

CCSSO and TUDA Task Force Updates and Discussion

Goal

The purpose of this session is to share with Board members the purposes and activities of the Board's task forces with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS). The Board contracts with CCSSO to conduct the State Policy Task Force and with CGCS to conduct the TUDA Task Force. These two task forces provide important feedback to the Board and to the National Center for Education Statistics on topics such as assessment framework development, communications, and NAEP administration.

Overview

Anne Bowles from CCSSO and Abe Krisst of the Connecticut Department of Education will present; Krisst chairs the State Policy Task Force. CGCS Executive Director Ray Hart and CGCS' lead for the TUDA Task Force, Akisha Osei Sarfo, will present, along with Chancellor of the District of Columbia Public Schools, Lewis Ferebee. After the presentations, time will be reserved for Q&A with Board members and for discussion by Board members.

Background

Background information on both task forces may be found appended to this overview document.

NAGB/CCSSO State Task Force Background

Since September 2007, the National Assessment Governing Board (Governing Board) has collaborated with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) through a joint Task Force. The Task Force is charged with providing feedback to the Governing Board on policy areas and activities related to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The dual goals of this collaboration are (1) to inform the Governing Board’s policy-setting work with state perspectives and (2) to implement joint initiatives under the Governing Board’s legislative mandate.

The Task Force comprises 12 leaders in state educational agencies. The members currently include three deputy or assistant superintendents, and three public information (or communications) officers, two chiefs of staff, and four assessment and accountability directors. Members are chosen based on their expertise and interest in assessment and geographic representation of the nation. They offer diverse viewpoints, which lend invaluable insight into the Governing Board’s deliberations about NAEP. The membership roster changes on an ongoing basis as members transition between roles within state education agencies or transition out of state employment entirely. Member terms are six years. The current members are listed below:

State Policy Task Force Membership 2025/26

Jean Cook	Mississippi Department of Education	Chief of Communication
Meghan Frick	Georgia Department of Education	Chief Communications Officer
David Jespersen (Vice Chair)	Nebraska Department of Education	Public Information Officer
Abe Krisst (Chair)	Connecticut Department of Education	Assessment Bureau Chief
Darin Nielsen	Utah State Board of Education	Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning
Kimako Patterson	Illinois State Board of Education	Chief of Staff

Brian Reiter	Hawai'i State Department of Education	Assessment Administrator
Dicky Shanor	Wyoming Department of Education	Chief of Staff
Visalakshi (Viji) Somasundaram	Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction	Director of Office of Educational Accountability
Zachary Warner	New York State Education Department	Assistant Commissioner for the Office of State Assessment
Christina Wirth-Hawkins	Colorado Department of Education	Chief Assessment and State Accountability Officer
Thomas Woods-Tucker	Kentucky Department of Education	Deputy Commissioner of Education and Chief Equity Officer

The Task Force meets three times a year, during which Task Force members share general updates about their state assessment programs and NAEP. In recent months, the Governing Board has sought Task Force member feedback on updated NAEP assessment frameworks, the NAEP administration schedule, and the communications strategy for the release of NAEP results

About once a year, the Governing Board invites a representative of the Council of Chief State School Officers and the chair of the State Policy Task Force to present task force accomplishments, share progress updates, and offer advice at a quarterly board meeting. At this meeting, Anne Bowles, the Senior Director, Programs at CCSSO, will present along with Task Force Chair Abe Krisst from Connecticut. Both panelists' biographies are presented below.



Anne Bowles joined the Council of Chief State School Officers in October 2018 and serves as Senior Director, Programs. Anne is responsible for providing overall direction, coordination, and supervision for the Council's direct support to states aligned to CCSSO's priorities in teaching and learning and assessment and accountability. Prior to joining CCSSO, Anne served in a number of roles on the policy, advocacy, and leadership teams at

Achieve, a nonprofit committed to working with states to prepare students for success



in college and career. Prior to Achieve, she served as a Policy and Outreach Associate at the Institute for Higher Education Policy and as a Program Associate with the American Youth Policy Forum. Anne began her career in education as middle school teacher in New York City. Anne earned her bachelor's in sociology from the University of Michigan, master's in education from Pace University and a certificate in nonprofit management from Georgetown University.



Abe Krisst has worked at the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) for over 22 years and currently oversees Connecticut's summative assessment system. The state summative assessment system includes: the Smarter Balanced Assessments, the Next Generation Science Standards Assessments, the Connecticut SAT School Day, the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System, the Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment, the English Language Proficiency Assessment, and the Kindergarten Entrance Inventory.

He serves as a Bureau Chief in the Performance Office (at the CSDE) where the mission of the office is to improve student outcomes through the use of data and technology. In addition to Abe's leadership with large scale assessments, he also supports other critical projects including data collections, information technology, data reporting, research/analyses, and accountability.





Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) Policy Task Force Background

The Council of the Great City Schools (the Council), the nation’s leading coalition of large urban school districts, continues to support the ongoing work of the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) Task Force to provide strategic feedback to the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). The Task Force offers recommendations on policy, research, and communications related to the TUDA program and plays a key role in informing NAGB’s Strategic Vision and shaping the continued evolution of the TUDA program.

In addition, the Task Force, which convenes twice a year, provides input that reflects the perspectives and needs of large urban school systems. Through this work, the Council ensures that the TUDA program remains responsive, data-informed, and aligned with the priorities of the urban school districts it serves.

Following the 2017 expansion of the TUDA program to 27 districts, the Council established and now coordinates a 10-member Task Force composed of local education leaders from TUDA districts, including superintendents and academic leaders, research, and communication directors. Members are selected for their expertise in their roles, ensuring representation from across the TUDAs.

These members bring a wide range of perspectives, offering invaluable insights that enrich the Governing Board’s discussions on NAEP. Their contributions help to provide a deeper understanding of NAEP from the TUDA perspective, ensuring that the discussions reflect the unique challenges and opportunities faced by TUDA districts. The composition of the group evolves over time, as members transition to new roles outside of TUDA districts or retire.

The current membership of the Task Force is below.

TUDA Policy Task Force Membership 2025-2026		
TUDA District	District Leader	Role
Atlanta Public Schools	Seth Coleman	Director of Media and Social Media
Baltimore City Public Schools	Theresa D. Jones	Chief Achievement & Accountability Officer
Boston Public Schools	Apryl Clarkson	Senior Executive Director of the Office of Data and Accountability
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	Dr. Crystal Hill	Superintendent
Cleveland Metropolitan School District	Dr. Warren Morgan	Chief Executive Officer
Dallas Independent School District	Angie Gaylord	Chief Academic Officer
Denver Public Schools	Jessica Piwko	Interim Chief Academic Officer
District of Columbia Public Schools	Corrine Colgan	Chief of Teaching and Learning
Guilford County Schools	Jusmar Maness	Chief Academic Officer
School District of Philadelphia	Dr. Tonya Wolford	Chief Evaluation, Research and Accountability

Once a year, the Governing Board invites representatives from the Council of the Great City Schools to present updates on Task Force accomplishments at a quarterly board meeting. In this session, Dr. Ray Hart, Executive Director of the Council of the Great City Schools, will present alongside Task Force coordinator and the Council's Director of Research, Dr. Akisha Osei Sarfo, and the Chancellor of District of Columbia Public Schools, Dr. Lewis Ferebee. Brief biographies of all three panelists are provided below.

Dr. Raymond C. Hart is the Executive Director of the Council of the Great City Schools. Hart, who has more than 30 years of experience in research and evaluation, was previously the Director of Research for the Council, and his work has spanned policy areas such as post-secondary success and college readiness, professional learning communities and school improvement, teacher effectiveness and value-added analysis, early childhood education, and adult and workforce literacy. He has worked with clients from a number of federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of State, the National Science Foundation, and many state and local departments of education. Hart holds a Ph.D. in Evaluation and Measurement from Kent State University, a M.Ed. with a focus on Curriculum and Instruction – Educational Research from Cleveland State University, and a bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Dr. Akisha Osei Sarfo is Director of Research at the Council of the Great City Schools, where she guides districts in effectively leveraging data and evaluation to improve student achievement and experiences in their districts. Previously, she served as Chief Performance Officer for Guilford County Schools, where she led a nationally recognized research and accountability division. She has also held education research leadership roles at Bellwether Education Partners and the University of Delaware and is a former Harvard Strategic Data Project fellow. She earned a bachelor's in Political Science and a master's in Educational Research Methods from the University of Michigan. She received her Ph.D. in Education Evaluation, Measurement, and Statistics from the University of Delaware and is an AERA Dissertation Fellow.

Dr. Lewis D. Ferebee has served as the Chancellor of District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) since 2018 and is the longest-serving Chancellor in the history of the district. Prior to joining DCPS, Ferebee served as superintendent of Indianapolis Public Schools, where he employed transformation efforts to drive turnaround for low-performing schools and raise the district's graduation rate by 15 percentage points. Earlier, Ferebee was chief of staff for Durham Public Schools in North Carolina, where the number of schools identified by the state as "low-performing" was reduced to zero. He also served in Guilford County Schools (NC) as a principal, earning recognition as Principal of the Year, before serving as an instructional improvement officer and regional superintendent. Ferebee holds a doctorate in educational leadership from East Carolina University, a master's in school administration from The George Washington University, and a bachelor's in elementary education from North Carolina Central University.