


MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents and Business Managers
FROM: Daniel M. French, Ed.D., Secretary of Education 
SUBJECT: ARP ESSER Benchmark Assessment Grant Application
DATE: November 16, 2022

Purpose

By this memo you are notified that the application for the ARP ESSER Benchmark Assessment Grant Application for Vermont LEAs is now available in the [Grant Management System](#) (GMS). ARP ESSER funds are available as part of the [ARP Act of 2021](#). The applications for this competitive grant opportunity are due January 17, 2023.

Overview

Created by ARP ESSER Section 2001(f)(1), this funding is set aside for specific activities that help address learning loss by supporting actions that respond to students' academic, social and emotional needs. This grant encourages LEAs to purchase new or expand on existing benchmark assessment system(s) for English Language Arts and Mathematics that report Lexile and Quantile measures, and/or to support staff participation in the Educator Academy for Lexile and/or Quantile Frameworks.

Benchmark assessments are an essential component of a high-quality Local Comprehensive Assessment System (LCAS). They provide a point of reference against which a learner's level of proficiency can be measured and should be used to collect data for future planning of instruction and curriculum, as well as communicating to learners their progress toward proficiency. Consistent with the State's primary education recovery strategy and goals, effective benchmark assessments used with fidelity are a critical tool for systems to meet the needs of students who need additional support and in identifying opportunities to accelerate student learning.

In order to qualify for this competitive grant opportunity, the [SY22-23 Universal Screener, Interim, or Benchmark Census](#) needs to be completed by January 17, 2023. The purpose of this survey is to gather information on the type(s) of assessments SU/SDs are using to measure growth for English Language Arts, math, and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) throughout the school year.

Contact Information:

If you have questions about this document or would like additional information please contact:
Pat Fitzsimmons, Student Pathways, at Pat.Fitzsimmons@vermont.gov

Please note: Because an assessment tool alone is not sufficient for improving student outcomes, the AOE is in the process of soliciting proposals that would provide wrap-around professional learning opportunities regarding the effective use of benchmark assessment data. This is part of the AOE's statewide responsibility for supporting the development of a high-quality Local Comprehensive Assessment System.

Grants will be awarded for a performance period from the award date through December 31, 2024.

Creating and Editing the Application in the Grant Management System

All Superintendents and Business Managers have permissions in the GMS to create and edit the application. If desired, a Superintendent can delegate the ability to create and edit the application to additional staff, by assigning the role "leaESSER" to any staff members with a GMS account. Note that, as with all other grant applications, only the Superintendent can agree to assurances and do the final submission to the Agency of Education.

LEAs should direct questions about the application to [Pat Fitzsimmons](#). Any technical questions pertaining to budgets or other financial topics should be sent to [Deb Allen](#).