



Secretary McMahon Appoints Former Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant to National Assessment Governing Board

Gov. Bryant led state education reforms as Mississippi made strong, sustained gains on NAEP in 4th grade reading

Contact: Stephaan Harris, stephaan.harris@ed.gov, 202-357-7504

November 17, 2025—(Washington, D.C) U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon today announced the appointment of [former Mississippi governor Phil Bryant](#) to the Governing Board, which oversees the Nation’s Report Card. He fills one of two seats designated for state governors from different political parties.

The [Nation's Report Card](#), also known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress or NAEP, is the only nationally representative assessment of student achievement over time for the nation, states, and large urban districts. The [2024 NAEP Report Cards](#) in reading, math, and science released this year provided critical information on student achievement nationwide. They showed steep declines that largely predated but were worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“NAEP is a crucial measure of how we are serving U.S. students, and there is so much that policymakers and education leaders can learn from NAEP and use in their own communities,” said Gov. Bryant. “I’m honored to join the Governing Board and hope to help more places experience the kind of dramatic progress we’ve seen in Mississippi in reading. Across the country, we need to also advance achievement in math, civics, U.S. history, and science.”

Gov. Phil Bryant (R) served as Mississippi’s governor from 2012 to 2020, where he led broad education reforms in early childhood, teacher pay, charter schools, school accountability, special education, career-technical training programs, and establishing scholarships for Mississippi students pursuing careers as public school teachers. He also led the state’s literacy reforms including teacher training on the science of reading, additional support for at-risk students, and implementing a 3rd grade literacy retention policy.

Gov. Bryant served as Mississippi’s lieutenant governor, state auditor, and a state legislator. He has a bachelor’s degree from the University of Southern Mississippi and a master’s degree from Mississippi College, where he also received an Honorary Doctorate of Laws Degree.

Gov. Bryant joins three [recently appointed or reappointed Governing Board members](#): Kymyona Burk, who led the implementation of Mississippi's reading reforms; Virginia elementary school principal Michael Sidebotham; and testing and measurement expert Scott Marion. Their terms began on Oct. 1.

"Education leaders are looking to understand Mississippi's strong and sustained progress on reading; and we're honored that Gov. Bryant is joining the Board to offer his leadership and perspective to make NAEP more meaningful to its users and to continue to share lessons learned from the Magnolia State," said Lesley Muldoon, executive director of the Governing Board.

In its policy role, the Governing Board determines which grades and subjects to assess, what content to include in assessments, sets the NAEP achievement levels, and works to make the Nation's Report Card results meaningful and relevant to the public.

New and reappointed members will be sworn in at the Governing Board's quarterly meeting in November. See the list of 26 Governing Board members [here](#).

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The National Assessment Governing Board (Governing Board) sets policy for the Nation's Report Card, also called the National Assessment of Educational Progress or NAEP. Created by Congress in 1988, the Governing Board is an independent, nonpartisan board whose 26 members include governors, state legislators, local and state school officials, educators, business representatives and members of the general public. For more information about the Governing Board, visit www.nagb.gov.