



## **NWEA Appoints Vanessa Peterson as Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility**

*Organization expands focus on DEIA initiatives in support of its mission to help all students learn; CEO named to diversity council at University of Oregon*

**Portland, Ore. — May 21, 2019** – [NWEA](#), the not-for-profit provider of assessment solutions, today announced that in support of its efforts to enhance and expand the organization’s commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) and further its mission to help all students learn, it has promoted Vanessa Peterson to Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility.

In her new role, Peterson will lead the development, implementation, and monitoring of programs that support and drive DEIA within NWEA as well as for the students, teachers, partners, and communities the organization serves. Additionally, she will review and prioritize all of NWEA’s DEIA efforts in terms of recruitment, retention and staff development, and will promote DEIA discussions, learning and best practices throughout the organization. Serving as a knowledgeable and thoughtful advisor at NWEA, Peterson will also oversee a DEIA Council, a DEIA Ambassadors’ Group, and additional policy and practice initiatives focused around this issue.

“Over the course of her career, Vanessa has shown tremendous dedication to providing all students, educators, and colleagues with equitable opportunities. She truly understands how to build and strengthen diverse environments in order to accomplish this,” said Chris Minnich, CEO of NWEA. “We’re excited to have her help in furthering our work in the areas of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility as well as in supporting our mission to help all students learn.”

Peterson most recently served as NWEA’s Program Manager for Partner Accounts, a role in which she was responsible for the management and support of district and state partnerships. Prior to joining the organization, she served as a member of Birmingham City Schools’ leadership team as the Supervisor of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Federal Programs. Peterson also worked with one of the largest urban districts in the country, Memphis City Schools, as a middle school teacher and a content and grade level chairperson. These district roles provided her with a solid understanding of the complexities involved when navigating diverse environments.

“Since joining NWEA, I have been impressed with the commitment the organization has demonstrated towards diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility both internally and externally. I’m excited about this new opportunity to help advance our work in these areas,” said Peterson. “My background as an educator and administrator for some of the nation’s most diverse districts, has uniquely positioned me to take on this role.”

Peterson holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Memphis, as well as a Master of Education degree from the University of Phoenix. She is currently completing her Doctor of Education degree at Walden University.

In addition, NWEA is pleased to announce that its CEO Chris Minnich has been appointed to the University of Oregon President's Diversity Advisory Community Council (PDACC). The 21-member council provides guidance and make recommendations about underrepresented students, staff and faculty; educational partnerships; innovations in applied research and development and communications. The members represent a wide-range of interests and links to the University of Oregon community.

### **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™.