

The NAEP Background Questions: An Underused National Resource

A report to the National Assessment Governing Board
by the Expert Panel on Strengthening the NAEP
Background Questions

March 2012

The Background Variables Represent a Potentially Critical National Information Resource

- Describe **educational resources** available to support learning for students with different home backgrounds.
- Track progress in implementing key **curricular, technological and education policy changes**.
- Monitor **student motivation, out-of-school learning** and other research-based factors affecting learning.
- **Benchmark high-performing states and urban districts and those with high achievement growth** to identify factors differentiating performance. This domestic effort would parallel extensive international analyses of the background variables in PISA and TIMSS.

But NAEP Background Data Are Currently an Underused Resource

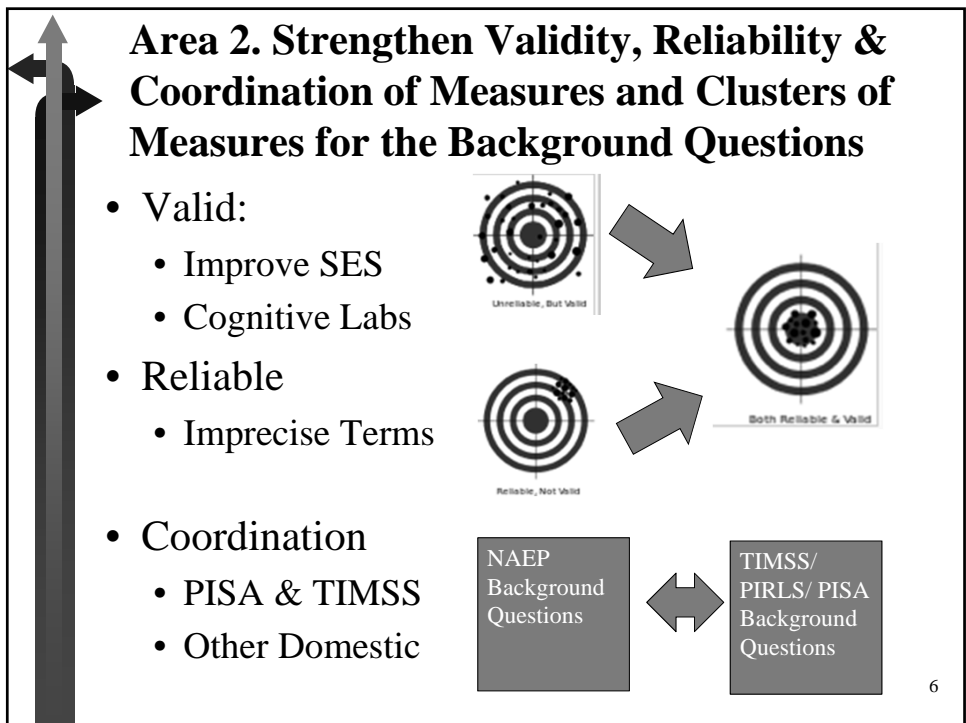
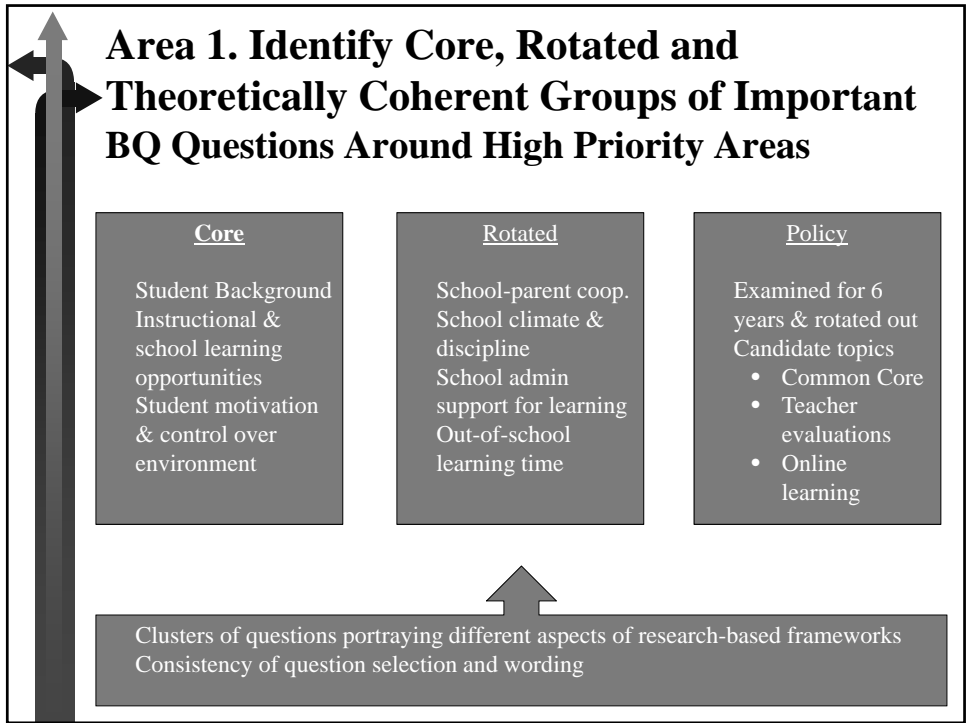
- NAEP no longer reports on student, teacher and school background responses when publishing main assessment results (except for student subgroups).
- In-depth NAEP special reports using the BQ data are rare. *The Educational Experiences of American Indian Students in Grades 4 and 8 is an exception (2010).*
- This leaves the primary access to the BQ data through the NAEP Data Explorer, which is great for the professional researcher but not for educators, policy makers, or the general public.

3

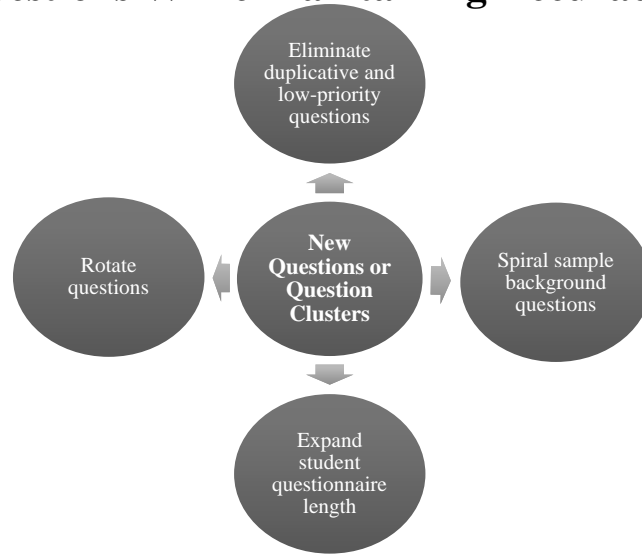
Expert Panel Recommendations to Strengthen NAEP BQ in Four Areas

1. Ask Important Questions	2. Improve the Accuracy of Measures	3. Strengthen Sampling Efficiency	4. Reinstitute Meaningful Analyses & Reporting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core questions • Rotated questions • Policy questions • Theoretical frameworks • Consistent questions over time • Delete duplicative & low-priority questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid • Reliable • Coordinated (with domestic and international surveys) • Cognitive labs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiral sampling • Extended questionnaire time • Alternate surveys • Pooling item responses across successive surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special BQ reports • Online compendium of responses • Report descriptive not causal findings • Externally conducted research • Improve online tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a single NAGB committee overseeing background questions • Review budget including need for staff to implement recommendations 			

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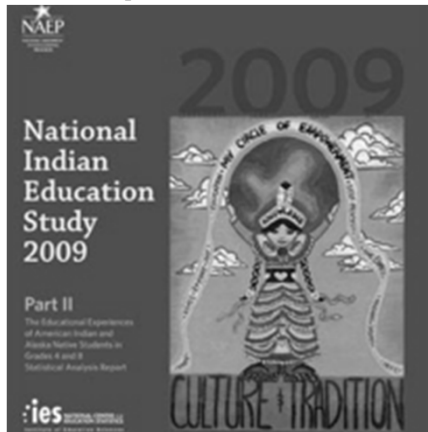
Area 3. Reform NAEP Sampling to Enhance the Scope of the Background Questions While Maintaining Accuracy



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Area 4. Reinstitute the Analysis and Regular Reporting of the NAEP Background Questions

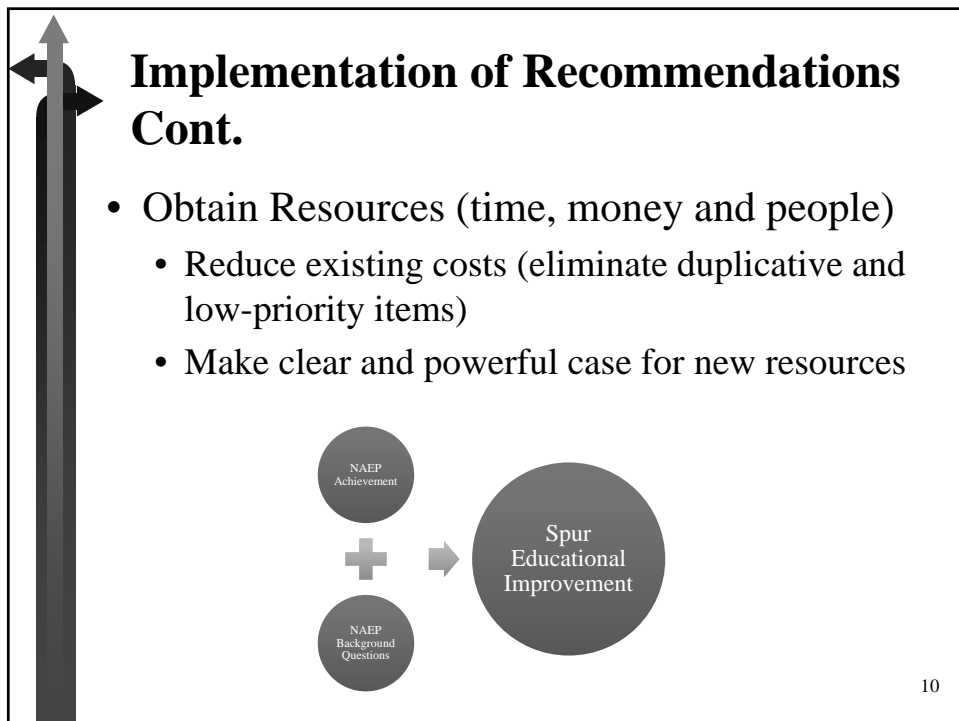
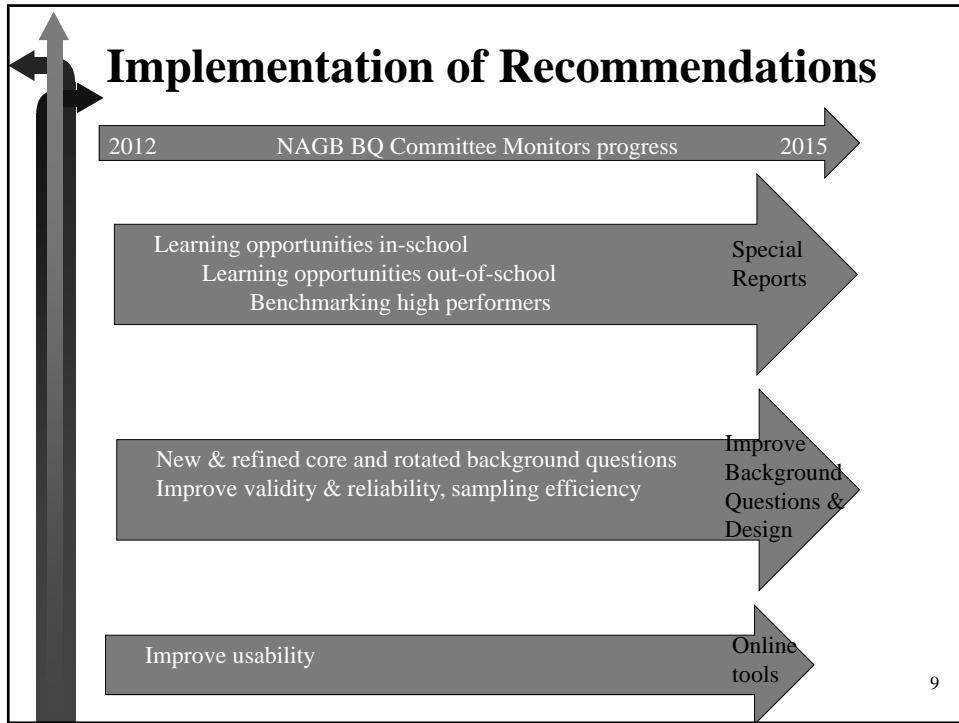
Education Experiences of Native Americans

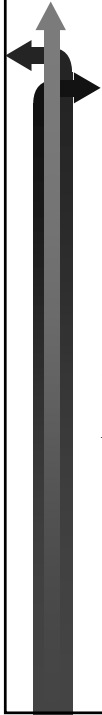


Statistical Tables: Urban Districts in Math

Exhibit B. Illustrative Table of Background Question Indicators With a Grade 8 Math Focus: School Districts Participating in the 2011 Trial Urban Development Assessment

Location	Grade 8 All Students	Grade 8 English/Literacy School Lunch	Grade 8 Absent for 10 or more days last month	Grade 8 Absent for 10 or more days in April	Grade 8 Hours of Math Per Week	Grade 8 Hour of Math Homework	Grade 8 After-school or Tutoring Program	Grade 8 Special Math Certification	Grade 8 Teacher Math Major or Special At School	Grade 8 Full-time Math Special At School	Grade 8 Assigned Math by Ability	Grade 8 2+ Math by Math Class	Grade 8 Complete Available to Teachers and Students	Percentage
National	284	44	7	42	37	17	21	17	38	17	16	41	84	
Albuquerque	275	65	8	37	65	13	20	27	33	12	16	59	77	
Atlanta	285	62	5	27	75	28	57	57	95	61	59	37	85	
Austin	287	69	8	23	61	27	30	42	57	18	13	52	81	
Baltimore City	281	65	9	48	93	41	38	38	79	12	16	37	72	
Boston	282	76	9	68	76	39	30	13	69	12	11	47	51	
Chicago	285	52	6	35	87	18	29	44	47	13	16	76	76	
Chicago	270	84	4	32	67	47	37	23	84	21	15	65	83	
Charlotte	282	102	11	29	69	33	26	6	58	14	12	44	82	
Dallas	274	65	7	32	48	27	39	61	68	13	15	24	57	
Detroit	280	79	17	24	81	46	37	11	83	16	14	48	82	
District of Columbia	282	70	12	33	65	28	39	57	68	41	13	20	58	





Thank You

Panel Members

Marshall S. Smith (Chair)

Naomi Chudowsky

Alan Ginsburg (Secretary)

Robert Hauser

Jennifer Jennings

Sharon Lewis