

## **Comments from CRESST/UCLA**

**Good morning,**

**My name is Ron Dietel and I am the assistant director for research use and communications at UCLA's National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST). CRESST has been a national R&D center since 1985, promoting scientifically based evaluation and testing methods while conducting research that leads to improved assessment and evaluation practice. Eva Baker and Joan Herman are two of our center directors, well known in the fields of evaluation, accountability, and assessment.**

**CRESST supports the recommendations of the two expert panels, especially the important NAGB goals for increasing the numbers of English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities who participate in NAEP, also known as America's Report Card. As you know, NAEP provides invaluable medium and long-term national and state information about student achievement, including English learners and students with disabilities, and serves as an important monitoring mechanism for 50 different sets of state assessments.**

**It is important that differences in performance on NAEP reflect differences in student learning, not differences in who takes the test or who is included or excluded from the test. We believe that the two panels recommendations will lead to:**

- Increased consistency in defining both ELLs and students with disabilities,**
- More consistent inclusion, administration and accommodations procedures,**
- Higher participation rates for both groups,**
- A more representative sample of students from each state who participate in NAEP, and**
- Improved state-by-state comparability.**

A more accurate sample of students will also aid the thousands of researchers who regularly use NAEP data in their studies and for policy makers who make important decisions based on NAEP results. Research studies may also lead to improved methods for serving both student groups, thereby decreasing achievement gaps. We agree strongly with the recommendation to track accommodations provided in order to determine their possible effects on student NAEP performance.

We also firmly concur with the ELL panel's recommendations to write prompts, directions, and items in plain language. Research by Jamal Abedi for example, one of the panel members, has shown that simplifying test items can benefit non-ELL students as well as ELL students. Indeed, we believe that this recommendation and practice should be applied to any assessment and for any student group.

Both panels note the existence of a third group of students, for which we have too little information and for which we suggest additional research. This group includes those students who are both English language learners and have disabilities. One of the areas for particular study would be the possible impact of multiple accommodations that may pose both feasibility and validity issues.

Based on a three-year IES study, CRESST is also in the midst of completing a new ELL policy brief that will contain additional topics for further research, which may have relevance for NAEP. These will include recommendations for using computer-based game strategies to measure student knowledge and skills; recommendations for investigating student's opportunities to learn; and research on long-term ELL students who may spend 10 or more years in ELL status.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the recommendations from both panels. I will do my best to answer any questions that you may have.

Ron Dietel  
CRESST/UCLA