



**National Assessment Governing Board's  
INNOVATION AMBITION**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2016-2020**

**DISCUSSION DRAFT**

**May 4, 2016**

## Overview

### ***Our Mission***

The mission of the independent, bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board is to set policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Among the responsibilities specified in its authorizing statute, the Governing Board must identify the subjects to be tested by NAEP, determine the content for each assessment, review all NAEP questions, set achievement levels, and inform Congress and the American public about the achievement of U.S. students. To fulfill its Congressional mandate, the Governing Board must also “take appropriate actions needed to improve the form, content, use, and reporting of results of any assessment authorized”.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Purpose of the Strategic Planning Initiative***

The purpose of the National Assessment Governing Board’s Strategic Planning Initiative is to take stock of the value and contributions of NAEP to our nation, identify opportunities to advance the Governing Board’s statutory mandate, understand and address any challenges to this mission posed by changes in the external environment, and ensure that the Governing Board continues to play an important role in informing policymakers, educators, and the public about student achievement in our nation. The Governing Board’s Strategic Plan aims to be consistent and coordinated with the priorities of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to further the overall mission and objectives of NAEP. The Strategic Plan affirms the long-standing principles of NAEP’s curriculum independence, its status as a low stakes assessment for national, state-level, and select urban district benchmarking comparisons and analysis, and its prohibition on reporting individual student and school results, in accordance with the NAEP statute.

### ***Vision***

This Strategic Plan serves as the “North Star” for the National Assessment Governing Board’s innovation ambition through the year 2020. The Strategic Plan is guided by the values of parsimony, feasibility, and measureable impact that make a difference in educational progress. When implemented, the Strategic Plan will ensure that the Governing Board continues to play an important role in informing policymakers, educators, and the public about the educational progress of our nation.

### ***Process***

The Governing Board embarked on a three-phase, six-year process to develop and implement its Strategic Plan for NAEP, beginning in November 2014. In the first year, Phase I, the Governing Board articulated the vision for its Strategic Plan through the Strategic Planning Framework. The Framework included overarching goals and priorities and was approved by the Board on August

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<sup>1</sup> Pub. L. 107-279, §302(e)(1)(I)

8, 2015. The second year, Phase II of the Strategic Planning Initiative, culminated in the approval of this Strategic Plan on *[fill in date TBD]*. The development of the Strategic Plan entailed numerous Board deliberations and consideration of external feedback from stakeholder groups which resulted in refinement of the priorities identified in the Framework document, referred to as Goals in this document. Finally, Phase III of the Initiative is to implement the plan, from its approval through the year 2020. The progress and impact of these initiatives will be captured in annual progress reports and a final report to summarize the successes of the Strategic Plan.

### ***Strategic Plan Goals***

The Governing Board identified the following Goals to guide its work through the year 2020:

1. *Improve Understanding and Use of NAEP Resources*
2. *Strengthen Partnerships to Inform and Promote NAEP Resources*
3. *Make Strategic Decisions to Increase the Value and Impact of NAEP*
4. *Innovate to Keep NAEP at the Forefront of Measuring Student Achievement*

These four Goals provide the overarching direction for the Governing Board's work. The following pages detail specific Strategies and activities the Governing Board will undertake to achieve these goals. Each Goal and Strategy includes exemplary Actions and Indicators to illuminate the likely activities that the Board will conduct to achieve the desired outcomes. Some of the Actions identified in this Strategic Plan build on existing initiatives already underway; others are new (indicated with an \*). However, in its implementation of the Strategic Plan, the Board is not constrained by the items listed in this document. Similarly the proposed Timelines for the exemplar Actions are general guidelines, not deadlines, for the work. The Actions (and accompanying Indicators and Timelines) may be amended during implementation of the Strategic Plan, to seize upon new opportunities or address changes in the educational and assessment landscape.

### ***Stakeholders***

It is the vision of the Governing Board to focus its efforts on activities that will benefit the stakeholders of NAEP. The primary audience is the *general public*, but also includes plans to reach *policymakers, researchers, educators, and parents*. Individual activities may target specific stakeholder groups; yet in total the Governing Board's implementation of its Strategic Plan will positively impact all of these stakeholders.

### ***Implementation of the Goals***

The Governing Board will implement the Strategic Plan over approximately four years, from its approval in 2016 through 2020. The following pages outline the strategies and activities the Governing Board will launch to achieve the four Strategic Plan Goals.

The initiatives identified in the Strategic Plan will be conducted primarily by Governing Board staff and its contractors and overseen by the Board’s Standing Committees: Assessment and Development Committee (ADC), Committee on Standards, Design and Methodology (COSDAM), Executive Committee, and Reporting and Dissemination (R&D) Committee. Each planned action detailed below includes the assigned oversight Committee, indicators for measuring progress, and anticipated timeline for completion. The Executive Committee will provide leadership to the Board regarding the course of those activities and will monitor the Strategic Plan’s implementation.

## **Goal 1: Improve Understanding and Use of NAEP Resources**

### ***Strategy A – Advance New Reporting Strategies***

Emphasize continuous (rather than episodic) reporting strategies that encourage greater use of NAEP resources.

#### **Actions**

1. Use diverse outreach approaches, including social media, to increase the reach of the Governing Board’s Communications Plan implementation.

<i>Committee</i> R&D	<i>Stakeholders</i> All	<i>Indicators</i> Communications Plan metrics	<i>Timeline</i> Duration of plan
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2. Create communications products (including infographics) to promote greater awareness and use of NAEP resources beyond what is traditionally included in initial releases (including spotlighting contextual variables, student subgroup performance, released test questions, and performance of rural regions).

<i>Committee</i> R&D	<i>Stakeholders</i> All	<i>Indicators</i> Materials created	<i>Timeline</i> Duration of plan
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3. Host a series of seminar/webinar events to highlight secondary uses of NAEP resources that inform research/policy/practice following Report Card releases.

<i>Committee</i> R&D COSDAM	<i>Stakeholders</i> All	<i>Indicators</i> Events hosted Event attendance	<i>Timeline</i> Duration of plan
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4. Expand outreach to education stakeholders who are less likely to be aware of NAEP (e.g. teachers, principals, and district administrators) by identifying their information needs and using those insights to customize communications.

<i>Committee</i> R&D	<i>Stakeholders</i> All	<i>Indicators</i> Information gathered Materials created	<i>Timeline</i> Duration of plan
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## **Goal 1: Improve Understanding and Use of NAEP Resources**

### ***Strategy B – Increase Understanding of Appropriate Uses of NAEP Information***

Develop and promote materials to increase stakeholders' understanding of valid uses of NAEP, thereby reducing inappropriate uses of NAEP and spotlighting good uses of the information. Promote these materials through the reporting strategies identified in Goal 1.A and tailor them for specific audiences as needed.

#### **Actions**

1. Develop case studies/testimonials showcasing the value of NAEP as a resource for educational improvements (such as participating districts' use of Trial Urban District Assessment data).\*

<i>Committee</i> R&D	<i>Stakeholders</i> All	<i>Indicators</i> Materials created	<i>Timeline</i> Years 2-3
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2. Working in partnership with NCES, define the desired claims that NAEP will be used to support a validity framework.\*

<i>Committee</i> COSDAM	<i>Stakeholders</i> Policymakers Researchers	<i>Indicators</i> List of desired claims	<i>Timeline</i> Duration of plan
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3. Synthesize secondary uses of NAEP information to identify the most common uses of NAEP and evaluate the extent to which these uses are appropriate or desirable to inform content needs for target audiences.\*

<i>Committee</i> COSDAM	<i>Stakeholders</i> Researchers Policymakers Media	<i>Indicators</i> Synthesis completed	<i>Timeline</i> Years 2-3
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4. Develop communications materials that explain what NAEP is within the context of high-quality assessments generally, how it can be used, and address common misuses/misconceptions.

<i>Committee</i> R&D	<i>Stakeholders</i> All	<i>Indicators</i> Communications Plan metrics	<i>Timeline</i> Years 2-3
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5. Promote the use of NAEP by increasing awareness and understanding of the relationship between NAEP and other assessments (e.g. international assessments).\*

<i>Committee</i> COSDAM	<i>Stakeholders</i> All	<i>Indicators</i> Communications Plan metrics	<i>Timeline</i> Duration of Plan
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\*Indicates a new Activity for the Governing Board.

## **Goal 2: Strengthen Partnerships to Inform and Promote NAEP Resources**

### ***Strategy A – Leverage Partnerships to Promote NAEP Resources to Stakeholders***

Identify ways to communicate more effectively to stakeholder groups to increase their awareness and use of NAEP resources.

#### **Actions**

1. Strengthen partnerships and leverage those relationships to provide the Governing Board with input on stakeholder information needs and to expand the reach of NAEP communications.

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
All	All	Co-hosted events Meetings with partners	Duration of plan

2. Tailor communication products to individual stakeholder groups, to be distributed via the reporting strategies in Goal 1.A and through Governing Board members' networks.\*

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
All	All	Communications Plan metrics	Duration of plan

3. Increase the number of NAEP presentations at education events hosted by partner organizations to promote NAEP resources and extend the coverage of NAEP releases.

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
All	All	Staff presentations at conferences Board member presentations at conferences	Duration of plan

\*Indicates a new Activity for the Governing Board.

### **Goal 3: Make Strategic Decisions to Increase the Value and Impact of NAEP**

#### ***Strategy A – Coordinate the Policy and Operational Arms of NAEP***

Ensure coordination among Governing Board and NCES activities to efficiently and effectively achieve the shared goal of improving NAEP.

#### **Actions**

1. Ensure coordination between the Governing Board's and NCES' implementation of their respective Strategic Plans, through regular information sharing and collaboration between staff of the Governing Board and NCES.\*

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
All	N/A	Periodic briefings to Board	Duration of plan

2. Provide input to NCES on the proposal development and review for the next competition of NAEP contracts to support alignment between NAEP contract structures and the Board's policy priorities.\*

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
Executive	N/A	Board priorities reflected in contracts	Years 2-3

3. Develop a process with NCES to estimate marginal cost impacts of new policies being considered by the Board, so as to inform the Board's policy decisions.\*

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
Executive	N/A	Process created Process successfully used	Years 2-3

4. Conduct a review of the Governing Board's existing policies to ensure relevance, reflection of current practice and needs, and to identify if new policies are needed.\*

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
All	N/A	Policies updated, if appropriate New policies adopted, if appropriate	Year 1

5. Evaluate the Governing Board's existing structure of standing Committees, quarterly meetings, and other bylaw provisions to determine if adjustments could improve the Board's operations.\*

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
Executive	N/A	Revise bylaws, if appropriate	Years 2-3

\*Indicates a new Activity for the Governing Board.



### **Goal 3: Make Strategic Decisions to Increase the Value and Impact of NAEP**

#### ***Strategy B – Promote Secondary Research Using NAEP Information***

Increase the impact of NAEP information by encouraging secondary uses of the rich resources that NAEP provides to the public.

#### **Actions**

1. Encourage greater use of NAEP by researchers and education leaders.

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
COSDAM	Researchers Policymakers Educators	Publicize NAEP's expansive resources Build expertise in the uses of NAEP	Duration of plan

2. Advocate for NCES to use NAEP resources to fund secondary analyses by researchers.\*

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
Executive	Researchers	Secondary research funded	Duration of plan

3. Increase awareness of NAEP's measurement innovations (e.g. Scenario-Based Task design) among assessment experts and educators to support advances in high quality digital-based education assessments.\*

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
ADC	Researchers Educators	TBD	Years 2-3

\*Indicates a new Activity for the Governing Board.

## **Goal 4: Innovate to Keep NAEP at the Forefront of Measuring Student Achievement**

### ***Strategy A – Ensure NAEP Remains Relevant***

To stay at the forefront of measuring student achievement, the Governing Board must continuously improve the form and function of NAEP.

#### **Actions**

1. Continue improving NAEP contextual variables to enhance reporting and analyses opportunities, with consideration for the sensitivity of the information.

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
ADC R&D	All	Contextual variables evaluated Changes proposed, implemented Contextual variables published and promoted	Duration of Plan

2. Examine if existing NAEP Frameworks need revisions while adhering to the value of maintaining trend (e.g. the NAEP Mathematics Framework).\*

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
ADC COSDAM	All	Conduct alignment studies between NAEP Frameworks and current state standards Revised Frameworks, if appropriate	Duration of Plan

3. Respond to the anticipated NAEP Achievement Levels evaluation report by identifying its impact on current Governing Board policies and practices and the use of NAEP generally.\*

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
All	All	TBD	Duration of Plan

4. Explore the design and content implications of conducting the NAEP Long Term Trend Assessments in Reading and Mathematics through the main NAEP assessments.\*

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
COSDAM ADC	Researchers Policymakers Educators	Review conducted Policy, if appropriate	Duration of Plan

\*Indicates a new Activity for the Governing Board.

## **Goal 4: Innovate to Keep NAEP at the Forefront of Measuring Student Achievement**

### ***Strategy B – Support the Next Frontier of NAEP Innovations***

Identify the next “big things” requiring the Governing Board’s attention for the duration of the Strategic Plan and beyond to stay on the forefront of measuring student achievement while also maintaining NAEP’s role as the most trusted source of student academic achievement.

#### **Actions**

1. Explore if NAEP should be measuring new areas (e.g. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills).\*

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
ADC COSDAM	All	New Frameworks, if appropriate	Duration of Plan

2. Conduct a comprehensive policy-level examination of grade 12 NAEP to determine the most useful and valid approach of assessing high school students.

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
All	N/A	Policy change, if appropriate	Duration of plan

3. Explore new approaches to determining the NAEP Assessment Schedule to achieve the Board’s policy priorities with consideration for fiscal uncertainty and public demand.\*

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
All	All	Alternative policy approaches considered, adopted if appropriate	Duration of plan

\*Indicates a new Activity for the Governing Board.

## Measuring Success

The Governing Board will monitor the implementation and success of its Strategic Planning Initiative. Ongoing monitoring will help the Board ensure that its implementation is on track and determine if any adjustments are needed to the Strategic Plan. Annually, at each August Governing Board meeting while the Strategic Plan is in effect, the Board will assess its progress towards attaining its Strategic Plan Goals. Upon completion of the Strategic Plan, the Governing Board will approve the final report summarizing the Strategic Plan’s overall success.

## Conclusion

An essential role of the Governing Board is to safeguard public trust in NAEP’s assessment of our nation’s elementary and secondary students’ academic performance. NAEP provides our country with information to understand the strengths, weaknesses, and trends in our decentralized system of education. Whenever there is discussion or debate about student achievement, NAEP is relied upon as a trusted and trustworthy source of information.

The imperative for school improvement called for by the 1983 report, *A Nation At Risk*, that carried through the bi-partisan legislation of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) in 2002 gave way to the emergence of a new era of education improvement efforts reflecting the demands for increased academic rigor, technological sophistication, civic participation, and global perspectives that define the early decades of the twenty-first century. The 2015 passage of the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, (the bi-partisan reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*) raised the bar for elementary and secondary education across the country and simultaneously increased the flexibility of how states achieve and measure these high goals. In the current landscape of state and local flexibility and frequently changing state and local standards and assessments, it is imperative for *The Nation’s Report Card* to remain the unassailable measure of student progress.

The Governing Board accepts the challenge to prepare students for their future, not our past, and to use assessments to inform the Board’s progress to deliver on this commitment.