

National Assessment Governing Board

Reporting and Dissemination Committee

Report of March 2, 2012

Attendees: Committee Members – Acting Chair Mary Frances Taymans, David Alukonis, Sonny Perdue; Other Board Member – Board Chairman David Driscoll; Governing Board Staff – Executive Director Cornelia Orr, Larry Feinberg, and Stephaan Harris; NCES – Associate Commissioner Peggy Carr, Arnold Goldstein, and Brenda Wolff; CCSSO-NAGB Policy Task Force – Joel Thornton; ETS – Donnell Butler and David Freund; Reingold – Amy Buckley; HagerSharp – Lisa Jacques and Debra Silimeo; HumRRO – Steve Sellman; AIR – Cadelle Hemphill and Fran Stancavage; Westat – Dianne Walsh and Marcie Hickman.

1. Expert Panel Report on NAEP Background Questions

The Committee heard from Marshall S. Smith, chairman of the expert panel appointed by the Board to recommend improvements in the NAEP background questions and how they might be better used in NAEP reporting.

Over the past 25 years the National Assessment has asked hundreds of background or noncognitive questions of the students, teachers, and schools in its samples. These are meant to enrich the reporting of NAEP’s academic results, but for more than a decade little use has been made of them in NAEP reports.

Smith said the six-member panel believes the background questions are “a potentially critical national information resource” that is “largely underused.” The panel said the background questionnaires could be used to describe school and home resources that support learning; track implementation of policy initiatives, such as the Common Core State Standards; and identify factors associated with high-performing and high-growth states and urban districts. The panel said this effort “would parallel the extensive reporting of background factors in PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) and TIMSS (Trends in International Student Assessment)” that have had considerable impact in recent years.

Smith said the panel also recommended that the Governing Board establish a separate standing committee to review all background questions and plans to improve their use. Currently, consideration of NAEP background questions is divided between the Assessment Development Committee, which handles subject-specific questions, and the Reporting and Dissemination Committee, which reviews the general interest questions about students, teachers, and schools.

Other specific recommendations from the expert panel include:

- Redesign the background questionnaires around coherent clusters of questions in high-priority areas.
- Improve the variables that describe socio-economic status.
- Rotate questions in different years, divide assessment samples, and lengthen questionnaires to obtain richer data.
- Include some questions from PISA and TIMSS to provide international comparisons.
- Use data in analytical reports that focus on key education issues, such as implementation of the Common Core, teacher evaluations, and online learning.

Committee member Sonny Perdue expressed particular interest in the panel's recommendation that the background questionnaires include some items about student motivation and out-of-school learning as factors with substantial impact on academic achievement. He also expressed interest in a suggestion by Mr. Smith that NAEP might conduct regular assessments of students in kindergarten or first grade that would show the wide differences among children entering school.

Members discussed what the next steps should be in the Board's consideration of the expert panel report. The Committee asked NCES to comment on the panel recommendations. Board staff is requested to obtain comment from interested organizations and the public. The Committee would also like to receive staff recommendations on which specific points it believes the Board should endorse with priorities and an implementation plan to be discussed at the next Governing Board meeting in May 2012. Members believe it would be a good idea for the Reporting and Dissemination Committee to meet jointly in May with the Assessment Development Committee to consider the expert panel report.

2. Implementation of Making a Difference Initiatives: Speaker's Tool Kit, Presentation for Parents, and Focused Reports

Amy Buckley, of Reingold, the Board's communications contractor, discussed the work performed thus far in developing NAEP and Board-related materials for parents and parent groups and a speaker's tool kit for Board members to use in presentations to promote NAEP and Board activities.

The Board conducted an outreach event in August 2011 to provide information about the Ad Hoc Committee on NAEP Parent Engagement. Since then draft materials have been developed to reach parents and parent groups. These include a PowerPoint presentation about NAEP that can be customized for local presentations; state and urban district assessment profiles that focus on student achievement and incorporate related data, such as high school and college completion rates; and a targeted web page for parents on the Board website.

Ms. Buckley said the Board has been soliciting input from parent groups and others involved in developing education data messages for a parent audience. Beginning in February and continuing into the spring, the Board is sponsoring several meetings to solicit feedback from parent groups on how to present information that has impact and is actionable, giving parents a call to action based on NAEP findings. Last month Reingold arranged two sessions with groups assembled through the PTA and the Public Education Network. Another planned session will focus on Hispanic parents for whom Spanish-language materials may be prepared. In the past, Ms. Buckley said, NAEP has usually been promoted to a broad public audience. She said targeting particular groups may have more impact.

Committee member David Alukonis said even though it would be desirable to increase the use and impact of NAEP among both parent groups and local and state policy-makers, there are sometimes barriers between these two constituencies. Thus, the Board needs to present hard-hitting information that will resonate with parents.

Ms. Buckley said that the speaker's toolkit, a prominent suggestion in the communications plan approved by the Board, will consist of a presentation template on NAEP that Board members can adapt depending on where they speak. The Board Vice Chair, Sister Mary Frances Taymans, who was serving as acting chair of the Reporting and Dissemination Committee, noted that member Shannon Garrison had made a very well-received presentation at a social studies conference last fall. She said members of the audience were surprised at the wide range of data and released test questions that are available from NAEP.

Acting Chair Taymans sought the views of Committee members on what would be appropriate to ask current and former Board members about their availability to present to various groups on NAEP. Mr. Alukonis suggested a formal survey. **The Committee requested staff to survey Governing Board members and alumni before the May meeting about organizations and conferences to which they have connections that might be interested in hearing presentations about NAEP. Members will be asked whether they would be willing to make presentations themselves.**

Arnold Goldstein, of NCES, discussed a list of 11 fairly brief focused reports that NCES issued during the 1990s on particular aspects of NAEP. In addition, he said several longer reports were prepared about different topics in mathematics education. He said the focused reports were discontinued when the frequency and scale of state-NAEP increased after 2000, but NCES now has plans to revive them. Three focused reports will be issued during the next few months. The topics are: results of NAEP social studies assessments in U.S. history, civics, and geography; Simpson's paradox in which subgroups improve but overall scores are unchanged because the proportion of students in low-scoring groups has increased; and 12th grade NAEP participation and engagement.

Larry Feinberg, of the NAGB staff, noted that preparing NAEP reports that focus on important education issues was a major recommendation of the Expert Panel on

NAEP Background Questions. A list of possible topics was included in the briefing materials for the Committee meeting. Executive Director Cornelia Orr said one topic of considerable current interest might be a report on 21st century skills, using NAEP released questions with performance data that illustrate widely-desired competencies in communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. Gov. Perdue said it would be valuable to have a report focusing on learning outside of school, including after-school activities and at home.

Members will be asked to consider topics for focused reports in preparation for the May Committee meeting at which time a priority list of such reports will be recommended for Board consideration. Some of these special reports might be funded and issued by the Governing Board itself.

3. Private School Participation and Reporting

Arnold Goldstein, of NCES, briefed the Committee on private school participation in the 2011 NAEP. In both fourth and eighth grades school participation rates exceeded the 70 percent required for NAEP reporting for private schools overall and for three categories of private schools—Catholic, Conservative Christian, and Lutheran. But participation rates in the “other private” category were just 42 percent at grade 4 and 46 percent at grade 8. As a result, no data were published for this group, which includes independent private schools that often have been reluctant to participate in NAEP. Private schools have been part of national NAEP since the assessment began in 1969.

Mr. Goldstein noted that, according to new NCES figures, enrollment in all types of private schools fell from 2007 to 2009. The decline overall was 7 percent to about 4.7 million students. Over the past 20 years student enrollment has dropped by about 24 percent in Catholic schools and 19 percent in Lutheran schools, but has risen in the three other large categories: Non-sectarian, Conservative Christian, and Other Religious (not Conservative Christian, Catholic, or Lutheran). Catholic schools accounted for 44 percent of private school enrollment in 2009 compared to almost 55 percent 20 years earlier. Over the past two decades the proportion of U.S. elementary and secondary students attending private schools has decreased from 11 to 9 percent.

Students in all categories of private schools reported by NAEP continue to score higher than those in public school. Limited information on private school results is included in the NAEP Report Cards. Even though complete data are available through the NAEP Data Explorer on the web, NAEP has not published a separate report on private schools since the 2005 assessment. A brief summary report on private schools is distributed to schools in the NAEP sample.

Mr. Goldstein said there will be no special oversampling of private schools in the 2013 NAEP. This would permit results to be reported for private schools overall and for Catholic schools, but not for any other category of private schools.

Committee members said a separate NAEP report on private schools should be considered after all 2011 results are released.

4. Review of Recent NAEP Release: TUDA 2011

Stephaan Harris, of the NAGB staff, discussed the release of the 2011 NAEP Mathematics and Reading reports for the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA). The release took place on December 7, 2011 at City Springs Elementary/Middle School in Baltimore, with a panel that included Board members Andrés Alonso and Tonya Miles; NCES Commissioner Jack Buckley; and Council of the Great City Schools Executive Director Michael Casserly. The TUDA results received substantial media coverage.

Ms. Buckley, of Reingold Communications, said there were 315 participants in the event either in person or through the live webcast. Twenty-six stakeholder groups promoted the event beforehand on their websites or through social media. She said the reports received news coverage in 258 print, broadcast and online media stories with 117 local news stories in TUDA districts. The Board press release on TUDA results was used online nearly 240 times. Ms. Buckley said 70 reporters in 19 urban districts, received access to embargoed materials in advance of the release. Some 26 journalists participated in a conference call before the release in which embargoed data were discussed.

Ms. Buckley said the majority of event participants were from education groups and state and local education departments. Mr. Harris said there was an embargo breach by the Christian Science Monitor as a result of an unintentional error. He said the reporter writing the story finished it a day before the official release and told her editor about the embargo. The release time was included in the actual story. However, a morning editor did not pay attention to the embargo notice and posted the story on the Monitor's web site about an hour before the 10 a.m. release. The reporter apologized and wrote a letter to Cornelia Orr and Jack Buckley, explaining the mistake. Ms. Orr said the reporter would be allowed access to embargoed NAEP data in the future but would be removed from the distribution list if another breach occurred.

Ms. Buckley said Reingold and the Board need to develop ways to increase the interest of higher education and business in NAEP reports, since participation in the releases by persons in those categories has been slight. Acting Chair Taymans said special efforts should be made to target these groups. In response to a question by Gov. Perdue on how the Board reaches out to business, Mr. Harris said chambers of commerce, business roundtables, and corporations are on the database lists for advisories about new NAEP reports. Ms. Buckley said business groups are among those selected for follow-up phone calls and e-mails requesting social media and website promotion of the release event. Ms. Orr said business leaders are invited to the outreach events before each Board meeting. She said business is a critical group for NAEP, and would be a key audience for the upcoming Board report on 12th grade preparedness.

Mr. Harris said Reingold is assisting the Board in planning a webinar on TUDA results that will focus on how urban districts are preparing for the Common Core State Standards and how NAEP data can be a useful resource in doing so. He said the webinar would be held in late March or April. It will include Mr. Casserly, an NCES representative, and the superintendents or other leaders of two TUDA districts – Chicago and Albuquerque, NM.

5. Projected Schedule for Future NAEP Reports

Mr. Goldstein discussed the list of NAEP reports and related NCES publications planned for release during 2012. He said the report linking 8th grade NAEP to the 2011 mathematics and science results for TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) would be ready in December even though essential data are not expected until July or August, creating a tight timeline. He added that a revised draft of the Mega-States report will be available for Board review in April or May and should be ready for release in July.

6. Release Plan for NAEP 2011 Science Report Card

Mr. Harris reviewed a release plan prepared by Board staff for the NAEP 2011 Science Report Card, which is expected to be released in April or May. The plan proposed a release over the Internet via webinar with pre-release briefings for Congressional staff. Embargoed access would be offered to journalists and officials of the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors' Association. There would be follow-up activities in-person and online to science and education stakeholders to extend the life of the report.

Vice Chair Taymans requested Reingold to look into the cost and logistics of making the Internet release more visual and interactive. Ms. Buckley will provide this information to the Board staff.

ACTION: Committee members recommended the release plan for the 2011 NAEP Science Report Card be presented to the full Board for approval, as appended in Attachment A.

7. Policy on NAEP Testing and Reporting on Students with Disabilities and English-Language Learners

Mr. Goldstein, of NCES, updated the Committee on actions taken to implement the policy on NAEP testing and reporting on students with disabilities (SD) and English language learners (ELL) that was adopted by the Board in March 2010. The reporting phase is being implemented in the Report Cards for the 2011 assessments. Also, additional efforts were made in 2011 to increase inclusion. Overall exclusion rates reached record lows, although variations among states and urban districts continued.

The new rules for testing SD and ELL students will be introduced in 2013. In preparation, pilot tests of the new decision trees are being conducted in 2012. Also, special studies have been conducted on offering only calculator-active booklets to SD students who use calculators on state mathematics tests and on special test booklets targeting lower proficiency levels.

Mr. Goldstein said offering only calculator-active booklets had just a slight impact on exclusion rates but raised serious technical and logistical concerns. He said the

targeted booklets, called KaSA (Knowledge and Skills Appropriate), did provide better measurement of students at the lower end of the performance distribution. He said these booklets will be used as part of another research study in 2013 to examine the impact on trends, but not in the operational assessment.

Committee members briefly discussed a letter from Florida Education Commissioner Gerard Robinson requesting further action because of the continued differences in SD and ELL inclusion rates in the states and districts participating in NAEP. Mr. Robinson proposed that the Board's SD and ELL participation goals be turned into standards for reporting. Members said the issue would be discussed further during the next Committee meeting in May.

I certify the accuracy of these minutes.



3-23-12

Mary Frances Taymans, Acting Chair

Date

**NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD
RELEASE PLAN FOR
NAEP SCIENCE 2011 REPORT**

The Nation's Report Card in Science 2011

The Nation's Report Card in Science 2011 will be released to the general public in April or May 2012. Following review and approval of the report's results, the release will be arranged as an online, interactive webinar. The release event will include a data presentation by the Commissioner of Education Statistics, with moderation and comments by at least one member of the National Assessment Governing Board and a science education expert. Full accompanying data will be posted on the Internet at the scheduled time of release.

The Report Card presents results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) from a representative sample of about 122,000 8th graders at the national and state levels. Results will be reported in terms of scale scores and the percentage of students at or above achievement levels. In addition to results for the nation as a whole, the report will include national and state level NAEP results for various demographic groups. Information about the Science Framework will be included, along with examples of questions and student responses.

This assessment was purposely scheduled for 2011 so that the data could be linked with the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) that was also administered in 2011. The NAEP-TIMSS linking report will be issued following release of the international TIMSS results in December 2012.

DATE AND LOCATION

The release event for media and the public will occur in April or May 2012. The exact 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 at least one Governing Board member
- Comments by a science education expert
- Questions from members of the press and then the general audience
- Program will last approximately 60 minutes
- Event will be broadcast live over the Internet, and viewers will be able to submit questions electronically for panelists. An archived version of the webinar, with closed captioning, will be posted on the Governing Board website.

EMBARGOED ACTIVITIES BEFORE RELEASE

In the days preceding the release, the Governing Board and NCES will offer embargoed briefings to U.S. Congressional staff in Washington, DC. Representatives of governors, state education agencies, and appropriate media will have access to a special website with embargoed data after signing the Governing Board's embargo agreement.

REPORT RELEASE

The Commissioner of Education Statistics will publicly release the report on the NAEP website—<http://nationsreportcard.gov>—at the scheduled time of the release event. An online copy of the report, along with data tools, questions, and various other resources, will be available at the time of release on the NAEP site. An interactive version of the release with panelists' statements, a Governing Board press release, publications and related materials will be posted on the Board's web site at 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

The Governing Board's communications contractor, Reingold-Ogilvy, will work with Board staff to coordinate an in-person or online event designed to extend the life of the NAEP Science results by featuring current topics that would be of great interest and relevance to stakeholders. The event will be designed for organizations, officials, and individuals in the fields of education and policy who have an interest in science education and assessment.