



## Memorandum

**To: National Assessment Governing Board Members**  
**From: Lesley Muldoon**  
**Subject: Recommendations on Assessment Schedule Action**  
**Date: October 27, 2023**

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Under the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) [governing statute](#), the National Assessment Governing Board (Governing Board) has the authority to establish to the NAEP Schedule of Assessments. Typically, that schedule is established to provide a 10-year outlook, both to signal to stakeholders when they can expect data and to provide sufficient time for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to plan and fund assessment administration. The [current NAEP Assessment Schedule](#), last amended on August 3, 2023, only extends until 2030 and contains more state and district level (in the 26 districts which voluntarily participate in the Trial Urban District Assessment, or TUDA) assessments beginning in 2028.

Under the NAEP law, the NAEP Assessment Schedule must include, at a minimum:

- Every two years: 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading and mathematics with results for the nation and for all 50 states
- Every four years: 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading and mathematics with results for the nation
- With a frequency to be determined by the Board: NAEP Long-Term Trend assessment for 9-, 13-, and 17-year old students

Additional assessments are included on the NAEP schedule at the discretion of the Board and to the extent that NCES's resources allow.

At the November Quarterly Board Meeting, members will reconsider the current schedule, extending it to 2034. The schedule that the Board approves in November will be used by NCES in developing the procurement documents they will issue in January for the next five-year NAEP contract. In preparation for these discussions, Board members met in small groups at the August Quarterly Board Meeting to discuss the current schedule and to request additional information to help them update the schedule.

Since that time, Governing Board staff have collaborated with NCES staff to gather the requested information, to develop the NAEP Schedule of Assessments drafts on which action is scheduled at the meeting, and to prepare this memo illuminating background on the data collections reflected on the schedule and the rationale for the recommendations.

Deliberative Draft A reflects the recommended assessment schedule, if Congress agrees to postpone the planned 2026 assessments to 2027, thereby returning to the historical practice of administering main NAEP in odd years, rather than in federal election years. Deliberative Draft B reflects the recommended schedule if no such waiver is provided by the time NCES issues the RFP.

Please note that due to budgetary constraints, these recommendations are focused on streamlining the schedule with the data deemed most important for the nation, rather than expanding it to include any subjects not previously assessed.

## **I. Assessments in Mandated Subjects**

### **A. State- and TUDA-Level 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading and Math Assessments**

#### **Background**

The NAEP Law requires that NCES administer 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading and mathematics assessments every four years and report results for the nation. In 2009 and 2013, NCES conducted pilot studies with funding from Congress to expand the 12<sup>th</sup> grade assessments to include state-level results as well as results for the nation as a whole. Eleven states volunteered to participate in 2009 and 13 states in 2013. Since then, funding constraints have precluded maintaining 12<sup>th</sup> grade state-level assessments as a regular feature of the schedule—as well as limited demand from state education agencies, who are responsible for working with schools to convince them to participate in voluntary assessments like this one.

NAEP has never reported results for 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in TUDA districts. In August 2023, the Board considered whether TUDAs may be interested to participate starting in 2029.

#### *Why 12<sup>th</sup> Grade?*

Because NAEP data is reported at the system-level, it serves as a broad measure of overall progress of the system—whether at the national, state, or TUDA-district level. Some advocates—notably former Governing Board Chair Checker Finn—have argued that 12<sup>th</sup> grade state-level NAEP data should be the most “in-demand” from policymakers. If the purpose of K-12 schooling is to prepare students for what lies ahead, whether it be college, the workforce, community leadership, or more, then The Nation’s Report Card is not fulfilling its mandate unless we give states data on how well prepared their 12<sup>th</sup> graders are in key subjects.

There is no other data source that can serve this role, since other high school assessments such as the ACT, SAT, and Advanced Placement exams, are taken by a smaller, non-representative proportion of high school students in most states. Thus, an employer trying to understand the preparedness of high school graduates for high-tech jobs across states has no comparable data upon which to make that evaluation; a governor or legislature trying to determine if the state’s high schools are preparing all graduates (not just those college-bound) to compete in the global economy has only its state data to use and cannot see how their graduates compare with their peers in neighboring states.

There is one potential use case: states in the Southern region have collaborated to improve educational outcomes through the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB).

SREB works with states to set long-range goals for the region's educational progress, and they have expressed interest in potentially using 12<sup>th</sup> grade state-level NAEP results to track the progress of their high schools over time. They currently use data from ACT and SAT for this purpose but understand the limitations of that data since it is not representative of the full high school population. SREB leadership has discussed with Board staff in the past whether Southern states could commit to participating regularly in a state-level 12<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP assessment for this purpose.

Arguments against expanding 12<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP to the state or TUDA level are more practical: there are concerns about how much testing high school students already take, the perceived lack of motivation of 12<sup>th</sup> graders to try their best on NAEP (regardless of empirical evidence), and questions about what education system leaders can do with the data given that the tested students will have left high school by the time the data are reported (of course, no NAEP data are reported on individual student progress). In addition, there is a concern that some grade 12 students are no longer available for testing in spring of their senior year, due to participation in dual enrollment programs or reduced schedules, thus potentially compromising the representativeness of the sample.

#### *State and District Priorities*

The state and TUDA survey results revealed that there was little interest in participating in grade 12 voluntary assessments at the state and TUDA levels. The state respondents indicated the least interest in adding voluntary grade 12 assessments compared to grade 4 and 8 assessments for all subject areas included on the survey. Of all the grade 12 assessments, Grade 12 civics was most frequently selected as an interest by the states. Just over one-third of the TUDAs indicated interest in reading and mathematics voluntary assessments at grade 12, which exceeded their interest in civics and U.S. history participation for any grade.

In addition to the survey results, Board staff had a discussion with members of the TUDA Policy Task Force, which the Governing Board convenes periodically in collaboration with the Council of the Great City Schools. Members of the TUDA Task Force represented 10 of the 26 TUDA districts from across a variety of communities. In the discussion about the value of 12<sup>th</sup> grade TUDA results in reading and math, the group was unanimous in its feedback: they would not be interested in having more of their 12<sup>th</sup> graders participate in NAEP so that they could get district-level results. If NAEP could provide more TUDA-level data, they would prefer it in another subject and grade (i.e., science at grades 4 and 8). TUDA district leaders cited multiple reasons for this position, including that they already have a multitude of data on their high school students (e.g., on-track indicators, high school graduation, FAFSA completion, college matriculation, college placement, etc.) They also noted that TUDA districts participate in NAEP voluntarily and that expanding TUDA to 12<sup>th</sup> grade when districts are not interested may decrease willingness to volunteer.

## **Recommendation**

Given the compelling national interest in having additional information on how well-prepared 12<sup>th</sup> graders are by the end of high school, NAEP should expand the mandated 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading and math assessments to include voluntary state-level results starting in 2029. Between now and then, the Board should work with national organizations that represent state policy leaders (such as CCSSO, SREB, ECS, etc.) to identify interested states and build their support to participate. Ideally, the Board could get commitments from regional blocs of states to participate to facilitate useful comparisons across neighboring states with linked local economies or get a diverse array of states to participate to allow for comparisons of diverse student populations. This will take time and concerted effort, but, if done well, could cement the value of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP assessments and provide a useful service to policymakers and the public.

## **B. Long-Term Trend Assessment**

### **Background**

The current NAEP Assessment Schedule indicates that the NAEP Long-Term Trend (LTT) Assessment will be administered next in 2025 for all three ages (9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds) and every four years thereafter. The schedule also includes a note that the next administration of these assessments will be digitally-based for the first time.

### *Explanation of LTT vs Main NAEP*

NAEP includes two national assessment programs—LTT NAEP and main NAEP. Both assessments enable NAEP to measure student progress over time, but the two assessment programs differ in key ways: (1) the NAEP LTT assessment measures national reading and mathematics performance at ages 9, 13 and 17, whereas main NAEP assessments sample students by grade and provide national, state, and district-level data; (2) LTT trend lines date back to the early 1970s, and main NAEP trend lines start in the early 1990s; (3) LTT measures more basic skills, while main NAEP hews more closely to current trends in education.” Sample items can be found at: <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/nqt/>; (4) main NAEP assessments in reading and mathematics occur every two years, as required by law, yet the periodicity for LTT is not specified.

The NAEP LTT assessments had been administered approximately every four years over the past few decades (and more frequently prior to that) up to 2012. The Governing Board postponed the NAEP LTT planned administration for 2016 due to budgetary constraints (and had initially postponed the 2020 administration as well, but it was ultimately added back to the schedule at the request of Congress as described below).

### *Previous Board Deliberations on the Future of LTT*

One of the many innovative recommendations from NCES was the convening in 2011 and 2012 of a “Future of NAEP” panel to explore if and how to combine or consolidate LTT and main NAEP data collections. This is a complex challenge due to the aforementioned differences in content, sampling, and administration of the assessments. When the

Governing Board adopted its first Strategic Vision in November 2016, it included a priority to “Research policy and technical implications related to the future of NAEP Long-Term Trend assessments in reading and mathematics.”

To explore the feasibility of combining the data collection efforts and to debate the relative merits of NAEP LTT, the Governing Board organized a [symposium on the future of NAEP Long-Term Trend](#). In advance of the March 2017 symposium, Edward Haertel of Stanford University (and Governing Board alumnus) prepared a comprehensive white paper on the history of NAEP Long-Term Trend and a consideration of current issues. The paper was distributed to four additional experts, who each prepared a shorter response paper on their perspective of the future of NAEP LTT. These papers served as the basis for discussion during the March 2, 2017 event. Acting NCES Commissioner Peggy Carr also participated and provided her perspective on the operational feasibility of the various options for the future of NAEP LTT.

Following the symposium, the Board engaged in several discussions of LTT throughout 2017 and 2018 and debated the following three potential courses of action:

1. Modernize LTT (i.e., move LTT from paper-and-pencil to a digital platform, produce assessment frameworks, perform a bridge study for each age group, keep the assessments in their existing administration windows, and better communicate to the public what LTT measures and how that differs from main NAEP)
2. Discontinue LTT (i.e., ask Congress to remove the legislative requirement and cease administration of LTT)
3. Retire LTT gradually (i.e., ask Congress to remove the legislative requirement but perform a special study where LTT is administered one last time to connect future main NAEP results with the longer LTT trend lines)

By fall of 2018, the Board was almost evenly divided between options 1 and 3. Some Board members were concerned that the LTT assessment items appear outdated and are not that relevant to current education while others argued that the 50-year trend lines provide unique value and serve as an “audit” for patterns in main NAEP results.

On September 28, 2018, the President signed the Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations bill for the Department of Education and the appropriations law included language directing the Governing Board to provide additional information to the appropriations committees of the House and Senate on resources required to administer LTT no later than 2021 (at the time it was next scheduled for administration in 2024). The NAEP program received a budget increase of \$2 million and the Governing Board agreed to reinstate the 2020 LTT administration for all three ages (this action was taken during the March 2019 Quarterly Board Meeting). Although the Board continued discussing the merits and feasibility of modernizing LTT, this development ceased most debate about whether LTT should continue to exist as a stand-alone assessment.

### *Administration and Results of Recent NAEP LTT Assessments*

Unlike main NAEP, each of the three ages for the LTT assessment is administered during a different time of year. For 2020, the 13-year-old administration occurred in fall 2019, the 9-year-old administration occurred in early 2020, and the 17-year-old administration was scheduled to begin in mid-March 2020 but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Surprisingly, the 2020 LTT assessment for 13-year-olds (administered just prior to the onset of the pandemic) indicated statistically significant declines in reading and mathematics performance from the previous administration for the first time in 50 years (there were no changes in performance for 9-year-olds).

The LTT assessment for 17-year-olds had been postponed from 2020 to 2022 due to the onset of the pandemic. However, in August 2021, the Board voted to re-administer the 9-year-old assessment in 2022 instead of the 17-year-old assessment to compare performance from early 2020 (just prior to the pandemic) to early 2022 (when nearly all schools returned to in-person instruction). In addition, when funds became available from the cancellation of the 2024 Technology and Engineering Literacy (TEL) Assessment, the Board voted in November 2021 to add another LTT administration for 13-year-olds to compare performance from fall 2019 to fall 2022.

The release of the 2022 LTT results for 9-year-olds in August 2022 received unprecedented attention from the media, policymakers, educators, and many other stakeholders; it preceded the release of the 2022 main NAEP results by two months and was the first source of nationally representative data following the onset of the pandemic. For the first time in 50 years of the LTT assessment, performance for 9-year-olds (not just 13-year-olds as seen in the previous LTT administration) significantly declined by 5 points in reading and 7 points in mathematics from 2020 to 2022. The release of the 2023 LTT assessment for 13-year-olds indicated that performance continued to decline in both reading and mathematics.

### **Recommendation**

Based on previous discussions and continued interest from Congress, staff believe it is unlikely that Congress would decide to remove the legislative requirement to maintain LTT. Recent LTT releases have received a lot of attention, and although the assessments measure more fundamental skills as compared to main NAEP, many students do not perform well. As indicated by “frequency” priority in the Board’s resolution on assessment schedule priorities, all NAEP assessments should be administered at least every 4 years, which would include LTT. The staff therefore recommends that LTT continue to be administered at least every four years.

Staff further recommend that the LTT administration currently scheduled for 2025 shift to 2026 for two reasons. First, a 2025 LTT administration (which actually begins during fall 2024) would fall into two different NCES contracts, which is logistically difficult. Second, a 2026 LTT administration would mean that a similar cohort of students who took the 9-year-

old LTT in early 2022 and 13-year-old LTT in fall 2022 would be assessed as 13-year-olds and 17-year-olds in fall 2025 and spring 2026, respectively.

NCES has not yet transitioned LTT from paper-and-pencil to a digital platform, and this is not expected to be complete in time for the next administration in 2025 or 2026. Staff recommends further Board discussion of both technical and cost considerations associated with the future of LTT in 2024.

## II. Voluntary Assessments

### A. Science Assessment

#### Background

NAEP Science is a voluntary assessment. The Board needs to affirm priorities for assessing science, including at which grades and at which level (national, state, or district). In making this decision, the Board may want to consider the historical assessment schedule; instruction, and assessment of these subjects across the nation; and state and district priorities for this voluntary NAEP assessment.

#### *Historical Context*

Since 1990, science has been assessed about every four years – typically at all three grade levels. Some administrations were at the national level only, while others also included states and TUDAs. The assessment schedule includes another grade 8 national assessment in 2024 and calls for a national, state, and TUDA grade 4 and 8 assessment administration in 2028 (based on the new framework expected to be adopted by the Board at this quarterly meeting). Table 1 below summarizes the past and future administrations of NAEP Science.

**Table 1. Past and Future Planned Administrations of NAEP Science (1990 – 2028)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Assessed</b>
1990	Science grades 4, 8, 12 National
1996	Science grades 4, 8, 12 National; grade 8 State
2000	Science grades 4, 8, 12 National; grades 4, 8 State
2005	Science grades 4, 8, 12 National; grades 4, 8 State
2009	Science grades 4, 8, 12 National; grades 4, 8 State & TUDA
2011	Science grade 8 National; grade 8 State
2015	Science grades 4, 8, 12 National; grades 4, 8 State
2019	Science grades 4, 8, 12 National
2024 (planned)	Science grade 8 National
2028 (planned)	Science grades 4, 8 National; grades 4, 8 State & TUDA

The Assessment Schedule for Board consideration in August 2023 included a proposal to assess science in grades 8 and 12 beginning in 2029 rather than grades 4 and 8 (as is currently planned). The rationale for that recommendation was the perception that science may not be a primary focus of elementary school instruction, but is required in high school.

At the August meeting, Board members expressed concern about eliminating the grade 4 science assessment, which could signal that science is unimportant in elementary school. Staff agreed to gather more relevant information to inform the Board’s deliberations about whether to pursue a grade 4 versus grade 12 science assessment in 2029 (in addition to grade 8).

*Elementary School Instruction and Assessment in Science*

The 2019 NAEP science teacher questionnaire asked teachers of the sampled grade 4 students about the instructional time spent on science in a typical week:

**Table 2. In a typical week, how long do you spend teaching science to students in this class?**

<b>Number of Hours Per Week</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than one hour	4%
1 – 1.9 hours	19%
2 – 2.9 hours	32%
3 – 3.9 hours	21%
4 – 4.9 hours	10%
5 – 5.9 hours	11%
6 – 6.9 hours	1%
7 hours or more	2%

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2019 Science Assessment.

The National Survey of Science and Mathematics Education (Banilower et al., 2018) also collected information about elementary science instruction using a different format:

**Table 3. Average Number of Minutes Per Day Spent Teaching Each Subject in Self-Contained Classes, by Grade Range**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number of Minutes Per Day</b>	
	<b>Grades K-3</b>	<b>Grades 4-6</b>
Reading/Language Arts	89	82
Mathematics	57	63
Science	18	27
Social Studies	16	21

SOURCE: The National Survey of Science and Mathematics Education, Horizon Research, Inc., 2018.

These surveys indicate that elementary school students receive some regular science instruction, albeit much less than reading and mathematics instruction. In addition, grade 5 is the most common grade for states to assess elementary school science, but only about 25 percent of states assess science in grade 4 during the 2023-24 school year. The 2028 NAEP Science Framework accounts for what knowledge and skills are typically covered by states by grade 4 rather than by grade 5.



### *State and District Priorities*

The state and TUDA survey results revealed the most interest in having a state or TUDA level science assessment at grade 8, with 53% of responding states and 45% of responding TUDAs indicating at least some level of interest. There was more interest in a state or TUDA level science assessment at grade 4 than at grade 12, but slightly less than at grade 8.

### *Other Considerations*

Additional considerations for scheduling the science assessment include:

- Based on the current Assessment Schedule, NCES plans to develop the grade 4 and 8 science assessment based on the new framework beginning in January 2024. Grade 12 science is not currently budgeted for development. Grade 12 could be substituted for grade 4 in 2029, but it would be more costly to develop and administer because more blocks are required to implement the grade 12 design as compared to grade 4.
- The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) is an international assessment that sometimes links to NAEP Science results; this assessment is administered in grades 4 and 8.
- The High School Transcript Study (HSTS) is typically linked to NAEP mathematics and science results in grade 12; if science is not administered at grade 12, then the HSTS would be limited to grade 12 mathematics results.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the information presented in this summary, and on prior Board discussions, staff make the following recommendations for future administrations of the science assessment:

- For the first administration under the new framework (in 2028 or 2029, depending on the status of the waiver), develop and administer the science assessment at grades 4 and 8 as currently indicated on the Assessment Schedule. Limit the state and TUDA administration to grade 8.
- For the second administration under the new framework (in 2032 or 2033), develop the grade 12 assessment and administer all 3 grades at the national level. Limit the state and TUDA administration to grade 8.

### References

Banilower, E. R., Smith, P. S., Malzahn, K. A., Plumley, C. L., Gordon, E. M., & Hayes, M. L. (2018). Report of the 2018 NSSME+. Chapel Hill, NC: Horizon Research, Inc.

## B. U.S. History and Civics Assessments

### Background

The Board will need to determine priorities for assessing U.S. History and Civics, including at which grades and at which reporting level. In making this decision, the Board may want to consider the historical assessment schedule of the subjects, instruction, and assessment of these subjects across the nation, as well as state and district priorities for these voluntary NAEP assessments. This information is presented in one section; however, the Board may decide to take a different approach for U.S. History and for Civics. For example, they may determine each should be assessed at different grade levels, and/or at different levels for reporting (i.e., national, state, or district).

### *Historical Context*

Since 2014, U.S. History and Civics have been assessed for grade 8 at the national level every four years. In 2010 and prior, grades 4 and 12 were also assessed for both subject areas at the national level. The assessment schedule calls for another grade 8, national assessment in 2026 and calls for a national grade 4 and 12 assessment administration for both subjects in 2030. The current assessment schedule also includes a state level administration of grade 8 Civics in 2030. Tables 1 and 2 below summarize the past and future administrations of NAEP U.S. History and Civics, respectively.

**Table 4. Past and Future Planned Administrations of NAEP U.S. History (from 1990 – 2030)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Assessed</b>
1994	U.S. History grades 4, 8, 12 National
2001	U.S. History grades 4, 8, 12 National
2006	U.S. History grades 4, 8, 12 National
2010	U.S. History grades 4, 8, 12 National
2014	U.S. History grade 8 National
2018	U.S. History grade 8 National
2022	U.S. History grade 8 National
2026 (planned)	U.S. History grade 8 National
2030 (planned)	U.S. History grades 4, 8, 12 National

**Table 5. Past and Future Planned Administrations of NAEP Civics (from 1990 – 2030)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Assessed</b>
1998	Civics grades 4, 8, 12 National
2006	Civics grades 4, 8, 12 National
2010	Civics grades 4, 8, 12 National
2014	Civics grade 8 National
2018	Civics grade 8 National
2022	Civics grade 8 National
2026 (planned)	Civics grade 8 National
2030 (planned)	Civics grades 4, 8, 12 National Grade 8 State

### *Instruction and Assessment Across the U.S.*

U.S. history and civics fall under social studies, an integrated subject that may include U.S. and world history, civics, geography, psychology, financial literacy, etc. All states include history and civics as part of students' social studies education, though the quantity and timing of the content in their state social studies standards differ, and sometimes districts decide. At grade 4, for example, state standards may include state-specific history, geography, U.S. history, or a variety of other topics (American Institutes for Research, 2023). These variations remain across middle school and high school, and the number and type of social studies credits required to graduate in one state may differ significantly from another.

Not all elementary schools offer social studies instruction every day; Banilower et. al. (2018) found teachers in grades K-3 spent on average 16 minutes per day on social studies, and at grades 4-6 they reported spending on average 21 minutes per day. This is substantially less than the instructional time reported for reading/language arts and mathematics in those grades and slightly less than science instructional time.

Most states do not administer a statewide social studies assessment, and those that do typically only assess at one, two, or three grade-levels (Education Commission of the States, 2018). Prior to grade 4, social studies standards for many states include topics of local community, neighborhood, and family. Some states begin teaching history (state, U.S., or more broadly) in third grade, though this is not the majority (American Institutes for Research, 2023).

### *State and TUDA Survey Findings*

The state and TUDA survey results revealed that 42% of responding states indicating some level of interest in state-level grade 8 U.S. History and 40% in state-level grade 8 Civics. One-third or fewer of the TUDA respondents expressed interest in state level U.S. History at grades 4 and 8, and for TUDA level assessments in these subjects for all grades.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the information presented in this summary, and on prior Board discussions, Board staff recommend:

- At the national level, continue to assess both subjects at grade 8 every four years, and assess both subjects at grade 12 beginning in 2031. This reflects the Board's priorities to assess students in their U.S. history and civics knowledge as they exit K-12 education. Grade 4 is not recommended, because not all students will have taken U.S. history and/or civics instruction by that point.
- Assess state-level U.S. History and Civics at grade 8 beginning in 2031. This reflects the interests expressed by states when identifying their priorities for voluntary NAEP assessments.
- Do not assess U.S. history or civics at the TUDA level. This reflects the interests expressed by TUDAs when identifying their priorities for voluntary NAEP assessments.

## References

American Institutes for Research (2023, March 27). Social Studies Standards Map. Retrieved October 5, 2023, from <https://www.air.org/social-studies-standards-map>

Banilower, E. R., Smith, P. S., Malzahn, K. A., Plumley, C. L., Gordon, E. M., & Hayes, M. L. (2018). Report of the 2018 NSSME+. Chapel Hill, NC: Horizon Research, Inc.

Education Commission of the States, 50-State Comparison: State Summative Assessments (2018, December 31), retrieved October 5, 2023, from <http://ecs.force.com/mbdata/mbquestrt?rep=SUM1804>. Data Source.

## C. Writing Assessment

### Background

NAEP Writing is a voluntary assessment. The most recent NAEP writing results reported were based on assessments administered in 2011 at grades 8 and 12. Although writing assessments were also administered in 2017 at grades 4 and 8, [technical concerns related to changes in the devices and platform prevented NCES from releasing the data](#). The current NAEP Assessment Schedule indicates that the NAEP Writing assessment will next be administered in 2030 and updates to the assessment framework will be considered for this administration.

In accordance with the [Board policy on Assessment Framework Development](#), the first step in the process of considering updates to a framework is to seek public comment on whether and how the existing framework should be changed. Following discussion at the November 2022 Assessment Development Committee (ADC) meeting, an open call for [initial public comment](#) on the current NAEP Writing framework was conducted from November 29, 2022 – January 25, 2023. In addition, Board staff sought input from the NCES on operational issues and challenges associated with the current framework and assessment, which was summarized in a memo. The public comment summary and NCES memo were shared with ADC as part of the [March 2023 meeting materials](#).

Next, Board staff commissioned short papers from five writing experts to inform discussion at the [May 2023 ADC meeting](#). ADC noted that all five expert consultants discussed the potential impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on writing instruction and assessment, although they differed on whether they advised the Board to postpone updating the framework or to proceed anyway. ADC members were concerned that a new framework could become outdated quickly, potentially even prior to the first administration of the assessment. In addition, updating the framework amidst active debates in the field on the role of AI for writing assessment could put the Governing Board in a precarious position of taking a stand before there is emerging consensus in the field. Therefore, ADC recommended that NAEP should continue to assess writing, but wait to update the framework.

During the August 2023 ADC meeting, the Committee considered the question of possibly administering the writing assessment using the current framework and NCES presented considerations related to this possibility. NCES indicated that it would not be possible to report new results on a trendline from either 2017 or from the first administration under this

framework in 2011. They also noted that funds for reprogramming the existing writing prompts for use in a new platform have not been included in the current budget and would require diverting from another funding source.

### **Recommendation**

ADC members recommend that the Board postpone both the framework update and the next administration of the NAEP Writing assessment until 2032 or 2033 and revisit this discussion once more information is available about the impact of artificial intelligence on writing instruction and assessment.

During the August 2023 Quarterly Board Meeting, the draft changes to the Assessment Schedule proposed by staff and discussed by the Board during the small group sessions included limiting the first administration of the new NAEP Writing framework in 2033 to national only for all three grades. This is due to operational and budget considerations since it is not feasible to administer assessments for states/TUDAs in four subjects at the same time. State interest in science data has been higher than writing data, although several states did express interest in writing. If the science and writing administrations are decoupled in the next iteration of the Assessment Schedule beyond 2033, decisions about state/TUDA administrations of writing could be revisited in the future. Implementation of a new framework and assessment (potentially incorporating aspects of artificial intelligence) also may have implications for future interest.

## **D. High School Transcript Study**

### **Background**

The NAEP High School Transcript Study is a voluntary assessment. When NAEP administers the assessments to twelfth-graders in mathematics and science, these students' high school transcripts are also collected for the High School Transcript Study (HSTS). NCES receives transcripts for all sampled students, including those who were absent during the assessment, and Special Education /English Learner students whom the school excluded from participating in NAEP.

The HSTS data, which comprise high school graduates' coursetaking and grades, can be linked to grade 12 NAEP scores. To link the transcript data with NAEP data, students must have completed the NAEP assessment and completed high school, thus slightly narrowing the students with linked data to high school graduates. The 2019 HSTS included a nationally representative sample of 47,000 high school graduates in 1,400 public and non-public schools which participated in the NAEP science and mathematics assessments.

The HSTS represents the only nationally representative source of data on students' academic experience in high school. And, by linking to NAEP scores, HSTS provides greater context for understanding subjective grades in relation to objective test performance. Data from the last HSTS release in 2019 found that students are taking more academic courses, more courses in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), and earning higher overall GPAs. Yet the average NAEP mathematics scores of high school graduates in 2019 have decreased compared to 2009, while their NAEP science assessment scores were similar compared to 2009.

These results resonated widely among media, policymakers, researchers, and education leaders. General media, e.g., Washington Post, New York Times, Forbes, as well as education sector media, e.g., The 74, Education Week all covered the HSTS results. The ACT, a college admissions test, shows similar evidence of grade inflation. However, the ACT is not neutral, not nationally representative since students must opt to participate, and does not represent the population of high school seniors, because ACT test-takers intend to attend college, which is not true of the population. Indeed, as fewer higher education institutions require admissions tests, the ACT will become less representative of the population. [Coverage of this ACT study](#) always cites HSTS as neutral, objective evidence. With media outlets reporting more widespread grade inflation during and after the pandemic, the next round of HSTS data in 2024 will become even more valuable and uniquely informative.

The NAEP administration teams already work with the participating schools to arrange assessment dates and to gather information on sampled students. Adding the collection of transcript data seems like a relatively light burden, given the prevalence of electronic transcripts. However, cleaning, analyzing, and reporting the data do pose a significant burden of time and effort by that expert in working with transcript.

### **Recommendation**

The staff recommends continuing to collect data on the high school experience through the High School Transcript Study.

## National Assessment Governing Board Resolution on Priorities for the NAEP Assessment Schedule

**Whereas**, The Nation's Report Card – also known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) – is mandated by Congress to conduct a national assessment and report data on student academic achievement and trends in public and private elementary schools and secondary schools (P.L. 107-279);

Whereas, The National Assessment of Educational Progress was originally authorized with bipartisan leadership and periodically reauthorized with bipartisan support, and the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB Governing Board) is explicitly structured to maintain that commitment to nonpartisanship;

**Whereas**, the NAEP Authorization Act requires that NAEP be administered in public and private schools in reading and mathematics at least every 2 years in grades 4 and 8 and every 4 years in grade 12 and ~~conduct that~~ the Long-Term Trend assessment be administered in reading and mathematics for ages 9, 13 and 17;

**Whereas**, the NAEP Authorization Act specifies that beyond the requirements listed above, to the extent ~~td~~ time and resources allow and at the direction of the Governing Board, NAEP shall assess and report achievement trends in additional subjects in grades 4, 8 and 12;

**Whereas**, the Every Student Succeeds Act ~~mandates-requires all that~~ states that receive Title I funds to participate in the biennial reading and mathematics NAEP assessments in grades 4 and 8;

**Whereas**, Congress supported the establishment and expansion of the NAEP Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) to provide NAEP results for select large urban districts;

**Whereas**, NAEP provides national, state, and local policymakers and practitioners with consistent, external, credible, and independent measures of student achievement through which results across education systems can be compared at points in time and over time;

**Whereas**, the National Assessment Governing Board and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) continuously work to enhance NAEP's form (e.g. ~~transitioning to digital-based assessments~~ the digital platform) and content (e.g. ~~the periodic updates of NAEP frameworks and assessments~~ the Technology and Engineering Literacy assessment), to reflect ~~the modern~~ contemporary expectations of what students know and can do;

~~Whereas, Congress authorized the National Assessment Governing Board to determine the NAEP subjects to be assessed;~~

**Whereas**, it is the National Assessment Governing Board's policy, in consultation with NCES, to ~~periodically~~ establish a dependable comprehensive, publicly announced NAEP

Schedule of Assessments spanning at least ten years, ~~and specifying which specifies~~ the subjects, grades, ages, assessment years, sampling levels (e.g., national, state, ~~TUDA~~district), and introduction of new and revised frameworks for each assessment;

~~Whereas, on November 18, 2016 the National Assessment Governing Board unanimously adopted its Strategic Vision which included a priority to “Develop policy approaches to revise the NAEP assessment subjects and schedule based on the nation’s evolving needs, the Board priorities, and NAEP funding”;~~

**Therefore**, as the National Assessment Governing Board ~~anticipates extending~~ provides periodic updates of the NAEP Schedule of Assessments now and into the future, ~~it the Board~~ will uphold all of the se aforementioned requirements and make decisions informed by each of the following priorities to ensure NAEP results are impactful and policy-relevant:

- **Utility** – prioritize the administration of NAEP assessments that are valuable and informative to education stakeholders who direct, change, or influence policy and/or practice. NAEP data and reports from these assessments will be accessible and understandable to diverse audiences so that statistically valid and reliable data from national, state, and district samples can be used to advance policy and practice in support of increased student achievement. ~~include more voluntary state and Trial Urban District Assessments and continue to align the schedule of NAEP administrations with international assessments in the same subjects to enable actionable data comparisons of districts, states, and other nations;~~
- **Frequency** – commit to assess subjects other than reading and math at least every 4 years to provide additional measures of student academic progress at regular intervals; and
- **Efficiency** – find develop and implement cost-effective ways to administer NAEP while, to the degree possible, maintaining a breadth of subjects on the schedule in order to continue reporting progress in student achievement; and
- **Credibility** – ensure that NAEP remains bipartisan and nonpartisan, producing trusted data and analyses based on rigorous standards of research and evaluation, and reported in a timely manner.

~~Furthermore~~The application of these priorities, ~~the National Assessment Governing Board recognizes that any change~~ to the NAEP Schedule of Assessments requires consideration of ~~the any~~ fiscal, technical, and operational factors in consultation and coordination with NCES.



# DELIBERATIVE DRAFT A



## National Assessment of Educational Progress Schedule of Assessments

*This draft assumes Congressional action permitting the Board to shift main NAEP to odd years after the 2024 administration.*

**KEY:**

- Recommended additions = **green, bold, underline**
- Recommended eliminations = ~~red strikethrough~~

Year	Subject	National Grades Assessed	State Grades Assessed	TUDA Grades Assessed
2024	Reading Mathematics Science Transcript Studies	4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12 8	4, 8 4, 8	4, 8 4, 8
2025				
<del>2026</del> <sub>5</sub>	Long-term Trend	~		
<del>2027</del> <sub>6</sub>	<b>READING</b> <b>MATHEMATICS</b> Civics U.S. History	4, 8 4, 8 8 8	4, 8 4, 8	4, 8 4, 8
<del>2028</del> <sub>7</sub>				
<del>2029</del> <sub>8</sub>	Reading Mathematics <b>SCIENCE</b> <del>Technology and Engineering Literacy</del> Transcript Studies	4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12 4, 8	4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12 <del>4, 8</del> 8	4, 8 4, 8 <del>4, 8</del>
<del>2030</del> <sub>29</sub>	Long-term Trend	~		
<del>2031</del> <sub>10</sub>	Reading Mathematics <b>CIVICS</b> <b>U.S. HISTORY</b> <del>WRITING</del>	4, 8 4, 8 <del>4, 8, 12</del> <del>4, 8, 12</del> <del>4, 8, 12</del>	4, 8 4, 8 8 <u>8</u> <del>4, 8, 12</del>	4, 8 4, 8  <del>4, 8</del>
<del>2032</del> <sub>1</sub>				
<del>2033</del> <sub>2</sub>	Reading Mathematics Science <b>WRITING</b> Transcript Studies	4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12 4, 8, <b>12</b> <b><u>4, 8, 12</u></b>	4, 8, <b>12</b> 4, 8, <b>12</b> 8	4, 8 4, 8 8
<del>2034</del> <sub>3</sub>	Long-Term Trend	~		

**NOTES:**

\* Long-term Trend (LTT) assessment not administered by computer until 2024. All other assessments will be digitally-based.

~ LTT assessments sample students at ages 9, 13, and 17 and are conducted in reading and mathematics.

**BOLD ALL CAPS** subjects indicate the assessment year in which a new or updated framework is implemented, if needed.

## DELIBERATIVE DRAFT B



# National Assessment of Educational Progress Schedule of Assessments

*This draft assumes Congressional action permitting the Board to shift main NAEP to odd years after the 2024 administration.*

**KEY:**

- Recommended additions = **green, bold, underline**
- Recommended eliminations = ~~red strikethroughs~~

Year	Subject	National Grades Assessed	State Grades Assessed	TUDA Grades Assessed
2024	Reading Mathematics Science Transcript Studies	4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12 8	4, 8 4, 8	4, 8 4, 8
2025	Long-term Trend	~		
2026	<b>READING</b> <b>MATHEMATICS</b> Civics U.S. History	4, 8 4, 8 8 8	4, 8 4, 8	4, 8 4, 8
2027				
2028	Reading Mathematics <b>SCIENCE</b> <del>Technology and Engineering Literacy</del> Transcript Studies	4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12 4, 8	4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12 <del>4, 8</del> 8	4, 8 4, 8 <del>4, 8</del>
2029	Long-term Trend	~		
2030	Reading Mathematics <b>CIVICS</b> <b>U.S. HISTORY</b> <del>WRITING</del>	4, 8 4, 8 <del>4, 8, 12</del> <del>4, 8, 12</del> <del>4, 8, 12</del>	4, 8 4, 8 8 <b>8</b> <del>4, 8, 12</del>	4, 8 4, 8  <b>4, 8</b>
2031				
2032	Reading Mathematics Science <b>WRITING</b> Transcript Studies	4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12 4, 8, <b>12</b> <b>4, 8, 12</b>	4, 8, <b>12</b> 4, 8, <b>12</b> 8	4, 8 4, 8 8
2033	Long-Term Trend	~		

**NOTES:**

\* ~~Long term Trend (LTT) assessment not administered by computer until 2024. All other assessments will be digitally based.~~

~ LTT assessments sample students at ages 9, 13, and 17 and are conducted in reading and mathematics.

**BOLD ALL CAPS** subjects indicate the assessment year in which a new or updated framework is implemented, if needed.

## History of Changes to the NAEP Assessment Schedule

Major historical changes adopted by the Board since 2000	Year Adopted
Added grade 4 and 8 state-level Reading and Mathematics every two years. [Prior to the 2002 ESEA reauthorization (NCLB), state assessments at grades 4 and 8 were given every two years with reading and writing in one biennium and mathematics and science in the next, i.e., these subjects and grade 12 subjects were tested once every four years.]	2002
Added the High School Transcript Study (HSTS) as a regularly scheduled study.	2005
Scheduled U.S. History, Civics and Geography on a once every four years cycle.	2005
Added Technology and Engineering Literacy (TEL) to the NAEP subjects assessed.	2005
Added grade 12 state-level Reading and Mathematics for volunteer states with a periodicity of every four years.	2008
Adjusted the periodicity of science to correspond to the periodicity of TIMSS to conduct international benchmarking studies in mathematics and science.	2010
Scheduled Writing as a technology based assessment, beginning with national data collections only and delaying grade 4 in order to complete a special study.	2010
Added state-level results for voluntary assessments in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Science for grades 4 and 8</li> <li>○ Civics and TEL for grade 8</li> <li>○ Writing in grades 4, 8, and 12</li> </ul>	2019
Added Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) results for voluntary assessments in Science and Writing in grades 4 and 8	2019
Eliminated foreign language (which was scheduled but never assessed), as well as arts, geography, and economics	2019
Shifted Main NAEP Reading and Mathematics assessments at grades 4 and 8 from 2021 to 2022, and every two years thereafter, due to challenges that COVID-19 pandemic posed for 2021 administration (Congress provided a waiver to allow this change). This change also shifted other NAEP assessments by one year.	2020
Eliminated Technology and Engineering Literacy (TEL) in grade 8 from 2024	2021
Changed the Long-term Trend scheduled for 2022 to assess 9-year-olds, replacing the 17-year-olds originally scheduled to be assessed.	2021
Added a Long-term Trend for fall 2022 to assess 13-year-olds	2021
Eliminated Technology and Engineering Literacy (TEL) in grade 8 from 2028 and recommended it not be considered high priority in the future	2023

## Guiding Principles for Schedule Changes

In 2018, the Governing Board [set priorities](#) establishing long-term goals for the assessment program. These were frequency—administering NAEP at least every four years; efficiency—finding cost-effective ways to administer NAEP; and utility—including more state and urban district data to create more actionable information.

Additional Governing Board guiding principles and priorities for schedule changes are to:

- follow the requirements in the [National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act](#), which includes the mandate to assess reading and math at the state level every two years and additional subjects as time and resources allow;
- adhere to the Governing Board's [General Policy: Conducting and Reporting the National Assessment of Educational Progress](#); and
- reflect the current priorities of the Governing Board to:
  - Administer all assessments using technology beginning in 2017; and
  - Provide state-level data in curricular areas beyond reading and mathematics.

Guidance for the schedule is found in NAEP Authorization Act Sec. 303(b)(2) which addresses the use of random sampling (A), testing in reading and mathematics at grades 4 and 8 once every two years (B), and testing in reading and mathematics at grade 12 at regularly scheduled intervals (at least as often as prior to NCLB) (C).

After this initial guidance, Sec. 303(b)(2)(D) provides guidance for including other subjects in grades 4, 8, and 12 to the extent time and resources allow. It says, including assessments "... in regularly scheduled intervals in additional subject matter, including writing, science, history, geography, civics, economics, foreign languages, and arts, and the [long term] trend assessment described in subparagraph (F)

## Recent Board Discussions on Changes to the Assessment Schedule

In May 2023, the Board approved a [Resolution to Request Postponement from 2026 to 2027 of NAEP Reading and Mathematics](#) assessments at grades 4 and 8. Such a change would require a waiver from Congress because it would result in a three year gap between the administrations of these assessments from 2024 to 2027 (the NAEP legislation requires that the Reading and Mathematics assessments at grades 4 and 8 are administered every two years at the national and state level). The Board has not yet taken action to formally make this change to the Assessment Schedule because a decision on the waiver is still pending.

The Board began discussing other potential changes to the NAEP Assessment Schedule at the August 2023 quarterly meeting. Additional discussions and action are planned for the upcoming November 2023 quarterly meeting.

## 2023 State and TUDA NAEP Assessment Survey Findings

The NCES State Coordinators surveyed leaders in state education agencies and in districts which participate in NAEP’s Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) program about NAEP data they currently use and their priorities and interests in any future NAEP voluntary assessments. The survey was open between September 25 and October 17, 2023. In total, 45 out of 53 (85%) states<sup>1</sup> and 11 out of 26 (42%) TUDAs responded.

Table 1 presents the percentage of respondents that indicated they currently use specific subject area NAEP data. As shown, the most frequently used data were reading and mathematics with almost all respondents indicating use by their state or TUDA. Science was the next most frequently used with almost half of states, and just over a third of TUDAs, using these data.

**Table 1. Percentage of responding states and TUDAs reporting currently using NAEP data, by subject area.**

Assessment	States (n = 45)	TUDAs (n=11)	Overall (n = 56)
Reading	96%	100%	96%
Mathematics	98%	100%	98%
Science	47%	36%	45%
U.S. History	36%	27%	34%
Civics	33%	27%	32%
Long-Term Trend	33%	27%	32%

The survey asked respondents to indicate how they use NAEP data. States reported the most frequent uses:

- a) as an overall metric to analyze performance (16 states);
- b) as a means to compare performance to other jurisdictions (14 states; 8 TUDAs);
- c) for state assessment validation, analysis, and/or comparison (14 states); and
- d) to share information with stakeholders (10 states).

Table 2 presents the percentage of responding states and TUDAs reporting that they were “somewhat interested” or “very interested” in participating in select voluntary state-level (or TUDA-level) assessments. **Science at grade 8 was most frequently selected, with more than half of states, and just under half of TUDAs, indicating interest.** The other grade 8 assessments (writing, civics, and U.S. history) and the grade 4 science and writing assessments were of interest to at least 40% of states. The grades 4 and 8 writing assessments were of interest to 45% of the TUDAs.

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<sup>1</sup> States in this context include all 50 U.S. States plus Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and Department of Defense schools.

**Table 2. Percentage of responding states and TUDAs reporting interest\* in voluntary NAEP assessments, by grade and subject area.**

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>States (n = 45)</b>	<b>TUDAs (n=11)</b>	<b>Overall (n = 56)</b>
Science Grade 8	53%	45%	52%
Science Grade 4	44%	36%	43%
Writing Grade 8	42%	45%	43%
Writing Grade 4	40%	45%	41%
U.S. History Grade 8	42%	27%	39%
Civics Grade 8	40%	27%	38%
Civics Grade 4	33%	27%	32%
U.S. History Grade 4	31%	27%	30%
Civics Grade 12	29%	27%	29%
U.S. History Grade 12	27%	18%	25%
Reading Grade 12	22%	36%	25%
Mathematics Grade 12	22%	36%	25%
Science Grade 12	22%	18%	21%
Writing Grade 12	20%	27%	21%

\*Percentages combine responses of “somewhat interested” and “very interested”.

The survey included an open-ended question for respondents to list their top priorities for voluntary assessments and their rationales for those priorities. Of the participants, 32 states (71%) and nine TUDAs (82%) completed this open-ended question. No clear frontrunners in the priorities emerged, though there were common themes among the justifications for selections.

About one third of the states and districts which answered the open-ended question indicated their top priorities would be assessments that aligned to the grades and content areas assessed in their state for comparison and/or external validation opportunities. A similar percentage claimed no interest in any voluntary assessments, as they needed to concentrate on other demands. Other priorities included (1) writing, because it is a critical skill with which some students struggle; (2) civics, because they align to state legislative priorities or include important citizenship skills; and (3) science, to see how they rank among states.