

Resolution to Continue with Preparations for 2021 NAEP Reading and Mathematics

Whereas, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is authorized by Congress and is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what our nation's elementary and secondary school students know and can do;

Whereas, since 1969, NAEP has been the nation's foremost resource for measuring student progress and identifying differences in student achievement across various student subgroups;

Whereas, the National Assessment Governing Board was established by Congress to "formulate policy guidelines for the National Assessment" (20 USC §9621(a));

Whereas, the Governing Board is charged with providing advice to the Commissioner for Education Statistics in carrying out the National Assessment (20 USC §9622(a));

Whereas, the NAEP Authorization Act requires that NAEP be administered in public and private schools in reading and mathematics every 2 years in grades 4 and 8;

Whereas, the Every Student Succeeds Act mandates that states participate in the biennial reading and mathematics NAEP assessments in grades 4 and 8;

Whereas, Congress authorized the Governing Board to determine additional NAEP subjects to be assessed beyond the mandated assessments in reading and mathematics;

Whereas, the COVID-19 global pandemic has impacted the education of virtually all K-12 students in U.S. public and private schools;

Whereas, the global pandemic is likely to exacerbate longstanding educational inequities for under-served students;

Whereas, in a time of such unprecedented disruption to education and assessment, there is a need to collect reliable and valid data to understand and compare student achievement across the nation, states, select large urban districts, and various student subgroups to support effective policy, research, and resource allocation;

Whereas, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has developed contingency plans to mitigate health and safety risks during the administration of NAEP in schools in the midst of the pandemic;

Whereas, the U.S. Congress is considering the appropriation of additional funding to allow NCES to implement contingency plans;

Whereas, NCES is identifying critical milestones that will inform whether to proceed with data collection;

Whereas, it may not be possible to administer NAEP and report results in a valid and reliable manner consistent with NCES' statistical standards;

Whereas, the Governing Board has policy oversight for the NAEP program, and in consultation with the Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics, seeks to uphold NAEP as the gold standard in student assessment;

Therefore, the National Assessment Governing Board advises NCES to continue preparations to administer the 2021 NAEP Reading and Mathematics Assessments as safely as possible unless NCES determines that accurate reporting of educational achievement and progress is not technically possible. The Governing Board will continue to work with NCES to understand the evolving status of state, school, and student participation based on school operations and health and safety factors to determine whether it becomes necessary to seek a waiver from Congress to postpone these assessments from 2021 to 2022.