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**National Assessment Governing Board**

**The Future of 12<sup>th</sup> Grade NAEP**

**Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on  
Planning for NAEP 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Assessments in 2009**

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## **Executive Summary**

In November 2005, the National Assessment Governing Board created the Ad Hoc Committee on Planning for the National Assessment of Educational Progress 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Assessments in 2009. The Committee's task was to help give focus and direction to the Governing Board's deliberations in three policy areas:

- Conducting assessments at the state level in 12<sup>th</sup> grade
- Reporting on 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness for college credit coursework, training for employment, and entrance into the military
- Improving 12<sup>th</sup> grade school and student participation

A primary consideration guided the Committee's deliberations: NAEP's strengths and limitations. Thus, the recommendations indicate both steps that should be taken and steps that should not be taken.

Of the three policy areas addressed, 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness presents the greatest challenges. Accordingly, the preponderance of recommendations is devoted to this policy area.

With the aim of helping the Governing Board address these three policy areas successfully, the Committee has attempted to be as specific as possible in presenting its recommendations.

The Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations follow below.

### **12<sup>th</sup> Grade State NAEP**

#### **Recommendation**

The Governing Board and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) should proceed with planning for the implementation in 2009 of state-level assessments in reading and mathematics at grade 12 on at least a pilot basis in 10 states.

### **12<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Preparedness**

#### **Recommendation 1**

If found to be technically, operationally, and economically feasible, NAEP reports should include statements about 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness, beginning with the reading and mathematics assessments to be conducted in 2009.

#### **Recommendation 2**

The Governing Board should develop and implement a plan for setting a final policy definition of "12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness," deciding on the statements about "preparedness" to include in NAEP reports, and conducting associated research and validity studies.

### **Recommendation 3**

The term “12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness” should be limited to postsecondary education and postsecondary training for occupations (including occupations in the military); it should not include “entrance into the military” as recommended by the NAEP 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Commission.

### **Recommendation 4**

The definition of 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness should focus on academic qualification without remediation for postsecondary education and postsecondary training for occupations; it should not include nonacademic personal attributes.

### **Recommendation 5**

The reporting of “12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness” should be done in conjunction with the Governing Board’s achievement levels—Basic, Proficient, and Advanced—rather than by setting separate “preparedness” performance standards. The degree of “preparedness” of students whose achievement is in the range below Basic should be fully reported as well.

### **Recommendation 6**

The reporting of 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness in NAEP should be kept as simple as possible to promote public understanding, consistent with available validity evidence.

### **Recommendation 7**

The Governing Board should decide on ancillary information relevant to 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness to include in NAEP reports, such as information from NAEP background questionnaires and student transcripts collected through the NAEP High School Transcript Studies.

## **12<sup>th</sup> Grade School and Student Participation**

### **Recommendation 1**

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) should continue implementing its plan for improving 12<sup>th</sup> grade school and student participation.

### **Recommendation 2**

The NCES plan should be amended as follows:

- a. In addition to communicating with NAEP participants as described in the NCES plan, contact should be made with the district superintendent regarding the planned administration of NAEP.
- b. As a courtesy, a letter should be sent to the president of the district school board to communicate information about the plans to administer NAEP in the district.

**Recommendation 3**

The Governing Board, through the Committee on Standards, Design and Methodology, should monitor and evaluate the implementation of the NCES plan and determine the impact on school and student participation.

## Introduction

In November 2005, the Governing Board created the Ad Hoc Committee on Planning for NAEP 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Assessments in 2009. The Committee was asked to present recommendations at the August 2006 Governing Board meeting to give focus and direction to the Governing Board's deliberations in three policy areas:

- Conducting assessments at the state level in 12<sup>th</sup> grade
- Reporting on 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness for college-credit coursework, training for employment, and entrance into the military
- Improving 12<sup>th</sup> grade school and student participation

The Governing Board's deliberations in these areas were prompted initially by the March 2004 report of the National Commission on NAEP 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Assessment and Reporting (NAEP 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Commission). Despite the progress made through assignments to Governing Board standing committees, there was a sense that the efforts lacked coherence. Consequently, the Ad Hoc Committee was commissioned.

The Governing Board set the year 2009 as the target for implementation. This provided a concrete goal for planning and instilled a sense of immediacy to the work ahead.

The Committee met eight times, either by conference call or face-to-face. Throughout the Committee's deliberations, the guiding consideration was NAEP's strengths and limitations. Thus, the recommendations address both steps the Governing Board should take and steps not to take.

Of the three policy areas under consideration, 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness presents the greatest challenges. The Committee spent considerable time addressing "preparedness" and, accordingly, the preponderance of recommendations is devoted to this area.

It is with the hope of assisting the Governing Board successfully address the three policy areas of interest that this report is respectfully submitted by the Ad Hoc Committee on Planning for NAEP 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Assessments in 2009.

The Committee's recommendations are presented on the pages that follow.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Grade State NAEP

### Recommendation

**The Governing Board and NCES should proceed with planning for the implementation in 2009 of state-level assessments in reading and mathematics at grade 12 on at least a pilot basis in 10 states.**

### Background

The Ad Hoc Committee believes that reporting state level results at grade 12 will provide important information to the public about student achievement, a view shared by a wide range of policymakers.

For example, the NAEP 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Commission stated that its most important recommendation was for NAEP to provide 12<sup>th</sup> grade results at the state level. President Bush asked for increases to the NAEP budget for FY 2006 and FY 2007 to conduct state level assessments at grade 12 in reading and mathematics. Senators Lamar Alexander and Edward M. Kennedy introduced the American History Act, authorizing pilot state assessments in up to 10 states in U.S. history and civics at grades 8 and 12. Congress requested the Governing Board to prepare a report on the feasibility of conducting state-level assessments in U.S. history and civics in grades 8 and 12.

A key question considered by the Ad Hoc Committee was—“Given agreement to go forward with planning for 12<sup>th</sup> grade state NAEP in 2009, and assuming that sufficient funding is available, how should the Governing Board proceed in seeking participants?”

Drawing on the lessons learned from the Trial State Assessment and the Trial Urban District Assessment, the Committee concluded that the most practicable approach would be to start by identifying the states that want the information and are willing to step forward voluntarily. There were indications of enough potential state interest to begin with at least a small-scale pilot.

Informal feedback from Chief State School Officers in response to the NAEP 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Commission Report suggested that 6–12 states would be willing to participate. A formal survey of Chief State School Officers was conducted in June 2006 to supply information for the report to Congress on the feasibility of state assessments in U.S. history and civics. Thirteen of 26 responding Chief State School Officers indicated potential interest in having their states participate at grade 12 and twenty at grade 8.

While some state chiefs express support, others are opposed. A general concern is that 12<sup>th</sup> graders will not take low-stakes NAEP seriously, the results will therefore be inaccurate, and that more problems will result from participating than educational benefit. Steps to take to improve 12<sup>th</sup> grade student effort are described in the third set of recommendations in this report.

The Ad Hoc Committee recommends that the Governing Board proceed with planning for implementation of state assessments at grade 12 in 10 voluntarily participating states in 2009. The Committee also notes that on June 13, 2006, the House Appropriations Committee approved the President’s requested increase of \$4 million in FY 2007 for 12<sup>th</sup> grade state NAEP in reading and mathematics in 2009. Therefore, if Congress ultimately supports the President’s request, the planning should be based on 50 participating states rather than 10.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Preparedness

### Recommendation 1

**If found to be technically, operationally, and economically feasible, NAEP reports should include statements about 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness, beginning with the reading and mathematics assessments to be conducted in 2009.**

### Background

The Ad Hoc Committee believes that the Governing Board should proceed with reporting on 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness in connection with the 2009 assessments. For most students, the 12<sup>th</sup> grade is the primary transition point to college, training for employment, and entrance into the military, the main paths to adult pursuits. Thus, information from NAEP about 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness would be important in informing policies relevant to the economic well being and security of the nation.

As the NAEP 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Commission members observed, it is no longer true that a high school education is sufficient preparation for civic obligations and to qualify for a job that could sustain an individual or family comfortably.

“The earnings gap between those with only a high school diploma and those with postsecondary education and training has widened substantially and the technological/scientific, legal, and moral complexity of today’s public policy issues require more to be an ‘informed citizen’ in a democracy.”

Because it is the only continuing source of representative national—and possibly state—12<sup>th</sup> grade student achievement data, it is appropriate that NAEP attempt to report on “preparedness.” However, this significant elaboration of NAEP’s time-honored practice of reporting on “what students know and can do” may be one of the most difficult tasks ever faced by NAEP.

Predictive statements about student achievement have not been made in NAEP reports. Whether NAEP can validly support such statements is not certain, particularly because NAEP does not produce individual student scores. Without individual student scores, there is no direct way of relating performance on NAEP to other indicators of “preparedness” of individual students, such as performance on college entrance and placement tests and on assessments designed to help determine qualifications for training for occupations.

Designing useful validity studies will require imagination, creativity, and the involvement of willing partners. Many technical challenges lie ahead. A systematic plan is needed for addressing those challenges.

## **Recommendation 2**

**The Governing Board should develop and implement a plan for setting a final policy definition of “12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness,” deciding on the statements about “preparedness” to include in NAEP reports, and conducting associated research and validity studies.**

### **Background**

Ultimately, whether statements about “preparedness” can be included in NAEP reports is a validity issue. The definition of “preparedness,” the content of assessments (i.e., test frameworks, specifications, and items), the process for setting achievement levels, and the statements about preparedness intended to be made in NAEP reports must all be aligned and mutually supportive. Evidence must be gathered to demonstrate this alignment. In addition, the statements about preparedness to be included in NAEP reports should be corroborated by external evidence.

Some preliminary work has already begun. The Governing Board has been overseeing revisions to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading and mathematics frameworks and specifications for 2009, designed to support statements about “preparedness.” External panels have been convened to help define preparedness for college and for training for employment. Experts have prepared commissioned papers on validity issues.

The Ad Hoc Committee believes that, building on this preliminary work, the Governing Board should now spell out the necessary steps—and a timeline for completing those steps—to report on 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness in connection with the 2009 assessment (see Appendix A for an outline of such a plan). The major outcomes of these steps would include:

- Adoption of an overall policy definition for 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness
- Decisions on the intended statements about 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness to be made in NAEP reports
- Approval of revisions to the policy definitions for Basic, Proficient, and Advanced achievement levels to reflect “preparedness”
- Approval of preliminary content definitions for preparedness in 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading and in 12<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics (to be used in achievement-level setting)
- Review of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading and mathematics frameworks, specifications, and items for consistency with the policy definitions, statements about “preparedness” intended for NAEP reports, and content definitions for the respective subjects
- Design and conduct of validity studies to provide evidence about the supportability of statements about “preparedness”

The central and most fundamental major outcome is adoption of an overall policy definition for 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness. The Ad Hoc Committee developed Recommendations 3, 4, and 5 to assist the Governing Board in defining the term “12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness” as it would be used in NAEP.

### Recommendation 3

**The term “12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness” should be limited to postsecondary education and postsecondary training for occupations (including occupations in the military); it should not include “entrance into the military” as recommended by the NAEP 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Commission.**

### Background

The Ad Hoc Committee believes that the categories under 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness should be changed from those recommended by the NAEP 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Commission—“college-credit course work, training for employment, and entrance into the military.” Instead, the Ad Hoc Committee recommends two categories—“postsecondary education” and “postsecondary training for occupations”—and that “entrance into the military” be eliminated as a separate category.

The intent is to simplify the categories. By changing the focus to preparedness for training for occupations, the military and civilian spheres are melded into a single category. Accordingly, the terms “postsecondary education” and “postsecondary training for occupations” should be defined—relative to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade subject being assessed under NAEP—to refer, respectively, to:

1. Freshman level credit bearing higher education coursework leading to a degree, and
2. Training for occupations—whether in the civilian or military spheres—that
  - a. according to the Department of Labor are likely to offer sufficient compensation potential to support a family of four and provide for career advancement; and
  - b. do not require a bachelor’s degree but do require training beyond high school.

Occupations in the military are vast in range and similar in prerequisites and responsibilities to like civilian occupations. The military has conducted a great deal of validity research on the relationship between scores on its aptitude tests and preparedness for training for occupations in the military. This research can be drawn upon in developing and validating the statements about preparedness for training for occupations proposed for NAEP reports.

There is debate about whether “preparedness for postsecondary education” and “preparedness for postsecondary training for occupations” are the same. ACT, Inc. has concluded that those entering college or workforce training programs after graduation “...need to be educated to a comparable level of readiness in reading and mathematics.”<sup>1</sup> Achieve, Inc. suggests there is a convergence of “...the English and mathematics that graduates must have mastered by the time they leave high school...to succeed in high-performance, high-growth jobs.”<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Paul Barton provides evidence to argue *against* the proposition that “...[all] those not going to college need to be qualified to enter [traditional academic] college credit courses in order to enter the workforce.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ready for College and Ready for Work: Same or Different?* ACT, Inc., Iowa City, IA; 2006.

<sup>2</sup> *Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma that Counts.* Achieve, Inc., Washington, DC; 2004.

<sup>3</sup> *High School Reform and Work: Facing Labor Market Realities.* Paul Barton. Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey; 2006.

Whether NAEP will be able to support statements about 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness for either postsecondary education or postsecondary training, for both, or for neither will need to be determined through research and validity studies as described in Recommendation 2, above.

#### **Recommendation 4**

**The definition of 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness should focus on academic qualification without remediation for postsecondary education and postsecondary training for occupations; it should not include nonacademic personal attributes.**

#### **Background**

**Academic qualification:** This recommendation emphasizes “qualification to enter” rather than “success in” or “completion of” postsecondary education and training. This is because the measurement of achievement will occur at the end of high school—the “transition point” to adult pursuits—and the objective is to inform the public about the degree to which 12<sup>th</sup> graders are ready academically for the next step, whether that next step is college or training for an occupation.

NAEP is designed to measure student academic achievement and does this very efficiently. However, NAEP is not designed to measure nonacademic characteristics often associated with success (whether in college or in the workplace) such as persistence, interpersonal communication, punctuality, and working in groups. Nor is NAEP designed to follow students longitudinally to determine whether postsecondary education or training was completed. Therefore, these factors are not included in the definition of 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness proposed for NAEP.

**Without remediation:** The NAEP 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Commission found that large percentages of college freshmen are being placed into noncredit remedial programs in reading, writing, or mathematics due to low scores on college entrance or placement exams (about 30 percent nationally and as high as 50 percent or more in some institutions). A recent research study by ACT, Inc. found that “only 51 percent of...high school graduates [who took the ACT in 2005] are ready for college-level reading...”<sup>4</sup>

According to NCES, the college noncompletion rate for students placed into any remedial program is very high. Of students who were 12<sup>th</sup> graders in 1992, attended a public 2-year or 4-year college by 2000, and were placed into any remedial course, 58 percent did not complete a degree or receive a certificate.<sup>5</sup> This suggests that, although admitted to college, students requiring remediation in reading, writing, or mathematics are not sufficiently prepared academically to accomplish the tasks that will be required of them.

Similarly, the National Association of Manufacturers, reporting on a 2001 survey of member companies on reasons they reject job applicants, found that 32 percent of respondents cited inadequate reading/writing skills and 21 percent cited inadequate math skills (N.B. 69 percent cited inadequate basic employability skills such as attendance and timeliness and 34 percent cited inadequate work experience, the first and second most prevalent reasons cited).<sup>6</sup> Therefore, “without remediation” is a key factor in defining 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness.

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<sup>4</sup> *Reading Between the Lines: What the ACT Reveals About College Readiness in Reading*. ACT, Inc.; 2005.

<sup>5</sup> *The Condition of Education 2004*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC.

<sup>6</sup> *The Skills Gap*. National Association of Manufacturers; Washington, D.C.; 2001.

## Recommendation 5

**The reporting of “12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness” should be done in conjunction with the Governing Board’s achievement levels—Basic, Proficient, and Advanced—rather than by setting separate “preparedness” performance standards. The degree of “preparedness” of students whose achievement is in the range below Basic should be fully reported as well.**

### Background

The Ad Hoc Committee believes that “preparedness” should be reported in the context of achievement levels. This will conform more with reporting at grades 4 and 8, be less confusing to the public, and may provide a lower threshold for validity than if new, separate preparedness levels were set. Statements in NAEP reports about 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness would be used to help explain the meaning of the achievement-level results. Accordingly, the policy definitions of “Basic,” “Proficient,” and “Advanced” at the 12<sup>th</sup> grade would need to be revised to address “preparedness.”

The revisions of the achievement-level policy definitions should be informed by research. For example, research might be conducted to examine the relationship between scores on 12<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP in reading and mathematics and cut scores on widely used tests for college entrance and placement. Similar research might be conducted using tests that assess qualifications for training for various occupations, such as the aptitude tests used by the military. Likewise, research could be conducted comparing the test content of NAEP and the other tests. The results would be used to help define the Basic, Proficient, and Advanced achievement levels at the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

In addition, the results might be used to set “benchmark” scores on the NAEP scales for reading and mathematics. The benchmarks would represent preparedness for postsecondary education and postsecondary training for occupations. If indicated as necessary by the research, multiple benchmarks would be used to represent, for example, “preparedness” at colleges of varying selectivity and for training for occupations with varying academic prerequisites.

The benchmarks could be displayed in association with item results, as in the current NAEP item maps. Showing the types of tasks that students at or near the benchmarks were likely to do successfully would add further meaning to the NAEP achievement level results. Figure 1 illustrates this approach, with the familiar item map to the right of the vertical NAEP scale and preparedness benchmarks to the left.

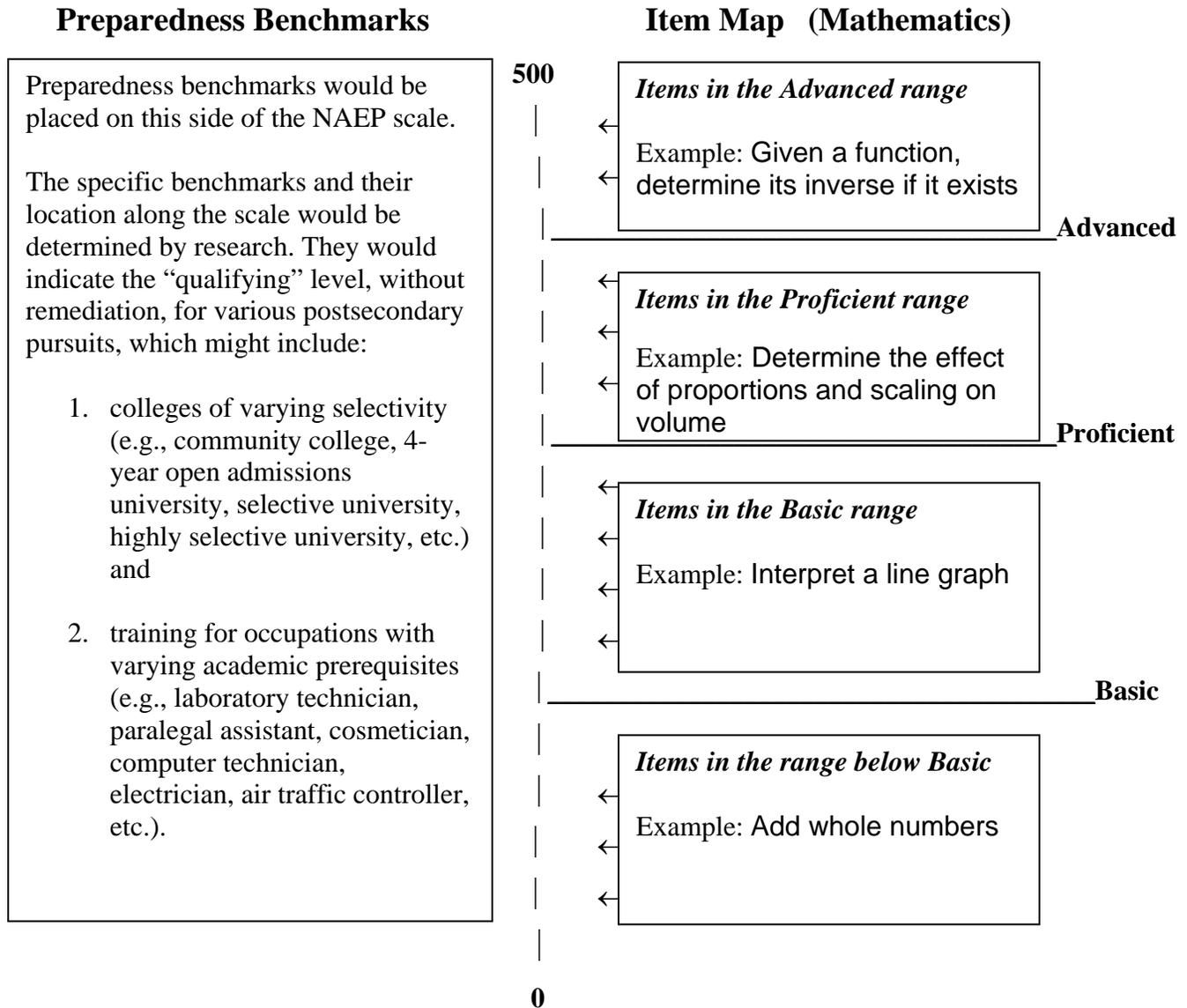
**The Ad Hoc Committee believes that it is essential to provide information about performance in the range below Basic.** Of 12<sup>th</sup> graders, approximately 26 percent are below Basic in reading and about 35 percent in mathematics. These students are likely to graduate from high school, yet their low levels of achievement suggest that their prospects immediately upon graduation will be limited in comparison to those of higher achieving students.

The number of students achieving below the Basic level is significant. It is important to report as fully as possible on the preparedness of these students for postsecondary endeavors, as well as those performing in the Basic, Proficient, and Advanced achievement levels ranges. Because the 12<sup>th</sup> grade assessment includes only youth in school, but not dropouts or other out of school youth, it also will be important to report clearly on which students are included in the sample and which students are not.

Figure 1

## 12<sup>th</sup> Grade NAEP Scale and Achievement Levels

(Example—Not NAEP Data)



## **Recommendation 6**

**The reporting of 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness in NAEP should be kept as simple as possible to promote public understanding, consistent with available validity evidence.**

### **Background**

The objective of reporting on 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness is to enhance public understanding about the meaning of student achievement. The concept of 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness seems simple to understand and likely to add value to NAEP reporting, answering the question—Are 12<sup>th</sup> graders ready to enter college or training for occupations without the need for remediation? However, this apparently simple idea may turn out to be overly complex in its implementation.

There is a debate about whether preparedness for postsecondary education requires the same proficiencies in reading and mathematics as preparedness for postsecondary training for occupations. Some argue that the proficiencies are the same. However, others argue that colleges have varying standards for placement into credit-bearing coursework and that occupations for which training is required have differing prerequisite academic demands.

If research supports the contention that the academic proficiencies needed to be prepared are the same for postsecondary education and for postsecondary training for occupations, reporting should be relatively straightforward and simple. However, the research might indicate that there are multiple “preparedness” levels, or that subtle caveats are required. The question then would be whether NAEP can reflect this variability faithfully and in a manner understandable to the public. Figure 1 above suggests a possible solution, but the answer lies in the research to be conducted.

In the end, reporting on 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness should be done in a manner that will promote understanding on the part of the public. Whether to report and what to report will have to be determined by the Governing Board in light of the validity evidence and a judgment about what will be meaningful and comprehensible to NAEP’s audience.

## **Recommendation 7**

**The Governing Board should decide on ancillary information relevant to 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness to include in NAEP reports, such as information from NAEP background questionnaires and student transcripts collected through the NAEP High School Transcript Studies.**

### **Background**

In addition to achievement on NAEP, other information related to academics should be included in NAEP reports relevant to 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness. For example, data could be collected to address questions such as

- What percentage of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students have completed a “college prep” program of study?
- What percentage of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students pursued a vocational program and what types of vocational programs were offered?

- What percentage of students participated in joint enrollment programs with local colleges?
- Is there a correlation between attendance and achievement?
- What is the degree of access to Advanced Placement courses and International Baccalaureate programs?
- Are there differences in course taking patterns by gender and by race/ethnicity?
- Do courses with similar titles have similar curricular content or are differences found by some variable, such as region, type of school, or demography?
- What percentage of students has taken college entrance exams?

This information could be collected through the NAEP High School Transcript Studies and through NAEP background questionnaires. The NAEP High School Transcript Studies are currently scheduled once every 4 years, in connection with NAEP 12<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics and science assessments. The next transcript study is scheduled for 2009, the target year for reporting 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness. NAEP background questionnaires are a component of each assessment. **The Governing Board should determine the ancillary information to be reported in connection with the 2009 12<sup>th</sup> grade assessments, specifying the information to be collected through NAEP background questionnaires and through the NAEP 2009 High School Transcript Studies.**

## **12<sup>th</sup> Grade School and Student Participation**

### **Recommendation 1**

**The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) should continue implementing its plan for improving 12<sup>th</sup> grade school and student participation.**

### **Recommendation 2**

**The NCES plan should be amended as follows:**

- In addition to communicating with NAEP participants as described in the NCES plan, contact should be made with the district superintendent regarding the planned administration of NAEP.**
- As a courtesy, a letter should be sent to the president of the district school board to communicate information about the plans to administer NAEP in the district.**

### **Recommendation 3**

**The Governing Board, through the Committee on Standards, Design and Methodology, should monitor and evaluate the implementation of the NCES plan and determine the impact on school and student participation.**

### **Background**

The National Center for Education Statistics has proposed—and begun implementing—initiatives to improve school and student participation. These initiatives include:

- Early notice to schools of their selection for the sample (spring of the school year prior to the assessment rather than fall of the school year in which the assessment is to be conducted)
- Communication by NAEP state coordinators with high school principals about the reasons to participate
- Placement of the assessment date on the school calendar for the next school year
- Greater flexibility to the schools in scheduling the assessment
- More persuasive materials about NAEP for principals, teachers, students, and parents

NCES should continue to implement these initiatives. In addition, NCES should report periodically to the Governing Board on the implementation of these initiatives and their impact on improving participation at the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The Committee on Standards, Design and Methodology (COSDAM) has offered to monitor implementation of the NCES plan on the Governing Board's behalf. The Ad Hoc Committee commends COSDAM for making this offer and recommends its acceptance formally by the Governing Board.

## **Conclusion**

The future of 12<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP is at a crossroad—it may flourish as a source of important information for the public or slowly wither into oblivion. The NAEP 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Commission was created because low participation rates and concerns about student motivation raised questions about the very viability of 12<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP. The Commission members concluded that 12<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP had valuable, unrealized potential and that tapping that potential would invigorate NAEP at the high school level.

The Ad Hoc Committee agrees. Reporting on 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness will increase the relevance and usefulness of NAEP. Supplying state-level results at the 12<sup>th</sup> grade will provide information about student achievement that is otherwise unavailable. Improving 12<sup>th</sup> grade school and student participation is essential if NAEP 12<sup>th</sup> grade results are to be viewed with credibility. The Ad Hoc Committee hopes that the recommendations in this report are helpful toward these ends and that the Governing Board will act on them with due deliberation.

## Reporting 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Preparedness in 2009: Example of Timetable of Key Events

August 2006	Receive Ad Hoc Committee Report
August-November 2006	<p>Review of draft “preparedness” policy definition with stakeholders</p> <p>Review of 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading and mathematics frameworks, specifications, and items in light of draft policy definition for preparedness</p> <p>Design of research and validity studies</p> <p>Develop draft statements about 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness to be considered for NAEP reports</p> <p>Develop draft policy definitions for 12<sup>th</sup> grade achievement Levels (Basic, Proficient, and Advanced)</p>
November 2006	<p>Governing Board standing committees consider technical and policy considerations</p> <p>Governing Board makes decision about process for external comments on draft policy definition for 12<sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness</p>
November 2006–March 2007	Public hearings, forums, Federal register notice, etc. to obtain comments about 12 <sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness: draft definition, policy and technical issues, etc.
March 2007	<p>Revised policy definitions of “preparedness” and of Basic, Proficient and Advanced achievement levels at 12<sup>th</sup> grade presented to the Governing Board for discussion</p> <p>Status report on reviews, development of research and validity studies, draft statements for reports, etc.</p> <p>Begin work on preliminary content definitions for “preparedness” in 12<sup>th</sup> reading and mathematics</p>
May 2007	Governing Board action on policy definition of “12 <sup>th</sup> grade preparedness” and 12 <sup>th</sup> grade achievement levels
August 2007	<p>Approve preliminary content definitions for “preparedness” in 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading and mathematics</p> <p>Approve proposed statements about preparedness for NAEP reports</p>

August–November 2007	Conduct construct validity studies in 12 <sup>th</sup> grade reading and mathematics
November 2007	Present results of construct validity studies; revise preliminary content definitions and statements for reporting accordingly
2008	Gather validity evidence  Award achievement level setting contracts
2009	Administer reading and mathematics assessments  Conduct achievement level setting activities  Governing Board action on 12 <sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness reporting
2010	Report on 12 <sup>th</sup> grade student preparedness