

Briefing on Next Generation NAEP

Goals

Three consecutive sessions on the Thursday plenary agenda focus on the work of the Next Generation NAEP project. The first session will set the context and share progress on the project, framing the questions and issues to be addressed in the second session—breakout group discussions. The third session will reconvene the Board as a collective to discuss highlights from the small group discussions.

By the end of the afternoon, Board members will:

- Develop shared understanding of emerging opportunities and challenges for NAEP reporting and data access
- Reflect on potential shifts in how NAEP serves different users
- Discuss implications for future implementation strategies
- Identify opportunities, concerns, and conditions needed for successful change

Overview

Governing Board Executive Director Lesley Muldoon will present an overview of the Next Generation NAEP work, including the purpose, structure, and participants. She then will introduce the Institute of Design (ID) team, who will explain how the Next Gen design process incorporates ideas and feedback elicited from the Advisory Committee, the Design Sprint participants, and external stakeholders and how user vignettes drive the development of nascent prototypes.

Following this plenary session, the small group discussions will allow Board members to explore how proposed conceptual prototypes respond to the vignettes and consider challenges to implementation. Three Board members (Danielle Gonzales, Matt Soldner [ex-officio], and Marty West) participated in the June 2026 design sprint and will facilitate these small group conversations. Finally, the Board will meet again as a whole to summarize and distill the discussions, identifying common themes and learning about the next phase of work.

Background

[Next Gen NAEP](#), launched in February 2026, is an initiative to modernize NAEP, while maintaining its gold standard reputation and prioritizing its three-decade trendline of student learning in math and reading.

The Next Gen NAEP initiative examines:

- How can technology and AI speed up NAEP development and reporting timelines?
- How can the NAEP platform and technology infrastructure be modernized and improved?
- How can NAEP data become easier to access and use?
- What cost savings can be realized and reinvested into reporting more state-level NAEP data in subjects beyond math and reading? How can the burden for students, schools, and districts be minimized while reporting more state-level data?

Next Gen NAEP employs a human-centered design process to glean insights and recommendations from a wide range of experts and stakeholders and to test innovations that should improve NAEP’s development, analysis, reporting, and dissemination. The project includes three design “sprints” or phases: (1) a discovery phase; (2) a prototyping phase; and (3) an application phase. Each sprint or phase encompasses an in-person design workshop with participants from a range of technical backgrounds and experiences.

An overarching Advisory Committee, not tied to one phase and comprising assessment experts, experts in artificial intelligence, and state and district leaders, provide input and counsel to the Governing Board, Institute of Education Sciences (IES), and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) throughout this project. The list of Advisory Committee members is available [here](#).

In February 2026, the Advisory Committee met with the ID team, Education First (who are facilitating the project), and staff from both the Governing Board and NCES. This meeting generated several potential work streams for innovation and improvement.

In March 2026, NCES and Board staff met with the ID and Education First teams to winnow these potential areas of substantive focus to just one for the initial effort. Three other substantive areas identified by the Advisory Committee and staff are planned for future work.

In April, the Advisory Committee met again with staff and the teams supporting this effort. The committee concurred with the decision to innovate and improve NAEP reporting as the first focus for the design process. Committee members also reviewed feedback from external stakeholders gathered from interviews conducted by Education First and offered technical direction.

In June, ID hosted the first design sprint. Participants reviewed findings from stakeholder interviews, brainstormed new ways to present and display NAEP results, considered how to increase access to NAEP data, and offered examples of data

visualization, presentation, interpretation, and online access that could serve as inspiration.

Currently, the ID team is developing prototypes of new NAEP reporting approaches and data access points based on all the input and feedback thus far. In late summer, the Design Sprint participants will meet again to discuss the prototypes, as will the Advisory Committee share their reactions.

At this session during the August quarterly board meeting, Executive Director Lesley Muldoon and the ID team will elaborate on the project and its outcomes thus far, and Board members will have the opportunity to give their vitally important feedback on the progress thus far and the prototypes still under development. The materials for this session include a summary of the design workshop.