

# **National Assessment Governing Board**

## **Reporting and Dissemination Committee**

### **Report for August 5, 2011**

**Attendees:** Committee Members – David Gordon (chair), Eileen Weiser (vice chair), David Alukonis, Anitere Flores, Tom Luna, Sonny Perdue, and Mary Frances Taymans; NAGB Staff – Larry Feinberg and Stephaan Harris; NCES – Commissioner Jack Buckley, Gina Broxterman, James Deaton, Angela Glymph, Arnold Goldstein, Steve Gorman, Bill Ward and Brenda Wolff; AIR – Fran Stancavage; ETS – Amy Drescher, Dave Freund and Patrick Kyllonen; HagerSharp – Lisa Jacques and Debra Silimeo; HumRRO – Steve Sellman; National PTA – Erin Hart; NESSI – Kim Gattis and Cadille Hemphill; Reingold – Amy Buckley; Westat – Chris Averett and Dianne Walsh; Others – Alan Ginsburg and Jay Noell (both retired from Policy and Program Studies Service, U.S. Department of Education).

#### **1. Review of Recent NAEP Releases: U.S. History, Hispanic-White Achievement Gaps, and Geography**

Stephaan Harris, of the NAGB staff, reviewed the release of the three reports issued since the last Board meeting in May 2011: the NAEP 2009 U.S. History Report Card, Hispanic-White Achievement Gaps, and the NAEP 2009 Geography Report Card. The U.S. History report was released via webinar in May in program that included Board members Steven Paine and David Gordon; NCES Commissioner Jack Buckley; and professor and education historian Diane Ravitch, a former Board member.

The Hispanic-White Gaps report was released in June at the annual conference of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) in San Antonio. The release featured Board members Anitere Flores and Leticia Van de Putte, both NALEO members, along with Commissioner Buckley in a panel discussion at the conference. The Geography report was released in July via a webinar that featured Commissioner Buckley, Board member Shannon Garrison, and professor and geography expert Roger Downs.

Mr. Harris said that instead of separate briefings for Senate and House staff for each report, which had been the practice in the past, the Board organized a combined briefing that explored the policy implications of the three NAEP social studies reports—Civics, U.S. History, and Geography. The briefing was held on the day after the Geography release and included a summary overview by Commissioner Buckley and commentary by an expert in each subject. Twenty-six congressional staff members attended, a much larger turn-out than at previous programs on Capitol Hill. Mr. Harris said similar joint or theme briefings may be held in the future.

Lisa Jacques, of Hager Sharp, said the release of the Hispanic-White Gaps Report, organized by NCES, drew about 60 attendees for the NALEO conference panel, which made it

standing-room only event. Ms. Jacques said that there was an embargoed media call two days before the release. She said the report received considerable media coverage, including stories by the *Associated Press* and *Education Week*.

Amy Buckley, of Reingold, said the U.S. History Report Card received a record 47.4 million daily print and broadcast impressions and mentions, including the *New York Times*. The Geography Report Card received 20.3 million print and broadcast impressions, including lengthy articles in the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Christian Science Monitor*. Ms. Buckley said support and interest was very strong from subject-matter groups. Many more persons logged-on to the online releases than attended the in-person events.

Committee member David Alukonis, noting Ms. Buckley's comparison of attendance and coverage across the last several releases, requested more information on trends in the coverage of NAEP reports over time in future presentations. Chairman Gordon said news coverage of the social studies reports brings up one area that NAEP should consider reporting more prominently in the future: the stories do not include information on how much or how little social studies is taught to students taking the tests. As a result, the media often seem to blame the students for poor results but fail to look at how much instruction the students have had.

## **2. Projected Schedule for Future NAEP Reports and Related Releases**

Arnold Goldstein, of NCES, discussed NAEP-related reports scheduled for the remainder of 2011. These include the State Mapping Study, being released by NCES on August 10, and the Mega-States Report and 2005 Mathematics Course Content Analysis, both planned for release in September. Later in the fall, there will be two combined releases of major reports—the NAEP 2011 Mathematics and Reading Report Cards for the nation and the states in October, and the NAEP 2011 Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) reports in Mathematics and Reading, which will be ready for November release. The report 2009 Science Hands-on Tasks and Interactive Computer Tasks will also be ready for fall release. Committee member Anitere Flores said the release of the Mega-States report will be an opportunity to discuss what different states have done to improve educational achievement and to start a conversation on best practices.

Committee member Mary Frances Taymans asked if reports can be modified to target specific audience and make results more relevant to their interests and concerns. Commissioner Buckley said there would be no time to do that this fall because of the quick succession of major reports set for release. However, Brenda Wolff, of NCES, said that under the new NAEP contracts to be issued in 2013 funds might be budgeted to create different versions of reports for target audiences. Mr. Harris pointed out that after major NAEP releases, there often is at least one stakeholder event to try to reach specific audiences.

### **3. Release Plans for NAEP Reports**

Mr. Harris presented release plans prepared by Board staff for two combined releases of NAEP reports—one in October for the 2011 Mathematics and Reading Report Cards with national and state results, the other in November for the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) 2011 Report Cards in Mathematics and Reading. For each release the proposed plan permitted a decision to be made later whether there would be an in-person release event or a release solely via the Internet. Both plans provided for a pre-release briefing for congressional staff and post-release events for stakeholder groups and interested members of the public.

Vice Chair Weiser proposed that the NAEP 2011 Report Cards in Mathematics and Reading be released through a webinar via the Internet. She proposed that the NAEP 2011 TUDA Reports Cards in Mathematics and Reading be released at an in-person event in a city that participated in the assessment. The event would be transmitted live over the Internet. Committee member Taymans seconded the motion.

**ACTION: After further discussion, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Governing Board approve release plans for the NAEP 2011 Reading and Mathematics Report Cards and the NAEP 2011 Reading and Mathematics reports for the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA), as appended in Attachments A and B to this report.**

### **4. Embargo Guidelines for NAEP Releases**

The Committee reviewed a set of guidelines, prepared by Governing Board staff, on granting embargoed access to NAEP reports to members of the news media prior to the public release. The guidelines were developed in consultation with NCES, and incorporate Committee views on a previous draft that was discussed at the meeting in May 2011.

Mr. Harris said the guidelines were prompted by major changes in the news business during the past few years with the decline of newspapers, magazines, and television and radio news and the rise of news websites and bloggers on the Internet. The key principle behind the guidelines is that it is in NAEP's interest to grant advance access to its reports to give journalists the time to write better, fuller, more accurate stories. At some point the Board may want to grant advance access to stakeholder organizations, such as teacher unions, or advocacy groups and think-tanks. But it is very difficult to do that without being accused of bias or, on the other hand, giving reports to everyone that requests them, and not having a scheduled release at all.

The proposed embargo guidelines for news media make no distinction among the vehicles used for transmitting the news. They apply equally to print, broadcast, and online media. But they provide that embargoed pre-release access will only be granted to an editor, reporter, columnist, or blogger affiliated with a news organization. The second category that would receive access is freelance reporters working for a news organization, who may be asked to provide documentation of their assignment.

Several Committee members asked how staff would define a news organization as opposed to an advocacy group. Larry Feinberg, of the Board staff, acknowledged that the lines were not always clear but said that a publication or blog that is an offshoot of a policy group or constituency organization, such the professional association of mathematics teachers, would not be regarded as a news organization.

Gov. Sonny Purdue said staff should be very conservative in defining a news organization to avoid having interest groups shape the initial coverage of NAEP results and the conversation around their release. NCES Commissioner Jack Buckley said he felt it is important to be cautious in order to avoid spreading data widely before an official release.

**The Committee endorsed the embargo guidelines for implementation by the Executive Director and Board staff as part of the initial public release of NAEP reports. These will be administrative guidelines, not an official policy, and do not require action by the full Governing Board.**

## **5. New Directions for NAEP Background Questions**

The Committee discussed possible new directions for NAEP background questions, including a major technical change in test administration and recommendations for additional topics and issues on which NAEP could report.

The technical change, called spiraling, was explained to the Committee by Jamie Deaton, of NCES. It would permit different blocks of questions to be asked of different samples of students, similar to the way in which the cognitive items on NAEP are arranged. At present all students sampled in a particular subject and grade are asked the same background items, which greatly restricts the number of questions and topics that can be covered because of limitations on the time available for NAEP. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) intends to implement the spiraling arrangement in its background questionnaires next year. If adopted by NAEP, it would allow more questions to be asked without expanding the time required of any student.

A similar principle was part of the *Background Information Framework for the National Assessment*, adopted by the Board in 2003, which called for asking “various groups of questions to various samples of students at various times.” The spiraling technique might also be applied to the teachers and schools in the NAEP samples, but the number of possible variations would be more limited because the number of cases involved is much less than the number of students.

The Committee discussed suggestions by the Board’s Business Policy Task Force on possible topics for new background questionnaires and the reports that might be based on them. These include reporting information on students’ use of time out-of-school, such as work, volunteering, after-school lessons, and scouting; participation in extra-curricular activities, such as band, arts, theater productions, student journalism, and debate; parental

influences, such as conversations about post-secondary interests or visits to museums or zoos; and a specific questionnaire for use in TUDA districts. The Task Force suggested that NAEP might consider using some of the PISA background questions.

Committee members expressed interest in many of the task force ideas.

Alan Ginsburg, who recently retired after many years as Director of Policy and Program Studies at the U.S. Department of Education, discussed the suggestions in his paper, entitled, “NAEP Background Variables: An Underutilized Resource,” which was included in the briefing book. Jay Noell, co-author of the paper also attended the Committee meeting.

Ginsburg said NAEP now makes almost no use of the background questions in its reports because of concerns that causation would improperly be implied. But he said it would be justifiable and valuable to report descriptive data on class size or teacher preparation for different demographic groups of students or those at different levels of achievement. He said this information would be of great interest to the public and would prompt important questions.

He said using some background questions from international assessments, such as TIMSS and PISA, would allow the states and districts in NAEP to make international comparisons to background factors along with having the achievement benchmarks that the TIMSS-NAEP linking study is meant to provide. He noted that the analytic reports by PISA comparing different national school systems had gained considerable public attention.

Commissioner Buckley agreed that descriptive information should be in NAEP reports but he said it should not be done in a way that suggests causation. He said some of the causal analysis in PISA reports went far beyond what the data properly supported.

Mr. Gordon said information from students about study habits and outside-the-classroom activities would probably be reliable and very interesting. He said he was skeptical about data provided by teachers and schools, which might be shaped by self-interest or opinion.

Sister Mary Francis Taymans said it would be important to develop more information on socio-economic status. Mr. Ginsburg noted that PISA uses an SES index. Mr. Buckley said NCES was working to improve the SES information that NAEP reports and had requested special SES tabulations from the Census Bureau on the school attendance areas in 50 large cities, but he expressed skepticism about creating an SES index.

Member Tom Luna said the only value of data is to use it. Chairman Gordon said he hoped more of the background data would be used in NAEP reports. Members noted that the discussion fit in well with the challenge of the Board chair, David Driscoll, to find ways to increase the usefulness and impact of NAEP.

**After further discussion, the Committee asked NAGB staff to put together a panel of experts to propose how to make better use of existing background questions and to**

**suggest a framework or analytic agenda for additional questions that would be policy useful and of value to the public. The expert panel would report to the Committee at the meeting in December 2011 or March 2012.**

## **6. Planning for Reports on Preparedness Research**

Mr. Feinberg updated the Committee on plans for two reports on the Board's 12th grade preparedness research—one popular and one technical. He said a contractor would help prepare the reports, which should be issued by the middle of 2012.

## **7. Information Item on Racial-Ethnic Categories**

The briefing book contains the report on the Committee teleconference of June 28, 2011 to decide on some of the new reporting categories for racial-ethnic groups to be used in the 2011 NAEP reports. Mr. Gordon noted that the Committee asked NCES to prepare a succinct explanation of the changes for use in the body of reports. Mr. Goldstein assured that Committee that this would be done.

I certify the accuracy of these minutes.



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David W. Gordon, Chairman

8-18-2011

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Date

Reporting and Dissemination Committee - 8/5/11

**NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD  
RELEASE PLAN FOR  
NAEP MATHEMATICS AND READING 2011 REPORTS**

*The Nation's Report Cards in Mathematics and Reading 2011*

The Nation's Report Cards 2011 in Mathematics and Reading will be released together in October 2011 via a live online webinar, based in Washington, DC. The release will include a data presentation by the Commissioner of Education Statistics, with comment by two members of the National Assessment Governing Board. Full accompanying data will be posted on the Internet at the scheduled time of release.

The Report Cards will present results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in mathematics and reading nationally and by state for grades 4 and 8. For each subject the assessment was given to samples of about 180,000 students in fourth and eighth grades.

Scale scores and achievement levels will be reported for each grade, including data by race/ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic factors (income and parent education). The reports will detail achievement gaps by race and gender. Scale score trends and achievement levels for mathematics will be reported for previous NAEP assessments since 1990. The same information for reading will be reported for previous NAEP assessments beginning in 1992. There will be a printed and web-based Report Card and additional supporting information on the Internet.

**DATE AND LOCATION**

The release will occur via a webinar event on the Internet in October 2011. The date will be determined by the Chair 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 two Governing Board members
- Webinar viewers will be able to submit questions for panelists. Questions from members of the press will be answered first followed by those from the general audience.
- Program will last approximately 60 minutes.

**EMBARGOED ACTIVITIES BEFORE RELEASE**

In the days preceding the release, the Governing Board and NCES will offer embargoed briefings to U.S. Congressional staff, as well as to representatives of governors and representatives from state education agencies. The Governing Board's communications contractor, Reingold-Ogilvy, will coordinate a national conference call for journalists nationwide to ask questions and receive additional information on assessment results and frameworks.

**REPORT RELEASE**

The Commissioner of Education Statistics will make the report available to the public at <http://nationsreportcard.gov> at the scheduled time of the release event. An interactive version of the release with statements, press releases, publications and related materials, will be posted on the Board's web site at [www.nagb.org](http://www.nagb.org). The site will also feature links to social networking sites, key graphics, and audio and/or video material related to the event.

**ACTIVITIES AFTER THE RELEASE**

A post-release event will be held on a subsequent date for representatives of Washington-based education organizations and other relevant groups interested in mathematics education and assessment. A separate event will be conducted for relevant organizations and groups interested in reading education and assessment. The events may be in the form of a webinar, an in-person briefing, or an event or presentation held in conjunction with a major conference or gathering of these constituencies.



Reporting and Dissemination Committee - 8/5/11

**NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD  
RELEASE PLAN FOR NAEP 2011  
TUDA MATHEMATICS AND READING REPORTS**

*The Nation's Report Cards for the Trial Urban District Assessment in  
Mathematics and Reading 2011*

The Nation's Report Cards for the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) in Mathematics and Reading 2011 will be released during November 2011 at a release event in one of the 21 participating large urban districts. The event will include a data presentation by the Commissioner of Education Statistics and comments by two members of the National Assessment Governing Board and an expert in urban education. Full accompanying data will be posted on the Internet at the scheduled time of release.

Per the Governing Board's approval, three additional urban school districts have participated in the TUDA program for the first time – Dallas, Hillsborough County, FL (Tampa), and Albuquerque (N.M.) public schools. The reports will contain district-wide results for grades 4 and 8 from an assessment given in early 2011 to a representative sample of students – in the range of 1,000–2,200 students per subject and grade in each district.

The results will be presented in terms of scale scores and achievement levels, and are disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, and socio-economic factors (income level and parent education). The report will also detail achievement gaps by race/ethnicity and gender. Scale score trends and achievement levels for mathematics and reading will be reported for previous TUDA assessments. There will be a printed and web-based Report Card and additional supporting information on the Internet.

**DATE AND LOCATION**

The release event for the media and the public will occur in November 2011. The date and location will be determined by the Chair 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 two Governing Board members
- Comments by a guest panelist with expertise in urban education
- Questions from members of the press and then the general audience
- Program will last approximately 60 minutes.
- Event will be transmitted live over the Internet via either webcast or webinar and viewers will be able to submit questions to the panelists.

### **EMBARGOED ACTIVITIES BEFORE RELEASE**

In the days preceding the release, the Governing Board and NCES will offer embargoed briefings to U.S. Congressional staff, as well as to representatives from state education agencies. The Governing Board's communications contractor, Reingold-Ogilvy, will coordinate a national conference call for journalists nationwide to ask questions and receive additional information on the assessment results and frameworks.

### **REPORT RELEASE**

The Commissioner of Education Statistics will make the report available to the public 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, a Governing Board press release, and other materials. An interactive version of the release with statements, press releases, publications and related materials, will be posted on the Board's web site at [www.nagb.org](http://www.nagb.org). The site will also feature links to social networking sites, key graphics, and audio and/or video material related to the event.

### **ACTIVITIES AFTER THE RELEASE**

A post-release event for persons and groups interested in urban education and assessment may be held in the form of a webinar, an in-person briefing in Washington, DC, or a presentation in conjunction with a major conference or gathering of a relevant organization.