

Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Media Fact Sheet

About NWEA

Founded in 1977 in Oregon, the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) is a national not-for-profit organization **dedicated to helping all kids learn**. NWEA does so by providing research-driven – and scientifically based – assessment tools that help kids identify and reach their aspirational learning goals.

NWEA assessments are **computer-adaptive** (meaning they adapt to a student's unique ability with each test question either getting harder or easier – depending on the student's ability to answer the previous question). The goal of these assessments is to identify how a student can make the greatest academic growth.

NWEA assessments provide highly accurate results that can be used to:

- Identify skills and concepts that students have learned (and more importantly, what they are ready learn).
- Monitor academic growth over time.
- Diagnose instructional needs and placement for Talented and Gifted, special needs, English language and other supplemental programs.
- Make data-informed decisions at the classroom, school, district and organizational level (for example, evaluating the effectiveness of certain academic or extracurricular programs or providing data to be incorporated into teacher evaluation).
- Predict a student's, or a group of students', performance on state-mandated tests as required under the No Child Left Behind Act.

Who NWEA Partners With

NWEA partners with public and private schools, districts, state departments of education, educational programs such as Teach for America, charter schools and other educational agencies to create a more *kid-centric* approach to education.

NWEA has more than 3,400 partners in all 50 states and 41 countries. Today, nearly 4 million students take NWEA assessment each year – totaling more than 20 million assessments since the organization's founding.

About NWEA Assessments

The hallmark of NWEA's success is its family of **Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)** assessments. NWEA MAP assessments are state-aligned, computerized adaptive assessment tools that accurately reflect the instructional level of each student. Districts can test up to four times a year, thus monitoring academic growth accurately and consistently.

NWEA offers MAP assessments in the following categories:

- Reading
- Mathematics

- Language
- General science and science concepts
- Reading and mathematics in primary grades (Kindergarten through 2nd Grade)

Research

NWEA research ensures the quality of its MAP assessments; helps members enhance student learning; informs national education policy discussions; and reveals the characteristics of effective teaching and learning.

Data and information on the nearly 4 million students that take NWEA's assessments each year can be found in the NWEA Growth Research Database (GRD) – one of the largest repositories of student achievement data of its kind. NWEA's researchers use the GRD to conduct extensive studies that inform education policy.

The Kingsbury Center at NWEA is an independent research organization whose mission is to advance the knowledge and practice of education through the use of student assessment data. The Kingsbury Center at NWEA relies on the GRD, which houses demographic information and highly reliable, longitudinal student achievement information for approximately 10% of the United States student population. The Kingsbury Center supports researchers by providing access to datasets extracted from the GRD and other sources, performing research studies in collaboration with external organizations and also provides consultation services.

Analytical Tools

NWEA believes that the purpose of assessment is as important as the method. NWEA's assessments help educators obtain meaningful results that can be used to help improve student learning. NWEA has carefully structured a variety of reports that can be used by students and the myriad of adults involved in their education and growth. These reports can be used to accurately assess individual student learning and inform important decisions such as program evaluation and resource allocation.

Support for Teachers

NWEA's classroom resources – DesCartes and, from provider MetaMetrics, the Lexile Framework for Reading – let teachers incorporate what they learn from MAP assessments into instructional planning.

DesCartes is a teaching and learning tool that provides information educators need to meet the academic needs of each student. DesCartes translates assessment data into specific learning skills and concepts that can be used in the classroom.

MetaMetrics' Lexile® Framework for Reading® is a powerful tool that provides an accurate measure of a student's reading ability. Educators combine the Lexile score determined from the MAP assessment with information from DesCartes to identify appropriate reading instruction – such as the ability to search reading material by topic to align with a child's interests.

NWEA also offers **professional development** in the form of workshops and training

seminars to help educators learn to maximize instructional effectiveness through the use of data and differentiated instruction. Through Regional Workshops, customized coursework and consultative offerings, NWEA is a driving force in equipping educators with the skills needed to optimize their time in the classroom.

Available Spokespeople

- **Matt Chapman, president and CEO.** With a background in business and law and a passion for education, Matt is leading NWEA in achieving its vision for kid-centric education based on comprehensive and accurate data.
- **Ginger Hopkins, vice president of partner relations.** In her current role, Ginger leads all aspects of the organization's work with its partners including enrollment, development and support. Ginger has more than 20 years of service in public education as both a teacher and administrator.
- **Charles Merritt, vice president of government relations.** Charles currently leads NWEA's efforts to fulfill its mission through public policy. His responsibilities include educating lawmakers and other constituents on the benefits of adaptive assessment and importance of differentiated instruction. He comes to NWEA from the Education Commission of the States.

Contact Information

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