

# National Assessment Governing Board Reporting and Dissemination Committee

**February 28, 2014**  
**10:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.**

## AGENDA

10:00 – 10:25 am	Board Input into 2014 NAEP Reports: U.S. History, Civics, and Geography <i>Arnold Goldstein, NCES</i> <i>Stephaan Harris, NAGB Staff</i>	Attachment A
10:25 – 11:00 am	Contextual Question Modules: Education Indicators, SES, and Non-Cognitive Contributors to Achievement <i>James Deaton, NCES</i> <i>Jonas Bertling, ETS</i>	Attachment B
11:00 – 11:10 am	<b>ACTION:</b> Release Plans for NAEP Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade 4 Computer-Based Writing</li> <li>• Grade 12 Reading and Mathematics</li> </ul> <i>Stephaan Harris, NAGB Staff</i>	Attachment C
11:10 – 11:30 am	Communications Plan <i>Stephaan Harris, NAGB Staff</i> <i>Amy Buckley, Reingold</i>	Attachment D
11:30 – 11:50 am	Embargo Policy for National Assessment Reports <i>Stephaan Harris, NAGB Staff</i>	Attachment E
11:50 – 12:10 pm	Reporting on Puerto Rico NAEP <i>Emmanuel Sikali, NCES</i>	Attachment F
12:10 – 12:15 pm	<b>Information Items:</b> Implementation of SD/ELL Policy Projected Schedule for Future NAEP Reports Review of Release: 2013 TUDA in Reading and Math	Attachment G Attachment H Attachment I



## Governing Board and Committee Input into Reporting NAEP Results

The Reporting and Dissemination Committee is continuing an ongoing discussion on its role in the reporting, release, and dissemination of National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results. The Committee desires more input at the beginning, or conception, phase of report development, rather than solely providing feedback on a late-stage draft report. The goal is to have input at a “big picture” level rather than to provide edits to report drafts. Additionally, being mindful of a changing and competitive media landscape and the need to make NAEP relevant and meaningful to a diverse group of audiences, the Committee is also exploring how NAEP data can best be featured and distributed via Report Cards and electronic tools.

The Committee has expressed interest in examining how their role might change while preserving the distinct and legal roles and responsibilities of the Governing Board, which sets policy for NAEP, and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which assesses the students, analyzes the data, and uses the findings to draft NAEP reports. The Governing Board’s NAEP reporting, release, and dissemination policy (in full below), adopted in 2006, was used as a starting point for this discussion.

After the Board meeting in August 2013, Committee Chair Andrés Alonso requested Board and NCES staff to begin collaboration on possible ideas to achieve the Committee’s goals. At the December 2013 meeting, the Committee discussed four ideas brought by Board and NCES staff that members found favorable:

- **Pre-Data Discussions:** Committee members discussing 2014 NAEP reports, without data, and contributing general feedback that can inform visioning meetings conducted by NCES and its NAEP contractors where data and report structure will be discussed.
- **Singling Out Topics:** Committee members suggesting topics within a subject they think the public might be especially interested in and the NAEP website highlighting those.
- **Site Questions:** Committee members suggesting ideas for the main questions on the interactive NAEP website through which performance summaries and charts and tables are structured.
- **Ideas for NAEP Website Graphics:** Committee members can suggest general ideas for potential trends, comparisons, etc., that would be make for a good chart or table.

At this meeting, the Committee will begin discussion on three 2014 NAEP reports currently being assessed in grade 8 on the national level: U.S. History, Civics, and Geography. Below is general information about those reports to stimulate discussion.

## **Plans for Reporting 2014 Social Studies Subjects: Civics, Geography, U.S. History**

The 2014 NAEP assessments in civics, geography, and U.S. history are presently being administered (February 2014). These assessments are being conducted at grade 8 only. The national-only samples consist of: civics, 8,000 students; geography, 8,000 students; U.S. history, 10,000 students. About 460 schools are involved. The samples include both public schools (including charter schools) and private schools.

The assessment frameworks are the same as those used for the previous assessments in these subjects. Civics was assessed in 2010, 2006, and 1998; geography was assessed in 2010, 2001, and 1994; and U.S. history was assessed in 2010, 2006, 2001, and 1994.

Results will be presented through our interactive website in terms of average scale scores and percentages of students scoring at the NAEP achievement levels (below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced). The NAEP Report Cards in these subjects will feature performance trends for students nationally, and for demographic groups including gender, race/ethnicity, eligibility for the National School Lunch Program (a measure of family income), level of parents' education, type of school (public or private), and for English language learners and students with disabilities. Other characteristics, such as type of location (city, suburb, town, rural) and region of the country will be available.

In each report, examples of test items and how students performed will be identified that reflect on specific areas of the framework, such as the working of government (civics), relationships between countries (geography), or historical periods (U.S. history). Of course, the items we include will be among those we collectively decide to release.

NAEP collects a variety of student, teacher, and school characteristics. These “contextual” variables will be analyzed to identify interesting relationships with performance or changes over time in the frequency of occurrence. These characteristics relate to students' classroom experience, teacher qualifications and instructional practices, school climate, and other characteristics of interest that NAEP collects through its survey questionnaires.

NCES will address to the extent the data permit the issues that Governing Board members consider important to include. We look forward to your ideas and input.

**National Assessment Governing Board**  
**Reporting, Release, and Dissemination of NAEP Results**  
**Policy Statement**

**Adopted: August 4, 2006**

***The Nation's Report Card<sup>TM</sup> informs the public about the academic achievement of elementary and secondary students in the United States. Report cards communicate the findings of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the only continuing and nationally representative measure of achievement in various subjects over time. The Nation's Report Card compares performance among states, urban districts, public and private schools, and student demographic groups.***

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## **Introduction**

NAEP collects data through representative-sample surveys and reports fair and accurate information on academic achievement to the American public. By law (P.L. 107-110, as amended by P.L. 107-279), NAEP is administered by the Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) under policy set by the National Assessment Governing Board ("the Governing Board"), a bipartisan, independent policymaking body.

According to the statute, the Governing Board shall exercise "independent judgment, free from inappropriate influences and special interests" and in the exercise of its responsibilities, "shall be independent of the Secretary and the other offices and officers of the Department [of Education]." Among the responsibilities specifically delegated to the Governing Board are: (1) "develop guidelines for reporting and disseminating [NAEP] results"; (2) "take appropriate actions needed to improve the form, content, use, and reporting of [NAEP] results"; and (3) "plan and execute the initial public release of [NAEP] reports."

To carry out these responsibilities, the Governing Board hereby adopts policy principles and guidelines for the reporting, release, and dissemination of The Nation's Report Card.

As outlined in the appendix, this policy defines The Nation's Report Card as, and applies to, the initial reporting of NAEP results from national, state, and trial urban district assessments

(TUDA), and to other special reports or studies authorized by the National Assessment Governing Board, including printed reports and the initial release Web site.

## **Delineation of NAEP Reporting, Release, and Dissemination Responsibilities**

The NCES Commissioner, under Governing Board policy guidance, is responsible for administering the assessment, ensuring the technical soundness and accuracy of all released data, preparing NAEP reports, and presenting NAEP results.

In addition to setting policy, Governing Board is responsible for ensuring policy compliance of Governing Board-authorized NAEP reports, determining their respective dates of release, and planning and executing the initial public release of NAEP results.

## **Part I: Report Preparation and Content**

### **Policy Principles**

1. The primary means for the initial public release of NAEP results shall be a printed summary report, known as The Nation's Report Card, accompanied by a separate, dedicated Web site – <http://nationsreportcard.gov>.
2. The primary audience for The Nation's Report Card is the American public.
  - a. All reports shall be written in language appropriate for an audience of the interested general public, the majority of whom are unlikely to have a technical understanding of education statistics or assessment.
3. The Nation's Report Card shall report data objectively, accurately, clearly, and fairly, in accordance with NCES data quality standards. Results shall be insulated from ideological and other special interests.
  - a. The Nation's Report Card shall include straightforward presentations of data. Reports may suggest correlations, but should not conclude cause-and-effect relationships. Any interpretation of results must be strongly supported by NAEP data.
  - b. The Nation's Report Card and its Web site may include references and links to the National Assessment Governing Board Web site, NCES Web site, and the NAEP Validity Studies Panel. Non-NAEP materials and links to non-NAEP resources shall not be included in initial release documents, with the exception of relevant federal and state government information, such as NCES surveys and other district, state, national, or international testing programs.

c. To improve public understanding of results, The Nation's Report Card should contain information about Governing Board-approved NAEP contextual variables and subject-specific background information—as outlined in the Background Information Framework for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (adopted by the National Assessment Governing Board, 8/1/03)—when available and reliable. Reports may also contain other contextual information from trustworthy sources outside of the NAEP program, such as expenditures per pupil, student/teacher ratios, and student enrollment.

4. In accordance with the law, The Nation's Report Card shall include results for the nation; states and school districts, when collected in conjunction with specific NAEP programs, respectively; and school types, disaggregated by subgroup whenever reliable. Subgroup results shall be prominently positioned to facilitate public review but shall not be used to adjust findings.

a. Disaggregated subgroup data should be accompanied by information about demographic changes in the student population assessed.

b. Results for states and school districts may be presented in alphabetical or rank order, accompanied by appropriate language to make the public aware of any data comparison limitations.

c. Data shall be publicly released on inclusion and accommodation rates for all NAEP samples, including national, state, district, and school type. Results for students with disabilities and English language learners shall be presented separately.

5. The Nation's Report Card shall report results by Governing Board-adopted achievement levels, average scale scores, and percentile distributions. Trend information shall be an important part of reports unless comparable and reliable data are not available.

a. Reports shall contain clear explanations of achievement levels, including item maps and sample test questions and answers to illustrate what students in each grade assessed should know and be able to do at each achievement level.

6. All NAEP data determined by the NCES Commissioner to be valid and reliable shall be made available on the World Wide Web at the time of initial public release, except for data from limited special purpose samples and pilot studies. A separate, dedicated Web site aimed at a broad public audience – <http://nationsreportcard.gov> – shall be utilized for initial public releases.

a. All released NAEP data shall be subject to NCES quality control procedures to ensure accuracy and completeness.

- b. At least one block of released NAEP questions shall be posted on the World Wide Web for each subject and grade for which results have been collected.
  - c. Concise information on test content, methodology, performance standards, and scoring shall be included in all NAEP reports. More extensive material on these topics should be readily accessible on the World Wide Web.
7. Results of special studies authorized by the Governing Board will be reported after careful review of information quality and statistical validity. These shall be treated as initial public releases of The Nation's Report Card, and shall be subject to NCES quality control procedures and Governing Board policies.
8. The Governing Board shall adopt general guidelines to inform the development of The Nation's Report Card and its Web site, and may set additional specifications for particular reports.
9. The Governing Board shall review the format and content of initial releases, including Web pages, to ensure compliance with Governing Board policy.
- a. The Nation's Report Card shall contain a description of the policymaking roles and responsibilities of the National Assessment Governing Board, including a list of current Governing Board members, their affiliations, and regional locations.

## **Part II: Public Release of NAEP Results**

### **Policy Principles**

1. Release activities shall be planned and executed by the National Assessment Governing Board. The Governing Board shall determine the release date, time, embargo policies, and manner of release for The Nation's Report Card, as covered by this policy.
- a. After the Governing Board has approved the final draft of The Nation's Report Card, including the pages that will be made available through the initial release Web site, the Chairman of the Reporting and Dissemination Committee, on behalf of the Governing Board, shall determine the date of the initial public release, in consultation with the Chairman and Executive Director of the National Assessment Governing Board and the NCES Commissioner.
  - b. The initial release shall be completed within 30 days of approval of the final draft of The Nation's Report Card. In setting that release date, attention will be paid to balancing

the priorities of an expeditious release with provision for adequate planning time, given the scheduling circumstances of the various parties involved.

c. Prior to the initial public release, NAEP results may be provided on an embargoed basis to federal, state, and TUDA-district officials and members of the press.

2. The Governing Board shall be responsible for organizing and conducting the release event and related activities.

a. A release plan shall be adopted by the Governing Board for each report. Elements of the plan may include issuance of a press release, a press conference and/or Web-based announcement, distribution of summary findings and graphics, time period for the initial public release phase of <http://nationsreportcard.gov>, and other related activities.

b. The official press release announcing NAEP results shall be issued by the Governing Board. Accompanying statements from the Governing Board's Executive Director or Governing Board members may also be issued.

c. At the press conference or other event for release of NAEP results, the NCES Commissioner or his/her designee shall present major data findings, accompanied by a written statement. The National Assessment Governing Board shall select members to provide individual commentary on the meaning of results. In addition, the Governing Board may invite other officials or experts to comment on the significance of the results in accordance with the approved release plan.

d. At press conferences, questions from the audience shall be limited to accredited members of the media. At other public release events, the Governing Board shall determine who may attend and ask questions or comment.

3. The Nation's Report Card shall seek to encourage wide public attention to NAEP results and clear understanding of their meaning and significance.

a. Video materials may be prepared to accompany the release. These shall be clearly identified as having been provided by the Governing Board or NCES of the U.S. Department of Education. The video materials may only contain sound bites, background footage, and other information for journalists to develop their own stories.

4. Release procedures shall underscore the credibility of The Nation's Report Card and encourage the participation of schools, school districts, and states in NAEP.



- a. NAEP data in statements distributed at The Nation's Report Card initial public release events shall be checked for accuracy by NCES.
5. The Nation's Report Card releases shall be clearly separated from any ideological or other special interests.
  - a. Activities related to the initial public release of The Nation's Report Card shall not be used to disseminate any materials unrelated to NAEP. No materials of any kind may be distributed at an initial release event without the prior approval of the Governing Board.
6. The National Assessment Governing Board will cooperate with the NCES Commissioner in the release of technical reports, working papers, and secondary analyses not covered by the policy.
7. The Governing Board will develop a reporting schedule each year for upcoming NAEP assessments based on data review and report production plans that are provided and updated by NCES.

### **Part III: Dissemination and Outreach**

#### **Policy Principles**

1. Information from The Nation's Report Card shall be disseminated through the media, the World Wide Web, and special publications and materials. Efforts shall be made to develop widespread public awareness of NAEP data and their meaning and of the value of The Nation's Report Card to the nation and participating jurisdictions.
  - a. NAEP results shall be available in both printed and electronic form, including on The Nation's Report Card Web site, at the scheduled time of release and in the permanent record.
  - b. To build public awareness of The Nation's Report Card, the home page of the initial release Web site shall remain on-line and include links to previous releases. This homepage shall link to respective pages found on the NAEP Web site.
2. To build understanding of The Nation's Report Card and the data it reports, other information about NAEP may be disseminated at the time of the initial release and on a continuing basis.

- a. Informational materials accompanying results shall explain the mission and value of The Nation's Report Card in clear and compelling terms.
3. The Nation's Report Card and supplementary NAEP materials shall be made available through a wide network of education, business, labor, civic, and other interested groups and to policy makers and practitioners at all levels of education and government.
  - a. The Nation's Report Card shall be distributed promptly to governors and chief state school officers, as well as to superintendents of TUDA districts. The reports shall be posted on the World Wide Web immediately at the time of initial release, with printed copies available to the public upon request.
  - b. Notification of upcoming releases shall be widely disseminated. Schools and school districts participating in NAEP samples shall be provided with information on how to access reports electronically and obtain printed copies upon release.
  - c. NCES and Governing Board staff shall encourage national and state organizations that are interested in education to disseminate NAEP results to their members.
  - d. The NCES Commissioner and staff, Governing Board members and staff, and NAEP State Coordinators are encouraged to increase awareness and understanding of NAEP among the public, educators, and government officials. They are encouraged to speak about the NAEP program to a variety of audiences; at meetings and conferences of national, state, and local organizations; on radio and television; and to writers for magazines and newspapers and other members of the media.
  - e. Talking points on key data findings shall be developed for each release and distributed to Governing Board members.
4. A variety of materials shall be developed, appropriate to various audiences, to carry out NAEP dissemination. Key audiences for these materials shall include the interested general public, policymakers, teachers, administrators, and parents.
5. Detailed data on cognitive results, Governing Board-approved contextual variables, and subject-specific background information (as outlined in Part I, Policy Principle 3, Item C) shall be made readily available through the World Wide Web to all those wishing to analyze NAEP findings, subject to privacy restrictions. Additional restricted data shall be available for scholarly research, subject to NCES licensing procedures.

- a. The limitations on interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations in official NAEP reports (as outlined in Part I, Policy Principle 3) shall apply fully to any materials disseminated as part of the NAEP program by NCES and the Governing Board.
- b. Researchers receiving secondary analysis grants from NCES may analyze data and provide commentary. Their reports may be disseminated by NCES if they meet NCES standards.

## **Appendix**

### **NAEP Initial Release Reporting Covered by this Policy**

#### **The Nation's Report Card™**

The primary means for the initial public release of NAEP results shall be a summary report in each subject, known as The Nation's Report Card™ and intended for the interested general public. The reports shall be made available in both print and electronic (Web-based) form. These reports shall present key findings and composite and disaggregated results. The printed reports shall be relatively brief, and written in a clear, jargon-free style with charts, tables, and graphics that are understandable and attractive. Data tables may be included in an appendix, either bound into the report or printed separately. This format shall be used to report key results for the nation and the states and of NAEP Trial Urban District Assessments.

A separate, dedicated Web site for the initial release of NAEP results shall be focused on a broad public audience, including less sophisticated users of the technology. The URL – <http://nationsreportcard.gov> – should be readily located via Internet search engines. Key NAEP findings will be available, clearly organized and prioritized. World Wide Web pages shall provide key findings, including composite and disaggregated results, as well as access to more extensive data sets.

#### **Individual State and School District Reports**

Relatively brief reports of key results shall be prepared for individual states, as well as for TUDA-participating school districts. All reports shall contain composite and disaggregated data, and may include an appendix with data tables.

#### **Special Studies and Reports**

Special studies and reports authorized by the National Assessment Governing Board and based on NAEP data collections will focus on specific topics of public interest and educational significance. They are aimed at policymakers and interested members of the public. They may include newly released data as well as data previously released that are analyzed to address issues identified by the Governing Board.



### Plans to Develop Core Contextual Questionnaire Modules

NCES is exploring an implementation strategy for developing modules for the 2017 core contextual questions. 2017 represents the beginning of technology-based assessments in mathematics and reading. The possibilities for new innovations with contextual questions expand significantly under a technology-based platform.

Developing modules will allow for the aggregation of multiple items into indices. These indices will capture broader constructs than the single item indicators available now. The modules will be designed to provide educators and policymakers with relevant data on important achievement predictors. Moreover, this approach would align with the first two<sup>1</sup> policy principles of the *Policy Statement on NAEP Background Questions*<sup>2</sup> and the *Use of Contextual Data in NAEP Reporting*.

With future core development, NCES has the opportunity to create more robust indicators that could be measured across all NAEP subject areas as part of the core contextual questionnaire. This would provide a basis for trend reporting and could further differentiate NAEP against other large-scale assessments (e.g., PISA, TIMSS) that rely heavily on subject-specific questionnaire constructs with frequent changes across administration cycles.

At the February 2014 meeting, NCES would like to share initial plans for possible core questionnaire modules with the Reporting and Dissemination (R&D) Committee. NCES is seeking the Committee's input on these modules.

In this February 2014 session we will:

- Share suggestions regarding modules that could be included within the core contextual questionnaire;
- Seek committee feedback about which modules to prioritize for development
- Highlight challenges for the development of questionnaire indices and implications for the overall NAEP survey questionnaire design;
- Provide more detail on the proposed implementation strategy and timeline to develop these modules.

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<sup>1</sup> These policy principles are: 1) Clusters of questions will be developed on important topics of continuing interest, such as student motivation and control over the environment, use of technology, and out-of-school learning, which could be used regularly or rotated across assessment cycles.

<sup>2</sup> Now referred to by the Board as "Contextual Questions".



## **Policy Statement on NAEP Background Questions and the Use of Contextual Data in NAEP Reporting**

### **INTRODUCTION**

By statute, the purpose of the National Assessment of Educational Progress is to provide a “fair and accurate” measure of student achievement and achievement trends. Academic or cognitive questions are its primary focus; the American public is its primary audience. However, in addition to reporting on what American students know and can do, NAEP has collected data for more than 40 years that provide a context for reporting and interpreting achievement results. According to the statute, such factors, both in and out of school, must be “directly related to the appraisal of academic achievement.”

In each assessment NAEP administers background questionnaires for students, their teachers, and schools. The questionnaires deal with educational experiences and other factors, such as teacher training or out-of-school learning activities, that are related to academic achievement. Data on several hundred background or noncognitive variables are available on the Internet through the NAEP Data Explorer. However, for more than a decade, little use has been made of this information in NAEP reports. The data have received minimal attention and had little impact despite the considerable efforts expended in developing and approving questionnaires and collecting and tabulating responses.

In October 2011 the National Assessment Governing Board convened an expert panel to recommend how to make better use of existing NAEP background questions and to propose an analytic agenda for additional topics and questions that would be useful in developing education policy and of value to the public. The panel report, entitled, *NAEP Background Questions: An Underused National Resource*, was presented to the Board in March 2012 by Marshall Smith, former U.S. Under Secretary of Education, who chaired the six-member panel.

Many of the panel recommendations build on the *Background Information Framework for the National Assessment of Educational Progress*, adopted by the Governing Board after it received final authority from Congress over non-cognitive items

on the assessment. The framework was adopted in 2003, but has not been fully implemented.

The following policies are based on recommendations by the expert panel. The Board has also taken into consideration a wide range of public comment and the analysis provided by the National Center for Education Statistics.

It is important to understand that the National Assessment is not designed to show cause-and-effect relationships. Its data should not be used to “prove” what schools should do. But, as the *Background Information Framework* declares, NAEP’s “descriptions of the educational circumstances of students..., considered in light of research from other sources, may provide important information for public discussion and policy action.” The Board believes the National Assessment should improve upon its efforts to collect contextual information and present it clearly to the public, which will add to NAEP’s value to the nation.

## **POLICY PRINCIPLES**

1. NAEP reporting should be enriched by greater use of contextual data derived from background or non-cognitive questions asked of students, teachers, and schools. Such data will be used both in regular Report Cards and in special focused reports.
2. Reporting of background data will describe patterns and trends, including the educational experiences of different groups of students. Care should be taken not to suggest causation.
3. Detailed frameworks will be published with the theoretical rationale and research evidence that support the selection of topics and questions in background questionnaires and their connection to student achievement. Such frameworks should be updated for each assessment cycle and provide the basis for new topics and questions.
4. An ad hoc committee of the Board will be established for one year to monitor implementation of this resolution, review the *NAEP Background Information Framework*, and recommend a permanent arrangement for Board consideration of background questions and the reporting of contextual data in NAEP.

## **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES**

### ***For Questions and Questionnaires***

1. Clusters of questions will be developed on important topics of continuing interest, such as student motivation and control over the environment, use of technology,

and out-of-school learning, which could be used regularly or rotated across assessment cycles.

2. Modules will be prepared for special one-time studies to provide descriptive information on issues of current policy interest.
3. A thorough review will be conducted to eliminate duplicative or low-priority questions. Unproductive topics and questions will be dropped.
4. NAEP will include background questions from international assessments, such as PISA and TIMSS, to obtain direct comparisons of states and TUDA districts to educational practices in other countries.
5. Because of the value of preserving trends, consistent wording of questions should be maintained on topics of continuing interest. Changes in wording must be justified. However, as practices and circumstances change, new questions will be introduced in a timely manner to gather data on topics of current interest.
6. The development and use of improved measures of socio-economic status (SES) will be accelerated, including further exploration of an SES index for NAEP reporting.

#### ***For Data Collection***

7. The maximum time for students to answer the background questionnaire will be increased from 10 to 15 minutes on new computer-based assessments. Consideration should be given to a similar increase in paper-and-pencil assessments.
8. Whenever feasible, assessment samples should be divided (spiral sampling) and background questions rotated in different years in order to cover more topics without increasing respondent burden. These practices will be initiated in the assessments of reading and mathematics, which are conducted frequently, and considered for other subject areas if the frequency of testing permits.

#### ***For Reporting***

9. Special focused reports with data through the 2013 assessment will be issued on the following topics: private schools, charter schools, gender gaps, and black male students. Reports shall include significant contextual information as well as cognitive results. Advisory committees, composed of a range of knowledgeable persons, may be appointed to provide input on reporting issues.
10. Exploratory analyses will be carried out to determine if existing background questions may form the basis for additional focused reports. Such reports may be

issued by the Governing Board as well as by the National Center for Education Statistics.

11. The NAEP Data Explorer should be further improved to make data more accessible to general, non-specialist users. Tables and very simple-to-construct charts will be prepared to present data on important topics of wide public interest. Additional means of disseminating information, using new technology such as simple apps that would allow parents, teachers, and others to access background and achievement data, will be explored.



## **NAEP Contextual Questionnaire Modules**

The following modules of NAEP contextual questions have been proposed in Governing Board policy statements, consultant reports, and meeting discussions:

### **NAEP Background Information Framework (2003)**

- Composite measure or index of socio-economic status (SES)

### **NAEP Contextual Information Framework (2013)**

- SES index
- Questions from international assessments, such as PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) and TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study)
- Student motivation and control over the environment
- Technology use
- Out-of-school learning

### **Report on Key Education Indicators by Marshall S. Smith and Alan Ginsburg (2013)**

- Composite indicator of socio-economic status (SES)
- Modules from international assessments
- Student motivation
- Technology use
- Teacher quality
- School climate for learning

### **Governing Board Members at Dec. 2013 Presentation on Learning/Innovation Skills**

- Non-cognitive contributors to student achievement, such as persistence (grit) and self-control

## ***Executive Summary***

# **Key Education Indicators for NAEP: A Proposed Composite Indicator Approach**

**Prepared for the National Assessment  
Governing Board**

**By Alan Ginsburg and Marshall S. Smith**

**February 2014**

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***Alan Ginsburg*** is an education consultant and analyst. He is former Director of Policy and Program Evaluation services for the U.S. Department of Education. ***Marshall S. Smith*** is former U.S. Under Secretary of Education and former Dean of the Stanford University Graduate School of Education. ***The data analyses and interpretations in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the National Assessment Governing Board.***

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **KEY EDUCATION INDICATORS: A COMPOSITE INDICATORS APPROACH**

This report recommends that the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) develop ten to 15 composite Key Education Indicators (KEIs) that would be regularly reported along with student achievement results. Developing such indicators would greatly enrich NAEP reporting by adding information on the complex factors that influence student achievement. The indicators would also show how prevalent these conditions are in the various groups and states on which the assessment reports.

Because of their complexity, useful measures of important background conditions frequently require composites, that are theoretically and empirically valid, rather than the individual contextual variables on which NAEP now reports. A KEI is best described as a weighted average of several different contextual variables. Preparing these indicators for a range of important topics would extend the idea of a composite for socio-economic status (SES), which has been proposed by an expert panel. The panel said an SES composite would be a much-improved alternative to using whether a student qualifies for free or reduced-priced lunch as NAEP's prime indicator of poverty.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress is the only regularly and predictably administered cross-sectional data set where background information can be directly related to student achievement. It is the only data set where information is regularly gathered from students, teachers and principals in the same schools. These characteristics provide the opportunity for asking questions that would help us better understand the reasons for differences and changes in student achievement. They might also provide data to increase our understanding of the status and of changes in the quality of school experiences and in the preparedness of students for school.

At present, however, NAEP's reporting of contextual variables is limited and appears ad hoc. While there are over 1,400 variables on the NAEP Data Explorer, over 1,000 of them were not administered in the most recent assessments. The only regular reporting is by racial/ethnic categories and eligibility for school-lunch. Almost all of the other background data collected are never formally analyzed nor reported in NAEP publications. Even though the structure of the Data Explorer is sensible, it does not establish priorities. Moreover, unlike the two major international surveys of TIMSS and PISA, each variable is presented only in isolation with no connections made among those addressing similar conditions. The lists in the Data Explorer are confusing and there is no clear rationale for the many changes in the variables collected.

Key education indicators are proposed as theoretically and empirically derived statistics that would regularly measure the health of important conditions likely to influence the achievement outcomes of the education system over time. There are many potential configurations of KEIs. Here we suggest that a coherent set of indicators may be clustered in two categories, one that focuses on the school, the other on the student.

The school quality component would have five basic school characteristic variables (place, size, type, student socio-economic class composition and racial composition) and six

composite KEIs: teacher quality, teacher professionalism, school climate, quality of implementation of standards and curriculum, effective use of technology, and the use by the school of systematic improvement strategies (Exhibit ES-1).

<b>Exhibit ES-1. Illustrative key education indicators (KEI) for school quality</b>	
<b>Composite Indicators</b>	<b>Evidence-Based Indicator Components (illustrative)</b>
1. Teacher quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student view of quality, teacher degree in field, experience, dispositions &amp; mindset</li> </ul>
2. Teacher professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeks help to improve, supports other teachers, seeks growth year after year, enjoys work, engaged in professional networks</li> </ul>
3. School climate for learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student absenteeism (not excessive), school safety, teacher expectations for students, teachers support each other, principal trusted, mindset</li> </ul>
4. Quality of implementation of standards and curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student-centered, aligned rigorous content, teach for understanding, adjust for student learning differences</li> </ul>
5. School effectively uses technology to teach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access at school and home, use at school and home, effectiveness in technology adding learning value</li> </ul>
6. Continuous improvement throughout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers use formative assessment, professional development focused on improving classroom and administrative processes</li> </ul>

The student component represents individual characteristics of the student. Along with the basic characteristics of sex, race, age, and handicapping conditions, the student KEIs seek to capture the fundamental characteristics of a student's learning inside and outside the school through six broad indicators: socio-economic status, home/neighborhood educational climate, preschool experiences, student engagement with learning, after-school learning opportunities, and non-cognitive contributors to academic achievement (such as self-control and persistence). (Exhibit ES-2).

**Exhibit ES-2. Illustrative key education indicators (KEIs) for students**

<b>Composite Indicators</b>	<b>Evidence-Based Indicator Components (illustrative)</b>
1. Socio-economic status	• Composite indicator as recommended by NCES expert panel
2. Home/neighborhood educational climate	• Family support, place to study, talks with but not at the child, friends respect educational accomplishment
3. Preschool experiences	• Number of years formal preschool, parent literacy activities with child, parent numeracy activities with child, parent sets boundaries
4. Student engagement with learning	• Student effort, hard work more important than luck, likes and goes to school, believes learning a lot
5. After-school learning opportunities	• Formal after school programs; informal after school programs, parents take child to zoos, museums, etc.
6. Non-cognitive contributors to academic achievement	• Self-control • Persistence (grit or determination)

**Illustrative KEI Composite Indicators**

The paper illustrates in some detail the development of composite indicators in five of the above areas. Illustrative indicators are presented for three school KEIs—school climate, teacher quality, and education technology, and two student KEIs— socio-economic status (SES) and student engagement. The illustrations were chosen in part based on the capabilities of the NAEP Data Explorer.

Each illustrative indicator is based on theoretical and empirical research that supports its importance for student achievement. The SES KEI reflects the recommendation of the NAEP expert panel for a composite indicator. Development of the other four illustrative KEIs began with identifying an explicit framework of underlying causal variables. From this framework, the NAEP Data Explorer was examined to identify measured proxy variables. For the technology KEI, we concluded that data were insufficient to develop even an illustrative indicator; in this case we suggest possible variables that could be developed into an indicator. For the other three, the most current data were chosen, and for one KEI trends over time were also illustrated.

As an example of indicator development, this report measures *school climate* as the three-variable KEI of student attendance, school misbehavior, and teacher expectations. However, limitations of the NAEP Data Explorer preclude disaggregating results of the three-variable composite by student and school characteristics. Therefore, a two-variable composite indicator is also presented to permit disaggregation. Exhibit ES-3 illustrates the results for grade 8 math of a composite indicator consisting of a two-variable combination of days absent and teacher expectations. The two-variable KEI was constructed because the Data Explorer can display a table of two composite variables along with student or school characteristics. The three-variable composite is at the Data Explorer maximum and the results cannot be disaggregated by school or student characteristics.

**Exhibit ES-3. Composite index for average NAEP scores & percentages for math, grade 8, by race/ethnicity showing very positive and very negative teacher expectations for students and 0-2 days absent prior month, 2003**

Race/ethnicity	Very positive teacher expectations & 0-2 days absent prior month		Some what positive or negative teacher expectations & 3 or more days absent prior month	
	Average NAEP score	Percentage	Average NAEP score	Percentage
<b>National</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>9</b>
White	293	52	273	8
Black	260	36	239	13
Hispanic	267	38	246	13
Asian American	300	57	266	4
American Indian	270	38	253	15

Source: NAEP Data Explorer

Exhibit ES-3 displays both the most positive and most negative two-variable combination for a school-climate indicator based on principal reports of teacher expectations for their students and student days absent during the prior month. The table shows NAEP scores and percentages cross-walked with student race/ethnicity.

The *very-positive school climate two-variable combination* consists of students with 0-2 days absent in the past month in schools with principals responding that their teachers mostly hold very positive expectations for student achievement. The year 2003 is used because that is the most recent year in which these background variables were collected.

- Nationally, 48 percent of grade 8 students were in this highly favorable school climate situation.
- By race/ethnicity, Whites and Asians were about 50 percent more likely to be in this highly favorable school climate than Blacks, Hispanics or American Indians.

The highly negative combination consists of students absent three or more days in the prior month and enrolled in schools with principals rating teachers as having only

somewhat positive or negative expectations for students.

- Nationally, 9 percent of students were in a very unfavorable school climate situation.
- While only 8 percent of White and 4 percent of Asian-American students had both 3 or more days absent and were in schools with the least favorable teacher expectations, about 50 percent more Black (13%), Hispanic (13%), and American Indian (15%) students were attending schools with the most undesirable school climate.

Over time we hope that having higher percentages of minority students in the more favorable category would help to close achievement gaps.

The three-variable school climate composite indicator measures school climate as the combination of student attendance, school misbehavior, and teacher expectations. It identified 39 percent of all 2003 grade 8 students in a highly favorable school climate. This was a school where a student was absent 0-2 days, with no more than minor discipline problems and a grade-8 math teacher with very positive expectations for student achievement. Unfortunately, these contextual variables were not collected more recently than 2003 so we cannot examine changes in this indicator over time.

The report also illustrates the development of four other KEIs

- A *teacher quality composite* KEI with the NAEP variables of: (1) teachers' knowledge of academic content, (2) teachers' mindset or disposition, and (3) teacher experience
- A *technology composite* KEI as a combination of: (1) student and school access to computers, (2) computer use at school and home for instructional and learning purposes, and (3) effectiveness based on the belief of teachers and students that the technology adds value to learning beyond the impact of teachers and the student's peers. As a different approach to developing KEIs, each sub-indicator will be constructed of three or four questions (variables).
- A *student engagement* composite KEI for reading consisting of three variables: reading is a favorite activity, pages read in school and for homework, and learn a lot when reading books.
- A *socio-economic status* (SES) KEI would be based on the NCES Expert Panel recommendations to construct an SES composite around three factors: family income and possessions, educational attainment of parents, and parental occupational status.

## **Recommendations to the National Assessment Governing Board**

This report discusses the importance of adopting a consistent set of priority contextual variables for regular NAEP data collection and reporting. Many of these variables should be components of Key Education Indicators, providing important composite data on factors affecting student achievement. Composite indicators are widely used in other fields, in

education by international assessments, and by NAEP to develop achievement scales. They should now be applied to the NAEP contextual variables.

The report makes the following specific recommendations:

1. *Convene expert panels to develop frameworks for composite Key Education Indicators in several areas to be selected by the Governing Board. Each framework with accompanying specifications would provide the blueprint for preparing questions and methods of analysis and weighting. The process would be analogous to long-standing arrangements for preparing subject-matter frameworks and test item specifications for NAEP cognitive assessments. However, since each indicator framework would be more limited, the time and expense needed should be much less.*
  - a. One of the KEIs should be an SES indicator based on the expert panel report proposing an SES composite of at least three factors: family income and possessions, parental educational attainment, and parental occupational status.
  - b. Other indicators may be based on the illustrations in this report, as shown in the school and student groups in Exhibits ES-1 and ES-2. Consideration could be given to KEIs for specific assessment subjects and possibly grades. Development should start with a few areas of greatest value and interest.
  - c. Each KEI should be validated by research and theory. Before using in reports, each indicator must be tested in field studies along with the individual variables of which it is comprised.
2. *Identify questions previously used that could support developing trends over time for KEIs.*
  - a. Consider reusing questions in old assessments, even if dropped more recently, to generate trends for variables likely to have a high priority in developing the KEIs. Examples include the questions on student, teacher, and principal perceptions incorporated in our illustrative KEIs that were last given in 2003. Repeating these questions would provide new information about trends that might help determine how best to create KEIs and effectively measure KEI changes over time.
  - b. *Report results for currently administered NAEP contextual variables with trends of ten years or more.* These trend analyses will provide useful information on school, teacher and student changes over at least a decade while offering a better understanding of important trend areas for indicator development.
3. *Consider other actions to support KEI development.*
  - a. Conduct psychometric studies on building composite indicators. Conduct exploratory analyses to recommend preferred strategies for computing indicator weights.



- b. Examine possibilities for coordinating or linking with data from other federal data collections. An example is the SES indicator panel's recommendation for linking NAEP measures with U.S. Census collections.
- 4. *Build a repository of articles and publications that use NAEP variables and indicators, which would be readily available to scholars and the public. A possible model for this repository is the NCES Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Data Products and Publications (2013).*
- 5. *Improve the NAEP Data Explorer to allow users to focus readily on the most useful and timely variables and dramatically reduce the number routinely shown in searches.*
  - a. Recent, useful variables should be placed in a prominent file; old, redundant, or useless variables in another file.
  - b. Enable the user to choose to see only those contextual variables available for selected years of interest.

## **Addendum on Long-Term Trend NAEP**

Long-term trend NAEP provides important national mathematics and reading results at ages 9, 13 and 17 dating back to 1970. Although an in-depth examination of contextual variables and possible KEIs for the long-term NAEP assessment was beyond the scope of this review, we believe that the underlying rationale for developing KEIs is equally applicable to the long-term trend NAEP. Unfortunately, about half the contextual variables in long-term trend were eliminated in 2008 and 2012 without a clear rationale. Some of these could be restored to report on trends in important factors affecting academic achievement.

Hence, it is recommended that the Governing Board consider the following:

- 1. *Have the expert panels developing KEI frameworks and specifications for main NAEP also make recommendations for KEIs in the areas under consideration using contextual variables in the long-term trend assessments.*
- 2. *Restore useful questions that were eliminated in the 2008 and 2012 administrations of long-term NAEP by adding them to the next administration.*



**NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD  
RELEASE PLAN FOR THE  
NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP)**

***The Nation's Report Card:  
Grade 4 Computer-Based 2012 Pilot Assessment in Writing***

The computer-based Grade 4 NAEP Writing 2012 pilot will be released during March 2014 as an online webinar, following review and approval of the report's results by the Governing Board. The release event will include a data presentation by the Acting Commissioner of Education Statistics, with moderation and comments by at least one member of the National Assessment Governing Board and an additional panelist with expertise in computer-based assessments and the field of writing. Full accompanying data will be posted on the Internet at the scheduled time of release.

Approximately 10,400 fourth-graders from 510 schools (420 public and 90 private) participated in the 2012 NAEP Writing computer-based pilot assessment. Their performance on writing tasks overall and for the three writing purposes (to persuade, convey and explain) will be summarized on a data website. Additionally, information from the 2011 usability study will be shared as the study informed how to design the NAEP computer-based writing assessment platform for elementary students. Data from the 60 fourth-grade participants across five states from this study will be displayed and will describe their computer experiences in school, at home and during the assessment.

This is the first-ever, large scale computer-based writing assessment of young students. The pilot findings and "lessons learned" will be particularly valuable as states and districts move toward computer-based testing in elementary school.

**DATE AND LOCATION**

The release event for the media and the public will occur in March 2014. The release date 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 National Assessment Governing Board representative
- Data presentation by the Acting Commissioner of Education Statistics
- Comments by one Governing Board member
- Comments by at least one expert in the field of education and assessment matters in large city school districts
- Questions from the webinar audience
- Program will last approximately 75 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 at [www.nagb.org](http://www.nagb.org) along with other materials such as the press release and panelist statements.

## **EMBARGOED ACTIVITIES BEFORE RELEASE**

In the days preceding the release, the Governing Board and NCES will offer access to embargoed data via a special website to approved U.S. Congressional staff in Washington, DC; approved senior representatives of the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers; and appropriate media as defined by the Governing Board's Embargo Policy. A conference call for journalists who signed embargo agreements will be held to give a brief overview of findings and data and to answer questions from the media.

## **REPORT RELEASE**

The Acting Commissioner of Education Statistics will publicly release the report at the NAEP website—<http://nationsreportcard.gov>—at the scheduled time of the release event. The interactive NAEP site will feature report data, a related usability study, and other resources. An interactive splash page with panelists' statements, a Governing Board press release, the NAEP Writing Framework, and related materials will be posted on the Board's web site at [www.nagb.org](http://www.nagb.org). The site will also feature links to social networking sites and audio and/or video material related to the event.



**NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD  
RELEASE PLAN FOR THE  
NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP)**

***The Nation's Report Card:  
Grade 12 Reading and Mathematics 2013***

The Grade 12 NAEP Reading and Mathematics 2013, which will include findings on academic preparedness, will be released during April 2014 as an online webinar, following review and approval of the report's results by the Governing Board. The release event will include a data presentation by the Acting Commissioner of Education Statistics, with moderation and comments by at least one member of the National Assessment Governing Board and at least one additional panelist with expertise in academic preparedness. Full accompanying data will be posted on the Internet at the scheduled time of release.

The Grade 12 NAEP Report Card will reveal the performance results of nationally representative samples of 12th graders from across the nation: 46,500 in mathematics, and 45,900 in reading. In addition, results for math and reading will also be available individually for 13 states (11 of which participated in the 2009 pilot study as well). Student performance is reported in two ways – as average scale scores and as percentages of students performing at each of three NAEP achievement levels.

And new in 2013, the report will include preliminary results of the Governing Board's academic preparedness research program, which will show how NAEP can be an indicator of the academic preparedness of grade 12 students.

**DATE AND LOCATION**

The release event for the media and the public will occur in April 2014. The release date 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 National Assessment Governing Board representative
- Data presentation by the Acting Commissioner of Education Statistics
- Comments by at least one Governing Board member
- Comments by at least one expert in the field of education and assessment matters in large city school districts academic preparedness
- Questions from the webinar audience
- Program will last approximately 75-90 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 at [www.nagb.org](http://www.nagb.org) along with other materials such as the press release and panelist statements.

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## **REPORT RELEASE**

The Acting Commissioner of Education Statistics will publicly release the report at the NAEP website—<http://nationsreportcard.gov>—at the scheduled time of the release event. The interactive NAEP site will feature graphics, charts, videos, and a report summary, along with data tools, questions, and other resources. An interactive splash page with panelists' statements, a Governing Board press release, subject frameworks, and related materials will be posted on the Board's web site at [www.nagb.org](http://www.nagb.org). The site will also feature links to social networking sites and audio and/or video material related to the event.

## **ACTIVITIES AFTER THE RELEASE**

The Governing Board's communications contractor, Reingold, will work with Board staff to coordinate a post-event communications effort to extend the life of the results and provide value and relevance to stakeholders with an interest in reading and mathematics assessment and grade 12 preparedness.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2014 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

**Discussion Draft for the Reporting and Dissemination Committee  
February 28, 2014**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The National Assessment Governing Board sets policy and provides oversight for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—the gold standard for measuring the academic achievement of American students. As the Nation’s Report Card, NAEP provides stakeholders, including educators, parents, and policymakers, with independent, reliable information that the nation can use as it seeks to raise student achievement. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) assesses representative samples of students, analyzes the data, and uses the findings to draft NAEP reports. NCES works in partnership with the Governing Board in NAEP report release efforts.

In its 25th year, the Governing Board is well-positioned to do more to expand the reach of NAEP and to engage key audiences strategically and thoughtfully. Supported by this communications plan, the Governing Board can “Make Data Matter” through partnerships and innovative outreach that effectively connect target audiences with relevant, user-friendly, impactful data that can help stakeholders improve student achievement.

This document outlines a creative and achievable strategic communications plan for 2014, along with a thorough review of current Governing Board communications and outreach efforts. Specific findings and insights from past communications efforts can be found in Appendix I. The 2014 plan builds on successes, responds to challenges, and is opportunistic in its approach. It aims to provide concrete steps to further the Governing Board’s reporting and dissemination work. As appropriate, the Board will collaborate with NCES on various strategies and ensure that the outreach efforts proposed do not duplicate efforts already undertaken by NCES.

Focus areas include the following:

**Report card releases.** Extend the life cycle of future report card releases with enhanced content, outreach, and event execution.

**Audience prioritization and message development.** Conduct an audience summit with Board staff and contractors to discuss priorities, tailor messaging, and develop calls to action for each audience group, ultimately creating a messaging framework.

**Content and materials development.** Assess Governing Board and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) materials and recommend a multimedia strategy to deepen understanding of NAEP data. Launch a quarterly e-newsletter, create Web-optimized one-pagers, and produce testimonials from key stakeholders.

**Stakeholder outreach.** Strategically engage Board members, Board alumni, and other champions, and solicit feedback from stakeholders and target audiences.

**Traditional media.** Create an editorial calendar and work with Governing Board members or alumni to pursue opportunities afforded by breaking news. Integrate multimedia into news releases.

**Website.** Enhance the user experience and analytics, such as by installing Google Analytics, conducting keyword research, building links with related websites, and executing a revised site map. Incorporate a new design and content.

**Social media.** Develop rich social media content, host social media events with partners, and work with the website contractor to optimize YouTube channels.

**Nominations.** Develop, execute, and analyze an innovative nominations outreach plan. Support the transition to an online nominations submission process.

## INTRODUCTION

The coming year presents the Governing Board with a unique opportunity. With an anticipated break in scheduled report card releases, the Board can focus on enhancing its digital communications assets, strengthen outreach efforts to priority audiences, develop messaging and materials tailored for different audiences, and build partnerships to expand its reach and relevance.

This plan was prepared by Reingold Inc., the Board’s communications contractor. It describes activities Reingold proposes to undertake at the direction of the Governing Board and Board staff to advance a fundamental goal: elevate the NAEP brand and increase the relevance of NAEP resources and results to stakeholder groups. Reingold recommends updating, enhancing, and focusing the 2010 communications plan to bring NAEP data to life for the audiences that use it to inform their work. Our charge is simple and powerful: “Make Data Matter.” This means building tangible connections between NAEP and its stakeholders, and equipping them with the insight, information, and tools to make a difference in educational quality and student achievement.

This roadmap preserves the most successful strategies and tactics of the Governing Board’s 2010 communications plan, lessons from the nominations and 12th grade preparedness campaigns, and the approach of the recently approved parent engagement plan. At the same time we added innovations in stakeholder and partnership outreach, social media and website development, and report card releases and special events. Our approach will drive strategic, robust, nimble communications that cut through the clutter to advance the Governing Board’s mission and empower the Governing Board to tell its story in a fresh way.

Reingold’s approach to communications planning integrates data and feedback from Governing Board members, staffers, and stakeholders—gathered through messaging summits, focus groups, and website usability testing—and Google Analytics, which tracks the behavior of visitors as they navigate the Governing Board’s website. We also use post-event surveys that offer feedback on the relevance of NAEP data for stakeholders, and external media metrics that provide insight into the quantity and quality of messaging delivered in the media. Employing these techniques, we can adjust and refine our messages and assess the effectiveness of our strategy.

## I. REPORT CARD RELEASES

Reingold believes there is great opportunity for the Governing Board to enliven data and engage target audiences by taking a comprehensive, reimagined view of releasing and reporting on NAEP results.

### **Expand Release Life Cycle**

The entire life cycle of an assessment—from developing the framework to fielding assessments to disseminating results—offers content and commentary that will powerfully support the NAEP brand if shared more strategically. Extending the Governing Board storytelling cycle beyond report card releases will create opportunities to make news, drive the Governing Board’s agenda,



comment on current events, and share information in smaller, more manageable pieces.

To help Make Data Matter, we recommend expanding the timeline for each release strategy. This will ideally begin when the assessment is fielded and continue three or more months after the release event. Increasing the data's lifespan will provide ample time to demonstrate the data's relevance and spark a long-term national conversation that will peak during the release event, but continue as stakeholders discover how the data matter to them.

The following are examples of content development and outreach during an extended life cycle approach to make meaningful connections with target audiences.

- Record and share video, photo, or audio from local NAEP staff in the field, or from a member of the Assessment Development Committee talking about the framework.
- Share a testimonial from a NAEP stakeholder discussing results from the previous assessment and highlighting what he or she hopes to see in this year's results.
- Expand Governing Board member engagement, taking advantage of quarterly Board meetings to obtain content (e.g., quotes, audio, video) from Governing Board members on the report card data and its implications.
- Share webinar slides or an original infographic on the release splash page after the event.
- Identify messages or data that were not emphasized in the release event or immediate media coverage and craft a dissemination plan for these "hidden gems."
- Gather media and stakeholder reactions to the report card results and repackage them for social media and as newsletter content.

### **Explore Innovative Release Strategies**

We recommend exploring innovative online methods to release the report card that might be more engaging than the standard webinar, such as a roundtable discussion through Google+, a video town hall, or a moderated chat-based conversation. With the report card content migrating online, greater emphasis should be placed on the release attendee experience, with a less scripted, more interactive event. This emphasis is supported by recent post-webinar survey responses, which show that attendees want more Q-and-A time and spontaneous panelist interaction, and they appreciate panelists' efforts to show practical applications of report card data.

We will recommend ways to take advantage of new opportunities presented by the report cards' new interactive format to appeal to new users and keep longtime users engaged. In addition, we offer several ideas for ways to enhance release events:

**Webinar event.** Reingold has provided the Governing Board with a webinar platform system analysis and proposed a new webinar that allows for more panel discussion, along with the data presentation and Q-and-A session. We also have recommended a new webinar vendor to provide a more user-friendly system that makes better use of enhanced technology, such as replacing PowerPoint presentations with multimedia, and that accommodates iPads and mobile devices.

**Media pre-call.** The media pre-call will include a Board member for commentary, move from a phone to Web-based format to show and share data as they are discussed, and augment panelists' statements with quote sheets so reporters do not have to search for quotes. Panelists may also be recorded before the event to provide journalists with approved sound bites.

**Post-release chats.** We propose continuing the conversation after the event in an online chat that allows for additional questions and answers—potentially on a new online platform such as CoveritLive (online chat forum) or in a Google+ Hangout (online video chat platform).

**Social media outreach.** Social media is an important element of promoting release events and delivering tailored messages and calls to action to target audiences. Reingold will incorporate additional tactics to increase followers and fans on Governing Board social media sites to continue to spark and manage conversations. We will target key influencers who can spread messaging and deliver specific calls to action, such as journalists, education bloggers, and influential stakeholder groups. We also intend to expand the use of the Twitter hashtag #NAEPtalk by developing conversation starters for use by key influencers and Board members.

**Website.** As the Governing Board modifies [www.nagb.org](http://www.nagb.org), the presentation and archiving of release event materials should be factored into the updates and redesign. Based on Web analytics on visitor and target audience online behaviors, Reingold recommends altering the splash page format and design to create a more user-friendly, search engine optimized listing of materials that will increase both internal and search engine-driven traffic.

**Partner collaboration.** Reingold has successfully assisted with several post-release event activities to further encourage the dissemination of data, and we recommend expanding this effort with relevant release-specific, topic-focused groups. Recently, to promote the long-term trends report card, we contacted the Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE) to host a discussion. The turnout shows the power of collaboration: Attending the AEE webinar with Governing Board Chair David Driscoll were 99 organizations and 190 individuals who had never before participated in a report card release event. The nature and timing of each report card should drive the specifics of the release strategy.

## **2014 Plan**

- **For each report card, develop a release plan earlier in its life cycle that includes recommendations to extend the reach of messages through enhanced content and outreach.**

## **II. AUDIENCE PRIORITIZATION AND TAILORED MESSAGING DEVELOPMENT**

Stakeholder groups have varying levels of knowledge of and experience with NAEP, different communications assets available, and different favored channels and communications approaches. With these differences in mind, it is imperative that the Governing Board identify priorities—and tailor messages and outreach activities accordingly—to inspire stakeholder groups to engage more deeply with Governing Board content. Clear priorities and corresponding messaging will enhance focus and increase impact.

## **Using Parent Outreach Plan as a Model for Other Audiences**

The recent Education Summit for Parent Leaders was the first collaboration between Reingold and the Governing Board targeting a single audience group. This strategy will ideally provide the blueprint for future outreach efforts for specific audience segments, such as K-12 educators, policymakers, or higher education groups.

## **Refining Outreach**

Over the past four years, Reingold has discovered additional effective ways to segment the Governing Board's audiences based on factors including previous attendance, participation in Board events or releases, and willingness to share the Board's message within their networks. While the previously determined audience groups still form the core of our focus, we can slice the data in many other productive ways. Increased tracking and analysis of Web and outreach data will continue to inform our strategies.

## **Testing Messages**

We recommend testing different messages on different audiences to determine if one group responds to certain messaging more than others do. Much like housing audience-specific information on tabs on the website to improve the user experience, segmenting messaging throughout a user's experience with Governing Board communications will make the information users see more relevant to them and improve their interaction with the Board.

## **2014 Plan**

- **Conduct an audience summit with Board staff to discuss priorities, tailored messaging, and calls to action for each audience group.**
- **Develop a messaging matrix reflecting overarching and audience-specific messages.**

## **III. CONTENT AND MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT**

Consistent with the Governing Board's commitment to innovation and thought leadership, Reingold recommends using a number of the latest communications technologies to broaden the reach and deepen the impact of the Governing Board's publications, while also reducing costs by relying on scalable online tools.

In line with the Governing Board's multiplatform communications and outreach approach, we will develop interactive, multimedia content and materials that are mobile device-friendly and customized by audience. As a rule, materials should be user-friendly and easily downloadable from the Governing Board website. To "Make Data Matter," the Governing Board must present language, graphics, and images that resonate with target audiences. Good writing and design make information approachable, understandable, actionable and meaningful.

Customizing written and online materials enables key stakeholders to more effectively connect with NAEP data more effectively than with a one-size-fits-all approach. The approach to

materials detailed in the Board-approved parent engagement outreach strategy provides a strong foundation on which to build materials tailored to each key audience segment, and is an approach we recommend for all priority audiences. We propose developing the following new materials. (Note: We have not yet begun executing the parent leader outreach plan; materials for parent leaders may include concepts other than those listed below.)

**Email newsletters** allow for ongoing contact with key stakeholders between report card releases—especially important in an “off” year such as 2014 with few scheduled releases. A Governing Board newsletter will provide a chance to keep audiences informed of the Board’s other initiatives, enrich conversations, respond to news in the education world, and attach a human face to the Governing Board by interviewing or profiling Board members—as well as keep the Board top of mind in the absence of frequent release notifications.

**Infographics** combine hard data with attractive visuals, allowing the Board to extract and embellish key report card findings to facilitate understanding and encourage engagement with NAEP data among nonexperts. Infographic designs are easily shared, potentially generating traction on social media, in news releases, or on the Governing Board’s website.

**Next-generation presentation tools**, such as Prezi, move beyond traditional, static, sequential presentation methods. A dynamic, kinetic interface allows for deeper exploration of the relationships between ideas and numbers while engaging audiences with a memorable approach. This type of platform is cloud-based, allowing online sharing and enabling remote presenters—including Board members and ambassadors—to easily access and present files from anywhere, at any time.

**Stakeholder testimonials** from those who have used NAEP data to address education issues can be made into a document for print and social media distribution, grouped by audience segment.

## **2014 Plan**

- **Develop and disseminate a quarterly e-newsletter on topics including parent engagement, TEL, assessment literacy, and stakeholder use of NAEP, beginning in the second quarter of 2014.**
- **Conduct an assessment of Governing Board and NCES materials to determine what materials are needed for the Board’s outreach priorities in 2014.**
- **Develop a strategy for using infographics, multimedia, and innovative presentation tools to deepen understanding and use of NAEP data.**
- **Develop Web-optimized one-pagers for priority audiences on key topics such as the richness of contextual variables, assessment literacy, and other Board initiatives.**
- **Conduct outreach with key stakeholders to elicit and produce testimonials of NAEP in action.**
- **Develop and execute a plan to obtain Board member insights on and reaction to NAEP data at each quarterly Board meeting.**
- **Translate static or outdated document formats (e.g., assessment frameworks) into more engaging and accessible media, such as e-publications or interactive PDFs.**

## **IV. STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH**

In 2013, the Governing Board contacted stakeholders frequently for five release events, two Board dinners, one symposium, and the 2014 Board nominations. In 2014, the Governing Board will engage stakeholders less frequently, with only one release event, Education Summit for Parent Leaders outreach, and 2015 nominations outreach. Less frequent outreach presents the Board with a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge: Less frequent outreach to stakeholders means the Board must work harder to remain top of mind and maintain relevance. The opportunity: The Governing Board can appeal to stakeholders with different kinds of outreach and learn more about its audiences, while bolstering its reputation as a powerful resource for assessment information.

Outreach and subsequent feedback, whether by actions or direct response, will allow Reingold to determine where stakeholders fall on an engagement continuum—from basic awareness, to understanding, appreciation, and finally action—and tailor messages and outreach to people at each point on the continuum to move them to the next level. For audiences that have minimal knowledge of NAEP, we will focus on raising awareness and encouraging them to learn more about NAEP’s research and resources. For those who are already aware, we can deliver information and messaging that motivates them to access and use NAEP resources and participate in Governing Board events. For stakeholders who are already champions, we can provide materials, tools, and resources to help them more effectively use NAEP in their work and share NAEP with colleagues.

Many of the stakeholder priorities for 2014 are discussed in their core area sections, such as content development and social media engagement. Stakeholder engagement priorities will be determined largely by the Board’s 2014 initiatives, including parent engagement, assessment literacy, and 12th grade academic preparedness. However, the Board must maintain solid engagement opportunities that feature enhanced content.

### **2014 Plan**

- Develop and execute a plan for engaging Board members, alumni, and other champions more strategically in outreach efforts.
- Identify opportunities to consult with stakeholder groups and seek feedback from target audience groups on the effectiveness of the Governing Board’s work.
- Continue to maintain and enhance high-quality, current contacts in the stakeholder database.

## V. TRADITIONAL MEDIA

The Governing Board's work to date provides a strong foundation for future media relations, supported by a database of influential journalists' contact information and continual media promotion of results from The Nation's Report Card. The challenge is to build on this foundation through consistent media outreach that provides journalists with compelling stories about why data matter.

As technology changes, so do the outlets, media, and individuals considered trusted newsmakers. At the same time, online and mobile platforms such as Twitter have accelerated the speed at which news enters the public conversation. The Governing Board needs media relations strategies that are agile, timely, and relevant in a fast-paced, quickly evolving news landscape. A vibrant, successful media relations strategy hinges on relevant media messaging, strategic reporter and news outlet targeting and relationship building, providing news outlets with relevant content and sources, preparing spokespeople for interviews, and pitching unique stories that grab journalists'—and the public's—attention. We propose the following strategies for 2014:

### **Expand the Media Conversations Beyond Report Card Results**

- Educate more journalists about the Board as well as NAEP data and why they matter.
- Develop an editorial calendar that defines monthly media hooks for pitching stories on NAEP and Board activities.
- Target news outlets by audience to further educate and engage priority audience groups.
- Position Governing Board members as thought leaders on a variety of topics that connect NAEP to international competitiveness, technology and innovation, achievement gaps, academic preparedness, parent leader engagement, assessment literacy, and assessment innovation.
- Integrate multimedia content into press materials to enhance the likelihood of pickup. Research by PR Newswire shows that, compared with news releases that do not use multimedia, news releases with multimedia elements are viewed 77 percent more frequently, are shared more than three times more often, and generate visibility for an average of 11 days longer.

Editorial calendar opportunities may include one or two high-profile media events, such as:

- Inviting reporters to write about assessment by hosting a press event at a participating school. Allow a journalist to track the process until the report is released.
- Conducting a media roundtable with NAEP experts and champions.
- To obtain more local TV coverage, pitching interviews with the Governing Board's subject matter experts to affiliate news services, similar to wire services, with broadcast content picked up by subscribing outlets such as ABC and distributed to local stations. This can be especially effective in Trial Urban District Assessment cities.

### **Engage With Journalists and Innovate to Meet Their Needs**

- Contact industry groups such as the Education Writers Association (EWA) and Hechinger Institute to host a meeting to discuss NAEP, its role, and how it is covered in the media.
- Host monthly Q-and-A sessions with Governing Board experts in forums such as National Journal, EWA, or in an online “Ask Me Anything” session. This is a feedback loop for discovering what education writers want to cover.

### **Expand the Use of Twitter as a Journalist Engagement Tool**

- Establish a Twitter monitoring strategy to allow the Governing Board to participate in online conversations with education journalists in real time.
- Develop Twitter relationships with influential members of the media to reach their followers. Klout ranks the influential education tweeters: U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan is No. 1; other influencers include Joy Resmovits (The Huffington Post), Alexander Russo (“This Week in Education”), and Motoko Rich (The New York Times).
- Use real-time social tools including Vocus, Radian6, and Muck Rack to gain insights into prevalent messages and perceptions of NAEP and the Board; determine frequently used channels; analyze how the Board’s work is reflected in stakeholder communications; and identify drivers of these conversations. Through structured analysis, we will help the Governing Board refine and optimize strategies across all channels.

### **2014 Plan**

- Create a 2014 editorial calendar that identifies one opportunity per month to engage the media, such as a roundtable, online Q-and-A session, desk-side briefing or attendance at an industry event.
- Work with a Governing Board member or alumnus to draft and place an op-ed each quarter.
- Integrate multimedia components into news releases for the grade 12 Reading and Mathematics report card and 2015 nominations, with the possibility for other releases
- Develop and execute a media engagement and monitoring social media strategy.

## **VI. WEBSITE**

The Governing Board’s website will become increasingly important for engaging all audiences, as consistent outreach for report card releases, parent engagement, and other Board initiatives drive people to the website for information and action. The website should be the primary vehicle for connecting audiences to relevant and actionable content through the Board’s integrated outreach efforts. Drawing on our continued work on the Board’s website, and content development for the report card release pages and audience-focused pages, Reingold will help the Governing Board enhance its website to improve both the overall user experience and the experience of each stakeholder audience.

Key recommendations include:

**Implement keyword research and a new site map.** The recommended site map identifies pages needing completely new content, and pages needing updating. We will work with the Governing Board to prioritize pages needing content, then develop content and revise the rest of the site.

**Perform ongoing search engine optimization (SEO).** The search landscape changes every day, so it is important to conduct keyword research periodically to make sure the Governing Board uses relevant terms and content. As new pages are developed, Reingold will work with the Board to make new content search engine-friendly.

**Conduct link-building.** The Governing Board has the potential to increase the modest number of external websites linking to nagb.org, enhancing its reputation as a trusted source for education information. Through outreach to partner organizations and supporters, we can identify relevant and authoritative education websites and request that they link to Board pages, increasing Board traffic and search engine visibility. The greater the number of external links that direct traffic to the Governing Board's site, the greater opportunity the Board has to engage specific audiences with the Governing Board's resources and information and drive them to the audience-focused pages on the website.

**Develop a mobile site.** As the use of mobile devices to access the Internet increases, we highly recommend that the Governing Board's Web pages be optimized for this use to allow seamless viewing on mobile devices. We recommend starting the mobile planning process once the website has been updated with new content.

**Adjust design and content.** To keep the website dynamic and relevant, pages must allow for consistent updates and new content. The home page and audience pages are the most modular; the majority of the other pages are static HTML. We recommend that the Governing Board expand the modular design onto pages with high traffic and visibility. In addition, we will expand the use of photos, videos, and other multimedia as primary elements on the page to increase engagement. As new content is developed for Board communications, the content must be included on the website in a way that is user-friendly and easy to find.

**Develop audience-focused pages.** As the Governing Board begins targeted outreach to different audiences, such as parent leaders, the website must feature content that appeals to each priority audience.

**Conduct ongoing monitoring and analysis of website activity.** Website analytics are essential in understanding how users are getting to the website and what they are doing once they get there. In addition, analytics will help us gauge the effectiveness of outreach and recommend improvements. We will work with the Governing Board to determine goals and conversions on each Web page, and then continually monitor website analytics to determine those factors that are contributing to successful conversions, as well as potential hurdles that are hampering the website's success.



## **2014 Plan**

- Complete execution of the design and content for the “Information For Parents” webpages.
- Work with the Board’s Web contractor to install Google Analytics and establish key tracking and performance metrics.
- Execute content development requirements for remaining “Information For” pages.
- Work with the Board’s Web contractor to implement keyword research and the new site map.
- Revise and create content and design for the new website, including the Education Topics section.
- Develop and execute link-building strategy.

## **VII. SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media will continue to become increasingly important for the Governing Board as its Web-based outreach to target audiences and the general public alike expands. The Board can focus on growing its social media audiences to elevate the impact and reach of its communications in a cost-effective manner. In addition, as the Governing Board’s website grows as the hub of its communications, social media can help reinforce its Web presence and drive traffic to specific Web pages.

The Governing Board can use social media to convey important messages about NAEP, and the Board’s role with NAEP, through the following four primary means:

### **Developing Rich Content and Multimedia**

Across social media channels, photos, videos, and other forms of multimedia are the most effective in soliciting users’ response and garnering their engagement. The Governing Board has a wealth of NAEP resources and materials, but they are not designed, packaged, or used effectively on social media. In addition to content strategies introduced in section III, rich content may include:

- Infographics following each release to distill the most important data points and to be used on Facebook and Twitter.
- Short audio and video clips to show attendees and other stakeholders at release events discussing the data and their implications.
- Facebook and Twitter graphics with images of students overlaid with quotes from release panelists or parent leaders on the importance of NAEP.

Content like this will help users best see or hear why NAEP is relevant to them, without having to click back to the website or review complex information. As content is posted, we will monitor performance to make recommendations for improvements in future multimedia content.

## **Increasing Year-Round Stakeholder Outreach to Target Specific Audiences**

As the Governing Board expands outreach to specific audiences (such as parent leaders), it can use social media properties to encourage audiences to take action. Leveraging partners' social media presences and blogger outreach capabilities can help.

Social media enables the Governing Board to maximize reach with limited resources, and reach audiences that it may not have access to otherwise. The Board asks partners to share content for release events; we recommend making such outreach ongoing. Strategies can include:

- Identifying and regularly engaging with other education-related organizations on their social networks.
- Sharing content from partner organizations on Governing Board's social networks to build relationships.
- Creating yearlong editorial content calendars that identify specific themes or events and share periodic (monthly, or to be determined) customized content with priority partners across audiences—such as parents, educators, civic leaders, and business leaders.
- Partnering with groups to develop guest blogs, host topical Twitter chats or Google+ Hangouts, or create other online engagement activities.
- Sharing a social media newsletter of key posts to Listservs for organizations to share posted Board content with their social networks.

## **Optimizing the Governing Board's Videos and YouTube Channel**

The Governing Board must promote and publicize its growing video collection. YouTube's new channel design provides a prime opportunity to build engagement with Board video content. We will address two main considerations for increasing the visibility of videos: how users search for and find the Governing Board's site and what viewers do after watching the videos. We recommend that the Board's website contractor reorganize its YouTube pages, making the content easier to navigate, aligned with user search patterns, and optimized for search engines, and providing better control of the user experience on YouTube. Channel design strategies include:

- Developing a custom header with the Governing Board brand.
- Organizing videos into more focused playlists by topic area such as "12th grade preparedness" and "technology and engineering."
- Uploading a channel trailer for nonsubscribers.
- Showcasing partner organizations on "Our Friends."
- Editing webinar videos into segments by panelists to optimize for search engines.
- Embedding Facebook's "like" plug-in into video content.

Search optimization strategies include:

- Developing video titles, tags, and descriptions that are most likely to show up in a search.
- Implementing video annotations (clickable links to other YouTube videos or external websites) to drive more traffic to other YouTube content and the website.
- Encouraging education-related discussion on the channel's home page.

Website optimization strategies include:

- Developing a video or multimedia portal on the Governing Board’s website.
- Using YouTube embedded videos (rather than native players).
- Using social media content to drive users to specific videos on the Board’s website.

### **Leveraging Board Members’ Social Media Networks**

We recommend tapping into Board members’ extensive professional networks to spread the word about the Governing Board’s important work. For example, the Honorable Tom Luna could write a guest blog on the Idaho State Department of Education website and promote it via his personal and institutional social media channels. The prominent education leaders on the Governing Board have a built-in audience interested in these issues, and so communicating directly to them is a natural step.

### **2014 Plan**

- Develop recommendations for content development, especially multimedia, for distribution via social media.
- Develop a stakeholder database and monthly partner calendars.
- Define, promote and host four social media engagement events with key stakeholder partners over the year, such as chats and hangouts.
- Work with the website contractor to organize and optimize YouTube channels.

## **VIII. NOMINATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS**

Reingold supports the execution of the Governing Board’s annual nominations solicitation process. Through comprehensive research, materials development, and outreach, we have helped the Governing Board find qualified individuals to help the Board fulfill its critical mission, and raised the visibility of the Board and its work among national education leaders, policymakers, business leaders, and the general public.

Every year, Reingold has worked with the Governing Board to find new and creative ways to attract candidates. We develop new products, expand online outreach, and refine the Web page to maximize interest. For the 2013 cycle, we communicated the diverse initiatives of the Board to emphasize the breadth of its work and the need for diverse and passionate nominees. We developed a one-pager and video highlighting the Board’s focus areas, and used the Web page to offer information on the “Board in Action.” In addition, social media helped build interest. The Governing Board garnered more than 185 nominations, and traffic to the website spiked from August to October during this effort.

The 2014 outreach cycle featured the people on the Governing Board to inspire interested candidates. We developed an interactive map for the home page, where users could read biography highlights and listen to audio clips of members talking about serving on the Board. Out of 3,200 visits to the Web page, there were 2,700 clicks on the map—a very high click-through rate of 84 percent. In addition, we made structural and design adjustments to the home

page, including large, prominent buttons with links to information about submitting a nomination and the frequently asked questions, rather than housing that content on the nominations page. From August to October, the traffic to the nominations page continued to increase, as did the number of people who actually clicked through to the “Submit a Nomination” page. Our expanded social media outreach also increased awareness of the openings.

The Governing Board is well-positioned for continued success and expansion. For the 2012 cycle, the database contact count was just less than 4,000 contacts. Today, the database has more than 10,000 contacts, nearly tripling in two years of outreach. We continue to use outreach data to drive improvements and outreach efforts for the following year. Reingold will build on this outreach success with a comprehensive strategy, including integrated stakeholder contact management and organization; a dynamic, Section 508-compliant Web page; multimedia materials and targeted content; email marketing; and Web-based and social media outreach. While the 2015 nominations outreach plan is to be developed in 2014, we have identified several recommendations:

### **Refine the Database and Focus on Quality Contacts**

Through each year’s nominations research, and the continuing research for report card releases and symposia, the Governing Board’s nominations database has expanded. For the upcoming nominations cycles, we recommend maintaining the database to ensure that our contacts are up to date, in addition to prioritizing and organizing those contacts that have demonstrated involvement in Board activities.

### **Expand Targeted (Position-Specific) Outreach**

The majority of our materials and outreach has not been segmented by open position. We believe it is important to work with the Governing Board to increase highly targeted outreach, refining our database to prioritize contacts and groups for notification of the open positions; developing messages and materials to attract individuals for specific positions; and identifying groups and influencers that are best positioned to use our materials to reach potential nominees through their channels. In addition, we suggest tapping into blogs and forums that have strong followings among target audience members and can build interest—and ultimately attract nominations.

### **Work With the Website Contractor to Transition to an Online Submission Process**

The transition to an online submission process will reduce the number of steps users have to take to nominate a Board member and allow for a seamless onsite experience. As more of our outreach happens online, it is easier for users to submit a nomination after following one of our outreach materials to the splash page and identifying the requirements. An online process will allow the Governing Board to capture users while they are on the site and interest is high.

## **Continue to Engage Board Members**

The Board members are some of the best selling points for serving on the Governing Board. Without requiring too much of their time, the Board can tap into their networks and communications channels to directly reach audiences across the full range of Board positions. For example, several Board members could write a guest blog to be featured on the splash page and published on social media. Or a Board member could participate in a Twitter chat on the Board's feed, to answer questions about the responsibility and weigh in on current challenges or opportunities the Governing Board faces. Content could also be collected at the quarterly Board meetings, where all of the members are already engaged with the Board's activities.

## **2014 Plan**

- Work with Governing Board members and staff to develop the 2015 nominations outreach plan.
- Work with the Board's Web contractor to transition to an online submission process on nagb.org.
- Execute the approved outreach plan.
- Provide an analysis of the outreach campaign including recommendations for the 2016 cycle.

## **CONCLUSION**

By building on successes and injecting a proven communications approach with fresh ideas refocused on the Governing Board's priorities, Reingold can help the Board more effectively reach the right audiences to Make Data Matter. The next step is obtaining Governing Board approval for the 2014 communications plan. On approval, we will schedule a kickoff meeting with the Governing Board staff to flesh out priorities, refine messages and calls to action for each target audience, and develop a time-phased action plan and budget for the year. We also will work with staff to articulate goals that are measureable and actionable, and identify realistic benchmarks by which we can collectively measure, evaluate, and adjust progress in communications and outreach throughout and at the end of the year. This concrete, actionable plan should provide clear steps to execute each strategy and effectively reach each target audience to make NAEP data more useful than ever before.

The Governing Board's work measures the progress of achievement in America, and how well different groups of students are learning various subjects. This rich information can be used by invested audiences, from parents to policymakers, to better understand education in the U.S. and ultimately improve our schools. The Board has built a formidable foundation of partners, stakeholders, and media contacts. Now, the Governing Board is positioned to be a leading voice in the national conversation about education reform by sharing NAEP data year-round in engaging multimedia formats customized to target audiences, and taking part in dynamic on- and offline events. By telling its story in fresh, relevant ways, the Governing Board will continue to Make Data Matter.

## **APPENDIX I: CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND**

In its 25th year, this is a critical moment for the National Assessment Governing Board. Data-driven decision-making has emerged as a powerful force in education reform, making the Board's work to provide an accurate, independent measurement of student progress more critical than ever before. Impartial NAEP data provide a comprehensive snapshot of education across cities, states, and demographic groups. Board members are respected educators, policymakers, and leaders in their fields, whose expertise informs the delivery of this information and helps provide context for the stakeholders who use it. At the same time, there is a growing anti-testing sentiment in the country. The creation of the Common Core State Standards has raised questions about the role of NAEP and, as the rollout of the standards continues on an at-times bumpy path, controversy over assessments and testing persists.

The Governing Board operates amid this complex education and assessment landscape, and it must be strategic and proactive in maintaining and enhancing the brand and relevancy of NAEP. The Board remains poised to leverage its important work to help improve student academic preparedness for college and careers, increase parent engagement in education, reduce achievement gaps between demographic groups, and incorporate technology literacy into American students' skills. To do so, the Governing Board must continually reassess how it engages with its audiences, use innovative strategies for reaching key stakeholders, and adapt to an evolving communications landscape.

Since the Governing Board's inception in 1988, the way organizations and institutions communicate their missions and activities to the public has transformed several times over. The Internet has pushed printed reports close to extinction, and webinars are replacing in-person press conferences. Media outlets have proliferated, and now include blogs. Social media has accelerated the news cycle and dispersed publishing power. Although the Board has begun to harness the potential of new technology to expand its reach and influence, there is plenty of room for progress. In today's dynamic communications universe, adaptability is a necessity.

After four years of successful partnership, Reingold is pleased to continue supporting the Governing Board in outreach and information dissemination. Below, we examine our original communications goals and evaluate the effectiveness of our efforts to achieve them. This comprehensive review, coupled with a new strategic plan—with a detailed timeline and budget to follow—offer tangible steps to strengthen the Governing Board's influence using the latest communications tools and taking advantage of emerging communications and assessment trends.

Undertaking a focused and innovative communications effort will empower the Governing Board to further cement its position as the respected authority behind NAEP. This plan can help the Governing Board effectively connect NAEP results to a wider range of relevant audiences while making the data both digestible and a compelling driver of educational improvement. Now is the time for the Governing Board to make a difference—to truly “Make Data Matter.”

## REVIEW OF CURRENT COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Since 2009, Reingold has employed a variety of strategies and tactics to help the Governing Board effectively tell the story of American student achievement. In our recommended communications plan approved by the Board in 2010, we introduced the theme “Getting Behind the Scores and Beyond the Releases.” Our challenge was to communicate how NAEP data can illuminate for parents, educators, and other stakeholders how students are performing at the national, state, and urban district levels, informing education policy, improving America’s schools, and ultimately helping children achieve.

The theme also emphasizes the Governing Board’s influence and importance beyond facilitating the releases of The Nation’s Report Card. The communications objectives then—and we believe now—were to elevate NAEP’s brand as the trusted, impartial leader in reporting student achievement, and make NAEP results and research more relevant, useful, and applicable by individuals and groups with a stake in student achievement.

The 2010 communications plan aimed to achieve four overarching goals:

- Consistent, year-round outreach and engagement
- Enhanced collaboration with NCES and other entities involved with NAEP
- Leveraging and integrating multiple communications channels
- Mobilizing stakeholders and partners

Since that original plan was created almost four years ago, the educational landscape and communications approaches have changed. The federal government challenged public schools to “Race to the Top” by offering grants to the most effective reformers; educators united to establish the Common Core State Standards; charter schools exploded in popularity; and philanthropic organizations, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, helped shape education reform priorities, including a focus on data-driven decision-making. At the same time, the use of Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms took off, and user-generated content grew in influence, changing what it means to engage an audience.

Reingold has worked closely with the Governing Board to enhance the quality and quantity of its communications and reach larger and more relevant audiences with the results of The Nation’s Report Card, including thousands of stakeholders and hundreds of journalists. These accomplishments signify real progress, but there is still great unrealized potential.

The 2010 communications plan was wide-ranging and innovative at the time and has been executed to varying degrees, as will be discussed. The plan was developed with broad recommendations and concrete next steps. However, it was not accompanied by specific action plans and timelines reflecting capacity and resource constraints. Simply put, the plan was overly ambitious. While some elements were pursued, many remain untapped opportunities. In the next plan, we strongly recommend developing annual, time-phased action plans with agreed-upon metrics. This will better focus the Governing Board’s limited staff capacity and resources on key priorities for each year, while maintaining a strong emphasis on progress and results.

The following table outlines accomplishments and challenges of our communications and outreach approach.

<b>Accomplishments</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
Planned and executed three major national campaigns and 19 releases of The Nation’s Report Card.	Continuing communications focus on NAEP releases, not moving “beyond the releases.”
Transformed releases from live events to cost-effective webinars appealing to expanded audiences.	Lack of momentum developing timely, relevant, multiformat content and materials, getting “behind the scores.”
Raised awareness of the Governing Board’s work with more than 10,000 education stakeholders.	Passive leveraging of Governing Board members, alumni, and NAEP champions to maximize exposure.
Boosted average participation in NAEP release events from fewer than 100 attendees to up to 500.	Conservative approach to investing in social media engagement.
Attracted the largest-ever number of Governing Board nominee applicants through an award-winning integrated marketing campaign.	Inconsistent partnership with website contractor to enhance and execute digital communications strategy.
Connected with more than 4,600 national, local, and trade reporters, and created a customized contact database to track their engagement.	
Earned coverage in more than 4,000 news stories.	

## **I. AUDIENCES AND MESSAGES**

The 2010 communications plan segmented the Governing Board’s primary audience—the general public—into six subgroups: policymakers, higher education professionals, advocacy groups, business leaders, educators, and parents. All of these audiences are relevant to the Board’s work, with various levels of interest in, knowledge of, and engagement with student assessment and achievement. This segmentation enables the Governing Board to target resources and messages that resonate with each particular audience, inspiring them to take action using NAEP.

However, the plan did not follow with assigning priorities to these audiences or developing a messaging matrix for each one. Rather, audience prioritization and messaging was driven by the Governing Board initiatives, such as 12th grade academic preparedness and parent engagement. For example, outreach for 12th grade preparedness targeted professionals in specific geographic regions for a series of symposia across the country to engage education, business, and civic leaders on the issue of college and career preparedness. Core messaging focused on research studies to determine whether NAEP data could serve as an indicator of 12th grade preparedness; materials were then tailored to various regions with local data. While this was essential to meet the needs of the initiative, the absence of other audience-specific messaging and materials remains a gap in the foundation for a robust communications and outreach strategy.

In addition, defining a call to action for each audience segment is needed to guide and sharpen messaging and communications. In other words, for each audience the Governing Board needs to answer the questions: What? So what? Now what?



Reingold recommended the development of “Information For” tabs on nagb.org during the website redesign phase, identifying priority audiences and directing each of these groups to customized Board and NAEP content. The determined audience segments themselves—parents, educators, policymakers, business leaders, and the media—reveal the nature of the Governing Board’s work and its outreach priorities. Tailored pages can deliver relevant content to the right audiences, making the website visitor’s experience more efficient and effective. However, at this time the five tabs within the “Information For” portal contain highly similar information, as the Governing Board has not yet fully built out these pages with updated content to be tested with each audience. In Reingold’s website audit, we identified several areas to improve the user experience by further tailoring content for each audience segment. Identifying proven audience-specific messaging and calls to action, and building out the “Information For” pages on nagb.org, must be priorities in 2014.

#### **Work to Date:**

- Researched and identified audiences to target with NAEP data.
- Tailored messaging for 12th grade academic preparedness and parent leader engagement initiatives.
- Created structure for audience-specific information pages on nagb.org.

## **II. STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNERSHIP OUTREACH**

Reingold has worked with the Governing Board to identify and engage more than 10,000 relevant education stakeholders, storing detailed information about them in a relationship database. Reingold has focused on developing contacts in education organizations and advocacy groups; parent groups; foundations; policy organizations; think tanks; higher education institutions; minority advocacy groups; state, local, and federal government agencies; and business, industry, and civil rights organizations.

For a variety of events, Reingold identified and engaged relevant education stakeholders based on the goals of each outreach effort. We worked with the Governing Board to determine the profile of stakeholders we wanted to appeal to for each event. We then identified specific contacts and priority audiences—based on their level of knowledge and understanding of the topic, history of involvement with the Board, location, and organization type—to attend events, participate on panels and in symposia, and promote the Board’s message across their organizational and personal networks.

For each event, Reingold’s multichannel outreach approach included emailing invitations to events, disseminating news releases and pitching stories, and posting relevant social media and website content. Reingold tracks interactions in the stakeholder database to identify influencers and champions. This tracking allows us identify patterns of engagement and behavior among groups through their attendance at release events, willingness to spread the Governing Board’s messages through their networks, and participation in Board meetings or activities, indicating high-value stakeholders to enlist as champions and brand ambassadors

In the first four years of our collaboration, our outreach has attracted more than 3,700 unique attendees to 19 release events for The Nation’s Report Card, engaged 144 organizations to help

promote the Board's events, and increased the number of nominations for vacant Governing Board positions. We find and engage top education professionals—from small rural school districts to large national organizations—in discussions on policy, academic preparedness, and the state of educational assessment.

There is still more to learn about the Governing Board's stakeholders, and Web analytics are key to revealing their interests and involvement. In 2013, we began adding custom URLs in our emails to track the event registration process—from the email, splash page, or other source through registration—and determine how and when users are spurred to register for events. We continue to analyze information from our outreach efforts in the context of four years of release data.

### 2010 Communications Plan Progress

Proposed Activity	Status
Build links with partner websites.	Reingold has suggested using link-building campaigns to drive traffic to nagb.org, detailed in the social media section of this plan.
Cosponsor workshops, events, and forums.	The Board has not cosponsored events.
Create NAEP recognition programs for schools and teachers.	The Board did not pursue this idea.
Seek partners to disseminate NAEP resources.	We have identified organizations to promote Governing Board/NAEP events (releases, symposia, etc.) and the Board has begun to engage with them.

### Work to Date:

- **Developed stakeholder database.** Reingold has compiled more than 10,000 contacts that can be segmented as needed by organization type, geography, previous interaction with the Board, or interest in a specific topic.
- **Managed stakeholder outreach for live and online events.** We have sent more than 535,000 emails to potential stakeholders and have made more than 1,000 phone calls to priority stakeholders to encourage their promotion of Governing Board events. We have worked with the Board to identify dozens of stakeholders to participate as panelists at various Board events.
- **Identified potential partners and champions.** Reingold has tracked organizations that have attended, participated in, or promoted the Governing Board's events. These potential partners can be approached to encourage additional promotion or participation.
- **Focused on audience groups that were a priority** for the 12th grade preparedness symposia, parent leader engagement, and specific report card subjects for each release.

### III. TRADITIONAL MEDIA

The 2010 communications plan identified media relations as a strategy for enhancing the NAEP brand and thought leadership. Media relations helped accomplish this by earning coverage of NAEP and The Nation's Report Card in respected news outlets trusted by key audiences. This supports the Governing Board's second objective—to strengthen the relevance and use of NAEP results and resources for new and existing audiences, from policymakers who read *Education Week* to Spanish-speaking families reading *La Opinión* to reporters looking for reliable education data.

Effective media relations enables journalists and the Governing Board to help make sure NAEP data is relevant, accurately reported, and accessible to the public through news channels. Media relations allow Board spokespeople to spark a broader public conversation about the data and its implications for education. Each report card release varies by subject matter, timing, and news competition, making an apples-to-apples comparison of Governing Board media coverage over time difficult. In 2009, online impression and circulation data measured 15.1 million potential readers of stories about NAEP data, compared with more than 900 million potential readers in 2012 and 2013. In that time, the number of online news outlets multiplied, but this rough metric illustrates solid, positive growth in the reach of Governing Board content.

### 2010 Communications Plan Progress

Proposed Activity	Status
Create additional media-friendly events.	The Governing Board hosted three 12th Grade Preparedness Commission symposia with media components, generating coverage, in addition to a desk-side briefing with former Mississippi Gov. Ronnie Musgrove and The Washington Post.
Leverage the influence and expertise of Governing Board members to write and pitch op-eds.	Board members served as panelists and occasional op-ed contributors, advancing their thought leadership and shaping the education conversation.
Cultivate media contacts and resources through regular contact.	The Board responds to media inquiries quickly, and Stephaan Harris engages with media regularly, but media outreach outside of report card releases is sporadic.
Make the website more inviting to the media.	The website clearly identifies media contacts, recent events, and links to important information such as the assessment frameworks. Feedback from journalists regarding the new online report format indicates that this was well received.
Cater to multiple platforms.	Reingold developed an infographic to support the 2013 Math and Reading release and engaged reporters via Twitter.
Create a story bank.	With the Board's focus on earning media coverage on report card results, no story bank was developed.
Refine the media database.	The Board's 4,000-member database is routinely scrubbed for accuracy and relevance. The database platform allows the Board to tag reporters and activities and generate pitch lists based on performance.

### Media Monitoring

Since 2010, Reingold has monitored news monthly, created reports on earned media, forwarded relevant stories and opportunities for media outreach to NAEP and the Governing Board, and built the Board's media contact database. However, capacity limitations prevent us from analyzing monthly coverage for quantity, topic, and tone. Rather, the emphasis is on identifying media engagement opportunities as well as new outlets to target.

### Report Card Releases

The Governing Board has effectively leveraged report card releases to earn news coverage and educate target audiences and the general public about NAEP's value. For each report card release, Reingold creates media materials, conducts targeted outreach to journalists, and works with news organizations to give qualified journalists embargoed access to the data. Report card releases drive the majority of the Board's and NAEP's news coverage. Through our continual media outreach, the Governing Board has identified and engaged more than 4,000 relevant

national, local, and industry reporters, establishing relationships that lead to increased coverage of NAEP.

NAEP results highlights are the most consistently communicated messages across all report card release events. National and local education reporters rely on The Nation's Report Card as a reliable measure of academic achievement, and the Governing Board has successfully established its reputation among these reporters. In the last four years, 150 reporters have covered NAEP in more than 4,056 news stories in outlets ranging from The Wall Street Journal and Education Week, to the San Jose Mercury News and Matthew Yglesias' blog for Slate.

In support of all media activities, the National Assessment Governing Board has issued 42 news releases, generating more than 7,000 links and 35,000 views. Robust media outreach and analysis helps keep the Governing Board's work in the public eye, ensuring that journalists and key audiences have accurate, compelling data to help shape stories and drive policy.

**Work to Date:**

- Supported report card releases with proactive media outreach, including targeted media messaging, media advisory releases, a news release, and email and phone pitching to journalists.
- Analyzed coverage of NAEP results by volume, reach, tone, and topic; used results to inform future release strategies.
- Grew and maintained the Governing Board's network of media contacts.
- Monitored news coverage monthly to collect clips based on keywords.

#### **IV. SOCIAL MEDIA**

The 2010 communications plan aimed to use digital communications to enable Governing Board stakeholders and key audiences to interact with each other in real time while receiving information from the Board. In addition, social media supports the Board's broader goals of raising awareness, cultivating new and existing audiences, and driving increased traffic to [nagb.org](http://nagb.org)—where having strong, optimized, relevant content is critical. As audiences spend more time online, it is critical the Board establish itself as a thought leader there.

In fall 2010, Reingold helped the Governing Board launch branded Facebook and Twitter properties and processes for developing, approving, and publishing content. Despite the rapid nature of social media, it was crucial that the Board feel comfortable with all social media content, taking a conservative approach that vets and approves all proposed content.

Reingold manages the Governing Board's Facebook and Twitter properties, working with the Board to develop and post timely, relevant content, and creating strategies and opportunities for promoting report card release events and other Governing Board initiatives.

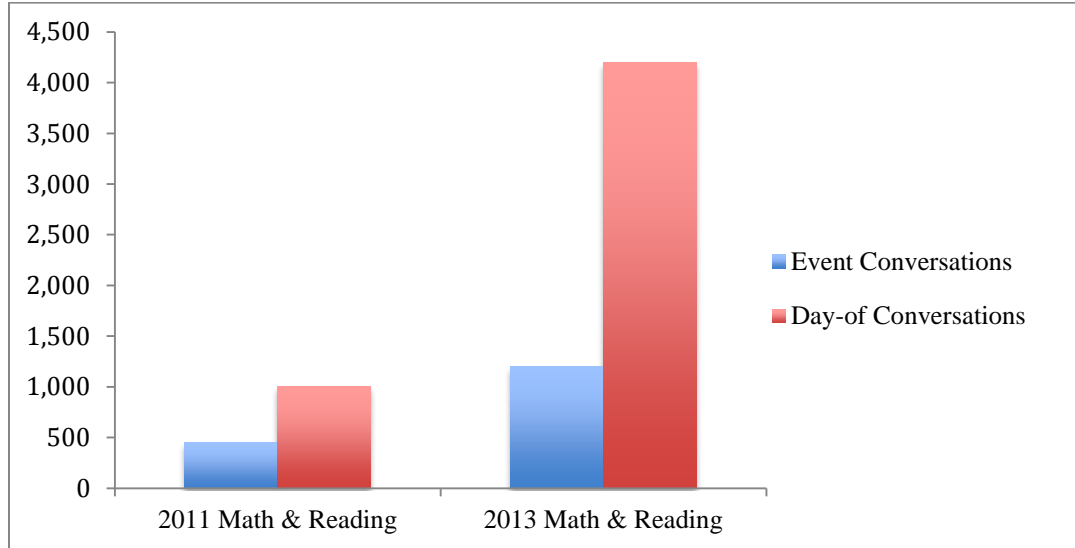
### 2010 Communications Plan Progress

Proposed Activity	Status
Create a Facebook page or private online community.	We launched a Governing Board Facebook page in the fall of 2010 and have posted content several times a week. No comprehensive outreach strategy has been executed.
Send tweets via Twitter.	We launched a Governing Board Twitter account in the fall of 2010 and have gradually built up the Board's following through weekly content, live tweeting of release events, and engaging stakeholders and media in following events. No comprehensive outreach strategy has been executed.
Disseminate email newsletters.	Initial concepts for a newsletter were developed, but the newsletter was never put into action due to other priorities.
Post blogs by Board members and guest authors.	The development of a blog on nagb.org has not been a priority, and so the perspectives of Board members have been shared in a handful of op-eds or post-release statements.
Court education bloggers through social media.	Our only interaction with bloggers and journalists has been for release events.

Since the social media launch, the Governing Board has increased its audiences and their engagement on Twitter more than Facebook. In November 2012, two years after the Governing Board launched its social media presences, @GovBoard had 500 followers on Twitter. Last year it grew twice as fast, to a total of nearly 900 followers.

Release events have been the Governing Board's most successful opportunities to build and engage an audience, shaping the conversation about NAEP. Comparing online data from the past two reading and math release events—arguably the largest in terms of media coverage and attendance—shows social media growth. The 2011 NAEP Reading and Math garnered more than 1,000 event-day mentions on social media, largely Twitter and blogs. Two years later, there were more than 1,200 mentions of the release on social media during the webinar alone, again mostly on Twitter, and more than 4,200 relevant social media conversations that day. Throughout the day, the online NAEP conversation garnered 10.4 million impressions. We continue to work with the Governing Board during release events to monitor the online conversation and find opportunities for engagement.

### On-topic Mentions Across Social Media, Day of Release



Also important to note are the audiences that are following the Governing Board on social media: parent groups, educators and state departments of education, policymakers, media, higher education organizations, general education groups, and think tanks.

Despite these gains, the Governing Board has not adopted a formal strategy for outreach, content development, and partnership building. Our social media efforts have consisted of ad hoc recommendations, responding to opportunities, and supporting report card releases. As a result, content posted on the Governing Board's social media platforms is reactive, rather than proactive.

The Governing Board's monthly content calendars are largely self-promotional, primarily linking back to NAEP resources and results. When using social media to its full potential, content should link to interesting and relevant materials to help build partnerships and expand networks. In addition, the campaigns lack a concrete outreach, engagement, and partnership building strategy. To build the Board's following on Facebook and Twitter, it is important for partners to see the Governing Board as a trusted resource for content, at the forefront of education reform and assessment news. The Governing Board has lacked quarterly social media milestones and overarching goals.

Recently the Governing Board's social media outreach has become more engaging and proactive, rather than self-promotional, but there is room for improvement. Implementing consistent social media outreach and link-building efforts are critical to leveraging the reach of stakeholders that can share NAEP messaging and data. As outlined, we will work with the Board to continue to expand its messaging and find creative ways of sharing relevant content.

**Work to Date:**

- Developed and posted monthly content calendars.
- Monitored relevant news and online conversations.
- Provided monthly reports on social media performance.
- Performed release event, nominations, and 12th Grade Preparedness Commission outreach.

**V. WEBSITE**

Effective websites have three integrated pieces: content, visitors, and design. When all three work well together, the result is conversions: website visitors taking desired actions, such as clicking through to information, signing up for an email list, or registering for an event. Although the Governing Board’s website has each component, there are adjustments that must be made to the content and design so they better align with how users want to experience the site and are searching for it. We must also optimize the website for search engines, infusing it with the relevant keywords that Governing Board stakeholders search for most frequently. And we need to perform outreach to continually drive the right users to the respective pages of the website.

The Governing Board website averages 3,000 to 4,000 visitors a month, depending on the outreach and other efforts driving traffic to the website. The largest referring sites are [nationsreportcard.gov](http://nationsreportcard.gov) and [nces.ed.gov](http://nces.ed.gov). The large majority of this website traffic is direct, meaning users are coming to the site from typing the URL in their browser. But a very low percentage of visitors come from search engines. In addition, [nagb.org](http://nagb.org) analytics show that the search terms that lead visitors to the site from search engines are very narrowly focused, meaning these visitors are looking for a specific piece of information or term that they’ve seen in Board communications. It also means that the website is not attracting potential new users interested or involved in popular education topics that are related to the Governing Board’s work and NAEP.

The website’s home page is the most visited page each month, meaning users do not come to the site through focused topical pages of interest. While the home page is the portal through which users can access the rest of the site, the Governing Board has not yet been able to attract users through more focused content—such as assessment development or subject-specific data—and drive them to specific interior pages on the site for more information on those topics.



### 2010 Communications Plan Progress

Proposed Activity	Status
Enhance website design.	The Governing Board updated the overall look and feel of the website, but has not implemented broader recommendations to make the website more user-friendly and navigable.
Perform keyword research.	We performed keyword research in 2010 before reviewing the website and developing a recommended sitemap, and updated our keyword research in 2013.
Conduct search engine optimization (SEO).	We reviewed the website in 2010 and developed a revised recommended sitemap, identifying structural and content needs to better optimize the site. Other than the “Information For” pages, few structural or content site changes have been made. We updated the revised sitemap in 2013 to match the new search landscape, including a section on the site with new pages on topics that have high search volume each month—which would increase nagb.org’s online authority and search engine visibility.
Develop fresh, optimized content.	We have developed content for new pages at the outset of each release event, symposium, or nominations cycle.
Perform link building and outreach.	Link building and outreach are dependent on the completion of the revised website architecture and design.

It is important to note that the Governing Board’s website visitors are driven largely by dedicated outreach efforts. The Web pages developed specifically for release events or other initiatives—such as the annual nominations process—are typically the top two most-visited pages on the website. Although outreach has driven traffic to the site, its value is limited because visitors are there to view only one page. There are greater opportunities to use Web page analytics to better understand where visitors come from, and whether users are taking the actions we want them to on the page. Do they register to attend the webinar, download materials, or leave? Analytics can help determine this.

Content can also be better optimized. Multimedia content is scattered, reducing its reach and effectiveness. If it is not on top pages such as the splash page and home page, then users are likely not finding the content on the website. For example, the technology and engineering literacy (TEL) video was produced and featured on the home page, in addition to being posted on the Governing Board’s social media channels, but was never included on a TEL-focused page. If users didn’t see it on the rotator, they missed it. Optimizing videos and introducing more visual elements should be a focus of new website efforts.

Overall, the Governing Board’s website is being used by its core audiences, with support from Board outreach, but it is not yet reaching its potential audiences and connecting with all users searching for or interested in Board content and subject areas. In addition, the Governing Board has not yet undertaken targeted outreach to audience groups to drive them to relevant pages of the website for information and action, and the website is not organized to drive audience-based navigation.

### Work to Date:

Reingold has been engaged in the Governing Board’s website redesign and restructuring efforts. We have worked with the Board to pursue a time-phased approach to its website redesign, focusing on revising the look and feel of the website before adjusting the site architecture and updating the content. Throughout the design process, Reingold has also performed research and made recommendations, in addition to continually developing report card release pages, the top performing pages on the website during the release months.

- **Performed keyword research.** To understand how to better optimize the website for search engines, Reingold performed keyword research to determine those terms in the education landscape that have the highest monthly search volumes, as well as analyze the Governing Board’s site ranking across key topics and terms. We found that across primary topics, the Governing Board does not rank in the top 100 Google search results—and typically search engine users do not look beyond the first or second page of search engine results.
- **Developed a sitemap.** Reingold revisited the Governing Board’s sitemap to evaluate where content could be enhanced or developed, including the development of new pages, to better match how users search for education and Governing Board information. Sitemap revisions include dedicated audience-focused pages. In addition, to support SEO research, we recommended developing a new section of the website focused on attracting search engine traffic via education keywords.
- **Audited the website design and user experience.** Reingold audited the redesigned website, making recommendations to improve its layout, optimize audio and visual content, increase Section 508 accessibility, and improve the user experience. Because different Governing Board audiences have unique interests and should receive tailored content, we reviewed the site from each audience’s perspective to evaluate how the Governing Board can improve audience-focused navigation and content.

The Governing Board is now well positioned to use the research performed and preliminary site map as well as design and content recommendations to start implementing the new sitemap, and revising and developing content to match the new site structure.

## VI. REPORT CARD RELEASE STRATEGY

Since 2010, Reingold has established a proven process for efficiently planning and executing releases of The Nation’s Report Card, mobilizing and integrating multiple communications channels in a campaign to publicize NAEP results to the Governing Board’s audiences.

In support of 19 report card release events, Reingold has developed outreach plans and executed tailored strategies to communicate important report card results to target audiences, provided innovative tactics to achieve record attendance and media stories, and analyzed, crafted, and provided continual recommendations for improvement through an extensive media analysis of coverage and event debrief reports.

### 2010 Communications Plan Progress

Proposed Activity	Status
Conduct releases via webinar.	The Board has successfully transitioned to releasing report card results via webinar, which has increased attendance among stakeholders nationwide and created significant cost savings over in-person events.
Optimize internal coordination.	Release kickoff meetings between the Board, NCES, and contractors establish a baseline of expectations for each release. However, even greater Governing Board/NCES collaboration would be valuable.
Disseminate online alerts to media.	Pre-event calls and media advisories have attracted growing numbers of reporters who request embargoed access.
Conduct outreach to stakeholder groups.	Reingold has conducted targeted outreach to priority organizations for each release to help promote the event among their constituencies, and has begun to cultivate relationships with communications contacts at key organizations. As a result, 151 unique groups have promoted Governing Board release content since 2010.
Conduct phone calls with journalists/stakeholders.	The Board has been successful in hosting a conference call for media before each release, but a call for stakeholders has not been realized. The goal of such a call may be better accomplished through the interactive online means described below.
Target prominent education reporters.	Phone calls and emails—and more recently, tweets—have been highly effective in engaging prominent education reporters.
Revisit release dates to coincide with or capitalize on external opportunities.	Given the NCES and Governing Board analysis and review timelines, there has not been an opportunity to select release dates based on opportunity: the focus instead is on meeting the required deadline to disseminate the results.
Pitch participation of the Board chair and executive director in major events.	The Board has had success in participating in webinars hosted by the Alliance for Excellent Education, but should be more proactive in identifying other outside speaking opportunities.
Conduct media desk-side briefings.	While the Board has conducted desk-side briefings in some contexts (e.g., following the 12th grade preparedness symposia), these have not been a priority during or between releases.
Reach out to high-priority online outlets.	While releases receive strong coverage from influential blogs, the Board has focused on outreach to mainstream media, in part because of the standing embargo policy.
Issue a post-event news release to capture reactions.	This strategy was not pursued but warrants consideration as we examine expanding the release lifecycle. Recently, Reingold developed an infographic interpreting 2013 math and reading results for a second media pitching effort following the release.

### **Transition to Web-Based Release Format**

Reingold has worked closely with Governing Board staff to adapt release events—moving to a webinar platform coupled with fewer in-person webcast events—to attract more attendees and additional exposure in a cost-effective way. As a result, since 2010, Governing Board releases have drawn more than 3,800 attendees from a broad range of target audience segments nationwide.

In addition, Reingold has worked with the Board to transition from delivering congressional briefing packets in person to providing online access to embargoed materials, significantly reducing printing costs and streamlining the time-consuming logistics of assembling and delivering packets by hand. Through the online process, we can better track contacts' access of the materials. In addition, response to online outreach from key staff has been highly positive.

Reingold will continue to consider emerging technologies to create efficiencies, reduce costs, and maximize outreach and engagement.

### **Partnership and Post-Release Promotion**

The Governing Board has seen some success in partnering with organizations like the Alliance for Excellent Education to spread the word about NAEP results, but it could better leverage the reach and influence of additional stakeholder organizations and associations, inviting them to inform their constituencies about releases and seek their assistance in event promotion.

The Governing Board also can be more proactive in finding opportunities for the chair and executive director to emerge as an authoritative voice in national media on assessment, data-driven decision-making, and setting high standards. The Governing Board has also underused post-release opportunities to extend and enrich the conversation about report card results.

### **Temporal and Logistical Constraints**

Reingold's release strategy has operated within the constraints of the report card development process and timeline, rather than in consideration of coinciding external events, the news cycle, and other opportunities for increasing public attention and engaging key audiences. In response, expanding the conception of a given report card release to encompass the assessment life cycle of conception, administration, and reporting will increase opportunities to build anticipation and capitalize on timely external events.



### **Embargo Policy Guidelines**

In August 2011, the Reporting and Dissemination Committee approved guidelines (in full below) for handling news media requests for embargoed access to NAEP reports to help prepare accurate news stories before the time set for an official release. The guidelines pertain only to embargoed pre-release access to NAEP materials by news media personnel and provide for equal treatment of all news organizations, regardless of how their news product is disseminated, whether published, broadcast, or posted on the Internet. Recipients must agree not to make any information public until the time set by the Board for public release.

However, the guidelines do not allow embargoed access to the vast majority of blogs or outlets connected to education constituency groups, such as a teachers union or school board association, advocacy groups with varying views on education issues, or non-profit think tanks that offer commentary and analysis. Several outlets in these two categories who sought embargo access and were denied by Board staff publicly criticized the guidelines during the last two Report Card releases of 2013 NAEP Reading and Mathematics (national/state and TUDA)

In response, the Reporting and Dissemination (R&D) Committee began discussion on embargo guidelines at their December 2013 meeting and how or if those guidelines should be adjusted, given the proliferation of online and “non-traditional” media. Committee members generally felt that giving access to outlets affiliated with an advocacy group was not a good idea.

The Committee requested Board staff to research how some national journalism organizations define who are considered journalists in the changing media landscape and determine their own criteria for membership, and share that feedback at the R&D meeting on February 28. Below are perspectives gathered by Stephaan Harris, of the NAGB staff, from five major journalism groups and their perspective on how journalism can and/or should be defined in the context of the Board’s own embargo guidelines.

Although these organizations had varying opinions, the one consensus was the recommendation that the Board isolate what its goals and objectives are as far as embargo access and NAEP coverage in media to effectively determine embargo guidelines, as opposed to attempting to create criteria for defining journalism or journalists.

Board staff suggests a few guiding questions to facilitate discussion on the matter:

- 1) What do you see as the biggest advantages and disadvantages for potentially broadening the embargo policy to include more “non-traditional” media?
- 2) If an outlet is funded or affiliated with a group, but operated like a traditional news media (news writing staff, original stories, editorial independence, etc.), should that outlet be considered for embargoed access?
- 3) Should audience size and influence be factors in determining embargo access for blogs or other online-only outlets?
- 4) Is there a concern that developing any potential criteria for those outlets currently not allowed access would create an unfair and inconsistent system? Should the Board's current embargo guidelines stay the same and inquiries be considered on a case-by-case basis?
- 5) Several of the outlets denied access for the 2013 NAEP reports still did stories anyway, although these stories appeared a day or so after the report release. Does this suggest that regardless of the guidelines, those interested in NAEP will still write about and discuss the results?
- 6) Were you concerned about the negative reaction by some outlets to being denied access, which was broadcast widely?

### **Organization Feedback**

**Society of Professional Journalists:** SPJ, founded in 1909, is one of the oldest journalism organizations in the United States with nearly 300 chapters and 9,000 members. The stated mission of the SPJ is to promote and defend the First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and freedom of the press; encourage high standards and ethical behavior in the practice of journalism; and promote and support diversity in journalism.

*Sonny Albarado, Immediate Past President:* SPJ has primarily thought about the definition of journalists and journalism mainly in the context of shield laws, not embargoed data. There are internal disagreements within the organization on this issue. Some of our members believe you

define a journalist as someone who gathers information for broader dissemination, regardless of the vehicle or affiliation.

The organization has tried to stay away from defining journalism as it is not so clear-cut. Most of our members would say those who write for an outlet that is partly or entirely supported by a lobbying or advocacy organization would not be a journalist. Blogs have been harder for us to define journalistic value. Someone like Diane Ravitch is an advocate as opposed to a typical journalist. But her blog is influential and reaches millions of people, and coverage in that type of vehicle could be beneficial to organizations.

**Education Writers Association:** As the professional organization of members of the media who cover education at all levels, EWA has worked for more than 65 years to be a resource for journalists as they produce stories. Today, EWA has more than 3,000 members participating in programs, training, information, support, and recognition.

*Lori Crouch, Assistant Director, and Lavinia Hurley, Interim Director of Membership and Marketing:* In its effort to define who should be considered journalists, EWA is developing a checklist, not yet finalized, of traits to make that determination. It is easier rather than just creating a simple definition. Because of the proliferation of online media, the defining lines created can be very fine.

When it comes to media outlets connected with groups and associations, several things should be kept in mind. First, an outlet being funded by a group shouldn't automatically be discounted. Journalism groups cannot be non-profits under the tax code. So they have to use organizations as pass-throughs to be nonprofit. Examples include *Catalyst Chicago* and *Chalkbeat*. We see writers for these entities as journalists. They have prize-winning prominent journalists from traditional outlets and a dedicated news staff which operates independently, and does original reporting. If a group is just a funding administrator for an outlet, it should not count against it.

An outlet like EdSource is more problematic as it was originally a research organization but has evolved into a more journalist organization. Media outlets for unions like the American Federation of Teachers and the National Educators Association are different and wouldn't be thought of as journalism vehicles, as their coverage would never counter organization goals and is not truly independent.

Blogs are a gray area. "This Week in Education," a blog through Scholastic, Inc., is an example of a journalistic outlet as it does original reporting and its author, Alexander Russo, is a longtime reporter with a policy and education background. Bloggers have to be journalists first. When it comes to freelancers, EWA looks at the regular professional input of that person. Andy Rotherham, for example, has written pieces for *Time* magazine, but he primarily works for Bellwether Education Partners, an education nonprofit, so he can't be thought of as a journalist.

Ultimately, you have to look at the type of journalism an outlet is doing, how it handles funding, its relationship with a group, and what that outlet is writing on a consistent basis.

**Poynter Institute:** Poynter is a non-profit school for journalism located in St. Petersburg, Florida, and started in 1975. News University, a project of the institute, offers newsroom training to journalists and journalism students through its interactive e-learning program and links to other journalist training opportunities.

*Ellyn Angelotti, Digital Trends and Social Media Faculty Member:* Instead of an outlet or petitioner's title and role, the Board should look at how both function. Instead of asking the question—"Is he/she a journalist—ask the question, "Is he/she doing journalism?" Poynter defines journalism as the gathering and dissemination of news and information for the wider community, and while actors are different in the changing media landscape, duties and values should still be the same.

The Board should be transparent in its ultimate reasons for why it has certain guidelines. If one concern of expanding the current guidelines is limited resources in processing potentially dozens or hundreds of requests for embargo access and policing for embargo breaks, for example, then the Board should proactively explain this. If any new guidelines are married to potential size and impact of an outlet's audience, or relate to values the Board may have in how NAEP is covered, that should also be spelled out.

Poynter acknowledges there are constant changes in publishing platforms and media organizations, and "traditional" media is more difficult to define. Moreover, Poynter staff members have seen bloggers doing better journalism than traditional journalists in terms of in-depth, analytical new stories. There should be an overall concern that limiting embargo access to more "traditional" media can potentially eliminate audiences for other outlets that can give NAEP more exposure and a more robust conversation.

In recent legal battles, some court decisions are eliminating differences between a journalist and a citizen publisher, such as an individual blogger, especially in defamation cases. Poynter sees the distinction between a traditional journalist and a non-traditional journalist eroding.

**Online News Association:** Founded in 1999, ONA is a non-profit organization made up of more 2,000 members and is the world's largest association of digital journalists. Its mission is inspiring innovation and excellence among digital journalists to better serve the public.

*Jane McDonnell, Executive Director:* It is a very thorny situation in terms of how many types of journalists are introduced in the media world. What we look for in determining who should be



considered a journalist is a variety of traits, including professional affiliation and past journalism experience. Our membership includes “data journalists” (online reporters who marry news storytelling with data, usually in a digital format), news web designers, and reporters who write for outlets exclusive to tablets or other modern media. We do include bloggers in our membership but they have to be someone who has covering a topic for some time and who has reporting experience. Our membership guidelines dictate that you spend about 75 percent of your time practicing journalism and you make a living from it.

If the Board’s goal is to control quality and accuracy of NAEP reporting, its current guidelines are good. If it is considering wider dissemination and more visibility, and is not worried how NAEP could be used or portrayed, then it should consider expansion. ONA is finding out the being more inclusive is typically a good thing for an organization. If you close doors, it might be hard to open them back up.

**Asian American Journalists Association:** AAJA is a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization founded in 1981 by several Asian-American journalists who felt a need to support greater participation by Asian Americans in the news media. It now has 20 chapters in the United States and Asia, with over 1,600 members

*Helen Chow, Executive Director:* Most journalists these days are mutli-platform and have become online media by default. Even if they are journalists for an established newspaper, magazine, or television station, their articles or stories will also go online, just like a blog. Lines are admittedly blurred when it comes to who qualifies as a journalist.

AAJA’s membership is largely made up of traditional journalists, and freelancers who write for mainstream and traditional media. And some of our members are bloggers. However, a “citizen journalist” for a community, such as an individual who posts online items on various issues, is not a journalist in the organization’s view. We see journalists as those with training and background in conventional news gathering, regardless of the type of media they work for. Groups who keep coming back to the Board for embargo access and have been denied should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. It is recommended that these groups should be sent notice in advance of a release as to why they can or cannot receive access, just to manage expectations.

# **National Assessment Governing Board**

## **News Media Embargo Guidelines**

**Approved by the Reporting and Dissemination Committee in August 2011**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Under law, the National Assessment Governing Board has the responsibility to “plan and execute the initial public release of National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reports.” The NAEP authorizing statute continues that NAEP data “shall not be released prior to the release of [such] reports.”

As part of pre-release activities, information is provided to the media in order to facilitate news coverage that reaches the general public. The practice for many years has been to grant access to confidential information to media representatives who have signed an embargo agreement, promising not to print or broadcast news of a report before the scheduled time of release. With the rapid evolution of the media industry bringing new and influential voices through the Internet, more requests for embargoed access are being received from those outside traditional print and broadcast news organizations.

In order for staff to make fair decisions about who should receive embargoed access, objective guidelines are needed. These guidelines establish the criteria and procedures to be used.

### **FUNCTION AND BENEFIT OF NEWS MEDIA EMBARGOES**

Under a longstanding tradition, organizations that release news and research findings to the public have used embargoes as a way to give reporters advance access to the information while retaining control of the timing and nature of their releases. Government officials and agencies, scientific and medical journals, corporate and consumer businesses, and financial institutions often use embargoes, particularly for lengthy or complex information that requires time for thorough review and analysis before news stories are completed.

Embargo agreements can be beneficial to the releasing organization, journalists, and the public that reads the news and can lead to broad-based dissemination and fuller coverage. Embargoed access may achieve the following:

- Give reporters the time to read and analyze reports, to do further research on complex information, to conduct interviews, and to write more complete, nuanced stories before the time set for release. This reduces the chances that a reporter will “dash off” a story quickly and as a result make errors in interpreting data.
- Permit news organizations to print or broadcast a story or place it on the Internet as soon as an embargo is lifted, promptly spreading news of the report or research findings to their audiences.

- Create interest and buy-in among journalists who are granted access, which may increase coverage. The additional time provided before stories must be written may help journalists appreciate the significance of the information and how newsworthy it is.

## **RISKS OF EMBARGOES**

Embargo breaks may be committed by a news organization or individual seeking to scoop the competition, or they may happen through accident or carelessness.

For most media outlets and individual reporters, the risks of damaging a relationship with a source or attracting negative attention heavily outweigh the possible benefits of violating an embargo agreement. Such cases do happen, but they are rare.

While journalists do not take a formal oath, and need no license, journalistic ethics demand that embargoes—once agreed to—be respected. If a journalist working outside of the traditional media practices ethical journalism, he or she will not knowingly break an embargo.

## **CRITERIA FOR ACCESS**

A requestor must meet one of the criteria below in order to receive embargoed access to NAEP reports:

### **1) The requestor is an editor, reporter, columnist, or blogger affiliated with a print, broadcast, or online news organization.**

*Print and broadcast news organizations for which qualifying employees may receive access would include newspapers, magazines, news services, and radio and television news outlets. Some examples: Associated Press, the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, the New York Times, MSNBC, Fox 5 NY, the New Yorker, National Review, the Nation, WTOP, Education Week.*

*Examples of online general-interest news organizations that would receive access:*

Huffington Post, Daily Kos, the Texas Tribune, the Daily Caller.

*Examples of print and online education trade publications and news providers that would receive access: Education Daily, Hechinger Report of Columbia University's Hechinger Institute for Education Journalism, Alexander Russo's This Week in Education, Inking and Thinking on Education by Joanne Jacobs.*

### **2) The requestor is a freelance reporter working on a story for a news organization in one of the categories above.**

Requestors may be asked to provide documentation of their employment or freelance assignment.

## **PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTS**

Information about the requirements for embargoed access to NAEP reports and embargo agreement forms shall be made available to news media prior to NAEP releases.

A separate agreement form must be signed by each person receiving embargoed information before each release.

## **DENIAL OF ACCESS**

Reporters shall be denied embargoed access to NAEP information if they are not in one of the categories above or refuse to sign the embargo agreement. Those who knowingly break the embargo shall not be granted embargoed access to subsequent NAEP reports for up to two years.

Appeals regarding denial of access shall be determined by the Commissioner of Education Statistics in consultation with the Executive Director of the Governing Board.



## **Puerto Rico Reporting Plans**

A number of studies conducted by NCES in the mid-2000s indicated that assessing the mathematics proficiency of 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in Puerto Rico using the NAEP instrument is very challenging. The main conclusion in those studies was that the difference between the performance levels of those students and the levels of performance where the NAEP mathematics instrument typically measures well was too large. As a result, the Mathematics Knowledge and Skills Appropriate (KaSA) study was launched in 2011 consisting of an assessment of items that were developed specifically to optimize the measurement information in lower performing groups of students, while being contained within the objectives of the NAEP mathematics framework. The study included two components: (1) a national linking study where test booklets of KaSA items were administered to a nationally representative sample as well as some booklets that contained both KaSA and regular items; (2) a Puerto Rico sample who took those same booklets, plus some booklets containing all regular items (translated into Puerto Rican Spanish). The results of the 2011 study were encouraging in the sense that reasonable performance results were obtained from Puerto Rican students and that the KaSA items appeared to be scalable on the main NAEP scale. This, in turn, would be an indication that the KaSA results could be reported on the main NAEP scale. However, given past experience, it was decided that a second data point would be needed for verification before these results could be fully reported.

In 2013, the KaSA study was repeated to find out whether the encouraging results of 2011 would hold, and to create a trend line for Puerto Rico. At the meeting, NCES will discuss the 2013 results in terms of scalability and the potential for Puerto Rico mathematics results to be placed onto the main scale and to be compared with other jurisdictions. Several reporting options are under consideration, if warranted by the results, including:

- A web-based report with scale score results (including trend), achievement levels, percentiles, comparisons with other jurisdictions, student group results, contextual variables, and sample questions;
- A more technical report that provides the background of the KaSA study and past challenges.

A 2015 KaSA study is being planned, similar to the 2011 and 2013 studies, which will provide a third trend point for Puerto Rico on the NAEP scale. In the longer range, the introduction of adaptive testing in mathematics might be conducive to embedding the KaSA instrument into a larger adaptive system that routes students according to their performance level. These plans will also be discussed at the meeting.

## **Update on Implementation of SD/ELL Exclusion Policy**

The March 2010 Governing Board policy on NAEP Testing and Reporting on Students with Disabilities (SD) and English Language Learners (ELL) was intended to reduce exclusion rates and provide more consistency across jurisdictions in which students are tested on NAEP to promote sound reporting of comparisons and trends. The policy limits the grounds on which schools can exclude students from NAEP samples to two categories – for SD, only those with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and for ELL, only those who have been in the U.S. schools for less than a year. Previously, schools excluded students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) that called for accommodations on state tests that NAEP does not allow, primarily the read-aloud accommodation on the Reading assessment.

Under the current Board policy, schools should no longer decide to exclude students whose IEPs for state tests specify an accommodation not allowed on NAEP. Instead, such students should take NAEP with allowable accommodations. Additionally, parents and educators should be encouraged to permit them to do so, given that NAEP provides no scores and causes no consequences for individuals but needs fully representative samples to produce the valid results for the groups on which it reports. By law, individual participation in NAEP is voluntary and parents may withdraw their children for any reason.

During the December 2013 Board meeting, the Committee on Standards, Design, and Methodology and the Reporting and Dissemination Committee met in joint session to discuss the 2013 participation data for grades 4 and 8 Reading and Mathematics. There have been large increases in inclusion rates over the past ten years, and the Board’s first inclusion rate goal—95 percent of all students in each sample—was met in almost all states in 2013. However, 11 states and eight districts failed to meet the Board’s second goal of testing at least 85 percent of students identified as SD or ELL. Contrary to Board policy, NCES has continued to permit schools to exclude students whose IEPs called for accommodations that NAEP does not allow. NCES believes changing this practice could possibly be detrimental to students, increase refusals, change NAEP’s target population, and be counter to current statistical procedures.

At the end of the December 2013 joint session, the Committees asked the staffs of NAGB and NCES to consider possible policy and operational changes and what their impact might be, as well as a timeline for possible Board action.

***February 2014 Update:*** The staffs of NAGB and NCES have had several conversations about the implementation of the SD/ELL policy, which have included the following possible next steps:

- It would be helpful to look at the universe of students who were sampled for NAEP and receive an accommodation on their state tests that is not allowed on NAEP, to examine

the percentages of such students who participate in NAEP even without that accommodation. Unfortunately, the data collection procedures for 2013 did not enable this question to be explored. We have recommended that the SD/ELL questionnaire be modified for 2015 to better differentiate between allowable NAEP accommodations (i.e., reading aloud the test directions) and non-allowable NAEP accommodations (i.e., reading aloud the reading passages and/or items) used on state tests.

- The policy could be clarified by revising the language about converting excluded students to refusals. The fourth implementation guideline for students with disabilities states, *“Students refusing to take the assessment because a particular accommodation is not allowed should not be classified as exclusions but placed in the category of refusals under NAEP data analysis procedures.”* NCES asserts that it is technically incorrect to apply a weight class adjustment that combines students who did not participate due to receiving accommodations on their state tests that are not allowed on NAEP with students who refused for other reasons. The former group cannot be assumed to be randomly missing, which is a necessary assumption for the current NAEP statistical procedures. However, NCES will explore other methods for imputing scores for such students, so that their lack of participation can be considered appropriately when calculating the NAEP scores.
- NCES has agreed to provide information about total participation rates in a manner that is transparent and more prominently displayed than the current approach.

We expect to convene a follow-up joint session during the May 2014 Board meeting, with possible steps for Board action at the August 2014 Board meeting.



## EVENT DEBRIEF

### *The Nation's Report Card: 2013 Mathematics and Reading—Trial Urban District Assessment*

#### Overview

On December 18, 2013, the National Assessment Governing Board coordinated a live webinar to release results of *The Nation's Report Card: 2013 Mathematics and Reading—Trial Urban District Assessment*. Panelists included:

- **Jack Buckley**, Commissioner, National Center for Education Statistics
- **Honorable Anitere Flores**, Florida State Senator; Member, National Assessment Governing Board
- **Michael Casserly**, Executive Director, Council of the Great City Schools
- **Cornelia Orr**, Executive Director, National Assessment Governing Board (moderator)

#### Webinar Attendance

This release event had 207 attendees from 166 organizations. With 338 people registered for the event, the attendance rate was 61 percent.

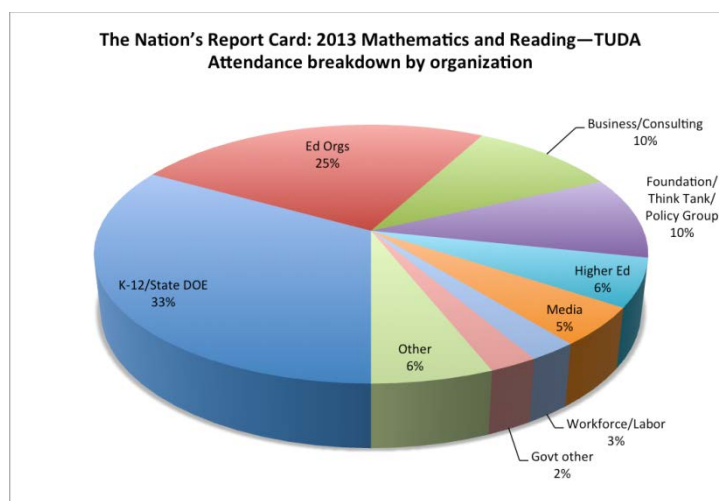
- State departments of education or public schools accounted for about one-third of attendees.
- Education organizations accounted for one-quarter of attendees.

A post-event WebEx survey drew responses from 49 attendees, who were asked questions about their satisfaction with the event and suggestions for future events. The responses were overwhelmingly positive:

- All 49 respondents found the information “very relevant” or “relevant” to their work.
- 75 percent of respondents said they would be willing to help spread the word for future release events.

#### Media Coverage

Within one day of the release event, news organizations from 20 TUDA districts published 67 original stories about the *2013 Mathematics and Reading TUDA* report: 16 national news stories, 51 local news stories. The headlines below link to selected articles online.





### ***National Outlets***

#### **Nation's Report Card shows narrowing gap between urban schools, national averages**

*Associated Press*—Ben Nuckols

#### **Report: Schools in American Cities Are Still a Mess**

*The Atlantic*—Julia Ryan

#### **Big city schools making progress but still have far to go, report says**

*Christian Science Monitor*—Stacy Teicher Khadaroo and Amanda Paulson

#### **NAEP Gains in D.C., Los Angeles Outpace Other Big Cities**

*Education Week*—Lesli Maxwell

#### **City Students Improve Test Scores, But Still Lag Significantly**

*Huffington Post*—Joy Resmovits

#### **New York City Students Show Slight Gains on Test Scores**

*New York Times*—Al Baker and Motoko Rich

#### **Nation's Report Card Shows Improvement, But Race Still Divides**

*NPR, Tell Me More*—Claudio Sanchez and Michel Martin

#### **Urban Students Improve in Math, Reading**

*U.S. News and World Report*—Allie Bidwell

#### **Despite D.C. public school gains, system trails behind large-city average**

*Washington Post*—Emma Brown

### ***Local Outlets***

#### **Atlanta students outperform urban districts in national report card**

*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*—Mark Niesse

#### **Austin students outperform urban peers in math, reading**

*Austin-American Statesman*—Melissa B. Taboada

#### **City students improve in reading, lag in math on national test**

*Baltimore Sun*—Erica L. Green

#### **Stagnant scores plague Boston schools on national exams**

*Boston Globe*—James Vaznis

#### **CMS tops urban districts on national math, reading tests**

*Charlotte Observer* (N.C.)—Ann Doss Helms

#### **Test-score gap widens between white, black students in Chicago**

*Chicago Sun-Times*—Becky Schlikerman

**Compared to other big-city districts, Dallas ISD is on par in math, lags in reading**

*The Dallas Morning News*—Holly Hacker

**Detroit Public Schools rank worst among urban districts on Nation's Report Card**

*Detroit Free Press*—Chastity Pratt Dawsey

**HISD fares well in math, poorly in reading on national exam**

*Houston Chronicle*—Ericka Mellon

**Fresno Unified School District students improve nationally but still behind peers**

*KFSN-TV* (Fresno, Calif.)

**San Diego Schools Scores Go Up On National Exams Yet Racial Gap Remains**

*KPBS* (San Diego)—Kyla Calvert

**LAUSD students improve English, math scores on national tests**

*Los Angeles Daily News*—Barbara Jones

***Alternative Outlets***

**Miami-Dade, Hillsborough counties beat the leading states in SNAP analysis of NAEP urban district study**

*Bridge to Tomorrow* (K-20 blog)—Paul Cottle

**The NAEP for Urban Districts Was Released Today**

*DianeRavitch.net*—Diane Ravitch

**NAEP Dishonor Roll: Urban Edition**

*Dropout Nation*—Rishawn Biddle

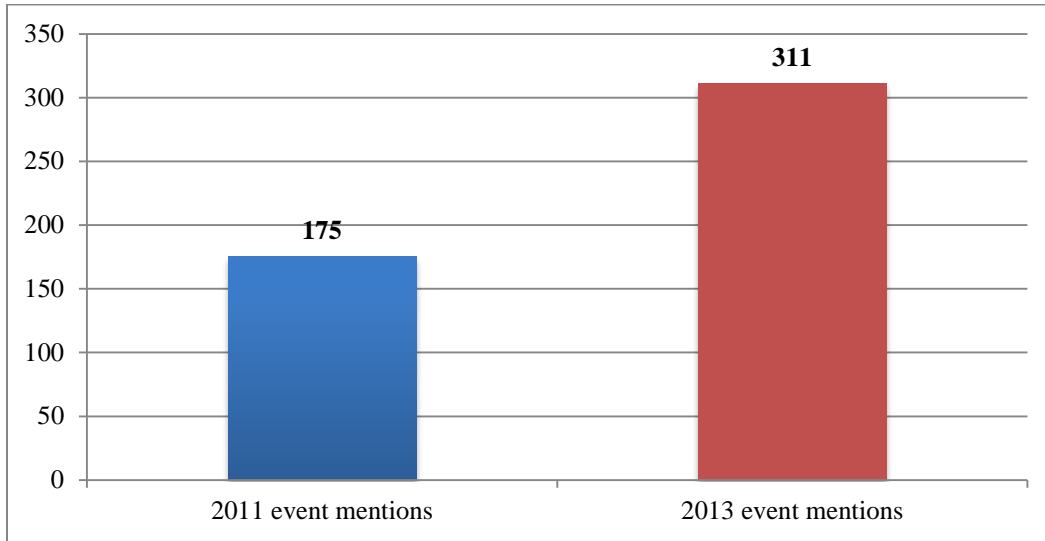
**The 10 things to know about NAEP TUDA 2013**

*Thomas B. Fordham Institute* (EdExcellence blog)—Andy Smarcik

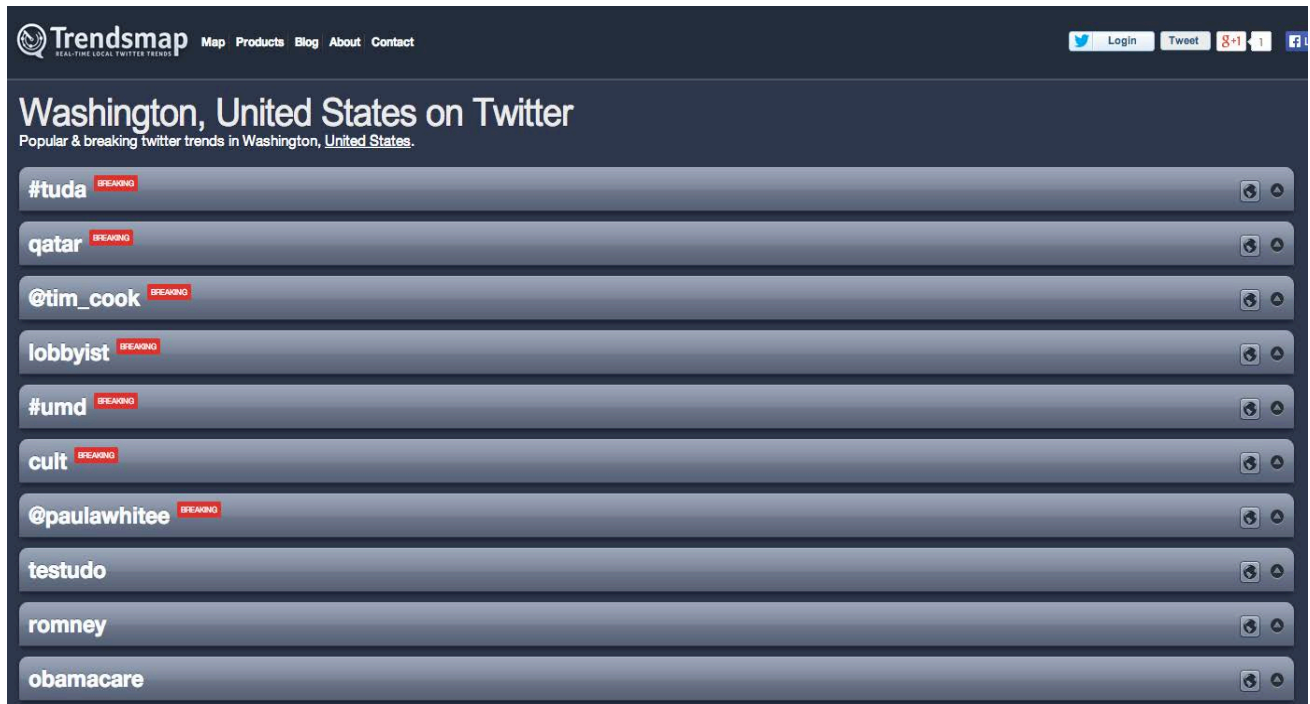
**Social Media Highlights**

- More than 300 on-topic conversations during the webinar event
- 65% of the conversation on Twitter; 9% driven by online mainstream news
- More than 2 million total impressions of NAEP conversations on Twitter during the event

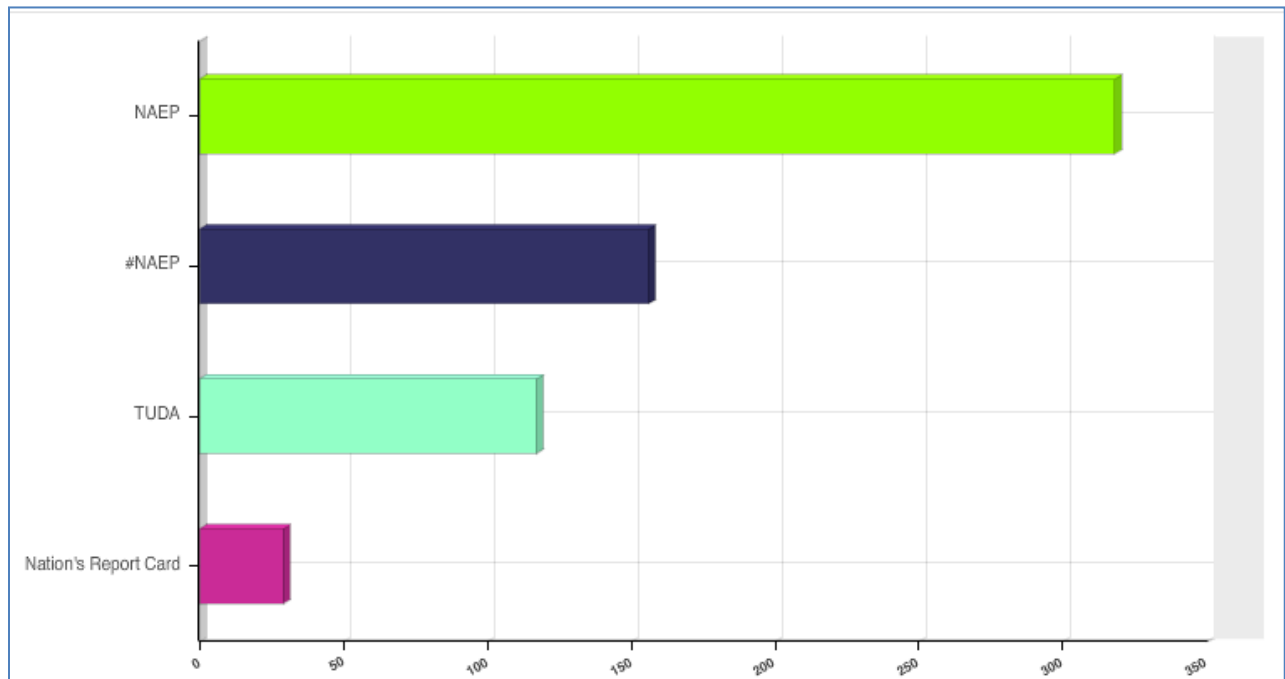
**More online conversation generated during the 2013 event than in 2011.**



**TUDA a top trending topic in DC during webinar.**



**Keywords NAEP and #NAEP drive majority of conversation.**



### Selected Conversation Clips from Twitter



**Education Week** @educationweek

38s

**NAEP Gains in D.C., Los Angeles Outpace Other Big Cities**

[bit.ly/JCzQiy](http://bit.ly/JCzQiy) #education

[View summary](#)

[Reply](#)

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[More](#)



**CharMeck Schools** @CMS\_Schools

2m

CMS takes top honors in @NAEP\_NCES national academic assessment. 1st in math & 2nd in reading in grades 4, 8!

[shar.es/OdOCC](http://shar.es/OdOCC)

[from Charlotte, NC](#)

[Reply](#)

[Retweet](#)

[Favorite](#)

[More](#)



**Chicago Sun-Times** @Suntimes

1m

Test-score gap continues to widen between white, black students in Chicago. [suntm.es/18z1OHL](http://suntm.es/18z1OHL) #NAEP

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**Vincent C. Gray** @mayorvincegray

1m

Released today - Test Results Show @dcpublicschools with Greatest Growth of Any Urban District: [dcps.dc.gov/DCPS/About+DCP...](https://dcps.dc.gov/DCPS/About+DCP...)  
#TUDA #NAEP

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**APS** @ABQschools

1m

FANTASTIC NEWS!! APS Ranks in Top Half of Big City School Districts for #TUDA results! [aps.edu/news/aps-ranks...](https://aps.edu/news/aps-ranks...) cc: @naep @NAEP\_NCES #WeAreAPS

Followed by NAEP

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**Stephanie Simon** @StephanieSimon\_

1m

Urban districts make gains in last decade, but it's wildly uneven...and black & Hispanic students lag; achievement gap barely budging  
#TUDA

Followed by Excellence in Ed and 8 others

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**Catalyst Chicago Mag** @CatalystChicago

2m

#NAEP - Chicago math scores grew more than national scores in last 10yrs; reading growth has been average for US.  
[nationsreportcard.gov](https://nationsreportcard.gov)

Followed by Excellence in Ed

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**Alberto M. Carvalho** @MiamiSup

55s

Miami-Dade @MDCPS and Hillsborough schools outperform large cities in reading and math on @NAEP, the nation's report card.

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**BaltoSchoolsChoice** @SPSOC

1m

The NAEP urban district results are being publicly released now.  
#TUDA

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**Fordham Institute** @educationgadfly

37s

#NAEP #TUDA: Today is a day to be sad for millions of disadvantaged kids. It is not a day for celebration [gadfly.ly/1dOtBlk](http://gadfly.ly/1dOtBlk)

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**The Hechinger Report** @hechingerreport

48s

Low-income inner-city achievement gap starts to close, urban districts, #DC improving faster than nation: [bit.ly/Jlmlt8](http://bit.ly/Jlmlt8) #edchat

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**Alex Sánchez** @AISD\_Alex

1m

Press conference on #NAEP results today at 1 p.m. Great news for AISD compared to large urban school districts across Texas and US.

Favorited by CGCS

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**The Belk Foundation** @belkfoundation

1m

A sobering read: The 10 things to know about NAEP TUDA 2013 [edexcellence.net/commentary/edu...](http://edexcellence.net/commentary/edu...)

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**Education News** @rssfeedsthree

49s

Low-income inner-city achievement gap starts to close, test scores of urban school districts improve faster th... [bit.ly/1kinydB](http://bit.ly/1kinydB)

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**Maureen Downey** @AJCGetSchooled

49s

#APs #math #NAEP NAEP scores released for cities & Atlanta 4th graders saw larger increases in mathematics than their peers in the nation.

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