

COMMUNITY COLLEGE TIMES

Panel to examine academic preparedness for college, jobs

BY CC TIMES, *Published May 6, 2010*

The [National Assessment Governing Board](#) will create a special commission to increase awareness about high school seniors' lack of academic preparedness in reading and math for higher education and job training.

Many high school graduates lack the skills needed to enter college and the workplace, despite the importance of postsecondary education and training to pursuing a career, a fulfilling life and civic participation, according to the board, which sets policy for the [National Assessment of Educational Progress \(NAEP\)](#). For example, 20 percent of freshmen in public four-year institutions and more than 40 percent in public two-year institutions are enrolled in at least one remedial course, the board said. In addition, many businesses continue to report a shortage of highly skilled workers.

“Particularly at a time when our nation confronts both high unemployment rates and a shortage of skilled workers and professionals, no issue is more important than preparing high school graduates to meet the demands of the global economy,” former Mississippi Gov. Ronnie Musgrove, who will chair the commission, said in a statement.

The commission will hold meetings, hearings and presentations with the public, educators at all levels, business leaders and policymakers and will then disseminate its findings later this year so that they can help shape education and workforce training policies and practice.

Reporting on 12th grade preparedness is complicated by the fact that no generally accepted definition exists for what students need to know and be able to do to qualify for entrance into postsecondary education and training without the need for remediation, according to NAEP.

The research will involve studies designed to:

- Determine how the NAEP 12th-grade reading and math test content aligns or overlaps with the content of other tests used for admissions and placement into college and job training programs, such as the SAT, ACT, ACCUPLACER, COMPASS, WorkKeys and employment tests.
- Determine the statistical relationships between NAEP and the other tests.
- Set a standard on NAEP 12th-grade reading and math tests that represents what students need to know and be able to do to qualify for placement in college credit-bearing courses or entry into job training programs.
- Survey higher education institutions about their use of admissions and placement tests to enroll students into credit-bearing or remedial courses.

Commission members include:

- Vice Chair Greg Jones, retired CEO of State Farm General Insurance
- John Engler, former governor of Michigan and president of the National Association of Manufacturers

- Michael Guerra, executive director of the American Center for School Choice
- Douglas Horne, founder of Horne Properties Inc.
- Nancy Kopp, Maryland state treasurer
- Steven Paine, West Virginia state superintendent of schools and Governing Board member
- Raymund Paredes, commissioner of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Eileen Weiser, a member of the Governing Board and former member of the Michigan State Board of Education