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.
“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.”


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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What Happens on our Current Assessments</th>
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<td>Assessments are designed to be content agnostic, while focusing on grade-level standards.</td>
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<th>Instructional Response to Assessments</th>
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<td>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.</td>
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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
The 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 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.
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.

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<th>ADMINISTRATION SEQUENCE</th>
<th>PILOT ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>End-of-Unit Assessment (Choice)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Winter</td>
<td>End-of-Unit Assessment (Choice)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>End-of-Unit Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>End-of-Year Essay</td>
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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.
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
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
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

- **AUGUST 2018**: Following approval from USDOE, initial pilot launched with grade 7.
- **2018-2019**: Pilot schools administered first assessment pilots.
- **2019-2022**: Pilot expands to additional school systems, schools, and grade-levels, replacing LEAP 2025 ELA and social studies assessments in those school systems.
- **2022-2023**: All Louisiana schools have access to the new assessments.
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


- **Hirsch, E.D. (1996)** *The Schools We Don't Have and Why We Need Them*

Interesting Reading


Interesting Reading

