

**AGENCY OF EDUCATION  
Montpelier, Vermont**

**TEAM:** Legal

**ACTION ITEM:** Will the State Board of Education authorize the Secretary to, on its behalf, award a three-year contract, with the possibility of two one-year extensions, to develop and implement statewide summative assessments of ELA, Math, and Science to Cognia, pursuant with the requirements set forth in federal law--ESSA, Section 1111--in preparation for administration beginning in the 2022-2023 school year.

**SECRETARY'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

That the State Board authorize the Secretary to, on its behalf, award a three-year contract, with the possibility of two one-year extensions, to develop and implement statewide summative assessments of ELA, Math, and Science to Cognia, pursuant with the requirements set forth in federal law--ESSA, Section 1111--in preparation for administration beginning in the 2022-2023 school year.

**STATUTORY AUTHORITY:** 16 V.S.A. § 1071, State Board Rule 2300.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Federal law requires the Agency of Education to administer a peer-reviewed assessment to students in the areas of Math, Science, and English Language Arts (ELA). In October 2022, development and implementation contracts expire for the current ELA, Math, and Science assessments. Based on [State Bulletin 3.5 Procurement and Contracting Policies](#), the State is required to issue a Request For Proposal (RFP), as the maximum term of the contract has been executed. The new contract will be implemented in the 2022-2023 school year, with an estimated July 1, 2022, start date. The Data Management and Analysis Division (DMAD) made several attempts to recruit field representation to participate in the vendor demonstrations. Unfortunately, no interest was received.

The Secretary recommends awarding the contract to Cognia, an industry leader in K-12 assessment. Cognia was rated the highest during the initial bid review, delivered a superior demonstration, and produced a more competitive Best and Final Offer (BAFO). The products and services proposed exceed that of our current contracts and that of the competing vendors.

The vendor has proposed measures to address data continuity, mainly by performing a linking study between new assessment and old assessment scores, so these data remain of long-term value to Vermont. Lexile and Quantile measures may also provide some consistency across assessments (i.e., our current assessment and any new assessment can be linked to these scales for ELA and Math).

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS:** This work is in support of existing policy so there should be no impact.

**EDUCATION IMPLICATIONS:** Standards are not changing, only the assessment that measures those standards will change because of this required procurement.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:** This new contract will be supported by a similar amount of SARA funds as the previous contracts and MOU combined, however, it represents a greater value proposition on several fronts, including but not limited to:

- Modern platform and unified user experience
- Simplified user experience
- Great user support
- Reduced SEA and LEA personnel time required to manage and implement
- More accessible and readily usable interim and benchmark assessment options

Thus, when factoring the significant reduction in the SEA and LEA staff time required to manage and implement this system, the recommended vendor represents a considerable return on the investment from the perspective of total cost of ownership for this assessment system.

**STAFF AVAILABLE:** Wendy I. Geller, PhD, Division Director, Data Management & Analysis  
and Amanda Gorham, PhD, Assessment Director