

The National Assessment Governing Board Charge to the Development Panel for the 2032 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Civics Assessment Framework

Whereas, The Nation’s Report Card—also known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—is mandated by Congress to conduct national assessments and report data on student academic achievement and trends in public and private elementary schools and secondary schools, and is prohibited from using any assessment to “evaluate individual students or teachers” or “to establish, require, or influence the standards, assessments, curriculum, ... or instructional practices of states or local education agencies” ([Public Law 107-279](#));

Whereas, Congress specifically assigned the National Assessment Governing Board responsibilities to “develop assessment objectives consistent with the requirements of this [law] and test specifications that produce an assessment that is valid and reliable, and are based on relevant widely accepted professional standards”;

Whereas, Congress explicitly stated that the National Assessment Governing Board shall carry out its legislatively-mandated responsibilities by “exercise[ing] its independent judgment, free from inappropriate influences and special interests”;

Whereas, the Governing Board established in its [Assessment Framework Development Policy](#) that the Board shall carry out substantive updates to frameworks through “a comprehensive, inclusive, and deliberative process that involves active participation of stakeholders” to determine and update the content and format of all NAEP assessments;

Whereas, the Governing Board’s Assessment Framework Development Policy states, “NAEP framework development shall be informed by a broad, balanced, and inclusive set of factors. Frameworks shall consider 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”;

Whereas, the Governing Board’s Assessment Framework Development Policy states, “The framework shall inform the development of subject-specific contextual questionnaires for students, teachers, and school administrators by identifying variables that may help contextualize the results”;

Whereas, the Governing Board received upfront input from stakeholders on potential changes to the current NAEP Civics Framework via an initial Social Studies Content Advisory Group who met from June 2024 – January 2025 and an initial public comment period on the current NAEP Civics Framework (conducted from February – March 2026);

Whereas, participation in the NAEP Civics assessment is voluntary and is conducted at the national level, and for states in some grades and years as indicated by the NAEP Assessment Schedule;

Whereas, based on initial stakeholder input from the Social Studies Content Advisory Group and public comment, the Board concludes that a Civics Development Panel shall be convened to

recommend substantive updates to the NAEP Civics Framework at grades 4, 8, and 12 (last adopted in 1996 for implementation in the 1998 assessment) for implementation in 2032 and beyond;

Therefore, the Governing Board charges the Civics Framework Development Panel (hereafter, the “framework panel”) with prioritizing the following considerations when formulating recommendations for updating the 2032 NAEP Civics Assessment Framework:

- **The NAEP Civics Framework should be informed by but not determined by state civics standards and the implementation of those standards.**
- **The NAEP Civics Framework should be updated to reflect the current structure of NAEP frameworks including additional information about NAEP generally, assessment design and sample items, and reporting. The framework text should be directly relevant to what NAEP measures and why.**
- **The Governing Board values the current NAEP trend lines in civics and seeks to continue those trend lines unless deemed infeasible by content alignment and bridge studies. Updates to the NAEP Civics Framework should focus on necessary changes to the framework that reflect the evolution of the nation’s civic and political processes since the current framework was adopted but avoid unnecessary changes.**
- **The framework panel should be bound by considerations of feasibility when developing recommendations, including technical issues (i.e., ensuring that the framework can be operationalized in an assessment), cost (e.g., accounting for scenario-based tasks being much more expensive than other item types) and constraints imposed by the NAEP legislation (including but not limited to the requirements for NAEP to be non-ideological and to avoid assessing personal or family beliefs and attitudes).**
- **The framework should center civics content knowledge, with the inclusion of civic skills and dispositions only through the application of that content knowledge. The framework panel should grapple with how to represent application of knowledge in a nonpartisan manner.**
- **The framework should include both traditional and contemporary civic scenarios in assessment contexts. Scenarios and stimuli should be drawn from primary and authentic sources (e.g., news reports, political cartoons, social media posts), with special attention paid to the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution (including the Bill of Rights and subsequent amendments), *The Federalist Papers*, and other foundational texts, statutes, and court rulings. The framework panel should grapple with how to ensure that assessment items reflect realistic conditions under which citizens learn about issues, deliberate, and make judgments, while maintaining NAEP’s nonpartisan stance.**

- **The NAEP Civics Framework should support the development of assessment items across a wide range of student performance at each assessed grade level, including performance at the lower end of the distribution, to maximize information about what students know and can do.**

The framework panel should regularly report to the Board on the status of addressing the considerations articulated above, in addition to other policy-relevant issues that emerge during deliberations, to support the Board in exercising its legislatively-mandated responsibility to make the final decision on the content and format of the NAEP Civics assessment.