National Assessment Governing Board

Reporting and Dissemination Committee

March 1, 2013
10:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

AGENDA

10:00 – 10:40 am	Implementation of Policy on Students with Disabilities and English-Language Learners *Grady Wilburn, NCES* **[Joint meeting with COSDAM]**	Attachment A
10:40 – 11:20 am	Parent Outreach Activities a. Draft Outreach Plan *Stephaan Harris, NAGB Staff* *Amy Buckley, Reingold Communications* b. Parent Summit *Ray Fields, NAGB Staff*	Attachment B
11:20 – 11:35 am	Review of NAEP Releases: Reading Vocabulary and Mega-States Reports *Amy Buckley, Reingold Communications*	Attachment C
11:35 – 11:45 am	Projected Schedule for Future NAEP Reports *Angela Glymph, NCES*	Attachment D
11:45 – 11:55 am	Configuration of Fall Releases: NAEP 2013 Reading and Mathematics Report Cards *Larry Feinberg, NAGB Staff*	Attachment E
11:55 am – 12:05 pm	**ACTION**: Release Plan for NAEP 2012 Economics Report Card *Stephaan Harris, NAGB Staff*	Attachment F
12:05 – 12:15 pm	Recommendations for Future Agenda Topics *Committee Members*	

Attachment A

Issues in Implementing the Governing Board's 2010 Inclusion Policy

In 2010, the Governing Board adopted the *NAEP Testing and Reporting on Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners* policy. This policy called for changes in how NAEP would both collect and report data on these two student groups. Through this policy, the Governing Board hoped to make NAEP a more inclusive assessment, to make inclusion and accommodation practices more consistent across the states. Further, the policy called for NCES to report which states meet, and do not meet the Board's inclusion targets of assessing at least 95 percent of all students as well as at least 85 percent of students with disabilities (SD) and English language learners (ELL).

Even before the scheduled full implementation of this policy in the 2013 data collection, many states complied with the spirit of this effort to make NAEP more inclusive. Working with the NAEP state coordinators and field staff, more SD and ELL students participated in the 2011 assessments than in 2009. In the grade 4 reading assessment, for example, in 2009, 17 states did not meet the 95 percent target compared with 9 states in 2011. Nearly all the states (45) included less than 85 of their SD and ELL students in this assessment in 2009, compared with only 18 in 2011. The changes were similar at grade 8. The 2011 NAEP report cards included tables showing which states met these targets, as the Board policy requested.

With one exception, NCES implemented the full policy in the 2013 data collection. The last major component was a new "decision tree," based on the policy, that NAEP administrators are using to assist school personnel in deciding which students should be tested and which accommodations they should receive. The purpose of this new decision tree is to make inclusion practices as uniform as possible across all states.

The one aspect of the decision tree that has proven challenging to implement as stated in the policy pertains to the conversion of certain excluded students to refusals. The policy says that in deciding how a disabled student is to participate in NAEP:

"If the student's IEP or 504 plan specifies an accommodation or modification that is not allowed on NAEP, then the student is encouraged to take NAEP without that accommodation or modification."

Examples of such accommodations are reading aloud the reading test and testing over multiple days.

The Governing Board policy further states:

"Students refusing to take the assessment because a particular accommodation is not allowed should not be classified as exclusions but placed in the category of refusals under NAEP data analysis procedures."

In NAEP's statistical methodology, however, the category of refusals has been set aside for those students who actually refuse to participate in the assessment or whose parents refuse permission for them to participate. Classifying disabled students who don't take the assessments because their IEP accommodations are not offered in NAEP as "refusals" would result in a technical distortion of the way in which the NAEP sample is adjusted to ensure that it accurately represents the student population as a whole.

NAEP uses a procedure known as "weight-class adjustments" to ensure that results collected from a sample of students accurately reflects the results that would be obtained from testing all students. Weight-class adjustments are defined as follows in the NAEP technical documentation:

"The student nonresponse adjustment procedure inflates the weights of assessed students to account for eligible sampled students who did not participate in the assessment. These inflation factors offset the loss of data associated with absent students. The adjustments are computed within nonresponse cells and are based on the assumption that the assessed and absent students within the same cell are more similar to one another than to students from different cells. Like its counterpart at the school level, the student nonresponse adjustment is intended to reduce the mean square error and thus improve the accuracy of NAEP assessment estimates."

In this procedure, students who refuse participation, as well as absent students, are given weights because presumably they would be able to take the assessments. If students not taking the tests due to unavailability of accommodations were classified as refusals, then refusals would no longer be a random group, since most of these students are relatively low-performing and according to their schools would not be able to take the assessments. Weight-class adjustments made for this group would then constitute an inappropriate use of the statistic, not comparable to the way it is used in other large-scale assessments such as TIMSS and PIRLS.

Classifying these students as "refusals" would result in other, unintended, consequences as well:

- The trend line may not be maintained if the methodology is changed;
- Exclusion rates would be artificially lowered though fewer students were tested;
- Participation rates would decrease as refusals increased; and
- Average scores on the assessments could be lowered in some jurisdictions.

NCES will discuss these issues in more detail at the meeting. We will describe the 2013 data being collected to analyze the impact of classifying these students as other than excluded, and to better understand the barriers still preventing some students from taking the assessments. We will also describe measures being taken to increase participation of students with disabilities and English language learners, and to make inclusion practices in NAEP more consistent across states and school districts. In support of the intent of the Board policy of converting excluded students to refusals, NCES will discuss alternative ways of reporting state exclusion rate data that will show the proportion of excluded students who could not participate in the 2013 assessments because their accommodations were not allowed or provided in NAEP.

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY BY NAGB—3/6/2010

National Assessment Governing Board

Policy Statement on NAEP Testing and Reporting on Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners

INTRODUCTION

To serve as the Nation's Report Card, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) must produce valid, comparable data on the academic achievement of American students. Public confidence in NAEP results must be high. But in recent years it has been threatened by continuing, substantial variations in exclusion rates for students with disabilities (SD) and English language learners (ELL) among the states and urban districts taking part.

Student participation in NAEP is voluntary, and the assessment is prohibited by law from providing results for individual children or schools. But NAEP's national, state, and district results are closely scrutinized, and the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) believes NAEP must act affirmatively to ensure that the samples reported are truly representative and that public confidence is maintained.

To ensure that NAEP is fully representative, a very high proportion of the students selected must participate in its samples, including students with disabilities and English language learners. Exclusion of such students must be minimized; they should be counted in the Nation's Report Card. Accommodations should be offered to make the assessment accessible, but these changes from standard test administration procedures should not alter the knowledge and skills being assessed.

The following policies and guidelines are based on recommendations by expert panels convened by the Governing Board to propose uniform national rules for NAEP testing of SD and ELL students. The Board has also taken into consideration the views expressed in a wide range of public comment and in detailed analyses provided by the National Center for Education Statistics, which is responsible for conducting the assessment under the policy guidance of the Board**.** The policies are presented not as statistically-derived standards but as policy guidelines intended to maximize student participation, minimize the potential for bias, promote fair comparisons, and maintain trends. They signify the Board's strong belief that NAEP must retain public confidence that it is fair and fully-representative of the jurisdictions and groups on which the assessment reports.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

1. As many students as possible should be encouraged to participate in the National Assessment. Accommodations should be offered, if necessary, to enable students with disabilities and English language learners to participate, but should not alter the constructs assessed, as defined in assessment frameworks approved by the National Assessment Governing Board.

2. To attain comparable inclusion rates across states and districts, special efforts should be made to inform and solicit the cooperation of state and local officials, including school personnel who decide upon the participation of individual students.

3. The proportion of all students excluded from any NAEP sample should not exceed 5 percent. Samples falling below this goal shall be prominently designated in reports as not attaining the desired inclusion rate of 95 percent.

4. Among students classified as either ELL or SD a goal of 85 percent inclusion shall be established. National, state, and district samples falling below this goal shall be identified in NAEP reporting.

5. In assessment frameworks adopted by the Board, the constructs to be tested should be carefully defined, and allowable accommodations should be identified.

6. All items and directions in NAEP assessments should be clearly written and free of linguistic complexity irrelevant to the constructs assessed.

7. Enhanced efforts should be made to provide a short clear description of the purpose and value of NAEP and of full student participation in the assessment. These materials should be aimed at school personnel, state officials, and the general public, including the parents of students with disabilities and English language learners. The materials should emphasize that NAEP provides important information on academic progress and that all groups of students should be counted in the Nation's Report Card. The materials should state clearly that NAEP gives no results for individual students or schools, and can have no impact on student status, grades, or placement decisions.

8. Before each state and district-level assessment NAEP program representatives should meet with testing directors and officials concerned with SD and ELL students to explain NAEP inclusion rules. The concerns of state and local decision makers should be discussed.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

For Students with Disabilities

1. Students with disabilities should participate in the National Assessment with or without allowable accommodations, as needed. Allowable accommodations are any changes from standard test administration procedures, needed to provide fair access by students with disabilities that do not alter the constructs being measured and produce valid results. In cases where non-standard procedures are permitted on state tests but not allowed on NAEP, students will be urged to take NAEP without them, but these students may use other allowable accommodations that they need.

2. The decision tree for participation of students with disabilities in NAEP shall be as follows:

NAEP Decision Tree for Students with Disabilities

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

1. NAEP is designed to measure constructs carefully defined in assessment frameworks adopted by the National Assessment Governing Board.

2. NAEP provides a list of appropriate accommodations and non-allowed modifications in each subject. An appropriate accommodation changes the way NAEP is normally administered to enable a student to take the test but does not alter the construct being measured. An inappropriate modification changes the way NAEP is normally administered but does alter the construct being measured.

STEPS OF THE DECISION TREE

3. In deciding how a student will participate in NAEP:

   a. If the student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan and is tested without accommodation, then he or she takes NAEP without accommodation.

   b. If the student's IEP or 504 plan specifies an accommodation permitted by NAEP, then the student takes NAEP with that accommodation.

   c. If the student's IEP or 504 plan specifies an accommodation or modification that is not allowed on NAEP, then the student is encouraged to take NAEP without that accommodation or modification.

3. Students should be considered for exclusion from NAEP only if they have previously been identified in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) as having the most significant cognitive disabilities, and are assessed by the state on an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS). All students tested by the state on an alternate assessment with modified achievement standards (AA-MAS) should be included in the National Assessment.

4. Students refusing to take the assessment because a particular accommodation is not allowed should not be classified as exclusions but placed in the category of refusals under NAEP data analysis procedures.

5. NAEP should report separately on students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and those with Section 504 plans, but (except to maintain trend) should only count the students with IEPs as students with disabilities. All 504 students should participate in NAEP.

   At present the National Assessment reports on students with disabilities by combining results for those with an individualized education program (who receive special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA]) and students with Section 504 plans under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (a much smaller group with disabilities who are not receiving services under IDEA but may be allowed test accommodations).[*] Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, only those with an IEP are counted as students with disabilities in reporting state test results. NAEP should be consistent with this practice. However, to preserve trend, results for both categories should be combined for several more assessment years, but over time NAEP should report as students with disabilities only those who have an IEP.

6. Only students with an IEP or Section 504 plan are eligible for accommodations on NAEP. States are urged to adopt policies providing that such documents should address participation in the National Assessment.

For English Language Learners

1. All English language learners selected for the NAEP sample who have been in United States schools for one year or more should be included in the National Assessment. Those in U.S. schools for less than one year should take the assessment if it is available in the student's primary language.

   One year or more shall be defined as one full academic year before the year of the assessment.

[*] NOTE: The regulation implementing Section 504 defines a person with a disability as one who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. 34 C.F.R. § 104.3(j)(1).

2. Accommodations should be offered that maximize meaningful participation, are responsive to the student's level of English proficiency, and maintain the constructs in the NAEP framework. A list of allowable accommodations should be prepared by NAEP and furnished to participating schools. Such accommodations may be provided only to students who are not native speakers of English and are currently classified by their schools as English language learners or limited English proficient (LEP).

3. Bilingual versions of NAEP in Spanish and English should be prepared in all subjects, other than reading and writing, to the extent deemed feasible by the National Center for Education Statistics. The assessments of reading and writing should continue to be in English only, as provided for in the NAEP frameworks for these subjects.

4. Staff at each school should select from among appropriate ELL-responsive accommodations allowed by NAEP, including bilingual booklets, those that best meet the linguistic needs of each student. Decisions should be made by a qualified professional familiar with the student, using objective indicators of English proficiency (such as the English language proficiency assessments [ELPA] required by federal law), in accordance with guidance provided by NAEP and subject to review by the NAEP assessment coordinator.

5. Schools may provide word-to-word bilingual dictionaries (without definitions) between English and the student's primary language, except for NAEP reading and writing, which are assessments in English only.

6. NAEP results for ELL students should be disaggregated and reported by detailed information on students' level of English language proficiency, using the best available standardized assessment data. As soon as possible, NAEP should develop its own brief test of English language proficiency to bring consistency to reporting nationwide.

7. Data should be collected, disaggregated, and reported for former English language learners who have been reclassified as English proficient and exited from the ELL category. This should include data on the number of years since students exited ELL services or were reclassified.

8. English language learners who are also classified as students with disabilities should first be given linguistically-appropriate accommodations before determining which additional accommodations may be needed to address any disabilities they may have.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Governing Board supports an aggressive schedule of research and development in the following areas:

1. The use of plain language and the principles of universal design, including a plain language review of new test items consistent with adopted frameworks.

2. Adaptive testing, either computer-based or paper-and-pencil. Such testing should provide more precise and accurate information than is available at present on low-performing and high-performing groups of students, and may include items appropriate for ELLs at low or intermediate levels of English proficiency. Data produced by such targeted testing should be placed on the common NAEP scale. Students assessed under any new procedures should be able to demonstrate fully their knowledge and skills on a range of material specified in NAEP frameworks.

3. A brief, easily-administered test of English language proficiency to be used for determining whether students should receive a translation, adaptive testing, or other accommodations because of limited English proficiency.

4. The validity and impact of commonly used testing accommodations, such as extended time and small group administration.

5. The identification, measurement, and reporting on academic achievement of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. This should be done in order to make recommendations on how such students could be included in NAEP in the future.

6. A study of outlier states and districts with notably high or low exclusion rates for either SD or ELL students to identify the characteristics of state policies, the approach of decision makers, and other criteria associated with different inclusion levels.

The Governing Board requests NCES to prepare a research agenda on the topics above. A status report on this research should be presented at the November 2010 meeting of the Board.

Technical Advisory Panel on Uniform National Rules for NAEP Testing of Students with Disabilities

Report to the National Assessment Governing Board

July 22, 2009

Chair: Alexa Posny

Members: Louis Danielson, George Engelhard, Miriam Freedman, Claire Greer, Robert Linn, Debra Paulson, and Martha Thurlow

Technical Advisory Panel on Uniform National Rules for NAEP Testing of Students with Disabilities

Executive Summary of Report to NAGB - July 2009

Chair: Alexa Posny
Members: Louis Danielson, George Engelhard, Miriam Freedman, Claire Greer, Robert Linn, Debra Paulson, and Martha Thurlow

The panel believes the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is an important tool for understanding academic achievement among students with disabilities. To ensure that NAEP samples are fully representative and to maintain the comparability of state and district NAEP results, the panel recommends that NAEP

1. Encourage as many students as possible to participate in NAEP, and provide for the use of allowable accommodations that are necessary to enable students with disabilities to participate.

2. Clarify and expand NAEP's guidance to schools, encouraging maximum participation of students with disabilities so at least 95% of those drawn for the NAEP sample participate.

3. Report separately on students who have individualized education programs (IEPs) and those with Section 504 plans, but (except to maintain trend) only count the students with IEPs as students with disabilities.

4. Provide incentives for schools to include students with disabilities, including additional outreach and public reporting of participation rates below 95% of students with disabilities.

5. Support research efforts to develop targeted testing for students at both the top and bottom levels of achievement, with sound procedures to identify students to receive targeted test booklets on the basis of their performance on some standard indicator of achievement.

6. Encourage and review research on the identification and progress of students who have a significant cognitive disability but in the short term do not test this 1% of students on NAEP.

7. Assess the English language proficiency of students with disabilities who are English language learners and are drawn for the NAEP sample and provide linguistically appropriate accommodations for those who need them before determining whether additional accommodations may be needed to address any disabilities those students may have.

Although NAEP can establish rules for students to be tested in the same way, individual students participate in NAEP on a voluntary basis, and it is their schools that normally make the decision about whether a student drawn for the NAEP sample participates or not. Therefore, the cooperation of schools and parents is essential to ensure that NAEP samples in every jurisdiction are fully representative and that test results are comparable among the states and districts assessed. The recommendations in this report are intended to be of practical use in determining NAEP testing procedures and in working with states and districts to continue the assessment's tradition of producing comparable results and useful information.

Technical Advisory Panel on Uniform National Rules for NAEP Testing of Students with Disabilities

Report to National Assessment Governing Board

July 22, 2009

Chair: Alexa Posny

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BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was established in 1969 to measure the academic achievement of a representative sample of elementary and secondary students in the United States. It is sometimes called the Nation's Report Card. Subsequently, the assessment was expanded to provide representative-sample results for states and large urban school districts.

NAEP is designed to produce valid, comparable data on large groups of students. It is prohibited by law from providing results for individual children or schools. Scores are not intended and (because no student takes the entire test) cannot be calculated for individual students. Because NAEP measures change over time, it can provide participating states and districts with reliable, independent information about the success of their efforts to improve education. It is an important common measure of student performance.

Recently, concern has arisen about the wide variation among states and districts in the rates at which students with disabilities participate in NAEP. Confusion can arise when in some states almost all students with disabilities who are selected for the NAEP sample take the test, and in others many do not. Some advocates for students with disabilities believe that having good information on the achievement of the full population of students with disabilities is a critical tool in improving services for them. The purpose of this report is both to increase the uniformity of NAEP participation rates among states and districts and to make participation rates high and participation procedures uniform.

Specifically, the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) convened a technical advisory panel to recommend a uniform set of rules for testing students with a disability on NAEP. The eight-member group held an all-day meeting in Washington, DC, on April 23, 2009, for initial briefings and discussion. The panel conducted four conference calls and exchanged numerous drafts and e-mails between May and July.

The Governing Board charged the panel to make recommendations that:

- provide that students with similar disabilities be tested on NAEP the same way, regardless of where they live;
- maximize student access and meaningful participation;
- ensure that the constructs on NAEP frameworks be measured and that all students may be placed on the same scale;
- permit only accommodations that maintain the validity, reliability, and comparability of NAEP results; and
- are feasible, logistically and financially, and without detrimental consequences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Encourage as many students as possible to participate in NAEP, and provide for the use of allowable accommodations that are necessary to enable students with disabilities to participate.**

The panel recommends that all students with disabilities participate in NAEP with appropriate accommodations that they need, which are approved by NAEP. The panel understands that some students will not be allowed to use on NAEP some of the accommodations or modifications that are permitted on tests administered by the state or district.

The panel defines an appropriate accommodation as:

i. a change to the way NAEP is normally administered, and
ii. a change that does ***not*** alter the construct being measured, and
iii. a change that is needed to enable a student to take the test.

If a proposed accommodation alters the construct being measured, the panel considers it a modification. The panel defines a modification as:

i. a change to the way NAEP is normally administered, and
ii. a change that does alter the construct being measured.

The panel recommends ***against*** the use of any change that would alter the construct NAEP is designed to measure, as defined by the NAEP frameworks.

The panel understands that the Governing Board defines the construct underlying the NAEP reading test as "an active and complex process that involves understanding written text." Because the Governing Board defines this construct to include the ability to decode written text, the panel reaffirms the current NAEP practice of not allowing "read aloud" as an accommodation on the reading test.

The panel understands that the Governing Board defines the construct underlying the NAEP mathematics test as involving five elements, one of which is "Number Properties and Operations (including computation…)" Because this construct includes computation, the panel reaffirms current NAEP practice of not allowing the use of calculators on those parts of the NAEP math test that assess computation.

2. Clarify and expand NAEP's guidance to schools, encouraging maximum participation of students with disabilities.

As stated previously, the panel recognizes that the testing rules NAEP adopts will not yield comparable state and local results if jurisdictions vary in their participation practices. The panel therefore recommends changes to the guidance given school personnel in deciding whether students drawn for the NAEP sample are to be tested. The panel recommends advising schools on the purpose and nature of NAEP and the desirability of high participation rates, and setting the clear expectation that at least 95% of all students with disabilities drawn for the NAEP sample are expected to take the test.

In a departure from past guidance, the panel recommends state and local decision makers begin with the expectation that almost all students with disabilities will take the test, and then make decisions regarding the accommodations that individual students will be allowed to have. Specifically, the panel recommends this revised Decision Tree be provided to schools:

NAEP Decision Tree for Students with Disabilities

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

1. NAEP is designed to measure constructs carefully defined by frameworks adopted by the Governing Board. Those frameworks include a definition of reading as "an active and complex process that involves understanding written text," (including the ability to decode text) and include in its definition of mathematics five elements, one of which is "Number Properties and Operations (including computation…)."

2. NAEP provides a list of accommodations that are and are not allowed in reading, mathematics, and other subjects. [See Column B of appendix for accommodations allowed and not allowed on NAEP.]

STEPS OF THE DECISION TREE

3. In deciding how this student will participate in NAEP:

    a. If the student has an IEP or 504 plan and is tested without accommodation, then he or she takes NAEP without accommodation.

    b. If the student's IEP or 504 plan specifies an accommodation permitted by NAEP, then the student takes NAEP with that accommodation.

    c. If the student's IEP or 504 plan specifies an accommodation or modification not allowed on NAEP, then the student takes NAEP without that accommodation or modification.

Students should be *excluded* from participating in NAEP ***only*** if they have previously been identified in an IEP as having a significant cognitive disability, and are assessed by the state on an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS). Students should be *included* if tested on an alternate test with what is called modified achievement standards (AA-MAS).

The panel recommends that guidance to school decision-makers include:

i) a short, clear account of the purpose and value of NAEP, why the inclusion of virtually all selected students is needed to provide representative samples, and the steps to determine how a selected student should participate, and

ii) the target for the percentage of students appropriately to be excluded from participating in NAEP would be 1% of the sample.

The panel also recommends that a broader effort at public information be undertaken to explain the value of NAEP and of securing high participation rates in the assessment.

3. Report separately on NAEP results for IEP and 504 students.

The panel recommends that NAEP report results for both IEP and 504 student groups, but report them separately, and calculate state scores for students with disabilities using IEP results only. At present the National Assessment reports on students with disabilities by combining the results for students with an individualized education program (who receive special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA]) and those with Section 504 plans under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (a much smaller group who are not special education students but may be allowed test accommodations).

Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, only students with an IEP are counted as students with disabilities in reporting state test results. NAEP should be consistent with this practice. However, the panel recognizes the usefulness of maintaining NAEP trends, and therefore recommends reporting both sets of data and combining results for IEP and 504 students only to preserve the trend line. The panel recommends over time defining students with disabilities for NAEP as only those who have an IEP. All 504 students should participate in NAEP.

4. Provide incentives for schools to include students with disabilities.

The panel recommends that NAEP make enhanced efforts to provide a short clear description of the purpose and value of NAEP and of full student participation in the assessment. These materials should be aimed at school personnel, state officials and the general public, including the parents of students with disabilities.

The panel recommends that upon release of each new set of NAEP results, information indicating the states and districts with more or less than 95% participation rates of students with disabilities with IEPs be among the information bullets highlighted for the

public and the press. All students with 504 plans are expected to participate. Participation rates should be reported both as a percentage of the total sample and as a percentage of the students identified with disabilities within the sample.

The panel further recommends undertaking special studies to look at any outlier states, with unusually high or low exclusion rates, and to continue work previously done for NCES to probe whether there is a cut point beyond which exclusion rates appear suspect.

Some members of the panel noted that there is significant variation among the states in the rate at which they identify students with disabilities for IEPs. While on average states identify about 12-13% of their students as having a disability and needing special education services, some states identify only 9% of their students, and others identify twice that percentage. The differences result mostly from state and local policy rather than the incidence of disability itself. Generally, jurisdictions with high identification rates include more students with mild disabilities. Those with low identification rates include only the more severe, which would make it more difficult to achieve 95% SD participation even though, overall, more of their students may be taking the assessment.

As an alternative to the 95% participation guideline for students with disabilities, some members of the panel recommend that NAEP study the possibility of developing a uniform SD participation guideline based on a percentage of the total student population, regardless of the percent identified as SD. If more than the selected percentage were excluded on the basis of disability, that would be noted in NAEP reports as indicating that the sample was not fully representative. For example, a maximum of 0.6% of the total sample not tested, or 99.4% participating, would correspond to a SD participation rate of 95% where 12% of the sample is identified as having a disability.

5. **Support research efforts to develop targeted testing for all students at both the top and bottom levels of achievement, with sound procedures to identify students to receive targeted test booklets on the basis of their performance on some standard indicator of achievement.**

The panel recommends that research and development efforts be pursued for NAEP to test all students, not only students with disabilities, at the top and bottom levels of achievement on targeted booklets with a high concentration of difficult or easy items that can be placed on the existing NAEP scale.

Currently all students are tested by NAEP with two 25-minute blocks of items covering a broad range of difficulty, some easy, some difficult, many in the middle. Any student might be randomly assigned any of the various booklets covering the complete range of difficulty for the grade and subject in which he or she is being tested.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is now developing booklets with a concentration of existing easy items that could be targeted for low-performing students. The panel recommends building upon this research effort, if successful, to create targeted tests at ***both*** the top and bottom of the achievement spectrum. High-performing students, those doing work well above grade level, would encounter more challenging items that

allow them to demonstrate knowledge at the advanced level. Likewise, low-performing students would encounter more items that allow them to demonstrate knowledge at the below basic level. This would allow NAEP to measure and report more accurately and in greater detail the knowledge and skills of those students scoring below basic and those scoring advanced. At both ends of the continuum, standard errors would be reduced, and better information would be available about student performance and improvements over time. If needed, additional easy and difficult items should be developed that test NAEP constructs on the existing NAEP scale.

The panel recommends that NAGB attend closely to NCES' on-going research in this area, and base future decisions on this work and similar research by others. If targeted testing becomes part of future NAEP operations, this information should be described carefully for state and local decision makers. Efforts should be made to explain how these innovations enable students with disabilities who are studying at below basic levels and those who are studying at advanced/above grade levels to engage with NAEP at all points of the continuum of achievement.

The panel recommends that NAEP find an objective and psychometrically sound method to identify which students take any targeted tests that are developed. It recommends consideration of the following possibilities:

a) a universal 2-stage process, the system proposed by R. Darrell Bock, in which all students receive a comprehensive block first (a locator test), and then receive either a booklet with a concentration of easy items, a test with a concentration of difficult items, or the usual full-range test in the second block, depending upon their performance on the initial locator test.

While this option was the preference of many panel members, it entails major issues of test administration that need to be taken into account before the technique would become feasible.

b) a specially constructed new NAEP screener.

This would entail new development work.

c) student performance near the top or bottom percentile rank of the state's previously administered state assessment.

While several panel members were hesitant to use results of varying state assessments, existing research shows that even the widely different tests used by states produce scores that correlate well enough with NAEP to be useful in identifying top and bottom performers who would be assigned high or low blocks of items.

d) a new or different method that may emerge, which is psychometrically sound and easy to administer.

The panel wants to see the adoption of a method that is fair, feasible, objective and effective, but recognizes that considerable technical development would be required before targeted testing can become a regular part of NAEP.

The panel recommends that the assignment of a targeted test to a student be based on how the student performs on some standard indicator of achievement (such as a test), and NOT upon a student's label, such as having a disability or being in advanced placement classes. The panel intends that the availability of the easy form of the test assure participating schools that low-performing students, including students with disabilities, are able to participate without altering NAEP standards. Likewise, high-performing students could be challenged on items in the assessment at the greater level of difficulty.

6. **Encourage and review research on the identification and progress of students who have a significant cognitive disability but in the short term do not test this 1% of students on NAEP.**

The Panel recommends that NAGB form a panel of experts and stakeholders to review research and best current practices for identifying, measuring and reporting the progress of students who have a significant cognitive disability, and to make recommendations to NAGB for how emerging findings can and should be applied to NAEP in the future so such students could be included in NAEP.

The panel believes that NAEP should encourage the appropriate assessment of all children, but recommends that for the near future students with a severe cognitive disability—about 1% of the student population—be excluded from NAEP. The exclusion of these students should not be considered in determining whether a jurisdiction meets participation rate guidelines.

7. **Assess the English language proficiency of students with disabilities drawn for the NAEP sample and provide NAEP-approved, linguistically appropriate accommodations for them before determining whether additional accommodations may be needed to address any disabilities these students may have.**

Some students drawn for the NAEP sample will be both English language learners and students with disabilities. For these students it is important first to determine the level of their English proficiency, and the accommodations allowed for them on NAEP. If these students have also been identified as having a disability and are eligible to receive special education services, they should receive whatever accommodations are allowed by NAEP that they need to participate in the NAEP assessment.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF MEMBERS AND AFFILIATIONS

Technical Advisory Panel on Uniform National Rules for NAEP Testing of Students with Disabilities

- Alexa Posny, Kansas Commissioner of Education (Chair)
  Former Director, Office of Special Education Programs
  U.S. Department of Education

- George Engelhard, Jr.
  Professor of Educational Studies (Educational Measurement and Policy)
  Emory University, Atlanta, GA

- Louis Danielson, Managing Director, American Institutes for Research
  Former Director, Research to Practice Division, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education

- Miriam Freedman, attorney and author
  Stoneman, Chandler & Miller, Boston, MA

- Claire Greer, Consultant for Autism, Severe, and Multiple Disabilities
  Exceptional Children Division
  North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

- Robert Linn, Professor of Education (Emeritus)
  Research and Evaluation Methods Program
  University of Colorado

- Debra Paulson
  Middle school math and special education teacher
  El Paso, TX.

- Martha Thurlow, Director
  National Center on Educational Outcomes
  University of Minnesota

APPENDIX B

ACCOMMODATIONS ALLOWED ON NAEP

On state assessment this student:	COLUMN A	COLUMN B: Accommodations allowed on NAEP — Reading	Math	Science	U.S. history or geography or civics
Presentation Format					
Has directions read aloud/repeated in English or receives assistance to understand directions	○	Standard NAEP practice			
Has directions only signed	○	Y	Y	Y	Y
Has test items signed	○	N	Y	Y	Y
Has **occasional** words or phrases read aloud	○	N	Y	Y	Y
Has **all or most** of the test materials read aloud	○	N	Y	Y	Y
Uses a Braille version of the test	○	Y	Y	Y[1]	Y[2]
Uses a large print version of the test	○	Y	Y	Y[1]	Y
Uses magnifying equipment	○	Y	Y	Y[1]	Y
Response Format					
Responds in sign language	○	Y	Y	Y	Y
Uses a Braille typewriter to respond	○	Y	Y	Y	Y
Points to answers or responds orally to a scribe	○	Y	Y	Y	Y
Tape records answers	○	N	N	N	N
Uses a computer or typewriter to respond	○	Y	Y	Y	Y
		Spell/grammar check not allowed			
Uses a template to respond	○	Y	Y	Y	Y
Uses a large marking pen or special writing tool	○	Y	Y	Y	Y
Writes directly in the test booklet	○	Standard NAEP practice			
Setting Format					
Takes the test in a small group[3]	○	Y	Y	Y	Y
Takes the test one-on-one[3]	○	Y	Y	Y	Y
Takes the test in a study carrel	○	Y	Y	Y	Y
Receives preferential seating, special lighting, or furniture	○	Y	Y	Y	Y
Must have test administered by familiar person	○	Y	Y	Y	Y
Timing Accommodations (Note: NAEP takes only 90 minutes.)					
Receives extended time[4]	○	Y	Y	Y	Y
Is given breaks during the test	○	Y	Y	Y	Y
Must be allowed to take subject test over several days	○	N	N	N	N
Other Accommodations					
Uses a calculator, including talking or Braille calculator for computation tasks	○	NA	N[5]	NA	NA
Uses an abacus, arithmetic tables, graph paper	○	NA	N	NA	NA
Uses dictionary, thesaurus, or spelling/grammar-checking software or devices	○	N	N	N	N
Receives the following accommodation(s) not listed above. _____	○	Check with your NAEP representative			

NAEP Policy on Assessing and Reporting for Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners – Possible Implications

Keith Rust, Westat

1

Potential Impact of this New Policy on Reporting (cont.)

- For 2011 NAEP we have data on which excluded students were excluded because NAEP does not provide an accommodation deemed necessary by the school for the student to be assessed.
- We can consider the results if those students are treated as nonrespondents, like absent students, rather than as exclusions. Call these 'hypothetical' results.
- This approximates the implementation of the directive: *Students refusing to take the assessment because a particular accommodation is not allowed should not be classified as exclusions but placed in the category of refusals under NAEP analysis procedures*.

2

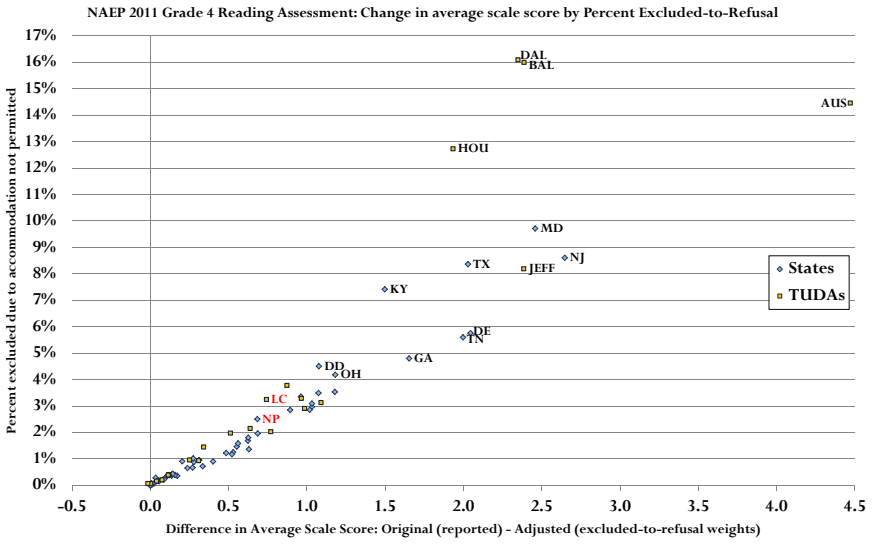
Grade 4 Reading

Jurisdiction	Student Exclusion Rates 2011	Student Exclusion Rates Hypothetical	Student Response Rates 2011	Student Response Rates Hypothetical	Mean Scores 2011	Mean Scores Hypothetical	Mean Scores Difference
Delaware	7.0	1.2	95	90	225.1	223.1	2.0
Kentucky	8.7	1.3	94	87	225.1	223.6	1.5
Maryland	10.3	0.6	94	85	230.8	228.3	2.5
New Jersey	9.1	0.5	95	87	231.2	228.6	2.6
Tennessee	7.1	1.5	95	90	214.6	212.6	2.0
Texas	9.9	1.6	95	87	218.3	216.3	2.0
Austin	16.5	2.3	94	80*	223.6	219.2	4.4
Baltimore	16.9	0.9	93	78*	200.5	198.1	2.4
Boston	8.1	4.3	95	91	217.0	216.1	0.9
Dallas	18.5	2.4	96	80*	203.7	201.3	2.4
Houston	14.5	1.7	95	83*	213.0	211.1	1.9
Jefferson Co. KY	9.6	1.4	95	87	222.8	220.4	2.4

* Response rate does not meet NAEP and NCES standards.

3

Grade 4 Reading



4

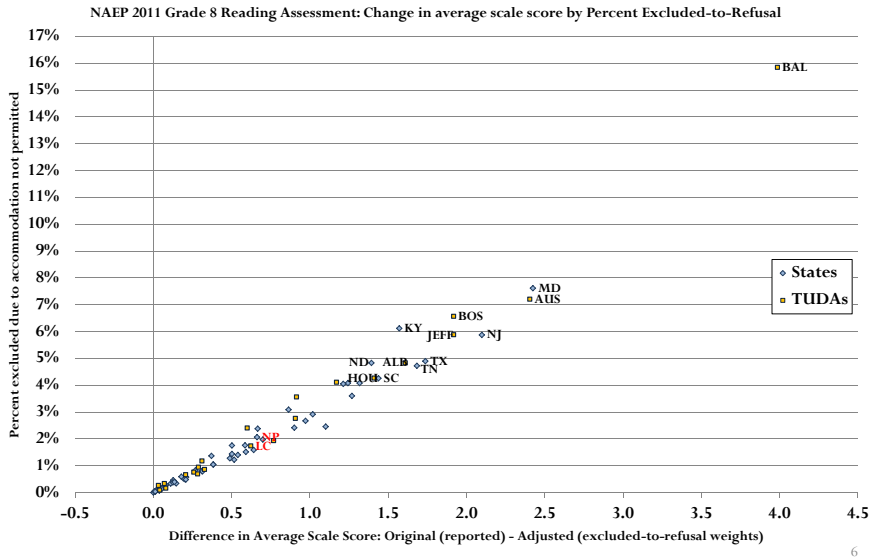
Grade 8 Reading

	Student Exclusion Rates		Student Response Rates		Mean Scores		
Jurisdiction	2011	Hypothetical	2011	Hypothetical	2011	Hypothetical	Difference
Delaware	5.3	1.7	93	90	265.8	264.6	1.2
Kentucky	7.2	1.1	94	96	268.8	267.3	1.5
Maryland	8.4	0.8	92	85	271.2	268.8	2.4
New Jersey	7.1	1.3	92	87	275.2	273.1	2.1
Tennessee	6.3	1.6	92	88	259.2	257.5	1.7
Texas	6.0	1.2	94	89	261.4	259.7	1.7
Austin	9.0	1.8	93	86	261.4	259.0	2.4
Baltimore	17.0	1.1	89	75*	245.8	241.8	4.0
Boston	9.7	3.1	90	84*	254.7	252.8	1.9
Dallas	6.0	1.9	93	89	247.6	246.4	1.2
Houston	6.4	2.1	94	90	252.5	251.1	1.4
Jefferson Co. KY	6.8	0.9	92	86	259.7	257.8	1.9

* Response rate does not meet NAEP and NCES standards.

5

Grade 8 Reading



6

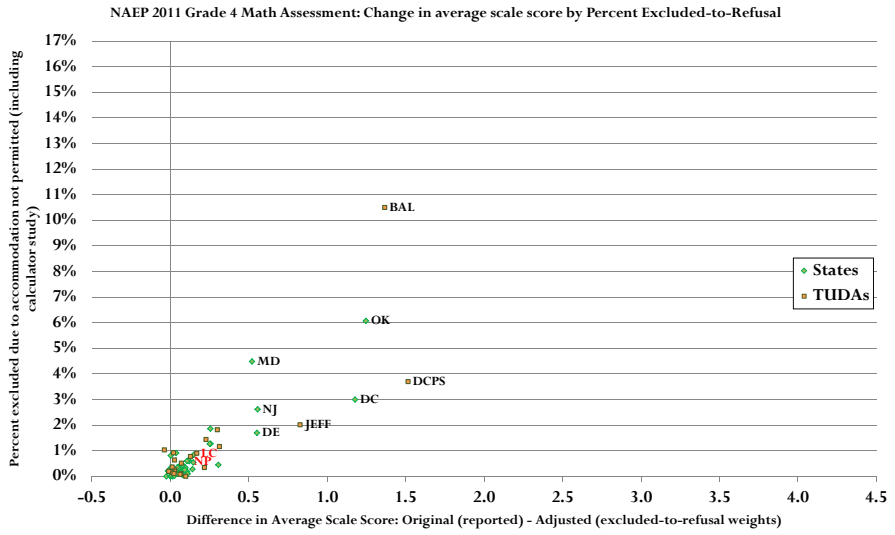
Grade 4 Math

Jurisdiction	Student Exclusion Rates 2011	Student Exclusion Rates Hypothetical	Student Response Rates 2011	Student Response Rates Hypothetical	Mean Scores 2011	Mean Scores Hypothetical	Mean Scores Difference
Delaware	3.6	1.2	94	92	240.4	239.8	0.6
Dist. Columbia	5.2	1.7	95	91	221.8	220.6	1.2
Maryland	5.6	1.0	95	91	247.1	246.6	0.5
New Jersey	3.3	0.6	95	92	248.0	247.4	0.6
Oklahoma	8.3	1.5	95	89	237.4	236.2	1.2
Texas	4.2	2.0	95	93	241.1	240.9	0.2
Austin	4.0	1.9	94	92	245.4	245.4	0.0
Baltimore	11.2	0.7	93	84*	225.6	224.2	1.4
Dallas	2.9	1.7	97	96	232.8	232.8	0.0
Detroit	5.7	3.6	89	87	203.2	202.9	0.3
Houston	4.1	2.1	95	93	237.0	236.8	0.2
Jefferson Co. KY	4.9	1.6	95	93	235.2	234.4	0.8

* Response rate does not meet NAEP and NCES standards.

7

Grade 4 Math



8

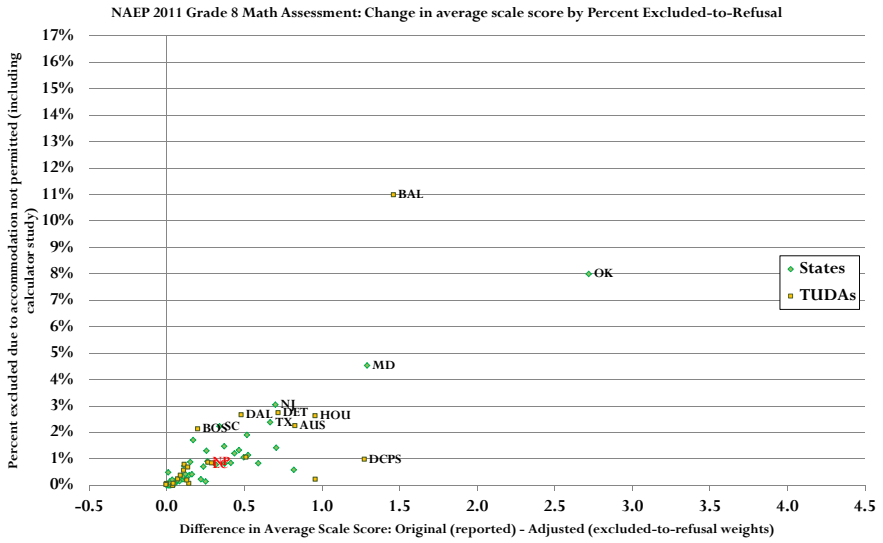
Grade 8 Math

	Student Exclusion Rates		Student Response Rates		Mean Scores		
Jurisdiction	2011	Hypothetical	2011	Hypothetical	2011	Hypothetical	Difference
Delaware	3.1	1.4	93	92	282.8	282.2	0.6
Dist. Columbia	4.4	1.3	90	88	260.5	259.6	0.9
Maryland	6.3	1.3	92	89	288.0	286.7	1.3
New Jersey	4.2	1.2	92	90	294.1	293.4	0.7
Oklahoma	9.8	1.3	92	85	279.2	276.5	2.7
Texas	5.2	2.1	94	91	290.3	289.7	0.6
Austin	4.6	1.9	91	89	286.9	286.1	0.8
Baltimore	12.5	1.5	87	79*	261.4	259.9	1.5
Dallas	4.9	2.0	94	91	274.3	273.8	0.5
Detroit	8.1	4.0	84	82*	246.2	245.5	0.7
Houston	5.6	2.2	93	90	279.3	278.4	0.9
Jefferson Co. KY	3.2	1.3	92	90	274.2	273.7	0.5

* Response rate does not meet NAEP and NCES standards.

9

Grade 8 Math



10

Summary of Results

Compared to 2011 Results, Hypothetical Results:

- Have up to 16 percent lower exclusion rate
- Have up to 16 percent lower student response rate
- Have up to 4-point lower mean achievement
- Never have higher mean achievement
- Have greater differences in exclusion and response rates, and mean scores, for reading than for mathematics
- Have similar effect at grade 4 as grade 8

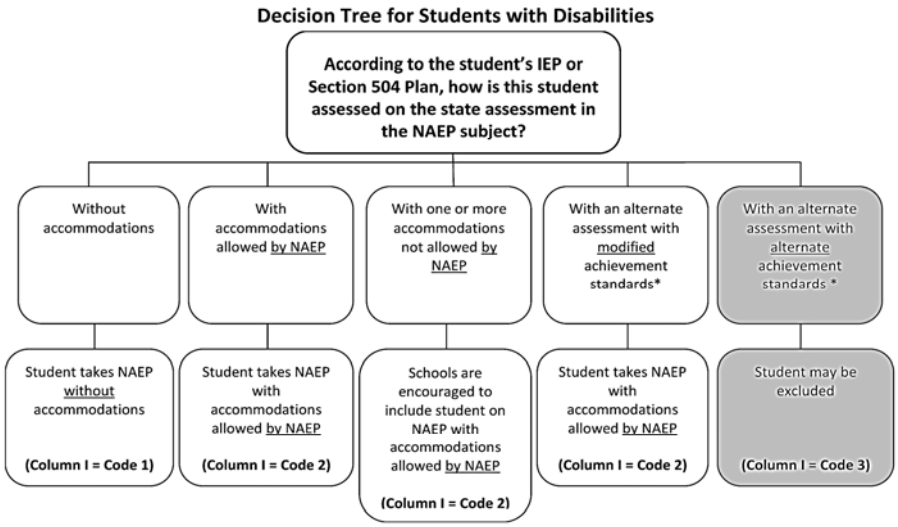
11

Procedures for 2013

- New Decision Tree, piloted in 2012, will be used during recruitment and administration of NAEP.
- Data will be collected as to which students were not assessed, contrary to the Decision Tree guidelines, even though the student was encouraged to be assessed. Data will also be collected as to whether this decision was made by the school, or by the student or parent.
- This will permit an evaluation of the effect of treating students who were not assessed, contrary to Decision Tree guidelines, as either exclusions or refusals.
- This evaluation can guide the process for future assessments, but will not lead to changes in reporting for 2013.

12

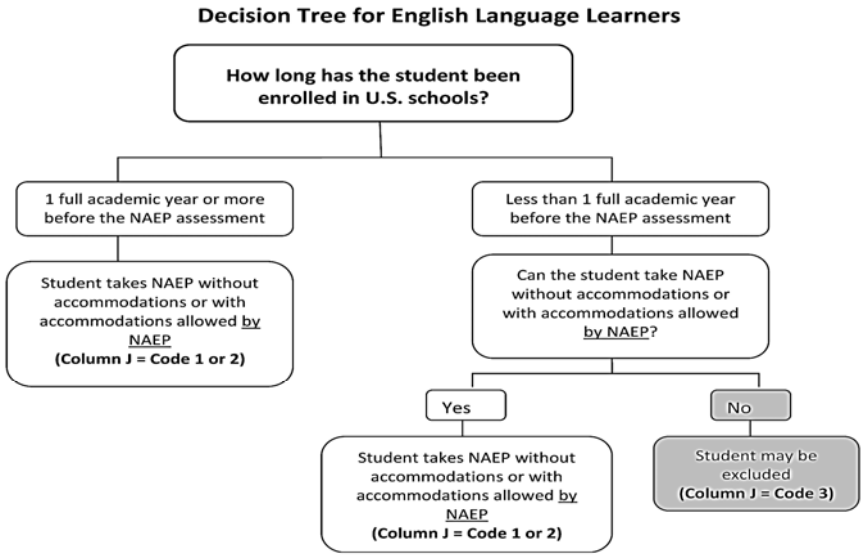
New SD Decision Tree



* Check the enclosed State-Specific SD Guidelines Summary for more information about alternate assessments with modified or alternate achievement standards in your state.

13

New ELL Decision Tree



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EDUCATION WEEK
Published Online: August 21, 2012
Published in Print: August 22, 2012, as **Split Erupts Over NAEP Exclusions**

Fed Agencies Spar Over NAEP for Special Populations

At issue is how many ELLs, Spec. Ed. students to test

By Nirvi Shah

Back to Story

Despite a pending policy change aimed at including more students with disabilities and English-language learners in the "nation's report card," the federal agency that administers the national testing program appears to be softening the penalty for states that fail to improve inclusion rates.

The disagreement underscores the uneasy relationship between the National Center for Education Statistics, the federal agency that administers the national tests, and the **National Assessment Governing Board**, the independent body that sets policy for the exams. And it reflects an intensifying debate about how to ensure that the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a congressionally mandated set of tests designed to take the national pulse on student achievement, accurately allows for state-by-state comparisons of student achievement.

"These issues, as all issues with students with disabilities and English-language learners, are hot potatoes," said Cornelia Orr, the governing board's executive director.

Two years ago, NAGB **adopted a policy** that takes effect in January, during the next administration of NAEP, to limit how many students with disabilities and English-learners states can be cut from the testing pool. The policy says, essentially, that only students with severe cognitive disabilities and English-language learners who have been in the country for less than one year should be excluded from taking the exams in reading, mathematics, and other subjects.

Nationwide, some 830,000 4th and 8th graders from nearly 18,000 schools will take the tests in reading and math next year.

"The impetus for the NAEP policy was to push states to smooth out those state exclusion rates, to have the same proportion of students being tested across states," Ms. Orr said.

As written, that policy would help make NAEP scores more comparable from state to state. As it now stands, states that exclude more students with disabilities and ELLs have a record of posting better scores than states that are more inclusive.

Case in Point

For example, in 2011, of 4th grade students with disabilities in the testing pool, Maryland included less than a third—31 percent—on the reading test. Other states included as many as 90 percent or more of

Grade 4 Reading

If a new policy about including more students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress had been in effect in 2011, fewer students with disabilities and English-language learners would have been excluded from taking the exam. Federal statisticians estimate that the resulting changes in some states' exclusion rates would have led, in turn, to lower scores on the 4th grade reading exam that year.

Enlarge

	Student Exclusion Rate*		Mean Scores (0-500)	
	2011		2011	Hypothetical
Delaware	7.0%	1.2%	225.1	223.1
Kentucky	8.7	1.3	225.1	223.6
Maryland	10.2	0.6	220.8	228.2

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics

those students, and the size of the testing pool—2,500 to 3,000 students—is the same in each state. Maryland posted **among the highest 4th grade reading scores in the country** that year, and it was one of the few states to improve its scores from previous years.

The discrepancies from state to state over which students are tested—and which are not—have been especially frustrating for states that have been more inclusive but have found their NAEP scores stagnating.

Florida's commissioner of education, Gerard Robinson, **wrote to NAGB** earlier this year, saying the board should consider a policy of only reporting or using state-level results if the minimum standards of inclusion are met.

NAGB's new policy says that the proportion of all students excluded from NAEP should not be more than 5 percent and that states should push to include 85 percent of all students with disabilities and ELLs identified to be part of the testing pool.

"This would ensure the validity of the reported results for the nation and for the participating states," wrote Mr. Robinson, whose state is among those with lower exclusion rates. "States not meeting the minimum standards should face funding sanctions."

From the beginning, the NCES, a branch of the U.S. Department of Education, disagreed with the policy, although the agency agreed with the greater goal of inclusion. (**"NAEP Board Curbs Special Ed. and ELL Exclusions,"** March 17, 2010.) At the time it was adopted, Stuart Kerachsky, then acting commissioner of NCES, said that the statistics agency harbored concerns about "flagging" individual states' exclusion rates.

Reason for Disagreeing

"There is no statistical basis for such standards," he wrote in a letter just days before the policy was adopted. "For that reason alone, NCES is unable to support this recommendation: We would be implicitly impugning jurisdiction results... without cause."

By law, the NCES is required to implement NAGB policy but, as this episode demonstrates, it has some degree of discretion to do so as it sees fit.

As created, the NAGB policy envisions dinging states that continue to exclude students with disabilities and ELLs from the testing pool when scores were tabulated.

The penalty would operate this way: Under the technical rules that guide NAEP, the federal agency is directed to impute, or estimate, the scores of such excluded students. In other words, if students with disabilities are excluded, their scores would still count in the calculation, using the average scores of other students with disabilities who were tested.

"Since students with disabilities tend to score lower on average than other students, disabled students ... would receive the same scores as similar disabled students, thus lowering the average," said Peggy Carr, the NCES' associate commissioner in the assessment division.

So the NCES is not planning to enact that penalty, she said.

But the NCES' plans are "contrary to the NAGB policy," said Lawrence Feinberg, the governing board's assistant director for reporting and analysis. "There's no question about that."

Advocates Object

With the threat of lower scores removed, any pressure on states to be more inclusive of special education students and English-language learners evaporates, say advocates for those groups.

"We want the sample to be more exemplary of students" with disabilities, said Laura Kaloi, the public-policy director for the National Center for Learning Disabilities, in New York City. "Why are schools more focused on excluding students that they don't believe can pass than [on] looking at why so many can't pass a grade-level exam?"

One complicating wrinkle in that debate is that NAEP doesn't allow all of the same accommodations for students with disabilities or students learning English on its tests that states typically permit. Some states, for example, allow portions of their state exams, including the reading sections, to be read aloud as designated in a students' individualized education program, or IEP. But NAEP doesn't. However, NAGB wants most students with disabilities to take the exam even if there is an accommodation they are accustomed to but cannot use on the national assessment.

That's partly why so many students with disabilities in Maryland have historically not taken NAEP, said Mary Gable, the assistant state superintendent for academic policy. Schools have a legal responsibility to carry out students' IEPS, Ms. Gable said. She believes the state would be violating federal law if students whose plans say they are entitled to the read-aloud accommodation had to take NAEP without it.

There's a similar issue in Kentucky, which also has high exclusion rates.

No Stakes

Mr. Feinberg said NAGB's understanding is that students could take NAEP even without every accommodation their education plans require, especially because the tests have no stakes for any individual student, such as determining whether students should be promoted to the next grade, and no records are kept about which students were tested.

Beyond the read-aloud issue, nearly **all other accommodations** are allowed on NAEP, such as additional time for testing, one-on-one testing, small-group testing, bilingual Spanish-English test booklets for subjects other than reading and writing, additional breaks, and having directions read in sign language.

RELATED BLOG

Visit this blog.

Including more students with disabilities on the math test may be less of an issue. NAEP only allows calculators on some portions of math, but some special education students are entitled to calculators any time they are working on that subject.

To encourage their participation, Ms. Carr said, those students will be assigned the portion of NAEP that allows calculators.

Assistant Editor Stephen Sawchuk contributed to this report.

GRADE 4 READING

If a new policy about including more students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress had been in effect in 2011, fewer students with disabilities and English-language learners would have been excluded from taking the exam. Federal statisticians estimate that the resulting changes in some states' exclusion rates would have led, in turn, to lower scores on the 4th grade reading exam that year.

	Student Exclusion Rate*		Mean Scores (0-500)	
	2011	Hypothetical	2011	Hypothetical
Delaware	7.0%	1.2%	225.1	223.1
Kentucky	8.7	1.3	225.1	223.6
Maryland	10.3	0.6	230.8	228.3
New Jersey	9.1	0.5	231.2	228.6
Tennessee	7.1	1.5	214.6	212.6
Texas	9.9	1.6	218.3	216.3

* Students with disabilities and English-language learners combined
SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics

iStockphoto/c.kurtlis

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

PARCC Releases Draft Accommodations Policies for Public Comment

UPDATED: January 17, 2013

PARCC Releases Draft Accommodations Policies for Public Comment

WASHINGTON - January 16, 2013 - The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) released two draft accommodations policies for public comment, the reading access accommodation and the calculator use accommodation.

In addition to allowing a full array of testing accommodations on summative tests, PARCC is proposing two accommodations that will expand access to its tests to an even wider range of students with disabilities.

First, the reading access accommodation will allow the passages, test items and answer choices on the English language arts/literacy assessment to be read to students who have a disability that prevents them from accessing printed text or have not yet learned braille. Also, the calculator policy will allow students who do not have the ability to calculate single digit numbers the use of a calculator for all items on the math assessment except those that measure fluency, as fluency is a skill required by the standards in some early grades. Both accommodations will have specific eligibility criteria and will be limited to students who meet these criteria.

Once feedback is provided on these policies, they will be included in a larger policy that details all accommodations provided to students with disabilities and English language learners.

"These policies were developed based on wide-spread input from states and experts," said Tamara Reavis, Senior Adviser for Assessment Accessibility and Equity. "Common accommodations will increase equitable access, fidelity of implementation, and comparability across PARCC states."

The public review period allows for feedback from a wide group of stakeholders, including K-12 educators, curriculum and assessment experts, and national groups or organizations.

Trinell Bowman, who chairs the PARCC working group on Accessibility, Accommodation and Fairness, said the policies were driven by what is expected of students in the Common Core State Standards and the claims of the PARCC summative assessments.

"These eligibility criteria will require all schools to address a student's need through research-based interventions and IEP goals, and these accommodations will give students a greater opportunity to show what they know and are able to do on these assessments," said Bowman, Program Manager with the Maryland State Department of Education.

From January 16, 2013 until February 4, 2013, the draft accommodations policies are posted on the PARCC website. Interested parties can provide feedback through a survey posted on the PARCC website (/open-policies-public-comment), answering questions specific to each policy.

All feedback will be reviewed by Achieve and the working group for Accessibility, Accommodation and Fairness and revisions will be made accordingly. Also, a determination as to whether to allow these accommodations and include them in the overall policy will be made based on feedback collected.

This is the first set of accommodation policies PARCC will release for public comment. An additional policy for writing access will be released for public comment in early February, 2013, and the entire PARCC accommodation policy manual will be made available for public comment in April, 2013.

For more information or to view the policies, visit http://www.parcconline.org (/parcc-accessibility-accommodations-and-fairness) .

Media Contact: Chad Colby (202) 419-1570, ccolby@achieve.org (mailto:ccolby@achieve.org)

SHARE (http://www.addthis.com/bookmark.php)

PARENT ENGAGEMENT DRAFT OUTREACH PLAN

Following presentation of the draft parent outreach plan at the November 2012 meeting of the Reporting and Dissemination Committee, members of the Committee completed a survey to provide feedback on the proposed outreach strategies, indicate priorities for implementation, and identify other outreach strategies that could be included in the final outreach plan.

Based on Committee member survey responses and Board staff input, the following is a recommended parent leader engagement draft plan with specific outreach strategies for the Board's review, approval, and implementation. The strategies listed in each section represent those that were the most favorably ranked by Committee members. As a reminder, the strategies below are centered on the objectives recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee on NAEP Parent Engagement that were approved by the full Governing Board in May 2012.

At this meeting, Committee members will further discuss strategies listed below and prioritize which ones should be actively pursued by the Board over the next 6-9 months. Board staff and Reingold, the Board's communications contractor, will record Committee feedback and draft a final parent outreach plan will be submitted for action by the Committee and then the full Board in May 2013.

AUDIENCE

The target audience for parent leader outreach is defined as: groups of active parents and parent organizations that see the connection between school system performance and the potential for impact on individual students. These include local and state leaders, often members of recognized parent and community organizations, who regularly work with the leaders of education systems, examine data, and ask fundamental questions to support and foster improved achievement and the closing of achievement gaps. This audience includes parent leaders who represent minority and special populations. Strategies include:

- **Review the stakeholder database to ensure that all relevant individuals and groups have been captured.** The database will include all potential parent leaders and organizations and not simply contain the traditional parent groups, such as the PTA. It will include specific populations, such as minority populations, lower-income populations, and special education populations, and also contain parent advocacy, cultural, language, and faith-based groups to be sure parent leaders in these populations may become involved with at the local level.
- **Develop a core list of key parent leaders and organizations that will be the focus of initial outreach efforts.** Use this group, or a subset of this group, to test materials and messages to be sure they are the most effective for reaching and mobilizing the leaders. They also can be tapped to use their networks to connect their audiences with the Board's key messages about and resources for NAEP.

- **Develop a relationship map that connects Board members, Board alumni, and other NAEP champions with the target parent leader audience.** This would involve a mapping, or a cross-walk, of each Board member and alumnus with parent leader organizations in the enhanced database, to determine where the Board has existing relationships. These relationships can then serve as an introduction to pursue possible information sharing, participation in conferences, etc.

PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTREACH

The Governing Board will continue to identify key parent influencers and approach them about opportunities to partner, present, or share in activities and content related to NAEP. Strategies include:

- **Pitch parent-focused articles or newsletters to education journalists or publications.** Use the ongoing relationships the Board has developed with the media to distribute targeted, parent-focused messages and encourage them to publish, post, and share content tailored for the parent leader audience.
- **Cosponsor panels, forums, or workshops with local and national parent-focused groups.** The Board can work with groups like the PTA and Alliance for Excellent Education to host focused conversations about NAEP data releases and other NAEP efforts of interest to parent leaders.
- **Speak at education-related conferences.** Representatives of the Board can present on the ways parent leaders can use NAEP as a tool in their endeavors, focusing on opportunities such as the annual conferences of parent, education, and/or civil rights organizations.
- **Work with state-level education influencers to connect with parent leaders.** State-level influencers can provide on-the-ground support to raise awareness of NAEP, distribute materials and messages, and provide an important feedback loop regarding needs of parent leaders.
- **Distribute materials at the local level, including to community groups and schools.** Community facilities including recreation and community centers, churches, and libraries can all be used as places for parents to find NAEP information.

MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

Existing and new materials will be at the core of the parent outreach effort and, wherever appropriate, will be customizable for particular states and urban districts. Many of the materials listed below can serve as important assets for outreach activities described in this strategy. Materials (and their messages) will be presented to the pilot parent leader group to confirm that we are meeting the needs of the parent leader audience. Materials to be developed include:

- **High Standards One-Pager.** A summary of the overall student achievement challenge and the need to narrow achievement gaps in the United States, with tools and information parent leaders can use to get involved and a call to action to direct their next steps.
- **Parent Leader Discussion Guide.** Talking points to be used when speaking to teachers, administrators, or policymakers to learn how a school, school system, or state compares with others nationwide, and to discuss what is being done to increase academic rigor and achievement for all students.

- **Parent Leader Testimonials.** Content from parent leaders who have used NAEP as a resource and motivator for change, which will be made into a video or a PDF document for print distribution.
- **Background Variable One-Pager.** A one-pager with information on the wealth of background information collected with each NAEP assessment, and how parent leaders can access these data.

WEBSITE AND ONLINE OUTREACH

Parent leaders at the Board's August 2012 outreach event provided a variety of thoughts and recommendations for improving the parent pages on the Board's website. In addition, Reingold performed an audit of the website, looking specifically at the parent pages from that audience's perspective, and provided further recommendations on revising and enhancing the pages' structure, design, and prioritization of content to better reach and engage parents. Supplementary online and social media outreach efforts will reinforce the website and reach parents through the channels they use online. Strategies include:

- **Refine and expand the parent Web pages.** Revisiting the design and structure of the website parent pages will visually prioritize the information the Board wants parent leaders to access, make it easy to use, and focus on reinforcing messages tailored for this audience.
- **Seed topics on discussion portals where parent leaders share ways for parents to get involved in education.** Provide content to an existing parent-focused site or forum, and work with the site managers to promote topics, questions, or conversations on some of the many sites where parent leaders share information.
- **Perform search engine optimization (SEO) to capitalize on search terms parent leaders use.** Determine priority keywords the Governing Board can use to optimize its parent pages for search engines. By creating or refining website content to integrate language that research has shown parents use, the Governing Board can use SEO to help raise the website's ranking in search engine results, increasing the chance that parents will find and use the website content and resources
- **Develop and disseminate data infographics.** Work with NCES to package Report Card results into compelling infographics that are visually appealing and relevant to parent leaders.
- **Frequently develop editorial pieces for parent leaders, such as an article in a newsletter or blog on nagb.org for parent leaders.** Engage parent leaders with a regularly updated, timely, communications tool for discussing the latest news and information and connecting NAEP with topical issues.
- **Share NAEP content with targeted parent leader groups.** Provide timely and relevant NAEP content to a list of priority parent groups in a variety of formats, such as social media posts, a website paragraph, or a newsletter blurb.

RESULTS OF REPORTING AND DISSEMINATION COMMITTEE MEMBER SURVEY

Outreach Activity	Priority
Audience	
Review Board's stakeholder database to ensure that all relevant groups have been captured	High
Develop a relationship map that connects Board members, Board alumni, and other NAEP champions with the target parent leader audience	Medium
Develop a list of 50 key parent leaders on which to focus initial outreach efforts	High
Partnerships and Outreach	
Target education journalists or publications and pitch parent-focused articles or newsletters	Medium
Cosponsor panels, forums, or workshops with local and national parent-focused groups	Medium
Partner with prominent organizations to develop parent-focused op-eds	Low
Distribute materials to community groups and schools	Medium
Speak at education-related conferences	Medium
Work with NAEP state coordinators to connect with parent leaders	Medium
Materials Development	
High standards one-pager	High
Parent leader testimonials	Medium
Background variable one-pager and quiz	Low
Parent leader discussion guide	High
Promotional materials, including USB drives, pencils, bumper stickers, posters	Low
Website and Online Outreach	
Refine the parent Web pages per the feedback from parent leaders and the recommendations from Reingold's website report	High
Develop a quarterly newsletter for parent leaders	Low
Perform search engine optimization to capitalize on search terms parent leaders use	Medium
Share social media content with targeted parent groups It's a shame this one was rated low	Low
Seed topics on discussion portals where parent leaders share ways for parents to get involved in education	Medium
Develop and disseminate data infographics	Medium
Create an assessment resource directory for parent leaders on the Governing Board website	Low
Develop a blog on the Governing Board website	Low
Develop an interactive NAEP data map	Low

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK FROM BOARD MEMBER RESPONDENTS

- **Use existing research and other (non-Governing Board) parent engagement efforts to assess and support outreach strategies.**
  Identify other groups or research organizations that may have data on current parent engagement efforts at the school district level, particularly those focused on education policy and broader advocacy addressing the educational needs/concerns of all students.
- **Consider forming a pilot parent group for testing and feedback.**
  This will be used for message testing prior to implementation and for continuous input throughout the duration of the initiative.
- **Focus on reaching parent leaders on the ground through local and state groups where they spend time/effort.**
  Engage with parent leaders associated (in a leadership position) with local, state, and national parent advocacy groups (community-based, school-based, faith-based, or nonprofit) who will incorporate NAEP data in their parent engagement work.
- **Expand the target audience and focus on the underrepresented populations**.
  Within the stakeholder database action, consider the higher-risk, underrepresented students and families that also represent the nation's broad student demographics. Also look to parent advocacy, cultural, language-specific, and faith-based groups to get information and support for their children's education. Other database expansions areas include school parent groups currently mandated by federal law, such as parent advisory groups and special education advisory councils.
- **Target each strategy to most effectively engage each audience**. Minority populations, low-income populations, and special education populations in particular may need tailored strategies to be reached and engaged most effectively.
- **Expand partnership and speaking opportunities.** Beyond parent leader groups, the Governing Board will connect with community, nonprofit, and business stakeholder groups that focus resources and are involved in initiatives to improve public pre- K-12 education.

MEMORANDUM

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

National Center for Education Statistics

TO: Stephaan Harris
National Assessment Governing Board

FROM: Gina Broxterman

DATE: January 31, 2013

RE: NCES Response to Parent Outreach Planning Proposal of November 2012

The purpose of this memorandum is to present the NCES response to the Parent Outreach Planning Proposal discussed at the last Board meeting in November/December 2012. NCES appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the proposal. Additionally, NCES acknowledges the hard work of the Ad Hoc Committee on NAEP Parent Engagement to increase outreach activities that inform parent leaders and parent groups about NAEP.

We understand that the Reporting and Dissemination Committee has been charged with providing feedback on the parent outreach proposal and additional ideas for the Board to consider. To aid in this endeavor, we have focused our comments on concerns and cautions the Board should consider when reviewing the proposal. We have divided our comments by section of the proposal to aid in the review.

Overview

NCES agrees with the Board's definition of the primary audience as parent leaders and influencers at the national, state, and local levels. This is practical and in line with the outreach strategies described. In addition, NCES agrees with suggestions for revising the Governing Board and NAEP web sites to be more user-friendly for parents. However, NCES recommends revising the language in the Website and Online Outreach section, which states, "develop parent pages on the Governing Board and NAEP websites." Parent pages currently exist on both the Governing Board and NAEP websites. NCES recommends changing the wording to recommend enhancements to the parent sections of these websites.

Outreach Efforts to Date

In this section, the plan suggests that there is a demand for NAEP data and resources that are presented in a parent-friendly manner. The plan also notes that parallel efforts by NCES have focused on general parent audiences, as well as specifically on parents whose children have been selected to take NAEP. NCES believes there are many materials that NCES produces for general audiences that have been and could continue to be repurposed for the parent leaders and parent organizations that he Governing Board focuses on in the proposal. These include promotional videos and report materials, such as the TEL and Hands-on Task videos.

The proposal suggests that one-page state profiles be developed to reach these audiences. NCES has already created a one-pager template that allows the states and districts in NAEP to customize a display of their key data. NCES considers this an area where collaboration should occur so there is no duplication of effort and consistency in the messages being disseminated by NCES and NAGB. NCES also recommends a technical review of the one-pagers before they are made available.

The summit to be held in 2013 for parent leaders and parent groups is another opportunity for NCES and the Board to collaborate on messaging and communication. NCES could promote the event via NAEP's established social media channels and through the NAEP state and district coordinators in conjunction with the Board. Also, NCES recommends including representation from state and local education agencies so that a collaborative environment can be fostered among key stakeholders.

NCES understands the usefulness and importance of the policy discussions that may come from the Mapping State Standards reports but we are concerned that creating and providing a one-pager on these reports will be challenging. Given the technical complexity and need for cautious interpretation of the research, a one-page document may not be sufficient to truly communicate the findings. NCES and the Governing Board should discuss this issue further before a one-page summary of the state mapping reports is prepared.

Parent Messages

NCES recognizes and supports the Boards goal of increased outreach to parent leaders and parent advocacy organizations. However, in the suggested messaging there is the claim that "U.S. student achievement has fallen significantly behind that of students in the highest-performing countries." However, the December 2012 release of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) indicates that the validity of this statement is questionable. For example, PIRLS found that of the 52 other educational systems participating, only five had higher average scores than the United States in the fourth grade reading assessment(Hong Kong-China, Florida

[participating as an independent entity], the Russian Federation, Finland, and Singapore); 40 had lower average scores; and seven had average scores not measurably different from the U.S. average. NCES recommends a review of the data from the most recent international assessment releases to ensure the validity of the message.

Under the primary message "NAEP is a truth teller," NCES has several editorial comments. NCES does not typically use the term "only" to describe NAEP. While NAEP is the largest nationally representative measure of student achievement, the international assessments provide a nationally representative measure. In addition, NCES generally uses the term "demographic groups" instead of "subgroups". Finally, in defining the achievement level of *Proficient*, generally NCES describes this as a high standard, as opposed to "good enough." The inference from the statement "good enough" does not coincide with NCES' and the Board's message about the *Proficient* achievement level and what it means as a standard of "competency over challenging subject matter" for a particular grade.

Proposed Outreach Recommendations

In the new materials section, there is a High Standards one-pager proposed that is described as "Sample questions mapped to achievement levels as practical examples through which parent leaders can better understand what *Proficient* means." This description is similar to the item maps that already exist in many NAEP reports and online. NCES recommends use of these item maps in the one-pager in order to eliminate a duplication of effort.

Also proposed in the new materials section is a Background Variable One-Pager and Quiz that contains a reference to renaming "background variables." NCES has made a concerted effort to refer to these as "contextual variables." However, renaming "background variables" as "achievement drivers" would imply causality and thus be misleading about the purpose and proper use of these factors in NAEP reporting. NCES suggests using "contextual variables" or developing a mutually agreeable term for referencing this type of non-cognitive item to ensure consistency in our descriptions and messaging.

NCES believes the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Parent Outreach, feedback from the Reporting and Dissemination Committee, and acceptance of this proposal by the Board will lead to useful and meaningful activity for reaching parent leaders and parent advocacy organizations to facilitate the promotion and understanding of NAEP. NCES looks forward to a collaborative effort to develop materials, presentations, and resources for these key stakeholders.

NCES would like to have a conversation with Board staff to further discuss some overarching areas of concern in the proposal, including inferences of causality, opportunities for innovation through the use of technology, and strategies for connecting these efforts together. We will follow up with an email to determine a time for this conversation.

National Assessment Governing Board

Resolution on Report of Ad Hoc Committee on NAEP Parent Engagement
Adopted May 19, 2012

Whereas, the National Assessment Governing Board is implementing an initiative to make a difference in fostering the improvement of student achievement in the United States and of closing achievement gaps by race, ethnicity, and income levels using NAEP data and resources; and

Whereas, the National Assessment Governing Board established the Ad Hoc Committee on NAEP Parent Engagement in March 2011 to

> "present recommendations…the Governing Board and representatives of the NAEP program can take directly, and/or support the efforts of others to increase parent awareness about the urgency to improve the levels of student achievement in the U.S. and the urgency to reduce the size of achievement gaps by race, ethnicity, and income levels, using NAEP data and resources"; and

Whereas, the Ad Hoc Committee on NAEP Parent Engagement presented its recommendations to the National Assessment Governing Board on March 2, 2012; and

Whereas, the Ad Hoc Committee on NAEP Parent Engagement recommended that the National Assessment Governing Board

- Specify National, State, and Local Parent Leaders and Parent Organizations as the Target Audience
- Establish Relationships with Recognized Parent and Community-based Organizations
- Develop Presentations and Materials Targeted to Parents for Use by Governing Board Members and Others
- Develop Parent Pages on the Governing Board and NAEP Websites
- Conduct a Parent Education Summit in Late Summer/Early Fall 2012; and

Whereas, adoption of the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations will be valuable, feasible, and consistent with the Governing Board's authority to "develop guidelines for reporting and disseminating results" and "…improve the form, content, use, and reporting of [NAEP] results…"; and

Whereas, implementation of the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations will require staff and financial resources and oversight by one or more standing committees of the National Assessment Governing Board;

Therefore, the National Assessment Governing Board hereby

1. adopts the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on NAEP Parent Engagement presented on March 2, 2012;
2. approves the use of appropriate staff and financial resources to implement the recommendations; and
3. authorizes the assignment of oversight of these activities to Governing Board standing committees.

Ad Hoc Committee on NAEP Parent Engagement

Reaching Parents with NAEP Resources

March 2, 2012

Committee Members

Tonya Miles, Chair
Louis M. Fabrizio
Shannon Garrison
Doris R. Hicks
Hector Ibarra
Henry Kranendonk
Warren T. Smith
Blair Taylor

Staff

Ray Fields

Ad Hoc Committee on NAEP Parent Engagement

Overview of Recommendations

1. Specify the Target Audience: National, State, and Local Parent Leaders and Parent Organizations
2. Establish Relationships with Recognized Parent and Community-based Organizations
3. Develop Presentations and Materials Targeted to Parents for Use by Governing Board Members and Others
4. Develop Parent Pages on the Governing Board and NAEP Websites
5. Conduct a Parent Education Summit in Late Summer/Early Fall 2012

Committee Activity Timeline

November 2010	Recognize Need to Address NAEP Parent Engagement
March 2011	Approve Mission Statement and Establish Ad Hoc Committee on NAEP Parent Engagement
April 2011	First Ad Hoc Committee Teleconference
May 2011	First Committee Meeting
August 2011	Second Committee Meeting
October 2011	Second Teleconference
December 2011	Third Committee Meeting
February 2012	Third Teleconference
March 2012	Final Committee Meeting; Present Recommendations to the Board

Foreword

The National Assessment Governing Board, in overseeing the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP or the Nation's Report Card), is carrying out an initiative to raise public awareness about the status of student achievement in the United States.

The Governing Board believes that the low levels of student achievement and the persistent, large achievement gaps between student demographic subgroups are cause for alarm—for individuals, for families, for communities, and for the nation's future.

Although the release of NAEP reports brings periodic public attention to this problem, this attention is not sustained for very long.

Consequently, the Governing Board is implementing an initiative to convey the urgency of improving achievement for all students and of closing achievement gaps between student subgroups by race, ethnicity and income levels, using NAEP data and resources.[1]

One part of this initiative is aimed at reaching parents. In March 2011, the Governing Board established the Ad Hoc Committee on NAEP Parent Engagement, composed of Board members. The Ad Hoc Committee's assignment was to study ways to reach parents with NAEP data and resources and to present the Committee's recommendations to the Governing Board by March 2012.

The members of the Ad Hoc Committee have worked diligently over the past year and are pleased to present our report and recommendations on the following pages.

We would like to express appreciation for the important contributions of the National Center for Education Statistics in supporting the Ad Hoc Committee's work and in embracing the objective of reaching more parents with NAEP data and resources. We also thank the Governing Board's CCSSO[2] Policy Task Force members for their valuable comments and suggestions.

Tonya Miles
Chair
Ad Hoc Committee on NAEP Parent Engagement

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[1] The authority for this initiative is found under the Governing Board's duties in the NAEP legislation, Public Law 107-279. Specifically, Section 302(e)(1) authorizes the Board to "take appropriate actions needed to improve the form, content, use, and reporting of results" and "plan and execute the initial public release of National Assessment of Educational Progress reports."
[2] The acronym CCSSO stands for Council of Chief State School Officers.

Introduction

The National Assessment Governing Board, recognizing that NAEP report releases were not conveying a sense of urgency, began an initiative in May 2010 to see what the Board could do to "make a difference" in fostering concern and action about the need to improve achievement and reduce achievement gaps, using NAEP data and resources. Toward this goal, the Governing Board established the Ad Hoc Committee on NAEP Parent Engagement. The Committee's task was to develop recommendations on ways to reach parents with NAEP information. The purpose of this report is to document the work of the Ad Hoc Committee and present its recommendations.

Background

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan addressed the Governing Board on November 19, 2010. He focused on the urgent need to improve student achievement and reduce achievement gaps among student subgroups. He has said publicly that "our nation will pay the price socially and economically" if we fail to act with determination and dispatch and stressed to the Board that "we have to continue to awaken our country to the huge consequences" of inaction.

Secretary Duncan emphasized the important role of parents in improving student achievement. He told the story of President Obama meeting with the President of South Korea, Lee Myung-bak. President Obama asked him about education issues in South Korea. President Lee said his biggest challenge is that parents in South Korea are very assertive in demanding a good education from their schools and great effort from their children. He emphasized that this includes parents of all income levels.

Implicit in this story is the fact that South Korean students, as well as others in the world, outperform U.S. students in mathematics and science on TIMSS.[3] Today's students are tomorrow's workers and leaders. It follows that failing to improve U.S. student achievement could have disastrous effects on the nation's future work force and global competitiveness, and that parents have an important role to play in promoting improved student achievement.

Secretary Duncan continued by saying "I wish my biggest problem, my biggest challenge, was parents knocking down my door saying, 'Get better faster!'" He said that there are good examples in the U.S. of parent initiatives that impact student achievement. But Secretary Duncan wanted to "scale up" parent engagement programs that "are really showing the ability to drive student achievement."

[3] The acronym TIMSS stands for the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.

The Secretary's remarks and the Board's initiative to make a difference served as the backdrop to Board member Tonya Miles asking what can the Board do to make NAEP data available to parents and guardians[4] about student achievement, especially about the urgency of addressing achievement gaps by race, ethnicity, and income levels.

The question—"What can the Board do?"—is pertinent and important. Parents have a significant stake in the quality of their local schools and, most immediately, in their own children's achievement.

Governing Board Chair David Driscoll recognized the opportunity and value of reaching parents with NAEP data. Therefore, at the conclusion of the November 2010 Governing Board meeting, he asked Ms. Miles, and she agreed, to lead a Board initiative to increase parent awareness about and access to NAEP data. The goal was to bring attention to the unacceptably low levels of student achievement in the U.S. and the disgraceful size of the achievement gaps.

The Mission

At the March 2011 Board meeting, the Executive Committee approved the mission statement for and established the Ad Hoc Committee on NAEP Parent Engagement (Appendix A). The Committee would be composed of Board members and chaired by Ms. Miles. The Ad Hoc Committee's task was to present recommendations to the Governing Board by March 2012. The recommendations would describe steps and strategies the Governing Board and representatives of the NAEP program can take directly, and/or support the efforts of others

> to increase parent awareness about the urgency to improve the levels of student achievement in the U.S. and the urgency to reduce the size of achievement gaps by race, ethnicity, and income levels, using NAEP data and resources.

The mission statement indicated that the recommendations were to be clear about the limits on the Board's role under the law. This was to ensure the Committee considered all appropriate options without exceeding the Board's authority.

The recommendations were to help reach parents in feasible, innovative, and meaningful ways, across all income levels, and whether residing in urban, rural, or suburban areas. Finally, the recommendations were to include strategies to make NAEP parent engagement an ongoing part of the work of the Board and the NAEP program.

[4] The term "parents" as used throughout this report is intended to refer to parents and guardians of school children.

Committee Activities

Members of the Ad Hoc Committee have met four times during the May 2011, August 2011, December 2011, and March 2012 Board meetings. The agendas for these meetings are in Appendix B.

The Ad Hoc Committee also has met three times in between Board meetings via conference calls:

- April 15, 2011 - reviewed the Committee's mission statement and a timeline for completing their work (Appendix C)
- October 12, 2011 - focused on formulating the Committee's preliminary recommendations for discussion at the December 2011 Board meeting (Appendix D)
- February 8, 2012 - reviewed the Committee's initial draft report

In addition, Chair Tonya Miles and Ray Fields conducted meetings with leaders of three nationally recognized parent-related organizations. The purpose was to brief them on the Board's initiative to reach parents with NAEP data, to receive their input and feedback, and to determine their interest in supporting this initiative. The three organizations are the National PTA, the Public Education Network, and the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University.

In connection with the August 2011 meeting in Washington, D.C., the Board conducted an outreach event with parent leaders and national and local parent organizations. The discussion with meeting participants, led by Ms. Miles and Governing Board Chair Driscoll, resulted in valuable feedback and input on the Board's parent initiative. A summary of the discussion at this parent outreach meeting is in Appendix E.

Concluding Comment

Parents are the primary advocates for the quality of their children's education. Having solid information about education achievement improves their ability to advocate and ask the right questions. NAEP can be one potentially valuable source of such information. Therefore, it is appropriate to seek ways to reach parents with NAEP data and resources. Some progress already has been made, in a small way, as will be seen in the activities and relationships described below. The recommendations that follow are offered as a set of feasible next steps, all within the Governing Board's authority. All have the potential to reach parents in meaningful ways. Recommendations that the Governing Board decides to adopt should be assigned to appropriate Board committees and staff for implementation.

Recommendations

1. Specify the Target Audience: National, State, and Local Parent Leaders and Parent Organizations

The target audience needs to be defined. Approximately 55 million students are enrolled in public and private K-12 schools in the U.S. It is not feasible to reach the parents of all these children with NAEP data, nor is it within NAEP or the Governing Board's scope to do so.

Further, the achievement of their own children is the most pressing and immediate interest of parents. Because NAEP does not provide individual student results, this interest of parents is not served by NAEP.

A unique aspect of NAEP is its ability to report patterns of overall and subgroup student performance within and across education systems. These patterns may reflect education system strengths and weaknesses that can affect the achievement of individual students. The NAEP data for the states and 21 urban districts[5] provide ample evidence of differences in achievement across comparable groups at points in time and differences in gains in achievement over time. The NAEP data also document persistent and unacceptable achievement gaps between groups. This NAEP information does have potential interest for parents.

Also of potential interest to parents is how their education systems compare internationally. The linking studies the Board has endorsed, beginning in 2011, between NAEP and the international assessments (TIMSS and PIRLS[6]) will provide a way to compare student achievement at the state level in the U.S. with achievement in other nations.

State and local education policymakers use NAEP data to ask fundamental questions about the levels of student achievement in schools under their authority. For example, Tennessee Commissioner of Education Kevin Huffman discussed how he uses NAEP at a November 2011 meeting in Nashville on NAEP 12th grade academic preparedness. Commissioner Huffman said that he analyzes student subgroup results in his state (e.g., students on free and reduced lunch) in comparison to other states. Raising questions about how subgroup performance compares across jurisdictions can help highlight where state or local policies may or may not be working. Asking thoughtful questions about the implications of NAEP results can be a positive way for parents to begin a productive conversation with state education leaders seeking to improve

[5] The 21 participants in the NAEP Trial Urban District Assessment Program are: Albuquerque, Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore City, Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Fresno, Hillsborough County, Houston, Los Angeles, Louisville, Ky. (Jefferson County), Miami (Dade County), Milwaukee, New York City, Philadelphia, San Diego, and Washington, DC.
[6] The acronym PIRLS stands for the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study.

achievement and close achievement gaps. Of course, while NAEP can be used as a source of information to help parents identify important questions to ask about the status of student achievement locally, the answers about what to do must be made by state and local officials with authority for the schools.

The Ad Hoc Committee believes there are groups of active parents and parent organizations who see the connection between system performance and the potential for impact on individual students. These include local and state leaders, often members of recognized parent and community organizations, who regularly work with the leaders of education systems, examine data, and ask fundamental questions to support and foster improved achievement and the closing of achievement gaps. These parent leaders and parent organizations should be the initial target audience for NAEP data and resources.

More specifically, because NAEP provides data for each of the 50 states and 21 urban districts, the initial target audience should be state and local parent leaders and parent organizations associated with these jurisdictions.

2. Establish Relationships with Recognized Parent and Community-based Organizations

To reach the target audience with NAEP data, it is important to work collaboratively with existing parent and community-based organizations. Many of these organizations have state affiliates and/or affiliates associated with local school districts. These organizations have direct access to parent and community leaders through email networks, social media, newsletters, and websites. These mechanisms are potentially effective, viable avenues for the dissemination of NAEP data and resources. In addition, these organizations often conduct national and state conferences, which could afford opportunities for presenting NAEP data and resources.

The Ad Hoc Committee has initiated conversations with the National PTA (NPTA), with positive results (see Appendix F). For example, the NPTA has begun announcing NAEP release events through its email networks and social media. In addition, Tonya Miles has been invited to make a presentation on March 7, 2012 at the NPTA Legislative Conference and on June 21, 2012 at the NPTA Annual Conference. Further, the NPTA assisted in recruiting parents for a meeting on February 16, 2012 to help review the NAEP presentation and materials for parents described in Recommendation 3.

Likewise, collaborative activity has occurred with the Public Education Network (PEN). Cornelia Orr, Governing Board Executive Director, made a presentation on NAEP and 12th grade academic preparedness at the PEN annual conference in November 2011. PEN also helped recruit experts from among its member organizations for a one-day meeting held on February 14,

2012 to provide input and feedback on the NAEP presentation and materials for parents described in Recommendation 3. PEN already transmits information about NAEP data and NAEP releases to its members and newsletter subscribers.

The Governing Board should continue to develop the relationships with the NPTA and PEN, and develop similar collaborative relationships with other organizations.

3. Develop Presentations and Materials Targeted to Parents for Use by Board Members and Others

Recognizing that the scope and depth of NAEP data and resources can be overwhelming, the Governing Board is working to develop a model PowerPoint presentation and associated materials for parents. Consistent with the information needs of the target audience in Recommendation 1, the presentation and materials can be customized for particular states and urban districts. The materials will include easy-to-understand charts and graphs and avoid the use of technical terms and jargon. In addition to explaining what NAEP is, the presentation will highlight NAEP data regarding the levels of achievement and the gaps between subgroups in ways that convey urgency.

The presentation and materials should be designed to help the audience understand the role of NAEP in the context of state and local assessments. Sample test items can be used to illustrate what content NAEP measures and how it is measured; consideration can be given to how this information about NAEP may complement state assessments. As noted in Recommendation 2, conducting input and feedback meetings with parent leaders and representatives of parent organizations is important to ensure that the level of detail and amount of information is appropriately tailored for the target audience.

The intent is for these resources to be available for use by Governing Board members invited to make presentations to the public and by interested parent and community-based organizations in making presentations specific to their locale.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is currently developing a general publication for parents. This publication will inform parents about what NAEP is, how it fits into the education landscape, and options to learn or do more. This publication will be debuted at the NPTA conference in June and displayed at the NAEP booth at the conference.

4. Develop Parent Pages on the Governing Board and NAEP Websites

Currently, the Governing Board website has no pages aimed at parents as the target audience. The NAEP website, managed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) does have pages for parents whose child has been selected to take NAEP, but not for parents in general.

The Ad Hoc Committee invited NCES to examine what it can do to make NAEP information on the website more accessible to parents. As a first important step, NCES made the "parent" navigation button more prominent on the NAEP website landing page. NCES is exploring additional changes to make the NAEP data more accessible to parents. As they develop the parent publication mentioned in Recommendation 3, NCES will update the NAEP web pages to ensure consistency. This will help expand the NAEP website audience from just parents of students selected for the NAEP sample to all interested parents.

The Ad Hoc Committee asked the Board's communications and website contractors, Reingold, Inc. and Quotient, to develop page mockups for parent pages on the Governing Board website (Appendix G). These should be further developed and incorporated as components of the Governing Board's website redesign, which is currently underway. The model PowerPoint presentation and materials in Recommendation 3 should be available for easy downloading from the Governing Board website.

In addition, the Governing Board should seek ways to leverage mass communications (e.g., TV, radio, public service announcements, and social media) to reach parents with NAEP data and resources.

5. Conduct a Parent Education Summit in Late Summer/Early Fall 2012

The Ad Hoc Committee proposes a one-day parent summit on education for the late summer or early fall of 2012. The summit would be conducted in Washington, D.C. and available across the nation via live-streaming internet video, with the potential for live TV and radio coverage via C-SPAN.

The objective of the summit would be to convey the urgency of improving student achievement in the United States for all children and the urgency of reducing achievement gaps between student subgroups.

In addition to Governing Board members, the audience of 150-300 would consist primarily of parent and community leaders, parent organizations, and leaders in education, business, civil rights, the religious community, and legislative policy.

To help convey the non-partisan, universal interest in achieving the summit objective, as well as to focus on its importance for the nation's future, First Lady Michelle Obama and former First Lady Laura Bush would be invited to share the podium in delivering the keynote address.

A distinguished journalist or media representative, acknowledged for intellect and freedom from bias, would be invited to moderate and provide a concluding summary.

A respected education advocate, with a strong reputation for compelling presentations on student achievement would be invited to present the NAEP data as evidence of the need to address the summit objective.

Individual and panel presentations would be made to address the national imperative for achieving the summit objective, from a wide range of perspectives which, taken together, would provide a compelling, unassailable argument for the urgent need to take action.

For example (not listed in priority order):

- Religious leaders would provide the moral perspective
- Economists would provide the national economic perspective
- Civil rights leaders would provide the equity perspective
- Military leaders would address the national security imperative
- Business leaders would address the human capital and employment imperative
- Scholars from nationally recognized policy institutions and foundations, representing a diverse range of philosophical orientations, would provide societal perspectives
- Demographers would address the implications from the perspective of a changing population
- Parent leaders would address the imperative for families and students
- Educators would describe actions that are needed to improve academic achievement overall and close achievement gaps

The Nation's Report Card

More Than Words: Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension

Overview and Media Coverage

January 17, 2013

OVERVIEW

The National Assessment Governing Board webinar More Than Words: Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension, at which the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report *Vocabulary Results from the 2009 and 2011 Reading Assessments* was released, took place on December 6, 2012, at 11 a.m. EST. The panelists for this webinar included:

- **Francie Alexander**, Senior Vice President and Chief Academic Officer, Scholastic Inc.; and former Governing Board Member
- **Jack Buckley**, NCES Commissioner
- **Brent Houston**, Principal, Shawnee Middle School, Shawnee, Okla.; and Governing Board Member
- **Margaret McKeown**, Senior Scientist, Learning Research and Development Center, and Clinical Professor, Department of Instruction and Learning, University of Pittsburgh School of Education

MEDIA COVERAGE SUMMARY

From December 6–13, 59 original stories were published about the vocabulary report card, including 55 news and four opinion stories. Most were published in multiple outlets, resulting in a total of 231 placements online, in print, and through broadcast media outlets.

The placements of coverage appeared in national and local news publications and on websites based in 44 states, the District of Columbia, and Guam. Outlets that covered the release include ABC World News, The Atlantic, CBS Radio, The Christian Science Monitor, The Huffington Post, Slate, USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, and Yahoo! News. An additional 332 websites ran the news release, including wire services Reuters and the Associated Press. CBS Radio also distributed the news release to 200 of its local affiliate stations.

Original coverage and reprints of news on the vocabulary results have the potential to reach about 187 million Web visitors, print readers, and broadcast media audiences. What follows are several examples of stories that were published following the release event.

USA TODAY

Report: U.S. students struggle with vocabulary
By: Greg Toppo

Vocabulary skills of students nationwide closely track students' reading comprehension levels.

Findings from a new federal study suggest that U.S. schoolchildren may not improve their reading skills until they have a better grasp of basic vocabulary.

The study, out Thursday from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, looks at the vocabulary skills of students nationwide and finds that they closely track students' reading comprehension levels. For fourth-graders, for instance, the top 25% of readers turned in an average 255-point vocabulary score on a 500-point scale; meanwhile, the weakest 25% of readers scored only 177 points.

The findings represent the first time that the federal government has analyzed vocabulary in isolation, and the results show that students have a long way to go: The average fourth-grader scored 218 points in 2011, essentially unchanged from 2009. The average eighth-grader scored 265, also unchanged from 2009. Twelfth-graders' results for 2009 averaged 296 points, but the test wasn't repeated in 2011.

The results come from the biennial National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), commonly called The Nation's Report Card.

Francie Alexander of the children's publishing house Scholastic said the results show that developing a rich vocabulary "can become a huge task for students," one that schools must take on "beginning in the earliest grades and continuing through high school." Alexander is also a former member of the National Assessment Governing Board, which oversees NAEP testing.

While the new effort isn't explicitly tied to more rigorous Common Core standards being piloted in schools nationwide, the new test in a sense closely follows the Common Core's direction. Common Core, which will be in place in most states by 2014, asks teachers to teach fewer subjects with more depth. The NAEP vocabulary test demanded more high-order, abstract thinking from students, inviting them to use the context of a passage to figure out words' meanings instead of simply asking them to define words in isolation.

In a one question, fourth-graders were asked to define the word "puzzled" as used in a reading passage about two boys who visit Boston's Public Gardens, the setting for the classic children's book Make Way for Ducklings. In the passage, the boys are "puzzled" that there are no ducks around.

Asked to pick from four possible definitions, only 51% correctly chose "confused that there were no ducks."

The choices:

a. trying to follow the ducks

b. hoping to play games with the ducks

c. surprised that there were so many ducks

d. confused that there were no ducks

Robert Pondiscio of the Core Knowledge Foundation, a non-profit curriculum advocacy organization based in Charlottesville, Va., said a rich vocabulary is absolutely key to students' academic success — previous research has suggested it's the single biggest indicator of a student's future achievement. "It's kind of the skill of skills," Pondiscio said.

He welcomed the federal government's new focus on vocabulary, but worried that it might lead to teachers simply assigning students to memorize long lists of words. It won't work, he said. "The context is what matters."

Rather, Pondiscio said, schools need to help kids develop bigger vocabularies through reading in a broad variety of topics.

Previous research has shown that low-income children tend to have far smaller vocabularies than their middle-class peers, a deficit that dooms many to an inferior education before it even begins.

"Demographics isn't destiny," he said, "but vocabulary might be."

Education Week

NAEP Data on Vocabulary Achievement Show Same Gaps
By Erik W. Robelen

A new analysis of federal data that provide a deeper and more systematic look into students' ability to understand the meaning of words in context than was previously available from "the nation's report card" finds stark achievement gaps in vocabulary across racial and ethnic groups, as well as income levels.

The analysis aims to offer greater insights into reading comprehension. The first-of-its-kind National Assessment of Educational Progress report suggests a consistent relationship between performance on vocabulary questions and the ability of students to comprehend a text, which experts say is consistent with prior research on the subject.

In 2011, 4th and 8th graders performing above the 75th percentile in reading comprehension on NAEP had the highest average vocabulary scores, the report says. Likewise, those 4th and 8th graders scoring at or below the 25th percentile had the lowest average vocabulary scores.

"Today's special report puts an important spotlight on something that's not discussed nearly enough on its own: vocabulary," Brent Houston, the principal of Shawnee Middle School in Shawnee, Okla., and a member of the NAEP governing board, said in prepared remarks. "We discuss concepts such as reading comprehension and reading on grade level, but we can't have success in those areas if our students also do not learn to understand the meaning of words in a variety of contexts."

What was especially troubling, Mr. Houston said, were the achievement gaps identified in the report.

"Perhaps what struck me most—and what hits closest to home—is observing the performance trends by family income," he said.

As Mr. Houston pointed out, the data reveal large gaps in achievement on the vocabulary assessment between students who are eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch and those who are not. In 4th grade, the gap was 31 points on a 0-500 scale. In 8th grade, the gap was 28 points.

The report does not provide achievement levels for students, such as "proficient" or "basic," as is typical for NAEP reports. Data from the broader NAEP reading report for 2011 found just 34 percent of both 4th and 8th graders scoring at or above the proficient level.

"Schools nationwide really need to go beyond teaching word definitions" to improve reading performance, Mr. Houston said.

The new report offers a sampling of vocabulary words that tripped up many students. The word "permeated" was a trouble spot for a lot of 8th graders, with nearly half failing to correctly identify its meaning in a nostalgic passage about eating a "mint snowball" at a small-town drugstore. And "puzzled" was apparently puzzling for 49 percent of 4th graders, who misidentified its meaning in a passage from the story "Ducklings Come Home to Boston."

‘The Early Stages’

A revised NAEP framework for reading, instituted in 2009, seeks to provide a more detailed and “systematic” measure of vocabulary. While previous reading assessments had included some vocabulary questions, the revised framework set new criteria for developing vocabulary questions and increased their number. The changes, a NAEP fact sheet says, allow the test to “reliably measure students’ vocabulary performance and report it separately.”

All vocabulary questions were multiple-choice and appeared in two different sections of the reading exam: comprehension and vocabulary.

Margaret McKeown, a senior scientist for learning research and development at the University of Pittsburgh, said in a statement that the new assessment is distinct from traditional vocabulary exams in three ways. First, it’s not based on a list of specific words. Second, the “target words” appear within the context of a passage, “rather than in isolation.” And third, the NAEP items emphasize an understanding of a word’s use within a given context, rather than the definition of the word on its own.

“This decision represents the major rationale for the assessment,” Ms. McKeown said, to measure “the kind of knowledge that students need to have about words in order to use the words to understand what they read.”

She added: “Although we are in the early stages of assessing vocabulary in NAEP, these initial results may give us some clues on patterns and how vocabulary fits into reading comprehension. ... Future NAEP reports in this area will provide invaluable data and trends on vocabulary in text that provide a better grasp of the nature of comprehending text and the role vocabulary knowledge plays in the quality of comprehension.”

Ms. McKeown served on a NAEP planning committee charged with developing recommendations for the current reading-assessment framework.

With two sets of data for grades 4 and 8, from 2009 and 2011, the data were able to show some changes over that time. In both grades, students achieving at or above the 75th percentile saw a statistically significant decline in achievement. For grade 4, the average score dropped from 269 to 266, and for grade 8 from 314 to 311.

On the issue of achievement gaps, the analysis found that in 2011, black students trailed white students, on average, by 29 points in both the 4th and 8th grades. Changes from 2009 to 2011 were not deemed statistically significant.

Meanwhile, Hispanic 4th and 8th graders also trailed their white peers, by 28 points in 8th grade and 29 in 4th grade.

Girls outperformed boys by slight margins in grades 4 and 8 (2 points and 3 points, respectively) in 2011. The 1-point difference in 12th grade, from the 2009 assessment, was not statistically significant. In 2011, 12th graders were not tested.

‘Barren’ and ‘Eerie’

A chart featured in the report highlights some of the vocabulary words tested and how students fared in recognizing their meaning in context.

In grade 4, words like “barren,” “detected,” and “eerie” posed problems, with fewer than half of students correctly identifying their meaning. But “created,” “spread,” and “underestimate” were correctly understood by 75 percent or more.

The word “urbane” was difficult for both 8th and 12th graders, with fewer than half getting the correct answer. But “anecdotes” was correctly understood by three-quarters of 8th and 12th graders.

Several criteria were used to select words for inclusion in the vocabulary questions, according to the report. Those words were to be: characteristic of written language, as opposed to everyday speech; used across a variety of content areas, rather than being technical or specialized language; generally familiar concepts, feelings, or actions; and necessary for understanding part or all of a passage.

The Atlantic

Opinion: Vocabulary and Reading: Give Your Kids a Fighting Chance
By John Tierney

U.S. students -- from the richest to the least privileged -- have trouble with words, and they're getting worse. This time, though, it's not just the schools that are failing them.

A recent news report got me thinking about students I've known who have weak vocabularies and poor reading comprehension. Late last week, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) released results from the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which showed that U.S. students fell well short of what they were expected to know on a new vocabulary section of a national exam.

This didn't surprise me. One of the strongest impressions I took away from my decade as a teacher of high-school juniors and seniors had to do with the weakness of their vocabularies. I was regularly astonished at the simple words many of them did not understand.

The NAEP report also got me thinking more about how having a weak vocabulary is a limitation that has roots in very early childhood and that, in this as in so many other areas of life, family income and other home circumstances have enormous effects on vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. Research has shown that the differences in the number of words kids are exposed to in different living situations are astounding: Between professional households and low-income households, there is a gap of 32 million words over the first four years of life. And there is a direct correlation between the intensity of these early verbal experiences and later achievement.

The NAEP report confirms that there are stark achievement gaps in vocabulary across racial and ethnic groups, as well as income levels, and that, overall, American students have weak vocabularies that are not improving.

The report lists words that tripped up many students. For example, roughly half of fourth-graders could not figure out, from seeing it in context, that the word "puzzled" means confused. Nearly half of eight-graders did not know the word "permeated" means "spread all the way through." Only half of twelfth-graders knew the meaning of "mitigate; less than half knew the meaning of "delusion" and "urbane."

As I say, none of this surprised me. The way I came to appreciate the vocabulary deficits of many of my eleventh- and twelfth-grade students was during tests. They seldom raised a hand during class time to ask about the meaning of a word. But in the higher-stakes situation of a test, they must have felt it worthwhile to catch my attention and ask me privately to define a word. Rarely did a testing period go by without at least one student asking for such help. These accumulated experiences gave me a sense of the scope of the vocabulary and reading-comprehension problems out there.

The weakness of students' vocabularies was a common topic of conversation -- and despair -- among the teachers at my school. And it's worth noting that we were not teaching in a low-income district where students are more likely to have weak vocabularies and poor reading skills. Rather, we taught at a private school for girls, most of whom came from extraordinarily privileged families with all the support and learning advantages their elevated socioeconomic status could impart.

Why do so many of these fortunate students have problems with vocabulary and reading comprehension? The most obvious answer is that they aren't doing much reading. I'm not an expert on vocabulary acquisition, but I can report on what I observe: Students who read a lot have strong vocabularies; those who read less have weaker vocabularies. There's nothing unusual about this. Seeing words in context helps us understand what they mean and recognize the proper spelling of words we've heard.

The connection might lead us to think that the best way to improve students' vocabularies is to get them to read more. True. The problem, of course, is that students with weak vocabularies have poor reading comprehension. As a result, they don't like to read. A cycle of cumulative deterioration sets in.

Is all this yet another sign of failure on the part of the American school system? I think not. I see it as a sign of failure on the part of two societal forces that shape our schools: the larger culture, and individual families.

The larger culture certainly is not helping to nourish good reading habits. Television is always there. So are Facebook, Twitter, and myriad other diversions. If my students' poor vocabularies were a shock to me, so was learning how much time they spent watching television and viewing favorite movies multiple times. Neither students' vocabularies nor their reading skills are improving while they're planted in front of Glee or the Twilight series. (Need I note that no other skills are improving at those times, either?)

But I don't think the larger culture is chiefly to blame here. The real responsibility rests with parents. And not just for letting their kids veg out in front of the TV for hours, but for failing to provide the conditions and model the sorts of behavior that can make a huge difference to a young person's vocabulary development and reading skills.

It's when we drill down to the individual family level that we see why higher-income families have such a substantial advantage in giving their kids the sorts of opportunities that really make a difference for learning. Poorer families devote the vast majority of their incomes (and, in many cases, their time) to meeting basic human needs of food and shelter. Richer families are in the fortunate position to use disposable income and time to expose their children to reading materials, conversation, and life experiences that enrich their vocabularies and teach them about the world that surrounds them.

That matters a lot. Not only does a weak vocabulary lead to poor reading comprehension, so does a lack of knowledge about basic social, economic, political, and scientific realities -- in short, "real-world" knowledge. This is different from "street smarts," which can be enormously advantageous, but which don't translate into learning advantages in school.

With respect to that general knowledge base, Daniel Willingham has explained that after young students have developed the decoding skills associated with learning to read, the difference between good readers and poor readers largely has to do with "differences in the knowledge that kids bring to the reading. It's easy to read something when you already know something about the topic. And if you don't know about the topic, it's utterly opaque to you."

The truth of his observation is familiar to any teacher. I got so that I could tell fairly reliably which of my students came from homes where the parents read a lot at home, where there were lots of books, magazines, newspapers, and other reading materials available, and where the parents talked to their kids about interesting developments in the news.

Equally obvious were the households where those things lost out to shared preoccupations with shopping and consumption, sports, physical appearance, and the like. You may think I'm being elitist, or willfully retrograde. I don't think so. Ask any teacher who has been at it for a number of years and they will tell you the same thing. The differences are clear and manifest.

If you want to foster your kids' vocabulary, reading comprehension, and real-world knowledge, it's best to start that effort when they're very young because, as noted, the foundations of a strong vocabulary are laid by the age of three or four. Exposing your kids to words, orally and in writing, sets them up for future achievement.

But it's not as if the window of opportunity for making a huge difference in your kid's life closes after the age of four. After that, you can still make a big difference by following lessons that emerge from teachers' observations and that have the wisdom of the ages backing them up. Whatever your circumstances and income level, do what you can to give your kids a fighting chance by shaping the home environment so they have an abundance of rich materials around from which they can learn about the real world. To the best of your ability, do the following:

- Speak to your children, early and often
- Read to them a lot when they're young
- Give them encouraging feedback.
- Set high expectations.
- Help them learn from failures and setbacks.
- Encourage a "growth mindset."

Oh, and don't try to lay all the blame on the schools. In this case, dear parent, the responsibility and the opportunity to make a difference rest chiefly with you.

Advisory for Mega-States Release

LIVE EVENT & WEBCAST

Lessons for All: Decades of NAEP Data from the Mega-States

February 21, 2013, 9 a.m. PST/Noon EST

What states can learn from NAEP:
Challenges and successes in our nation's largest states

During the past decade, the United States has undergone seismic shifts in its demographic makeup—nowhere more so than in school systems in our most populated states. Nearly 40 percent of U.S. students attend schools in our nation's "mega-states" — California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas. Although each is unique in its educational approaches and challenges, these states offer lessons about the condition and future of education in the country as a whole.

To shed light on the trends affecting these key states, the National Assessment Governing Board sponsored ***Mega-States: An Analysis of Student Performance in the Five Most Heavily Populated States in the Nation***. This report highlights shifts over time in demographics and student performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in the subjects of reading, mathematics, and science at grades 4 and 8.

To learn more about the report, join the Governing Board on February 21, 2013, at 9 a.m. PST, in Sacramento, Calif., for **Lessons for All: Decades of NAEP Data from the Mega-States**, an event exploring this unique cross section of student achievement data. The event will also be webcast live.

This view across the five mega-states will show patterns in performance of student subgroups (by race and ethnicity, income level, and English language learner status) relative to their peers nationwide. Find out how factors including student-to-teacher ratios and states' use of resources relate to academic achievement.

A panel of experts representing the mega-states will provide in-depth analysis of the report's findings.

Meet the panel:

- **David W. Gordon,** Sacramento County Superintendent of Schools, Sacramento County Office of Education (moderator)
- **Jack Buckley,** Commissioner, National Center for Education Statistics (data presentation)
- **Tony Bennett,** Commissioner, Florida Department of Education
- **Michael L. Williams,** Commissioner, Texas Education Agency
- **Richard Zeiger,** Chief Deputy Superintendent, California Department of Education
- **Kristen Huff,** Senior Fellow for Assessment, New York State Education Department
- **Mary O'Brian,** Acting Assessment Director, Illinois State Board of Education

Upcoming NAEP Reports as of March 2013

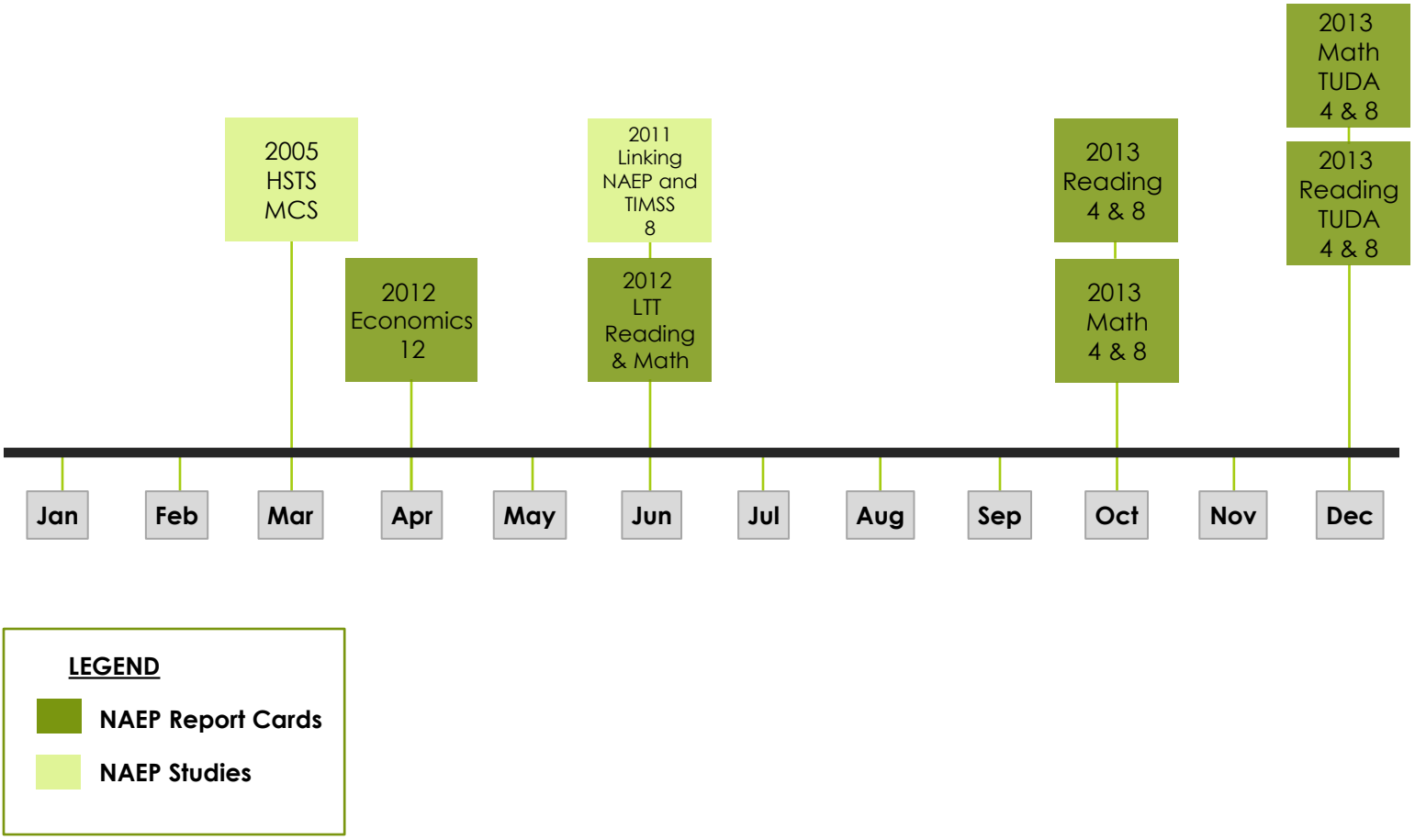
Initial NAEP Releases

Report	Expected Release Date
2012 Economics	April 2013
2012 Long-Term Trend	June 2013
2013 Mathematics Grades 4 and 8	October 2013
2013 Reading Grades 4 and 8	October 2013
2013 Mathematics TUDA Grades 4, 8	December 2013
2013 Reading TUDA Grades 4, 8	December 2013
2013 Reading and Mathematics, Grade 12	Spring 2014

Other NAEP Reports

Report	Expected Release Date
2005 HSTS Math Curriculum Study	March 2013
Linking NAEP and TIMSS 2011 Mathematics and Science Results for the 8th Grade	June 2013

2013 NCES Assessment Data Release Timeline



Releases in 2013

- 2005 HSTS Math Curriculum Study
- 2012 Economics Report Card: Grade 12 (National only)
- Linking NAEP and TIMSS 2011 Mathematics and Science Results for the 8th Grade
- 2012 Long-term Trend (LTT) Reading & Math: Ages 9, 13, and 17 (National only)
- 2013 Reading Report Card: Grades 4 and 8
- 2013 Mathematics Report Card: Grades 4 and 8
- 2013 Reading Report Card: Trial Urban Districts (TUDA): Grades 4 and 8
- 2013 Mathematics Report Card: Trial Urban Districts (TUDA): Grades 4 and 8

Assessment Data Collection Schedule 2013

- Reading: Grades 4, 8, 12
- Math: Grades 4, 8, 12

NOTE TO Reporting and Dissemination Committee on Configuration of Fall 2013 NAEP Releases

The 2013 reading and mathematics results are likely to generate more public attention than any other NAEP reports this year. How their release is configured will have a substantial impact on how the data are reported by the press and how they are discussed by the public.

The information to be released this fall will be for

- Two subjects—reading and mathematics
- Three grades—4, 8, and 12, and
- Three governmental levels—the nation, the states, and 21 large urban school districts.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is planning to issue four reports:

- *NAEP 2013 Mathematics Report Card for the Nation and the States* (grades 4, 8, and 12 with trends from 1990)
- *NAEP 2013 Reading Report Card for the Nation and the States* (grades 4, 8, and 12 with trends from 1992)
- *NAEP 2013 Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) Report Card in Mathematics* (grades 4 and 8 with trends from 2003)
- *NAEP 2013 Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) Report Card in Reading* (grades 4 and 8 with trends from 2002)

The two state and national reports are scheduled to be ready for release in October; the two TUDA reports in December. In addition, at the time of each release a massive amount of detailed data will be posted on the Internet via the NAEP Data Explorer.

Essentially, NAEP releases can emphasize the subject assessed, the grade tested, or the governmental units being reported. Until 2003, individual releases focused on particular subjects. Almost always there were separate releases for reading, mathematics, science, and the other subjects NAEP assesses—though occasionally reports for related subjects were released together, such as U.S. history and civics.

Since the advent of No Child Left Behind and required state-NAEP testing, the reading and math reports for the nation and the states have usually been released together. The emphasis in press coverage has been on comparisons between the states and with results of state testing programs. The TUDA reading and math results have also been released together about four to six weeks after the state and national results. Again, the emphasis has been on comparisons rather than the subject assessed. Even though the amount of data released has been enormous (or maybe because of that), the story lines about it have generally been simple—up, down, or no change.

For the 2009 NAEP there was a special report on grade 12 NAEP results. Reading and mathematics were in the same publication with data for the nation and the 11 states that participated in the first 12th grade state NAEP.

For this fall the Board may wish to consider three releases:

- National and state mathematics (grades 4, 8, and 12)
- National and state reading (grades 4, 8, and 12)
- TUDA reading and math (grades 4 and 8)

The two main report cards would be released two to three weeks apart in October with the release webinars discussing developments in each subject in some detail. Of course, there would be state comparisons but the emphasis would be on trends and patterns in achievement and teaching in each field, including contextual data on school practices and student interests and behaviors.

For TUDA the reports on the two subjects would be released together in December. This would keep the focus on how the various districts perform and how they compare with each other, large central cities overall, and the nation, which is the purpose of the TUDA program. Separate consideration of mathematics and reading probably is not warranted for TUDA since that already would have been addressed in the main report card releases.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD
RELEASE PLAN FOR
NAEP ECONOMICS 2012 REPORT

The Nation's Report Card in Economics 2012

The Nation's Report Card in Economics 2012 will be released to the general public during April 2013. Following a review and approval of the report's results, the release will be arranged as an online webinar. The release event will include a data presentation by the Commissioner of Education Statistics, with moderation and comments by at least one member of the National Assessment Governing Board. Full accompanying data will be posted on the Internet at the scheduled time of release.

The 2012 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Report Card in Economics measures students' skills in economic literacy. Students responded to questions designed to measure their understanding of how economics and markets work and how people function in them; the benefits and costs of economic interaction and the interdependence among people and nations; and the fundamental constraints imposed by limited resources, the resulting choices people have to make, and the tradeoffs they face.

The NAEP Economics 2012 Report Card presents results from a representative sample of about 10,900 12th graders at the national level—the assessment is not administered to state-level samples. Results will be reported in terms of scale scores and percentages of students at or above achievement levels. Results are also presented by such demographic categories as gender, race/ethnicity, and free/reduced price lunch eligibility. Because the NAEP Economics Framework was used to develop both the 2012 and 2006 assessments, the 2012 results can be compared with initial assessment results from 2006—the previous assessment year for NAEP Economics.

DATE AND LOCATION

The release event for the media and the public will occur in April 2013. The exact date and location will be determined by the Chair of the Reporting and Dissemination Committee in accordance with Governing Board policy, following acceptance of the final report.

EVENT FORMAT

- Introductions and opening statement by a National Assessment Governing Board member
- Data presentation by the Commissioner of Education Statistics
- Comments by at least one Governing Board member
- Comments by a representative of the economics community

- Questions from members of the press and then the general audience
- Program will last approximately 75 minutes
- Event will be broadcast live over the Internet, and viewers will be able to submit questions electronically for panelists. An archived version of the webinar, with closed captioning, will be posted on the Governing Board website at www.nagb.org.

EMBARGOED ACTIVITIES BEFORE RELEASE

In the days preceding the release, the Governing Board and NCES will offer access to embargoed data via a special website to approved U.S. Congressional staff in Washington, DC; representatives of governors and state education agencies; and appropriate media. A conference call for journalists who signed embargo agreements will be held to give a brief overview of findings and data and to answer questions.

REPORT RELEASE

The Commissioner of Education Statistics will publicly release the report at the NAEP website–http://nationsreportcard.gov–at the scheduled time of the release event. An online copy of the report, along with data tools, questions, and various other resources, will be available at the time of release on the NAEP site. An interactive version of the release with panelists' statements, a Governing Board press release, publications and related materials, including an abridged version of the 2012 NAEP Economics Framework, will be posted on the Board's web site at www.nagb.org. The site will also feature links to social networking sites, key graphics, and audio and/or video material related to the event.

ACTIVITIES AFTER THE RELEASE

The Governing Board's communications contractor, Reingold, will work with Board staff to coordinate a communications effort, which could include a webinar, seminar, or social media initiative, to extend the life of the NAEP Economics results. These initiatives should be of great value and relevance to stakeholders with an interest in student achievement as well as economics education and assessment.