

Louisiana Believes

Innovative Assessment Pilot: Status and Updates

February 2020

Objectives

1. Explain the assessment problem that Louisiana is solving.
2. Describe the design of the new LEAP 2025 Humanities assessment.
3. Describe the rollout of the new LEAP 2025 Humanities assessment.

Every day, all **students** are in schools that treat them with dignity and respect and where they have the opportunity to...



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build knowledge
of the world,

read
meaningful texts,

express ideas through
writing and speaking, and

solve
complex problems.

Louisiana's success is a result of the belief that those closest to children are best positioned to make decisions that impact student learning.

In Louisiana, change is achieved through the following process:



1. **Start the work at a small scale with innovative educators** through grants and pilots.
2. **Encourage projects to grow to scale**, through coherent and aligned incentives like funding and reporting.
3. **Nurture and assist the expansion**, through regional partnerships, external support organizations and strategic communications.
4. **Codify changes in policy** after learning from pilots and achieving statewide scale.
5. **Embed the change in the school system planning process and statewide support structures** to facilitate local implementation.



The Problem

Let's Read

“Churniak swings and hits a slow bouncing ball toward the shortstop. Haley comes in, fields it, and throws to first, but too late. Churniak is on first with a single, Johnson stayed on third. The next batter is Whitcomb, the Cougars’ left-fielder.

The ball is returned to Claresen. He gets the sign and winds up, and throws a slider that Whitcomb hits between Manfred and Roberts for a hit.”

Question: Does Johnson have to run after Whitcomb hits the ball?

[Effect of Prior Knowledge on Good and Poor Readers' Memory of Text](#)



Let's Read

With a partner, consider:

1. What did you have to know to answer the question?
2. In what ways do traditional reading assessments ask students to bring in background knowledge?

The Need for Innovative Assessments

Research demonstrates that students are better able to comprehend what they read when they possess knowledge of the subject.

However, reading tests traditionally use passages that include experiences and vocabulary that students may have never encountered, placing those who have fewer life experience at a disadvantage.

- “Once kids can decode fluently, reading comprehension depends heavily on knowledge. By failing to provide a solid grounding in basic subjects we inadvertently hobble children's ability in reading comprehension.” [School Time Knowledge and Reading Comprehension](#)
- “Whether or not readers understand a text depends far more on how much background knowledge and vocabulary they have relating to the topic than on how much they’ve practiced comprehension skills.” [Why American Students Haven't Gotten Better at Reading in 20 Years](#)

Instruction & Assessments: The Current State

Current Assessments

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

Instructional Response to Assessments

Too often, teachers focus on teaching isolated sets of skills (e.g., finding the main idea, citing evidence, summarizing) to prepare students for an assessment rather than helping students make deeper meaning of the texts.

The Need for Innovative Assessments

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 Design

Louisiana's Theory of Action and Strategy

ELA: [Guidebooks](#) have been adopted in approximately 75 percent of Louisiana school systems.

Social Studies: In 2017, Louisiana developed scope and sequences to support teachers and school systems; however, through the innovative assessment pilot, LDOE envisions a more comprehensive curriculum solution for social studies similar to ELA Guidebooks.

This provides a unique opportunity for Louisiana to connect curriculum and assessment supporting more equitable knowledge building and streamlined assessments to provide information sooner.



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.

In ELA, [Guidebooks](#) has been adopted in approximately 75 percent of Louisiana school systems. This provides a unique opportunity for Louisiana to connect curriculum and assessment while supporting more equitable knowledge building and assessment reduction.

In social studies, the instructional materials review process has not identified a K-12 solution for high-quality materials. In 2017 Louisiana developed scope and sequences to support teachers and school systems; however, through the the innovative assessment pilot, LDOE envisions a more comprehensive curriculum solution for social studies similar to ELA Guidebooks.

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. The assessment measures students' deep knowledge of texts, passages, and sources that they have studied in class, and provides information to educators and parents along the way.
- **Focus:** Teachers can focus instruction on background knowledge and making meaning of 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.

LEAP 2025 Humanities Assessment

The LEAP 2025 Humanities Assessment focuses on

- reading and writing assessment that reflects and is sequenced with *knowledge-rich classroom instruction*
- measuring student ability *to understand and to build knowledge* from their reading, and express that knowledge and understanding in writing

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:

Unit- related 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

Students take **three** end-of-unit assessments, the EOY essay, and the Social Studies Supplement for one cumulative score.

ADMINISTRATION SEQUENCE	PILOT ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS
Window 1	End-of-Unit Assessment (Choice)
Window 2	End-of-Unit Assessment (Choice)
Window 3	End-of-Unit Assessment
	End-of-Year Essay, Social Studies Supplement

Grade 7 End-of-Unit Assessment

SECTION 1	
Unit Text(s) (provided in classroom) and Unit-Related Text(s) (included in test form)	Selected-Response Items (Multiple-select /Two-Part /TEI) Constructed-Response Item
SECTION 2	
Students use knowledge built from unit texts and unit-related text(s) (No Texts allowed)	1 Essay Item

Students take a total of THREE End-of-Unit Assessments*

Grade 7 End-Of-Year (EOY) Assessment

The **End-of-year Essay** (administered in Window 3) consists of a single essay question that requires students to use and extend the knowledge built through the texts they have read throughout the year in their English Language Arts class in order to address a global concept.

ONE SESSION
(No Texts)

1 CROSS-UNIT ANALYSIS ESSAY



The Rollout

Louisiana's Innovative Assessment Pilot

Louisiana submitted a proposal for the pilot in April 2018, in response to a provision in ESSA through 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.

Rollout

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

- February 2019- Students tested out items for two of the five unit assessments.
- May 2019- Students tested out items for the three remaining unit assessments, and the end-of-year essay.

During the 2019-2020 school year, there are three operational windows:

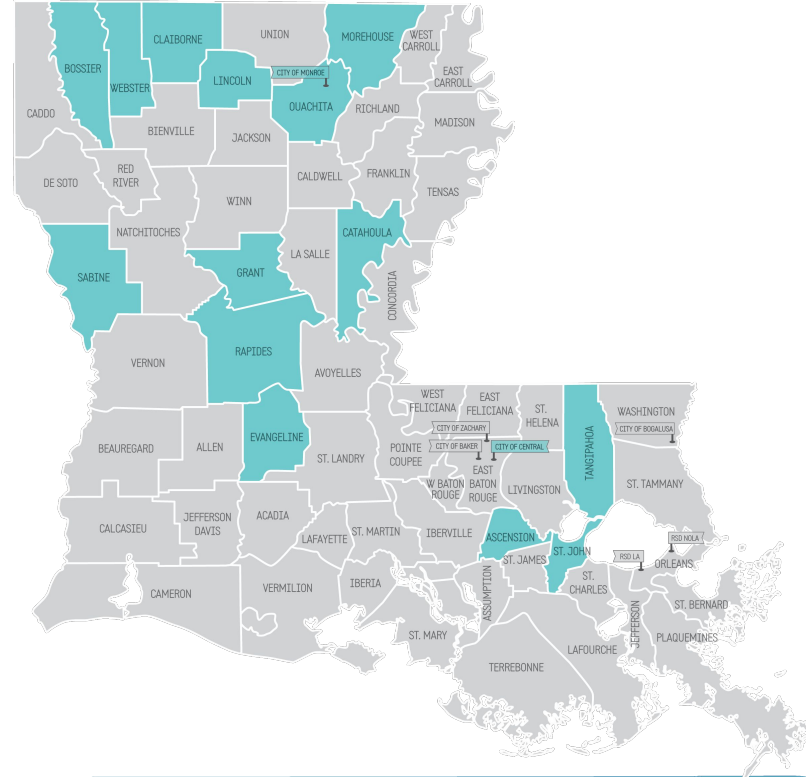
- Window 1 (Fall 2019): End-of-Unit Assessment
- Window 2 (Winter 2019): End-of-Unit Assessment
- Window 3 (Spring 2019): End-of-Unit Assessment and End-of-Year Essay

2019-2020 Pilot Partners

Louisiana is partnering with school systems in year two of the development and execution of the innovative assessment:

- Assumption, Lincoln, Ouachita, St. John the Baptist, Redesign Schools Louisiana, Rapides, City of Monroe Schools, Claiborne, Evangeline, Central Community Schools, Bossier, Grant, Catahoula, Morehouse, Sabine, Tangipahoa, and Webster.

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



Supporting Rollout

Goal: Teachers teach deep study of texts, not just skills, in order to ensure knowledge-rich classrooms for all children.

To participate, districts must be using an aligned curriculum and must be prepared to support teachers through this change.

Teachers and district staff will receive the additional support:

- Webinars (Before each window; At critical decision making points)
- Field Visits (Support at district-led curriculum trainings; Classroom observations and feedback)
- Trainings
- Accountability Policies

Initial Feedback

- Initial teacher feedback indicates this is a promising approach

“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

Questions

Questions?

To learn more about the pilot, including how your school system can join, please email Chanda Johnson (chanda.johnson@la.gov).