



# Policy and Advocacy Agenda

## MISSION

Partnering to help all kids learn®.

## CONTEXT

NWEA® is a not-for-profit, research-based organization with an ambitious vision to disrupt educational inequities. Through research, advocacy, technical assistance, and partnerships, our policy and advocacy team works to expand excellence and equity from preschool through post-secondary education. We have a holistic view of student success and believe that all students deserve access to excellent opportunities to learn.

For more than 40 years, NWEA has developed high-quality assessment solutions that measure students' academic growth and achievement, providing actionable insights to inform policy and practice. While our assessments and services are best-in-class tools and supports, they alone are not enough. That's why our policy and advocacy work plays an imperative role in our commitment to supporting our partners and helping all kids learn. We help federal, state, and district partners reimagine how they use assessment results—most importantly in accountability, data reporting, and school improvement—to develop more holistic views of student, school, and system success.

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## AREAS OF FOCUS

### 1 RECOVERY

**Informing the recovery and transformation of student learning following disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic**

Drawing on NWEA's extensive data and expertise, we support national, state, and district leaders in **illuminating the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic**, advancing learning, informing resource allocation, and reimagining educational systems. We continue to partner with NWEA's research team to release data and policy recommendations on how COVID-19 has impacted learning. This has included a webinar on supporting recovery for students with disabilities, a policy brief on academic outcomes during the 2020–21 school year and proposed ways to transform education systems, and virtual events with civil rights leaders and practitioners.

## WHAT WE DO



### Advocacy

We work to improve state and federal policy, as change must happen from Congress to the classroom.



### Data analysis

We collaborate with **NWEA's research team** to ensure that the work of policymakers and education leaders is informed by the latest data.



### Partnerships

We can't go about this work alone—we co-create solutions with impacted communities and expert organizations.



### Technical assistance

We support our state and district partners as they work to strengthen their systems and improve outcomes for all students.

## 2 ASSESSMENT

### Driving equity and innovation in state and local assessment systems

In order to drive sustained improvement in student outcomes, assessments must continue to evolve. That's why we work to **ensure that new assessment models are designed with equity at the forefront, are more actionable for educators and policymakers, and positively impact learning.** To do this, we are collaborating with a coalition of assessment organizations to advance equity in assessment systems. This includes eliminating bias and promoting cultural competence in assessment design, empowering educators and caregivers to use assessment data effectively, and expanding diversity and inclusion work among assessment organizations. We are also supporting a group of state chiefs and senior staff as they help their students recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and transform learning, assessment, and accountability systems to better support all kids.

## 3 ACCOUNTABILITY

### Supporting the reimagining of state accountability systems

We recognize that accountability systems are an important tool for identifying and supporting schools, particularly those serving the most marginalized students. We work to **strengthen and restructure accountability systems to reflect a more holistic vision of student success, drive COVID recovery, and improve the use of data to inform decision-making.** During the 2021-22 school year and beyond, we will be supporting states in restarting and reimagining their accountability systems to drive equitable resource allocation (including federal recovery funds), scale best practices, and transform teaching and learning to improve student outcomes.

## 4 TEACHERS & LEADERS

### Building and supporting a diverse educator workforce

Leveraging NWEA's expertise in measurement, data, and professional learning, we **promote assessment literacy through improved educator preparation, training, and professional development** that empowers teachers and leaders to make effective use of data to personalize instruction for all students. In collaboration with NWEA's professional learning team, we will be working with educator preparation programs to offer professional development to coaches and pre-service teachers. We are also convening a group of educators, including former state teachers of the year, to inform our work in all areas.

## 5 OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN

### Expanding opportunities to learn and strengthening early-grades education

Because all students deserve excellent opportunities to learn, we work to **improve access to high-quality early childhood education, college and career pathways, instructional materials, and technological resources such as broadband.** Our data reveals greater pandemic learning disruptions for students in younger grades, so we prioritize supporting our partners in building foundational skills and advancing learning for the youngest learners. Specifically, we champion the importance of early learning and reading by third grade, access to high-speed internet and devices, and the use of holistic measures of student outcomes to inform policy and practice.

### THE TEAM

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For additional information on the latest policy and advocacy updates and recommendations using NWEA research, data, and expertise visit [nwea.org/policy-advocacy](https://nwea.org/policy-advocacy). Follow us on Twitter at [@NWEAPolicy](https://twitter.com/NWEAPolicy)



NWEA is a not-for-profit organization that supports students and educators worldwide by providing assessment solutions, insightful reports, professional learning offerings, and research services. Visit [NWEA.org](https://NWEA.org) to find out how NWEA can partner with you to help all kids learn.

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