

National Assessment Governing Board Reporting and Dissemination Committee Report of November 21, 2014

Reporting and Dissemination (R&D) Committee Attendees:

R&D Committee Members: R&D Committee Vice Chair Rebecca Gagnon, Tonya Matthews, Father Joseph O'Keefe, Tonya Miles, Governor Ronnie Musgrove

Other Board Members: Chair Terry Mazany

Governing Board Staff: Laura LoGerfo, Stephaan Harris, Lily Clark, Anthony White

NCES: Acting Commissioner Peggy Carr, Jamie Deaton, Ebony Walton Chester, Grady Wilburn, Linda Hamilton, Gina Broxterman, Arnold Goldstein

Contractors: Jonas Bertling, Lisa Ward (ETS); Valerie Marrapodi, Sarah Johnson, Amy Buckley (Reingold); Yvette Clinton (Optimal); Cadille Hemphill (American Institutes of Research); Debra Silmeo, David Hoff, (Hager Sharp); Steve Sellman (HumRro)

Vice Chair Rebecca Gagnon opened the meeting and welcomed new Board member Tonya Matthews and new staff member Laura LoGerfo.

Puerto Rico 2013 Mathematics Assessment

The Committee discussed the release of the Puerto Rico 2013 Mathematics Assessment. For reference, approximately 4,600 4th graders and about 5,200 8th graders in public schools across Puerto Rico participated in the assessment. This 2013 assessment permitted inclusion of the Puerto Rico scores on the same scale as the NAEP state assessments. Roughly a third of Puerto Rico's student population is enrolled in private schools, though NAEP did not administer the math assessment in private schools, to retain consistency with the state-level NAEP assessments that are administered only in public schools.

Both Father O'Keefe and Tonya Matthews suggested that future assessments in Puerto Rico perhaps should include private schools, because as an island territory, Puerto Rico may be more similar to urban districts than to states. No state has such a high proportion of students in private schools as Puerto Rico, which affects the ability to report on the achievement of Puerto Rico students as a whole. However, NCES Acting Commissioner, Peggy Carr, informed the Committee that the intended plan was to consider Puerto Rico as equivalent to a state, report Puerto Rico's results with the regular release of national and state-level NAEP results, and not sample Puerto Rico private school students as the NAEP state-level assessments include only public school students. The Committee expressed concern about this approach as not fitting the profile of Puerto Rico and perhaps providing an incomplete picture of student achievement in the territory.

Reporting and Dissemination Committee Chair, Andrés Alonso, was unable to participate in the Committee meeting due to a schedule conflict, but he sent comments for Vice Chair Gagnon to present on his behalf. Ms. Gagnon summarized Mr. Alonso's comments, which centered on three main points: (1) translation; (2) context; and (3) comparison. These three points are elaborated as follows: First, the 2013 Puerto Rico Mathematics release should be presented in both English and Spanish to promote the report broadly. Second, the results suggest a negatively framed narrative. The context for these results must be considered, and emphasizing relevant contextual variables along with the NAEP achievement scores may represent the best approach for release. Third, Ms. Gagnon conveyed Mr. Alonso's caution about finding the most appropriate comparison for the Puerto Rico mathematics assessment scores. A comparison between Puerto Rico and a state may not be appropriate based on demographics, such as comparing students in Puerto Rico to Hispanic students in an English-centric mainland system.

Gina Broxterman from NCES reported on her trip to Puerto Rico where she met with the Acting Secretary of Education for Puerto Rico and members of the assessment staff there. The staff with whom Ms. Broxterman met were knowledgeable about assessment and NAEP and reviewed an embargoed version of the report. The Puerto Rico Department of Education staff noted that they had already been approached by the media about their participation in NAEP and expect harsh scrutiny of the results.

Ms. Broxterman highlighted several challenges unique to this release of the Puerto Rico NAEP results: (1) This release is off-cycle, so Puerto Rico stands alone to address questions and concerns about the results; (2) In the last two years, Puerto Rico adopted the Common Core State Standards curriculum and has undertaken efforts to improve the educational experience and to provide teachers with professional development, however the effects of these efforts will not be reflected in the 2013 NAEP results; and (3) Memories of the negative feedback from the public and media about Puerto Rico's performance on PISA may lead to anxious anticipation about this release. Puerto Rico staff did not offer any suggestions or preferences for release.

The current release plan for this report comprises a webinar, which will include policymakers and media from Puerto Rico and the U.S. The Committee elaborated upon this plan and suggested various changes as described below.

First, the Committee members advised that the panel discussion for the webinar should be presented in Spanish and English simultaneously. Families and parents whom the Board is attempting to reach more broadly and deeply may not be as proficient in English as educators and policymakers in Puerto Rico. Thus the Committee concluded that a simultaneous bilingual presentation should improve accessibility and would represent a gesture of respect to Puerto Rico.

Second, the panelists should include education-related experts from Puerto Rico and from the National Council for La Raza. Vice Chair Gagnon suggested inviting a fellow Minneapolis School Board member who is originally from Puerto Rico to participate. Third, before the release, NCES and Governing Board staff will host an embargoed briefing, inviting a small number of mostly Puerto Rico policymakers and leaders to whom Board staff and NAEP staff

will show results, provide context, and answer questions as a means to prepare in advance for the public release and the subsequent media response.

A few outstanding questions remain: (1) How broadly will the NAEP mathematics results be publicized in Puerto Rico and beyond Puerto Rico? (2) What is the anticipated extent of the report's public impact? (3) What is the role of NCES in this revised approach for release?

The Committee discussed making this release an evidence-based means to galvanize support for efforts to improve Puerto Rico's education experience. Vice Chair Gagnon suggested emphasizing systemic variables that can be changed within the educational context, for example, the rigor of the curriculum in the public schools such as 8th grade algebra, differences that exist between the mainland curriculum and Puerto Rico's curriculum, and other factors. The best approach may be to consider this 2013 Puerto Rico release as a baseline report of mathematics achievement within the context of Puerto Rico's education system.

In sum, the Committee agreed to recommend a revised release plan to the Board for the Puerto Rico 2013 mathematics assessment results that includes:

- A press release linked to a prerecorded panel discussion (pictures with audio) in Puerto Rican Spanish and English.
- The Executive Summary will be translated into Spanish. Although the Committee agreed that the entire report should be released in Spanish and in English, given fiscal and time constraints, the report will be published in English.
- A focus on the contextual variables, especially school-based and system-based characteristics

The Committee concluded that the approach taken with the release of Puerto Rico's 2013 mathematics assessment results could stand as a pilot test for the newly-adopted communications plan.

ACTION: The Reporting and Dissemination Committee recommends approval of the release plan for the 2013 NAEP Puerto Rico Mathematics Report, with modifications as noted in the November 21, 2014 Committee report.

Release of the Civics, Geography, and U.S. History Assessment Results

Arnold Goldstein from NCES presented to the Committee the current plan for the web-based reporting of results from the 2014 Civics, Geography, and U.S. History assessments. In reviewing the structure of the proposed website, Mr. Goldstein noted that the landing page for the release website presents 'at a glance' information, a cross-subject comparison chart, and each subject highlighted separately. Within each subject, the website presents four layers of data and analysis: (1) primary coverage of average score changes, scores by percentile, scores by content area, scores by student group, population percentages, and student group cross-tabulation analyses; (2) analyses of student groups, achievement gaps, and percentage changes over time by student group; (3) contextual variables as instructional practices, out-of-school activity questions, use of textbooks, use of internet/computer, as well as student interests; (4) an item map and sample questions, along with information about the assessment itself – design, participation, inclusion, and other features.

The Committee agreed on the importance of these three subject areas, not just as a package but as three separate reports. Currently, there are plans for one umbrella product (release and website) for all three reports. But each subject is distinct, and the Committee expressed the wish to avoid shortchanging or overshadowing one subject and to avoid alienating the subject area constituencies.

Board Member Tonya Miles noted that students are a critically important and valuable audience for these reports; the 2010 Civics report prompted teen-oriented media outlets to promote civics education. Vice Chair Rebecca Gagnon connected the critical value of these subject assessments to policymakers in a time when curricula are narrowing. Board Member Father Joseph O'Keefe urged the Committee to show the importance of these subject assessments and asked how the Board could engage 8th grade teachers in this release, perhaps by offering them a way to compare their students to the national results.

The Committee agreed that there should be a more distinct plan for each report's release, though still under the same umbrella. One suggestion was to emphasize the area of the website related to the specific data. The Committee and Board as a whole must retain the connections among the subjects, but distinguish each assessment's unique value.

In sum, the Committee must determine how to retain a cohesive whole with three separate segments for each of the three reports. The reports will be ready for review by the Committee in February or early March of 2015, with an April release expected. Revisions to the release plan will require follow-up conference calls among the Committee in the months before the March 2015 Board meeting.

Implementation of Communications Plan

Board staff member, Stephaan Harris, and Reingold representative, Amy Buckley, presented the next steps in implementing the Communications Plan the Board approved in August. The presenters elicited reactions from the Committee about the proposed action steps to engage parents, educators, and policymakers in NAEP. A quick overview of the elements follows by target audience:

- Parents: Parent Discussion Guide, Op-Ed Commentary, Email Newsletter
- Educators: NAEP Toolkit, Webinar Series, Infographics with Hidden Gems
- Policymakers: Testimonials, Conference Presentations, Roundtable Discussions

Mr. Harris asked the Committee to consider what priorities should form the first forays into implementation of the Communications Plan. Committee members expressed mostly positive reactions generally and provided feedback on specific elements.

Parents

Around the Parent Discussion Guide, Board Member Tonya Miles said that the Guide should direct people to navigate through the website, not just to click on the website and move on. Parents need multiple gates into and pathways through the Board and NAEP websites. Board Member Tonya Matthews raised questions about prompting the target audience to engage with the Board and NAEP.

Op-Ed Commentaries need to revolve around what is exciting and intriguing to website users and the public. And the Board should help connect the dots for parents on what is actionable from reports and data: they see the data, they read the report, now what? The Board through op-eds can address critical questions for parents, especially how NAEP matters to their children. Vice Chair Rebecca Gagnon mentioned the NAEP Mathematics Curriculum Study as an example of a NAEP report that has a direct, immediate impact on parents and students. Parents can ask whether the content of their child's class really meets expectations of curricular rigor.

Committee members considered ways to share how parents have used NAEP data and reporting and provide specific real-life examples to make these approaches clear. Op-eds and email newsletters can spotlight NAEP's infusion into the ongoing conversation about standards. Vice Chair Rebecca Gagnon suggested inserting NAEP and links to NAEP and the Board's website and reports into extant organizations' newsletters, as well as participating in national parent conferences where one appearance allows time with many audience members. Committee members urged NCES and Board staff to restart collaborations on conference presentations, organizing who presents where to avoid duplication and optimize leverage.

Educators

Committee members expanded upon the Communications Plan for educators. Board Member Father O'Keefe suggested presenting at conferences of organizations, such as the National Catholic Educators' Association (NCEA), American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), Council for American Private Education (CAPE), to garner attention for NAEP and the Board. By highlighting AACTE, Father O'Keefe emphasized that the Board should not downplay the importance of engaging new teachers in assessment and NAEP issues, perhaps through professional development. The Board could work with appropriate organizations and districts to allow for participation in NAEP webinars or with the toolkit to count as professional development points (or embed in ongoing professional development efforts).

Tonya Miles volunteered fellow Board member, Shannon Garrison, to show how she expertly uses the NAEP Data Explorer with other teachers through webinars or online modules. This would encourage teachers to visit the NAEP, NCES, and Governing Board websites, then translate lessons into classroom action. This should be part of a broader strategy to mine the strengths and participation preferences of Board members.

Tonya Matthews endorsed infographics as an immediate way to relate better to broader audiences and noted the high potential for infographics to go viral. She also asked about how the Board and NAEP connect to the largest growth sector in education – homeschooling families. The current NAEP law does not permit the inclusion of home schooled students in the sample, however, it is an interesting question to consider how to reach out to that audience.

Father Joseph O'Keefe asked about follow-up from the January 2014 Parent Summit. What did Parent Summit attendees learn? And what did they do and how did they act on those lessons learned? Mr. Harris responded that a contract will be underway soon to investigate the answers to these questions as part of a Parent Summit evaluation.


Policymakers

The Committee expressed the need for policymakers to think of NAEP as an independent measure of student achievement and not to make inappropriate comparisons or draw incorrect implications from NAEP data. The Committee agreed that an effective outreach approach may center on holding roundtable discussions with congressional staff rather than with members of Congress who may not have time to process information or promote NAEP themselves. For purposes of ensuring the Board is aware of NAEP's presence on the Hill and in policy conversations, the Board staff should establish a Google alert for NAEP-related commentary from policymakers. This would help connect NAEP to national conversations on opting out of assessments, on the foundering trust in testing programs generally, on implementing Common Core State Standards, and on spending too much time on testing. Committee members concurred that NAEP should be presented as an asset in those conversations.

Similar to their feedback on the Communications Plan for parents, the Committee agreed that exemplars are the best motivators and suggested state staff show peers how they have used NAEP data and reporting in their work at the state-level and with districts. Organizations such as the Council of Chief State School Officers can become a potentially powerful ally in producing testimonials to connect NAEP data and state data. Also, the Committee agreed that Board members and staff should present about NAEP at conferences to realize maximal reward for the investment of time and resources.

In sum, the Communications Plan's action steps seem like positive and potentially fruitful paths to engaging parents, educators, and policymakers more effectively. At the next meeting, Board staff member and Reingold staff will discuss accomplishments to date and progress made.

I certify the accuracy of these minutes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Gagnon", is enclosed within a white octagonal border.

Rebecca Gagnon, Acting Chair