

## State and TUDA Task Force Updates

### Background on State Task Force

Since September 2007, the National Assessment Governing Board (Governing Board) has collaborated with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) via a joint Task Force. The Task Force is charged with providing feedback to the Governing Board on policy areas and projects related to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The dual goals of this collaboration are to inform the Governing Board's policy-setting work with the state perspective and to implement joint initiatives under the Governing Board's legislative mandate.

The Task Force comprises 12 leaders in state educational agencies. The members currently include two state chiefs, seven deputy or assistant superintendents, and three public information (or communications) officers. They offer diverse perspectives, which lend invaluable insight into the Governing Board's deliberations about NAEP. The current members are listed below:

### State Policy Task Force Membership 2021

Audra Ahumada	Arizona	Deputy Associate Superintendent of Assessment
Katie Bieber	Nebraska	Director of Public Information and Communications
Kari Eakins	Wyoming	Chief Policy Officer
Joy Hofmeister	Oklahoma	State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Abe Krisst	Connecticut	Assessment Bureau Chief
John Payne	South Carolina	Deputy State Superintendent
Chris Reykdal	Washington	State Superintendent
John Richard	Ohio	Deputy State Superintendent
Shelley Loving-Ryder (Chair)	Virginia	Assistant Superintendent, Student Assessment, Accountability, and ESEA Programs
Michael Sibley (Vice Chair)	Alabama	Director of Communications
Pete Smith	Mississippi	Chief of Communications and Government Relations
Joyce Zurkowski	Colorado	Director of Student Assessment

The Task Force meets four times a year, either before or after Governing Board quarterly meetings. The Task Force members typically share general updates about

their states and specifically about their assessment programs and NAEP. In recent months, the Governing Board has sought Task Force member feedback on the Board's communications and engagement strategies and the NAEP Reading framework draft.

One State Policy Task Force member is invited to attend a Governing Board quarterly meeting in person. Over the last year, more Task Force members have attended quarterly Governing Board meetings due to the virtual nature of the convenings.

Once a year, the Governing Board invites a representative of the Council of Chief State School Officers and the chair of the State Policy Task Force, Shelley Loving-Ryder, to present task force accomplishments, progress updates, and impending plans at a quarterly board meeting. Scott Norton will represent CCSSO. Both panelists' biographies are presented in a separate attachment.

### Background on Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) Task Force

Led by the Council of the Great City Schools (the Council), the Governing Board started the TUDA program in 2002 with just six districts. The Council advocated for using NAEP to measure educational progress in large urban school districts and to enable comparisons across large urban districts, states, and the nation. The value of the program is manifest through districts' continued interest in participating voluntarily (27 districts as of 2019), the Council's use of TUDA results to inform districts' efforts, and ongoing support from Congress for the TUDA program.

The goal of the TUDA Task Force is to seek district input and feedback to improve the TUDA program and to inform the Governing Board's efforts to promote the use of TUDA data. Specifically, at the last meeting, the task force provided guidance to the Board on the Board's Strategic Vision and NAEP efforts in the post-COVID pandemic context.

The TUDA Task Force also affords its ten members opportunities to engage in meaningful discussions about policy and assessment with education leaders from other large urban districts. Membership comprises district superintendents, deputy or associate superintendents, research and evaluation or assessment directors, and public information or communications officers.

The membership turns over completely with the onset of each new contract. The current task force members are listed below.

TUDA Task Force Membership 2020-2022

Monica Armenta	Albuquerque	Executive Director, Communications
Roseann Canfora	Cleveland	Deputy Chief of Strategic Communications
Linda Chen	New York City	Chief Academic Officer
Barbara Griffith	Fort Worth	Senior Communications Officer
Lisa Herring	Atlanta	Superintendent
Theresa D. Jones	Baltimore	Chief Achievement and Accountability Officer
Alicia Lacy-Castille	Houston	Assessment Manager
Jessica Lotz	Memphis	Director of Research and Performance Management
Robert Nelson	Fresno	Superintendent
Alison Yoshimoto-Towery	Los Angeles	Chief Academic Officer

The task force meets twice a year, in March and in October, in conjunction with the Council's conferences. Once a year, the Governing Board invites the executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools, Michael Casserly, and Ray Hart, the Council's research director and lead for the TUDA Task Force, to provide highlights from the task force's work and plans for future discussion. Their biographies are presented in a separate attachment.

## State and TUDA Task Force Updates

### Panelist Biographies



**Michael Casserly** has served as Executive Director of the Council of the Great City Schools, the nation's primary coalition of large urban public school systems, since January 1992. Before assuming this position, Casserly served as the Council's Director of Legislation and Research for 15 years.

As head of the Council, Casserly unified urban schools nationwide around a vision of reform and improvement; launched an aggressive research program on trends in urban education; convened the first Education Summit of Big City Mayors and Urban School Superintendents; led the nation's largest urban school districts to volunteer for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP); led the first national study of common practices among the nation's fastest improving urban school districts; and launched national task forces on achievement gaps, leadership and governance, finance, professional development, and bilingual education.

While Director of Legislation and Research for the Council, Dr. Casserly initiated major reforms in Title I, Vocational Education, and Drug Free Schools. He also initiated and wrote the federal Magnet School Act and the Urban Schools of America Act. Since 1989, he has garnered over \$25.0 billion in extra federal money for urban schools.

Casserly has also written numerous studies, reports and op-ed pieces on urban schools, including "Beating the Odds"—the nation's first look at urban school performance on state tests. His legislative work has been the subject of a college textbook on how Capitol Hill really works. He is considered by many to be one of Washington's best education advocates and lobbyists, and an expert on urban education, governance, finance, and federal legislation and policy. Washington Almanac listed Casserly as one of Washington D.C.'s 400 most powerful individuals, and USA Today calls Casserly a "crusader" for city schoolchildren.

Dr. Casserly is a U.S. Army veteran and holds a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland and B.A. from Villanova University. When not working, he participates in a local Shakespeare group.



**Ray Hart** is the Director of Research for the Council of the Great City Schools and has more than 20 years of experience in research and evaluation. His work has spanned policy areas such as post-secondary success and college readiness, professional learning communities and school improvement, teacher effectiveness and value-added analysis, early childhood education, and adult and workforce literacy. He has worked with a number of local, state, and federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of

Education, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of State, and the National Science Foundation.

Hart served as the Executive Director of Research, Planning and Accountability for the Atlanta Public School District; President and CEO of RS Hart and Partners, which is an evaluation and assessment consulting firm; and an Assistant Professor of Research, Measurement, and Statistics at Georgia State University. Prior to his work as a consultant, Dr. Hart served as the Director of the Bureau of Research Training and Services at Kent State University. His career began in 1989 as a program director for African American, Hispanic, and Native American students in Engineering and Science.

Hart holds a Ph.D. in Evaluation and Measurement from Kent State University, a M.Ed. with a focus on Curriculum and Instruction – Educational Research from Cleveland State University, and a bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology.



**Shelley Loving-Ryder** serves as the Chair of the joint CCSSO & National Assessment Governing Board State Policy Task Force. She has been the Assistant Superintendent for Student Assessment and School Improvement at the Virginia Department of Education since 2001. In 2007, she was given the additional responsibility of overseeing the office of school improvement, and in 2014 she became responsible for the Program Administration and Accountability unit within the Department. She currently oversees staff in the offices of test

administration, scoring, and reporting; test development; and federal program administration and accountability.

Prior to 2001, Ms. Loving-Ryder worked in various capacities with the assessment unit, including serving as director, managing both criterion-referenced and norm-referenced testing programs; managing the development of tests in mathematics, reading and writing; and developing and implementing rubrics used to score open-ended items. During her tenure as assistant superintendent, she has led Virginia's transition from paper and pencil testing to one of the most extensive online testing programs in the country. Recently she led an initiative to move Virginia's testing program to a computer adaptive testing model.



**Scott Norton** is the Deputy Executive Director of Programs for the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). In his role, he directs and oversees the development and execution of our programmatic areas. Scott works to make sure all programs are designed to ensure strategic planning goals are met, core values are reinforced, and programmatic activities help to maximize organizational impact. Additionally, he oversees staff that supports programmatic connections to budgets/contracts, innovation, and activities related to the

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Prior to joining CCSSO, Scott was the assistant superintendent in the Office of Standards, Assessments, and Accountability for the Louisiana Department of Education.

Scott holds a bachelor's degree in education from Tennessee Technological University, a master's degree in education administration, a master's degree of public administration, and a doctoral degree in educational administration and supervision from Louisiana State University.