

Louisiana Believes

Louisiana's Innovative Assessment Pilot National Update August 15, 2019

The background of the slide is a watercolor-style illustration. It features soft, blended washes of light blue and white, creating a textured, ethereal effect. The colors are more saturated in some areas and lighter in others, giving it a sense of depth and movement. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

The Need for Innovative Assessments

The Current State of Reading in America

Over the past 25 years, reading scores have shown little change.

- From 1992 to 2017, Grade 8 NAEP reading scores are only up 7 points. In comparison, math scores are up 20 points since 1990.
- From 1992 to 2017, Grade 4 NAEP reading scores of students in the lowest percentile only increased by 1 point. In comparison, math scores of students in the lowest percentile are up 27 points.

Performance gaps persist in reading.

- In 2017, in Grade 4 NAEP reading, there was a 28 point gap between students not eligible for NSLP and students eligible for NSLP; the gap has fluctuated between 26-29 points since 2003.

Note: NAEP creates a scale ranging from 0–500.

Let's Read

“Harry Potter was speeding toward the ground when the crowd saw him clap his hand to his mouth as though he was about to be sick - he hit the field on all fours- coughed- and something gold fell into his hand.

‘I’ve got the Snitch!’ He shouted, waving it above his head, and the game ended in complete confusion.”

Rowling, J. K. Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 2000.

Question: Who won the game? How do you know?

Requirements of Reading

- Reading requires skill.
- Reading requires background knowledge.
- [Effect of Prior Knowledge on Good and Poor Readers' Memory of Text](#)



Instruction & Assessments: The Current State

What Happens on our Current Assessments

Assessments are designed to be content agnostic, while focusing on grade-level standards.

Instructional Response to Assessments

Instructional practice is focused on teaching an isolated set of skills such as finding the main idea, citing evidence, and summarizing instead of helping students make meaning of the texts.

How Do We Change Student Work and Teacher Practice?

Currently, we are implicitly measuring knowledge.

If we want students to study books and texts deeply, **our assessments must begin to explicitly measure knowledge.**

This will encourage teachers to focus on knowledge building and ensure that students have the background knowledge required for their assessments.

“The bottom line is that policymakers and advocates who have pushed for more testing in part as a way to narrow the gap between rich and poor have undermined their own efforts. They have created a system that incentivizes teachers to withhold the very thing that could accomplish both objectives: knowledge. All students suffer under this system, but the neediest suffer the most.”

[Why American Students Haven't Gotten Better at Reading in 20 Years](#); Natalie Wexler

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The Solution

Louisiana's Solution

Louisiana submitted a proposal for the pilot in April 2018 in response to a provision in ESSA by which select states are allowed to develop and pilot new high-quality assessment formats in lieu of the existing statewide achievement tests.

Louisiana's proposal to pilot an innovative Humanities assessment was the first to be [approved by the U.S. Department of Education](#).

Louisiana has five years to develop, pilot, and expand the innovative assessment.

The Content

The instructional materials reviews available from [Louisiana](#) and [EdReports](#) have made it easier for school systems and states across America to adopt high quality instructional materials.

[Guidebooks](#), available for free nationally through [LearnZillion](#), has been adopted in approximately 75 percent of Louisiana school systems. This provides a unique opportunity to connect curriculum and assessment.

LEAP 2025 Humanities Assessment

- **Integration:** Several brief assessments, including both ELA and social studies content, are administered throughout the year, rather than one end-of-year ELA exam and one end-of-year social studies exam, to measure students' deep knowledge of texts, passages, and sources that they have studied in class.
- **Focus:** Teachers can focus instruction on background knowledge and making meaning of full texts.
- **Equity:** All students have the opportunity to develop background knowledge together so that no student is at a disadvantage due to a lack of life experiences.
- **Preserves local control:** School systems continue to decide which books are used during instruction and which assessments students take.

A New Approach to Assessment Passages

Current Approach

COLD Read texts:

Random selection of grade-level texts purposely unrelated to anything students have studied.

LEAP 2025 Humanities Assessment

HOT Read Texts:

Unit texts studied in ELA class

WARM Read Texts:

Texts students have *not* read, but texts are *topically-related* to the information and knowledge they have encountered in class

LEAP 2025 Humanities Assessment Components

Two Components:

- End-of-Unit Assessments
- End-of-Year (EOY) Essay

Students will take **three** end-of-unit assessments and the EOY essay for one cumulative score.

ADMINISTRATION SEQUENCE	PILOT ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS
Fall	End-of-Unit Assessment (Choice)
Early Winter	End-of-Unit Assessment (Choice)
Spring	End-of-Unit Assessment
Spring	End-of-Year Essay

Sample End-of-Year Essay

For the end-of-year essay, you will answer **one** essay question. Read the essay question carefully. Then think about the many texts you have read and topics you have studied throughout the year in your English Language Arts class. Write a well-developed essay based on the knowledge you built from the texts and units of study.


Answer the following essay question based on the texts you have read in class this year.

In your ELA class this year you have studied texts in which individuals have found themselves in seemingly hopeless situations. Write a well-constructed essay explaining how the following statement could apply to the individuals in those texts:

“We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope.”

– Martin Luther King

Support your analysis by referencing relevant ideas and information from the texts you have studied this year.

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Year One:
2018-2019

Pilot Partners

Louisiana partnered with the following organizations in its development and execution of the innovative assessment:

- NWEA
- Odell Education
- Johns Hopkins University
- The Center for Assessment
- MZD
- Strategic Measurement and Evaluation
- Five Louisiana school systems: Assumption, Lincoln, Ouachita, St. John the Baptist, and Redesign Schools Louisiana

Pilot Rollout


During the 2018-2019 school year, there were two pilot windows for Grade 7.

- **February 2019:** Students tested items for unit assessments focused on [Written in Bone](#) and [Christmas Carol](#).
- **May 2019:** Students tested items for unit assessments focused on [Memoir](#), [The Giver](#), and [Behind the Scenes](#) and for the end-of-year essay.

Reflections from Pilot Participants

“This is a more authentic and effective way to assess students' knowledge of texts and topics. When students can take information from texts apart and put it back together in a way that deeply expresses their understanding of the world around them, we know that real learning is happening.” -- Emily Howell, Lincoln Parish

“The assessment changes would provide an equitable experience when testing for the students in St. John the Baptist Parish. Students can apply knowledge of grade level content learned in classes on assessments. This will even the playing field for our students and we are enthused about the pilot.” --Angela Davis, St. John the Baptist Parish



Year Two:
2019-2020

Pilot Partners

Louisiana is continuing to partner with the following organizations in its development and execution of the innovative assessment:

- NWEA
- Odell Education
- Johns Hopkins University
- The Center for Assessment
- MZD
- Strategic Measurement and Evaluation
- 10 Louisiana school systems: Assumption, Lincoln, Ouachita, St. John the Baptist, Redesign Schools Louisiana, Rapides, Monroe City Schools, Claiborne, Evangeline, and Central Community Schools

**Additional school systems are continuing to join; this number will continue to grow.*

Pilot Rollout

During the 2019-2020 school year, there will be three operational windows for Grade 7:

- Window 1 (Fall 2019): End-of-Unit Assessment
- Window 2 (Winter 2019): End-of-Unit Assessment
- Window 3 (Spring 2020): End-of-Unit Assessment and End-of-Year Essay

During the 2019-2020 school year, there will be two pilot windows for Grades 6 and 8.

- February 2020: Students will test out items for two of the five unit assessments.
- May 2020: Students will test out items for the three remaining unit assessments and the end-of-year essay.

Supporting Rollout

Teachers and school system staff will receive the following supports:

- Webinars (before each window; at critical decision making points)
- Field Visits (support at district-led curriculum trainings; classroom observations and feedback)
- Quarterly Collaborations
- Bi-monthly Newsletter
- Accountability Policies to Support Learning Time

Pilot Next Steps: Design Timeline





Questions

How to Get Involved

To learn more about the pilot or how to get involved, please email

- Jessica Baghian (jessica.baghian@la.gov); or
- Chanda Johnson (chanda.johnson@la.gov).

Interesting Reading

- **Chall, J. S. (1983).** *Stages of reading development*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- **Fisher, D. & Frey, N. (2008).** [What does it take to create skilled readers? Facilitating the transfer and application of literacy strategies](#). *Voices from the Middle*, 15(4), 16-22.
- **Hirsch, E.D. (1996)** *The Schools We Don't Have and Why We Need Them*
- **National Reading Panel, National Institute of Child Health, & Human Development (2000).** [Report of the national reading panel: Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction: Reports of the subgroups](#). National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health.

Interesting Reading

- **Pearson, P. D. (2013).** [Research foundations of the Common Core State Standards in English language arts](#). In S. Neuman and L. Gambrell (Eds.), *Quality reading instruction in the age of Common Core State Standards*(pp. 237-262). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- **Shanahan, T. (2005).** [The National Reading Panel report: Practical advice for teachers](#). Naperville, IL: Learning Point Associates/North Central Regional Education Laboratories.
- **Snow, C. & Biancarosa, G. (2003).** [Adolescent literacy and the achievement gap: What do we know and where do we go from here?](#) New York: Carnegie Corporation.

Interesting Reading

- **Snow, C., & Moje, E. (2010).** [Why is everyone talking about adolescent literacy?](#) Retrieved from Phi Delta Kappan, 91(6), 66-69.
- **Wexler, N. (2019).** [Why American Students Haven't Gotten Better at Reading in 20 Years.](#) Retrieved from The Atlantic.
- **Willingham, D. T. (2017).** [How to Get Your Mind to Read.](#) Retrieved from NY Times.