

Adopted: May 12, 2022



The National Assessment Governing Board Charge to the Steering and Development Panels for the 2028 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Science Assessment Framework

Whereas, The Nation’s Report Card—also known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—is mandated by Congress to conduct national assessments and report data on student academic achievement and trends in public and private elementary schools and secondary schools, and is prohibited from using any assessment to “evaluate individual students or teachers” or “to establish, require, or influence the standards, assessments, curriculum, ... or instructional practices of states or local education agencies” ([Public Law 107-279](#));

Whereas, Congress specifically assigned the National Assessment Governing Board responsibilities to “develop assessment objectives consistent with the requirements of this [law] and test specifications that produce an assessment that is valid and reliable, and are based on relevant widely accepted professional standards”;

Whereas, the Governing Board established in its [Assessment Framework Development Policy](#) that the Board shall conduct “a comprehensive, inclusive, and deliberative process that involves active participation of stakeholders” to determine and update the content and design of all NAEP assessments;

Whereas, the Governing Board’s Assessment Framework Development Policy states, “NAEP framework development shall be informed by a broad, balanced, and inclusive set of factors. Frameworks shall reflect current curricula and instruction, research regarding cognitive development and instruction, and the nation’s future needs and desirable levels of achievement. This delicate balance between ‘what is’ and ‘what should be’ is at the core of the NAEP framework development process”;

Whereas, the Governing Board received upfront input from stakeholders on potential changes to the current NAEP Science Framework via an [initial public comment period](#) on the current [NAEP Science Framework](#) (conducted from August – October 2021) and [brief papers from science education experts](#) who participated in a moderated discussion with the Board in March 2022;

Whereas, most of that stakeholder input focused on the importance of updating the NAEP Science Framework to account for greater (but not full) convergence in state standards and alignment to the National Academies Framework for K-12 Science Education – and yet NAEP cannot endorse the standards of any particular state or group of states, including the Next Generation Science Standards;

Whereas, much of the stakeholder input focused on the increasing role of equity in science education and educational assessment generally, and the Board has been engaged in ongoing discussions about how to most appropriately demonstrate its continuing commitment to equity;

Whereas, participation in the NAEP science assessment is voluntary and is conducted at the national level, and for states and select urban districts in some grades and years as indicated by the [NAEP Assessment Schedule](#);

Whereas, based on initial stakeholder input and Board discussions, the Board concludes that a Steering Panel shall be convened (with a subset of members continuing as the Development Panel) to recommend updates to the NAEP Science Framework at grades 4, 8, and 12 (last adopted in 2005 for implementation in the 2009 assessment) for implementation in 2028 and beyond;

Therefore, the Governing Board charges the Steering and Development Panels (hereafter, the “framework panels”) with prioritizing the following considerations when formulating recommendations for the 2028 NAEP Science Assessment Framework:

- **The NAEP Science Framework should be informed by but not determined by state science standards and the implementation of those standards. The framework panels should grapple with how to reflect greater convergence among state standards while also accounting for science education in states that diverge from the Next Generation Science Standards.**
- **The NAEP Science Framework should be forward-looking and consider what students should know and be able to do in science to be successful in college and careers.**
- **The framework panels should consider what aspects, if any, of the current [NAEP Technology and Engineering Literacy \(TEL\) Framework](#) should be incorporated into the NAEP Science Framework to reflect an updated definition of student achievement in science.**
- **The Governing Board values the current NAEP trend lines in science and would like to allow the greatest possible chance that they can be continued if supported by content alignment and bridge studies to be conducted following framework adoption. Updates to the NAEP Science Framework should prioritize relevance, utility, and validity over the need to maintain trend lines with results from the current science framework, but the framework panels should provide strong justification for changes.**

- **The framework panels should grapple with the extent to which scientific reasoning skills are independent of content versus based on content.**
- **The framework panels should be bound by considerations of feasibility when developing recommendations, including technical issues (i.e., ensuring that the framework can be operationalized in an assessment), cost (e.g., accounting for scenario-based tasks being much more expensive than other item types) and constraints imposed by the NAEP legislation (including but not limited to the requirements for NAEP to be non-ideological and avoid assessing personal or family beliefs and attitudes).**
- **The NAEP Science Framework should support the development of assessment items across a wide range of student performance at each assessed grade level, including lower-achieving students.**

The framework panels should periodically report to the Board on the status of addressing the considerations articulated above, in addition to other policy-relevant issues that emerge during deliberations. The Board will communicate relevant decisions that impact the development of the NAEP Science Framework to the framework panels when they occur, including how equity should be conceptualized in NAEP generally and the assessment frameworks in particular.