

2017 NAEP Grade 4 Writing Assessment and Achievement Levels Setting

In the spring of 2017, the NAEP Writing assessment was administered to a nationally representative sample of approximately 22,000 fourth grade students. This was the first administration of the grade 4 assessment developed to meet the design specifications described in the current computer-based [NAEP Writing Framework](#). The assessment is digital-based, comprised of constructed-response items, for which students compose and construct their responses using word processing software on a tablet (with detachable keyboard).

The assessment was designed to measure students' writing using word processing software with commonly available tools. The NAEP Writing Framework, which guides development activities, includes three communicative purposes: to persuade, to explain, and to convey experience. Results will be available at the national level only and are expected to be released as The Nation's Report Card in fall 2018.

By law, the Governing Board is charged with setting achievement levels for each grade and subject tested by NAEP. On August 3, 2016, the Governing Board awarded a contract to NCS Pearson to develop achievement levels for the NAEP Writing assessment at grade 4¹. The achievement levels setting process is being carried out according to the Governing Board policy on [Developing Student Performance Levels for NAEP](#). Over the past 1.5 years, COSDAM has received project updates at each quarterly Board meeting.

Pearson has conducted a field trial (June 2017) and a pilot study (November 2017) to try out various aspects of the achievement levels setting procedures. The operational achievement levels setting meeting is taking place during February 2018, and results will be discussed with COSDAM via webinar in mid to late March 2018. The results from the operational achievement levels setting, along with COSDAM's recommendations, will be presented to the full Board for action during the May 17-19, 2018, Governing Board meeting.

This session is intended to provide context for the planned Board achievement levels action in May. Presenters at the March Writing achievement levels briefing will include:

- **Carol Jago**, Governing Board member, will introduce the Writing Framework.
- **Eunice Greer**, NCES staff, will share selected grade 4 writing prompts (secure items).
- **Andrew Ho**, COSDAM Chair, will provide an overview of achievement levels setting and the role of the Governing Board.
- **Sharyn Rosenberg**, Governing Board staff, will provide an overview of the grade 4 Writing achievement levels setting project and a description of the information that will be presented for the May 2018 Board discussion and action.

¹ Achievement levels were set for Writing grades 8 and 12 with the 2011 administration of those assessments. The grade 4 assessment initially was scheduled to be administered in 2013 but the Governing Board postponed it to 2017 due to budgetary constraints.