



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MZD selected to Help Louisiana Department of Education Deploy
First-Ever Innovative Assessment Pilot
Approved by U.S. Department of Education**

MZD's OSCAR™ and ADAM™ will equip the project team delivering the Louisiana ESSA Innovative Assessment pilot with tools to author, create, deliver, score and report results for the innovative assessments.

March 21, 2019—NORTH LIBERTY, IA - [MZ Development](#), a leading provider of performance assessment solutions, announced it has been selected to provide item authoring, test delivery, performance scoring and reporting solutions for the Louisiana Department of Education. The project is the first-ever innovative assessment pilot test approved by the U.S. Department of Education under the Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority, part of the [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#). Louisiana is the first state to earn this approval from the federal government and is leading the nation's efforts to make assessments more relevant and connected to the classroom. Louisiana teachers and students will benefit from the use of valid assessments that yield transparent data on student achievement and growth.

In July 2018, the Louisiana Department of Education approved the state's proposal to pilot an innovative English assessment. The state plans to measure students' knowledge of specific books rather than texts they have not previously read, and aspires to build students' deeper knowledge of facts and texts. The proposal was in response to a provision in ESSA under which select states are permitted to develop and pilot new high-quality assessment formats as replacements for existing statewide achievement tests. The innovative assessment pilot will occur during the 2019-2020 school year with approximately 2,500 seventh grade students in four school systems, including Ouachita Parish, St. John the Baptist Parish, and Lincoln Parish, as well as Celerity Charter Schools in East Baton Rouge Parish.

MZD was selected by [NWEA®](#) (the program's general contractor) to provide the Louisiana Department of Education with item authoring, test creation, delivery and scoring for performance assessment using the Company's [OSCAR™](#) and [ADAM™](#) platforms. OSCAR is an online distributed scoring platform designed to streamline scoring activities for constructed response, video, audio, and portfolio work. OSCAR has been adopted by the New York City Department of Education, Gwinnett County Public Schools (Atlanta), Millard Public Schools (Omaha), and the Georgia Center for Assessment, among others. ADAM™ will be used for the creation and delivery of innovative performance assessments at Louisiana's five pilot school systems.

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Zac Henrich, Co-Founder and CEO of MZD, Inc. said the solutions his team has built are a great fit for the pilot project. “MZD is a logical choice to help the Louisiana Department of Education pilot innovative assessment in the first-ever approved pilot recognized by the federal government,” said Henrich. “Our team has decades of assessment experience that we have leveraged to create a performance assessment platform that make it possible for any district to do performance assessment in a cost effective and efficient manner. We are thrilled to be on the forefront of making performance assessment a reality for not only the Louisiana Department of Education, but any state or school district.”

About NWEA

NWEA is a mission-driven, not-for-profit organization that supports students and educators worldwide by creating assessment solutions that precisely measure growth and proficiency—and provide insights to help tailor instruction. For more than 40 years, NWEA has developed innovative Pre-K-12 assessments, professional learning that fosters educators’ ability to accelerate student learning, and research that supports assessment validity and data interpretation. For more information, visit: www.nwea.org

About Louisiana Department of Education

The Louisiana Department of Education and its Louisiana Believes program is built on the premise that Louisiana students are just as capable as any students in America, and that those closest to children – parents and teachers – are best positioned to help students achieve those expectations. As a result of this belief, Louisiana has seen an increase in student performance in every measure both locally and nationally. Louisiana’s approach to improving student outcomes is viewed as a national model as outlined in the study, “Raising the Bar: Louisiana’s Strategies for Raising Student Achievement” by the RAND Foundation. For more information, visit: www.louisianabelieves.com

About MZD, Inc.

MZD, Inc. was founded in 2015 in Iowa by a group of individuals who collectively have over 75 years of experience in the online assessment and performance scoring industry. MZD is focused on a single mission: delivering solutions that make Performance Assessments a reality for organizations of all sizes. The first product, OSCAR, was launched in 2015 and is currently in use with leading districts and test assessment organizations throughout the country. More information can be found at <https://mzdevinc.com>. Districts and organizations interested in MZ Development and its innovative assessment platforms can email contact@mzdevinc.com or call 319-855-7694.

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