

# **National Assessment Governing Board**

## **Reporting and Dissemination Committee**

### **Report of May 14, 2010**

**Attendees:** Committee Members – Chairman David Gordon, Vice Chair Mary Frances Taymans, David Alukonis, Anitere Flores, Warren Smith, Eric Wearne (representing Gov. Perdue), and Eileen Weiser; NAGB Staff – Larry Feinberg and Stephaan Harris; NCES – Arnold Goldstein, Holly Spurlock, Suzanne Triplett, and Brenda Wolff; ETS – Dave Freund, Steve Szyskiewicz, and Greg Vafis; HagerSharp – Lisa Clarke; HumRRO – Steve Sellman; MetaMetrics – Heather Koons; NESSI – Cadille Hemphill; Pearson – Russ Vogt; Reingold – Amy Buckley; Westat – Keith Rust.

#### **1. Review of Core Background Questions**

Under a delegation of authority from the Governing Board, the Committee reviewed the supplemental background questionnaire for charter schools. This questionnaire was first put together in 2003 when NAEP over-sampled charter schools for a special report. Since then the number of such schools has greatly increased so there is no need to over-sample but NAEP has continued to give the questionnaire with no changes to all the charter schools in which it tests.

Of the 18 questions in the questionnaire the Committee decided that 13 should be deleted from the assessment in 2011. Most of these are no longer relevant or useful now that the charter school movement has matured. Other questions ask for a level of detail that makes them difficult to answer and possibly misleading.

The Committee suggested that NCES prepare new questions for a supplemental charter school questionnaire in 2013, which would be ten years after the first detailed look at charter schools by NAEP. This would be a special study questionnaire that would not be administered every time NAEP is given but might be repeated at six or ten year intervals to track significant changes in charter schools that may be related to student achievement.

On May 3 the Committee held a teleconference to review the 21 core items in the background questionnaires for schools. It decided to delete three of them on the ground that they had been unproductive and were either ambiguous or unnecessarily time-consuming to answer. It asked for two questions to be combined, and said revisions should be considered for five others in 2013 although they were useful enough to remain “as is” in 2011.

A detailed report on Committee actions and comments has been transmitted to NCES. The Committee is committed to taking a careful look at the core and special NAEP background questionnaires it reviews. It intends to make sure they are productive and relevant to academic achievement, which are important elements in the law and in the Governing Board policy.

## **2. Demonstration of NAEP Data Explorer and State Comparisons Web Tool**

Over the past decade the Internet has become the principal means by which most NAEP results are made available to the public. Instead of large, heavy books with many tables of NAEP data, printed reports have become thin, the number printed has been reduced, and virtually all NAEP data is made available on the web. To help the public gain access to the enormous amount of data available, NCES, through its contractor ETS, has developed several Internet tools that are found on the NAEP web site.

At the Committee meeting Steve Szyskiewicz, director of web reporting for the NAEP project at ETS, demonstrated how these web tools work. The main one is called the NAEP Data Explorer, which has almost everything NAEP has collected data on since 1990. There are also two somewhat simpler off-shoots, which give key data on a few prime topics. One is the state comparisons web tool, which can be used to make comparisons between the states. These include putting the states in rank order for the various categories on which NAEP reports. The other NAEP web tool is state profiles, which can be used to get detailed data on a particular state.

The web tools not only produce tables of data but can also create charts and graphs, indicate which differences are statistically significant, and present NAEP results for any reporting category in terms of both average scores and achievement levels.

Each Board member is being given a four-page reference guide explaining how the NAEP Data Explorer can be used to access and analyze the full range of National Assessment results. The Committee expressed appreciation for the demonstration and noted that it would continue to monitor Internet reporting of NAEP results.

## **3. Review of Recent NAEP Release: 2009 Reading Report Card**

Amy Buckley, of Reingold, the Board's communications contractor, presented a review of media coverage and analysis of the NAEP 2009 Reading Report Card, which was released at a press conference in Washington, DC on March 24. The coverage was extensive, with 25 million print impressions, 44 radio and TV reports, and 249 blog posts, resulting in more than 500 stories. Some of the major outlets included *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and the Associated Press. Ms. Buckley said the AP wire service is of special importance because its stories are widely used by print outlets and on the web.

Ms. Buckley said she was looking forward to working with NAGB Public Affairs Specialist Stephaan Harris to develop more audio and video materials in conjunction with releases and to increase the presence of NAEP on social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. Committee Member Anitere Flores said the social media sites offer a good opportunity to tell people about NAGB and NAEP releases since they can reach thousands of people at once.

Ms. Buckley noted that many of the print headlines and articles focused on how NAEP reading scores had held steady or were not as positive as the NAEP results in math. She said the

coverage emphasized NAEP data and made almost no use of the statements by panel members at the press conference that accompanied the release.

Vice Chair Mary Frances Taymans said perhaps a strategy for improving release coverage may be to invite panelists with significant name recognition. Ms. Buckley said other ideas to enhance media coverage might include strategic messaging of panelist statements and focusing on key messages that get beyond the scores.

Chairman David Gordon suggested that giving prominence to achievement levels in the Board press release and member statements might help the press and public understand the meaning of results and focus attention on the movement of students across levels, which minor changes in scale scores don't make clear.

#### **4. Projected Schedule for Future NAEP Reports and Related Releases**

Arnold Goldstein, of NCES, discussed upcoming NAEP reports to be released in 2010 and 2011. He said release of the 2009 Science Report Card would be delayed until late in the fall in part because the science achievement levels are still being considered by the Governing Board and would likely not be ready for approval until the Board's August meeting. He said the Reading and Mathematics report for grade 12 might be ready before Science. Because the Science Report Card would be delayed Chairman Gordon said the release plan for Science 2009 would be taken off the agenda for this meeting and considered in August.

Mt. Goldstein then reviewed the remainder of the schedule for future NAEP releases, which is presented in the agenda book for this meeting. He noted that the 2010 report cards in Civics, U.S. History and Geography were all scheduled to be ready for release in spring 2011. Chairman David Gordon suggested, and the Committee concurred, that it would be best to release each of these reports separately, rather than combining them, which has occasionally been done in the past, in order to focus attention on each subject and not diminish its importance.

Vice Chair Taymans suggested that members of the Board be sent notices and links to all NAEP reports, not just the initial releases conducted by the Governing Board. Larry Feinberg, of the NAGB staff, asked if the upcoming report on White-Hispanic gaps might contain data on some of the nationality groups within the Hispanic category since achievement among them varies widely. David Freund, of ETS, said this would not be possible because the racial/ethnic data on which the gap analysis is based comes from school records, which do not break out different nationalities. These groups are listed only on the NAEP background questions filled out by students. Chairman Gordon expressed concern that the omission of Hispanic nationality groups would reduce the thoroughness of the gap report.

#### **5. Update on Mega-States Report**

The Committee received an update on the Mega-States report, which is now scheduled for release in February 2011. Arnold Goldstein, of NCES, showed possible layouts for data presentations that could be used both in the brief highlights report and in the extensive material to be made available on the web. All of the data and charts would be produced using the NAEP

Data Explorer but would be arranged to focus on the nation's five largest states—California, Texas, Florida, New York, and Illinois. Vice Chair Taymans said it would be important to have clear explanations accompany all charts in the report. Chairman Gordon said charts should be included showing demographic changes in each state over time.

Members said NCES should carry out the Board's original plan for the report by including state-level data for NAEP science as well as for reading and mathematics. Ms. Flores noted the importance of science and said the Board also wants to make sure that the report presents achievement results across the curriculum and does not focus exclusively on the basics of reading and math.

#### **6. Follow-up Letter on NAEP in Puerto Rico**

The letter on NAEP activities in Puerto Rico, sent to members of Congress and Puerto Rico officials, is included as an information item under the Committee tab in the briefing book. Vice Chair Taymans expressed concern that the letter does not mention the expression of support at the Committee's last meeting in March for testing private schools in Puerto Rico, as well as public schools, in order to present a complete picture of student achievement on the island. Private schools enroll more than a quarter of Puerto Rico students, a much higher proportion than in any state.

The Committee asked NCES to study the feasibility of testing a representative sample of private schools in Puerto Rico when regular NAEP testing resumes on the island, possibly in 2013.

I certify the accuracy of these minutes.




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David W. Gordon, Chairman

5.24.10

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Date