

# Understanding Educational Assessment

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**Jim Popham**

## **PREAMBLE**

*This will be a very brief preamble to two almost as brief analyses. The first of those two essays was written at Dulles Airport immediately after a December meeting of the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) in Washington, D.C. That initial analysis proposed that NAGB take the lead in enhancing the educational assessment understandings of U.S. citizens, but especially of parents and grandparents of America's school-age children. That brief commentary, entitled "Of Simple Things," was sent to NAGB leadership and staff (from Dulles) as soon as it had been written. During a subsequent March 2013 NAGB meeting, the writer was invited to make a brief oral presentation to the full Board during its May 2013 Los Angeles session. The May presentation was to describe the proposal advocated in the earlier, Dulles-authored essay.*

*You will find below, then, the December 2012 analysis (after having expunged a few Dulles-inspired typographical errors). Thereafter, in a second essay, I have supplied a few suggestions about how NAGB might move forward should it be decided to embark on a campaign to increase the educational-assessment understandings of Americans and, of course, their understandings about the role played by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The second analysis is entitled, "What Next?" I hope to highlight certain elements of this second analysis during my remarks at the May 2013 NAGB meeting. The aim of that presentation will be to stimulate Board Members' pro/con consideration of the recommended proposal.*

*W. James Popham*

*April 13, 2013*

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## **OF SIMPLE THINGS**

I love simplicity. Thus, as I sit at Dulles Airport after taking part in a meeting of the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), I look back with approval at NAGB Chairman David Driscoll's call for NAGB to "make a difference." He initially issued this challenge many months ago, and has reiterated it often—and as recently as a few hours ago. What he wants is for the assessment-related arsenal at NAGB's disposal to be

used so it leads to improved American schooling. It is a simple challenge, but responding to it requires NAGB members to consider potential implementation alternatives.

One of the improvement-tactics voiced several times during the recent three-day meeting is for NAGB to let the nation know more about the tests for which we are responsible, namely, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). If this tactic were followed, I fear, it would most certainly be *unsuccessful*. And here's why.

Educational assessment is, at bottom, quite a simple process. We get students to supply *overt* responses to test-items so that we can arrive at inferences about those test-takers' *covert* knowledge and skills. These test-based inferences, depending on the way a test is built and administered, can apply at different levels of aggregation, that is, at a national level, a state level, a school level, a teacher level, and a student level.

In a rather general way, some Americans might be interested in large-scale test-based inferences such as (1) how well U.S. students are doing today in contrast to their past performances or (2) how American students compare to students in other nations. However, most citizens—and particularly parents of school-age children—want to see test-scores, and the resultant test-based inferences—that lead to *action*. Ask any parents of elementary children whether they're more interested in (1) how their state's NAEP scores stack up against state-level scores of other states or (2) what should be the specific focus of instruction to strengthen their child's mastery of key curricular content. Clearly, the answer will invariably be one that provides *actionable* test-elicited evidence.

And therein resides the problem. NAEP provides us with “big-signal” results. The resulting score-based inferences might provide actionable information to high-authority policymakers, but to average citizens—and particularly to parents of school-age children—there simply are no action implications flowing from NAEP results. Therefore, for NAGB to tout its NAEP tests for parents and other citizens *in isolation* is akin to telling an individual to “pay attention to something that you can't do anything about!” Sensible parents, given their powerful interest in their children's well being, will quite properly ask: “But what can I do about this?” NAGB needs to provide a legitimate answer to that question.

One answer, I submit, is for NAGB to undertake a serious campaign to enhance the assessment-related understandings of American citizens—with a particular emphasis on parents (and, these days, also on grandparents) of school-age youngsters. We can show how, initially triggered by “big-signal” inferences derivative from NAEP, other genres of educational tests can provide follow-on, actionable evidence that's needed.

Whereas most current state-level accountability tests are not sufficiently diagnostic to supply useful instructional guidance, many district-level and teacher-made tests are capable of supplying the sort of assessment evidence that could help parents decide how, in an effective and targeted manner, to support a child's learning.

Putting it simply, NAGB-generated noise about NAEP—all by itself—is noise destined to make no difference. On the other hand, a meaningful assessment-literacy initiative would show our citizens how NAEP's mission complements the contributions of other kinds of assessments. Indeed, a consequence of such an assessment-literacy initiative might be for parents to demand that the full spectrum of appropriate educational assessments be employed in their local settings. NAEP can do things that no other tests can do. But NAEP can't do other things, and citizens need to know it. We can help our citizens distinguish among educational tests intended to fulfill different functions.

Important school-quality issues will be coming up in the next few years, issues of relevance to many Americans. Consider, for example, the degree to which the tests being created by the two Common Core assessment consortia are duplicative of, or complementary to, NAEP. Are the educational tests currently being used by so many states to evaluate teachers suitable for that significant task? American citizens need to possess basic understandings regarding educational assessment so that they can take part, perhaps along with their elected representatives, in analyses of such issues.

NAGB is ideally positioned to lead a major initiative to enhance the nation's assessment understandings. NAGB has no interest in selling tests, hence should be regarded as a nonpartisan distributor of objective information regarding educational assessment. The focus of any NAGB effort along these lines should be patently educative, and never advocative such as supporting particular types of test or, worse, the virtues or vices of a particular test-development firm's tests. Rather, the emphasis should be on helping citizens become more knowledgeable about the basic fundamentals of educational testing such as the sorts of interpretations derivative from classroom, state, national, and international tests. The educative effort should focus on a modest collection of fundamental concepts and procedures, not on the psychometric esoterica that sometimes abound when NAGB meets.

Moreover, if there were to be a NAGB-headed effort to promote greater understanding of educational assessment among citizens, should we not also direct at least some of our attention to "citizens in waiting?" Yes, given today's enormous importance of students' performances on educational tests, should we not be relaying some of these assessment-related understandings to U.S. students themselves? Educational assessment is too important to leave it to the grownups.

Wrapping up this exercise in simplicity, because my flight will soon be departing, I have argued that a NAGB promotional effort focused only on NAEP *per se* would be a mistake because its test-based inferences are at a generality-level of scant utility to most citizens. However, by educating citizens—especially parents of school-age children—about the strengths and weaknesses of the major varieties of educational tests, NAGB can show the nation what NAEP can and can't do. And we can also describe what other kinds of tests are needed to effectively educate our children. It's really that simple.

W. James Popham

Dulles Airport--December 1, 2012\*

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\*Typo-corrected copy provided to NAGB staff on February 26, 2013.

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## WHAT NEXT?

Recapitulating, then, the thrust of the proposal proffered in December 2012 was to urge NAGB to take part in a campaign to enhance the understandings of Americans regarding educational assessment *per se* rather than only understandings about NAEP. By becoming more knowledgeable regarding today's full array of educational tests, including what NAEP can and can't do, interested citizens will be better able to make use of the information provided by educational tests. Moreover, if shortcomings are discovered in the nature of their local, currently used educational tests, or in the ways the results of such tests are being utilized, a more knowledgeable citizenry will be better positioned to call for improvements in such testing.

Because multiple audiences would be targeted by such a campaign, diverse tactics would need to be employed to reach those audiences. Likely targets of an educational-assessment campaign would be (1) *educational policymakers* such as governors, federal and state legislators, as well as state and district school-board members; (2) everyday *citizens*, especially parents and grandparents of school-age children; and (3) *students* themselves. It would be the goal of such an educative campaign to promote

genuine understandings among such audiences regarding the most important (basic) assessment concepts and procedures that can play a prominent role in how we operate and evaluate the success of American schools.

It will be noted in the preceding paragraph that among the three suggested target audiences, namely, educational policymakers, citizens, and students, I have not identified educators. Regrettably, the level of assessment acumen among American educators is remarkably low. Clearly, the educators who operate U.S. schools need to know much, much more about educational assessment. On two counts, however, I am disinclined to include educators as targets of a campaign such as that being proposed. First, the depth of understandings needed by teachers and administrators about education testing goes well beyond what is needed by the identified three groups. It would be difficult to arrive at a Goldilocks, “just right” depth of treatment for both educators and non-educators. Second, a substantial number of organizations currently are providing professional development opportunities for America’s educators. If persuaded to do so, many of these groups could easily address the topic of educational assessment. For the three groups identified here, that is, educational policymakers, citizens, and students, *no governmental or nongovernmental group is currently promoting greater understanding of educational assessment in general.* If NAGB were inclined to move forward with some variant of the proposed educative campaign, an early-on decision would need to be made about target audiences and, of course, one of the audiences to be considered for inclusion might well be U.S. educators.

If NAGB members were disposed to move in the proposed direction, how might this kind of program be initiated, and who would operate it? In the following paragraphs, I will briefly address those issues.

### **An NCES-NAGB Joint Venture**

I confess instantly, that I know naught about the inner workings of NAGB or the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES)—even though, as a member of NAGB, I am privileged to see the consequences of collaboration between the staffs of these two groups during every quarterly NAGB meeting that I attend. Apparently, based on a sufficiency of smiles and an absence of vitriolic rhetoric, NCES and NAGB staffers have adopted viable interaction strategies. I am positing, then, the suggestion that if NAGB were interested in moving forward with what is being proposed herein, and if NCES leaders were also interested, then a joint attack on the problem would follow. (In many situations, not knowing about the nature of behind-the-scenes activities can be decidedly advantageous. I prefer, in this instance, to remain sublimely ignorant.)

As we all realize, these are not plush fiscal times for federal agencies or for independent organizations funded by federal dollars. Accordingly, it is all too clear that whatever arrangements might be arrived at regarding how to move this initiative forward, its magnitude would clearly be governed by available financial and personnel resources. Ideally, if NAGB members were strongly supportive of the proposal, and if NCES officials were equally enthusiastic, then a genuinely substantial initiative might be undertaken. Fiscal constraints, however, could markedly diminish the size of any campaign efforts. Yet, because the thrust of the proposed activity would be to diminish the assessment-related ignorance of one or more of the target audiences, even a modest campaign to accomplish such a mission would be well worth undertaking.

### **A Suitable Label**

In early, informal discussions with colleagues about the proposed initiative, it was often referred to as “an assessment-literacy campaign.” I realize that this is a label commonly affixed to such programs, for it seems to do the descriptive job satisfactorily. But I don’t like this label, even though I have sometimes used it in my writing.

In my dictionary, *literacy* refers to “a person’s knowledge of a particular subject or field.” And this, after all, is precisely what it is proposed we promote, namely, greater knowledge on the part of several target audiences about educational assessment. “Literacy,” however, has an opposite variant—and that opposite is “illiteracy.” There is, unfortunately, a patently pejorative connotation present when we refer to anyone as an “illiterate.” Strategically, therefore, instead of trying to get a flock of “assessment illiterates” to learn more about educational testing or, if you prefer, “to remove such people from their state of ignorance,” it seems that a more palatable plan might be to move people forward with respect to their understanding of educational assessment (UEA). I suggest, then, that as a *pro tem* placeholder we refer to what’s being suggested as the UEA Campaign, that is, the *Understanding Educational Assessment Campaign*. Obviously, were NCES and NAGB inclined to move forward in the proposed direction, all aspects of the program would be determined early on—definitely including the name for the initiative itself. For the nonce, however, I shall refer to what’s under discussion as the UEA Campaign.

### **Campaign Particulars**

So many features of any campaign of this sort would depend on the available resources allocated to carry it out. Accordingly, it would be meaningless to set forth a galaxy of potential interventions intended to promote greater understandings about educational assessment. Obviously, all of the usual educative mechanisms would be fair game—ranging from the prosaic use of the printed word all the way to today’s alluring

innovations in electronic technology. Not only would those staffing the UEA Campaign need to be deciding among competing educational ploys, but methods of evaluating the effectiveness of any chosen campaign tactics would also need to be identified—and implemented. Good hard thinking, a ton of it, must be undertaken prior to the initiation of an NCES-NAGB directed UEA Campaign.

One important consideration is the high regard in which NAEP is held by almost everyone. The “gold-standard” branding of NAEP, so adroitly carried out by NAGB and NCES leaders over the years, would be a wonderful asset were the proposed campaign to be undertaken. Neither NAGB nor NCES is peddling educational tests. These two groups are not profit-driven but, rather, are committed to a patently educational effort aimed at key target audiences. Both groups want to improve American schooling, and almost everyone knows it. A UEA Campaign could, happily, operate from what is, unarguably, the “high ground.”

One asset that must be considered by any architects of a UEA Campaign should definitely be the NAEP State Coordinators. Through its NAEP Support and Service Center (NSSC), NCES provides these State Coordinators with support in their efforts to increase assessment knowledge of their state stakeholders. As I have reviewed the efforts of NSSC in assisting State Coordinators, although I encounter occasional references to sharing information with “external stakeholders,” I conclude that the bulk of the educative efforts currently carried out by the State Coordinators are, understandably, focused on NAEP itself rather than on educational assessment in general.

Excellent NAEP-focused materials from NCES already exist, such as *What Every Parent Should Know About NAEP*. But, as can be inferred, such materials are centered on NAEP itself. What is being proposed in the UEA Campaign is a broader educational effort in which NAEP’s nature and potential contributions are treated *along with* numerous other genres of educational measurement. Indeed, insofar as sensible, Campaign content could even suggest how a member of the target audience might *act* on whatever level of NAEP results are most pertinent to that audience (for example, state-level results for educational policymakers or parents of school-age children).

I have worked with a number of these NAEP State Coordinators over the years, and have found them to be uniformly first-rate professionals. Those planning any UEA Campaign should surely find a way to involve this powerful collection of assessment-knowledgeable individuals in the contemplated educational activity. At the moment, it is my perception that the educational efforts of NAEP State Coordinators are dominantly focused on NAEP *per se*.

## Less and More

What content would a UEA Campaign address, that is, what understandings about educational assessment would such a campaign treat? Let's face it, educational measurement can be mighty complex if one wishes to dig deeply into it. But the level of understanding needed by policymakers, citizens, and students is not all that deep. Indeed, there would be peril were the campaign to dip into the exotica that might prove exhilarating to psychometricians, but confusing to normal people. Accordingly, this is another instance in which less is most definitely more. It makes more sense if we can get parents of school-age children to really comprehend 10 *basic* measurement concepts than to become overwhelmed and confused by 50 measurement concepts—many of which have no action implications for those parents. This is an instance in which the actionability of potential content should always trump competing content.

A content-review group should be set up to prioritize potential content in a way that potential understandings such as the following should be considered and debated at length—with their action implications spelled out for the specific audience(s) involved. One example of such an understanding—in italics—is presented below along with an indication of the target audience and the potential action implications. A substantial collection of such understandings could be presented to the prioritizing group, and the number of highest-priority understandings would be chosen that best match the projected educational methods and the financial magnitude of the planned UEA Campaign.

### An Illustrative Educational Assessment Understanding

#### For Parents/Grandparents of School-Age Children

The Understanding: *Although a relationship exists between (a) high-school students' scores on such aptitude tests as the SAT and ACT and (b) students' college grades, only 25% of college grades are actually accounted for by those test scores. The remaining 75% is linked to factors such as a student's effort and study habits.*

Action Implication: If a child's scores on the SAT or ACT are not remarkably high, this does *not* mean that the child is destined for failure in college. Because fully 75% of a student's academic success in college is dependent on non-test factors, parents should not send messages of discouragement to a child who scores low on these aptitude tests. In most instances, a child's success in college is up to the child, not the child's scores on a single, less than perfectly predictive test taken during high school.

From a set of understandings such as this one, those that were most highly prioritized by a carefully chosen content-review group would then be addressed properly in the Campaign's educational materials in audience-appropriate language and with sufficient illustrations. The explanations and illustrations, of course, would mesh with the educational medium chosen for best promoting that particular understanding.

### **Wrap Up**

NAGB and NCES are carrying out the development, administration, scoring, and reporting of one of the world's premier educational assessments. In America, however, fewer individuals understand the mission and limitations of NAEP than is appropriate. In part, a failure to understand the role of NAEP stems from a widespread absence of understanding regarding the basics of educational assessment itself.

If more educational policymakers, citizens (including parents/grandparents of school-age children), and students better understood educational assessment, those individuals would be more likely to take appropriate assessment-dependent actions and, where possible, make better educational decisions.

Therefore, it was proposed that NAGB, working in close alliance with NCES, implement a meaningful Understanding Educational Assessment Campaign to address this problem. If the proposed campaign is successful, more Americans will understand how to employ the results of educational assessment in order to reach better educational decisions. As a consequence, American schooling will improve.

W. James Popham

April 13, 2013

# **UNDERSTANDING EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT**

**A Petite Presentation to NAGB During  
its May 2013 Quarterly Meeting**

**By W. James Popham**

**May 17, 2013**

**Los Angeles, California**

**(Storied Locus of UCLA and Other  
Glamorous Entities)**

# WHY DO WE USE EDUCATIONAL TESTS?

- To make valid inferences about students' covert status
- So we can base our educational decisions on these inferences
- In order to improve educational quality

# UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS OF EDUCATIONAL TESTING

The educational decisions made by those who don't understand or, worse, those who *misunderstand* are almost certain to be inappropriate.

# A DIVERSITY OF USERS

- **Teachers and School Administrators**
- **Educational Policymakers**
- **Everyday Citizens (particularly parents and grandparents of school-age children)**
- **Students Themselves**

# **A DISTURBING REALITY**

**At the present, most Americans' understandings about the basics of educational testing are appallingly low, educators as well as non-educators.**

# A PROPOSAL TO NAGB

**It is recommended, therefore, that NAGB collaborate with NCES to initiate an *Understanding Educational Assessment (UEA) Campaign*.**

# POTENTIAL TYPES OF TESTS

- **NAEP**
- **Prominent International Tests**
- **State Accountability Tests**
- **National Assessment Consortia**
- **Classroom Assessments (Formative and Summative Uses)**
- **Interim Tests (Diagnostic or Predictive)**
- **Affective Inventories**

# POSSIBLE UNDERSTANDINGS TO INCLUDE IN A UEA CAMPAIGN

- **Validity refers to inferences, not tests.**
- **NAEP is a matrix-sampled “big signal.”**
- **Research has ratified the formative-assessment process.**
- **Evaluative tests are misused if their instructional sensitivity is unproven.**

## **AND NOW**

**A pro and con Board discussion of the proposal to initiate a UEA Campaign should transpire.**

**Pro comments will be zealously encouraged by the presenter.**

**Con comments will be treated fairly, but with thinly veiled disdain.**

# Outreach to Principals and School Systems

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**Hector Ibarra**

January 7, 2013

Dear Dave,

At my initial and 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the board I stated that NAEP wasn't very well known and I provided input as to what I thought could be improved. I shared:

- 1) Students at the school where I taught took NAEP tests often;
- 2) The NAEP tests were not offered during my science class periods;
- 3) The principals never provided background information on NAEP or promoted it;
- 4) Parents were not informed of the importance of students doing their best on the test;
- 5) No posters or informative materials were ever placed on the bulletin board stating NAEP was coming and promoting the importance of students doing their best;
- 6) Not until I was selected as a member of the NAEP Standing Committee did I realize the importance of NAEP and utilizing NAEP information to help my students do better on ITBS (Iowa Tests of Basic Skills) tests; and
- 7) Not until I was a member of the NAEP Standing Committee did State NAEP Coordinator, Diane Chadwick and others seek me out to ask questions of a person who was on the Standing Committee. They had never met a person from the committee.

**At my first two board meetings I offered suggestions on what could be done, including:**

- 1) Using posters in schools informing the students and parents about the NAEP tests. These posters should be innovative so that students would take notice. Notices could be placed in the local paper or pamphlets created for students to take home for parents to read.
- 2) Working to help principals to accept the challenge to show student improvement on the tests. This might include organizing meetings to inform teachers about NAEP and the ways NAEP results can be utilized. It is difficult for teachers to take NAEP seriously if they don't know what NAEP is and if they are not provided easy to understand information from the principal. The principal needs to care and establish the culture of caring for the teachers. Leadership begins with school administration and continues down to teachers, staff, students, parents and the community.
- 3) Instilling pride as a motivator for students to do their best and to take the NAEP tests seriously. Students are selected to be representative of the school demographics. But how can students be helped to realize the importance of their role and test results if no one really **CARES** to tell them how important it is for them to represent the student body to the best of their ability? I truly believe that "pride" can be used as a huge motivator. I was a head varsity wrestling coach. Motivation was a key to having wrestlers believe they could do better. It works in sports, why not education?
- 4) Reaching out to state NAEP coordinators and utilizing their services. The state NAEP coordinators should not be unknown entities that come and go from school periodically. Wouldn't it be a wise investment for them to meet with teachers or attend a school board meeting, when possible, to explain the purpose of the NAEP tests, how selection of students taking the tests is done, and other pertinent information that could be distributed to the public?

NAGB has made progress in addressing the lack of concern about how students do on the NAEP tests. But is this best done through parents or principals? At public outreach Wednesday night dinners, I sensed the PTA's and other organizations were already on board and we shared information with highly motivated people who already understood the value of NAEP. The intent is to reach people who can make a broad difference, beyond the limited number of students they represent. My point is that at conferences where the Parental Engagement PowerPoint and presentations are made, how many in the audience are already on board with the importance of NAEP? The key is to reach those that don't know, can make an immediate impact, and can move forward to make a difference with the broadest potential impact possible.

Since my initial membership on NAGB I have believed and articulated that public awareness about NAEP begins with school principals. If principals clearly understood and articulated the purpose of NAEP, think of the resulting broad range impact this could have on NAEP results. The information about principals was important enough to be brought up by several board members at an Assessment meeting and once again, at the Full Saturday Board meeting. I honestly believe there are other board members who express concerns that NAGB can broaden its focus. I certainly would like to know what the other board members are thinking.

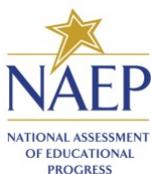
I continue to believe in the importance of getting school administration on the NAEP agenda. Because the Board voted to move forward with the Parental Engagement Making a Difference initiative, I have not been as vocal about a focus on principals. The more board members know and experience, the more diverse thinking occurs by members. I know that reading and reviewing data is important. Teachers look at NAEP differently once they actually "live it" and experience the atmosphere when students from their school take the NAEP tests. Perhaps this is the reason board members are exploring the topic of the role of a principal.

If NAGB is looking to make the biggest impact, I would ask that the Board extend the plan of action to include school administrators. From the parent engagement perspective I understand that NAGB's goal is to help parents and children better understand that NAEP's purpose is to be another assessment by which progress is measured. In my opinion, important change begins with school administration. Parents are important, but they are not the drivers to move this important initiative forward quickly. I believe there are more than a few other board members who also believe this is true.

Hector Ibarra

Cc: Cornelia Orr

Cc: Mary Crovo



## Outreach to Schools and Local Educators

Information Provided by Dianne Chadwick,  
NAEP State Coordinator for Iowa

**Introduction:** NAEP State Coordinators are responsible for recruiting and gaining the cooperation of schools sampled for NAEP in their respective jurisdictions. This process includes not only gaining school cooperation, but also sharing information about NAEP, the school's roles and responsibilities for the assessment, the value of NAEP to the nation and their states, and the resources NAEP offers. Sharing information about the value of NAEP and NAEP resources extends beyond sampled schools, to all schools in the state. The context of outreach to schools varies by state. Some states require all contact with schools to go through district offices, and restrict the timing and amount of communications with schools by state agency staff in order to reduce burden on schools. The geographic size of the state and the number of schools in the NAEP sample also contribute to variations in the method of outreach activities.

### NAEP State Coordinator (NSC) Engagement of Schools Sampled for NAEP

- Gaining cooperation and materials distribution process
  1. State Chief State School Officer notifies districts of schools selected for NAEP in May and distributes *Facts for Districts, Introduction to NAEP, and Overview of NAEP*.
  2. NSC notifies principals that they are selected for NAEP in May and distributes *Facts for Principals; Introduction to NAEP; Overview of NAEP; and spring issue of Measure Up for teachers*.
  3. NSC notifies principal of NAEP assessment day so NAEP can be added to school calendar in June and distributes *NAEP in Your School*.
  4. NSC sends letter to principal and NAEP school coordinator in August and distributes *NAEP in Your School—School Coordinator Responsibilities; MySchool brochure; fall issue of Measure Up for teachers; NAEP folder; and the parent notification letter*.
  5. During in-person pre-assessment visit field staff provides schools with NAEP Sample Questions Booklet and NAEP Online Resources Postcard, including links to NAEP frameworks.
- Ongoing communication with schools
  - MySchool is a private website for school principals and coordinators in which information about NAEP is shared, including the value of NAEP, NAEP resources, and what to do to prepare for NAEP. NSCs can customize content to add information specific to their state and their contact information. In NAEP 2013 over three-quarters of schools registered for MySchool.
  - Throughout the school year NSCs share information about NAEP through email, including emails designed in HTML that include the NAEP logo, and their own newsletters about NAEP.
  - Some NSCs conduct webinars with school staff to share information about the value of NAEP to their state and how to prepare for NAEP.
  - NSCs visit some schools to observe pre-assessment visits and assessment sessions.

- After the assessment is over, NSCs send their thanks to schools, including personal, handwritten notes, NAEP snapshot reports, certificates of appreciation, HTML emails, and postcards
- *Best Practices Guide for 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Participation and Engagement*, a set of materials developed particularly for high schools to help to encourage student participation and engagement.
  - Distributed by NSCs to high school principals through in person visits and via shipping
  - Electronic toolkit on flash drive
  - Resources include customized PowerPoint for teachers and students, teacher video, student video, all of which stress the value of NAEP

**Other NSC Outreach to School Audiences**

- **NAEP exhibits at state education conferences**
- **Presentations at conferences for local educators**
- **Articles** about NAEP in state agency and stakeholder newsletters
- Including a **NAEP webpage** and state education agency websites with resources and information about NAEP and links to the NCES website

**NSCs have access to the following materials for individualized school outreach**

- *How NAEP Constructed-Response Items are Scored: A Turnkey Workshop for Teachers*: including PowerPoint slides, discussion guide, **tip sheet on using the NAEP Questions Tool**, and other resources. The materials provided in this toolkit allow the presenter to facilitate one hour, half day, or full day workshops to teachers on scoring NAEP constructed-response items.
- *Thank You, Teachers!* toolkit: Brochure templates and sample topics and data stories from teacher questionnaire data, customizable with state-specific data, to send to teachers to thank them for their particular contributions to NAEP by completing teacher questionnaire.
- *NAEP Questions Tool* toolkit: **NSCs can share with educators** how NAEP released items can be used to support classroom instruction
- *HTML Email templates*: visually appealing and customizable HTML email templates to promote NAEP and guide schools to relevant pages on MySchool
- Graphics toolkit: includes photos, graphics, newsletter headers, NAEP state and TUDA logos, in various designs
- *NAEP Outreach Planning Guide*: to facilitate NSC planning for outreach activities

**Outreach Action Team:** New support team in NSSC to develop ideas and materials for expanding outreach to a variety of NAEP audiences and stakeholders

**Examples of Outreach by NAEP State Coordinators to Local Educators**

State	Title	Description	Distribution
Delaware	<i>'NAEP in Delaware' Poster &amp; Video Contest</i>	Student contest to <b>promote the importance of NAEP</b> to Delaware's schools	Principals and NAEP School Coordinators
South Carolina	<b>Sample Test Items:</b> Grades 4 and 8 NAEP Reading 2011	<b>NAEP 2011 released items</b> and the corresponding performance data for South Carolina	<b>Post on state websites;</b> distributes to schools on site visits

State	Title	Description	Distribution
Kentucky	Kentucky NAEP Exhibit Display	NAEP State Booth with poster, photos, handouts	<b>Exhibit at conferences</b> , e.g. Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA) approximately 1,000 participants that included superintendents, district assessment coordinators, principals
Alaska	<b>Using the NAEP Questions Tool to Create Formative Assessment Math Activities</b>	Guide that shows how questions and the related performance data can be a valuable resource for classroom formative assessments that require students to reason and communicate mathematical practices, particularly in preparation for CCSAs in the future.	<b>Mailed guide to schools</b> ; posted on state NAEP web page; described as resource in NAEP newsletter to schools
Hawaii	<b>Math Examination from NAEP-Released Items</b>	<b>Assessment booklet</b> for classroom use by the math teachers and students of Hawaii, particularly for students not selected for NAEP	<b>Distributed to schools where not all students were selected for the assessment</b>
Oregon	<b>NAEP and the Common Core State Standards</b>	Presentation about NAEP's relationship to ELA CCSS	Oregon Council of Teachers of English
Connecticut	World of Assessment: Released Items	<b>Flyer with sample released item from NAEP, TIMSS, and PISA</b> , and links for additional information	<b>Distributed to schools</b> as a recruitment tool; <b>distributed at regional conferences</b>
West Virginia	<b>NAEP Questions Tool: Informing Educators about WESTEST 2</b>	PowerPoint presentation on use of NAEP in developing state assessment	<b>West Virginia Council of Teachers of Mathematics Annual Conference</b>
Tennessee	<b>2013 NAEP Webinar</b>	PowerPoint presentation on why NAEP is important to TN; NAEP resources; and activities to prepare for NAEP	<b>Webinar hosted by NSSC; attended by 73 schools</b> ; recorded for all schools access
Alabama	National Assessment of Educational Progress (2011): Brief Picture and a Look Toward the Future	<b>PowerPoint presentation about NAEP</b>	<b>Webinar with schools</b>
Colorado	Colorado NAEP News	<b>Flyer describing NAEP 2011 assessment for schools</b>	Distributed to schools selected for the sample

State	Title	Description	Distribution
North Carolina	NAEP: Measuring What Students Know and Can Do	Poster including student art from NC high school; <b>Coordinator worked with students at a school selected for NAEP to develop poster emphasizing value/importance of NAEP</b>	<b>All students in selected school; posted on state NAEP webpage</b>
Wisconsin	NAEP Update	<b>Article in Wisconsin Office of Educational Accountability Newsletter</b>	Distributed to all WI schools
Massachusetts	Two Internet Tools: <b>The NAEP Questions Tool and NAEP Item Maps</b>	Flyer describing tools and where to find them on the web	<b>Flyer to curriculum developers</b>
California	Assessment and Accountability Division National Assessment of Educational Progress Notes	<b>Newsletter with NAEP updates</b>	Distributed to sampled schools

**NAEP on State Websites:** Almost all NSCs create webpages devoted to NAEP on state websites. Some examples:

North Carolina <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/policies/naep/naep>

Missouri <http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/naep/>

South Carolina <http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/44/>

Michigan [https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-22709\\_32669---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-22709_32669---,00.html)

Florida <http://www.fldoe.org/asp/naep/>

Virginia [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/naep\\_natl\\_assessment\\_ed\\_progress/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/naep_natl_assessment_ed_progress/index.shtml)

### NCES Focus Groups

- Principal's Working Group in 2005: NCES convened several meetings with goal to improve participation and engagement on NAEP. Significant initiatives resulting from their recommendations:
  - Early notification of selection in sample to have NAEP put on school calendar
  - **Best Practices Guide to share ideas with principals**
  - **Ongoing and personal contact with schools**
- NCES will convene another principal's panel in summer 2013. **The Principal's Standing Committee will provide input for improving NAEP-school relations, reducing burden on schools, and providing feedback to schools.**

- School Level Report Focus Groups in 2011. Convened with principals and teachers with the goal to evaluate and provide feedback on three sample school-level reports.

### **Education Association Outreach**

- **Exhibit with NAEP materials at national education conferences**, including American Association of School Administrators, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, ASCD (formerly the Association for School and Curriculum Development), National Council of Teachers of English, National Council for the Social Studies, National Science Teachers Association, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, International Reading Association, International Society for Technology in Education, International Technology and Engineering Educators Association, Council for Exceptional Children, American Education Research Association, Education Writers Association, Parent-Teacher Association, Council of Chief State School Officers, NCES Summer Data Conference
- **Presentations (conducted by Hager Sharp and NCES) at national education conferences**, including ASCD (formerly the Association for School and Curriculum Development), National Council for the Social Studies, National Science Teachers Association, Council for Exceptional Children, American Education Research Association, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, International Reading Association, International Society for Technology in Education, International Technology and Engineering Educators Association
- **Post-report release webinars with school and educator associations**, including the National Science Teachers Association, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, International Reading Association, Center for Civic Education, National Indian Education Association, Alliance for Excellent Education

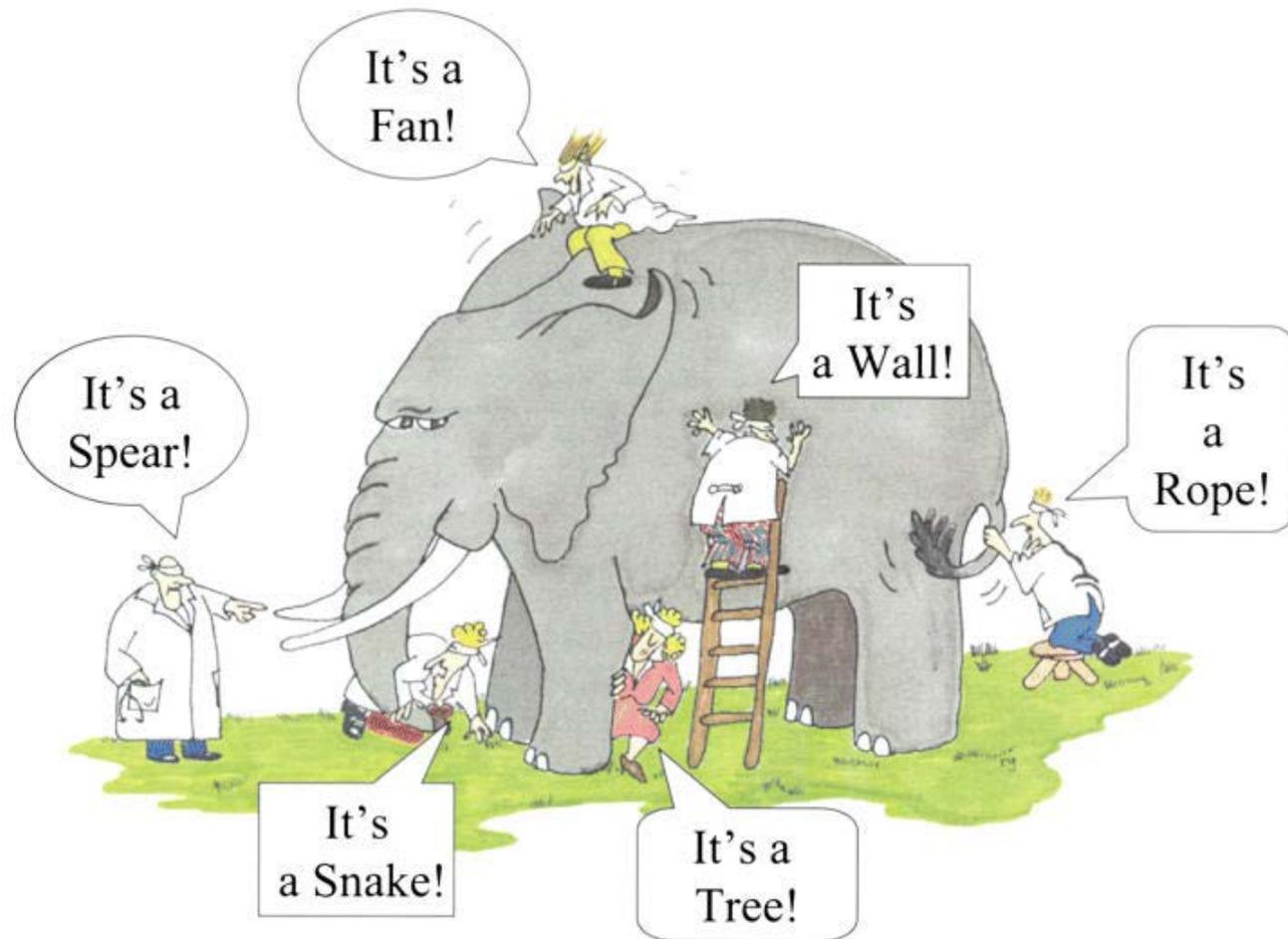


# Opportunity for Action: Principals and School Systems

**Hector Ibarra**

May 17, 2013

# Blind Men and the Elephant



# Current State Structure

- Iowa - an example of a state-level NAEP sample
  - ✓ In 2013 (math & reading tested 1/28 thru 3/12)  
all eligible schools in Iowa participated representing over 180 school districts (348 total school districts in Iowa)
    - 127 4<sup>th</sup> grade schools
    - 112 8<sup>th</sup> grade schools
    - 115 12<sup>th</sup> grade schools
- Since 2003, Iowa schools have been cooperative and almost all have participated in NAEP

# Current State Awareness

- Participating schools:
  - ✓ Knowledge may be limited to 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers
  - ✓ Other teachers frequently are not aware of:
    - NAEP subjects tested
    - NAEP results
    - “NAEP 101”
- Non-participating schools:
  - ✓ Teachers have little to no knowledge of NAEP
- General:
  - ✓ Teachers are not aware of available tools or how to access or use NAEP data in their classrooms

# Informal Assessments

## **National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) Session Informal survey on April 12, 2013**

48 participants, ~33% indicated they knew little about NAEP, ~33% wanted to know how to use NAEP in their classrooms.

## **Informal e-mail survey April 2013**

Of more than 30 colleagues surveyed, over 90% indicated they know little about NAEP; principal never held staff meetings about NAEP; school participated in NAEP but knew nothing about it; did not know how NAEP could be used in the classroom...

# Iowa NAEP State Coordinator (NSC) Findings

- Principal's leadership is key to student participation in NAEP AND key to the culture of the school.
- NAEP results are quoted more often in Iowa than previously.
- While more educators in Iowa recognize NAEP as a national test, many cannot recall details about NAEP assessments.
- School personnel vary from district to district both on their opinion of and their perceived value of NAEP.
- New teachers are often not knowledgeable about NAEP.

# Opportunity for Action: Iowa State Coordinator

**Need to develop a network of contacts to promote NAEP understanding and awareness**

- Focus on disseminating NAEP information and results

**Iowa NAEP State Coordinator (NSC):**

- In summer of 2012, the NSC hosted a workshop for 40 Iowa reading and math teachers. They **analyzed released NAEP items** in reading and math:
  - **aligned them to Iowa Core Standards**
  - **labeled the items based on depth of knowledge (Webb) and rigor (Bloom).**



# Opportunity for Action (continued)

- Develop a positive relationship with the district administrators, principals, and teachers
- Customize the MySchool website. Data are usually posted daily and the School System Control website is updated.
- Communicate with schools (required to send parent notification)
- Conduct school pre-assessment visits in January prior to NAEP administration

# Opportunity for Action: School Systems

## Inclusion of NAEP in school culture:

- Administration has role in setting the school culture
- Teachers have a role in carrying out the mission



# Opportunity for Action: Building Leadership

## Principals

- Education about NAEP
- Tools they can use with teachers and the community, including posters, web information, etc.
- Promoting a culture of caring in the students who participate

## Teachers

- Tools they can use to understand questions in the development of test taking strategies, activities, curriculum and discussions in the classroom
- Promoting a culture of caring in the students who participate

# Opportunity for Action: Best Practices

## Education and Tools for Principals

NAEP State Coordinators can:

- Offer a best practices, hands-on NAEP class that counts toward re-certification
- Work with principals to post NAEP information on the school websites
- Host NAEP webinars that guide principals/teachers through hands-on activities
- Encourage principals and teachers to use the NAEP Questions Tool to create formative assessment activities
- **Encourage school districts to align NAEP frameworks to state core standards**
- Hold student contests to promote the importance of NAEP through posters (idea from Delaware).

# Opportunity for Action: Iowa NSC Goals

- Increase knowledge of NAEP results and various contexts available within the network of contacts to promote NAEP understanding and awareness
- Increase awareness of uses and value of NAEP; improve the message provided to the public (i.e. importance of NAEP)
- Promote visibility and use of NAEP released questions; increase understanding about reasons to support NAEP and the story NAEP tells us about education in Iowa
- **Conduct an alignment study of NAEP Frameworks and Iowa Core standards**

# Opportunity for Action at the State Level

- Develop a plan to help schools build the importance of NAEP as one of the battery of school tests.
- Conduct an alignment study of NAEP Frameworks and State Core Standards
- Label NAEP questions with the depth of knowledge (Webb) and rigor (Bloom)
- Provide technical assistance, training, and support to state and local education agencies and other target audiences as relates to NAEP

# Opportunity for Action: Summary

Promote understanding about NAEP, its relevance to the state assessment system, large-scale assessment, assessment systems, and assessment literacy to various audiences:

- state education department representatives
- state policy makers
- local school district staff
- school administrators
- teachers
- parents
- general public

Promote understanding of policies and legislation regarding NAEP.



# Opportunity for Action – Student Role

“The way students approach their selection and completion of NAEP reflects the school culture of the building.”

Dianne Chadwick, Iowa NAEP State Coordinator

Help students recognize the important role they play in this testing process and how the data will be used to compare state and U.S. schools with those internationally.

# Opportunity for Action: Principal/Teacher Re-certification and Teacher Prep Programs

NAEP is currently not a component of:

- Principal 5 year re-certification requirements
- Teacher 5 year re-certification requirements
- Student-teacher college preparatory programs
- “New” teacher orientation—they are “heavily inundated with state and local data; they feel like they are drowning in the the data they are required to use.”
- NAEP is more an awareness in Master of Science Teaching programs. “just another collection of test score data and doesn't drive student learning or inquiry-based ideas.”

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# How can NAGB Deliver the Message? Develop a Sense of Urgency: Kodak Moment

