

National Assessment Governing Board

Executive Committee

Report of November 20, 2014

Executive Committee Members: Terry Mazany (Chair), Susan Pimentel (Vice Chair), Lou Fabrizio, Rebecca Gagnon, Shannon Garrison, Tonya Miles, Fielding Rolston, Cary Sneider.

Other Board Members: Lucille Davy, Frank Fernandes, James Geringer, Doris Hicks, Andrew Ho, Terry Holliday, Tonya Matthews, Ronnie Musgrove, Dale Nowlin, Joseph O’Keefe, James Popham, Chasidy White, Ex Officio Member: Sue Betka.

Governing Board Staff: Cornelia Orr, Mary Crovo, Lily Clark, Michelle Blair, Stephaan Harris, Laura LoGerfo, Munira Mwalimu, Sharyn Rosenberg, Anthony White.

Other Attendees:

NCES Staff: Peggy Carr, Elvira Germino Hausken, Arnold Goldstein, Eunice Greer, Linda Hamilton, Shawn Kline, Drew Malizio, Dan McGrath, Michael Moles, Holly Spurlock, William Tirre, Amy Yamashiro. *Other Attendees:* ETS: Jay Campbell, Amy Dresher, Andreas Oranje, Greg Vafis, Lisa Ward. HumRRO: Steve Sellman, Laress Wise. AIR: Kim Gattis, Cadelle Hemphill, Fran Stancavage. Hager Sharp: David Hoff. Reingold: Amy Buckley. Pearson: Connie Smith.

1. Welcome, Introductions, Comments, and Agenda

Chair Terry Mazany called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. He expressed appreciation for the warm and generous welcome in his new role as Chair and noted that the work ahead will be exciting with the great Board and staff.

Mr. Mazany welcomed Rebecca Gagnon to the Executive Committee in her new role as Vice Chair of the Reporting and Dissemination (R&D) Committee and congratulated Ms. Gagnon on her recent reelection to the Minneapolis school board. He also congratulated Shannon Garrison on her reappointment for a second term on the Board.

Mr. Mazany mentioned his meeting with the new Board members at their orientation session on November 5, 2014 in Washington, DC. He then introduced the new members and noted that they would provide more detailed introductions about themselves at the full Board meeting on Friday morning. In attendance at the Executive Committee meeting were: Frank Fernandes (Secondary School Principal), Tonya Matthews (General Public Representative), and Chasidy White (8th Grade Teacher). The Chair also noted that new member Mitchell Chester (State School Chief) was not present but would be joining the meeting on Saturday.

Chair Mazany stated that the Board’s Executive Director, Cornelia Orr, would provide the Executive Committee with updates, then he would lead a strategic discussion, and finally the Committee would meet in closed session regarding the NAEP budget. He noted that at the August 2014 Board meeting, we were left with a “cliffhanger” about the state of the budget; yet thanks to the hard work of the previous Governing Board Chair, David Driscoll, and NCES

Acting Commissioner, Peggy Carr, the Board has a much deeper understanding of the NAEP budget.

2. Updates: Governing Board Staffing, NAEP Reauthorization Status, 2015 Budget Appropriation Status

Governing Board Staffing – Cornelia Orr introduced the newest members of the Governing Board staff. Anthony (Tony) White is the new Contract Specialist. Laura LoGerfo is the new Assistant Director for Reporting and Analysis. Ms. Orr noted that the Governing Board is now fully staffed for the first time in well over a year, and referred the Committee to an updated organization chart included as Attachment A of the meeting materials.

NAEP Reauthorization Status – Ms. Orr noted that progress has been made on NAEP reauthorization. The *Strengthening Education through Research Act* (HR 4366) passed in the House in May of 2014. Since our last Governing Board meeting in July 2014, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee passed a bill with minor changes to the House bill. After Thanksgiving the Senate HELP Committee intends to bring the bill, which is considered noncontroversial, to the Senate floor for passage by Unanimous Consent before the end of this Congress's term. A unanimous consent vote would mean that there would be no vote, discussion, or debate of the bill. The Senate's changes to the bill are agreeable to the House; therefore a conferencing of the bill between the House and Senate versions would not be necessary.

As a result of the recent election, it is expected that Senator Lamar Alexander of Tennessee will become the Chairman of the Senate HELP Committee. He is very supportive of NAEP and the Governing Board. Preliminary conversations with his staff indicate that while they are still working out many of the details around what Senator Alexander hopes to achieve within the Committee's broad jurisdiction, his main priorities next year will be fixing No Child Left Behind, reauthorizing the Higher Education Act, and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Reform.

2015 Budget Appropriation Status – Since our previous Governing Board meeting, Congress passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 budget. Ms. Orr noted that the CR is good news for NAEP, because our budget would be \$5 million less if the President's proposed budget was passed. The CR imposed a small reduction (less than a 1%) over the FY 2014 level.

Before the CR was passed in September, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), Education and Related Agencies had marked up its bill for FY 2015. This subcommittee added proviso language to their budget mark-up that specifically relates to the Governing Board's work. If passed, the language would have required us to report to them within 30 days on what will be assessed and when U.S. history will be assessed (proviso language was included on page 3 of Attachment B). Ms. Orr mentioned that Senator Alexander is a member of this subcommittee and has been a strong proponent of NAEP, specifically U.S. history and Civics. He was very concerned when the NAEP assessments in civics, U.S. history, and geography were given only at 8th grade in 2014.

The CR expires on December 11, 2014. Therefore, this Congress will need to vote on the budget soon.

3. Discussion: Strategic Thinking about NAEP and NAGB: Mission and Values, Policy Drivers/Initiatives, Budget Constraints

Chair Mazany began the conversation on the future of NAEP by reflecting on the history of NAEP and the Governing Board. He stated that while we often emphasize the “gold standard” of NAEP, the history of NAEP is also a story of innovation. From NAEP’s inception, the mission to draw conclusions about educational progress over time was groundbreaking. This forward-thinking continues to be evident throughout our work, for example in our approaches to sampling, measuring trends, analytic modeling, scaling, achievement level setting, item response theory, use of contextual variables, population inclusions, Internet reporting and dissemination, and in our decision to assess urban districts.

To continue this theme of innovation for NAEP, Mr. Mazany stated that it is time to consider “What is our innovation ambition?” and to develop a thoughtful innovation agenda for the Governing Board to pursue. He noted that all of the Governing Board Committees have a role to play in increasing the impact of NAEP. Recently through reporting, assessment, and engaging parents and the public, the Board has been advancing in this regard. He tasked each Committee chair to consider what “frontier of innovation” his or her Committee could be leading. He noted that we will need time beyond the quarterly Board meetings to knit these ambitions together and develop a strategy.

In developing our vision for NAEP, the Chair noted that the Board should be mindful of three risks:

1. The state of the **Common Core State Standards**: the increasing uncertainty of its outcomes could result in a movement back towards decentralized assessment and curriculum, in which case NAEP then retains and increases its importance as a trusted source of student achievement information.
2. The **nature and use of assessments** nationally: with growing criticism surrounding the role, amount, and purpose of assessments occurring in schools, the Assessment Literacy Work Group becomes increasingly important. The Governing Board should determine whether NAEP should become a convener to lead national conversations about assessment and its role in improving teaching and learning.
3. **International Assessments**: we should consider the roles of PISA and TIMSS and where NAEP stands relative to these international assessments.

Chair Mazany encouraged Board members to think boldly about what NAEP’s next innovation frontier should be, as the Governing Board can add tremendous value. He reminded Committee members that the Board has access to experts and partners to help inform these discussions and decisions. He further noted that he is not presupposing answers to these questions, and invited thoughts and reactions from the group.

Tonya Miles supported the vision of developing a strategic plan. She applauded the work of considering innovation across the Committees and noted that the Executive Committee could serve as a critical fourth group to be a part of the strategic planning.

Sue Pimentel responded to the Chair's comments about scrutiny of the role of assessments nationally. In her previous research on NAEP, she was struck by how few teachers understood NAEP and its purpose. She expressed support for the Board to convene discussions about how different assessments play different roles.

Cary Sneider agreed with Ms. Pimentel's comments and the three issues identified by the Chair. In concurrence with the second issue, Mr. Sneider noted the recent press coverage regarding the substantial proportion of the school year that some states use to administer assessments.

Mr. Sneider and Shannon Garrison asked the Chair to elaborate on his request of the Committees and the process for developing the Board's innovation strategy.

Mr. Mazany said that Committee Chairs should devote some time in their Friday meetings to poll members and create an inventory of their innovation ideas to serve as a starting point. Members should identify needs, gaps, or opportunities to be addressed. Suggestions do not need to be limited to the scope of each Committee's purview given the broad expertise of members beyond their Committee roles. Mr. Mazany also noted that he would be providing examples of innovation in his opening remarks on Friday morning, which would help prompt more thinking.

He has already talked with Governing Board senior staff, Cornelia Orr and Mary Crovo, to set aside time for a future strategic planning conversation. This will occur once we have identified the topics, organized the necessary research and information, and provided it in advance to Board members to enable good deliberation. He asked members to think about what is within our mission and mandate, what a bold vision looks like, and what we hope to accomplish.

Chair Mazany presented a slide titled "organizing for excellence" which outlined how alignment, coherence, and equity at the district level support success, and he suggested these same ideas will be helpful for developing the Board's national innovation agenda. To illustrate, he posited that we should consider if we have a point of view about the alignment (or lack thereof) of assessments within districts and also between districts and states. There is a great deal of national emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, yet many students lack access to the rigorous curriculum required to consider college and career options in STEM fields. There is a mismatch between what young people are experiencing outside and inside the classroom. Finally, all of this work relies on a foundation of equity. Disparity is the primary driver of reform initiatives. The Board should consider how we can inform conversations about equity for opportunity. Chair Mazany stated that we need to figure out how, in our innovation ambition, we can use the NAEP resources to make progress on equity. He invited Board members to provide thoughts on other dimensions to consider in this visioning task.

Ms. Pimentel supported the Chair's mention of parents, students, and community partners, and the Chair's recognition of our increasing focus on parents as part of innovation. She commented that she is excited about the Chairman's vision and noted that our work is so deliberate, careful, and thoughtful and yet we are always pushing the boundaries.

The Chair ended the portion of the agenda open to the public at 5:00 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

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4. NAEP Schedule of Assessments and the NAEP Budget

The Executive Committee met in closed session from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Peggy Carr, NCES Acting Commissioner, discussed costs and contract options under NAEP contracts for FY 2013 through FY 2017. Board members engaged in a question and answer session with Ms. Carr on various components of the NAEP budget, as well as timelines for Board decisions regarding the NAEP schedule of assessments. Chair Mazany thanked Ms. Carr and her staff for providing a thorough, clear budget briefing to the Executive Committee. The information provided in this briefing will be useful in the full Board closed session discussion of the NAEP budget and assessment schedule on Friday, November 21.

The Executive Committee schedule and budget discussion was conducted in closed session because the disclosure of technical and cost data would significantly impede implementation of the contract awards and negotiations for awards. Therefore this discussion is protected by exemption 9(B) of section 552b(C) of Title 5 U.S.C.

Mr. Mazany adjourned the Executive Committee meeting at 6:00 p.m.

I certify the accuracy of these minutes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terry Mazany". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Terry" and last name "Mazany" clearly distinguishable.

Terry Mazany, Chair

December 3, 2014

Date