



## STRATEGY PLANNING TO ENHANCE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD (NAGB) OUTREACH EFFORTS TO PARENT LEADERS

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### Introduction

The purpose of this White Paper is to assist the National Assessment Governing Board in developing specific strategies to enhance outreach efforts to parent leaders and parent organizations. The paper reviews the outreach planning efforts to date and identifies potential further strategies the Governing Board can employ in its efforts to inform parent leaders and parent groups.

It is expected that the proposed solutions and recommendations in the White Paper will segue into the continuing work of developing tools and strategies that will make NAEP data and resources relevant, understandable, and easily consumable by a variety of parent leaders and groups across the country.

### Assessment in a Context of Urgency

It can be argued that the historical independence enjoyed by individual states over practical aspects of education has served this nation well. It has provided ample scope for local and sectarian interests to prevail politically, and a rich soil for professional practice and research. Almost certainly, the resulting variety of state practices and programs has been a critical factor in why the United States has been unchallenged for its quality of contribution to pedagogy and educational research.

Over the past ten years or so, education reform initiatives have triggered a sea change in thinking about sharing the collective wisdom of states for the collective good of the country. Despite this, and despite the continuing introduction of a common core curriculum, states still remain largely independent in most aspects of assessment. This includes where the “bar” is set to indicate the expected level of achievement at different grades/ages. By 2008, only three states—Massachusetts, South Carolina, and Missouri—had established

world-class proficiency standards in math and reading.<sup>1</sup> Every other state had established a lower proficiency standard, and some states (for example, Georgia and Mississippi) declared most students proficient even when their performance lagged far behind the NAEP standard. The adoption of widely varying standards across the states has effectively made nonsense of the concept of proficiency. If my 4<sup>th</sup> grader has not mastered reading in South Carolina, then clearly she will read no better in Mississippi, yet she might be deemed proficient. The United States is unique in embracing this diverse pattern of setting proficiency standards, and the nation's culture of assessment is challenging for a number of reasons.

Firstly, families have become increasingly more mobile and frequently migrate from state to state and, in doing so, want for parity of achievement standards for their children. The same is true for families moving internationally. The American system of assessment is unusual worldwide and does not easily transfer to other models. The majority of national systems (e.g. Australasia, India, UK, much of Africa) rely heavily on summative examinations at certain ages rather than the cumulative acquisition of credits.<sup>2</sup> This makes it very tough, for example, for an American high school student to transfer to almost any other English speaking system, which is not the case for a similar student transferring between, say Australia and the UK, or between Ireland and Uganda.

Secondly, learning, including metacognition - how we *know* what we know and can do, is much more transparent in the post-internet era. As we gather information on-line and make critical decisions about purchasing, health and welfare, we expect information to be clear. When we learn on line, as increasingly we will in the emerging landscape of 'blended learning', we expect integrity of knowledge and meaningful assessment of mastery. The United States is not alone in needing to develop a clear and comprehensive system of assessment that takes into account, and supports these emerging trends that differ radically from the pedagogy of the traditional classroom.

Finally, and most importantly, as the century unfolds there is a growing urgency to uphold America's economic position in an increasingly competitive world market. Poignantly documented in Friedman's "The World is

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<sup>1</sup> Peterson PE, Hess F. **Few States Set World Class Standards: In fact, most render the notion of proficiency meaningless.** Education Next. 2008;8(3)

<sup>2</sup> OECD



Flat” (4M copies; 37 languages), the failure to keep pace educationally, is suggested even in the titles of landmark federal commissions and actions: *A Nation at Risk* (1983) and *No Child Left Behind* (2001). *A Nation at Risk* turns thirty this year and the urgency of its opening lines will no doubt be remembered and re-quoted:

*If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war.*<sup>3</sup>

## NAEP Background

Since 1969, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has been administered, initially voluntarily, but in step with the urgency described above, increasingly by federal funding requirements. In order to provide the Nation’s Report Card, NAEP has developed over time a carefully designed sampling procedure that allows the assessment to be representative of the geographical, racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity of schools and students across all states. Since NAEP assessments are administered uniformly to all participating students using the same test booklets and identical procedures across the nation, NAEP results have served as a common metric for states and the urban districts that participate in the assessments. Under the direction of the National Assessment Governing Board, NAEP has provided the largest continuing and nationally representative assessment of what American students know and can do in core subjects. This has been the case for over fifty years, and the range and depth of NAEP assessment has continued to increase and continues to do so.

The continuing work of the Governing Board has provided access to data that addresses the concern that as a nation we do not know how well our children achieve at school; in this respect, against the backdrop of state independence, the NAEP tests have earned wide respect over the years for their objectivity and integrity, as well as for providing comparisons across states.

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<sup>3</sup> United States. National Commission on Excellence in Education. **A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform: A Report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education**, United States Department of Education. Washington, D.C.: The Commission, 1983



## Recent NAEP Developments: Parent Leadership Engagement

The National Assessment Governing Board recognizes that parents play a vital part in the education of the nation's children and are important change agents, both in the role they play at home and in their communities and in effecting change nationally.

In March 2011, The Governing Board established an Ad Hoc Committee to:

*present recommendations...the Governing Board and representatives of the NAEP program can take directly, and/or support the efforts of others to increase parent awareness about the urgency to improve the levels of student achievement in the U.S. and the urgency to reduce the size of achievement gaps by race, ethnicity, and income levels, using NAEP data and resources*

One year later, in March 2012, the committee presented their recommendations to the Board and these were ratified at the meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2012. The recommendations specify national, state and local parent leader groups as the target audiences in parent outreach work, and call for the establishment of relationships with such groups and the development of materials and presentations for use by Governing Board members and others in fostering such relationships. There were specific recommendations to develop parent pages on the Governing Board and NAEP websites and to conduct a Parent Summit in late summer/early fall 2012.

Work has taken place on the development of parent pages on the two websites. For example, from January 2013, searching "NAEP" and "Parents" on the web brings you directly to *Information for Parents* and *What you Need to Know*. Similarly, it is now a 'one click' search to arrive at *Parents / NAGB* (parents sensitively lead the title) a page providing information to parents and links to NAEP resources.

In the event, the Parent Summit was not held in 2012, but is now scheduled for January 2014, following release of the NAEP 2013 Mathematics and Reading Report Cards.

At their Board Meeting of May 17, 2013, Governing Board members considered a plan put forward by Reingold, the Board's communication contractor to engage parent leaders in order to communicate messages

that emphasize the overall and critical importance of NAEP to America's education, and to encourage parent leaders to use the NAEP's numerous resources. Reingold identify an example range of parent leader organizations less and more likely to have an impact on educational policy and with differing resources to disseminate information to parents. Reingold suggest identifying a specific set of 50 priority parent leader groups.

The draft plan, the results of the May 2013 discussion and continuing feedback from Board Members, together with further research will inform a final Parent Outreach Plan to be submitted to the full Board in August 2013. This paper was commissioned to assist the Board in developing specific strategies to enhance the Governing Board's outreach efforts by proposing practical ideas which build a sense of urgency about improving achievement and closing achievement gaps.

## Analysis

The language of assessment, especially in the United States, is frequently off-putting not only to parents, but also educational professionals, including teachers. There is good reason for accurate and descriptive terminology in any science, but when such instructions as: *you will want to work with the psychometrically derived scale scores which have been extensively validated*, stray beyond the testing lab they are unhelpful and counterproductive. All of us who have been principals and administrators know of good programs that have foundered on the rocks of prosaic technical guidance and expectation.

Unfortunately, because of the very precise and complex nature of NAEP assessment, NAEP publications are no stranger to such language. In fairness, the audience for the NAEP assessment program has not historically been the uninitiated and indeed, where assessment experts exist within organizations, very good work can be seen, as in the example provided as Appendix A: *A Case Study of The Education Trust and Elmont Memorial High School, New York*. This case study shows how NAEP data in its existing form can be used to great advantage.

This group has an assessment director who can undertake this kind of close analysis of achievement gaps in the NAEP data that can be informative. She writes:

NAEP results allow us to examine national trends in student achievement, providing consistent assessment data biannually and across states. NAEP is an ideal measure for our analyses because the proficiency standards are higher than most state standards, making analysis of advanced performance a true indicator of exemplary achievement. Also, unlike state assessments, NAEP is not tied to state accountability systems, providing little incentive to manipulate scores.

Her analysis shows, for example, that low income students of color can perform at the top, but it is much less likely than for higher income white students. If this is the case, a question that needs to be asked emerges: what needs to be done to increase the achievement status of lower income students? The analysis triggers the kinds of questions that parents should be asking, and often do ask, if given the opportunity, about how their children are doing. Enabling parent leaders in their organizations to engage with NAEP data in this way will be a crucial way to in turn enable their constituencies to ask such question. As one Board member put it in recent discussion: *this objective (informing the right questions to close the achievement gap) should be the “north star” that guides presentations and other efforts to involve parent leaders and other parents.*

Schools and parent leader organizations are taking an increasing interest in family and parent engagement in learning and assessment, and the kind of initiatives recommended to the Board by Reingold is in step with this trend. For example, the number of schools using online data-sharing systems, such as ParentLink and Infinite Campus, has tripled in recent years.<sup>4</sup> However, as Christine Patton of the Harvard Family Research Project warns: “the proliferation of (data) portals has helped many parents gain easier and more ongoing access to their child’s school performance data, (but) families often do not know how to use these systems in meaningful ways to understand what the data truly say about their child’s learning or how they can act on the data to support their child’s progress”<sup>5</sup>. The same warning should be heeded with regards parent leader organizations, many of which do not have the expert assessment resources of The Education Trust, referred to above.

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<sup>4</sup> Shellenbarger S. **When Curious Parents See Math Grades in Real Time**. Wall Street Journal. 2012, October 2. Retrieved from: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444592404578032360255233782.html>

<sup>5</sup> Patten CL. **Making Data Meaningful**. Harvard Family Research Project. FINE Newsletter. 2013. Vol 5(2)

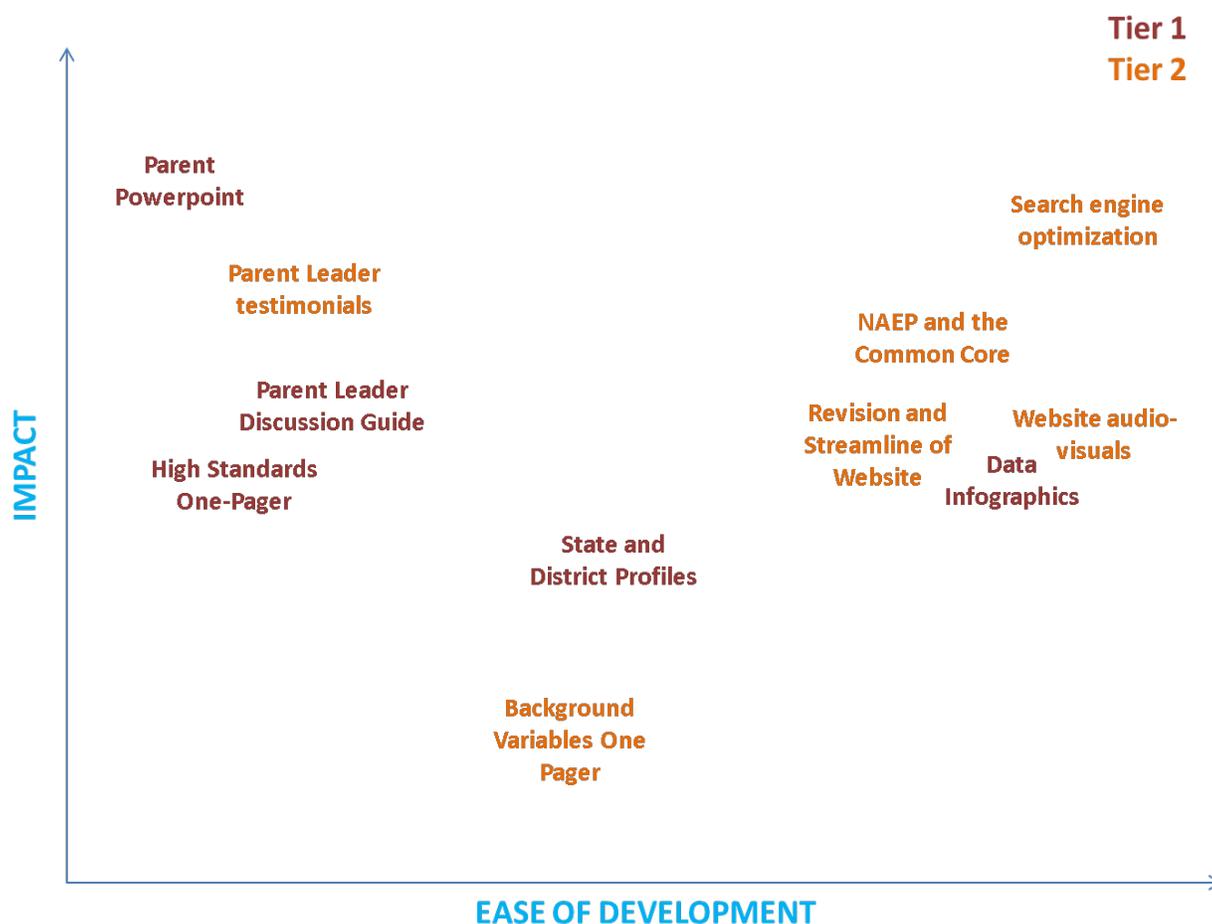
## Solutions

The Reingold plan suggests the Governing Board’s parent leader outreach efforts should clearly convey how the Board believes parent leaders can use NAEP, and be *inspirational*. It is essentially a *high impact communication strategy*. The Executive Summary of the outreach plan proposed by Reingold is attached as an appendix to this paper. This paper endorses the strategy and objectives of the proposed plan as a sound approach to outreach.

### *High Impact Communications Strategy:*

The aim must be to change the public perception of NAEP, so that it is seen as an accessible and important utility by parent leaders and not an impenetrable government database. MacDonald, the fast food chain, used just such a high impact communication strategy – which combined both offline and online engagement strategies - to change public perceptions about their products with great success. A Case Study outlining the MacDonald strategy is included as Appendix 4.

Reingold proposes the execution of a diverse and challenging material development program (see Appendix 6). This White paper endorses the Reingold proposal, but just as a continuum of involvement will be required in order to identify the initial partner parent leader organizations in developing the outreach strategy, so an analysis of impact versus ease of development should be conducted in order to prioritize what is quite a long ‘to do’ list. For example:



The question is: how to engage and *inspire* parent leaders, so that they in turn can inspire their constituencies? Advocates they might be, but parent leaders are often busy people and assessment is arguably perceived as rather a ‘dry’ field of study.

Changing public perceptions about NAEP, so that it shifts from being a respected – if lofty – data repository to a useful tool to propel educational reform and improvement will require a sophisticated digital solution. What follows aims to deepen the understanding of Board members about how this can be achieved.

*Open Data Solution (ODS):*

The Outreach Plan should aim to deliver the content (the data and its relevance to parents), as widely as possible, rather than trying to drive traffic to a particular website. This is an important First Principle. The Governing Board’s objective should not be measured by “hits” on the NAEP website, however much this might

have been enhanced, but rather by the tens of thousands of families made aware of NAEP and its relevance to them through a variety of highly accessible digital media. The achievement of this objective might prove challenging to measure scientifically, but success is likely to be perceptually self-evident. The objective can best be achieved by *Open Data Solution (ODS)* through which a website is established to be the host for all the available assessment data. This information is commonly held in accessible data formats (e.g. Excel, CSV files) and the editorial position taken is that this data is available and free for others to download to use for academic, personal or journalistic study as they wish. Two examples of such data stores are <http://data.london.gov.uk> and <http://www.data.gov>. A home page is included in the appendix for ease of reference.

The philosophical backdrop to this is that a national government is holding itself up to political scrutiny in releasing information in this form. Others can interpret the data and that can sometimes lead to unexpectedly valuable conclusions. An example of how this strategy plays out in practice, Dr. Foster Intelligence, UK, is included as Appendix 5.

An Open Data website managed by the Governing Board in such a way as to encourage proactive engagement from the public would become an important repository for educational and assessment data. The Governing Board might want to go further and aggregate other relevant data that we know has an impact on educational outcomes - income, geography, family size, and so forth. The best use of assessment data is not to simply look at it in isolation, but to encourage people to look at the influences on that data.

The next step should be to create what is known in digital commerce language as a *secondary data market*: to encourage people to take the data and work with it in creative and developmental ways. This market would include not only parent leaders, but also other significant players such as digital journalists and thought leaders.

Two different approaches to the data that such users might take are analysis and the development of products.

### *Analysis:*

What we should aim to see the secondary market develop here would be inspiring interpretation. In order to stimulate the market, the Governing Board might want to consider releasing its own Ted-style talks on what the data tells us, or creating RSA Animate-style presentations (rather than or as well as Power Point and video). The Governing Board might produce visualizations, academic analyses and so on; a stream of products out of the data, pour *encourager les autres*.

### *Development of Products:*

Providing this stimulus is effectively inspiring other secondary marketers who will take the data and create products out of it. The frequently used data-led transport apps that provide travelers with minute by minute updates of actual train and bus movement, independent of the operating transport companies, are an example of such products. In NAEP's case, given the deep and extensive data repository, this could lead to products providing rich information for parents and other enquirers. Clearly, the nature of these products depends on the ingenuity of the initiator but almost all would be the result of weaving the assessment data with other data; this is at the heart of ODS.

Two secondary markets can be identified, an *internal secondary market* of parent leader organizations that represent a constituency of direct interest and an *external secondary market* of technologists, educationalists, data journalists, bloggers and so on whose business it is to deal in open data solutions.

Developing the internal market will require forging partnerships with those organizations with the technical capacity, digital intelligence and insight to make good ground quickly in achieving the objectives of an open data strategy. These are organizations that score highly on the Reingold Parent Engagement Continuum. Some, including some community and faith based groups, have been identified already by Reingold, others include intermediary organizations that work with parent groups, such as Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University and in NYC, the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence in KY, and Families in

Schools in Los Angeles. It would be relatively straightforward to come up with a list of ten to fifteen front-runners representing diverse constituencies.

The external market is that which Reingold identifies in their section “Parent-focused media and other influencers”, with such examples as *ParentNet Unplugged blog*, *Education Week’s K-12 Parents and the Public blog*, *Sacramento Parent Magazine*, *PTO Today Blog*, *Greatschools.net*, and *HuffPost Parents page bloggers*. This market can be stimulated through active engagement, particularly with data journalists and bloggers and the development of an app – along the same lines as the World Bank’s ‘EdStats’– which places all ownership on those seeking to meld data with engagement strategies. In developing strategies to stimulate the external market the Governing Board might consider partnering with a ‘think tank’ or appropriate University Department engaged in open data development and research. This was the key to success for the UK’s Department of Health. They partnered with *Dr Foster Intelligence* to synthesize data and present it in a compelling way to attract media and public interest.

## Conclusion

The recent changes to both the Governing Board (NAGB) and NAEP websites signify the determination of the current Board to reach out to parent leaders, providing them with access to the most valuable national data on student achievement. In parallel with these practical steps, the Governing Board is developing an outreach strategy, informed by sound advice from Reingold and to which this White Paper contributes.

The outreach process should spread NAEP content as widely as possible, rather than trying to drive traffic to the website. This project is successful not when the Governing Board doubles the number of visitors to the website but when the numbers of people who have come into contact with the data runs into the tens of millions. At this stage of product development users may not even know it is the original data because it will have been incorporated into more distinctive products and they may be using it to inform educational debate or they may be using it to inform local decisions on parental choice or on budget.

The trick with measuring success in any such outreach process is in tracking the reach, and this is difficult. The Governing Board will need to aggregate the best uses of the data and the analysis and products that emerge, and the most responsible versions from partner groups will want to register for acknowledgement. Even so, measuring the impact may well be a rather inexact science.

Having an Open Data Policy and a well-delivered Open Data Store will encourage more imaginative analysis and be the catalyst to tech-driven innovation. The secret in that, lies not just in the creation of a well-driven, genuinely open data set, but in creating the right relationships and delivery mechanisms that ensure the data is well used by a secondary market who will create academic, journalistic and tech-driven projects that re-deliver the information across a wide variety of markets and platforms, way beyond what the original site could ever manage. To begin to establish this market it will be necessary to identify a small number of target users from amongst parent leader organizations and data journalists in particular.

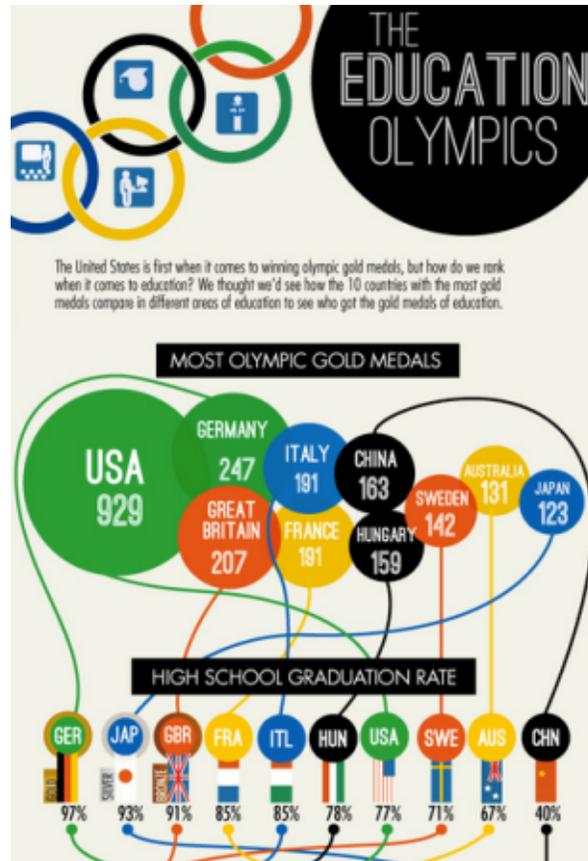
## Recommendations

*Develop the Parent Leader Outreach Strategy proposed by Reingold:*

The suggestions below endorse the Reingold Plan which is a set of specific strategies likely to enhance the Governing Board's outreach efforts to parent leaders and parent organizations. The execution of the Reingold Plan might become overwhelming, particularly for an organization with limited staff personnel resources. It is hoped that these suggestions help to identify priorities. In particular, the following immediate activities are suggested:

- 1) Review and Development of the NAEP and Governing Board websites should continue to eradicate complex terminology and jargon and communicate data imaginatively so as to make information and resources relevant. Key information should be identified and synthesized to make important data understandable and easily consumable by a variety of parent groups and leaders across the country. For example, user-friendly infographics which show variance in results across socio economic and

geographical boundaries might be displayed in a compelling way, as in the example below which compares high school graduation rates with Olympic Gold Medal achievement<sup>6</sup>:

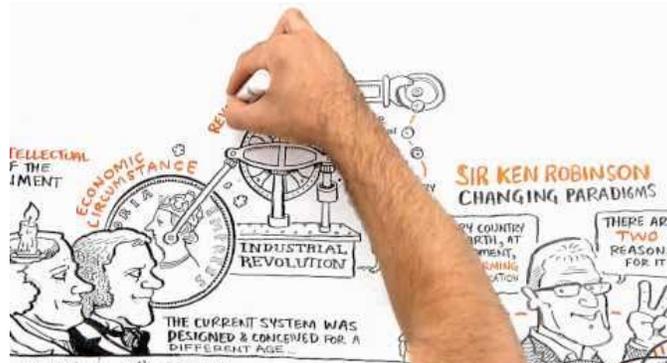


- 2) What applies to the websites also applies to the NAEP Data Explorer and associated Smartphone App. In addition, because smartphones and tablets are so versatile and data responsive, too strong a reliance on text or embedded information that requires several ‘clicks’ is likely to alienate users and become counterproductive. It has long been the intention of Board members to use app technology to get information into the hands of parents. As planning has progressed the Board has come to identify the target group as parent leaders and other catalyst agencies for change. In developing app technology, the needs of these groups should be considered. For example, easily accessible examples of what children know and are able to do at certain ages across national and international boundaries would be useful. It would also be helpful to disaggregate data so that it can be presented in such a way as to allow for

<sup>6</sup> Retrieved from: <http://certificationmap.com/the-education-olympics-infographic/>

comparisons beyond grade and subject. It would be relatively straightforward to draw on TIMMS and PISA data and create visually stimulating, easily accessible and telling information. The development of such an app would be a good way to test out the use of infographics and other technology as well as relationships with early adopters, see below.

- 3) Produce internally-developed public-facing analyses of key data in order to start a public conversation about the data. Two ways forward are suggested: firstly, consider development of TED-style talks and secondly, rather than Power Point develop RSA-Animate style videos. An example frame follows, but Board members should go to the link in the appendix to review RSA-Animate as a working tool, if they are not familiar.<sup>7</sup>



- 4) Confirm the plans for the Parent Summit which will initiate a high profile communications strategy, and might provide a starting point for a number of activities. The Parent Summit should include:
  - A skilled, person-friendly data specialist able to synthesise data and present findings, in a compelling way. In particular attention would be drawn to achievement gaps between US students nationally and international peers, between socio-economic groups and different geographies
  - RSA-animate style videos, infographics and other data communication strategies that show trends
  - School improvement experts to interpret the information mined by the data specialist and present findings; lead Q&A sessions

<sup>7</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.thersa.org/events/rsaaanimate>

- Invite high profile educational and data journalists as well as parent bloggers to spread messages through social media
- Ensure maximum diversity of participation by inviting parent group leaders representing different demographic, geographic and interest groups. With this in mind consideration should be given to whether regional summits, rather than a national summit might be more effective in subsequently developing local networks.

*Develop Open Data Solution Products:*

Use the Reingold idea of creating a continuum of involvement to determine the capacity of parent leader organizations to engage in developing secondary market data products.

Establish relationships with the five most 'ready' parent leaders organizations to begin establishing Open Data Solutions (ODS).

Consideration should be given to partnering with a University Department or public forum think tank in order to mine the rich potential of the existing data most effectively. This models the success of Dr. Foster Intelligence (Case Study below).

## APPENDICES

**Appendix 1:** [http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/Glass\\_Ceiling\\_0.pdf](http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/Glass_Ceiling_0.pdf)

**Appendix 2:** <http://data.london.gov.uk>

**Appendix 3:** [www.rsa-animate.com](http://www.rsa-animate.com)

## Appendix 4: Case Study - McDonald's Nutrition Network, US

In 2012, McDonald's won the Best Use of Digital or Social Media for Media Relations in PR Daily's Digital PR & Social Media Awards for their Nutrition Network campaign, created to demonstrate McDonald's commitment to nutrition and endorse healthy eating choices. In their efforts to promote their campaign locally, McDonald's established the McDonald's New York Metro Nutrition Network which was established to support local organizations fund projects which promoted healthy eating. McDonald's established themselves in this field by:

- Hiring high profile dieticians to communicate the story of McDonald's
- Encouraging 1000s of local organizations to apply for funding
- Organizing 'meet ups' hosted by the dieticians where attendees could sample McDonald's dishes
- Tasking the dieticians with developing content for the brand's website, Facebook and Twitter pages and to push to influential bloggers to share

By targeting audiences through offline, as well as online, channels, McDonald's were able to start a conversation about healthy eating that they had previously been excluded from and dispel the myths surrounding their food.

The results of the campaign were impressive:

- McDonald's was able to achieve nearly 100 media hits with prominent news agencies and bloggers in the New York area
- Grant applications increased by nearly 500 per cent
- Impact in Social Media: There was "a 2,300 per cent increase in social media impressions around McDonald's and nutrition with 99 per cent of them considered 'favorable.'"
- Increase in positive posts about McDonald's from influential bloggers

## Appendix 5: Case Study: Dr. Foster Intelligence, UK

Dr. Foster Intelligence is a joint venture with the UK's Department of Health which uses data and specialist methodologies to identify potential problems in clinical performance and increase transparency in healthcare. By mapping different sets of publicly available data, the Dr. Foster Unit is able to identify certain trends and share these with hospitals, the government and the media. One project involved The Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust which was listed as one of the worst performing trusts in the UK, with higher than average mortality rates recorded at weekends. Dr. Foster worked with the Trust to identify causes of their underperformance so they could put appropriate strategies in place to improve mortality rates. By mapping different sets of data, they were able to detect several trends:

- Certain clinical areas, such as respiratory health, were experiencing more deaths than usual
- Respiratory admissions to the Trust were 10% more severe than the UK national average
- Issue surrounding patient flow and doctor cover placed increased pressure on the Trust at weekends

With the support of Dr. Foster Intelligence, the Trust has been able to put in place various interventions enabling improvement in patient flow and doctor cover and a reduction in the mortality rate. As part of the Trust's efforts to tackle the high percentage of severe respiratory admissions, they are now working to improve community care provisions; a hospital consultant now goes out once a week into community to prevent unnecessary re-admissions.

"There are people walking around today only here because of the performance data published by Dr. Foster and the resulting drive by organizations to improve." - Matthew Swindells, former Interim Chief Information Officer for Health, Department of Health UK.

## Appendix 6



**PARENT LEADER ENGAGEMENT OUTREACH STRATEGY  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
DEVELOPED BY REINGOLD  
JUNE 2013**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Reingold has worked with Governing Board staff and members of the Board's Reporting and Dissemination Committee to develop and refine a parent leader engagement outreach plan for implementation in collaboration with National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) activities. Below is an executive summary of the outreach plan approved by the committee at the May 2013 Board meeting, including a suggested timeline.

### **GOALS**

The Governing Board's parent engagement plan seeks to promote the important role the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) plays in assessing and improving education in America, and instill a concern among parent leaders for increasing the achievement of all children. Parent leader outreach efforts should clearly convey how the Board believes parent leaders can use NAEP, and inspire parent leaders to:

1. Learn about NAEP and the data and resources available.
2. Understand NAEP's applicability to their organization and mission.
3. Access and use NAEP tools to inform their work.
4. Inform and empower parents in their networks to learn about, understand, and use NAEP data.
5. Have discussions and ask questions about improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps.

### **AUDIENCE AND PRIORITY OUTREACH TARGETS**

Parent leaders are defined as organizations and individuals whose work and interests involve education and parents, and that see the connection between system performance and the potential for impact on individual students.

The parent leader audience has been segmented into these five subgroups: general education parent leaders; K-12 education parent leaders; minority and underrepresented population parent leaders; community parent leaders; and parent-focused media and online influencers.

Initial outreach efforts will focus on 50 priority parent leader groups across the parent leader subgroups. It will be important to create a targeted strategy for engaging these 50 groups with customized approaches, recognizing that they have varying levels of knowledge of NAEP.

Steps for selecting the parent leader target audience include:

- Reviewing the Board’s current stakeholder database to make sure that relevant individuals and groups within the subgroups are included.
- Determining the 50 parent leader groups that will be the focus of initial efforts.
- Analyzing the 50 groups and leaders to identify how familiar they are with NAEP, what communications assets they have, and what channels and activities they use to communicate to their networks.
- Developing a relationship map that identifies connections of Board members, Board alumni, and other NAEP champions to the 50 groups.

## **OUTREACH STRATEGIES**

Below are Reingold’s recommended strategies to engage the parent leader audience. This integrated approach uses traditional channels, such as in-person events and media relations, as well as outreach through new media channels, including online and social media.

### **I. Develop a Parent Leader Toolkit and Supporting Materials**

Relevant, user-friendly materials will be fundamental to the success of the outreach plan, especially those that have greatest use and applicability across all parent leader audiences and allow parent leaders to speak knowledgeably about NAEP. These three items will be the primary components of the parent leader toolkit:

- **NAEP 101 video.** This will be an introductory video to NAEP. It has become clear through Board outreach events and meetings with education groups that most leaders in education and the community do not know enough about NAEP to allow them to connect their efforts with its data and resources.
- **Parent presentation.** A PowerPoint presentation has been used occasionally at Governing Board events and conferences. This important tool must be updated to include the Board’s core messages for parent leaders and illustrate how NAEP materials can help parent leaders engage their networks and advance their goals.
- **Parent leader discussion guide.** Complementing the NAEP 101 video and the presentation, the discussion guide will assist parent leaders in their conversations about improving student achievement for all children. Discussion points will support their efforts with policymakers and administrators to understand how their school system or state compares with others nationwide, and to discuss what is being done to increase academic rigor and achievement for all students.

As the outreach effort grows, more materials will be developed to better demonstrate NAEP’s relevance and usefulness for each parent leader audience. Materials will be customizable and/or downloadable as needed and include:

- **State and district profiles.** These will be parent leader-friendly versions of the NAEP state and Trial Urban District Assessment district profiles, with a focus on achievement-level data and key background variable findings. They also will include brief explanations of what the data show, including trend lines.
- **Data infographics.** NAEP data will be shaped into infographics that are visually appealing and engaging to parent leaders.
- **Parent leader testimonials.** Stories from parent leaders who have used NAEP data as resources to address education issues will be made into a video or a PDF document for print distribution.
- **Background variables one-pager.** This will include information on the wealth of background variables collected with each NAEP assessment, and how parent leaders can access and use these data in their work.
- **NAEP and the Common Core.** Most parent leaders may be more familiar with the Common Core State Standards than with NAEP and have questions about the role of each. The NAEP 101 video may address this, but it will help to also address the differences in a frequently asked questions format available for parent leaders.

## II. Expand Integrated Web Presence and Online Engagement With Parent Leaders

Effective websites are a combination of strong content, strategic design, and online outreach. The outreach strategies will make the Governing Board's website a primary destination for parent leaders, who may also visit it through search engines, word of mouth, or other channels, and so it is critical that the Web pages are user-friendly and provide relevant materials. The easier it is for content to be consumed and shared, the more online reach and visibility the parent engagement effort will have. Steps to optimize the parent leader online presence include:

- **Prioritizing content on parent Web pages.** Revisit the design and structure of the parent pages to make it easy to use, access key information, and focus on reinforcing messages tailored for this audience.
- **Performing search engine optimization to capitalize on search terms parent leaders use.** Determine priority keywords the Governing Board can use to make its parent pages show up higher and more often in search engines, and create or refine website content to help raise the website's ranking in search engine results.
- **Sharing NAEP digital content with targeted parent leader groups.** Provide timely and relevant NAEP content to the 50 priority parent leader groups in a variety of formats, such as social media posts, a website paragraph, a newsletter blurb, infographics, or graphs from the state or district profiles.
- **Initiating topics on discussion forums where parent leaders share best practices.** Provide content to parent-focused sites, and work with the site managers to promote topics, questions, or conversations on some of the many other popular parent sites.
- **Expanding and promoting the NAEP Results app.** The NAEP Results app was published on the iTunes store in 2012, allowing mobile users to dive into NAEP data via mobile device. In addition to promoting the app, the Board can consider working with NCES to integrate content and functionality that is specifically tailored to parent leaders.

## III. Expand Thought Leadership Through Partnerships, Events, and the Media

The Governing Board can raise awareness of NAEP and the Board's role in education through consistent efforts to engage key influencers. The Board has successfully established relationships with nationally recognized parent-focused organizations, including the National PTA, and can continue to use new and existing partnerships and publications to influence new audiences in a strategic way.

- **Speak at education-related conferences.** Representatives of the Board can present at gatherings such as conferences of parent, education, and civil rights organizations.
- **Co-sponsor panels, forums, or workshops.** The Board can work with groups like Achieve or Council of the Great City Schools to host conversations about NAEP data releases and other NAEP efforts of interest to parent leaders.
- **Develop editorial pieces for parent leaders, such as articles to appear in a newsletter or blog for parent leaders.** Engage parent leaders with regularly updated, timely communications that tie together the day's headlines about education with NAEP findings, with links back to the parent pages of the website.
- **Pitch parent-focused articles or newsletters to education journalists or publications.** Use the on-going relationships the Board has developed with the media to distribute targeted, parent-focused messages and encourage them to publish, post, and share content tailored for the parent leader audience.