

Questions and Answers

Last Updated: October 8, 2015

RFQ #15-001: Teacher and Principal Evaluation: Qualifications for Supplemental Assessments and Corresponding Growth Models and/or Assessments for Use with SLOs to Be Used by New York State School Districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) in Teacher and Principal Evaluations

Application Guidelines

1. *Can assessments under development be considered for listing?*

Assessments submitted through this RFQ must be completely developed and ready for use in an Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan.

2. *If a district has approximately 90 assessments to submit, must we submit an application for each individual assessment or can we submit an application for the framework that is common across all of the assessments?*

Must a district submit a new RFQ for each assessment they wish to use under 3012-d? Many of our districts have used many district developed assessments under 3012-c. Is it realistic for a district to prepare a new RFQ for each assessment used, especially in small rural districts that lack man-power and funds to create statistically reliable assessments that would earn enough points in the RFQ process?

May a vendor submit more than one SLO application (for example, a separate application for Science than for Reading) to better reflect the differences in how students grow? (3.4, p. 18, bullet 2)

Section 3.4, APPLICATION PACKAGE FORMAT, on page 18 of the RFQ addresses the submission of assessments for various grades and subjects:

Assessments to Be Used with an SLO

- Applicants seeking approval for more than one assessment to be used with an SLO should submit a single application for all proposed assessments. Applicants should specify all applicable grades and subjects on Form B-1.
- In instances where different assessments for use with SLOs have different characteristics that must be described to the Department, applicants may wish to submit multiple copies of a particular form (e.g., Form C).

Supplemental Assessments and Associated Growth Model

- Applicants seeking approval for more than one supplemental assessment and associated growth model must submit separate applications for each assessment and/or associated growth model.
- Applicants seeking approval of a supplemental assessment and associated growth model for more than one grade within the same subject area may submit one application, provided the

application clearly specifies any variance in the degree to which the assessment meets the criteria in Form B-2 for the grades for which the assessment is being proposed.

- Applicants seeking approval of a supplemental assessment and corresponding growth model for more than one subject area may submit separate applications or a single application, but must clearly specify any variance in the degree to which the assessment meets the criteria in Sections 2.2 for the subjects for which the assessment is being proposed. **Please note that if one application includes an assessment for more than one subject area and/or grade, the assessment may not be approved for use in all subject(s)/grade(s) for which it was submitted if the technical documentation for each subject/grade does not meet the criteria specified in Form B-2.**

3. *If a vendor is planning to submit an assessment for both the “Required Student Performance Subcomponent” and the “Optional Student Performance Subcomponent”, is a separate application required for each model?*

Each type of assessment has different requirements for submission. Assessments submitted for approval as an Assessment to Be Used with an SLO and as a Supplemental Assessment and Associated Growth Model may be submitted on the same application, but must include the required documents for both types of assessments. Please see question 6 for details on what is required for each type of assessment. In certain instances, it may be necessary to submit multiple versions of a particular form specific to each type of assessment.

4. *Our district’s current agreement under 3012-c allowed for district-developed assessments in dozens of instances crossing many grades and disciplines. Are we to submit every assessment that was utilized?*

Districts/BOCES must submit an application to this RFQ and receive approval for any assessments they wish to use in an APPR plan under Education Law §3012-d. For details on submitting assessments for multiple grades and subjects, please see question 2. Please note that nothing in this RFQ requires an applicant to submit the actual assessments they wish to use.

5. *Page 3 states: Entities are allowed to apply to “either or both lists of approved assessments for the purposes of APPR”; therefore, we intended to reply only to the first bullet for SLO’s, and bypass the list for Growth Models. Are we correct in the understanding that you can choose to submit in one or both categories?*

Applicants may choose to submit an application for one or both type(s) of assessment.

6. *Please clarify: There appears to be mixed interpretations in the field regarding what is required in the RFQ Assessment application is “Form H” the only form that needs to be submitted?*

Would it be possible for NYSED to give districts more detailed guidance on exactly what should be submitted and in what form?

Section 3.5, APPLICATION PACKAGE CHECKLIST, on page 19 of the RFQ describes the required components of an application.

Assessments to Be Used with an SLO

Applicants seeking approval for an assessment to be used with an SLO are required to submit the following:

Component	Requirement/Format
TRANSMITTAL LETTER	An authorized individual must write a brief Transmittal Letter to formally submit/transmit the application, and other materials, on behalf of the Applicant, to the New York State Education Department. The transmittal letter must be signed and dated by the authorized Applicant and, if applicable, the Copyright Owner/Assessment Representative.
VENDOR RESPONSIBILITY QUESTIONNAIRE (VRQ)	A completed VendRep Questionnaire must be included with the application or completed online, unless applicant is exempt.
FORM A	The Applicant must complete an Application Cover Page .
FORM B-1	The Applicant must complete an Assessment Information Page .
FORM C	The Applicant must prepare a Publicly-Available Service Summary that will be posted to the Web if the application is approved and available for download.
FORM D	The Assessment Representative/Provider must complete an Assurances and Signature page that must be signed and dated by an authorized individual.
FORM E	The Applicant must complete a Request for Exemption from Disclosure Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Law , identifying any proprietary material submitted in the application for which exemption from FOIL is requested, or write "N/A" on the form, if the application does not include any proprietary material.
FORM F	If the applicant is NOT the Copyright Owner / Assessment Representative, then a completed Approval to Submit on Behalf of Assessment Copyright Owner / Assessment Representative form MUST be submitted.
FORM H	The Assessment Representative/Provider must complete an Applicant Certification Form – Assessments for Use with SLOs that must be signed and dated by an authorized individual. For co-submitted applications, both applicants must submit a complete, signed and dated Certification Form .
APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS	The Applicant must provide appropriate Appendices/Attachments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supporting documentation (Graphs or charts demonstrating achievement, certificates of incorporation, etc.).

Supplemental Assessments and Associated Growth Model

Applicants seeking approval for more than one supplemental assessment and associated growth model are required to submit the following:

Component	Requirement/Format
TRANSMITTAL LETTER	An authorized individual must write a brief Transmittal Letter to formally submit/transmit the application, and other materials, on behalf of the Applicant, to the New York State Education

	Department. The transmittal letter must be signed and dated by the authorized Applicant and, if applicable, the Copyright Owner/Assessment Representative.
VENDOR RESPONSIBILITY QUESTIONNAIRE (VRQ)	A completed VendRep Questionnaire must be included with the application or completed online, unless applicant is exempt.
FORM A	The Applicant must complete an Application Cover Page .
FORM B-1	The Applicant must complete an Assessment Information Page .
FORM B-2	The Applicant must submit a Technical Application .
FORM C	The Applicant must prepare a Publicly-Available Service Summary that will be posted to the Web if the application is approved and available for download.
FORM D	The Assessment Representative/Provider must complete an Assurances and Signature page that must be signed and dated by an authorized individual.
FORM E	The Applicant must complete a Request for Exemption from Disclosure Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Law , identifying any proprietary material submitted in the application for which exemption from FOIL is requested, or write "N/A" on the form, if the application does not include any proprietary material.
FORM F	If the applicant is NOT the Copyright Owner / Assessment Representative, then a completed Approval to Submit on Behalf of Assessment Copyright Owner / Assessment Representative form MUST be submitted.
FORM G	The Assessment Representative/Provider must complete an Attestation of Technical Criteria – Supplemental Assessments and Corresponding Growth Models that must be signed and dated by an authorized individual. For co-submitted applications, both applicants must submit a complete, signed and dated Attestation of Technical Criteria .
APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS	The Applicant must provide appropriate Appendices/Attachments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Technical/administration manuals as required in this RFQ. ○ Supporting documentation (Graphs or charts demonstrating achievement, certificates of incorporation, etc.).

Please see question 38 for information on Section 3.4, APPLICATION PACKAGE FORMAT.

Assessment Requirements

7. ***Please confirm that the previous prescriptive guidance on the assignment of teachers to HEDI rating categories for SLOs (that establishes requirements for what percentage of students meeting a year's worth of growth corresponds to a specific HEDI category, 2.2 F on Form G of first released RFQ, p. 46), is no longer applicable. (1.1, p. 3, last paragraph).***

Please provide clarification on minimum requirements. Are these the requirements noted in Form H?

Assessments to Be Used with an SLO

Minimum requirements are outlined on Form H: APPLICANT CERTIFICATION FORM –ASSESSMENTS FOR USE WITH STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES on pages 49 and 50 of the RFQ and are noted below.

- The assessment is rigorous, meaning that it is aligned to the New York State learning standards or, in instances where there are no such learning standards that apply to a subject/grade level, alignment to research-based learning standards.
- To the extent practicable, the assessment must be valid and reliable as defined by the Standards of Educational and Psychological Testing.
- The assessment can be used to measure one year's expected growth for individual students.
- For K-2 assessments, the assessment is not a "Traditional Standardized Assessment" as defined in Section 1.3 of the RFQ.
- For assessments previously used under Education Law §3012-c, the assessment results in differentiated student-level performance. If the assessment has not produced differentiated results in prior school years, the applicant assures that the lack of differentiation is justified by equivalently consistent student results based on other measures of student achievement.
- For assessments not previously used in teacher/principal evaluation, the applicant has a plan for collecting evidence of differentiated student results such that the evidence will be available by the end of each school year.
- At the end of each school year, the applicant will collect evidence demonstrating that the assessment has produced differentiated student-level results and will provide such evidence to the Department upon request.¹

Please note that pursuant to Sections 30-3.4 and 30-3.5 of the Rules of the Board of Regents, educators must be assigned a HEDI rating based on the following percentages of students meeting/exceeding targets: 0-59% = Ineffective; 60-74% = Developing; 75-89% = Effective; 90-100% = Highly Effective. Specific percentage ranges corresponding to each HEDI point can be found here: <https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/meetings/Sep%202015/915p12hea1revised.pdf>.

Supplemental Assessments and Associated Growth Model

Minimum requirements are outlined on Form B-2: TECHNICAL APPLICATION on pages 31-35 of the RFQ and on Form G: ATTESTATION OF TECHNICAL CRITERIA – SUPPLEMENTAL ASSESSMENTS WITH CORRESPONDING GROWTH MODELS on pages 42-51.

¹ Please note, pursuant to Section 2.3 of this RFQ, an assessment may be removed from the approved list if such assessment does not comply with one or more of the criteria for approval set forth in this RFQ

Assessment Security and Rights

- 8. Does SED have any guidance on test security in the process of developing new assessments under 3012-d? If tests are shared throughout the State will tests be secure? How should vested interest be handled in small rural districts?**

The regulations require that the assessment development, security and scoring processes utilized by a school district/BOCES must ensure that any assessments and/or measures used to evaluate teachers and principals are not disseminated to students before administration and that teachers and principals do not have a vested interest in the outcome of the assessments they score. Recognizing that there may be rare instances in which this is not practicable (e.g., when administering the NYSAA), the Department recommends that districts/BOCES make every attempt possible to ensure that teachers and principals do not score assessments where they have a vested interest in the outcome, even in cases where the teacher is the only one in the district with the specific content expertise. Districts/BOCES should consult with their local counsel to determine what measures should be taken to mitigate security risks (e.g., certification, periodic audits, etc.).

Assessments for Use with SLOs

- 9. As a local school district, we worked for several years to design and implement a K-12 performance-based assessment system in accordance with 3012-c regulations. We would very much like to continue to use our local assessments in 3012-d in conjunction with SLOs. Will there be an application process that is geared toward school districts or will there only be the one process that is presented in the guidance document? The existing process in the RFQ is geared toward commercial entities and as a local school district we are unable to respond to many of the items in the application.**

I am trying to understand the change regarding assessments being used for SLOs. Can you explain in lay terms what has specifically changed? Must all assessments used for SLOs still be submitted for approval with the full application?

Is Form H the only form necessary to be submitted to NYSED for an assessment locally-developed for use with SLOs? I referenced the RFQ guidance, which specifies that a full application needs to be completed, yet form B-2 is now being replaced with Form H for locally developed SLO assessments.

The application process outlined in this RFQ is for both commercial entities and local school districts. For assessments to be used with SLOs, Form B-2: TECHNICAL APPLICATION on pages 31-35 of the RFQ and the corresponding Form G: ATTESTATION OF TECHNICAL CRITERIA – SUPPLEMENTAL ASSESSMENTS WITH CORRESPONDING GROWTH MODELS on pages 42-51 do not need to be completed as these forms are applicable only to supplemental assessments with corresponding growth models. If an application is for assessments for use with SLOs, Form H: APPLICANT CERTIFICATION FORM –ASSESSMENTS FOR USE WITH STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES on pages 49 and 50 of the RFQ is substituted for Form B-2 and Form G. Question 10 provides more information on the required items for an application for an assessment to be used with an SLO.

10. If we are using district created final exams as the SLO for many of our elective courses, do we have to submit each exam for review or do we just submit Form H? If we just submit Form H, do we have to submit a separate one for each final exam?

Section 3.5, APPLICATION PACKAGE CHECKLIST, on page 19 of the RFQ describes the required components of an application.

Applicants seeking approval for an assessment to be used with an SLO are required to submit the following:

Component	Requirement/Format
TRANSMITTAL LETTER	An authorized individual must write a brief Transmittal Letter to formally submit/transmit the application, and other materials, on behalf of the Applicant, to the New York State Education Department. The transmittal letter must be signed and dated by the authorized Applicant and, if applicable, the Copyright Owner/Assessment Representative.
VENDOR RESPONSIBILITY QUESTIONNAIRE (VRQ)	A completed VendRep Questionnaire must be included with the application or completed online, unless applicant is exempt.
FORM A	The Applicant must complete an Application Cover Page .
FORM B-1	The Applicant must complete an Assessment Information Page .
FORM C	The Applicant must prepare a Publicly-Available Service Summary that will be posted to the Web if the application is approved and available for download.
FORM D	The Assessment Representative/Provider must complete an Assurances and Signature page that must be signed and dated by an authorized individual.
FORM E	The Applicant must complete a Request for Exemption from Disclosure Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Law , identifying any proprietary material submitted in the application for which exemption from FOIL is requested, or write "N/A" on the form, if the application does not include any proprietary material.
FORM F	If the applicant is NOT the Copyright Owner / Assessment Representative, then a completed Approval to Submit on Behalf of Assessment Copyright Owner / Assessment Representative form MUST be submitted.
FORM H	The Assessment Representative/Provider must complete an Applicant Certification Form – Assessments for Use with SLOs that must be signed and dated by an authorized individual. For co-submitted applications, both applicants must submit a complete, signed and dated Certification Form .
APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS	The Applicant must provide appropriate Appendices/Attachments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supporting documentation (Graphs or charts demonstrating achievement, certificates of incorporation, etc.).

Applicants seeking approval for more than one assessment to be used with an SLO should submit a single application for all proposed assessments. Applicants should specify all applicable grades and subjects on Form B-1.

- 11. Page 22 states: “For assessments for use with SLOs, applicants must provide responses to all items. If we only respond to the SLO category, which form/narrative should we respond to, as the RFQ makes multiple references to the fact that Form B-2 should only “be completed for supplemental assessments with corresponding growth models” and we could not locate any specific questions related to SLOs as indicated on page 22.**

Page 24, Response Category: 2.2(A): Narrative Overview of Proposed Supplemental Assessment and Associated Growth Model or Assessment to be used with a SLO. Question: Is the “response” category and “desired characteristics” category listed within the table at the top of page 24 applicable only for proposed supplemental assessment and associated growth model? Will NYSED provide a detailed point breakdown for assessments to be used with SLOs?

The RFQ was revised on September 18 and September 22 to make Form B-2: TECHNICAL APPLICATION on pages 31-35 of the RFQ and the corresponding Form G: ATTESTATION OF TECHNICAL CRITERIA – SUPPLEMENTAL ASSESSMENTS WITH CORRESPONDING GROWTH MODELS on pages 42-51 applicable only to supplemental assessments with corresponding growth models. If an application is for assessments for use with SLOs, Form H: APPLICANT CERTIFICATION FORM – ASSESSMENTS FOR USE WITH STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES on pages 49 and 50 of the RFQ is substituted for Form B-2 and Form G. Form H does not have point values assigned to it; instead, applicants must check all boxes, certifying that they meet all necessary criteria.

BOCES Sponsorship

- 12. Can you please outline the steps of BOCES sponsorship? Will BOCES staff be trained in the various statistical elements of the technical application so that sponsorship can be legitimate? What legal implications are there for BOCES that sponsor a district assessment?**

If a district wishes to submit and we must “sign off” as a sponsor, what is the level of accountability to BOCES? Are we responsible for content of assessment and accompanying packaging?

The procedure for a district to secure BOCES sponsorship would be determined locally by the BOCES. In completing the RFQ application, BOCES will have to complete all necessary forms as the “co-applicant” and have their designated representative sign where necessary (see, .e.g., Forms A, B-1, and G). LEAs should consult with their local counsel regarding the legal implications and accountability of providing and/or sponsoring an application to this RFQ.

Co-Applicants

- 13. 2.1 (A) requires submission with a LEA, while the other, 2.1 (D), does not. Would you please differentiate between the two?**

Can you provide clarification when it would not be necessary for a vendor to partner with a New York State LEA in a co-submission?

2.1(A) addresses an instance in which a local education agency (LEA) may want to partner with a vendor to develop a Supplemental Assessment and Associated Growth Model or an Assessment to Be Used with an SLO specific to their student population. In this case the vendor would submit the assessment with the LEA as a co-applicant.

2.1(D) allows a vendor to submit a Supplemental Assessment and Associated Growth Model or an Assessment to Be Used with an SLO that would not be designed specifically for the student population in any one local education agency (LEA) and would be available for use by any district or BOCES.

- 14. Another vendor is going to be our partner in this work. Should they be considered a co-applicant and if so do you need their signed forms?**

If the assessment is developed and owned by one organization, but a component of the proposed growth model for use with the supplemental assessment is developed by a separate organization, should the second organization be considered a co-applicant?

This depends on the relationship between the two parties. The applicant should be the copyright owner of the assessment and/or the assessment representative.

If an LEA is partnering with a third-party vendor to develop a custom assessment, then the LEA is the applicant and the third-party vendor is the co-applicant.

If a third-party assessment provider is partnering with another vendor to develop a growth model, the applicant should be the copyright owner of the assessment and/or assessment representative. The growth model provider does not necessarily need to be a co-applicant.

Disapproval

- 15. What are the ramifications for a district that submits an assessment that is not approved?**

Only approved assessments can be utilized in an Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan. Therefore, if a district submits an assessment that is not approved, the district must either modify their application and resubmit, or choose an alternate assessment. The district may make revisions to their RFQ application and resubmit it for review, or they must choose to use either a State assessment, or a different assessment that is included on the Approved Assessment List(s). Applications, including re-applications that address deficiencies, will be accepted on a continuous and ongoing basis.

Form B-1: The Assessment Information Page

16. A line item for grade(s) is not included on Form B-1. Is it acceptable for vendors to include the grade(s) for the assessment on the “name of assessment” line?

The grade(s) applicable to the assessment can be included in the name of the assessment, or they can be listed underneath the corresponding subject(s) where “Please Specify” is indicated.

17. We are going to submit an application for approval for our SLO assessments. For form B-1, do we need to complete a form for each assessment?

A separate Form B-1 is not required for each assessment; all grades and subjects can be listed on one form.

Form C: Publicly-Available Service Summary

18. For form C, if we check no for allowing them to be purchased or shared, do we need to complete the three shaded sections below?

All information requested on Form C should be included, regardless of whether the assessment is able to be purchased or shared. This form will be posted with the assessment information on the approved assessment list(s) as information for public consumption.

While you can use “N/A” when submitting your application if these items are not applicable, this form will be posted on our list of approved assessments website if your assessment is approved, and so you may wish to supply this information.

19. Regarding page 36, Form C: Nature of Assessment, if a vendor is submitting more than one product for review of assessment for use with SLOs with target setting model, can vendor submit multiple products in a combined submission? If so, should Form C include all products or should vendors complete a separate Form C for each product?

As noted in question 2, applicants seeking approval for more than one assessment to be used with an SLO should submit a single application for all proposed assessments. A separate Form C is not required for each assessment; information pertaining to all assessments can be listed on one form. If an applicant wishes to submit multiple copies of the same form for different assessments, they may do so as well.

Form H: Applicant Certification Form – Assessments for Use with SLOs

20. I am not sure that there is a district in NYS this is truly equipped to create and use a locally created assessment that can meet the criteria of Form H. How viable is this option? To what exactly am I certifying? What is the consequence if SED at some point finds that the assessment is not truly aligned to the six criteria on Form H?

Form H: APPLICANT CERTIFICATION FORM –ASSESSMENTS FOR USE WITH STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES on pages 49 and 50 of the RFQ requires the applicant to certify that the assessment is consistent with the requirements listed below.

- The assessment is rigorous, meaning that it is aligned to the New York State learning standards or, in instances where there are no such learning standards that apply to a subject/grade level, alignment to research-based learning standards.

- To the extent practicable, the assessment must be valid and reliable as defined by the Standards of Educational and Psychological Testing.
- The assessment can be used to measure one year's expected growth for individual students.
- For K-2 assessments, the assessment is not a "Traditional Standardized Assessment" as defined in Section 1.3 of the RFQ.
- For assessments previously used under Education Law §3012-c, the assessment results in differentiated student-level performance. If the assessment has not produced differentiated results in prior school years, the applicant assures that the lack of differentiation is justified by equivalently consistent student results based on other measures of student achievement.
- For assessments not previously used in teacher/principal evaluation, the applicant has a plan for collecting evidence of differentiated student results such that the evidence will be available by the end of each school year.
- At the end of each school year, the applicant will collect evidence demonstrating that the assessment has produced differentiated student-level results and will provide such evidence to the Department upon request.²

In the event that the assessment is found not to be consistent with these criteria, the approval may be terminated. In these cases, the LEA would have to initiate a material change to their APPR plan and choose a different assessment. Please see section 2.3, TERMINATION OF APPROVAL OF A SUPPLEMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND ASSOCIATED GROWTH MODEL AND AN ASSESSMENT FOR USE WITH AN SLO, on page 15 of the RFQ for more information on termination of approval.

21. Based on the new guidance, if we have used the STAR assessment, can we complete Form H, as an assurance for this assessment, which will be used in developing the SLO?

Applications may be submitted to this RFQ by an applicant who is not also the copyright owner of the assessment. However, such applications must include a completed Form F: APPROVAL TO SUBMIT ON BEHALF OF COPYRIGHT OWNER / ASSESSMENT REPRESENTATIVE signed by the copyright owner/assessment representative.

Growth Models

22. Is NY interested in using national-level data as part of the expected growth model?

Assessment providers may utilize national-level data in providing the necessary technical documentation on Form B-2. For criteria 2.2(E) and 2.2(F), if an applicant does not have the necessary evidence, NYSED will accept a detailed plan for how evidence will be collected during the 2015-16 school year such that defensible teacher-level growth scores that are convertible to New York State's 0-20 APPR scale are available for use by teachers for the purposes of APPR by the end of the 2015-16 school year.

Growth Targets

23. Does each assessment submitted for approval require a separate year's worth of growth model or is creating a scale that would be applicable for all submitted assessments by a vendor (i.e. Jefferson-Lewis BOCES) be sufficient?

² Please note, pursuant to Section 2.3 of this RFQ, an assessment may be removed from the approved list if such assessment does not comply with one or more of the criteria for approval set forth in this RFQ

A scale that is applicable to all assessments submitted by an applicant is sufficient. Please note that if this application is only for assessments for use with SLOs, applicants do not need to submit Forms B-2 and G, but should instead submit Form H.

Inclusion of Assessments

24. As I review the RFQ for the purposes of an SLO, I am not seeing where the actual assessment has to be submitted.

As part of 3012-c we used assessments for our SLOs. Do we have to submit copies of all of assessments for courses that do not culminate in a state assessment? We have many, many courses at the secondary level.

Does the RFQ application package for assessment approval (assessment used with a SLO) include the requirement that a copy of the actual assessment, provided to the student, be included in the application packet? I have reviewed the application forms and do not see a reference to such an attachment.

Earlier in this process, it was my understanding that all assessments, the actual assessment we present to students, were to be submitted to the State for approval. However, in discussion with colleagues, it seems that only the RFQ, which is an extensive application, needs to be submitted, without the actual assessment. Is this an accurate interpretation?

I recently heard that State Ed. is no longer requiring districts to send our district-made SLO assessments along with the application, is that true?

A complete application to the RFQ does not necessarily require a copy of the assessment be provided. Please see page 21 of the updated assessment RFQ (attached to this email) for a sample of a complete application package. If the application is for an assessment for use with SLOs, Forms B-2 and G do not need to be included. In their place, the applicant would submit Form H. Please see question 6 for more information on application requirements.

K-2 Assessments

25. None of the tests that have been approved are approved for grades K-2, even though some of these companies obviously have tests for those grades - Examples: NWEA and STAR. Can you please explain why?

For K-2 assessments, the assessment must not be a "Traditional Standardized Assessment" as defined in Section 1.3 of the RFQ. Such assessments may be added to the Lists of Approved Assessments under Education Law §3012-d. If you are referring to the list of approved third-party assessments under Education Law §3012-c, please note that third-party assessments for grades K-2 were removed from that list on March 2, 2014. Please see:

<https://www.engageny.org/resource/guidance-on-the-approved-regulatory-amendments-to-app-to-help-reduce-local-testing> for additional information.

Law and Regulations

26. Would NYSED provide citation(s) to the following: “terms and conditions cited in State law and regulation [RFQ Section 1.2(C), ¶3, p. 8]?”

Assessment providers who enter into agreements with LEAs to provide assessments must comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

MGP Calculation

27. Please provide technical details on how adjusted MGP are calculated for each demographic group and grade for reading and math.

Details regarding the methodology used by the Department to translate MGPs to HEDI scores can be found on the document “Classification Rules for Growth Ratings and Scores - Schools (2014-15)” available on EngageNY at: <https://www.engageny.org/resource/classification-rules-growth-ratings-and-scores-schools-2014-15>.

Modification to Application

28. May Responders add addendum to, resubmit, or withdraw applications if any answers to questions released by the Department on 10/8 represent a significant change to the scope of work or policies described in the RFQ?

Yes, applicants are free to resubmit and/or modify their application at any time. Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis, so there is no time limit for when these changes must be submitted. An applicant may contact assessrfq@nysed.gov if they would like to resubmit or withdraw their application based on the information provided in this document.

Next Generation Assessment Priorities

29. Are the "New York State Next Generation Assessment Priorities" publicly available?

The "New York State Next Generation Assessment Priorities" are publicly available within the RFQ on pages 5-7.

One Year Expected Growth

30. Does the Department define “one year of expected growth” for the purposes of SLO target setting and this RFQ in a specific way (e.g., the median growth of all students who took the assessment)?

We need some more guidance on setting the year's worth of growth.

Please explain the NYSED definition of “one year expected growth” [RFQ Section 2.1 (A), p. 13].

SLO targets should be set with the goal of a student achieving one year of growth from baseline to final assessment. Assessments to be used with SLOs should include a target setting process aligned with this goal. **The Department does not have a specific benchmark associated with one year’s expected growth.** Because of the variety of assessments and processes for measuring growth that districts/BOCES utilize as part of their evaluation systems, the Department has not prescribed a particular methodology. Educators should look to standards and course curricula to determine what

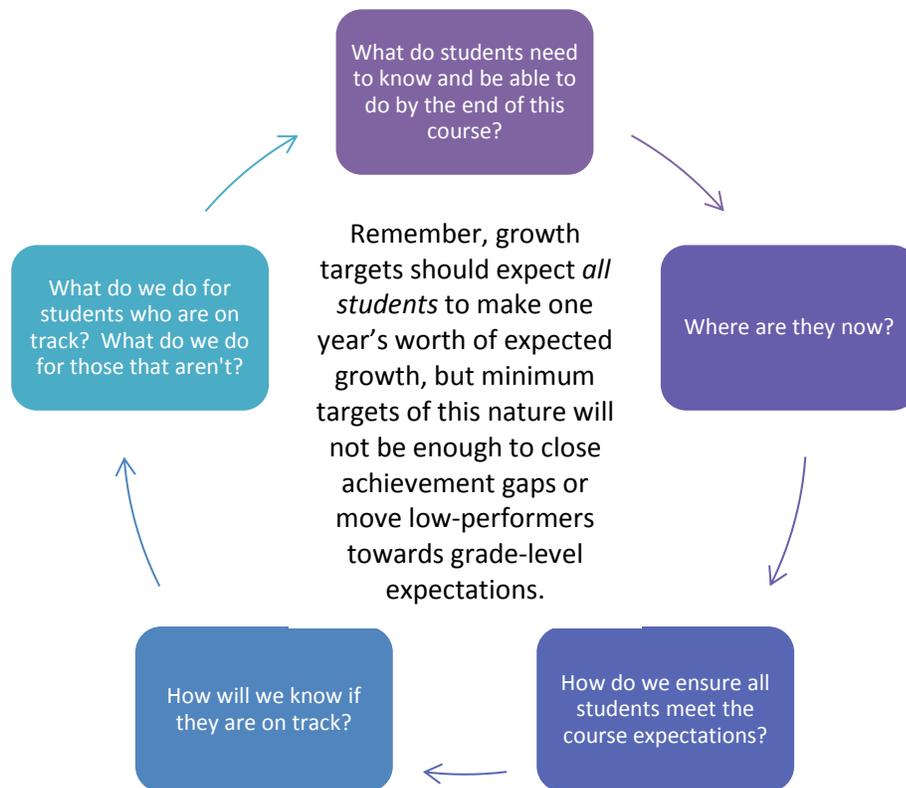
knowledge and skills students are expected to gain over the interval of instruction. The minimum rigor target for all students should reflect one year's expected growth. It is ultimately superintendents (or another administrator serving as their designees) who must certify that all individual growth targets used for SLOs represent, at a minimum, one year of expected growth. These targets may vary based on a student's present level of performance and learning needs in order to close achievement gaps or move low-performance towards grade-level expectations.

31. How can I determine whether my assessment can be used to measure one year's worth of expected growth?

SLO targets must reflect a minimum growth target of one year's expected growth for every student, which may vary based upon a student's academic preparedness (i.e., prior achievement) and learning needs. Such targets may take the following characteristics into account: poverty, students with disabilities, English language learners, and prior academic history. Targets should be set in such a way as to encourage accelerated gains and close achievement gaps.

Educators should look to standards and course curricula to determine what knowledge and skills students are expected to gain over the interval of instruction. The minimum rigor target for all students should reflect one year's expected growth. Please note that the Department does not have a specific benchmark associated with one year's expected growth (e.g., at least the median growth of all students who took the assessment).

The figure below illustrates questions educators need to ask themselves as they work to set targets that will ensure that all students are growing academically each year.



Reflective Questions for Use in the Target Setting Process

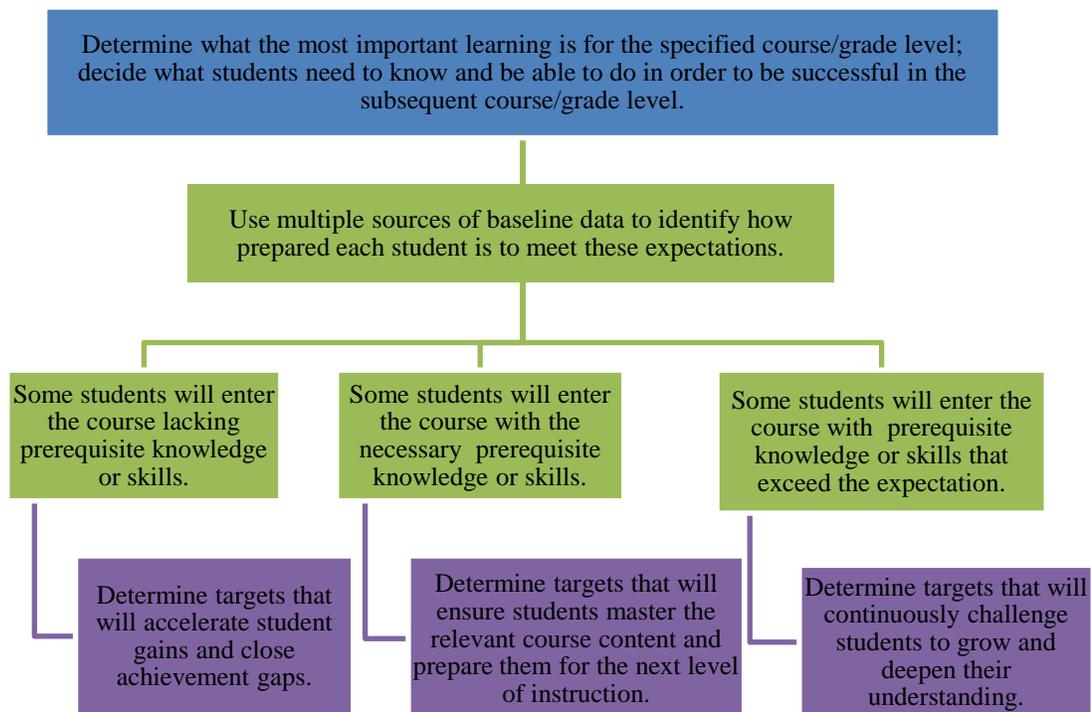
Importantly, superintendents must certify that all individual growth targets used for SLOs represent, at a minimum, one year of expected growth. Targets may vary based on a student's present level of performance and learning needs in order to close achievement gaps or move low-performance towards grade-level expectations.

32. How might a district/BOCES differentiate targets while maintaining the rigor of a year's worth of expected growth for students who enter significantly below or significantly above grade-level expectations?

Students begin a course with varying levels of preparedness so educators must determine what a year's worth of grade-level growth will look like for students who enter significantly below or significantly above grade-level expectations.

The flow chart below provides educators with a series of actions that will ensure targets:

- accelerate student gains and close achievement gaps;
- focus on mastery of relevant course content that prepares students for the next level of instruction; and
- continuously challenge students to grow and deepen their understanding.



Setting Differentiated Targets While Maintaining Rigor

Rigorous but achievable growth targets accompanied by appropriate accommodations, supports, and intensity of instruction can help to ensure all students are successful in making the expected minimum year's worth of growth.

Pre-Assessments

33. As for the baseline assessment, if it is a pre-assessment that is locally developed, does this assessment need to be submitted through the RFQ process?

The Assessment RFQ is utilized by assessment providers to have their summative assessments approved for use with Student Learning Objectives and/or as a supplemental assessment with a corresponding growth model. Pre-assessments, which are a form of baseline data used to inform target setting, are not summative assessments. Accordingly, they do not necessarily need to be submitted through the RFQ.

34. Do pre-assessments for Regents classes have to go through the Assessment RFQ process for approval? A colleague of mine thinks they do and I did not see that anywhere.

The RFQ is for approval of Supplemental Assessments and Associated Growth Models and for Assessments to Be Used with SLOs. Pre-assessments used to set baseline data for SLOs based on Regents Assessments do not need to be approved through this RFQ.

Previously Approved Assessments

35. Are schools allowed to use assessments from the previous approved list for the 2015-16 school year?

What is the procedure for updating assessments previously approved under 3012-c?

Section 30-3.8 of the Rules of the Board of Regents requires the Commissioner to evaluate student assessments for use in the Required and/or Optional Student Performance Subcomponents based on the criteria outlined in the RFQ. Such assessments include those previously placed on the “List of Approved Student Assessments for Use by School Districts and BOCES in Teacher and Principal Evaluations.” Assessments approved under the previous list are only eligible for use under Education Law §3012-c. Assessment providers must apply to this RFQ in order to be approved for use under Education Law §3012-d.

For assessments previously approved by the Department pursuant to the RFQ for Student Assessments to Be Used by New York State School Districts and BOCES in Teacher and Principal Evaluations under Education Law §3012-c, the Department will expedite its review.

Districts who receive a Hardship Waiver from the Department may continue to implement their previously approved APPR plan during the 2015-16 school year until such time as the Department approves a new APPR plan consistent with the requirements of Education Law §3012-d. Thus, if a district is utilizing particular third-party assessments in their currently approved plan, and they apply for a receive approval of a Hardship Waiver, then they may continue to use those assessments for APPR purposes. For additional information regarding the Hardship Waiver process, please see <https://www.engageny.org/resource/hardship-waiver-implementation-education-law-3012-d>.

Pricing

36. In what format would NYSED like the pricing? Is there a form for vendors to use?

Information on pricing is not required in the RFQ application. If a district or BOCES is interested in purchasing an assessment that is available for purchase, they should contact the assessment provider using the contact information listed on the approved assessment list(s).

Rights to Assessments

37. If assessments we have "copyrighted" or produced are approved, do we need to submit a FOIL exemption request to avoid having the assessment posted for anyone to use (we would make these available for a purchased service, as we have structured our regional assessments in the past)?

Form B-1, the Assessment Information Page, includes a section to indicate whether the assessment is available, either for free or through purchase, to other districts or BOCES in New York State. This information is also included on Form C, the Publicly Available Services Summary, which will be posted with the assessment information on the Approved Assessment List(s).

Submission Method

38. Does NYSED prefer hard copies of the technical and administration manuals or does NYSED prefer the technical and administration manuals be placed on a CD?

Please confirm that it is acceptable for applicants to either email OR submit via hard copy their proposal. In other words, that both methods are not required.

Please confirm that NYSED is seeking a CD that contains: individual PDF files of the application, i.e., a PDF file of the transmittal letter, PDF file of the VRQ, PDF file of Form A, etc. AND one PDF file that is made up of the entire application including the transmittal letter, VRQ, Form A, etc.

The first paragraph specifies that applications should be emailed to AssessRFQ@nysed.gov. However, on page 17 the RFQ states: "Any questions concerning this RFQ must be emailed by September 24, 2015 to: ASSESSRFQ@nysed.gov. (Note: This email address is for questions only; do not submit application materials to this address.)" Please confirm the address to which completed applications should be emailed.

Section 3.2, APPLICATION SUBMISSION METHOD, on pages 16 and 17 of the RFQ outlines the Acceptable Submission Methods below. Applicants may choose one of the methods; they do not have to submit electronically and in hard copy.

1. Submit electronically by emailing an application packet containing a copy of the full application in Microsoft Office (.doc(x), .xls(x), .ppt(x)) and/or portable document format (.pdf). Also, if possible, include a single PDF containing all application materials / appendices / attachment to AssessRFQ@nysed.gov; or
2. Address or hand-deliver an application packet containing:
 1. one (1) original;
 2. one (1) copy;

3. **one (1) CD** containing a copy of the **full application** in Microsoft Office (.doc(x), .xls(x), .ppt(x)) and/or portable document format (.pdf). Also, if possible, include a single PDF containing all application materials / appendices / attachments.

To the following address:

New York State Education Department
1071 EBA
Office of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness
89 Washington Ave
Albany, NY 12234

ATTENTION: TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION: QUALIFICATIONS FOR SUPPLEMENTAL ASSESSMENTS AND CORRESPONDING GROWTH MODELS AND/OR ASSESSMENTS FOR USE WITH SLOs TO BE USED BY NEW YORK STATE SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND BOARDS OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (BOCES) IN TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATIONS

The notation on page 17 indicating that application materials should not be submitted to the AssessRFQ@nysed.gov mailbox predates the revisions made to the RFQ on September 21 to allow for electronic submissions.

- 39. For generic materials that apply to all tests (e.g., administration guides, brochures, legal documents), can the vendor send one or two sets of materials instead of one for each application?**

Materials such as administration guides, brochures, legal documents, etc. that related to all tests can be submitted by an assessment provider in one application, so long as they are properly referenced in other applications that require the same materials.

- 40. Is it acceptable for applicants to email only a single PDF containing the entire application and appendices, rather than separate files for each component?**

A single PDF can be sent, as opposed to separate files for each component.

- 41. What is the maximum file size attachment the provided email address (ASSESSRFQ@nysed.gov) can accept?**

The maximum file size that can be accepted into the assessrfq@nysed.gov mailbox is 150 megabytes.

SLOs

- 42. How can a district/BOCES review goals or spot check targets to ensure rigor and comparability?**

The SLO includes information on the level of knowledge and skills that students have at the beginning of a course, as well as defines the level of student performance that is expected at the end of a course.

Although superintendents must certify that all individual growth targets used for SLOs represent, at a minimum, one year of expected growth, the flexibility within the required components of an SLO allow districts/BOCES to tailor each academic goal to the specific needs of the students and nature of the course.

Questions to Reflect Upon Rigor of SLO Targets

- What are the defined levels of proficiency and mastery for student performance in this course?
 - Do these levels align with the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards or other applicable grade level/course standards?
- What sources of baseline data were used to identify the current level of student performance?
 - Do these sources provide information relative to the knowledge and skills students' will need in order to be successful in the current course?
 - Does the analysis of baseline data provide insight into the type of instructional strategies and areas of support needed to ensure the success of each student?
- Based on previous student performance in the course, and familiarity with the assessment, are appropriate targets set for students starting below, at, or above grade level?
 - Do the targets set for all students require a minimum of a year's worth of expected growth?
 - Do the targets set for students entering below grade-level expectations ensure enough progress will be made to narrow or close achievement gaps?
 - Do the targets set for students entering at grade-level expectation ensure enough progress will be made to prepare students for the next level of instruction?
 - Do the targets set for students entering above grade-level expectations maintain a sense of rigor and challenge so that students continue to grow academically?

A district/BOCES may use the following questions to help determine if targets meet minimum expectations and are rigorous and comparable across classrooms/subject areas:

Please note that pursuant to Education Law §3012-d(4)(a), the Department must affirmatively approve and shall have the authority to reject or require modifications of district's/BOCES' APPR plans that do not set appropriate growth targets, including after initial approval.

43. Will every teacher in NY be required to have an SLO? [RFQ Section 1.1, #1, p.2]

The "Blue Memo" found on the engageNY website

(<http://www.engageny.org/file/131571/download/blue-memo-3012-d.pdf>, page 1) states that "All teachers who receive a State-provided growth score must also have a back-up SLO set by the Superintendent or his/her designee in case there are not enough scores, or other unforeseen data issues that will not allow the Department to generate a growth score." Please verify that all teachers will need to have an SLO developed for the Required Student Performance Subcomponent, either as the primary measurement of student growth or as a back-up to the State-provided measurement of student growth.

For a teacher whose course ends in a State-created or administered test for which there is a State-provided growth model and at least 50% of a teacher's students are covered by the State-provided growth measure, or for principals with at least 30% of his/her students covered under the State-provided growth measure, an educator shall have a State-provided growth score for the Required

subcomponent of the Student Performance category. For all other teachers, SLOs must be developed, consistent with a goal-setting process determined or developed by the commissioner, that results in a student growth score based on whether or not the target of one year's worth of expected growth has been met; provided that, for any educator whose course ends in a State-created or administered assessment for which there is no State-provided growth model, such assessment must be used as the underlying assessment for such SLO.

All teachers who do not receive a State-provided growth score are required to have an SLO under Education Law §3012-d, as they were under Education Law §3012-c.

44. *Within the RFQ, are we required to set SLO targets for teachers?*

The RFQ is for approval of Assessment to Be Used with an SLO, which must include a target setting process aligned with one year of expected growth. This target setting process will be used in the development of SLOs for teachers; however, these SLOs are not part of the required pieces of the RFQ application.

Subscription Agreements

45. *If an Assessment Provider is added to the Approved Assessment List, can it continue to use its Master Subscription Agreement with district and BOCES [RFQ Section 1.2(C), ¶3, p. 8]?*

Assessment providers should consult with their counsel on whether or not an existing Master Subscription Agreement can be used.

Third Party Assessments

46. *I was planning to wait for the Renaissance Learning to submit the STAR assessment to the State for approval. However, with the posting of revised guidelines and the need to complete form H for SLOs, which appears to indicate that it will not be necessary to submit assessments to the State for approval, as previously noted in the initial RFQ. Yet, I may be misinterpreting the new guidelines.*

All assessments used in an APPR plan under Education Law §3012-d must be submitted and approved through this RFQ. The STAR Early Literacy assessment, the STAR Math assessment, and the STAR Reading assessment were approved for use with SLOs as of Monday, October 05, 2015 and have been added to the appropriate List. Accordingly, these assessments are available for use by any LEA in the Required subcomponent of the Student Performance category subject to an agreement with the assessment provider.

Timelines

47. *At what point does NYSED expect to complete this approval/listing process?*

Our district has submitted two assessments for NYS approval for use with SLOs under 3012-d. I am wondering about the timeline to see feedback?

Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis in the order they are received. Priority is placed on assessments previously approved for use under Education Law §3012-c and those Supplemental Assessments which have existing growth models. Applications will be accepted on a continuous and ongoing basis, and the list will be updated as new assessments are approved. There is not a set submission period.

48. For what duration of time would a listing be active (e.g., upon approval is a publisher listed for 5 years)?

Unless approval is terminated, approved assessments remain active on the approved list(s) until the list(s) expire. Please see section 2.3, TERMINATION OF APPROVAL OF A SUPPLEMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND ASSOCIATED GROWTH MODEL AND AN ASSESSMENT FOR USE WITH AN SLO, on page 15 of the RFQ for more information on termination of approval.

49. Is there an anticipated end date to the rolling application timeline?

The Department's intention is to accept submissions on a rolling basis, indefinitely. Please note, however, that districts/BOCES may need to have assessments approved by a certain date in order to ensure that they can be included in the APPR plan that is submitted to the Department.

50. Would the listing become effective on the date the instrument is approved, or at another point in time (e.g., start of the 2016-17 school year)?

Approved assessments are available for use upon approval.