



**NWEA Deepens Commitment to Educational Research;
Launches Three Distinct Research and Innovation Centers
Focused on Policy, Practice, and Emerging Technologies**

Collaborative for Student Growth, Center for School and Student Progress, and Product Innovation Center Provide Insights to Inform Practice and Policy

Portland, Ore. — March 1, 2019 — Expanding its 42-year commitment to education research and in support of its mission to help all students learn, [NWEA](#), the not-for-profit provider of assessment solutions, introduced today three Research and Innovation Centers, each with a distinct mission and purpose. The Collaborative for Student Growth, the Center for School and Student Progress, and the Product Innovation Center undertake research to provide greater insights to inform education practice and policy.

“Research is in our DNA and serves as the foundation for much of our work,” said Chris Minnich, CEO, NWEA. “Our world-class research team examines some of the most challenging issues facing education. The individual centers enable NWEA to provide deeper insights across a broader range of topics, to inform both policy and practice as we work to improve education and learning.”

NWEA researchers have a wealth of multi-disciplinary academic and industry experience. They publish original research, provide expert insight as presenters and panelists at conferences, and serve on editorial boards and technical advisory committees. NWEA researchers have ready access to one of the world’s richest databases of student achievement data—the NWEA Growth Research Database (GRD™), comprised of longitudinal student data points from over 230 million anonymized test events.

The Collaborative for Student Growth is transforming education research through advancements in assessment, growth measurement, and the availability of longitudinal data. Core to the mission is partnering with universities, think tanks, and foundations to broaden our understanding of the challenges facing students and inform new ways of serving them.

Collaborative researchers author peer-reviewed publications, including on ESSA, accountability, and growth; social emotional learning; and early learning. They will present on these and other topics this March and April at [SXSW EDU](#); [SREE](#); [ASCD Empower19](#); [AEFP](#); [AERA](#); and [NCME](#).

“We are at a pivotal time where communities and schools are navigating issues of equity, poverty, and achievement gaps against a backdrop of shifting education policy,” said Beth Tarasawa, Ph.D., Director of the Collaborative for Student Growth. “Our access to exceptional data and a multi-disciplinary team of researchers uniquely positions us to undertake research into these critical issues.”

The Center for School and Student Progress provides consultation, analysis, and reporting tools to schools using NWEA assessments to support their efforts to improve student learning. It engages in school and district research partnerships to investigate critical issues that can be

answered by analysis and application of NWEA assessment data. The Center has explored issues of school and teacher accountability, testing integrity, and poverty and school performance. New research on the effect of chronic absenteeism on student achievement will be presented in March at [AEFP](#).

“Our work focuses on issues that directly impact educators and their students, with practical implications for the classroom,” said Nate Jensen, Ph.D., Interim Director of the Center for School and Student Progress. “The Center’s skillset of assessment expertise, consulting skills, and data analysis is unique in the industry and enables us to engage directly with schools to influence practices and local policies that promote student success.”

The Product Innovation Center is focused on discovering new assessment methods, utilizing emerging technologies and inventive design that provide more accurate and timely data on student performance. Through its Partners in Innovation program, the Center works with classrooms to conceptualize, build, and field test approaches to immersive learning and assessment.

Currently, the Center is testing the use of augmented reality within an assessment to measure higher depth of knowledge (DOK); prototyping an approach to measure Collaborative Problems Solving (CPS) capacity; and exploring embedding items within reading passages to improve the student experience and performance.

“Our Center is dedicated to understanding how to harness technologies to better assess students, and understand how they’re learning and growing,” said Mike Nesterak, Sr. Director of the Product Innovation Center. “We’re working closely with schools to identify the most innovative designs that provide the greatest opportunity to improve assessment for all.”

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. Educators in more than 10,000 schools, districts, and education agencies in 141 countries rely on our flagship interim assessment, MAP® Growth™; our progress monitoring and skills mastery tool, MAP® Skills™; and our reading fluency and comprehension assessment, MAP® Reading Fluency™.