

Benchmark Assessment Grant Application: Frequently Asked Questions

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide responses to questions from the field regarding the [ARP-ESSER funded Benchmark Assessment](#) grant opportunity that is available through the [Vermont Grants Management System](#) (GMS).

Questions and Answers

1. Does this grant fund professional development related to benchmark assessments that have already been purchased?

There are three permissible uses of funding for this competitive grant opportunity:

1. Purchase a new benchmark assessment system(s) that includes Lexile and Quantile measures;
2. Extend the grade levels assessed in the current benchmark assessment system that provides Lexile and Quantile measures throughout K - 8 with the possibility of including high school; and/or
3. Fund participation in the [Educator Academy for Lexile and/or Quantile Frameworks](#).

Proposed expenses related to professional learning beyond educator participation in the Educator Academy would not be eligible. However, the Agency is currently in the procurement process to secure a vendor who will be offering professional learning to the field statewide related to local assessment practices. Please stay tuned for that announcement.

2. Why is the Agency supporting the use of Quantile and Lexile measures?

The Agency is not making a value statement that Lexile and Quantile measures are the only actionable data to collect around student performance to inform curricular, instructional, and assessment decisions. However, the Agency is leveraging state and set-aside funds to support the use of one viable and actionable strategy for understanding student performance and needs. One benefit of Lexile and Quantile measures is that they provide a common and consistent measure across classrooms, schools, and districts when reporting student progress toward proficiency. This can be particularly useful for educator and team planning, such as Education Support Teams (etc.), and as students transition within and across SUs/SDs. An additional benefit is that state summative assessments also report Lexile and Quantile measures. This allows for SUs/SDs, schools, and educators, no matter the benchmark assessments being used at the local level, to plot a growth trajectory for students throughout the year.

Contact Information:

If you have questions about this document or would like additional information please contact:

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3. What data and resources are available through the Lexile and Quantile Hub?

Lexile measures are one way to determine a student’s instructional and independent reading levels. While it is best practice to support student literacy development through repeated readings of complex texts that build student background knowledge and vocabulary, students will not be able to access important content independently if they are not able to decode the text. Lexile measures can provide one way for educators, students, and parents to select texts at a level of complexity that is just right for reading comprehension.

In a similar way, Quantile measures place students, curriculum, and teaching materials on the same scale. Educators are then able to differentiate their mathematics instruction by matching students with skills and concepts that they are ready to learn.

Lexile and Quantile measures also have the advantage of the [Lexile and Quantile Hub](#), which provides a set of resources and tools that can be used by [educators](#) and [families](#) to support students. For example, educators, parents, and students can use [Lexile Find-A-Book](#) to search for books by Lexile measure, grade level, interest, or reading complexity as well as view a book’s most challenging vocabulary words. The [Lexile Text Analyzer](#) can calculate the Lexile range of a text passage. The [Math@Home](#) tool supports classroom instruction at home by allowing parents and students to access free math resources that are tailored to a student’s individual grade, mathematical topic, and Quantile measure. Resources include activities, online games, tutorial videos, and worksheets. Teachers can use the [Math Skills Database](#) to discover individual Quantile Skills & Concepts (QSCs) and the Quantile measures of each state standard. A detailed view of the Knowledge Clusters and the interconnectedness of QSCs is also provided, along with access to free resources aligned to QSCs, state standards, and Quantile measures. A teacher can use this information to learn about both the pre-requisite and impending skills.

Please see the [Lexile and Quantile Hub webpage](#) on the Agency of Education website to explore all of the available resources and learn more about their uses.

4. Is the focus on Quantile and Lexile measures a movement towards the state collecting local data from districts?

The intent of the grant is to support SUs/SDs, schools, and educators in building out robust Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems that include benchmark assessments that can report Lexile and Quantile measures. This aligns with the Agency’s previous investment to support free access to the Lexile and Quantile Hub to ensure that educators have classroom tools readily available that can allow them to design instruction and assessment that is responsive to student learning. It also aligns with state summative assessment reporting capacity and provides the opportunity for schools to review local assessment data and state summative assessment data through a common metric.

5. Could the grant be used to purchase a particular component of a benchmark assessment?

If the proposed benchmark assessment reports Lexile and/or Quantile measures, this is a permissible funding request.

6. Could interventionists and other key administrator personnel participate in the Quantile/Lexile training instead of teachers?

Yes. Any educator can access the self-paced, online Academy. We encourage SU/SDs to think creatively about professionals within their SU/SD who might benefit from participating in the [Educator Academy](#).

If you have additional questions regarding the Benchmark Grant Application, please reach out to Pat Fitzsimmons at pat.fitzsimmons@vermont.gov.