The Reading Framework for the National Assessment of Educational Progress:

Preparing for Another Decade of Reading Assessment

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The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has provided professionals in the field of education, policymakers across the spectrum, and the public with indispensable information about what the children and youth in our schools know and are able to do. To maintain confidence in NAEP, sometimes referred to as The Nation's Report Card, the assessment must continuously evolve in a manner that captures the most up-to-date learning science and research offer in a process that is transparent and inclusive. The role of reading in the education of our children and youth cannot be overestimated. Reading proficiently ensures that our students will do better in school and ultimately in life – socially, emotionally, economically, and physically. When students are able to access reading, they better understand both our world and themselves. The assessment of educational progress plays a critical role in supporting an equity agenda which acknowledges that reading is a basic right.

Having participated in the development of the two frameworks used to guide the development of assessments since 1988 when the charge and configuration of the current National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) were established, I have observed that the framework development process honors both continuity and change. Further, while the framework is designed to meet assessment purposes only, there is evidence of the reading framework's influence on standard setting and curriculum development. Specifically, *The 2009/2017 Reading Framework* had an impact on the following:

- There has been more emphasis on nonfiction and knowledge building.

- Text quality has become more of a focus and there is intensified emphasis on seeking evidence when responding to text.

- Poetry is more prevalent and recent award-winning books for young people are written in that form.

- The vocabulary imperative continues to resonate.

The most recent framework has been guiding assessment development for over a decade. This is the second framework and the development process that shaped it provided the opportunity to make decisions about what to maintain, what to revise, and how to innovate.

The focus of this paper will be on making the case for an updated assessment framework and on new lines of inquiry to be followed. This is to argue that there is a need for a new reading framework that will address recent developments in learning science; insights from technologically examining "the reading brain"; the most up-to-date reading research; highly effective classroom practices, and an appreciation for the increasingly complex literacy demands on children who will enter the world as adults in 2030 and beyond.

Brandt and Eagleton describe how humans create as "bending, breaking and blending" (Brandt & Eagleton, 2017). This view of creativity is fully realized in today's children's literature and in the plethora of reading materials available. Bending describes using elements of an established form to make something different. The young adult book Isabella (Palantini, 2018) incorporates narrative text, a social media script, and a graphic story within a story. This illustrates what reading looks like in 2018. Breaking is described as taking something apart and reconfiguring the pieces into something new. Infographics are becoming staples of informational text. With the

continuation of the information explosion and the impact of the 3-D printer, we are at the cusp of how many ways data can be presented. In a recent speech, Bill Daggett, president of the International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE), reported that employers want readers who can comprehend complicated infotext as part of a modern work force (Daggett, 2018). Blending is mixing elements and in reading occurs when text is presented in multimedia and print formats. Readers now use strategies that adapt to the reason to read and the mode of presentation.

In this transformative environment for readers, it is time to pursue new lines of inquiry and innovation when establishing a reading framework that responds to the question, "How well are the nation's children and youth reading?" Here are five proposals for further study:

1. Multimedia and Print Reading: What we know

   - Different demands are placed on the reader based on the modality (Wolfe, 2007).
   - Fourth graders did better in comparison to peers in other countries when using technology than they did when using traditional print (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS2017).

   What we need to know:

   > What are the implications of using multimedia and print resources for the assessment of reading comprehension?

2. Deep Reading: What we know

   - Surface to Deep to Transfer is the trajectory of becoming a skilled reader. (Fisher, Frey, Hattie, 2016).
   - Deep reading involves making connections and seeing relationships.

What we need to know:

Does the current NAEP framework go deep enough in assessing reading comprehension?

3. Knowledge: What we know

- Background knowledge will greatly influence a student's comprehension of text (Duke, 2017).

- The "baseball" study revealed that knowledge of the subject was more important than the ability of the reader (Recht & Leslie, 1988).

What we need to know:

Does the current framework adequately address the knowledge conundrum?

4. Social-Emotional Learning: What we know

- Social-Emotional learning as demonstrated by a growth mindset (Dweck, 2007) and other positive learning behaviors can contribute to academic success.

- Children and youth do well when supported by a culturally-responsive environment (Howard, 2014).

- Effort may need to be considered more deeply (Tyner, 2018).

What we need to know:

How can we examine social-emotional learning in a more robust and meaningful manner?

5. Critical and Collaborative Reading: What we know

- With more opportunities to read and more reading resources to draw on, there is a need to evaluate sources and demonstrate media literacy.

- Argumentative reasoning skills have been developed using electronically conducted dialogic conversations (Kuhn & Cromwell, 2010).

What we need to know:

Does the assessment framework need to address media literacy and evaluating sources?
Is it possible to have group work conducted electronically as a component of the assessment of reading comprehension?

Reading is one of the most important human achievements and one that makes us more humane. The focus provided by the National Assessment of Educational Progress supports the goals of becoming a nation of readers and unlocking the potential of every child and young person.

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