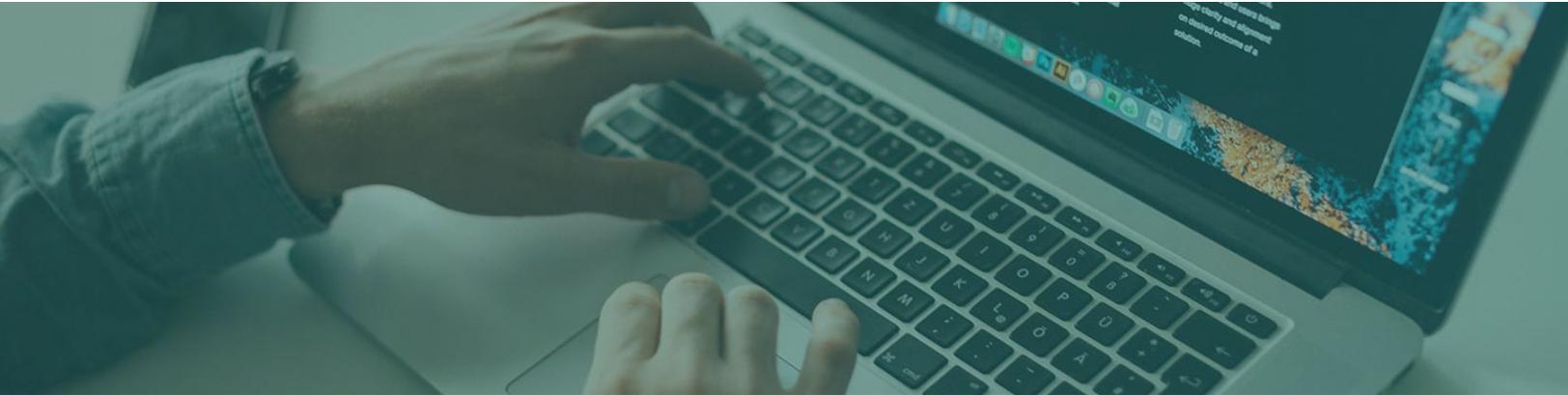




Platform as Possibility: NWEA selected MZD to help Launch a Statewide Innovative Assessment Pilot in Louisiana



More Relevant, More Equitable State Assessments

The success of a pilot program in Louisiana is highlighting the value of authentic assessments that remove silos between subject areas and provide better-aligned opportunities for all students to demonstrate their learning in more relevant ways. Through its **Innovative Assessment Pilot Program**, the Louisiana Department of Education has assembled partners to help design a new approach to statewide summative testing in English Language Arts (ELA) and Social Studies, enabled by next-generation online tools. The collaborative team is led by research specialists at NWEA and includes Johns Hopkins University's Institute for Education Policy, Odell Education, Center for Assessment, the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, Strategic Measurement and Evaluation and the proven assessment technology experts at MZ Development (MZD).

Louisiana's Vision for Innovation

Through the Innovative Assessment Pilot, the Louisiana Department of Education is focusing on improving learning outcomes by ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed on state tests. Their unique approach is piloting combined English Language Arts (ELA) and Social Studies tests that will assess students' reading and writing skills in the context of books and passages that they have already studied in class. Traditionally, reading passages on state assessments are new material to all students, but often implicitly require background knowledge and life experiences that not all students have. By identifying high-quality texts for ELA and Social Studies classrooms and then assessing learning using the same texts, Louisiana is directly addressing Equity and access to opportunity issues with a new structure that allows students to develop background knowledge together so that no student is at a disadvantage due to differences in life experiences. To make assessments more meaningful in supporting students as they are learning, and to help drive instruction with data, Louisiana is also using the pilot to shift state practice from a single summative end-of-year assessment to several brief assessments administered throughout the year, while simultaneously enhancing local control by empowering school systems with responsibility for text selection and quick turn-around assessment scoring.

The Future of Assessment with MZD Technology

The flexibility, scalability, and security of MZD assessment technologies are a perfect match for the needs of the Louisiana Department of Education, providing robust yet nimble infrastructure for innovation. The educator friendly tools and advanced student test interfaces of MZD's **Assessment Delivery and Management (ADAM)** platform are supporting the authoring and administration of the new tests in 20+ pilot districts across the state, providing them with exceptional ease of use, reliability, and system performance for their assessment platform and equipping them with a powerful toolset of next-generation interactive assessment item types and accessibility features. With test delivery and scoring for multiple tests throughout the year being a critical element of the innovative assessment approach, MZD has also been supporting the success of the program with the **OSCAR Online Scoring and Reporting** system. Unique in the industry for its educator-centric engineering, OSCAR is allowing Louisiana to hand-score students' written essay responses with rigor and efficiency. The positive feedback from the project about using OSCAR in the pilot assessments is helping to demonstrate the powerful shift that is possible with moving state-level assessment practices closer to the locus of instruction.

Improved Assessment Experience Design with NWEA

As a trusted leader in assessment research, design, and administration Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) is a natural partner to support Louisiana's future assessment vision. Their contributions to the Innovative Pilot include working with the state to rethink the relevancy and equitability of testing content, and to evaluate the efficacy of a combined assessment experience for ELA and Social Studies. These objectives created a compelling need for a modern assessment technology platform grounded in both theory and practice. To accomplish this vision, NWEA teamed with MZD to deploy ADAM and OSCAR in support of their Innovative Assessment Pilot activities including test content authoring; assessment experience development; test program administration, delivery, and scoring; and research data management and reporting.

"MZD has been an excellent partner in the Louisiana innovative assessment pilot due to the strength and versatility of its testing platform. Their flexibility and problem-solving attitude have been instrumental in the success of this program."

- Mike Nesterak, NWEA

Scaling Success: The Future, Yet Familiar

Results from the initial phases of Louisiana's Innovative Assessment Pilot have been promising. Leaders in the Department of Education and teachers in participating districts are reporting positive reactions to the new pilot tests and the overall shift in approach to state-level snapshots of student learning. As a key component of the progress so far, the ADAM and OSCAR platforms have enabled a secure, reliable, high-performance technology solution upon which innovation can take place; and demonstrated the value of future-facing online tools that are tightly aligned with assessment best practices and designed for educators by educators. The experiment underway in Louisiana is just one example of MZD's growing role as an educational technology leader and visionary partner for states and districts that are rethinking the nature of academic measurement and striving to make assessments more meaningful.

"MZD helped Louisiana assess over 21,000 students last year. Preliminary analysis of data from the innovative assessment pilot indicates that at least a portion of what has historically been described as an achievement gap amongst socioeconomic groups may be partly attributed to an opportunity gap and the new test design may provide students with more equitable opportunity to show what they know."

- Mike Nesterak, NWEA



About NWEA

NWEA is a research-based, 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 40 years, NWEA has developed pre-K12 assessments and professional learning offerings to help advance all students along their optimal learning paths. Their mission – Partnering to help all kids learn®



About MZD Inc.

With a mission to enable more meaningful and actionable educational measurement, MZ Development, Inc. (MZD) is a testing technology innovation company focused on building better tools for assessment scoring, reporting, authoring, and delivery. MZD provides state departments of education, test publishers, school districts, and credentialing organizations with cutting edge technology solutions that emphasize practical designs, enjoyable user experiences, and richer results with greater efficiency. Founded in 2015, MZD has quickly established a strong reputation as a trusted technical partner building powerful tools that meet the unique needs of large-scale assessment programs and has aggregated the experience necessary to skillfully address evolving assessment technology requirements with practical, cost-effective solutions.

If you are interested in learning more about MZD or seeing our platform in action email us at contact@mzdevinc.com or call 319.855.7694.