

**National Assessment Governing Board**

**Meeting of May 13-14, 2021**

**Virtual**

**OFFICIAL SUMMARY OF GOVERNING BOARD PROCEEDINGS**

**Complete Transcript Available**

**National Assessment Governing Board Members Present**

Haley Barbour, Chair  
Alice Peisch, Vice Chair  
Dana Boyd  
Alberto Carvalho  
Gregory Cizek  
Tyler Cramer  
Christine Cunningham  
Frank Edelblut  
Paul Gasparini  
Jim Geringer  
Eric Hanushek  
Patrick Kelly  
Suzanne Lane  
Tonya Matthews  
Reginald McGregor  
Mark Miller  
Beverly Perdue  
Julia Rafal-Baer  
Ron Reynolds  
Nardi Routten  
Martin West  
Mark White  
Grover Whitehurst  
Carey Wright  
Mark Schneider (ex-officio)

**National Assessment Governing Board Staff**

Lesley Muldoon, Executive Director  
Lisa Stooksberry, Deputy Executive Director  
Michelle Blair  
Stephaan Harris  
Donnetta Kennedy  
Laura LoGerfo

Munira Mwalimu  
Tessa Regis  
Sharyn Rosenberg  
Angela Scott  
Matt Stern  
Anthony White

**National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)**

Lynn Woodworth, Commissioner  
Peggy Carr, Associate Commissioner  
Tammie Adams  
Gina Broxterman  
Samantha Burg  
Jing Chen  
Brian Cramer  
James Deaton  
Alison Deigan  
Enis Dogan  
Veda Edwards  
Patricia Etienne  
Eunice Greer  
Shawn Kline  
Tina Love  
Daniel McGrath  
Nadia McLaughlin  
Taslina Rahman  
Emmanuel Sikali  
Tom Smith  
Holly Spurlock  
William Tirre  
Ebony Walton  
William Ward  
Grady Wilburn  
Angela Woodard  
Roberta Woods

**American Institutes for Research (AIR)**

Markus Broer  
Jack Buckley  
Danielle Ferguson  
Kim Gattis  
Cadelle Hemphill  
Martin Hooper  
Young Yee Kim

Sami Kitmitto  
Gabrielle Merken  
Jasmine Park  
Yan Wang  
Xiaying Zheng

**Council of Chief State School Officers, CCSSO**

Fen Chou  
Scott Norton

**CRP, Inc.**

Shamai Carter  
Subin Hona  
Anthony Velez  
Edward Wofford

**Department of Education**

James Forester  
Marco Sanchez  
Craig Stanton

**Educational Testing Service (ETS)**

Siva Angappan  
Marc Berger  
Jonas Bertling  
Kelly Bruce  
Jay Campbell  
Peter Ciemins  
Gloria Dion  
Hugo Dos Santos  
Amy Drescher  
Kadriye Ercikan  
Gary Feng  
Janel Gill  
Yue Jia  
Cassandra Malcom  
Daniel McCaffrey  
Tenaha O'Reilly  
Hilary Persky  
Emilie Pooler  
Sarah Rodgers  
Kathleen Scalise

Adrienne Sgammato  
Lisa Ward  
Nancy Waters  
Karen Wixson

**Hager Sharp**

James Elias  
David Hoff  
Joanne Lim  
Debra Silimeo

**The Hatcher Group**

Jenny Beard  
Sami Ghani  
Robert Johnston  
Zoey Lichtenheld  
David Loewenberg  
Alexandra Sanfuentes  
Devin Simpson  
Nandini Singh  
Jenna Tomasello

**Management Strategies**

Brandon Dart  
Harrison Moore

**Optimal Solutions Group**

Imer Arnautovic  
Sonika Mishra

**Pearson**

Scott Becker  
Cindy Flockhart  
Abigail Keller-Dombrock  
Eric Moyer  
Paula Rios  
Pat Stearns  
Cathy White  
Llana Williams

## **Westat**

Chris Averett  
Greg Binzer  
Lauren Byrne  
Zully Hilton  
Jason Nicholas  
Lisa Rodriguez  
Rick Rogers  
Keith Rust

## **WestEd**

Matthew Gaertner  
Georgia Garcia  
Cynthia Greenleaf  
Mira-Lisa Katz  
Mark Loveland  
Sonya Powers  
Steve Schneider  
Megan Schneider  
Sarah Warner

## **Other Attendees/Speakers**

Sarah Aguirre, Reading Development Panel Member  
Vickie Baker, West Virginia Department of Education  
Angela Battaglia, Utah State Board of Education  
Amanda Beaumont, U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP)  
Derek Briggs, University of Colorado Boulder  
Nancy Brynelson, California State University  
Kymyona Burk, Foundation for Excellence in Education  
Michael Casserly, Council of the Great City Schools  
Gina Cervetti, University of Michigan  
Allegra Chilstrom, Neal Gross  
Julie Coiro, University of Rhode Island  
Theresa Deeney, University of Rhode Island  
Kathilia Delp, University of the Cumberland  
Danielle Dennis, University of Rhode Island  
Donna Dubey, New Hampshire Department of Education  
Jeremy Ellis, Missouri Department of Education  
Andrea Faulkner, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction  
Jennifer Fletcher, California State University  
Elena Forzani, Boston University  
Rachael Gabriel, University of Connecticut  
John Guthrie, University of Maryland College Park

Kathleen Hinchman, Syracuse University  
Andrew Ho, Harvard University  
Christy Hovanetz, ExcelinEd  
Linda Jacobson, The 74 Million  
Carol Jago, University of California, Los Angeles  
Laura Jimenez, Boston University  
Michael Kolen, University of Iowa  
Andrew Kolstad, P20 Strategies LLC  
Beth LaDuca, Oregon Department of Education  
Regina Lewis, Maine Department of Education  
Tamara Lewis, Maryland State Department of Education  
Brian Lloyd, Michigan Department of Education  
Rebecca Logan, Oklahoma State Department of Education  
Susan Loomis, Independent Consultant  
Scott Marion, National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment  
Michael McShane, EdChoice  
Raina Mouljian, Alaska Department of Education & Early Development  
Jim Patterson, College Board  
P. David Pearson, University of California, Berkeley  
Marianne Perie, Measurement in Practice, LLC  
Renee Savoie, Connecticut State Department of Education  
Mandy Schaumburg, U.S. House Committee on Education and Labor  
Wanda Sims, WMS Associates  
Emily Slack, U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Michael Slattery, NAEP WTDOM  
Mark Stephenson, Kansas Department of Education  
Christy Talbot, American Educational Research Association  
Paola Uccelli, Harvard Graduate School of Education  
Zuowei Wang, University of Memphis  
Joyce Zurkowski, Colorado Department of Education  
Jeanna, ACS AI Media

### **Opening Remarks**

Haley Barbour, Chair, called the session to order at 12:30 p.m. and welcomed attendees to the May 13, 2021, National Assessment Governing Board (Board or Governing Board) meeting.

### **Approval of May 2021 Agenda**

Barbour requested a motion for approval of the May 2021 agenda. Jim Geringer moved to accept the revised agenda circulated to the Board members on May 12, 2021. Reginald McGregor seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### **Approval of March 2021 Board Meeting Minutes**

Barbour requested a motion for approval of the March 2021 meeting minutes. Alice Peisch moved to approve the minutes, and Suzanne Lane seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### **Executive Director's Update**

Governing Board Executive Director Lesley Muldoon provided a quarterly update.

Muldoon noted that plans are underway to convene in-person for the August 2021 Board meeting based on the current vaccination rollout in the United States. The meeting approval plans are dependent on prevailing CDC guidelines and requisite approvals from the Department of Education. Muldoon stated that the Board would be updated on developments regarding that decision.

Muldoon announced that the Board's Assistant Director of Assessment Development, Michelle Blair, would depart the Governing Board staff at the end of May to embark on a doctoral program in economics. Muldoon thanked Blair for her 14 years of service to the Board and called for the Board and staff to congratulate her.

Muldoon then reflected on challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as difficult decisions facing the Board. Virtual meetings, necessitated by COVID-19 restrictions, limited members' full experience of their service, specifically the collaboration, collective responsibility, and camaraderie which are hallmarks of the Board.

Muldoon highlighted the Board's foundational values and each member's responsibility to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The NAEP program has evolved over time yet continues to reflect the importance of education assessment, which it has exemplified since its inception. In the mid-1980s, then-Secretary of Education William Bennett commissioned a report about on how to make the Nation's Report Card useful to states and localities, responsive to state and local concerns but free from partisan politics. In that report, the commission recommended a new governance structure for NAEP which would accomplish three goals:

1. Be broadly representative of education stakeholders, in order to provide wisdom, stability, and continuity;
2. Mesh the assessment needs of states and localities with those of the nation; and
3. Be buffered from manipulation by any individual, level of government, or special interest group in the field of education.

These recommendations later served as a template for what became the National Assessment Governing Board in 1988. Muldoon said that all staff and Governing Board members bear a responsibility to uphold the founding principles of the Board. The Board, through sound policy and tradition, helps members find common ground to fulfill Board duties.

Muldoon believes the Board has reached a point where it has departed from institutional norms and traditions, which threatens the Board's functioning and its ability to fulfill its

responsibilities. Muldoon underscored that her comments were not directed at any individual or specific action. Muldoon reiterated the importance of the Board as a nonpartisan, deliberative body in which each member's perspective is valued and given equal weight. Governing Board meetings provide time and space for the deliberative process required to hear diverse perspectives, gather facts, and arrive at a consensus. She noted that nonpartisan agreement requires each Board member remain honest and open in expressing viewpoints, while committing to listen to other viewpoints. Muldoon concluded her statements by stating that the Board's primary goal with respect to the Reading Framework discussion should be to identify areas of additional consensus regarding the revised Reading Framework and allow the Board to proceed with taking action in August.

Tonya Matthews thanked Muldoon for her comments, insight, and oversight. Matthews expressed appreciation for Muldoon's recognition of the challenges brought on by the pandemic. She questioned the notion that virtual meetings due to the pandemic were the central reason that Board members were not forming collaborative, respectful relationships. Matthews described the explicit and implicit tutoring and support she received in her first years on the Board.

Matthews acknowledged the palpable tension among the Board which had gone unaddressed. She and her fellow Board members are stewards of a long history and legacy and must support and respect each other in this work. Matthews recalled her nomination to be Vice Chair by former Board member Ronnie Musgrove and remembered feeling terrified upon meeting him for the first time because he had an accent Matthews had been taught to fear. Matthews recalled that Musgrove corrected her misconception quickly through warm handshakes and Southern humor. Matthews reminded the Board that the genius of the Board derives from its bipartisan composition, non-partisan structure, and shared moments of revelry.

Barbour thanked Matthews for her remarks and highlighted changes to the meeting agenda. He noted that staff removed a session from the program to give members sufficient time to review the revised Reading Framework. Barbour announced that time had been allocated, within the day's agenda, for everyone to study the revisions which had emerged during discussions the prior week. The Chair stated the Board would reconvene at 2:30 p.m. to discuss member reactions and allow each Board member time to provide comments limited to two minutes. The floor then would open for discussion. Before breaking for the independent review time, Barbour invited members to express viewpoints.

Julia Rafal-Baer thanked Matthews for her statement, citing it as both brave and poignant. She requested additional background on the Reading Framework milestones, including the public comments received during the summer of 2020 and how it was addressed in subsequent drafts. Muldoon referenced existing summaries of the public comment and stated that she would re-send them to all Board members. Mark Miller, Vice Chair of the Assessment Development Committee (ADC), noted that Rafal-Baer could review the 2018 Board meeting minutes, available online, for additional context.

Barbour thanked Miller and announced the beginning of the independent reading period.

### **Independent Review Time**



The May 13, 2021, session of the Board meeting adjourned at 12:57 p.m. to allow members to individually review the NAEP Reading Framework. The meeting was reconvened at 2:30 p.m.

### **NAEP Reading Framework Policy Discussion**

Barbour opened the discussion by reminding members that the Governing Board's Executive Committee decided in April that the action on the NAEP Reading framework update would occur in August 2021 instead of during this Board meeting.

Barbour summarized activities that have taken place in discussions on the Reading Framework:

- Board members had an opportunity to read the most recent revision of the framework, which is dated April 21, 2021.
- Members participated in an informational webinar on April 30, 2021.
- Office hours were held by Governing Board staff to address member questions.

Barbour acknowledged that the Board members had the previous hour to review Board member Russ Whitehurst's edits to the draft framework, development panel feedback to those edits, and additional materials that Muldoon sent the evening of May 12, 2021, and the morning of May 13, 2021.

Before initiating the discussion, Barbour invited Dana Boyd, ADC Chair, to provide a brief summary of the May 7, 2021, ADC meeting.

Boyd noted that when she took the oath of office as a Board member, she expressed her commitment to students, parents, and teachers as the elementary school principal representative and noted that she would continue to advocate for all students. She stated that parents are entrusting the Board to make the best decisions for their children's future. As ADC Chair, her leadership style as a principal focuses on empowering others and being empowered by team members. She believes that every Board member should have an equal voice and respect one another even when they disagree. Boyd thanked the Development Panel for their work and expertise and also thanked Board staff member Michelle Blair for her role throughout the process.

Boyd then shared a chronology of recent activities:

1. On April 23, all Board members received the April 21 version of the draft reading framework.
2. On April 30, the Board hosted an informational webinar to review secure item information, which included briefings from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). During that informational webinar, Board member Whitehurst asked to submit a revised version of the framework, and Chair Barbour requested that Whitehurst send the draft to him the following Monday.
3. On May 3, Whitehurst's revisions were sent to the Board Chair who forwarded it to the ADC as the committee of jurisdiction.

4. On May 7, ADC reviewed the revisions and forwarded them to the Development Panel for their expert opinion.

Boyd invited Christine Cunningham to summarize the discussions at the May 7, 2021, ADC meeting and Miller to conclude the briefing.

Cunningham noted that detailed minutes of the ADC meeting were shared with all Board members the previous evening. She reported that ADC members reviewed the proposed edits that Whitehurst made to the April draft and responded with respect to four areas: policy, process, intent, and content.

Addressing each area, Cunningham stated that some proposed edits were not aligned with Board policies. For example, while framework development and update processes should reflect professional standards, key reports, and research, some proposed edits deleted justifications for how the framework is conceptualized. Some of these justifications responded to external comments requesting clarification and are needed for documentation and transparency.

Second, Cunningham explained that the Committee had concerns about process. Board policy requires a process that convenes visioning and development panelists with diverse expertise. There are established processes for review, revisions, and edits by the panelists. ADC members were concerned that these processes were not being followed.

Third, Cunningham explained that the perceived intent of the edits was discussed. According to Cunningham, the proposed changes address framing and wording but do not change the assessment itself.

Fourth, Cunningham stated that the proposed content changes were discussed. She said that ADC agreed that this framework should express a commitment to equity and fairness, particularly given how equity is positioned in the Strategic Vision, in the previous Board-adopted framework, in National Academies' consensus reports, and in professional testing standards. Cunningham explained that, while the ADC objected to the deletion of related references in the edited document, it sent the edited draft to the Development Panel for their feedback. The Development Panel's feedback overlapped with several concerns about content raised by the ADC and included two areas of potential revision for the final framework.

Concluding her recap of the ADC meeting, Cunningham asked NCES Commissioner Lynn Woodworth to share NCES' position on measuring specific beliefs and attitudes in the subject-specific contextual variables. Woodworth stated that NCES had no time to review these documents thoroughly so he declined to comment at this time. Cunningham invited Miller to provide remarks.

Citing the substantial differences between the June 2020 draft and the April 2021 draft, Miller applauded the panel for its work. He added that the ADC agrees that the April 2021 draft is a strong product that reflects the spirit and the letter of the Board's framework development policy and indicated that he looked forward to additional Board input.

Barbour thanked Boyd, Cunningham, and Miller and also expressed appreciation to Board member Whitehurst for his proposed edits to the framework. Barbour clarified that the Board had agreed to vote on the Reading Framework in August 2021. He then asked each member to respond to two questions:

1. Are members ready to support the framework draft presented by ADC, as proposed by the reading panel?
2. If so, why? If not, why not?

The Chair then called on each individual member to provide remarks with a time allotment of two minutes each.

Boyd began by commending the ADC's hard work and commitment to treating one another with respect. Boyd urged Board members to make sure the final framework is grounded in research and best practices. Boyd said that the framework development process has become divisive, including some critiques that have been interpreted as personal attacks. The presentations made by the panel and other experts provided important context, background, and details to help members and the public better understand the updated framework. She said that staff member Michelle Blair supported the ADC's review in accordance with ADC requests. Boyd was appreciative that the ADC has the opportunity to listen to each Board member. Expressing hope for a majority consensus, Boyd stated her support for the framework that the panel has proposed.

Next, Barbour called on Alberto Carvalho, who had stepped away to address an urgent matter. Later, however, Carvalho responded that he was inclined to vote for the framework. He reported that he had productive discussions with staff and all his questions were answered to his satisfaction. He had also read the letters and stakeholder input which further solidified his position.

Gregory Cizek stated he had three disappointments and one hope. He said that NAEP is the gold standard of trend monitoring, not trend setting. Cizek expressed his belief that the proposed new definition of reading in the framework changes the construct measured by NAEP and would break trend. He added that while the Governing Board has an honorable tradition of struggling to reach consensus and speaking with a singular voice, he worried that the framework development process has been degraded by factionalism. Cizek expressed concern that NAEP would lose credibility if the Board moves forward without fixing this draft.

In closing, Cizek shared an image of three children of different heights standing on boxes of different heights so that each could look over a fence at the same level. Cizek described the image, stating kids are standing on boxes so they can see over a fence labeled "Proficient," representing the desire, held by the Board, for all students to attain that level of achievement. Cizek said the boxes represent the supports for those students, which, if in place for assessments, lead to the wrong conclusion that the students are equal in their reading comprehension. Cizek explained why this is a problem. First, because the students are not equal in their reading comprehension. Second, when the test is over and they face the literacy demands of college and career, the tall kid is well-prepared but the short kid whom NAEP deemed Proficient is left to struggle. Cizek emphasized that Governing Board members were appointed to ensure the collection and reporting

of accurate data and emphasized to Board members that it was not too late to pause, reset, and refocus on what is best for students.

Tyler Cramer described his background in education advocacy and how E.D. Hirsch, Checker Finn, Russ Whitehurst, Mark Schneider, and Rick Hanushek have influenced his work. Cramer stated that what gets measured gets done and that the Reading Framework will influence how reading is taught and learned. He noted that frameworks and assessments change just like everything else. He added that he often needs help seeing such changes more clearly. He supported colleagues in wanting valid, reliable, unbiased, and in-depth assessments that illuminate inequities and inequalities – one of NAEP’s most important functions.

Cramer emphasized the importance of contextual questions for illuminating inequities and making education more effective. Cramer stated that Chapter Four of this draft focuses on reporting and contextual questions, but he worried that some of the contextual questions may be challenging to implement. Cramer thanked David Pearson for leading the Development Panel and gave great weight to his recommendations, stating that Pearson is very well-respected. Cramer stated that he believed the same was true for all who served on the panels.

Cramer explained that he reached out to former Board members Carol Jago and Linda Rosen for their feedback on the framework, noting that while these experts had questions about the April 21 draft of the Reading Framework, they recommended its adoption. Cramer stated that he was leaning towards voting for the framework because he believed trend would be maintained and necessary contextual questions would be added.

Cunningham commended the range of expertise involved in the framework process and the diverse backgrounds of Board members helping to inform the process. Acknowledging that reading was not her area of study, she expressed gratitude for the framework development process and the group of highly respected reading experts who contributed to its development. She noted that many people and organizations have helped revise the framework. Although not every viewpoint could be adopted, the revisions have strengthened the framework. Concluding that NAEP is charged to look to the future while being grounded in recent research and practice, Cunningham affirmed her support for adopting the latest draft of the Reading Framework.

Frank Edelblut said that Board members share the same goal—to help all U.S. students achieve the best possible outcomes. He urged members to sustain their passion for creating bright futures for students across the nation. As a member of ADC, he was at first skeptical of the framework recommendations and met with David Pearson to understand what was being done and where the efforts were going. Like other Board members, he wanted to make sure that student outcomes would be measured in a valid and reliable way.

Understanding that the Board could keep trend on the NAEP Reading Assessment, he would support the framework. He added that he hopes the Panel will further revise the draft in response to Whitehurst’s feedback and noted Whitehurst’s bravery in sharing his feedback with the Board, as well as ADC’s patience with the process and willingness to ensure that all voices were heard.

Paul Gasparini stated that he supported the proposed framework because he believes the framework development process had been faithfully adhered to.

Geringer stated that as a former governor, former teacher, and parent, he had encountered his share of contentious policy issues. He urged Board members to return to the work that needs to be done, in the most respectful and gracious way, and refrain from building coalitions outside of the structure of the institution. Geringer expressed his support for the ADC's work and recommended adopting the Reading Framework.

Hanushek said that the Board has at times conflated the idea of assessing reading with improving reading, stating that the latter was not in its charge. Hanushek asked: If we change views about the theory of learning, should we change the way we assess learning? Secondly, is the ADC draft evolutionary, or is it revolutionary? Hanushek said he gets imprecise and off-topic responses to the first question about how testing should relate to learning theory. Hanushek referenced the book, *How People Learn II*, and the importance of tests developed based on learning progressions rather than the science of learning.

Hanushek moved to address question two, deciphering whether Board efforts were seen as evolutionary or revolutionary. Hanushek stated that NCES adopts an evolutionary view, which he supports. Addressing the ADC draft, Hanushek asserted that the Board was trying to be revolutionary and diving into how to change reading rather than just assessing reading. Hanushek does not believe that the Board should ratify a learning theory, even if all Board members believe in that theory; the Governing Board's primary role is to assess performance.

Additionally, he asserted that the Board does not do a good job of setting the performance standards and cited the high percentage of Black eighth graders performing below the NAEP Basic achievement level as an example of an inequitable system.

Hanushek noted that he did not believe that adding a couple of contextual questions would allow the Board to get at the causality of things that affect policy. Hanushek concluded by expressing hope to return to what the Governing Board specializes in, focusing on assessment and not on learning theories and learning policies.

Patrick Kelly thanked Board members for their work on contributing to the updated framework. He expressed support for the Reading Framework produced by the Development Panel. Kelly referenced the color-coded chart on page 103 of the meeting materials, titled TABLE 1: Similarities and Differences Between the 2009–2019 and 2026 NAEP Reading Frameworks. Kelly stated that he believed the framework should be amended based on the Development Panel feedback that came as a result of Whitehurst's notes.

Kelly stated his support for the framework because the process has been responsive to feedback and concerns about sociocultural context and the importance of reading as a cognitive process. Kelly stated that he does not think creating broad definitions of reading is needed at this point as the issue was addressed in an earlier version of the framework. Kelly added that a majority of the public comments the Board received indicated that most people supported the original framework, dated [insert month year].

Kelly cited the expertise of the Development Panel and indicated that he trusted their recommendations. Kelly reiterated that he could support the April 21 version of the framework, because he supports the changes and because so many experts agreed on the high likelihood of maintaining trend. Kelly added that it was necessary for the Board to look at how to measure socioeconomic status beyond free- and reduced-price eligibility.

Lane referred to the 2014 version of Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. She stated that fairness is a fundamental validity issue that requires attention throughout all stages of test development and use. She also shared that many test developers have incorporated socio-cognitive theories of learning into test development processes. She noted that while she was initially skeptical about the framework because of the role of UDEs in assessing reading comprehension, she has become more comfortable having read more of the background documents. Lane expressed support for the assessment framework.

Matthews stated her support for the framework and pride in the Board's work. She acknowledged that this decision was part of a bigger conversation about how the Board and the public think about assessments and the bias that may or may not be embedded in them. Matthews said she trusted her colleagues and the process that they have followed.

McGregor stated that he had the privilege of hearing from industry colleagues as well as education colleagues throughout the development process. He stated his support for the April 21 version of the framework. McGregor concluded that he supports the framework because it responds to comments from the field, is focused on students, and should allow the maintenance of trend.

Miller expressed gratitude for the opportunity to speak as an eighth-grade teacher and said he believes the April 21 NAEP Reading Framework would serve students well. He reasoned that the April 21 draft framework aligns well with the Governing Board's Strategic Vision to serve as a catalyst for action to improve student achievement and will continue to tell the story of achievement over time and in context.

Miller addressed the importance of student participation in NAEP. As a teacher, Miller said he has heard students ask: "What are we taking this test for? What happens if I don't do well? Is this going to affect my grade?" He said that the April 21 draft provides a framework for an assessment which engages students and includes motivational UDEs so as to allow all students to show what they know and can do. Miller expressed support for the April 21 version of the NAEP Reading Framework.

Beverly Perdue stated that NAEP is the North Star in assessment and that the Nation's Report Card reflects something more important than just math and reading. It reflects the ability of Americans to come together with different opinions, reach consensus, and move forward.

Perdue expressed hope that there will be greater opportunity to reflect on why 50 percent of African American children may not be achieving as they should. Having read most of the supporting documents, Perdue believed that the framework, with the revisions, was well-thought

out. Perdue expressed support for the April 21 version of the framework. Perdue concluded by thanking Whitehurst for his feedback.

Julia Rafal-Baer expressed concern that some elements of the framework and/or framework development had been conflated and recent critiques may instead reflect earlier framework drafts. In particular, letters about the framework suggested a belief that the framework is grounded in a sociocultural model, even though the revision plan states that is not the case.

Rafal-Baer worried that if the Board did not distribute the latest revision of the framework for another round of public comment, and clarify what had been removed, the Governing Board may appear partisan and risk losing support from all sides. Rafal-Baer stated that families want to know if NAEP is maintaining the trend line and developing questionnaires to better understand students' socioeconomic status. She urged additional public comment.

Ron Reynolds stated that regardless of what a person is reading, certain mental operations remain fundamental to reading. If that were untrue, then the concept of trend would have little or no meaning. Reynolds stated that the decisive factor in his evaluation of the draft Reading Framework was maintaining trend. Maintaining trend assures that NAEP will continue to assess the cognitive elements that have remained and will remain fundamental to the construct of reading. Stating that this should be NAEP's primary goal, he added that he believed trend could and will be maintained. Reynolds indicated support for the April 21 version of the framework.

Nardi Routten reflected on changes in reading expectations during her 24 years of teaching. She explained that many states, including Florida—where she spent most of her teaching career—requires fourth-grade students to read up to three texts on the same topic, synthesize information, and respond to a prompt by providing evidence and citing their source. Still, teachers, including Routten, often help students draw on personal experiences to make connections when they read text.

She added that although reading is a cognitive process, students naturally bring to bear their experiences and sociocultural resources. She asked, shouldn't the Board strive to create fair and equitable assessments? She stated that she believed a good start is providing UDEs and recognizing and understanding how students convey their experiences to reading. Routten emphasized the importance of recognizing students' differences, cultural identity, and voice. Routten concluded that if recent and updated research were dismissed in the framework, maintaining the gold star or the North Star standard would be difficult. She concluded by expressing support for the April 21 revision of the framework.

Martin West noted that the Board has reached consensus on many elements of the current framework. The Board seemed to agree that maintaining trend is a high priority. The Board also seemed to agree on a new comprehension target and disciplinary target for reading and associated text types and agreed to include all forms of UDEs currently on the operational NAEP as a strategy to reduce construct irrelevant variance. West noted that the extent of agreement is underscored by the fact that Whitehurst's proposed edits would not require changes to the assessment.

West said that his main concern about the framework was that efforts to minimize the role of background knowledge in the assessment could obscure group differences in achievement and distract educators from building background knowledge as a strategy for improving literacy.

West said Board members have been told by technical advisory committee members that none of the UDEs included in the framework update should assist a particular group of students. West did not think that this message was communicated effectively in the framework and echoed Rafal-Baer's concern about the nature of some of the misunderstandings in the feedback the Board received from stakeholders. West said that misunderstandings highlight the need for additional clarification and editing the framework. West concluded that he was optimistic about the Board's ability to get the April 21 draft approved by improving it so that it would be clearly understood by the field.

Mark White stated that he was not ready to support the framework because he wants to better understand the framework, the goal of the update, and the development process. He added that he wants to make certain that the Board was not setting up a pendulum effect for the NAEP assessment going forward where it swings one way and then the other. White concluded that as a new Board member he is trying to understand the background resources and was unable to support the framework at this time.

Whitehurst stated that he could not support the current draft framework but that he could support it if there were willingness and openness to edits. He stated that additional edits should not be onerous or upsetting but that one issue on which he seeks more clarity is language around equity and fairness. Whitehurst referenced the same chapter Lane had mentioned previously, noting that the term "fairness" has no single meaning. He stated that, while it is possible that individuals endorse fairness and testing as a desirable social goal, they can reach quite different conclusions about the fairness of a given testing program. The key element missing in the current draft, he said, is an explanation of what is considered fair or not fair.

Whitehurst then cited Mississippi's recent improvement in NAEP scores and Massachusetts's decline in scores. He asked if the implication was that these results revealed something was wrong or unfair about the assessment. Whitehurst agreed that more work would be required to avoid political pushback on the framework and urged colleagues not to hold on to something that was not absolute or necessary to move NAEP forward.

Carey Wright urged the Board to consider all input around the framework in revising the framework. She said that both the cognitive and sociocultural orientations deserve consideration and should not be in competition with each other. Wright emphasized that all Board members want an assessment system that will measure what children know and can do in a way that informs teachers, districts, and state departments of education. Wright found the revised framework and summary material helpful but asked for another review to determine if the framework was honoring both researchers who believe in cognitive and sociocultural orientations. Wright concluded by stating support for more public comment.

Peisch stated that she was comfortable taking action on the framework at the Board's next meeting. She found the current draft responsive to the concerns that were raised with the initial



draft. Peisch added that the question about maintaining trend had been answered: If Andrew Ho believed NAEP would maintain trend under the new framework, she was comfortable that it would. She said the time had come to make a decision and to move on and that once action was taken, the Board must clearly communicate what had been done and clarify any lingering confusion.

Barbour then opened the floor for questions and discussion. Geringer asked for clarification about next steps for the Board and a timeline for receiving the final framework document. Barbour clarified that the Board would not adopt the framework at this meeting; some edits would need to be made together with additional input and guidance from the Board. Muldoon stated that ADC would present an updated version of the framework during the August meeting.

Wright asked if Board members would have time to review the updated version of the framework prior to the August meeting. Barbour stated they would, although outstanding issues must be addressed and clarifications provided. He said there appeared to be a two to one sentiment in favor of adopting the framework. He did not think there was time to put out the framework for another round of public comment. Barbour clarified that the vote on the framework would take place in August. He also suggested convening a webinar in the interim and hoped the Board would come to a consensus by the time members reconvened.

Rafal-Baer asked the Board to take time to build bipartisan support for the framework and clarify confusion by seeking public input. She recommended creating a summary that could be shared publicly. She said that agreeing upon a revised framework need not require a long process, but it is necessary to remain intentional about reaching out to groups on both sides of the political spectrum and to document the input. Rafal-Baer also urged her colleagues to ensure that all state leaders have the opportunity to add their input directly, as well as district leaders who participate in the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA). Ultimately, she said, more input and conversations would help make the framework and the process reflect everyone's needs and concerns.

Kelly echoed Rafal-Baer's concerns about public comment and asked if it were possible to invite feedback from organizations that responded to the initial version of the framework. Doing so would give the Board the ability to measure shifts in opinion and shield the Board from some of the partisanship which emerged during the process. Kelly added that he agreed that fairness is a loaded term, referencing Cizek's presentation with the diagram of students on boxes and noting that the framework lacked clear definitions of equity and fairness.

West urged seeking public comment in a targeted way to get valuable input from the field and to encourage people to review the Board's work more closely. He believed that this could prove valuable to the reception of the eventual framework and would not be particularly onerous.

Looking toward the next Board meeting, Barbour cautioned against extending the timeline for voting on the framework because it would delay implementation of the new framework until the 2028 NAEP Reading Assessment. Barbour asked for clarity from Board members on the level of additional input they wanted and how long they wanted to wait to receive it.

Cramer stated that he agreed that a lot of the differences of opinion had been narrowed in the revised framework but was not sure that others were aware of the changes. Cramer believed the Board could reach out to the public to clarify how feedback had been addressed. He also endorsed formulating a definition of equity and fairness for NAEP.

Matthews suggested that if additional input is sought, the Board reach out to those who already commented so as not to restart the process from the beginning. Matthews concluded that one of the Board's strengths is that it is not bipartisan, but non-partisan.

Boyd stated that it was in ADC's best interest to listen to all points of view and asked for clarification from Rafal-Baer if it would be possible to hold a public webinar to provide clarity of where they were, as a Board, but not necessarily put the framework out for public comment. Boyd stated that everybody's ideas were noted and the ADC would reconvene soon to decide what to integrate into the next iteration of the framework. Boyd reiterated that a public webinar could be held to address concerns and clarifications with the framework.

Whitehurst stated that the revision process, so far, would likely not generate changes that would prove sufficient for him. He was unsure if he could vote for the framework, in part, because he said the Visioning Panel seemed to have just one view and that such an advisory group should reflect differences of opinion and that ideally those differences would overlap with concerns that were held by members of the Board. He stated that because no one on the Visioning Panel appeared to share the concerns voiced by some Board members, he encouraged further review and comments from Board members before finalizing the framework. He hoped that such a process would get the Board to a unanimous vote, which he believed would be beneficial for the Board and for NAEP.

Miller reassured the Board that the ADC would meet after this meeting to create a new version that addresses the latest comments and suggestions.

Barbour said ADC would try as quickly as possible, no later than next week, to draft a plan and timeline for revisions. Barbour reiterated the need to take action on the framework during the August quarterly Board meeting. He concluded that the Board owed it to the public and to NAEP to produce the best framework possible.

### **National Center for Education Statistics Update**

Barbour noted that NCES Commissioner Lynn Woodworth's tenure was quickly coming to a close. Barbour expressed appreciation for Woodworth's service to the country and invited him to address the Board and provide the NCES update.

Woodworth shared his appreciation for returning to public service at NCES. He noted he had spent 6 years in the United States Marine Corps, 11 years as a public-school teacher, 5 years as a researcher, and a number of years as a student at various levels, all in public institutions.

Woodworth thanked Peggy Carr and commended Carr on her extensive experience in all areas of NAEP's work. He recognized Carr as an outstanding individual who has made invaluable contributions to NAEP. He thanked the rest of the NCES staff and expressed appreciation to Enis Dogan, Daniel McGrath, Patrick Keaton, Eunice Greer, Gina Broxterman, Grady Wilburn, and Ebony Walton.

Woodworth also thanked the Governing Board staff, noting that the work had been tough and that many long and frank conversations took place, but they were all valued for working in the best interest of the country and its students. He noted the Governing Board's commitment to NAEP. Woodworth referenced the Reading Framework discussions, stating that the conversation is emblematic of what should be focused on: the country and its students. Woodworth expressed appreciation for the hard work of NAEP contractors, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Woodworth acknowledged the unprecedented nature of the pandemic, mentioning that never, in the history of the United States, had nearly every public school in the country been shut down. The adjustments made, by the NCES staff, the Governing Board staff, and the contractors challenged everyone to work harder. Woodworth mentioned that the NAEP program will return to the field in 2022 to gain an accurate measure of achievement and learn where students are academically, based on the impact of COVID, which will prove vitally important. That assessment, by Woodworth's standards, will be the most important NAEP assessment done in the history of the United States due to the unprecedented events that have unfolded over the past year.

Woodworth stated that the current NAEP began in 1990 and it was time for certain updates to NAEP. The methodology to develop the NAEP assessments in 1980 brilliantly solved the issue about how to assess the existing content and materials without spending an excess amount of time doing it. The people who designed NAEP determined that a matrix design could be used, which would cover a large scope, meaning that no student had to spend five days taking the assessment. This development met the needs that would allow estimates for large sub-populations at the national and state levels. However, Woodworth stated that the assessment did not meet the needs of today.

Woodworth added that there are a number of advances in computing power which have led to different uses of NAEP data. Woodworth cited that one of today's more common uses is regression analysis to examine correlations across the data set and across student characteristics. Woodworth claimed that the current NAEP does not work well for this use because those data analyses require reliable and replicable scores for each student. Woodworth encouraged the Board to consider moving NAEP to an item-level computer adaptive assessment. These assessments would provide accurate estimates at all levels of student achievement—at the very top, the middle, and at the bottom. The assessments would produce comparable direct scores for each student that could be used to run these analyses. Not only could group outcomes be evaluated, but also individual-level data.

Woodworth recommended that NAEP move toward online and device-agnostic administrations, stating that the expenses of administering NAEP in person would not be sustainable moving

forward. Woodworth clarified that collecting data for NAEP assessments was the most expensive part of NAEP. The COVID-19 crisis highlighted flaws in the administration model, because people needed to enter schools to set up, check, and operate equipment. Ultimately, the pandemic prevented the assessment from taking place. An online and device-agnostic NAEP could have occurred, despite COVID-19.

Woodworth also recommended that NAEP move toward two-subject design. No other major assessment still uses a one-student, one-subject design. Woodworth stated that there were advances to run correlations between subjects if a student took both reading and math. Currently, there is a set of students assessed for reading and a separate set of students assessed for math, so those types of analyses and comparisons are impossible.

Woodworth challenged the Governing Board to persuade NCEES to certify the achievement levels as being reasonable and informative to the public. He claimed that the previous six commissioners had agreed with him that the NAEP achievement levels do not work. He pointed out that half the students in major sub-populations score below NAEP Basic based on the current standards. The last time the 12th grade math assessment was administered, 75 percent of 12th grade math students scored below *NAEP Proficient* and 40 percent scored below *NAEP Basic*. Woodworth declared that these results lead to one of two conclusions: either the United States' education system is a disaster, failing huge swaths of kids, or the achievement levels are in the wrong place.

Woodworth acknowledged the Governing Board's interest in scenario-based tasks (SBT) for NAEP but noted their immense expense. The Board wants more frequent assessments and more state level assessments, but the current budget cannot support those goals. SBTs cost twice more than a similar block of multiple-choice items, even though they do not provide twice the information power. Woodworth requested that the Board evaluate the SBTs from a scientific standpoint and determine if they merit the investment.

Woodworth said that NAEP is struggling, along with every other type of data collection, to recruit students and schools to participate. He recommended that Congress decide what subjects and grades are most important to assess and provide funds necessary to complete those assessments. He added that Congress should mandate all states participate in those assessments.

Woodworth stressed the importance of NAEP, reasoning that if it was important enough to spend millions of dollars to administer and for kids to miss time from school, then the assessments are important enough for Congress to say that states must participate. Woodworth added that NAEP is one of the Department of Education's most important activities and plays an important role in measuring education performance and educational equity across the nation.

Woodworth concluded that, without NAEP, there would be no standard to measure education system outcomes, no way to compare performance from one state to the next, and no way to understand the gaps that keep children from achieving their potential. Woodward reiterated that NAEP remains a critical tool in the fight for the American education system and he invited everyone to move toward a better NAEP.

## **Resolution in Honor of Michael Casserly, Executive Director, Council of the Great City Schools**

Barbour announced that Michael Casserly, Executive Director of the Council of Great City Schools was retiring after 30 years of service. He thanked Casserly for his collaboration, invaluable insights, and his advocacy and contribution to NAEP.

Barbour called attention to a resolution, drafted in Casserly's honor to recognize Casserly for his support, contributions, accomplishments, and partnership. Barbour noted that Casserly is an ardent advocate for NAEP and his work has bolstered the strength and power of NAEP in harnessing NAEP data. He has focused on improving achievement in large cities.

The Chair expressed gratitude for Casserly's insightful leadership and his founding of the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) program – a subset of NAEP which represents samples of students in select urban districts across the United States.

Barbour then read the resolution to honor Casserly (see Appendix X for the full text of the resolution).

Barbour requested a motion for approval of the resolution of Michael Casserly. Cramer moved to approve the resolution; the motion was seconded by Martin West and passed unanimously. Barbour then invited Casserly to share remarks.

Casserly thanked the Chair for his words of affirmation and his leadership. Casserly also thanked Mark Schneider of the Institute of Education Sciences; Lynn Woodworth and Peggy Carr of NCEES; Executive Director of the Governing Board, Lesley Muldoon; her predecessors; and the Governing Board staff for their hard work and dedication.

Casserly noted that the autumn of 2000 was a fraught period in the history of NAEP. Casserly approached the Board and proposed the development of what became the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) for three reasons:

1. Districts wanted a way to compare themselves to other big city school districts facing similar challenges;
2. Districts wanted to see if their efforts to improve were actually reaping benefits, if they were improving as they thought they would; and,
3. Districts wanted to test whether or not the reforms they were pursuing actually worked and which did not.

Casserly added that NAEP has helped TUDAs improve instruction for students in urban school districts and has served as an invaluable tool. He expressed gratitude for the Board's forward thinking in agreeing to the TUDA proposal over 20 years ago. While more must be done, the strides taken so far have immensely improve urban education throughout the decades. Casserly concluded by thanking the Board.

## **Concluding Remarks**

Barbour announced that the next day's sessions (Friday, May 14) were closed to the public as members would be receiving embargoed NAEP Science results and engage in budget discussions. Barbour thanked the Board, its staff, NCES, and all who helped facilitate the meeting.

The meeting adjourned for the day at 5:28 p.m.

## **Results from the 2019 NAEP Science Assessment (CLOSED)**

Under the provisions of exemption 9(B) of §552b(c) of Title 5 U.S.C., the National Assessment Governing Board (Governing Board) met in closed session on Friday, May 14, 2021, from 12:39 p.m. to 1:47 p.m. to receive a briefing from Grady Wilburn of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) on results from the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in Science.

Chair Barbour called the meeting to order. He explained that the session was closed to the public because results of the science assessment have not been released to the public. He noted that the initial release event will occur on May 25, 2021. Board member Christine Cunningham and former Board member Cary Sneider will participate in the release along with NCES staff.

Wilburn provided a briefing on the NAEP 2019 science results at grades 4, 8, and 12. He noted that the science assessment was administered between January and March 2019 to a national sample of 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders. This administration marked the first time the science assessment was given via tablet, but the assessment was administered through both paper-and-pencil and digital platforms to preserve trend lines of student performance over time. Wilburn reported that the NAEP Science assessment includes three content areas—physical science, life science, and earth and space sciences. The assessment measures four science practices—(1) identifying science principles; (2) using science principles; (3) using scientific inquiry; and (4) using technological design.

Wilburn highlighted sample scenario-based tasks in the science assessment at each grade. He then provided an overview of student performance at grades 4, 8, and 12 and compared the science results with the NAEP 2015 and 2009 science results by:

- Average scale score
- Percentile score
- Content area scores
- NAEP achievement levels

He then highlighted the results by grade and average scale scores. The results were compared with the 2015 and 2009 assessment results. Student performance was described by race/ethnicity, participation in the National School Lunch Program, and gender. Wilburn also shared insights from the contextual questionnaires, including how often students engaged in scientific inquiry-related classroom activities and their enrollment in biology, chemistry, and physics classes. Board members asked questions during the presentation, which Wilburn addressed.

## **Recess**

The May 14, 2021, Governing Board meeting recessed at 1:47 p.m. and reconvened at 2:05 p.m.

## **NAEP Budget and Assessment Schedule (CLOSED)**

Under the provisions of exemption 9(B) of §552b(c) of Title 5 U.S.C., the Governing Board met in closed session on Friday, May 14, 2021, from 2:05 p.m. to 3:46 p.m. to receive a briefing from Peggy Carr, Associate Commissioner, NCES, on the NAEP budget and Assessment Schedule. Chair Barbour announced that the session was closed to the public and that only Governing Board members could ask questions. Congressional staff attended the session for information gathering purposes only.

Carr provided a briefing on the NAEP budget and its impact on the NAEP Assessment Schedule. The briefing covered three areas:

- COVID implications in 2022
- Current budget cash flow for FY 2020 through FY 2024
- Marginal costs of assessments

Carr concluded the briefing by highlighting the President's budget proposal timeline for Fiscal Year 2023:

- July-August 2021: Offices submit requests and justifications to Department Budget Service
- September 2021: Department submits to OMB
- November/December 2021: OMB pass back/Department appeals
- February 2022: President submits FY23 budget proposal to Congress

Board members asked questions during and after the presentation, which Carr addressed.

## **Next Generation NAEP (CLOSED)**

Under the provisions of exemption 9(B) of §552b(c) of Title 5 U.S.C., the Governing Board met in closed session on Friday, May 14, 2021, from 3:47 p.m. to 4:35 p.m. to receive a briefing from Peggy Carr on the Next Generation NAEP.

The briefing covered three areas:

- Costs relative to changes in NAEP's scope of work over time
- Reviewing major cost drivers
- Investment needed to modernize NAEP

Carr addressed questions from Board members throughout her presentation.

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

I certify the accuracy of the minutes.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

July 22, 2021  
Date





**Resolution in Honor of Michael Casserly  
Executive Director of the Council of the Great City Schools**

**Approved May 13, 2021**

**Whereas**, Michael Casserly has served as Executive Director of the Council of the Great City Schools for 29 years and is stepping down from his leadership position and assuming a role of consultant and advisor;

**Whereas**, through his insightful leadership of the Council, Michael Casserly inspired and initiated the Trial Urban District Assessment Program (TUDA) of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which assesses representative samples of students in urban districts across the United States through which invaluable data are provided for these districts to understand and to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of their cities' students;

**Whereas**, Michael Casserly strengthened and sustained the TUDA program for more than two decades, expanding the program from six districts in its first year to 27 districts that currently participate by eloquently explaining the unique value and immense power of TUDA data to urban school district policy and function;

**Whereas**, the TUDA data facilitate urban school districts' efforts to improve student performance and close achievement gaps by allowing districts to conduct comparative analyses with districts similar in demographic profile, to learn lessons from peers' experiences and successes, and to discern and implement effective education practices, with large cities making significant score gains and their performance on NAEP Reading and Mathematics improving faster than the nation;

**Whereas**, Michael Casserly's leadership of the TUDA Task Force with the Governing Board affords vitally important feedback to the Governing Board to inform and improve policy, research, and communications related to NAEP and to the TUDA program, leading to significant improvements;

**Whereas**, Michael Casserly's ardent advocacy for NAEP neither began nor concluded with the TUDA program in that he consistently and persuasively championed for support for the Nation's Report Card and worked tirelessly to advance the NAEP program through his savvy, sage, expert advice, his keen insights on strategic implementation of assessment programs, and his thoughtful, collegial collaboration with both the National Center for Education Statistics and the Governing Board members and staff;

**Therefore, be it resolved** that the National Assessment Governing Board expresses its profound appreciation and gratitude for Michael Casserly's unwavering support and monumental contributions to NAEP and student achievement in our nation;

**Be it further resolved** that a copy of this resolution be entered permanently into the minutes of the National Assessment Governing Board meeting of May 2021.

Signed on this Thirteenth Day of May, Two-Thousand and Twenty-One

Haley Barbour, Chair  
National Assessment Governing Board

**National Assessment Governing Board**  
**Executive Committee Meeting**  
**Report of May 5, 2021**

**CLOSED SESSION**

**Executive Committee Members:** Haley Barbour (Chair), Alice Peisch (Vice Chair), Dana Boyd, Gregory Cizek, Jim Geringer, Tonya Matthews, Mark Miller, Bev Perdue, Martin West, Carey Wright.

**Executive Committee Members Absent:** None.

**National Assessment Governing Board Members:** Ron Reynolds, Mark Schneider (ex-officio).

**National Assessment Governing Board Staff:** Michelle Blair, Stephaan Harris, Donnetta Kennedy, Laura LoGerfo, Lesley Muldoon, Munira Mwalimu, Tessa Regis, Sharyn Rosenberg, Angela Scott, Matthew Stern, Lisa Stooksberry, Anthony White.

**National Center for Education Statistics Staff:** Peggy Carr, Pat Etienne, Dan McGrath, Holly Spurlock, James Lynn Woodworth, Brian Cramer, Ebony Walton, Enis Dogan, Eunice Greer, Jing Chen, Shawn Kline, William Tirre.

The Executive Committee met in closed session from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. to discuss the NAEP budget and assessment schedule, in addition to other Governing Board priorities.

The closed session was called to order by Chair Haley Barbour at 3:00 p.m.

These discussions were conducted in closed session because the disclosure of cost data would significantly impede implementation of contract awards. Therefore, this discussion is protected by exemption 9(B) of section 552b(C) of Title 5 U.S.C.

Barbour reminded members of the confidential nature of the discussions. Barbour informed other Executive Committee Members that he would have to leave the meeting early and that Vice Chair Peisch would assume the responsibilities of the Chair, in his absence.

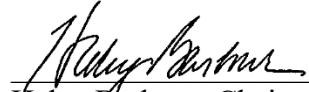
Barbour provided a brief update on the NAEP Reading framework timeline and process and the Board's recordkeeping policies based on guidance from the U.S. Department of Education. Barbour reminded Executive Committee Members that more information on the recordkeeping requirements would be shared at a later date.

Barbour then introduced Peggy Carr, Associate Commissioner, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Carr led a presentation on the NAEP Budget. Carr provided information about projected costs for the program, including the impact of COVID and school closures, updating the reading framework, and forthcoming research and development. Carr described projected budget implications for the NAEP Assessment Schedule.

Lesley Muldoon, Executive Director, then facilitated a discussion on potential implications for the NAEP Assessment Schedule in the short- and long-term. Muldoon facilitated members' discussion on a transition to the next generation of digitally based assessments and how NAEP modernization could lead to long-term cost savings.

At 4:52 p.m. Vice Chair Peisch adjourned the meeting.

I certify the accuracy of these minutes.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Haley Barbour, Chair

July 1, 2021  
Date

# **National Assessment Governing Board**

## **Assessment Development Committee**

### **Report of May 7, 2021**

**Assessment Development Committee (ADC) Members:** Dana Boyd (Chair), Mark Miller (Vice Chair), Christine Cunningham, Patrick Kelly, Reginald McGregor, Nardi Routten.

**Other Governing Board Members:** Tyler Cramer, Ron Reynolds, Mark Schneider (ex officio).

**Governing Board Staff:** Lesley Muldoon, Lisa Stooksberry, Michelle Blair, Stephaan Harris, Laura LoGerfo, Munira Mwalimu, Sharyn Rosenberg, Angela Scott, Matthew Stern,.

**Other Attendees:** Doretha Allen, Imer Arnautovic, Sadaf Asrar, Scott Becker, Rebecca Bennett, Jonas Bertling, Derek Briggs, Markus Broer, Nancy Brynelson, Jack Buckley, Lauren Byrne, Gina Broxterman, Jinghong Cai, Peggy Carr (Associate Commissioner, NCES), Shamai Carter, Jay Campbell, Gina Cervetti, Jing Chen, Julie Coiro, Brian Cramer, Kathilia Delp, Gloria Dion, Patricia Donahue, Jeremy Ellis, Kadriye Ercikan, Patricia Etienne, Gary Feng, Chester Finn, Elena Forzani, Matt Gaertner, Georgia Garcia, Kim Gattis, Eunice Greer, Laura Goadrich, Cynthia Greenleaf, Kristin Hamilton, Kathleen Hinchman, David Hoff, Martin Hooper, Maria Hyler, Linda Jacobson, Carol Jago, Robert Johnston, Beth LaDuca, Carol Lee, Joanne Lim, Mira-Lisa Katz, Young Yee Kim, Mark Loveland, Scott Marion, Daniel McGrath, Nadia McLaughlin, Gabrielle Merken, Jim Patterson, P. David Pearson, Hilary Persky, Susan Pimentel, Emilie Pooler, Stanley Rabinowitz, Sarah Rodgers, Rick Rogers, Alicia Ross, Megan Schneider, Steve Schneider, Nandini Singh, Paola Uccelli, Sheila Valencia, Ebony Walton, Sarah Warner, Karen Wixson, Edward Wofford.

#### **NAEP Reading Framework Update**

Vice Chair Mark Miller welcomed Committee members and other Board members in attendance. Mark reviewed three goals for today's Assessment Development Committee (ADC) session on the NAEP Reading Framework: (1) to review guidance from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for the NAEP Reading Framework Update, as issued to the Framework Development Panel; (2) to review suggested edits recently submitted by Board member Russ Whitehurst; and (3) to review suggested edits submitted by the Framework Development Panel in April 2021.

Miller then introduced Matt Gaertner, WestEd Measurement Lead, to provide a report on the most recent meeting of the TAC for the NAEP Reading Framework Update. Gaertner noted that the TAC has provided ongoing advice for the Framework Development Panel as they have been drafting NAEP Reading Framework Update recommendations. He then introduced two members of the eight-person TAC who were in attendance: (1) Derek Briggs, Professor of the Research

and Evaluation Methodology at the University of Colorado, Boulder and director of the Center for Assessment Design Research and Evaluation (CADRE); and (2) Scott Marion, Executive Director of The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment.

At its recent meeting, the TAC discussion focused primarily on issues related to topic knowledge and Universal Design Elements (UDEs), with a special emphasis on knowledge-based UDEs recommended by the Framework Development Panel. Gaertner began by reviewing the TAC's discussion of UDEs. The TAC was asked to provide their advice about the types of evidentiary standards that should be used to understand whether UDEs are functioning in an assessment as intended. Gaertner noted that for assessment accommodations, appropriate supporting evidence would be data showing that the accommodation in question was assisting only the students who needed it. In contrast, Gaertner indicated that UDEs are intended for all students; that is, none of the UDEs proposed in the NAEP Reading Framework update are intended to assist a particular group of students, e.g., by gender, socioeconomic status, or race/ethnicity. Because of this, he noted that the appropriate supporting evidence would be data showing that a given UDE assists all students; evidence that a UDE assists a particular group of students could, therefore, be a cause for concern.

In the TAC discussion about topic knowledge, Gaertner summarized that the assessment construct in the proposed NAEP Reading Framework Update specifically excludes text-independent domain knowledge, as does the current NAEP Reading Framework. The framework update specifies that although topic knowledge is important, it is not part of the intended assessment construct. Gaertner noted that the two knowledge-based UDEs that are proposed in the NAEP Reading Framework update are: (1) short introductions, of one or two sentences, to potentially unfamiliar topics; and (2) providing definitions for words that are likely to be unfamiliar and are not part of the construct being assessed. Gaertner stated that the knowledge-based UDEs in the framework update support the intended assessment construct. Further, they have precedent and are deemed non-controversial in assessment practice, i.e., they appear in various state-wide summative assessments across the U.S. For example, in a recent CCSSO survey, most states indicated that they use similar UDEs on their assessments.

Gaertner asked Briggs and Marion to offer any additional comments about the TAC advice to the Framework Development Panel. Marion clarified that the introduction of topic knowledge could be a threat to the validity of reading comprehension assessment. Briggs asserted that while the term 'topic knowledge' has been used extensively in discussions about the intended construct for the NAEP Reading Assessment, it would be more appropriate to think of the issue as one of 'topical familiarity.' The knowledge-based UDEs are more like "primes" to allow students to be cued in to what to look for, getting students ready to engage with the text; they are not intended to be an instructional intervention.

Patrick Kelly asked whether UDEs interplay with NAEP's time constraint in a way that improves the ability of the assessment to measure student achievement. Marion noted that the knowledge-based UDEs are intended to activate the students' prior knowledge. The amount of extra reading relating to the knowledge-based UDEs is miniscule. Further, he stated that the NAEP exam is not intended to be speeded. Briggs noted that the provision of UDEs increases student engagement and increases the student's ability to take agency over their assessment experience. Hence, there are likely to be some efficiency gains as students progress through the assessment and potentially spend less time on each assessment task. Marion agreed and noted that the TAC does not believe these UDEs will add to assessment time.

Chair Dana Boyd reported that a few days ago Board member Russ Whitehurst shared a suggested rewrite of the NAEP Reading Framework update. Per the Governing Board Framework Development Policy and NAEP law, active participation of a wide array of stakeholders is required for each framework process. Accordingly, Boyd observed that the Board typically provides feedback to Framework panels in a more collaborative manner and at an earlier stage in the framework development process. She asserted, however, that the Board wants the best framework possible. Hence, it is important to carefully consider the critiques and suggestions. She asked the Committee to share thoughts about whether and how these edits should be shared with the Development Panel as guidance from the Governing Board.

Christine Cunningham said that she thoroughly reviewed the suggested edits and had four areas of concern relating to: (1) policy, (2) process, (3) intent, and (4) content. In the issues of policy, the edits are misaligned with many of the policies that are supposed to be informing frameworks and framework development. Cunningham cited the fourth principle of the Governing Board Framework Development Policy which says, "The NAEP framework development and update processes shall be informed by a broad, balanced, and inclusive set of factors. The framework shall reflect current curricula and instruction, research regarding cognitive development and instruction, and the nation's future needs and desirable levels of achievement. This delicate balance between 'what is' and 'what should be' is at the core of the NAEP framework development process." This Board policy also instructs framework panels to consider a wide variety of resources "...including but not limited to curriculum guides and assessments developed by states and local districts, widely accepted professional standards, scientific research, other types of research studies in the literature, key reports having significant national and international interest, international standards and assessments, other assessment instruments in the content area, and prior NAEP frameworks, if available." To summarize the policy, Cunningham stated that the Board is supposed to prioritize what is currently occurring in research, professional standards, and key reports, and this all highlights the forward-thinking "what should be" nature of the Board's work.

Cunningham then noted that the Board’s policy also mandates that each framework must set forth the content to be measured, the format for the assessment, and the levels of achievement. Therefore, removing achievement level descriptions from any framework would be in violation of Board policy.

Regarding the issue of process, Cunningham noted that Board policy requires the participation of many stakeholders, which is why the Visioning and Development panels convened for a framework update must be comprised of nationally renowned experts. Cunningham asserted that we cannot and should not invite experts to work over many months in an iterative drafting effort, and then allow one person to edit their carefully written document. Cunningham concluded her remarks regarding process by noting that allowing any Board member to rewrite a framework breaches the norms of transparency and open deliberation that are central to NAEP framework processes.

Cunningham then described her concerns about the intent of the edits proposed by Whitehurst. Cunningham noted that in the preamble, where Whitehurst summarized his edits, he stated that his proposed edits do not require any changes in the assessment plans recommended in the Framework Development Panel’s April 2021 draft. Cunningham observed that this implies that the edits put forward do not relate to the concerns articulated in the Board’s policy deliberations over the last nine months – namely, maintaining trend, Universal Design Elements, or what is best for students. Cunningham indicated that many of the words struck in the edited document are widely accepted and espoused by current research. Cunningham reported that she could not agree with these deletions, and she suspected that there may be other Committee members, members of the Framework Development Panel, classroom teachers, reading researchers, and members of the public across the country that might also find many of these edits objectionable.

Cunningham conducted general classifications of the edits suggested by Whitehurst. In her final area of concern, Cunningham summarized these content issues by asking a series of questions to understand the sense of the Committee:

1. Do we as a Committee have a commitment to equity?
2. Do we as a Committee have a commitment to fairness?
3. Do we aspire to create assessments that are equitable, non-biased, valid, fair, rigorous, precise, and accurate? (She clarified that all of these words with the exception of one appearance of the word “valid” were removed in the proposed revisions of the framework.)
4. Should we as a Committee and as a Board minimize test bias?
5. Should the framework reflect advances in current research about learning in reading?
6. Should the framework draw on work and recommendations of non-partisan National Academies committees?
7. Do we as a Committee believe that social and cultural experiences shape learning?

8. Do contexts, readers, texts, and activities all affect students' readings?
9. Do we see as consistent with our mission designing assessments that call attention to malleable factors that are most likely to lead to improved policies and practices that can shift students' outcomes? (She clarified that this last question largely relates to edits proposed for Chapter 4, which deals with reporting.)

All Committee members in attendance affirmatively answered each of these nine questions by raising their hands. Cunningham then explained that each of her questions related to sections of the framework that were either deleted or rephrased. She inferred that the Committee's affirmative answers to her questions meant that many of these edits are problematic.

Cunningham noted that the latest Strategic Vision, adopted by the Governing Board in September 2020, observes that equity is a prevalent goal of educational practitioners. Language about equity also appears in the NAEP Technology and Engineering Literacy Assessment – as a content area for the assessment and also as an ideal for the assessment itself. Given the commitment to equity listed in the current Governing Board Strategic Vision, current NAEP frameworks, and the Committee's aforementioned consensus, Cunningham concluded that it is appropriate for the word "equity" to appear in a NAEP framework. The April 2021 draft of the framework from the Framework Development Panel defines equity, notes it as an important outcome, and references several non-partisan national reports that have extensively addressed equity issues.

Miller thanked Cunningham for her analysis. He commented that her effort helps to ensure that the Committee carefully considers the decisions ahead. Nardi Routten expressed appreciation for Cunningham's remarks. Routten reported that she also noted the repeated deletions of certain words, and she found these deletions offensive as an educator.

Kelly appreciated the work that Whitehurst devoted to his revisions within a short period of time. Kelly commented that Whitehurst's passion is remarkable and commendable. Kelly said he was concerned that the Board is not effectively communicating about the framework because some Board members are still considering the public comment draft that was released in June 2020. Since then, there have been several revisions to account for and incorporate public comment and Board feedback. The April 2021 draft before the Committee today is dramatically different from what was put forward in June 2020; and Kelly claimed that this difference is a testimony to the quality and strength of the Board's framework development process. As a Board member, he agrees that adhering to research evidence is an important principle for assessment. The framework's citation of Universal Design of Assessment (UDA) principles is well-sourced and reflects what good assessment design ought to encompass. He observed that Whitehurst did not edit these principles, which likely implies that he also views UDA principles as important for best practice. Looking at the UDA principle for inclusive assessment populations, Kelly stated



that equity is essential to this principle, and designing assessments to ensure equitable access is an appropriate goal for a framework to put forward. Kelly also noted that he wanted to hear what the Framework Development Panel thought about Whitehurst's edits, because they are the experts empaneled to provide guidance on the assessment construct and the assessment design.

Cunningham noted that the theoretical basis and research evidence for selected contextual variables are required in the Governing Board's policy on NAEP contextual questionnaires. Cunningham said that another content aspect of the suggested edits was the deletion of theoretical rationales for the contextual variables recommended for subject-specific questionnaires under the NAEP Reading Framework update. However, many of these deletions counter Board policy. Cunningham clarified that theoretical rationale is not a philosophical or instructional tool; all assessments are grounded in a theory of how people learn – stated or unstated. Yet, theoretical rationales in the NAEP Reading Framework update have been largely deleted in the proposed edits. By removing these rationales, the remaining research that is cited is dated in nature and does not reflect the widely accepted view of research in education, what most educators know about teaching, or the consensus identified in different National Academies reports. The role of cultures, societies, social interactions, and contexts in learning and in learning reading have been well-established. To relabel these as environmental factors is not consistent with current research. By deleting references to context, for example, the framework becomes incomplete, relative to current research. Cunningham reiterated that the Board is mandated to ensure that frameworks reflect current research. Routten agreed that it is important to reflect recent and updated research in assessment. Boyd said that as a Committee, the ADC has several practitioners. She agreed that from a practitioner perspective, it is inappropriate to exclude consideration of recent research.

Kelly observed that the public comment draft of the framework may have referred to sociocultural theory in ways that sparked several critiques, and these critiques were then used to refine the framework update into the improved draft that the Panel put forward in April 2021. Kelly also observed that some of the ongoing critiques assert that the framework is attempting to delegitimize the role of content and background knowledge in reading, but this seems inaccurate. The framework even cites Daniel Willingham, whom we know is an expert who believes that background knowledge matters in reading. Kelly noted that in the preamble where Whitehurst summarized his edits, Whitehurst argued that the sociocultural perspective is “elevated to conceptual preeminence” in the April 2021 draft. Kelly suggested, however, that this was not accurate, and it could be that Whitehurst was referring to the public comment draft (released in June 2020). In the April 2021 draft, the NAEP Definition of Reading Comprehension emphasizes reading as a complex cognitive process, and the current NAEP Reading Framework also defines reading as a complex cognitive process. In the original feedback from the public, only one person accused the public comment draft of activism, and in response, the references to sociocultural theory were substantially scaled back. It is, therefore, difficult to understand how

sociocultural theory could be framed in “politically charged and divisive” terms (as noted in the Whitehurst preamble summary) in this latest draft from the Framework Development Panel (as submitted in April 2021).

Cunningham added that many of the suggested edits removed rationales or details that were requested in the public comment period. These rationales are also important for the various validity research activities undertaken by NCES. Kelly noted that it is possible that Whitehurst removed these rationales to improve the accessibility of the framework as a document, e.g., by deleting excessive research citations. Still, Kelly noted that it is more important for the framework to be well-documented and supported than it is for the framework to be highly readable. Miller noted that abridged frameworks are developed after a framework is adopted, and that these shorter documents tend to be more user-friendly and accessible to the general public.

Regarding the contextual variables, Cunningham asked NCES to confirm whether the Panel’s framework recommendations are consistent with past NAEP practice. Dan McGrath reported that NCES only measures things that are closely related to achievement, which includes attitudes, confidence, and perseverance related to reading, for example. Kelly noted that the NAEP survey question that Whitehurst cited related to self-efficacy does appear to be asking students to share a personal belief. Kelly said that having this type of NAEP survey question should be carefully reviewed and revisited by the Governing Board, but the measurement of self-efficacy occurs in other NAEP subject areas as well – so this is not specific to the NAEP Reading Framework Update.

Reginald McGregor applauded the dedication that Whitehurst showed in helping the Board make the right decisions on the NAEP Reading Framework. He also praised the extensive efforts that have been made to collect feedback from various stakeholders in the development of the framework update. McGregor noted the importance of having documents that reflect inclusiveness, whether the document is an employee handbook or an assessment framework. He also said that current research must be cited in whatever NAEP does. He remarked that he also hoped that negative connotations of the word “equity” could be set aside.

McGregor then reminded the Committee that Governing Board members have largely expressed two major areas of concern with the framework update under discussion: Universal Design Elements and topic knowledge. He encouraged the ADC to stay focused on these two issues and praised Cunningham for her thoughtful analysis.

Cunningham said that with the proposed removal of current research citations, it is not clear what would be new in the framework update; if these edits are accepted, it is not clear that a framework update is even needed. She added that misalignment with current research would not be aligned with the Strategic Vision, which calls for innovation.

In closing the discussion of these suggested edits, the Committee agreed to forward the edits to the Framework Development Panel to determine if any should be considered for inclusion in the framework, based on their expertise. Miller also noted that it is important for the Panel to also receive a summary of the current ADC discussion, as context for this request.

Miller then opened discussion of the April 2021 draft of the framework, which incorporates feedback received at the March 2021 Quarterly Board meeting. For example, multimedia knowledge-based Universal Design Elements are removed, and there are other clarifications – such as removing redundancy and improving graphics. He asked whether the Governing Board Framework Development Policy was implemented faithfully, particularly the responses to public comment and Board feedback. Kelly stated that this draft is responsive to the Board’s charge, public comment, and Board feedback over multiple iterations. It aligns NAEP with what is appropriate in the field based on current research and understandings, without being revolutionary and unnecessarily introducing instability to what the NAEP Reading Assessment measures. Kelly noted that page 53 has an example item with a UDE that occurs as a video. He asked if this was an error given that knowledge-based UDEs that involve video are supposed to be relegated to a special study. David Pearson responded that this video component might have been a part of the original text, but he needed to confer with the lead authors of Chapter 3 to confirm. Framework Development Panel member Julie Coiro was in attendance. As a lead author for Chapter 3, she clarified that the video was a motivational UDE, to get students intrigued with the scenario. Coiro shared that her understanding was that knowledge-based UDEs could not be in a video format, but that motivational UDEs allowed for the possibility of video.

Boyd thanked the Panel for their ongoing and thorough efforts.

### **NAEP Mathematics and Reading Framework Processes**

Miller stated that it is important for the Committee to review how framework processes have been implemented, as the ADC deliberates on potential process improvements for future framework projects. To provide a report on recent implementations, Miller introduced Mark Loveland, the WestEd Project Co-Director for both the Mathematics and Reading Framework updates.

Loveland reviewed the Governing Board policy principles that drive how WestEd has been implementing framework processes. To launch the work, each Panel receives various resources including copies of the current framework, specifications, NAEP survey questionnaires, and access to items from the current assessment. So, both the NAEP Mathematics Framework Development Panel and the NAEP Reading Framework Development Panel anchored their work

in the current frameworks, rather than writing completely new framework documents. He noted that the COVID-19 pandemic prompted a transition to virtual meetings and timeline adjustments.

Loveland summarized the ongoing involvement of the group of psychometricians that comprise the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for each framework panel – attending Panel meetings, holding their own TAC meetings, reviewing draft documents, and responding to Panel questions.

Then, Loveland discussed the demographic panelist selection criteria, such as teaching experience, geographic region, locale (i.e., urban, suburban, rural), gender, and grade band (i.e., elementary, middle, high school). He described the areas of expertise that were needed for each Panel; these areas were identified in the Governing Board Framework Review, which was conducted before each framework update project was launched. Finally, Loveland summarized the types of stakeholders that were represented on each Panel, as well as the organizations that were represented. For example, he noted that the Council of the Great City Schools, the National School Boards Association, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals were each represented on both mathematics and reading update panels.

Loveland reported on how panelists rated their experiences in each framework process. Most importantly, mathematics panelists reported that the opportunity to contribute their thinking was either very good or exceptional. Similarly, mathematics panelists reported that the opportunity for others to contribute their thinking was also very good or exceptional. Some mathematics panelists were surprised by how “big influencers” impacted the framework process. Reading panelists reported that opportunities to contribute their thinking and for others to contribute their thinking was satisfactory, very good, or exceptional. Some reading panelists expressed frustration that they were working “to make things more ‘palatable’... for Board members.”

Loveland reported on the public comment period and the related outreach that WestEd organized. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of public comments submitted for reading were about 50 percent higher than in the mathematics public comment period. Loveland also reported on the ways in which the Board engaged with the Panel. This involvement begins with the Board-adopted charge to each panel. Loveland observed that the initial charge for the NAEP Mathematics update prioritized maintaining trend, while the charge for NAEP Reading did not. Still, Loveland noted that both panels navigated tensions of supporting NAEP’s innovations and relevance while also presenting changes that allow for stable reporting of student achievement trends. He stated that both panels scaled back their original vision in their public comment drafts based on Board feedback.

Loveland described common themes in both the mathematics and reading framework update projects. He noted that both framework update panels expressed strong interest in improving

NAEP reporting, which relates to many of each panel's contextual questionnaire recommendations. Loveland concluded by sharing reflections on panel size and structure.

Boyd thanked Loveland for his clear presentation. Miller asked about the selection procedures for identifying panel candidates and eventually selecting finalists to serve on each panel. Loveland noted that there is a fairly iterative process of review that involves Governing Board staff and Governing Board members. Miller asked if larger panels might be helpful to the framework process. Although each Panel has current and former classroom teachers, Loveland responded that if the Board wants to increase the number of panelists who are currently serving as classroom teachers, then it might be helpful to have a larger panel.

Kelly noted that it was important for the Board to improve the charges that are given to panels. For example, it would have prevented some frustration if reading framework panelists knew earlier that the Board highly prioritized trend. Kelly also asked for the Board to consider how Board feedback is delivered to the Panel. He noted that having the panel hear the Board's feedback in real time could be harshly received, counterproductive, and damaging to the Board's ability to recruit panelists for future framework projects.

### **Other Framework Processes: Initial Discussion**

Boyd called attention to a white paper about assessment framework processes outside of NAEP (Attachment C in the Committee's advanced materials). She noted that this paper is also useful in thinking about potential process improvements suggested by the larger assessment landscape.

Boyd announced that the ADC is planning to convene with COSDAM in June for a joint committee session about framework processes. These discussions will help the ADC in detailing a procedures manual, which is one Strategic Vision activity.

### **NAEP Science Framework**

Miller announced that the Board is gearing up for a review of the NAEP Science Framework. The ADC will need to develop a recommendation about whether this framework needs to be updated.


At recent ADC meetings, the Committee discussed the importance of gathering public comment early to inform deliberations. The Committee agreed that this is a good approach, and a draft public comment request is in the ADC's advanced materials (Attachment D).

Cunningham asked about the appropriate time for the Board to discuss merging the NAEP Technology and Engineering Literacy Framework with the NAEP Science Framework. Michelle

Blair noted that the issue may surface in the initial public comment on the NAEP Science Framework, which would make it a formal part of the Governing Board's Framework Review and related Board deliberations.

Boyd adjourned the meeting at 7:28 p.m. E.T.

I certify the accuracy of these minutes.

  
Dana Boyd, Chair

May 12, 2021  
Date

# **National Assessment Governing Board**

## **Committee on Standards, Design and Methodology**

### **Report of May 3, 2021**

**COSDAM Members:** Gregory Cizek (Chair), Carey Wright (Vice Chair), Jim Geringer, Eric Hanushek, Suzanne Lane, Alice Peisch, Julia Rafal-Baer, and Russ Whitehurst.

**Other Governing Board Members:** Dana Boyd, Christine Cunningham, and Patrick Kelly.

**Governing Board Staff:** Executive Director Lesley Muldoon, Deputy Executive Director Lisa Stooksberry, Michelle Blair, Laura LoGerfo, Munira Mwalimu, Sharyn Rosenberg, Angela Scott, and Matt Stern.

**NCES Staff:** Commissioner James (Lynn) Woodworth, Associate Commissioner Peggy Carr, Gina Broxterman, Samantha Burg, Jing Chen, Brian Cramer, Enis Dogan, Pat Etienne, Eunice Greer, Daniel McGrath, Nadia McLaughlin, Taslima Rahman, Eddie Rivers, Holly Spurlock, Bill Tirre, and Ebony Walton.

**Other Attendees:** American Institutes for Research: George Bohrnstedt, Markus Broer, Kim Gattis, Martin Hooper, Young Yee Kim, and Xiaying Zheng. CRP: Shamai Carter, Subin Hona, and Edward Wooford. Educational Testing Service: Jay Campbell, Gloria Dion, Amy Dresher, Helena Jia, Hilary Persky, Sarah Rodgers, Luis Saldivia, Karen Wixson, and Meng Wu. Hager Sharp: James Elias, Cailin Jason, and Joanne Lim. The Hatcher Group: Jenny Beard, Nandini Singh, and Jenna Tomasello. Pearson: Jennifer Galindo, Eric Moyer, and Cathy White. Westat: Lauren Bryne and Keith Rust. WestEd: Matthew Gaertner, Cynthia Greenleaf, Mira-Lisa Katz, Mark Loveland, Sonya Powers, and Steve Schneider. Other: Rebecca Bennett (Massachusetts Department of Education), Derek Briggs (University of Colorado – Boulder), Kathilia Delp, Donna Dubey (New Hampshire Department of Education), Laura Goadrich (Arkansas Department of Education), Michael Kolen (University of Iowa), Beth LaDuca (Oregon Department of Education), Raina Moulian (Alaska Department of Education), David Pearson (University of California – Berkeley), Linda Rosen, and Wayne Sheffield (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction).

#### **Welcome and Overview of Agenda**

Chair Gregory Cizek called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m. ET and noted that the agenda included four topics: a brief update on the math and reading achievement level descriptions, a brief update on framework development processes generally, a discussion and question and answer session with NCES on the proposed NAEP Reading Framework, and an NCES presentation and discussion on NAEP Long-Term Trend for 17-year-olds.

## **Review and Revision of Mathematics and Reading Achievement Level Descriptions**

Cizek began by noting that this topic has been on the COSDAM agenda several times and provided a brief explanation of achievement level descriptions (ALDs). NAEP has three achievement level policy definitions: *NAEP Basic*, *NAEP Proficient*, and *NAEP Advanced*. ALDs translate these general policy definitions into specific expectations for a given subject and grade assessed by NAEP that are more informative about what students at each achievement level should know and be able to do. He explained that the ALDs provide important validity evidence for the NAEP achievement levels, and that the study to be conducted by Pearson will show us whether students within a given achievement level can actually do the things that the ALDs claim they should be able to do.

Cizek noted that a written update on the project and minor changes to the Design Document were provided in the advance materials. He invited Pearson project director Eric Moyer to briefly highlight the changes to the project since the March COSDAM meeting.

Moyer stated that the major project update was an extension of the project schedule to account for planning the panel meetings in person rather than virtually. With the additional time, the technical advisory committee (TAC) for the project spent more time reviewing the Design Document and procedures. This led to two additional recommendations: 1) removing the discrimination criteria for determining the anchor sets, and 2) conducting the item review by passage for reading.

Suzanne Lane complimented Moyer on the written materials and presentation. Cizek agreed and asked about the TAC's rationale for removing the discrimination criteria. Moyer noted that the criteria used in previous studies was norm-referenced, which meant that it would vary across the different subjects and achievement level categories. Pearson examined other alternatives and discovered that few items would be removed from the anchor sets regardless of the discrimination criteria employed, but that the excluded items might address important content that would not otherwise be represented because some of the anchor sets are fairly small. Cizek reiterated that the study would include items to illustrate the range of content that students know and can do at each achievement level without worrying about how well those items differentiate between students at different achievement levels.

Rick Hanushek stated that the large percentages of students—especially in some subgroups--scoring below the *NAEP Basic* level suggests to him that NAEP is not providing very useful information about those students. Cizek responded that he understands the concern about the need for better measurement and description of lower-performing students but that the concern is distinguishable from the purpose of the ALD project, which is based on the current achievement levels policy. Cizek noted that he would work with Board staff to plan a session for the August COSDAM meeting to begin discussing various options for improving measurement and reporting at the low end of the performance distribution.

There were no other questions or concerns about the project update or Design Document.



## Framework Development Processes

Cizek explained that he has been thinking about the Board's framework development process and is interested in seeing how it can be improved; this is not meant to impact the Reading Framework update that is nearing completion, but rather to see how lessons learned from that process can inform the Science Framework. He began by differentiating between content standards and performance standards. Content standards define what is to be measured (knowledge, skills, and abilities), while performance standards indicate how high performance must be to be classified as *NAEP Basic*, *NAEP Proficient*, or *NAEP Advanced*. Framework development is focused on the first type of standards.

Cizek noted that the current Board policy on framework development was updated by the Board a few years prior and that it is important to be familiar with that policy. He highlighted three points in the framework process that he believes warrant further discussion to minimize tumult: 1) balancing the role of NAEP frameworks as a "mirror" versus "crystal ball" (i.e., the extent to which frameworks should reflect the current state of education versus trying to predict future practices); 2) reflecting contemporary practice (for example, by reconsidering the proportion of currently practicing teachers in the subject area); and 3) frequency of review (i.e., more frequent review could result in smaller, more incremental changes that could pose less threat to trend). Finally, he noted that the Board materials include two papers that will not be discussed at the current meeting due to time constraints but will provide background for an upcoming joint meeting of COSDAM and the Assessment Development Committee.

Russ Whitehurst responded to the crystal ball analogy, noting that NAEP has a special status because it can be self-fulfilling when NAEP tries to predict the future; that is, states may adjust their own assessment and instruction to maximize their performance on NAEP, even though NAEP is prohibited from influencing curriculum. Lane added that certification programs also grapple with trying to identify what knowledge and skills are emerging in the next 5-10 years; this challenge is not unique to NAEP or to educational assessment. Cizek clarified that part of the challenge is to figure out how to ease into emerging practices rather than trying to lead or influence what other people are doing.

Carey Wright observed that the Visioning Panel plays a large role in this process, and that she would appreciate knowing more about how they are selected and how they relate to the Development Panel. Cizek responded that the Development Panel is a subset of the Visioning Panel, and that he believes that the Development Panel has the most powerful role because they do the actual writing of the framework document.

Hanushek stated that the frameworks should be predictive of skills that are relevant to society and that increasing the proportion of educators to reflect current practice should be considered against increasing the input of employers and other users of NAEP data and the power of NAEP scores for predicting post-schooling outcomes. Cizek responded that the Visioning Panel does include several types of users of NAEP data but that there may be an opportunity to broaden the groups who are included.

## **Discussion of NAEP Reading Assessment**

Cizek began by noting that the informational webinar on the Reading Framework held on April 30 was helpful; this COSDAM discussion is an additional opportunity to ask specific questions of NCES related to operationalizing the assessment. He reminded members that specific information about budget or secure items or passages could not be discussed during an open meeting.

Hanushek suggested that improved survey questions could result in better understanding the causal structures of reading and better policies to improve reading. He believes that these claims go beyond what NAEP can do, and that the framework should stick to defining what is being measured rather than how the data should be analyzed and used. He also raised concerns regarding the use of National School Lunch Program (NSLP) eligibility as the current measure of socioeconomic status because of the characteristics of those data.

Other Board members also expressed concerns about how NAEP currently measures socioeconomic status and suggested that alternatives be explored; they noted that existing problems with NSLP eligibility have been exacerbated by the pandemic because many states are now providing free lunch to all students. States are also struggling with how to measure socioeconomic status. Governing Board Executive Director Lesley Muldoon noted that the Reporting and Dissemination Committee has been discussing the measurement and reporting of socioeconomic status on NAEP, and that this topic is likely to be on a full Board agenda later this year. NCES Commissioner of Education Statistics Lynn Woodworth added that NCES is aware of the problems with the current measure and has been working with the Census Bureau on developing an alternative to NSLP eligibility using a kriging modeling methodology that estimates the socioeconomic status of a given point on a map. This work has been time consuming and has not yet been vetted strongly enough to implement in operational NAEP.

Cizek referred members to the documents in the advance materials prepared by NCES to address open questions from the Board. He stated that he has an interest in understanding whether the design elements intended to provide topic knowledge are having their intended effect; that is, do they differentially impact students who lack that topic knowledge?

Woodworth responded that previous studies have not attempted to capture students' topic knowledge; additional research to address this question might be able to be conducted if resources allow, but he was not willing to commit to such a study at this time.

In response to two questions about the size and representativeness of the student samples for cognitive interviews and pretesting, Eunice Greer of NCES noted that typically cognitive interviews are conducted individually with 9-12 students, small scale tryouts include 50-100 students, and pilot studies use regular NAEP samples of 2500-3000 students. NCES works with their contractors and provides sampling guidelines to ensure that a diverse student population is included in these activities.

Several Board members raised questions about the NCES written response stating that the cost of implementing a framework can only be determined after Board approval of that framework. Some members expressed concerns about adopting a framework without understanding the costs upfront. Associate Commissioner of NCES Peggy Carr, clarified that the costs largely

depend on how much new item development and field testing is needed, along with bridge studies. She indicated that she was unable to provide specific numbers during this open discussion but that she would prepare some information about the cost of implementing the current draft framework for an upcoming closed budget briefing. Holly Spurlock added that NCES submits a formal response memo to all frameworks during the public comment period and focuses on any concerns related to framework implementation, including cost. For example, during the development of the math framework, NCES indicated that the large number of scenario-based tasks called for in the public comment draft would be very costly; the final math framework included a reduction of scenario-based tasks.

In response to questions about whether the existing universal design elements (UDEs) increase testing time, Spurlock indicated that there is a wide range of UDEs and that NCES does not consider most of them to be accommodations. The current tasks are developed as 30-minute segments and incorporate elements that are necessary for good measurement practice; UDEs are part of this development rather than being conceptualized as an add-on. Woodworth noted that process data could be analyzed, if time and resources allow, to examine how much time students spend on some of the existing UDEs.

Cizek noted that it is considered best practice to screen reading passages to ensure that everything students need to answer the assessment questions is included in the passage. He asked whether NCES has a procedure to ensure that students do not need to rely on topic knowledge to answer questions on the reading assessment. Greer responded that NCES does attend to this concern in the development and review process. Spurlock added that the Assessment Development Committee reviews all reading passages before NCES even begins writing assessment items.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) member Derek Briggs stated that many of the concerns raised by COSDAM were also the subject of discussions between the TAC and the Visioning Panel; throughout the process, part of the TAC's role was to remind the panel that NAEP operates within certain constraints. Some of the panel's original vision and aspirations were scaled back from the initial draft. In the current draft of the framework, the knowledge-based UDEs are not intended to serve as mini tutorials to teach students about a topic; rather they are very brief attempts (e.g., two sentence introductions or a short pop-up definition) to prime students and provide basic familiarity with a context.

TAC member Scott Marion agreed with Briggs and stated that he views NAEP as the most technically sound assessment with the most extensive development process in the country. He believes that the typical NAEP development process will provide data to address the questions raised by COSDAM members.

Cizek thanked NCES for the helpful information that they provided.

### **Discussion of 2022 NAEP Long-Term Trend**

Cizek noted that the final agenda topic was related to the Long-Term Trend (LTT) assessment; he introduced Enis Dogan of NCES.

Dogan began by noting that the LTT assessment is age-based rather than grade-based; the assessments for 9-year-olds, 13-year-olds, and 17-year-olds are administered during different times of the school year. The assessment was scheduled to be conducted during the 2019-2020 school year; data collection for 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds was completed as scheduled but the 17-year-old administration was scheduled to begin in March 2020 right when schools shut down due to COVID-19. The Governing Board subsequently moved the LTT assessment of 17-year-olds from 2020 to 2022 on the NAEP Assessment Schedule. Dogan stated that the purpose of this session is to ensure that COSDAM members are informed about technical considerations related to the planned administration of LTT for 17-year-olds in 2022.

Dogan noted that although the data from the three age groups were scaled together during the initial 1971 assessment, the age groups have subsequently been scaled separately. From the perspective of scaling, there is no concern with conducting the 17-year-old data collection at a different point in time than the other age groups.

In terms of item functioning, Dogan reported that there were some challenges with the 2020 data collection, particularly for 13-year-olds. Several items had to be split during data analysis; that is, they were treated as if they were different items in 2012 and 2020 even though the items themselves did not change. Dogan hypothesized that even more items could require splitting for 17-year-olds given the larger gap from the prior administration and potential effects from the pandemic. He concluded that this challenge is not insurmountable given the data analysis tools available.

Dogan described concerns related to interpretation of the results for 17-year-olds. Depending on the status of COVID-19 in 2022, changes to administration conditions could be a confounding variable impacting the results. In addition, if there has been a lot of learning loss over the last couple of years, 17-year-old results could be closer to the typical 13-year-old results, which could also pose challenges to their interpretation.

Finally, Dogan noted that there may be limited utility to collecting data on 17-year-olds in 2022. One of the primary purposes for the 2020 LTT data collection was to establish one final data point before transitioning the LTT assessment to a digital platform in 2025. The field test for the 2025 LTT administration will take place in January 2023, and there is not enough time to analyze the 2022 LTT data to allow for changes prior to the field test. Dogan concluded his presentation by stating that there were several technical issues to consider but that the challenges were not insurmountable.

Hanushek requested clarification on the concern related to testing 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds prior to the pandemic and 17-year-olds after the pandemic. Dogan explained the need for some degree of match between what the assessment is measuring and what students know; the concern is partly that precision could be reduced if some items are not providing much information about what students know. In addition, there are concerns about interpreting the results given the potential for some users to compare performance across the three age groups when the pandemic affected only the measurement of 17-year-olds.

Lane asked about plans for examining item misfit and whether there is an analysis of the content of such items. Dogan responded that data to model fit is examined routinely, along with

differential item functioning analyses. He explained that the content of problematic items is examined as well. For example, if most problematic items were in a single content area, that could indicate a systematic issue that could affect the representativeness of the construct.

Woodworth added that the unique circumstances of the pandemic could cause some items to function differentially in 2022 but return to functioning normally in 2025. It would be difficult to know how to interpret whether item performance fluctuations are due to COVID or due to diminishing relevance or other factors until there is an additional data point available. This is one reason why Woodworth is hesitant to proceed with the 2022 LTT administration.

Julia Rafal-Baer asked whether it is likely that COVID will continue to have an impact on the data collected, given that many students and families are still reluctant to return to school in person. Woodworth responded that he is aware of concerns that some students will never fully recover from the educational impacts of the pandemic, but that he believes that the deficit for 17-year-olds will be smaller in 2025 than it would be in 2022.

Hanushek countered that he is interested in what individual students can do and argued that the group of 17-year-olds in 2022 is a different cohort than the students who will be 17-year-olds in 2025. He does not believe there is a benefit to dropping the 2022 data point.

Cizek complemented the NCES staff on the presentation and discussions throughout the meeting and noted that Board members will keep this information in mind when making a decision about whether to proceed with the 2022 LTT assessment for 17-year-olds.

Cizek adjourned the meeting at 2:02 pm ET.

I certify the accuracy of these minutes.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gregory Cizek, Chair

July 15, 2021  
Date

# Reporting and Dissemination Committee Meeting

May 10, 2021

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

**Reporting and Dissemination Committee Members:** Chair Tonya Matthews, Vice Chair Marty West, Alberto Carvalho, Tyler Cramer, Paul Gasparini, Governor Bev Perdue, Ron Reynolds, Mark White

**Governing Board Staff:** Stephaan Harris, Donnetta Kennedy, Laura LoGerfo, Lesley Muldoon, Munira Mwalimu, Sharyn Rosenberg, Angela Scott, Matt Stern

**National Center for Education Statistics Staff:** Gina Broxterman, Samantha Burg, Peggy Carr, Jing Chen, Brian Cramer, Jamie Deaton, Pat Etienne, Doug Gevert, Eunice Greer, Daniel McGrath, Taslima Rahman, Holly Spurlock, William Tirre, Ebony Walton, William Ward, Grady Wilburn, Lynn Woodworth

**Contractors:** AIR: George Bohrnstedt, Markus Broer, Cadelle Hemphill, Young Kim, Xiaying Zheng; CRP: Shamai Carter, Subin Hona, Emilie Pooler, Anthony Velez, Edward Wofford; ETS: Jonas Bertling, Hugo Dos Santos, Amy Dresher, Gloria Dion, Robert Finnegan, Laura Jerry, Sami Kitmitto, Courtney Sibley, Lisa Ward, Ryan Whorton, Karen Wixson; Hager Sharp: James Elias, David Hoff, Joanne Lim; The Hatcher Group: Sami Ghani, Zoey Lichtenheld, David Loewenberg, Nandini Singh, Jenna Tomasello; Optimal Solutions Group: Imer Arnautovic, Sadaf Asrar, Charlotte Notaras; Pearson: Eric Moyer, Stanley Rabinowitz, Pat Stearns; Silimeo Group: Debra Silimeo; Westat: Chris Averett, Kavemuii Murangi, Lisa Rodriguez

**Other:** Rebecca Bennett (Massachusetts Department of Education), Kathilia Delp, Donna Dubey (New Hampshire Department of Education), Jeremy Ellis (Missouri Department of Education), Jasmine Fletcher-For, Laura Goadrich (Arkansas Department of Education), Beth LaDuca (Oregon Department of Education), Regina Lewis (Maine Department of Education), Rebecca Logan (Oklahoma Department of Education)

---

Chair Tonya Matthews called the Reporting and Dissemination Committee meeting to order at 10:00 am on Monday, May 10, 2021. Matthews provided an overview of the agenda and the goals for the meeting.

The meeting began with a focus on the Strategic Vision. Matthews briefly described both the general pillars and the specific goals for which the Reporting and Dissemination (R&D)

Committee serves as primary agent. Much of R&D's work resides within all of the pillars, with a few particularly salient to R&D's strengths. For example, the Board's Strategic Vision includes circumscribing the purpose and use of NAEP, specifically what NAEP can inform and what NAEP cannot. To that end, R&D members have urged the Board to develop a body of evidence to improve interpretations of NAEP.

Matthews noted that more than one committee tackles the work for each pillar. Even a goal about setting the assessment schedule falls to R&D, because the Board needs to communicate the expected schedule (and any changes) and to elicit feedback from stakeholders on whether the Board's communications efforts succeed.

Laura LoGerfo, Governing Board assistant director for reporting and analysis, then outlined how the Strategic Vision's pillars and goals drive the Board staff's work plans. The communications contractor, The Hatcher Group, then executes the plans developed and approved by R&D through activities included in the recently updated communications and outreach plan.

LoGerfo provided an example of how this work develops in ways that leverage the resources of the small staff. One of the Strategic Vision's pillars is inform, which leads to meetings with stakeholders to determine their interests in NAEP data. These interests become incorporated into release events and post-release activities and materials, all of which are presented in the communications plan. For a specific example, representatives of school districts in the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) program convene as part of the Board's TUDA Task Force, led by the Council of the Great City Schools. The Board considers these TUDA districts as priority stakeholders, seeks their feedback and insights, and develops strategies based on this input.

Vice Chair Marty West acknowledged how these examples validate R&D's contributions to the Strategic Vision and affirmed the prominence of the inform and engage pillars as uniquely suited to R&D. He explained that where the Board cannot align neatly with stakeholder needs, when the Board or NAEP cannot directly answer questions, those gaps can be addressed with innovation, the third pillar in the Strategic Vision.

### Communications and Outreach: Accomplishments and Aspirations

With this context established, Stephaan Harris, the Governing Board's assistant director of communications, and Robert Johnston, lead for the Board's communications contractor, shared achievements from the last communications plan and outlined plans for the next two years.

Johnston presented first, crediting the daily collaboration between Board staff and the Hatcher team, for recent successes. As West observed moments earlier, the two pillars of inform and engage guide activities, which can be organized as (1) release events and post-release activities; (2) social media management; (3) artifacts such as videos and graphics featuring NAEP data; (4) community outreach events, e.g., outreach dinners in off-site Board meeting locations like El

Paso and Montgomery; (5) Governing Board member recruitment campaigns; and (6) a monthly newsletter sent to 5,600 recipients.

In reviewing the Board's social media strategy on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, the Board increased its followers across all platforms, and permission to use paid digital ads on Facebook boosted impressions of the Board's posts about release events. Evidence indicates that this small investment reaps significant rewards. In 2018, the Board seldom engaged with LinkedIn, but current practice focuses on this platform as a critical component of a tripartite social media strategy.

Attention then shifted to Stephaan Harris who explained the Governing Board's new communications and outreach plan to the committee. The Strategic Vision adopted by the Board in 2020 conveniently coincided with the contractually obligated update to the Board's communications plan. Thus, the plan neatly aligns its content with the Strategic Vision.

At the start, the communications plan declares the priority audiences for the Board's outreach work as education administrators, researchers, education advocacy organizations, and policymakers. This declaration derives from the Strategic Vision itself and from several meetings with Board staff. Introducing NAEP and the Board's work to new audiences represents Inform, after which sustained collaboration can reflect the Engage pillar. The Board needs a systemic approach to establishing regular avenues of communication with current collaborators and with new stakeholders, such as social media, media outreach, conferences, and emails. Such collaboration compels reciprocation; heeding stakeholders' needs while also soliciting their assistance in disseminating the Board's messaging.

These messages center most squarely on the unique and valuable data NAEP provides about how the nation's students are learning. Tantamount in importance, NAEP, the gold standard in student assessment, serves as a catalyst for action to improve student achievement. Equitable education policy and outcomes rely on understanding what students know and can do. Vice Chair West noted that many recommendations in the plan call for either deepening relationships with a few stakeholders or broadening the Board's reach to include new additional voices. He suggested that the most effective, expedient impact may emerge first from delving more deeply into NAEP with a select few stakeholders, then leveraging that initial work to broaden the audience and enhance the Board's ability to attract new stakeholders.

In the near future, Hatcher is interested in elevating the profiles of Board members and their diverse areas of expertise as a feature in journalists' stories not only in education-related media but also in more mainstream outlets that publish on broader issues to wider audiences. This fall, the Board can capitalize on the postponement of NAEP Day (the biannual initial release of results in NAEP Reading and Mathematics) to host an event about related topics like the divergent trend lines or to showcase the transcript data, which will be released sometime in Autumn 2021.



Matthews then invited questions and discussion, recommending R&D members consult Attachment B which lists upcoming releases and reports, including the upcoming 2019 NAEP Science release event on May 25. Matthews cautioned that the Board must be sensitive in releasing data at this moment and acknowledge the lag between the collection and release of data. Namely, these data capture performance prior to COVID. Matthews urged the committee members to consider additional communications challenges which they anticipate may affect imminent releases.

NCES Commissioner Woodworth asked Matthews if he could share a few updates with the committee. NCES is currently building an equity dashboard tool for the U.S. Department of Education, which should include information from the Governing Board, or even lead to a companion website for the Governing Board. He encouraged the Board to collaborate with NCES on this front. Marty West expressed appreciation for this news and emphasized that the Board should deem NCES and the Department itself as critical stakeholders for communications efforts.

West asked when the Governing Board expects to return to assuming that events should be held in person, with virtual as only a back-up option. Or, should the Board eliminate the in-person experience, because the Board gains more and more widespread viewers through remote attendance? He also wondered why the monthly school COVID-19 survey, administered through the NAEP infrastructure, is not branded as a NAEP product? Commissioner Woodworth explained that the school survey data do not undergo the same rigorous quality control checks as the NAEP data, thus NCES distinguishes these survey results from NAEP so as not to raise doubts about NAEP data.

Ron Reynolds praised the outreach plan as comprehensive and well-conceived and observed how the plan strikes the appropriate balance between broadcasting and narrowcasting. Broadcasting NAEP means informing those in the education field unfamiliar with NAEP, but who, once cognizant of NAEP's value, could inform others. But Reynolds could perceive the expedient benefits of engaging key stakeholders, or narrow-casting. He then asked for examples of how the Board should engage the general public. Harris described the general public as those who do not normally seek NAEP data or who are unfamiliar with NAEP, e.g., advocacy groups which do not specialize in education and media who cover issues other than education. Also, in response, Matthews coined a new term of "in-between casting," i.e., casting to specific task force members, congressional leaders, and superintendents invested in NAEP.

Matthews replied that the Board grapples with this issue perennially. Because NAEP does not capture school-level or student-level data, proving NAEP's value to the general public becomes challenging, but not impossible. The Board aims to engage parents and parent advocates, which is currently accomplished through recruiting them as nominees for general public representative Board seats.

The presentation on the outreach plan inspired several questions from general public representative, Tyler Cramer. Cramer asked who on the Board staff identifies current and prospective NAEP users, because the Board needs to research who these audiences are (Hatcher and Board staff jointly undertake this task). He urged staff to include state legislators and the legal community among key stakeholders to approach. Equity is typically decided in the courts, so the Board should teach lawyers how to use NAEP. Cramer encouraged NAEP to spearhead the effort to decide what equity means for educational assessment. Cramer also expressed concerns about the NAEP Reading assessment framework, which calls for new reporting on new contextual data. How can the R&D Committee, whose jurisdiction includes responsibility for core contextual variables, address these recommendations?

This session concluded, and Matthews transitioned to the next agenda item by affirming Cramer's point that more attention should be paid to equity in assessment. Updating the assessment frameworks provokes intense questions of equity, which may require engaging with new audiences.

### **Measuring SES: Recap & Discussion**

Equity, or a lack thereof, can be found through understanding differences in performance. A typical measure of equity in school systems is the extent to which family background generally--and SES specifically--factors into student outcomes. NAEP should be a tool to measure the extent to which student achievement depends on SES and how that relationship changes over time. However, that is a challenging duty, given the relatively imprecise data NAEP collects on student SES.

At the March meeting of the R&D Committee, Markus Broer, a researcher at the American Institutes for Research, Eric Hanushek, a current Governing Board member and scholar at Stanford University, and Tom Kane, a professor at Harvard University, presented their suggestions on how to improve NAEP's measure of SES. Their thought-provoking presentations left the committee with little time then to discuss the proposed approaches. Beyond allotting ample time for member discussion at this meeting, the committee also invited NCES staff to share their reactions as to the technical feasibility of each proposal.

West began by reviewing the proposed approaches and the assumptions which 'constrain' the feasibility of those approaches, such as using extant variables, so that any new iteration of SES can be applied to previous data to chart trends across time. However, fixating on that proviso precludes new information and prevents a shift to a more precise, improved measure. West encouraged R&D members and NCES to think more flexibly about that principle as an absolute constraint. West ceded the intractability of a few challenges, e.g., the meaning and interpretation of contextual questions may change over time and missing or erroneous data, because the data come from student self-reports on their family circumstances.

To jog committee members' memories, West summarized the three proposals from the March meeting:

- Broer measures SES in an additive index comprising (1) number of books at home; (2) student eligibility for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP); (3) school percent of students eligible for NSLP; (4) parents' highest level of education. This index offers stronger explanatory power than eligibility for NSLP alone and more than the SES index in PISA data. Broer examines how the relationship between SES and student achievement has evolved over time, but finds little evidence of change, just modest narrowing of gaps.
- Hanushek's proposal aligns closely with Broer's approach, with its emphasis on household possessions. Unlike Broer, Hanushek employs principal component analysis to construct his SES index.
- Kane eschews all variables but household income, which is one component of SES but does not reflect the entire construct. The NAEP program does not collect these data, but Kane links NAEP schools in the restricted-use datafile to neighborhood income data from the Census Bureau. He and his team aggregate the data and analyze measures of variance of achievement within schools and the variance of income in the schools' surrounding neighborhoods to draw inferences about the relationship between income and achievement
  - This approach assumes that schools in NAEP generally serve their immediate surrounding neighborhoods, but that assumption is flawed to a degree, given the variable prevalence of charter schools, other schools of choice, and the nature of gentrification.
  - Kane and his colleagues find a narrowing of differences over time, consistent with others' findings, even though income inequality has increased over time.

West concluded his review by inviting NCES staff to respond, and Dan McGrath, director of reporting for NAEP, addressed the committee first. He agreed that a measure of SES on NAEP should not be constrained only to variables previously administered. Such a constraint would benefit those invested in maintaining trend, but that should not be a mandatory requirement. Indices like what Broer and Hanushek use allow for changes in the meaning of individual variables over time while conserving the overall meaning of the construct for analyses of trend. In short, indices depend on the importance of the collective, not the individual items which comprise the index. For example, an index can include specific items on what technology students own or use regularly, but the specific variable can transform from asking about Palm Pilots to smart phones while retaining the actual meaning of "technology use in the home."

Bill Ward of NCES chimed in next and deemed none of the three proposals were too outlandish. In fact, this might be the appropriate time to explore how to enact some of the ideas. Ward also suggested that supplemental reporting about new indices may prove illuminating and address some concerns with the SES data.

Ebony Walton of NCES shared a caution about using the NSLP eligibility indicator in NAEP. She warned that even before the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for NSLP (above a certain percentage of students in a given school eligible for free- and reduced-price lunch, the entire school is classified as eligible), the NSLP indicator did not measure individual need. Walton drew an analogy to Title I. The NAEP program already asks the school administrator whether the school provides Title I for individual students or for the entire school. Perhaps NAEP could edit the wording of the NSLP item on NAEP to mark that same distinction. Ebony shared that the relationship between NSLP and performance is growing weaker, because changes in policy have changed how schools participate in NSLP, all of which disrupts the interpretation of trend. Lynn Woodworth added that COVID caused further change, because the U.S. Department of Agriculture extended free lunches to every student across the country during the pandemic. This gives further proof that education researchers should not rely on this variable as a measure of student need.

To that point, Matthews suggested capturing indicators of environmental equity, which refers to resources available to students in their communities, such as nearby libraries, which relate to student learning. She also urged NCES not to overlook mental wellness, which may transcend traditional notions of socioeconomic status but certainly affect student achievement. Both Woodworth and West supported the inclusion of measures of environmental equity or linking to datasets with such information.

Broer requested to reply to queries and comments raised by R&D Committee members. He discussed his analyses of NSLP eligibility data at both the state and national levels through 2019 which show continued relevance for this objective measure. Admittedly, schoolwide eligibility quadrupled since the implementation of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), but schools can determine individual eligibility, which has remained stable. Prior to CEP implementation, which began in 2011, schools with 75-100% of their student population eligible for NSLP already basically had schoolwide eligibility, so the policy change made no impact for them. Indeed, the estimates before and after 2011 support this claim. Since 2011, the NSLP eligibility indicator has proven an even stronger predictor of performance in some states and some urban school districts in the Trial Urban District Assessment program.

In Broer's analyses, variables about household possessions do not add precision or reliability to the index and actually reduce internal consistency. To which West inquired why Rick Hanushek persists in using them if such items do not add much unique value to the SES index.

Cramer shifted the focus from the federal lunch program to the private sector and wondered if NAEP could partner with Amazon, Costco, and other companies to procure these companies' data on personal consumption in neighborhoods. Or simply ask students whether they own their own cellular telephone. Broer explained that NAEP at one point did inquire about cell phones at home and currently asks about smartphones. These data showed that students who had high SES through other measures had a steep drop in cell phone usage, students in mid-range SES had no change, and low-SES students increased their cell phone ownership and use. Not to overinterpret the data, but these findings may be linked to higher-SES parents now more likely to regulate their children's time with technology and lower-SES students using cell phones as the only means to access the internet. West suggested that these results would make a fascinating presentation (duly noted by staff for future meetings!).

Cramer again raised a familiar question about the interoperability of NAEP data with other federal datasets such as those available from the U.S. Census and the U.S. Department of Labor. West reassured Cramer that analysts with restricted use data licenses can link individual students on NAEP to any measure of local geography, which is Tom Kane's approach. However, depending on neighborhood SES data to impute or infer school SES can pose a challenge, because in gentrifying urban areas, students enrolled in the school do not necessarily reside in the surrounding neighborhood.

West asked about the legality of Kane's proposal to gather information about students' addresses only temporarily until a match to aggregated income data is made, when all personally identifiable information (PII) is discarded. Woodworth clarified that this approach lies outside the law. However, McGrath shared that NCES is already pursuing an approach akin to Kane's. This work is led by Doug Gevert who has invested more than two years into geocoding addresses of student participants in NAEP and building a poverty index from the Common Core of Data for all schools in the nation.

Gevert and his SIDE project team at NCES work with schools where the NAEP program lists sampled students' names, and the schools append data relevant to students' addresses and pass that relevant data to NCES. This follows the same process as collecting data on NSLP eligibility. States and districts hold the student-level information, not the federal government, which side-steps any worries about PII.

The unique value of SIDE estimates dwells in their specificity; Gevert can produce address-specific estimates of income-to-poverty ratios, which uses a continuous measure from 0 to 999, with 100 equal to the poverty threshold, 130 and 185 the income-to-poverty ratios that determine NSLP eligibility, and higher numbers corresponding to further distance from poverty. The 0-999 continuum allows researchers to peer past the current 185 cap on the measure and examine middle income and affluent schools as well, which facilitates new analytic possibilities.

Geverdt essentially attains a measure strong in reliability like tract-level estimates (based on more data, so high reliability) but with the precision of the block level, which captures the best of both approaches. If NCES can convince states about the benefits to this strategy, then NAEP can request SIDE estimates, just like the typical request for NSLP data. Through NCES' Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems grant program, 16 states already provide information to check SIDE estimates as a feasibility test.

West inquired whether researchers can link or append those poverty indices to schools in the restricted-use NAEP datafile. Geverdt demurred that this effort should be classified as a pilot test at this point, with the geospatial infrastructure required for its operation still nascent. But there is hope for the relatively near future. Maryland is developing alternative measures to capture SES beyond NSLP. The Council of the Great City Schools and the Atlanta school district use zip codes to capture corresponding Census data on SES.

Reynolds asked a process question. Adding contextual variables to NAEP seems like both a policy question, under the Governing Board's domain, and a technical question, NCES' bailiwick. Whose responsibility is it? West and LoGerfo explained that the Board decides on the constructs of importance to include, and NCES gives feedback on technical feasibility.

Walton underscored the importance of including contextual variables on NAEP itself. Data linkages work well for secondary research, but obtaining additional data from external sources to predict student outcomes may produce biased results. The NAEP conditioning model, which generates plausible values for the assessment, uses data from the questionnaires. Thus the most accurate statistics about students' backgrounds come from the NAEP dataset.

In the final moments of the meeting, McGrath summarized next steps. He and the NCES team would explore items pertinent to environmental equity, which can be obtained through geocoding, as well as to mental health and wellness, which may be tricky to operationalize within the constraints on intrusiveness. LoGerfo noted later that the TUDA Task Force requested communication from the Governing Board that acknowledges the issues with relying only on NSLP eligibility to measure SES and updating them about progress underway to improve the measure.

At 12:01 pm, the meeting concluded. Matthews made a motion to adjourn, which West seconded.

I certify the accuracy of these minutes.



Tonya Matthews, Chair

July 20, 2021

# National Assessment Governing Board

## Nominations Committee

May 11, 2021

### Open Session

**Nominations Committee Members:** Governor Jim Geringer (Chair), Dana Boyd, Tyler Cramer, Paul Gasparini, Tonya Matthews, Reginald McGregor, Mark Miller, Alice Peisch.

**Board Member:** Suzanne Lane.

**Board Staff:** Stephaan Harris, Donnetta Kennedy, Lesley Muldoon, Munira Mwalimu, Tessa Regis, Lisa Stooksberry.

Governor Geringer welcomed members and thanked Board member Suzanne Lane for attending the meeting. He reviewed the agenda topics for discussion.

### Outreach Strategy for 2022 Nominations Campaign

Stephaan Harris, Assistant Director of Communications, briefed the committee on the outreach strategy for the 2022 nominations campaign and the role of the communications contractor, the Hatcher Group, in this effort. In the 2021 campaign staff and contractors pursued typical strategies such as calls with key stakeholders and extensive social media outreach. However, new activities included a well-received webinar with the Governing Board alumni, who were asked to tap into their professional networks to get the word out on the campaign. Harris reported that the 2021 strategy yielded success with a large, diverse pool of candidates.

The 2022 campaign will be launched via a splash page in the summer of 2021 before the site is open to applicants. Vacant positions in 2022 include 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, Secondary School Principal, and General Public Representative (Parent Leader). A tool kit will be developed, and a webinar will be convened to attract candidates for all open categories with a focus on the parent leader's category. In addition, outreach will include a range of organizations with networks of potential candidates for the open positions (e.g., the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA), among many others). Harris suggested that Tonya Matthews write a blog about her experiences serving on the Board as a General Public Representative.

A survey will be sent to Board members this summer to solicit outreach ideas.

### Procedures Manual

Geringer asked members if they had any suggested edits to the Nominations Procedures manual. He referenced a previous request for clarification regarding qualifications in the Testing and

Measurement category. He reported that the Office of General Counsel (OGC) had provided guidance on candidate eligibility in this category, noting that candidates who work at a testing company are not automatically disqualified. Circumstances for candidates are reviewed and determined on an individual basis by OGC.

There were no changes suggested to the Procedures Manual. Tessa Regis reported that she planned to survey members to evaluate the 2021 review and rating processes and to also request feedback on the Procedures Manual.

### **Closed Session**

**Nominations Committee Members:** Governor Jim Geringer (Chair), Dana Boyd, Tyler Cramer, Paul Gasparini, Tonya Matthews, Reginald McGregor, Mark Miller, Alice Peisch.

**Board Member:** Suzanne Lane.

**Board Staff:** Stephaan Harris, Donnetta Kennedy, Lesley Muldoon, Munira Mwalimu, Tessa Regis, Lisa Stooksberry.

Under the provisions of exemptions 2 and 6 of § 552b (c) of Title 5 U.S.C., the Nominations Committee met in a closed session on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 from 6:10 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. to receive a briefing on the slate of 2021 finalists for submission to the Secretary for consideration and appointment.

Lisa Stooksberry reported on the status of 2021 candidates and referenced internal preparations for a forthcoming meeting with the Secretary's office. Geringer then provided a briefing on a technical issue that has since been resolved. The committee discussed this matter with an eye toward preventing such issues in the future.

Geringer thanked the Nominations Committee members for their efforts and staff for their support.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

I certify the accuracy of these minutes.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Geringer, Chair

July 9, 2021  
Date