

National Assessment Governing Board August 2017 Meeting

Breakout Discussion Primer: Strategic Vision #9

The National Assessment Governing Board's Strategic Vision adopted at the November 2016 Board meeting identifies several implementation activities. One of the priorities in the Strategic Vision is to: ***"Develop policy approaches to revise the NAEP assessment subjects and schedule based on the nation's evolving needs, the Board's priorities, and NAEP funding"*** (SV #9).

Setting the NAEP Assessment Schedule is one of the Governing Board's most important statutory responsibilities; therefore its inclusion in the Strategic Vision is appropriate. The Governing Board's guiding principles for schedule changes are to:

- follow the requirements in the [National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act](#), which mandates assessing reading and math at the state level every two years and additional subjects as time and resources allow;
- adhere to the Governing Board's [General Policy: Conducting and Reporting the National Assessment of Educational Progress](#); and
- reflect the current priorities of the Governing Board.

The Governing Board typically sets a schedule to project the NAEP assessments for the decade ahead, with a stated goal to assess each subject area at least twice every 10 years (*in accordance with the Governing Board's policy, see excerpt on page 4*). Historically, the Governing Board has amended the NAEP Assessment Schedule to reflect legislative changes to NAEP's authorization, new opportunities, and evolving expectations in what students should know and be able to do (*see page 3 for the history of changes to the NAEP Assessment Schedule*).

Though it is the Board's policy to publish a "dependable" schedule, the non-mandatory subjects that appear later on the Assessment Schedule may be considered somewhat aspirational. It has been the practice of the Board to maintain a full breadth of subjects on the Assessment Schedule to signal their importance in The Nation's Report Card, while knowing that the funding levels may not fully support the costs associated with implementing the full schedule as approved. As such, the Board generally expects to amend the Assessment Schedule as time progresses, circumstances change, and actual costs and appropriations become known.

More recently, the Governing Board made it a priority for all NAEP assessments to be digitally-based by 2017. The heavy investment to transition NAEP to digital-based assessments (DBA) coupled with reduced federal funding for the program required changes in the NAEP Assessment Schedule to postpone or remove planned assessments (*refer to press releases from [August 3, 2013](#), [March 16, 2015](#), and [November 25, 2015](#); see page 5 for the current [Assessment Schedule](#)*).

In fiscal year 2016, Congress increased NAEP's funding to \$149 million to support the current schedule and NAEP's transition to DBA. As a part of developing the congressional budget request in fiscal year 2016, the Governing Board established the following priorities for NAEP:

1. Transition to DBA and maintain trend (state validation studies),
2. Assess broad-based curricular areas with a priority for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM),
3. Provide state-level data in curriculum areas beyond reading and mathematics, and
4. Expand the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) program.¹

Pursuant to the Strategic Vision item #9, the Governing Board plans to develop a policy approach to establishing the NAEP Assessment Schedule. To begin this process, Governing Board Members engaged in small group and plenary discussions on this topic at the May 2017 Board meeting. From these sessions emerged a consensus on the primary questions for the Board's August discussion:

1. What is the value of providing NAEP national-only results, as compared to providing state and possibly TUDA results?
2. What is an ideal interval between assessments, i.e., two years, three years, four years?
3. Are there other domains of knowledge and skills the Governing Board should consider assessing than the ones already scheduled? In addition to, or in place of?
4. Should the administration of some assessments be restructured, possibly providing subscale scores, i.e., science, technology and engineering literacy, and math (STEM); reading & writing (ELA); civics, geography, U.S. History and economics (social studies)?

On Friday, August 4th, these discussion questions will be posed to a panel of external policy experts and then further considered by Board members in small group discussions. The breakout discussions will be led by Governing Board members, with Governing Board staff and NCES staff participating as appropriate. The four designated breakout group facilitators will report the group's discussions during the Saturday, August 5th plenary session and a full Board discussion will follow.

The goal of the breakout groups and full Board discussions is to actively engage the Governing Board members in identifying and documenting a thoughtful process or policy ideas for reviewing and making changes to the NAEP Assessment Schedule that takes into account factors to include: innovation, research, Board priorities, operational considerations, and budget implications. These discussions should also consider how possible changes to the schedule could impact other initiatives identified in the Board's Strategic Vision.

No Board action on the NAEP Assessment Schedule is expected at this time. The purpose of the May 2017 meeting discussions is to generate ideas for a new policy approach to setting the Assessment Schedule. These discussions will support ongoing deliberation and work to implement this priority of the Strategic Vision.

¹ The increased funding in fiscal year 2016 successfully resulted in the addition of six TUDA districts beginning in 2017, for a total of 27 participating districts in the TUDA program.

The following pages include these reference materials for the Board's discussion:

- History of Changes to the NAEP Assessment Schedule
- Excerpt from the Governing Board's General Policy: Conducting and Reporting The National Assessment of Educational Progress
- NAEP Assessment Schedule, approved November 21, 2015

History of Changes to the NAEP Schedule of Assessments

The major schedule changes adopted by the Board since 2000 are listed below in chronological order:

1. Added grade 4 and 8 state-level Reading and Mathematics every two years. (2002) [Prior to the 2002 ESEA reauthorization (NCLB), state assessments at grades 4 and 8 were given every two years with reading and writing in one biennium and mathematics and science in the next, i.e., these subjects and grade 12 subjects were tested once every four years.]
2. Added the High School Transcript Study (HSTS) as a regularly scheduled study. (2005)
3. Scheduled U.S. History, Civics and Geography on a once every four years cycle. (2005)
4. Added Technology and Engineering Literacy (TEL) to the NAEP subjects assessed. (2005)
5. Added grade 12 state-level Reading and Mathematics for volunteer states with a periodicity of every four years. (2008)
6. Adjusted the periodicity of science to correspond to the periodicity of TIMSS to conduct international benchmarking studies in mathematics and science. (2010)
7. Scheduled Writing as a technology based assessment, beginning with national data collections only and delaying grade 4 in order to complete a special study. (2010)

Other schedule changes and program adjustments from 2000 through 2015 have been due primarily to budget constraints and/or technical challenges, considering options such as:

- Assessing fewer grade levels in non-required subject areas (e.g., U.S. History, Civics, and Geography; Writing; TEL);
- Postponing a state-level assessment; and
- Postponing a full assessment/study (e.g., World History, Foreign Language, HSTS).

Excerpt from the Governing Board's [*General Policy: Conducting and Reporting The National Assessment of Educational Progress*](#)

Goals and Activities for Conducting and Reporting the National Assessment of Educational Progress

Goal 1: To serve as a consistent external, independent measure of student achievement by which results across education systems can be compared at points in time and over time.

National, state, and local education leaders and policymakers—public and private—rely on NAEP data as an independent monitor of student achievement and as a way to compare performance across education systems. For NAEP to serve in this role, NAGB, in consultation with NCES and stakeholders, periodically establishes a dependable, publicly announced assessment schedule of at least ten years in scope. The schedule specifies the subject or topic (e.g., High School Transcript Study), grades, ages, assessment year, and sampling levels (e.g., national, state) for each assessment.

The NAEP schedule of assessments is the foundation for states' planning for participation in the assessments. It is the basis for NCES operational planning, annual budget requests, and contract statements of work. In making decisions about the NAEP schedule of assessments, NAGB includes the wide range of important subjects and topics to which students are exposed. NAGB also considers opportunities to conduct studies linking NAEP with international assessments.

As the NAEP authorizing legislation provides, assessments are conducted in reading and mathematics, and, as time and resources allow, in subjects such as science, writing, history, civics, geography, the arts, foreign language, economics, technology and engineering literacy and other areas, as determined by NAGB. The goal for the frequency of each subject area assessment is at least twice in ten years, to provide for reporting achievement trends.

In order to compare results across geographic jurisdictions, the samples drawn must be representative. For each assessment, the National Assessment program takes affirmative steps to achieve statistically sound levels of school and student participation and optimal levels of student engagement in the assessment, including steps to maximize the participation of students with disabilities and students who are English language learners.

NCES employs safeguards to protect the integrity of the National Assessment program, prevent misuse of data, and ensure the privacy of individual test takers. NAEP results are accompanied by clear statements about school and student participation rates; student engagement in the assessment, when feasible; and cautions, where appropriate, about interpreting achievement results.



National Assessment of Educational Progress

Schedule of Assessments

Approved November 21, 2015

The *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Authorization Act* established the National Assessment Governing Board to set policy for NAEP, including determining the schedule of assessments. (P.L. 107-279)

Year	Subject	National Grades Assessed	State Grades Assessed	TUDA Grades Assessed
2014	U.S. History* Civics* Geography* TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING LITERACY	8 8 8 8		
2015	Reading* Mathematics* Science**	4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12	4, 8 4, 8 4, 8	4, 8 4, 8
2016	Arts*	8		
2017	Reading Mathematics Writing	4, 8 4, 8 4, 8	4, 8 4, 8	4, 8 4, 8
2018	U.S. History Civics Geography Technology and Engineering Literacy	8 8 8 8		
2019	Reading Mathematics Science High School Transcript Study	4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12	4, 8 4, 8	4, 8 4, 8
2020				
2021	Reading Mathematics Writing	4, 8 4, 8 4, 8, 12	4, 8 4, 8 8	4, 8 4, 8
2022	U.S. HISTORY CIVICS GEOGRAPHY Economics Technology and Engineering Literacy	8, 12 8, 12 8, 12 12 8, 12		
2023	Reading Mathematics Science High School Transcript Study	4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12	4, 8 4, 8 4, 8	4, 8 4, 8 4, 8
2024	ARTS FOREIGN LANGUAGE Long-term Trend	8 12 ~		

NOTES:

*Assessments not administered by computer. Beginning in 2017 all operational assessments will be digitally based.

**Science in 2015 consisted of paper-and-pencil and digital-based components.

~Long-term Trend (LTT) assessments sample students at ages 9, 13, and 17 and are conducted in reading and mathematics. Subjects in **BOLD ALL CAPS** indicate the year in which a new framework is implemented or assessment year for which the Governing Board will decide whether a new or updated framework is needed.