

# Changing Demographics in the U.S. Student Population: Implications for NAEP

## Background

At the March 2012 Governing Board meeting, member Leticia Van de Putte spoke of the recently completed 2010 U.S. Census and the rapidly changing demographics in our nation. Leticia stated that it is very important for the Board to understand what our student demographics will look like in five years, ten years, and 20 years so that the Board's decisions are informed by these demographic changes. She requested that the Board hear from expert demographers at an upcoming meeting and discuss implications for NAEP policy.

## The Panel

Board staff have convened a panel consisting of two nationally-recognized demographers and a senior representative from the American Institutes for Research with expertise in student demographics and educational measurement. The panel members are:

- **Steve H. Murdock:** Professor of Sociology at Rice University in Houston, Texas. Dr. Rice served as the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau from 2007-2009 and has published numerous books and articles on the implications of current and future demographic and socioeconomic change. He also served as the official State Demographer of Texas, the first person to occupy this position.
- **Linda A. Jacobsen:** Vice President of Domestic Programs at the Population Reference Bureau (PRB), a nonpartisan research organization located in Washington, DC. Dr. Jacobsen has more than 30 years of experience analyzing U.S. population trends and their implications. She co-authored two U.S. Census Bureau handbooks on the American Community Survey and uses NAEP achievement data in developing national publications.
- **George W. Bohrnstedt:** Senior Vice President for Research (Emeritus) at the American Institutes for Research (AIR). Dr. Bohrnstedt chairs the NCES NAEP Validity Studies (NVS) Panel, which develops a validity research agenda for NCES. NVS provides an independent review of NAEP validity research and conducts many validity research studies, including several on the impact of changing demographics on NAEP trends.

A more detailed biographical sketch for each panel member is included in this section of the May Board briefing materials.

## Discussion

Following their presentations, the panel members will engage in a question and answer session. Board members may wish to consider some of the discussion questions below, in addition to other issues raised during the presentations.

- How can NAEP validly report on changes in achievement trends given changing student demographics?
- How are changes in race/ethnicity likely to affect reporting trends in academic achievement for student subgroups in the years ahead, particularly for reporting achievement gaps?
- Will reporting by race/ethnicity become obsolete in the future and if so, how can NAEP use Census data to help monitor the progress of groups with educational disadvantages?
- What areas should NAEP explore to improve collection of socio economic (SES) measures for students?
- How can technology be used to improve the collection and reporting of demographic information for NAEP?
- Are there viable links to be made between NAEP and U.S. Census data in the future?
- Does the panel have recommendations for improving the use and reporting of NAEP background (non-cognitive) questions in light of changing demographics? Are there new background variables to consider given our nation's shifting demographics?

## **Steve H. Murdock, Ph.D.**

Steve H. Murdock is the Allyn R. and Gladys M. Cline Professor of Sociology at Rice University. He previously served as Director of the U.S. Bureau of the Census having been nominated for the position by President Bush and unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 2007 and serving until the change in administration in January of 2009.

Prior to his appointment at Rice, he was the Lutcher Brown Distinguished Chair in Demography and Organization Studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and the Director of the Institute for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research. Before UTSA, Murdock was a Regents Professor and Head of the Department of Rural Sociology at Texas A&M University. He was also the official State Demographer of Texas. He was appointed to this position by Governor Rick Perry and was the first person to occupy this position.

Dr. Murdock earned his Ph.D. in demography and sociology from the University of Kentucky and is the author or editor of 13 books and more than 150 articles and technical reports on the implications of current and future demographic and socioeconomic change. He is the recipient of numerous honors and awards. These include the Faculty Distinguished Achievement Award in Research from Texas A&M University, the Excellence in Research Award and the Outstanding Rural Sociologist Award from the Rural Sociological Society, The Distinguished Alumni Award from North Dakota State University and the Distinguished Alumni Award from the Department of Sociology at the University of Kentucky He is a member of the Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, and Phi Eta Epsilon national honor societies.

## **Linda A. Jacobsen, Ph.D.**

Linda A. Jacobsen is Vice President of Domestic Programs at the Population Reference Bureau (PRB), a nonpartisan research organization in Washington, DC. Dr. Jacobsen is a demographer with more than 30 years of experience analyzing U.S. population trends and their implications. Her research has focused on family and household demography, population estimates and projections, and poverty and inequality. She is co-author of PRB's recent *Population Bulletin*, "U.S. Economic and Social Trends since 2000", and has been a featured speaker on U.S. demographic trends at the Knight Center for Specialized Journalism and at Harvard University's Program for Newly Elected Members of Congress.

Dr. Jacobsen has extensive research experience with the American Community Survey (ACS) and co-authored two of the U.S. Census Bureau's handbooks for understanding and using ACS data. She is currently serving on the steering committee for an upcoming National Academy of Sciences (NAS) workshop on the ACS, as well as an NAS Panel addressing priority technical issues for the next decade of the ACS. Dr. Jacobsen is chair of the Government and Public Affairs Committee of the Population Association of America, Chair-elect of the Social Statistics Section of the American Statistical Association, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics.

Prior to joining PRB in 2005, Dr. Jacobsen was a senior executive and chief demographer for two leading marketing information companies; the research director at *American Demographics* magazine; and a faculty member at both Cornell University and the University of Iowa, where she conducted research and taught graduate studies in sociology and demography. She holds an M.S. and a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a B.A. in sociology from Reed College.

## **George W. Bohrnstedt, Ph.D.**

George W. Bohrnstedt is Senior Vice President for Research (Emeritus) at the American Institutes for Research. He currently chairs the National Center for Education Statistics' NAEP Validity Studies (NVS) Panel. The NVS panel develops a validity research agenda for the National Center of Education Statistics, carries out some of those studies and provides an independent review of other validity research done for NCES. Bohrnstedt is also the Principal Investigator of the NCES-funded State NAEP Analysis Contract. The NAEP State Analysis provides the National Center for Education Statistics the technical and analytical support necessary to design, conduct, and report in-depth, thematic studies of student achievement on State NAEP assessments. He was also the project director for the National Academy of Education's multi-year evaluation of Trial State NAEP, a project which examined a number of validity issues such as inclusion of students with disabilities, the content of the NAEP assessments, and the NAEP achievement levels. He currently serves as a consultant on AIR's ESSIN contract which provides a broad set of services to NCES related to NAEP.

Dr. Bohrnstedt is also the Principal Investigator of an on-going evaluation of the Say Yes Foundation's effort to improve college-going in the Syracuse City School District. He was the Principal Investigator of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation-funded evaluation of their initiative to create small, personalized high schools as a way to improve academic performance of inner city children. Finally, he directed AIR's evaluation of the College Board's Equity 2000 program – the first national effort to push for the completion of algebra for all students by the end of their freshman year.

Dr. Bohrnstedt had a 20-year career in academia before joining AIR. He served as chairman of the sociology departments at both the University of Minnesota and Indiana University. He also has served as co-editor of the American Sociological Association's yearbook, *Sociological*

*Methodology* and also has been editor and co-editor of *Sociological Methods and Research* and *Social Psychology Quarterly* and served as Chair of the ASA's Section on Methodology. Finally, he has been a Fellow at Stanford University's Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences, a Belding Scholar at the Foundation for Child Development, and as an inaugural fellow of the American Education Research Association.