



NWEA Appoints Paul D. Nichols as Director of Large-Scale Assessment Design

Organization creates new position to spearhead the creation of next-generation summative, interim and formative assessments

Portland, Ore. — June 25, 2019 – [NWEA](#), the not-for-profit provider of assessment solutions, today announced that in support of its efforts to develop next-generation assessments that commingle summative, interim and formative assessment purposes, it has appointed Paul D. Nichols, Ph.D., as Director of Large-Scale Design, effective immediately.

In his role, Nichols will work closely with the NWEA Large-Scale Psychometrics and Content teams to support the design and development of large-scale assessment solutions, guide the work of innovative approaches to the assessment landscape, and lead development of assessments designed to meet the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

“With over two decades of experience conducting extensive research, design and analysis of innovative forms of assessment, Paul brings tremendous experience to the team at NWEA,” said Chris Minnich, CEO of NWEA. “We’re excited to have his deep knowledge and expertise as we continue our work to make sure that all students have a chance to demonstrate what they know and are ready to learn next, and that teachers have the most precise data to inform their instruction.”

Nichols most recently served as Vice President, Innovative Research, Design, and Consulting, at ACT, a role in which he led efficacy and validity research in support of product development and adoption for a product portfolio that spanned assessment, learning, behavior, interests, and navigation. Prior to joining ACT, Nichols served as a Principal Research Scientist at Pearson, where he worked in the Center for Next Generation Learning and Assessment supporting research and leading evidence-centered design efforts. Earlier in his career, he served as Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

“NWEA is a true pioneer in assessment and is ideally positioned to help states create assessments to meet the needs of their students and educators,” said Nichols. “I am excited to join NWEA and to be on this journey with them to ensure that we continue to develop the most innovative and accurate assessments for every part of the teaching and learning continuum, for the ultimate goal of improving outcomes for all students.”

Nichols holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology, a Master of Arts degree in Educational Psychology, and a Doctoral degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Iowa, Iowa City.

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™.