National Assessment Governing Board

Committee on Standards, Design and Methodology

May 18, 2012 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

AGENDA

10:00 – 10:05 am	Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Overview *Lou Fabrizio, COSDAM Chair*	
10:05– 10:50 am	Reporting 12th Grade Preparedness Research: Validity Evidence for Reporting Preparedness on Reading and Mathematics NAEP **(Joint Session with the Reporting and Dissemination Committee)** *Larry Feinberg, Ray Fields, and Susan Loomis* *Governing Board Staff*	See Reporting 12th Grade Preparedness Tab
10:50 – 11:20 am	Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) Policy: Proposed Modifications in Eligibility Statements *Ray Fields*	Attachment A
11:20 - 11:25 am	Recommendations of Future COSDAM Agenda Topics	
CLOSED SESSION		
11:25 am – 11:55	Studies to Expand NAEP Measurement Precision - Knowledge and Skills Accessibility Study - Multi-Stage Adaptive Field Trial *Andreas Oranje, ETS Research Staff*	Attachment B Attachment C
11:55 – 12:25pm	2011 Writing Achievement Levels-Setting Grades 8 and 12: Recommendations for Approval - Writing Achievement Levels Descriptions - Writing Achievement Levels Cut Scores and Consequences Data - Exemplar Performances *Luz Bay, Measured Progress* *Susan Loomis*	Attachment D Attachment D-1 Distributed to COSDAM in Closed Session
OPEN SESSION		
12:25 – 12:30 pm	Resolution for Governing Board Approval of NAEP Writing Achievement Levels for Grades 8 and 12 *Lou Fabrizio*	

Clarifications to the Governing Board's Policy for

The Trial Urban District Assessment Program

Ray Fields

The Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) program was first funded by Congress for assessments conducted in 2002. TUDA began with five volunteering districts; twenty-one volunteering districts participated in 2011 and have signed letters committing to participate in 2013.

The identification of the participating districts is the responsibility of the Governing Board, in consultation with the Executive Director of Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) and staff of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The identification process is prescribed under the Governing Board Policy Statement entitled "Eligibility Criteria and Procedures for Selecting Districts for Participation in the National Assessment of Educational Progress: Trial Urban District Assessment."

The current TUDA policy statement was adopted on March 3, 2007. Governing Board staff periodically review extant policies to determine whether revisions may be needed. The TUDA policy statement was recently reviewed by staff. Through this review, a number of elements of the TUDA policy were identified that staff suggest would benefit from clarification, particularly the eligibility criteria. Governing Board staff have consulted with CGCS and NCES on the proposed changes.

Accordingly, the staff recommendations for clarifying revisions to the TUDA policy are on the following pages, along with a document showing the impact of the clarified eligibility criteria on the list of eligible districts.

No action on changes to the TUDA policy is required at the May 2012 Board meeting. However, action may be taken at the August 2012 Board meeting.

Adopted: March 3, 2007
Revised: DATE

National Assessment Governing Board

Eligibility Criteria and Procedures for
Selecting Districts for Participation in the
National Assessment of Educational Progress

Trial Urban District Assessment

Policy Statement

Purpose

To define the eligibility criteria and selection procedures for participation of urban school districts in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA).

Guiding Principles

Principle 1
Participation in TUDA shall be voluntary.

Principle 2
A primary goal of TUDA is to support promote education reform aimed at improving the achievement in support of the large number of challenged populationsstudents enrolled in the schools of ournation's large largest urban school districts and to focus attention on the specific challenges and accomplishments associated with urban education.

Principle 3
Districts participating in TUDA shall have the characteristics of large urban areas.

Principle 4
All urban districts that have participateding in TUDA without interruption once

included at the time the Governing Board adopts criteria and establishes a selection process shall be deemed eligible and permitted to continue to participate.

Principle 5
The eligibility criteria for participation in TUDA shall promote (1) inter-district homogeneitycomparability, — so that participating districts that are reasonably similar with respect to key demographics across the districts and (2) efficiency in resources required of the NAEP program.

Principle 6
The selection of any additional districts for TUDA participation shall be contingent on additional funding from Congress. Current funding is sufficient to support ten (10) TUDA districts.

Principle 7
The Governing Board may implement the procedures to consider districts for participation in TUDA whenever sufficient funding is available to support the action.

Principle 8
Districts applying for participation in TUDA should be committed to long-term participation.

Eligibility Criteria

1. Only large cities having 250,000 or more population shall be represented in TUDA.

2. Districts participating in TUDA shall be have a student enrollment large enough to support NAEP assessments in three subjects in each grade assessed three-subject assessment cycle for NAEP in grade-levels included in the state assessment program. The enrollment requirement is a minimum of approximately 1,500 students per subject per grade level assessed.

3. Districts participating in TUDA shall have an enrollment district-wide or in the grade levels assessed that meets majority *(50% or more) of students meeting* at least one of the following criteria:
   a. 50% or more are minority students (i.e., Either African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, orHispanic, and/or of two or more races).
   b. 50% or more are eligibleEligible for participation in the free and reduced-price lunch program (or other appropriate indicator of poverty status)
b.

Districts that are very near to meeting a particular eligibility requirement may be

considered eligible if they request to participate in the program and if funds are sufficient to permit participation. Eligibility data shall be updated and verified regularly.

Application and Selection Process

1. A letter of application from urban districts seeking to participate in TUDA should be submitted to the Executive Director of the Governing Board**.**

2**.** The Executive Director of the Governing Board and appropriate staff of the Governing Board shall review applications in consultation with the Chairman of the Governing Board, the Chairman of the Board's Committee on Standards, Design and Methodology, staff of the National Center for Education Statistics, and the Executive Director of Council of the Great City Schools.

3. The Executive Director of the Governing Board shall recommend new districts for participation in TUDA to the Governing Board for final action.

4. The Executive Director of the Governing Board shall send notification of the Board's decision regarding district participation in TUDA to the district and to the Commissioner of Education Statistics.

5. Districts must be accepted for participation at least 14 months prior to the first assessment cycle for their participation in TUDA.

Potential Pool of Eligible Districts

The list of eligible districts shall be posted on the website of the National Assessment Governing Board (www.nagb.org) and made publicly available through other appropriate means. The list of districts will change from time to time due to changes in the population of the district and the district setting.

District Eligibility for TUDA
(Common Core of Data 2010-2011)

Current Criteria		Proposed Clarified Criteria	
ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	NM	ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	NM
ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS	GA	ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS	GA
AUSTIN ISD	TX	AUSTIN ISD	TX
BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	MD	BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	MD
BOSTON	MA	BOSTON	MA
CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS	NC	CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS	NC
CITY OF CHICAGO SD 299	IL	CITY OF CHICAGO SD 299	IL
CLEVELAND MUNICIPAL	OH	CLEVELAND MUNICIPAL	OH
DALLAS ISD	TX	DALLAS ISD	TX
DETROIT CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT	MI	DETROIT CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT	MI
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS	DC	DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS	DC
FRESNO UNIFIED	CA	FRESNO UNIFIED	CA
HILLSBOROUGH	FL	HILLSBOROUGH	FL
HOUSTON ISD	TX	HOUSTON ISD	TX
JEFFERSON COUNTY	KY	JEFFERSON COUNTY	KY
LOS ANGELES UNIFIED	CA	LOS ANGELES UNIFIED	CA
MIAMI DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	FL	MIAMI DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	FL
MILWAUKEE SCHOOL DISTRICT	WI	MILWAUKEE SCHOOL DISTRICT	WI
NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	NY	NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	NY
PHILADELPHIA CITY SD	PA	PHILADELPHIA CITY SD	PA
SAN DIEGO UNIFIED	CA	SAN DIEGO UNIFIED	CA
CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	NV	CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	NV
CYPRESS-FAIRBANKS ISD	TX	CYPRESS-FAIRBANKS ISD	TX
DAVIDSON COUNTY	TN	DAVIDSON COUNTY	TN
DUVAL	FL	DUVAL	FL
EL PASO ISD	TX	EL PASO ISD	TX
ELK GROVE UNIFIED	CA	ELK GROVE UNIFIED	CA
FORT BEND ISD	TX	FORT BEND ISD	TX
FORT WORTH ISD	TX	FORT WORTH ISD	TX
GUILFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS	NC	GUILFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS	NC
LONG BEACH UNIFIED	CA	LONG BEACH UNIFIED	CA
MEMPHIS	TN	MEMPHIS	TN
MESA UNIFIED DISTRICT	AZ	MESA UNIFIED DISTRICT	AZ
NORTH EAST ISD	TX	NORTH EAST ISD	TX
NORTHSIDE ISD	TX	NORTHSIDE ISD	TX
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1 IN THE COUNTY OF DENVER	CO	SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1 IN THE COUNTY OF DENVER	CO
		KATY ISD	TX
		WAKE COUNTY SCHOOLS	NC

Current Participants

Additional Eligibles

Knowledge and Skills Accessible Study (KaSA)

Introduction and Goals

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is often characterized as an assessment program of broadly defined constructs that is focused on measuring a wide range of performance levels. Over the last decade, this range has expanded considerably with the introduction of the Trial Urban District Assessment as well as the NAEP Mathematics assessment of Puerto Rico in grades 4 and 8. Since 2003, various Puerto Rico assessments have been conducted and they have not been without challenges. While several procedures were modified to address some of the challenges (e.g., different translations, additional assessment time), the core challenge is that a typical NAEP mathematics assessment measures those student groups very well that have average abilities at the middle and upper ends of the NAEP scale, but it is not geared toward the lower end. Combined with the generally low performance levels observed in Puerto Rico public schools, the result is below chance-level performance and high non-response. This, in turn, has yielded unstable, implausible average scores, particularly when looking at trends. To address this misalignment of the NAEP mathematics instrument for student groups with abilities near the lower end of the ability scale, NCES developed the Knowledge and Skills Accessible (KaSA) study with the goals of measuring low performing groups with reasonable accuracy and reporting results from Puerto Rico on the NAEP scale. Note that the desire to better measure low performing groups is a more general goal, beyond Puerto Rico.

As part of the study, KaSA items were developed to address a targeted subset of the NAEP mathematics framework, representing subtopics and objectives in appropriate proportions. While KaSA items are written to address framework objectives, the pool of items does not span the breadth of the framework. In terms of item types, the number of multiple choice items is relatively large in the KaSA item pool; and approximately 70% of the items are of low mathematical complexity, as defined in the framework, and the remainder are of moderate complexity. In comparison, operational assessments have a target of 25% low complexity. For each grade, 60 KaSA items were developed and placed in four 15-item KaSA blocks. The KaSA items were translated to Puerto Rican Spanish for administration in Puerto Rico.

Research Design

In 2011, the KaSA blocks were administered to a representative sample of public school students in Puerto Rico. The goal of the investigation was to report average scores for Puerto Rico on the main NAEP Mathematics scale. Three booklet types were developed: a pair of KaSA blocks, a KaSA block paired with an operational block, and a pair of operational blocks. The scale was developed based on operational items only; then the KaSA items were placed on the scale. To further strengthen the desired link between KaSA and the main assessment, as well as to investigate other potential uses of KaSA items outside of Puerto Rico, a special national U.S. sample also received KaSA books along with books that paired KaSA blocks with main assessment blocks. Below is a table that clarifies the various components and a figure that provides a visual schematic of the components. Sample sizes for the Puerto Rico components were approximately 4,400, while the national components yielded 6,800 and 4,600 for grade 4 and 8, respectively.

Instrument and sample components of the 2011 KaSA study

Sample	Instrument	Contents	Number of Books	Percentage of Students Assessed
Puerto Rico	KaSA	Two KaSA blocks	12	41%
	Mixed	One KaSA, one operational	16	41%
	Main	Two operational blocks	10	18%
National	KaSA	Two KaSA blocks	12	45%
	Mixed	One KaSA, one operational	16	55%
	Main	Main Assessment	50	N/A (150k+)

Schematic of components of the 2011 KaSA study
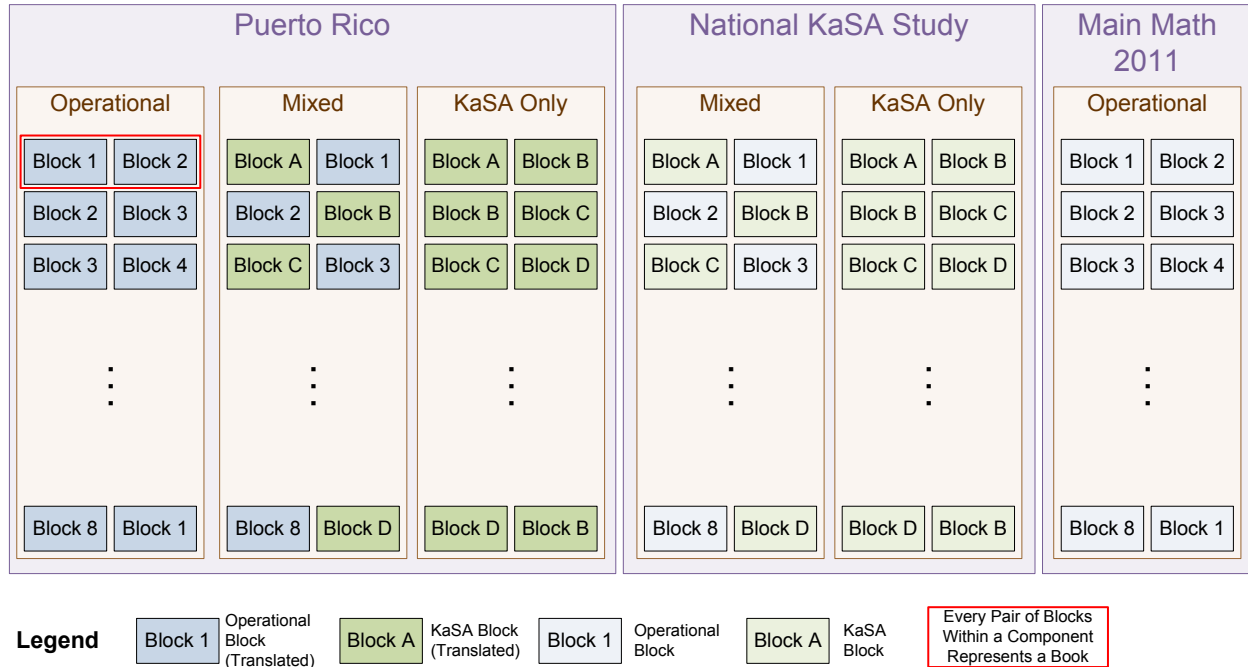
Current Status and Results

The analysis has been completed and results have been discussed with Puerto Rico representatives. The results themselves are under embargo, but the following findings in relation to the measurement aspects of the study can be shared:

- The KaSA item pool yielded lower omit rates and a larger above-chance level student performance compared to the operational items in the Puerto Rico sample.
- The KaSA item pool provided more precise measurement of the performance levels typically found in Puerto Rico compared to the operational item pool.
- Better model-data fit could be obtained in Puerto Rico using the KaSA items than was found for the operational items.
- It appears that Puerto Rico results can be placed on the NAEP scale through the KaSA items and the links established through the national sample. However, given the history of performance on NAEP by students in Puerto Rico, it will be necessary to evaluate the stability of these findings across years to verify the stability of the estimates.

These points will be discussed in more detail during the presentation.

Future Plans

In terms of next steps for Puerto Rico, it is critical to evaluate the success of KaSA in terms of trend as indicated above. Therefore, a replication of the study, using the same KaSA blocks and instrument and sample design, is planned for 2013. Outside of Puerto Rico, these blocks could be used to include more students with an Individualized Education Plan and/or designated as English Language Learner. A special study was conducted in 2011 and it was shown that increased participation could be obtained if KaSA items were available. Finally, development of KaSA and similar efforts serve the goal of enabling NAEP instruments to measure a wider range of abilities accurately and to provide exemplars of what students typically know and can do at various levels located at the lower end of the performance scale. For example, KaSA blocks could serve well as targeted later-stage content for a multi-stage testing approach to NAEP. That is, students exhibiting relatively low performance during a first-stage block could be routed to a KaSA block during the second stage.

Mathematics Computer Based Study (MCBS)

Introduction and Goals

In 2011, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) conducted a special study called the Mathematics Computer Based Study (MCBS) to start assessing the benefits of adaptive testing for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and to develop knowledge and experience about implementing an operational adaptive testing in the context of a group-score assessment. Adaptive testing in this context means that performance during earlier parts of an administration (e.g., stage 1) is used to determine what items a student receives during later parts (e.g., stage 2). The goal is to match the difficulty level of the test as closely as possible to the performance level of the student. A student who does not answer many questions correctly on an initial set of items subsequently receives a less difficult set of items, while a student who gets many questions correct on the initial set receives a more difficult set of items. The psychometric models used in NAEP, specifically Item Response Theory (IRT) models, make it statistically possible to adjust properly for the varying difficulty of the different sets of items. Therefore, results obtained under adaptive testing should be equally valid and comparable to those obtained under the current matrix sample design.

The following research questions were pursued in this study:

1. How do the results (group averages and achievement level percentages) obtained under one approach to adaptive testing (i.e., multi-stage testing, MST) compare to those obtained under the current design from the main assessment?
2. To what degree did the MST approach increase the precision (i.e., reduce the standard error) of the group-level results reported by NAEP? How successful was the MST adaptive approach used in this study at routing students to the optimal item set in terms of their performance level?

In addition to these questions, the study collected some information about engagement to assess whether a test targeted towards a student's ability level increases the level of engagement with the assessment.

Research Design

The study was conducted with the nationally representative sample of 8th graders using standard NAEP sampling procedures. The total instrument consisted of five blocks of mathematics items from the 2011 operational and pilot assessments... Only items that could be translated directly from a paper- to a computer-based format were selected. The relatively small percentage (i.e., 23%) of items in NAEP that require drawing, producing complex equations, and using auxiliary materials (e.g., protractor) were not included in the study. The five blocks included two routing blocks and three targeted blocks. The assessment itself was designed as a two-stage test, where one of the two routing blocks was administered in stage 1 and one of the targeted blocks in stage 2 for a total of two blocks per student – the same number of blocks given to each student in the main NAEP assessment. The routing blocks were in terms of the distribution of difficulties similar to operational blocks. The targeted blocks were Easy, Medium, and Hard, targeting low, medium, and high performers, respectively.

Despite the aforementioned restrictions on the item pool, the instrument does reflect the content distribution targets (i.e., the proportion of items in each subcontent area) described in the framework. However, the item pool for the MCBS did have a lower proportion of constructed-response items than does the full NAEP item pool. In particular, the first-stage (or routing) blocks consisted entirely of multiple-choice items to facilitate immediate scoring without the need for automated scoring engines.

Percentage of items distributed across content areas by block and across blocks, including the framework targets for the assessment

Block	Numbers & Operations	Measurement	Geometry	Data Analysis, Statistics, & Probability	Algebra
Routing Block A	18	18	18	12	35
Routing Block B	24	18	18	12	29
Easy Block	19	13	19	13	38
Medium Block	19	13	19	19	31
Hard Block	19	13	19	19	31
Total	**20**	**15**	**18**	**15**	**33**
Framework Target	**20**	**15**	**20**	**15**	**30**

A total of 8,400 students participated in this study, which used an experimental design. About 40% of the students were randomly selected in the experimental sample and, therefore, 60% in the control sample. This distribution was by design to ensure a target sample of 1,500 students per item in the control group. The adaptive design used was a Two-Stage Test, containing two distinct stages and a single decision point. In the experimental group, students received one of the two routing blocks during the first stage and, based on their performance, either the Easy, Medium, or Hard block was presented during the second stage. In the control group, the second stage block was randomly assigned--not based on performance. Figure 1 graphically represents the design of the study in terms of routing and routing decisions. The delivery system captured all student-computer interactions, including time stamps.

Status and Schedule

The core analyses for this study have been completed and a summary will be provided during a closed session of the committee. These results will include:
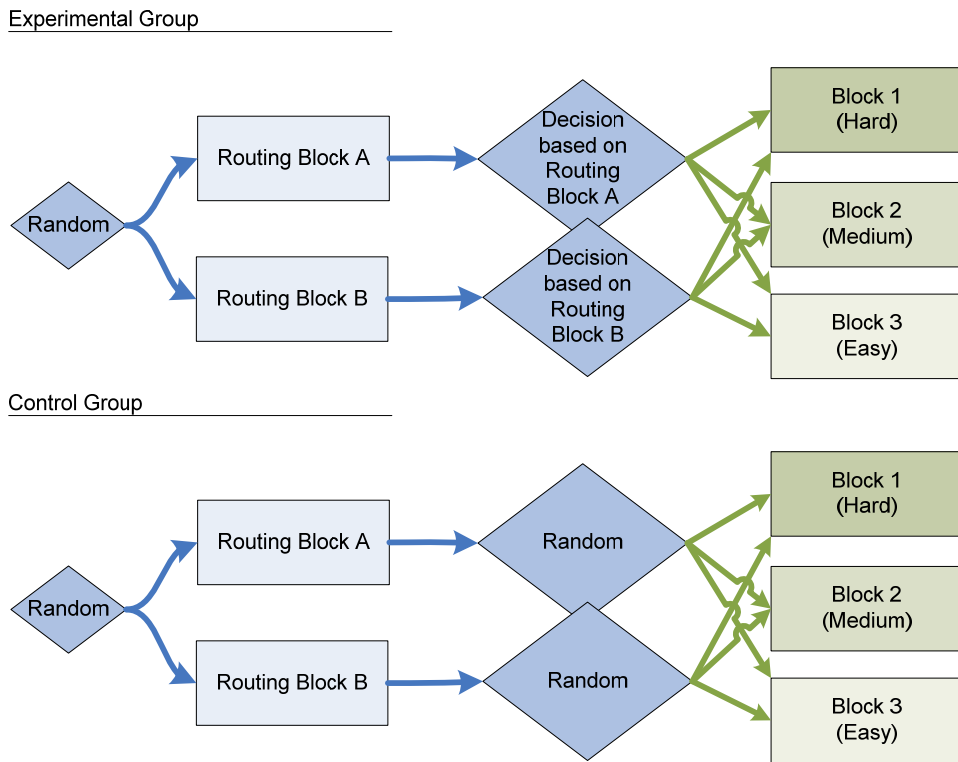
- Basic performance differences between conditions
- Routing accuracy and routing percentages by student group
- Differences in measurement error at the student and group levels

Extended analyses are currently being completed, which include the use of response time to detect engagement as well as the analysis of response patterns, independently and in relation to performance. In addition, a research memorandum is under development that provides, in addition to the core results, details about scaling methodologies and considerations for student group estimation.

Plans for Future Research

At this point, no specific plans for future research have been finalized. In terms of item development, the focus is changing towards computer based assessments, particularly in terms of taking advantage of technology, and meeting the statistical requirements associated with developing effective multi-stage tests. In terms of design, some simulation work is ensuing around determining optimal designs and using effective measures to evaluate different designs. In addition, some further work is required that focuses on effectively maintaining trends under an adaptive approach.

Routing sequence and design of the study

Experimental Group

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Random → Routing Block A → Decision based on Routing Block A
Random → Routing Block B → Decision based on Routing Block B
→ Block 1 (Hard)
→ Block 2 (Medium)
→ Block 3 (Easy)
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Control Group

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Random → Routing Block A → Random
Random → Routing Block B → Random
→ Block 1 (Hard)
→ Block 2 (Medium)
→ Block 3 (Easy)
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Setting Achievement Levels for the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress in Writing for Grades 8 and 12
CLOSED SESSION
Susan Cooper Loomis

A timeline of key events leading up to the policy decision by the National Assessment Governing Board to set achievement levels for the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for writing at grades 8 and 12 is presented at the end of this overview. The Committee on Standards, Design and Methodology (COSDAM) is scheduled to take action on May 18, 2012 regarding its recommendation for Board approval of the achievement levels on May 19, 2012.

COSDAM has been updated about the activities and presented with preliminary findings at each quarterly committee meeting since the contract for developing achievement levels was awarded in September 2010. The complete set of data recommendations and achievement levels were presented to COSDAM at the March 2, 2012 meeting. Exemplar performances for each achievement level were also presented, but some substitutions have been made in response to suggestions from COSDAM members. The achievement levels descriptions are presented as Attachment D-1, but the cut scores, percentages of students performing at or above each, and the exemplar performances remain secure until the release of the Nation's Report Card. Those materials will be presented in the ***closed session***.

The first fully computerized National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was administered in 2011 for writing at grades 8 and 12. Writing tasks were presented in a variety of formats including written documents and instructions, video clips, and audio clips. A demonstration of the computer-based writing assessment will be presented to the Governing Board during the closed session following Committee meetings on May 18, 2012.

For the writing achievement levels setting (ALS) process, the Body of Work (BoW) method was the process implemented for panelists to judge student performances relative to the NAEP achievement levels descriptions for Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. The Body of Work method is a holistic judgmental process whereby student work is judged according to criteria (NAEP achievement levels descriptions) and classified accordingly. Performances judged to be lower than the description of the Basic achievement level were to be classified as below Basic. Achievement levels-setting panels include teachers, other educators, and representatives of the general public. All panelists must have training or experience in the subject matter, and the panelists for writing included several published authors.

A total of 100 student booklets were evaluated by each panelist relative to the achievement levels descriptions. Panelists were first given 50 booklets to classify. They used the same 50 booklets to classify booklets two times, with feedback and discussions after each classification. Cut scores were computed for each panelist, and the grade level cut score was computed as the
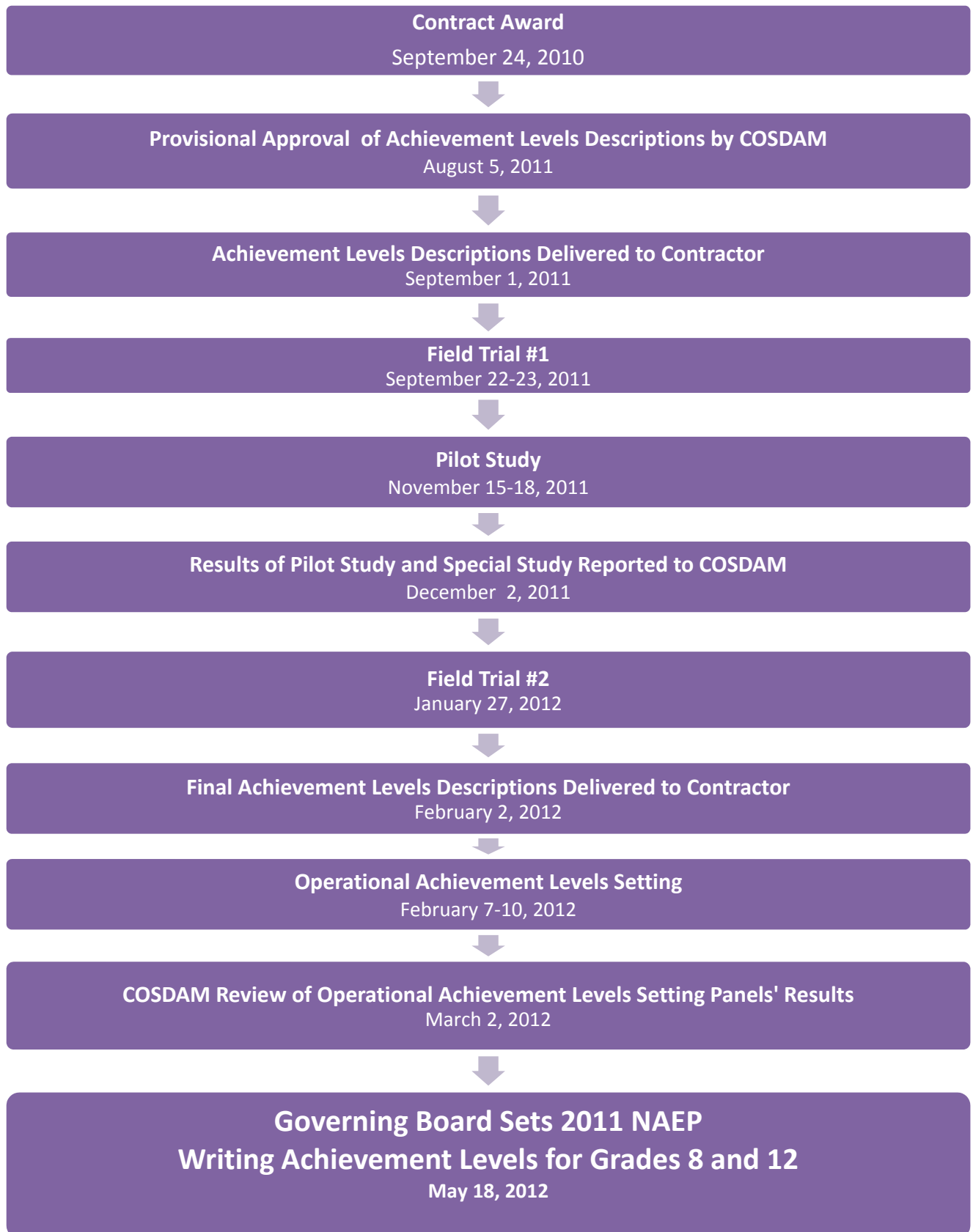
median of the panelists' cut scores for each grade. A different set of 50 booklets were distributed for the third round of classifications, and the third classifications were used to compute the final cut scores. Panelists were given data on the percentages of students that performed at or above the cut scores set for each achievement levels in each grade group before the final round of judgments and following that round.

The Body of Work method was fully computerized for the NAEP writing achievement levels-setting process. A demonstration of the software and achievement levels-setting procedure will be presented to the Governing Board on May 18, 2012 in closed session following the Committee meetings.

COSDAM will take **action** on the following:
1. Achievement levels descriptions (see Attachment D-1)
2. Cut scores for each achievement level (Basic, Proficient, and Advanced) and percentages of students performing at or above each cut score (provided in closed session)
3. Student responses to writing tasks for grades 8 and 12 that have been identified for public release. These student responses were recommended by a majority of panelists as appropriate illustrations of performance required at each level of achievement. (provided in closed session)

Chronology of Key Events for Setting Achievement Levels for the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress Grades 8 and 12

Contract Award
September 24, 2010

Provisional Approval of Achievement Levels Descriptions by COSDAM
August 5, 2011

Achievement Levels Descriptions Delivered to Contractor
September 1, 2011

Field Trial #1
September 22-23, 2011

Pilot Study
November 15-18, 2011

Results of Pilot Study and Special Study Reported to COSDAM
December 2, 2011

Field Trial #2
January 27, 2012

Final Achievement Levels Descriptions Delivered to Contractor
February 2, 2012

Operational Achievement Levels Setting
February 7-10, 2012

COSDAM Review of Operational Achievement Levels Setting Panels' Results
March 2, 2012

Governing Board Sets 2011 NAEP Writing Achievement Levels for Grades 8 and 12
May 18, 2012

WRITING ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS DESCRIPTIONS FOR GRADE 4

BASIC

Fourth-grade students writing at the Basic level should be able to address the tasks appropriately and at least partially accomplish their communicative purposes. Texts should be appropriately structured. Many of the ideas in the texts should be developed, and their texts should include supporting details and examples that are relevant to the topic, purpose, and audience. Most sentences should be well structured, and texts may be composed mostly of simple sentences. Many of the words and phrases should be appropriate to the topics, purposes, and audiences. Spelling, grammar, usage, capitalization, and punctuation skills should be sufficiently accurate to convey general meaning, although there may be some errors that detract from meaning.

PROFICIENT

Fourth-grade students writing at the Proficient level should be able to address the tasks appropriately and accomplish their communicative purposes. Texts should be appropriately structured and coherent. Most of the ideas in their texts should be developed effectively, and their texts should include supporting details and examples that support the main ideas. Texts should have well structured sentences and a variety of sentence types—simple, compound, and complex. Words and phrases should be thoughtfully selected and appropriate to the topics, purposes, and audiences. Spelling, grammar, usage, capitalization, and punctuation should be sufficiently accurate to communicate clearly with the reader. There may be some errors in the texts, but these errors should not impede meaning.

ADVANCED

Fourth-grade students writing at the Advanced level should be able to address the tasks appropriately and accomplish their communicative purposes in effective ways. Texts should be well structured and coherent. The ideas in the texts should be developed fully and effectively. Their texts should include supporting details and examples that are closely related to the topic, purpose, and audience and that enhance communicative effectiveness. Sentences should be well structured, and texts should include a variety of sentence types (simple, compound, and complex) to enhance their communicative effectiveness. Words and phrases should be chosen skillfully, and they should both enrich meaning in the texts and enhance communicative effectiveness. Spelling, grammar, usage, capitalization, and punctuation should be mostly accurate and well developed, and they should be used appropriately. Grammatical, mechanical, and usage choices should contribute to communicative effectiveness. There may be a few errors, but they should not impede meaning.

WRITING ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS DESCRIPTIONS FOR GRADE 8

BASIC

Eighth-grade students writing at the Basic level should be able to address the tasks appropriately and mostly accomplish their communicative purposes. Their texts should be coherent and effectively structured. Many of the ideas in their texts should be developed effectively. Supporting details and examples should be relevant to the main ideas they support. Voice should align with the topic, purpose, and audience. Texts should include appropriately varied uses of simple, compound, and complex sentences. Words and phrases should be relevant to the topics, purposes, and audiences. Knowledge of spelling, grammar, usage, capitalization, and punctuation should be made evident; however, there may be some errors in the texts that impede meaning.

PROFICIENT

Eighth-grade students writing at the Proficient level should be able to develop responses that clearly accomplish their communicative purposes. Their texts should be coherent and well structured, and they should include appropriate connections and transitions. Most of the ideas in the texts should be developed logically, coherently, and effectively. Supporting details and examples should be relevant to the main ideas they support, and contribute to overall communicative effectiveness. Voice should be relevant to the tasks and support communicative effectiveness. Texts should include a variety of simple, compound, and complex sentence types combined effectively. Words and phrases should be chosen thoughtfully and used in ways that contribute to communicative effectiveness. Solid knowledge of spelling, grammar, usage, capitalization, and punctuation should be evident throughout the texts. There may be some errors, but these errors should not impede meaning.

ADVANCED

Eighth-grade students writing at the Advanced level should be able to construct skillful responses that accomplish their communicative purposes effectively. Their texts should be coherent and well structured throughout, and they should include effective connections and transitions. Ideas in the texts should be developed logically, coherently, and effectively. Supporting details and examples should skillfully and effectively support and extend the main ideas in the texts. Voice should be distinct and enhance communicative effectiveness. Texts should include a well-chosen variety of sentence types, and the sentence structure variations should enhance communicative effectiveness. Words and phrases should be chosen strategically, with precision, and in ways that enhance communicative effectiveness. An extensive knowledge of spelling, grammar, usage, capitalization, and punctuation should be evident throughout the texts. Appropriate use of these features should enhance communicative effectiveness. There may be a few errors, but these errors should not impede meaning.

WRITING ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS DESCRIPTIONS FOR GRADE 12

BASIC

Twelfth-grade students writing at the Basic level should be able to respond effectively to the tasks and accomplish their communicative purposes. Their texts should be coherent and well structured. Most of the ideas in their texts should be developed effectively. Relevant details and examples should be used to support and extend the main ideas in the texts. Voice should support the communicative purposes of the texts. Texts should include appropriately varied simple, compound, and complex sentence types. Words and phrases should be suitable for the topics, purposes, and audiences. Substantial knowledge of spelling, grammar, usage, capitalization, and punctuation should be clearly evident. There may be some errors in the texts, but these errors should not generally impede meaning.

PROFICIENT

Twelfth-grade students writing at the Proficient level should address the tasks effectively and fully accomplish their communicative purposes. Their texts should be coherent and well structured with respect to these purposes, and they should include well-crafted and effective connections and transitions. Their ideas should be developed in a logical, clear, and effective manner. Relevant details and examples should support and extend the main ideas of the texts and contribute to their overall communicative effectiveness. Voice should be relevant to the tasks and contribute to overall communicative effectiveness. . Texts should include a variety of simple, compound, and complex sentence types that contribute to overall communicative effectiveness. Words and phrases should be chosen purposefully and used skillfully to enhance the effectiveness of the texts. A solid knowledge of spelling, grammar, usage, capitalization, and punctuation should be evident throughout the texts. There may be some errors in the texts, but they should not impede meaning.

ADVANCED

Twelfth-grade students writing at the Advanced level should be able to address the tasks strategically, fully accomplish their communicative purposes, and demonstrate a skillful and creative approach to constructing and delivering their messages. Their texts should be coherent and well structured; they should include skillfully constructed and effective connections and transitions; and they should be rhetorically powerful. All of the ideas in their texts should be developed clearly, logically, effectively, and in focused and sophisticated ways. Supporting details and examples should be well crafted; they should skillfully support and extend the main ideas; and they should strengthen both communicative effectiveness and rhetorical power of the texts. A distinct voice that enhances the communicative effectiveness and rhetorical power of the texts should be evident. Texts should include a variety of sentence structures and types that are skillfully crafted and enhance communicative effectiveness and rhetorical power. Words and phrases should be chosen purposefully, with precision, and in ways that enhance communicative effectiveness and rhetorical power. A highly developed knowledge of spelling, grammar, usage, capitalization, and punctuation should be evident throughout the texts and function in ways that enhance communicative effectiveness and rhetorical power. There may be a few errors in the texts, but they should not impede meaning.