



NEWS RELEASE

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National Assessment Governing Board Adopts 2026 NAEP Reading Framework

Vote concludes over two years of development, input, and deliberation

WASHINGTON — The National Assessment Governing Board today voted to approve a Reading Framework for the 2026 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), otherwise known as The Nation’s Report Card. The vote on the framework, which guides the content of NAEP assessments, was the culmination of a comprehensive process that began more than two years ago and involved dozens of experts and stakeholders providing multiple rounds of input and revisions.

Last updated in 2004, the new Reading Framework will guide development of the 2026 NAEP Reading Assessment. The adopted framework will ensure that the assessment reflects the latest research on reading comprehension and how reading is assessed, and the transition to digital administration of NAEP assessments that began in 2017.

“I am pleased the Board fulfilled one of its primary responsibilities: updating the NAEP assessment framework,” said Board Chair Haley Barbour, former Mississippi governor. “Board members worked diligently to develop consensus after considering a diverse array of perspectives, rallying together around our common purpose—ensuring the NAEP Reading Assessment serves the best interests of our nation’s students.”

The NAEP Reading Assessment is administered every two years, providing the country’s largest continuing and representative assessment of student reading performance at the state and national levels, and for 27 large school districts that are part of NAEP’s Trial Urban District Assessment program. The Governing Board is charged by federal law to develop, update, and approve frameworks for all NAEP assessments.

The new Reading Framework updates the previous version to align with the NAEP Reading Assessment’s transition to a digital platform in 2017 and adds only a few new features, many of which already exist on state reading assessments. For example, the 2026 Framework will report results separately for reading texts in literature, social studies, and science rather than just literary and informational texts.

The 2026 framework also calls for a deeper level of disaggregation of NAEP data to include disciplinary contexts, socioeconomic status within race and ethnicity, and English learner status. These changes are intended to increase the relevance and usefulness of NAEP results.

“The Board set on a process two years ago to develop and adopt a reading framework that would maximize the value of NAEP to the nation, expand the depth and reporting of NAEP data, and very likely maintain trends to enable comparisons back to 1992,” said Massachusetts Rep. Alice Peisch,

Board vice chair. “I’m happy to say that today the Board – with the help of many stakeholders – has succeeded in that charge.”

The process of revising began with the Governing Board’s recommendation to update the Reading Framework after consulting with experts in the field. Following that decision in March 2019, the Governing Board convened experts from research, policy, and practice to establish the content and types of questions the assessment should include. Experts on a Visioning Panel—which included subject matter experts, practitioners, and members of the general public, such as business leaders and policymakers—developed high-level recommendations.

Next, a Development Panel made up of technical experts in reading and assessment drafted the framework. Several rounds of feedback from the Governing Board, stakeholders, and a formal public comment process were then incorporated into conversations and revisions leading to the version adopted today. In May 2021, Chair Barbour convened a working group of Board members representing various viewpoints to address outstanding issues from other members and stakeholders.

“We wanted the framework to reflect consensus among the Board and constructive stakeholder feedback while maintaining NAEP’s rigor and reputation” said Board Member Dana Boyd, who chairs the Board’s Assessment Development Committee which oversaw the framework development process. “This collaboration produced a version we can all endorse and feel confident maintains NAEP as the gold standard of assessment.”

The approved update will now initiate a comprehensive, multi-year effort that will involve the Governing Board providing guidance to inform the development of NAEP questions, tasks, and reading passages by the National Center for Education Statistics, which administers NAEP. The process will involve numerous rounds of testing and review by Board members, experts, and various stakeholders before the new content is implemented for the 2026 assessments.

“The 2026 Reading Framework will help ensure that NAEP continues to be the trusted, relevant, and useful resource we rely upon,” said Carey Wright, Board member and Mississippi State Superintendent of Education. “Especially with a subject as important as reading that has proven to be a challenge in education, we need NAEP to help us understand and promote student achievement at the state and national levels.”

The full 2026 NAEP Reading Framework and background materials can be [accessed here](#).

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The National Assessment Governing Board is an independent, nonpartisan board whose members include governors, state legislators, local and state school officials, educators, business representatives, and members of the general public. Congress created the 26-member Governing Board in 1988 to set policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress. For more information, visit www.nagb.gov.