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**SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FINDS NWEA'S MEASURES  
OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS ASSESSMENT TO BE ALIGNED WITH STATE  
STANDARDS**

**July 31, 2009 – Portland, Ore.** – The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) recently conducted a study to determine the alignment of Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA)'s Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments to state standards. NWEA partners with 99 districts, schools and other educational agencies throughout South Carolina.

The alignment study was conducted in preparation for the 2007-8 and 2008-9 school years and compared NWEA's MAP assessments in math, reading and language usage to state standards in grades 1 – 9. Overall, the MAP assessments were found to be between 64% and 100% aligned.

The SCDE asked all of its current assessment vendors to respond to a request for inclusion on a "Formative Assessment Adoption List." NWEA and other vendors that met the first phase of requirements for this classification were asked to participate in a more detailed alignment review. NWEA was approved for the list for both years and is automatically approved for the 2009-2010 school year per Susan Creighton, an education associate with the SCDE.

The alignment study information is also used to determine the amount of funding awarded to South Carolina school districts that use the approved products on the formative assessment list, including NWEA's assessments. The funding formula for these products includes the number of students tested in either reading/language usage or mathematics plus the number of students eligible for free/reduced meals. Funding for each district is capped by the amount of its expenditures for one of the formative assessments.

“This study affirms the significant cost savings for districts using or interested in using MAP, as well as NWEA’s alignment methodologies,” said Charles Merritt, vice president of government relations. “The comprehensive nature of SCDE’s alignment review – looking at each item in NWEA’s South Carolina aligned pool of thousands of items – is the most extensive and appropriate for a computer-adaptive assessment.”

NWEA’s MAP is a state-aligned computer-adaptive assessment system that accurately measures each student’s instructional level and growth over time. The assessment package provides insight into student academic needs and resources to adjust instruction through detailed growth data, resources and professional development components.

The MAP assessment package includes assessments for mathematics, reading, language usage, along with optional assessments for science and primary grades (K-2).

In addition to using MAP assessments to improve classroom instruction, many educators throughout South Carolina also use the assessments to place students with unique learning needs into special programs, such as gifted and talented students. MAP assessment data is also helpful in evaluating such programs and their ability to improve student learning.

### **About Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA)**

The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) is a national not-for-profit educational services organization that provides research-based educational growth measures, professional training, and consulting services to improve teaching and learning. Partnering with school districts, states, and other education organizations, NWEA delivers computerized assessment services to more than 3,400 education agencies and approximately 4 million students. Additionally, its Growth Research Database, the most extensive collection of student growth data in the country, provides a rich source for the study of academic achievement. Contact and other information is available at [www.nwea.org](http://www.nwea.org).

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