



## **Technical Advisory Panel on Uniform National Rules for NAEP Testing of English Language Learners**

Report to the National Assessment  
Governing Board  
August 2009



## **Charge to the Expert Panel**

Propose a set of uniform national rules, which

- Provide that students with a similar level of English proficiency are tested on NAEP the same way, regardless of where they live.
- Maximize student access and meaningful participation.
- Ensure that the constructs in NAEP frameworks are measured and that all students may be placed on the same scale.

## **Charge to the Expert Panel**

- Permit only accommodations or translations that maintain the validity, reliability, and comparability of NAEP data.
- Are feasible, logistically and financially, and without detrimental consequences.

Recommend follow-up studies on the implementation and impact of recommended procedures.

## **Expert Panel Members**

- **Sharif Shakrani** (Chair)  
Professor of Measurement and Quantitative Methods, Michigan State University
- **Jamal Abedi**, Professor of Education  
University of California, Davis
- **Diane August**, Senior Research Scientist  
Center for Applied Linguistics  
Washington, DC



## Expert Panel Members

- **Robert Linqanti**, Senior Research Associate  
Project Director for English Learner Evaluation  
and Accountability Support  
WestEd, Oakland, CA
- **Phil Morse**, Coordinator, Student Testing Unit  
Los Angeles Unified School District  
President, National Assn. of Test Directors
- **Charlene Rivera**, Executive Director  
Center for Equity and Excellence in Education,  
George Washington University  
Washington, DC



## Expert Panel Members

- **Maria Santos**, Executive Director  
Office of English Language Learners  
New York City Department of Education
- **Josefina Tinajero**, Dean  
College of Education  
Professor of Bilingual Education  
University of Texas at El Paso



## Meetings

- In-person meeting May 1, 2009
- Five teleconferences during May, June, and July



## Recommendations

1. All English language learners selected for the NAEP sample who have been in United States schools for one year or more should be included in the National Assessment.
  - This policy should be implemented with the disaggregated reporting of ELL test results by detailed information on English language proficiency and the availability of accommodations that maximize meaningful participation.



## Recommendations

2. Students should be offered ELL-responsive accommodations that maintain the constructs in the NAEP framework, including
  - Items and directions in plain language.
  - Side-by-side Spanish-English test booklets.
  - Word-to-word bilingual glossaries without definitions.
  - Extra time.
  - Other accommodations currently allowed by NAEP.



## Recommendations

- Accommodations should be selected by qualified school personnel with knowledge of the student's level of English proficiency.
- Reading assessment passages should not be modified, but directions should be in plain language without unnecessary complexity unrelated to the constructs assessed.



## Recommendations

3. Prompts, directions, and items in all NAEP assessments should be written in plain language.
  - Such material should be free of unnecessary linguistic complexity irrelevant to the construct being tested.
  - But the level of item difficulty should not be changed.
  - All NAEP assessments should undergo a plain language review.



## Recommendations

4. Develop test blocks at the low and high ends of difficulty. Low-end blocks should be offered to ELL students who would otherwise be excluded.
  - Such targeted testing would reduce standard errors, provide more information about low and high-achieving students, and reassure local decision-makers that ELLs can meaningfully participate in NAEP.



## Recommendations

5. Disaggregate and report NAEP results for English language learners by the best available standardized test data on the level of English language proficiency.
  - Although existing state English language proficiency assessments are not consistent, data obtained from them should be used for research and analysis purposes.
  - As soon as possible, NAEP should develop its own brief test of English language proficiency to report ELLs as advanced, intermediate, or beginner/low.



## Recommendations

6. Collect additional background information on English language learners tested, including
  - Number of years living in the United States.
  - Years attending schools in the United States.
  - Years receiving instruction primarily in English.



## Recommendations

7. Report results for former English language learners who have been reclassified as English proficient.
  - Collect data on number of years since student exited ELL services or was reclassified.
  - Encourage states to maintain this data to provide a more complete picture of the long-term success of English language learners in U.S. schools.



## Recommendations

8. To obtain high and comparable participation rates across states and districts, make special efforts to solicit the cooperation of officials deciding participation of individual students.
  - Establish a high common goal of 95% participation among all ELLs in U.S. schools for one year or more.
  - Jurisdictions that do not reach this policy goal should be designated in NAEP reports as falling below the desired participation rate.





## **Recommendations**

9. Adopt an aggressive timeline for innovation and research, including
  - Test items written in plain language.
  - A short test of English language proficiency.
  - Targeted testing with blocks of items at low and high levels of difficulty.
  - Computerized administration when feasible.