

National Assessment Governing Board

Reporting and Dissemination Committee

Report of August 6, 2010

Attendees: Committee Members – David Gordon (chair), Mary Frances Taymans (vice chair), David Alukonis, Anitere Flores, Warren Smith, Leticia Van de Putte, Eileen Weiser, and Eric Wearne (representing Governor Sonny Perdue). NAGB Staff – Executive Director Cornelia Orr, Larry Feinberg, and Stephaan Harris. NCES – Associate Commissioner Peggy Carr, Gina Broxterman, Samantha Burg, Jamie Deaton, Angela Glymph, Arnold Goldstein, Holly Spurlock, Grady Wilburn, and Brenda Wolff. AIR – Fran Stancavage. CRP – Jasmine Fletcher and Carina John. ETS – Amy Dresher, David Freund, and Greg Vafis. HagerSharp – Lisa Clarke and Debra Silimeo. HumRRO – Steve Sellman. NESSI – Cadille Hemphill. Oklahoma Business and Education Coalition – Phyllis Hudecki. Reingold – Amy Buckley, Kevin Miller, and Alonza Robertson. Westat – Chris Averett and Marcie Hickman. *Education Week* – Catherine Gewertz.

1. Review of NAEP TUDA Reading 2009 Release

Amy Buckley, of Reingold, Inc., the Board’s communications contractor, gave a brief overview of media coverage of the release in Atlanta on May 20, 2010 of the NAEP 2009 Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) in Reading. The event incorporated two firsts for a Governing Board release: a live satellite video feed—of Chancellor Joel Klein, a panelist, from New York City, and an interactive Q&A in which panelists took questions via e-mail from those watching online. Other panel members, who spoke in Atlanta, were Stuart Kerachsky, Deputy Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES); David Gordon, Chairman of the Reporting and Dissemination Committee and Superintendent of Schools in Sacramento, CA; and Michael Casserly, Executive Director of the Council of the Great City Schools.

Ms. Buckley said the coverage was good with placement in such outlets as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. There were newspaper articles in all 18 TUDA cities assessed with a total of more than 64 articles, garnering 16.5 million print impressions. There was no national broadcast coverage, as the report was treated as a local news story. Ms. Buckley said most coverage focused on increases and decreases in district-wide scores, without demographic breakdowns or other detail. NAEP was cast consistently as a highly respected assessment.

Ms. Buckley also outlined the report’s online presence. It drew 344 comments on the online version of the *Detroit Free-Press*, and 162,000 followers through Twitter alerts. Chairman Gordon asked for an example of a common “tweet.” Ms. Buckley responded that many made reference to “Scores Up” or “Scores Down” with a link to the results. Committee member Leticia Van de Putte said she has 17,000 followers on Twitter. The tweet she sent about the report elicited about 500 comments. Ms. Van de Putte said Twitter is a powerful tool used by many policymakers, and that it should also be harnessed for the Board’s work.

2. NAEP and NAGB Communications Plan

Stephaan Harris, of the NAGB staff, introduced Ms. Buckley to present the NAGB and NAEP communications plan, for which staff would solicit comments from Committee members to finalize for approval at the November 2010 meeting.

Ms. Buckley said the overarching goal of the plan is to get behind the scores and beyond the releases to promote NAGB and NAEP. She said the plan's main objectives were to enhance and elevate the NAEP brand as the "gold standard" of academic assessment, and to strengthen the relevance of NAEP data and resources to existing and new audiences.

Ms. Buckley highlighted several strategies recommended in the plan, including developing partnerships with stakeholders and improving collaboration between NAGB, NCES, and NCES contractors involved in outreach and communications for NAEP. Chairman Gordon thought the latter was already happening, but Executive Director Cornelia Orr said the plan would formalize this process. But because there is a division of responsibility for NAEP releases between NAGB and NCES, Chairman Gordon asked about how the two groups come together in advance to promote a release. Vice Chair Mary Frances Taymans said communication is often the toughest issue involving releases because things often happen so quickly.

Larry Feinberg, of the NAGB staff, and Arnold Goldstein, of NCES, expressed concern that because NAEP's credibility is based on its reputation for objectivity, a few of the proposed strategies could compromise that by placing the Board and the program in an advocacy role. Ms. Van de Putte said NAEP can be presented in ways that do not advocate legislation, for example, but instead inform issues such as education funding that many can relate to. Ms. Buckley said the "call to action" in the plan is not advocacy but instead refers to educating the audience and providing content for dialogue and decisions made by those who follow NAEP scores.

Ms. Buckley said that NAGB's designation of "general public" as its primary audience makes communication strategies difficult since it is so broad. She said in response the plan designates two groups of audiences – A (policymakers, higher education and advocacy groups, and employers) and B (parents, teachers, and general public). The plan's first major strategy calls for partnering with these audiences in outreach plans such as workshops at the PTA or monthly webinars on NAEP data.

The plan's second strategy calls for enhancing media outreach by tapping Board member expertise, creating a more media-friendly website with multimedia content, and drafting op-ed commentaries on behalf of Board members. Chairman Gordon said the op-ed strategy should be employed for all interested members immediately. He said the communications plan does not have to be finalized to pursue this.

Citing the success of op-eds by Governor Ronnie Musgrove, chair of the NAEP 12th Grade Preparedness Commission, Mr. Gordon said that an individualized op-ed done for all 25 members could have penetrated 25 regional media markets. Ms. Weiser said she is running for her state's Board of Education and realized she had no media presence, noting that the commission's media coverage makes Governor Musgrove's role clear. Alonza Robertson, of

Reingold, said op-ed drafts for Board members on the issue of preparedness are being developed for the third week of August. Chairman Gordon said that timeline was too slow as having copy now would take advantage of the media interest in education at back-to-school time.

Vice Chair Taymans said that op-eds should be data-driven rather than pure commentary. Mr. Feinberg said that, in general, the more issues that NAEP focuses on through specific reports, the more audiences the Board can reach. He cited the upcoming White-Hispanic gap report as a focused study that could attract substantial attention.

Ms. Buckley said the third strategy in the plan involves using social media, such as blogs and networks like Facebook and Twitter, for further outreach. The fourth strategy is changing the format of our Report Card release events from a traditional press conference to an online, webinar form. Ms. Buckley said the benefits of a webinar include lower costs and the ability to focus resources on content and message as opposed to logistics. The fifth strategy involves enhancing the Board website to better target audience groups.

Vice Chair Taymans asked how can you measure report fatigue when NAEP is reaching various audiences. Mr. Robertson said the Board could combat that fatigue in part by creating original content outside of reports. Ms. Weiser said the Board faces the dilemma of keeping NAEP data pure yet promoting it to audiences in various forms. Ms. Van de Putte said using just facts can make for good promotion, citing an idea of perhaps using a different fact or graph of the day for the Board website to draw attention to the data.

Eric Wearne said he liked the idea of a webinar as the main format for Report Card releases. Member Anitere Flores said the plan had many good ideas but expressed concern about how they should be prioritized and how staff could realistically accomplish all of the objectives. Member Warren Smith said the plan has many innovative ideas but in keeping with NAGB Chairman David Driscoll's mandate to think outside of the box, he said the Board should do what it can to advocate anything that would help to improve student academic performance. He said this kind of advocacy would not endanger the reputation of NAEP and the Board.

Committee member David Alukonis said the plan identifies too many audiences, and that outreach needs to be more targeted to be effective. He said that at the local level, NAEP often does not resonate unless you are in a TUDA district. Mr. Alukonis said since many education decisions are being made by state legislatures, rather than school chiefs, state lawmakers should be more of a priority audience. He added that much of the general audience can be reached through media stories. Vice Chair Taymans said that for report releases, the Board could perhaps partner with groups that can arrange a webinar on NAEP data for their members. Ms. Buckley said something like this can be executed as part of the plan and added that many groups are sent advisories about major NAEP releases.

Chairman Gordon said he was concerned about whether the NAEP State Coordinator program was cost-effective in conducting outreach and publicity for NAEP. In his seven years on the Board, he said didn't even know who the coordinator for his state was. Mr. Smith said he has had a similar experience but eventually connected with his state coordinator, who will work with Mr. Smith to coordinate presentations and answer questions for colleagues. Ms. Orr said that in

her involvement with the CCSSO Policy Task Force, she found many of its members depended on state coordinators for resources and information. She said the task force liked the Reingold plan and wanted to see less emphasis on outreach to parents and more emphasis on business outreach. She said the task force suggested an eventual goal of having a Data Explorer app for iPhones. Mr. Gordon said there seemed to be Committee support for webinar releases, but he said in cases of TUDA reports, there should still be the option of holding a live event in a city that is doing well, which could create a considerable draw for coverage and participation.

The Committee felt the communications plan was good overall and expressed support for moving ahead, although some revisions are needed to prioritize audiences and actions and focus more clearly on key activities.

3. Projected Schedule for Future NAEP Reports and Related Releases

Arnold Goldstein, of NCES, presented the tentative schedule for NAEP releases during the coming year. There are three major releases of 2009 Report Cards expected late in the fall and early winter: Grade 12 Reading and Math in November; Science in grades 4, 8, and 12 in December; and Science TUDA in January 2011. The Board is responsible for conducting all three of these initial releases.

Another report inadvertently was left off the list, the NAEP 2009 High School Transcript Study. Mr. Goldstein said the transcript report, providing data on the courses students take in high school and relating that to mathematics and science achievement, would probably be ready for a release conducted by the Board in the winter of 2011.

In November 2010 an analytical report would be ready, which is not classified as an initial release, about the pattern of achievement gaps between Hispanic and white students. This report is similar to one on the achievement gaps between black and white students issued about a year ago. The release of that report was accompanied by a very lively seminar, and the report attracted a great deal of public attention. Mr. Goldstein said NCES is thinking about a similar event for the Hispanic-white achievement gap study and would work with the Governing Board in making arrangements. A Governing Board member might be a speaker at the seminar.

Mr. Goldstein listed three other reports that may be of considerable interest:

- (1) The content of high school mathematics courses which have the same title, such as Algebra 1 or Geometry, but may be very different depending on the race/ethnicity of the students or the type of community or region of the country. The report is based on materials collected as part of the NAEP High School Transcript Study of 2005, but NCES feels it is still very pertinent and interesting.
- (2) The hands-on tasks and interactive computer tasks in the NAEP 2009 Science assessment.

- (3) The third volume of the National Indian Education Study, which reports on open-ended responses to background questions on the knowledge and use made of Native American history and culture by Native American students and their teachers and schools.

Mr. Goldstein agreed with Larry Feinberg, of the Governing Board staff, that all three of these reports should be classified as initial releases, for which the Board would decide when and how the release should be conducted. Mr. Goldstein said the three reports should be ready during spring 2011.

4. Update on Mega-States Report

Mr. Goldstein gave an update on development of the Mega-States report, which the Board authorized in November 2009. He said the report should be ready in late winter of 2011 after all national, state, and TUDA results for 2009 are made public.

The report will provide comparisons between the five largest states—California, Texas, Florida, New York, and Illinois. As the Board was informed earlier, the report will mainly be on the web with a six- to eight-page printed highlights summary. Mr. Goldstein showed mock-ups of how some of the comparisons might be made. Because it is web-based, an enormous number of comparisons can easily be made not only on achievement trends, but also on demographics and contextual factors, such as classroom instructional activities and curriculum policy.

The report will be different than any state-level report previously issued by NAEP because it will cover all subjects across the curriculum that have been assessed at the state level—reading, mathematics, science, and writing.

Member Leticia Van de Putte suggested that data should be included on changes in total enrollment in each state as well as on shifts in the racial/ethnic composition of the students enrolled. The Committee members were impressed with the great deal of work that has been done in developing the Mega-States report.

5. ACTION ITEM: Release Plan for NAEP 12th Grade Reading and Mathematics

Mr. Harris introduced the draft plan for release of the NAEP 2009 Report Card in 12th Grade Reading and Mathematics, which would be ready for release in mid-November 2010. The report will include both national data and results for 11 states that took part in the first-ever state-level pilot of 12th grade NAEP.

Despite the Committee consensus in discussing the communications plan to support webinar releases for future Report Cards, Chairman Gordon suggested conducting a traditional live in-person press conference for the 12th grade report with a webinar or webcast component. He said a hybrid would be best at this release because it has a great possibility for exposure and can tie in to the Board's preparedness efforts and research. He added that the release should be held in conjunction with the November 2010 Board meeting, starting Thursday, November 18, in

Washington, DC, which would permit greater participation by Board members. Ms. Weiser said that because the communications plan suggests some significant changes, making 12th Grade Reading and Mathematics a live event may be best to provide time for the transition.

After further discussion, the Committee recommended that the Governing Board approve the release plan the NAEP 12th Grade Reading and Mathematics Report Card, as appended in Attachment A to this report.

6. Reporting on Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners in NAEP 2011

Mr. Goldstein presented several options that NCES is considering for reporting on how well states and districts have met the inclusion goals established by the Board in the new NAEP policy on students with disabilities (SD) and English-language learners (ELL). The policy was adopted in March 2010. Various parts of it will be implemented over the next few years.

Two specific provisions deal with reporting:

- “The proportion of all students excluded from any NAEP sample should not exceed 5 percent. Samples falling below this goal shall be prominently designated in reports as not attaining the desired inclusion rate of 95 percent.”
- “Among students classified as either ELL or SD a goal of 85 percent inclusion shall be established. National, state, and district samples falling below this goal shall be identified in NAEP reporting.”

For the 95 percent overall inclusion goal, Mr. Goldstein said NCES was considering placing a box near the front of every report, which states the Board goal but does not list the jurisdictions that had not met it.

For the 85 percent inclusion goal for SD and ELL students, he presented two alternatives—(1) a sentence stating the goal in the footnote section under each table in the appendix that presents exclusion and accommodation data, and (2) a small footnote number at the top of the excluded column in each table with exclusion data, referring readers to the statement of policy in the footnote.

Mr. Goldstein said NCES did not want to designate specific states in the 2011 reports because the states would not have enough time to get ready for the new policy. Chairman Gordon said states and districts with high exclusion rates had frequently been cited by critics and the press even before the Board adopted the policy. Mr. Feinberg noted that the policy had been based on recommendations by two expert panels. He said the Board’s Ad Hoc Committee on SD and ELL students had put in the specific phrase “prominently designated” about how to report whether jurisdictions had met the overall inclusion goal of 95 percent of selected students. He said the phrase had been suggested by member Steven Paine, who is the state school superintendent for West Virginia and president of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

Ms. Van de Putte said a footnote would be hard to read, and suggested that color shading be used to show clearly which jurisdictions had met the goals and which had not. She said state reporting on their own accountability tests makes it very clear which schools and districts had met inclusion goals. She said clarity is important. Mr. Gordon said the highlighting should emphasize the jurisdictions that had met inclusion goals.

Mr. Goldstein noted that in 2009 almost all states and districts had met the goal of including at least 95 percent of all students selected for NAEP samples, but that most did not meet the goal of including 85 percent the students classified as SD or ELL. A much higher proportion met that goal for ELL than for SD.

After further discussion, Committee members indicated that they favor easy-to read shading rather than footnotes with a positive emphasis on inclusion.

7. Other Topics

Two topics on the meeting agenda, not addressed because of insufficient time, will be discussed at the November 2010 meeting of the Committee: (1) increasing the visibility of NAEP and the Governing Board, and (2) background questions with specific attention to those enabling NAEP to report on socio-economic status.

I certify the accuracy of these minutes.



David W. Gordon, Chairman

August 17, 2010

Date

**NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD
RELEASE PLAN FOR NAEP GRADE 12
READING AND MATHEMATICS 2009 REPORT**

**The Nation's Report Card in Grade 12 Reading and Mathematics
2009**

The Nation's Report Card in Grade 12 Reading and Mathematics 2009 will be released in November 2010 at an appropriate venue. The format of the event will be a press conference, accompanied by a webinar, allowing others across the country to listen-in and ask questions. The event will include a data presentation by the Commissioner of Education Statistics, with comments and moderation by members of the National Assessment Governing Board and additional experts in reading and mathematics. Full accompanying data will be posted on the Internet at the scheduled time of release.

This Report Card presents national results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments in reading and mathematics at grade 12, which were given to a nationally representative sample of 52,000 students in reading, and 49,000 students in math in 2009. The report will also include results for 11 states – Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, South Dakota, and West Virginia – that volunteered to participate as part of the 12th grade pilot. The reporting of results will include scale scores and achievement levels, and results will be disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, socio-economic factors (income level), and geographical location.

DATE AND LOCATION

The release event for the media and the public will occur in November 2010, if possible in conjunction with the scheduled Board meeting. The exact date and location will be determined by the Chairman of the Reporting and Dissemination Committee, in accordance with Governing Board policy, following acceptance of the final report.

EVENT FORMAT

- Introductions and opening statement by a member of the National Assessment Governing Board
- Data presentation by the Commissioner of Education Statistics
- Comments by Governing Board members
- Comments from reading and mathematics experts

- Questions from members of the press and then the general audience, including those submitting questions electronically
- Program will last approximately 60 minutes
- Event will be webcast over the Internet live

EMBARGOED ACTIVITIES BEFORE RELEASE

In the days preceding the release, the Governing Board and NCES will offer embargoed briefings to U.S. Congressional staff and to representatives of governors, as well as representatives from state education agencies. The briefings will be conducted both in-person in Washington, DC and via teleconference if necessary.

REPORT RELEASE

The Commissioner of Education Statistics will publicly release the report at <http://nationsreportcard.gov> at the scheduled time of the release event. Printed copies will be available at the press conference, along with panelists' statements and a Governing Board press release. An interactive version of the release, complete with the statements as well as links to audio and video material related to the event and publications related to the report, will be posted on the Board's website at www.nagb.org.

ACTIVITIES AFTER THE RELEASE

The Governing Board's communications contractor, Reingold-Ogilvy, will coordinate a national conference call after the release event for journalists not in the Washington, DC area to allow them to ask questions and receive additional information.

A briefing may be held on a subsequent date for representatives of Washington-based education and policy organizations and other relevant groups interested in reading and mathematics assessment.