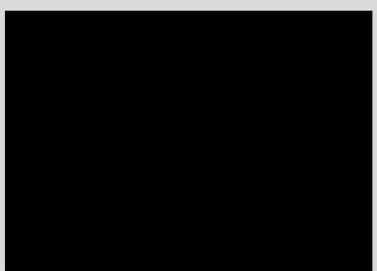
Renaissance Learning has helped thousands of schools across the country use our formative assessment and periodic progress-monitoring technology to enhance the curriculum, facilitate student growth, and support differentiated instruction for students of all ability levels in reading and math. Our STAR assessments offer intelligible ongoing feedback to help educators make data-driven instructional decisions that can increase student academic performance.

In the interest of protecting the privacy of our customers, and due to legal obligations under FERPA and other laws, Renaissance Learning does not disclose details about our customers without their permission. However, the table on the following page provides a sampling of Virginia customers who have agreed to serve as references for Renaissance Learning products. For each customer, we have provided contact information as well as a brief description of their STAR implementations. Please note that the information provided in this table is considered **Confidential Information** and is not for public viewing.

3.E. List of Local and State Agencies **CONFIDENTIAL** (continued)

District	Contact	Product Use
Accomack County Public Schools 23296 Courthouse Avenue Accomac, Virginia 23301		
Caroline County Public Schools 16221 Richmond Turnpike Bowling Green, Virginia 22427		
Norfolk Public Schools 800 E. City Hall Avenue Norfolk, Virginia 23510		
Mecklenburg County Public Schools 175 Mayfield Drive Boydton, Virginia 23917		

3.E. List of Local and State Agencies **CONFIDENTIAL** (continued)

<p>Alleghany County Public Schools 100 Central Circle Low Moor, Virginia 24457</p>		
<p>Wythe County Public Schools 1570 West Reservoir Street Wytheville, Virginia 24382</p>		
<p>Prince George County Public Schools 6410 Courts Drive Prince George, Virginia 23875</p>		

3.F. References **CONFIDENTIAL**

Three references (names, titles, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses).

The table below presents a list of references and accompanying contact information. Please note this is considered **Confidential Information** and is not for public viewing.

Name and Title	Contact Information	Responsibilities
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]