

Background for the Board's Small Group Discussions on the Ad Hoc Committee on Measures of Postsecondary Preparedness Potential Recommendations

At the August Board meeting, the Board will engage in small group discussions about the potential recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Measures of Postsecondary Preparedness, which are included in the attached working draft.

The small groups will consider the following questions:

1. What is missing from the ad hoc committee's list of potential recommendations?
2. What are the opportunities and risks of pursuing these potential recommendations?
3. What is your guidance to the ad hoc committee, as it develops its final recommendations to the Board for the November meeting?

Following the small group discussion on Friday, August 3, the Board will have multiple opportunities to provide their feedback during the August Board meeting. There are 30-minute plenary sessions on both Friday, August 3 and Saturday, August 4 for full Board discussion.

Note the ad hoc committee is expected to discuss and refine the attached draft during its meeting on Thursday, August 2. Therefore, the exact wording or list of potential recommendations that the full Board discusses on Friday, August 3 may change.

Ad Hoc Committee on Measures of Postsecondary Preparedness Potential Recommendations: A Working Draft

This initial working draft reflects the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Measures of Postsecondary Preparedness (the Committee, or we) thus far in pursuit of its charge. This draft should be challenged and improved, as the Committee members debate the potential recommendations and prepares the Committee’s final report to the Board.

Background and Charge

In August 2017, the National Assessment Governing Board commissioned the Ad Hoc Committee on Measures of Postsecondary Preparedness to review existing research, collect expert testimony, and prepare recommendations for the National Assessment Governing Board’s consideration to achieve Strategic Vision priority #10, which states, “*Develop new approaches to measure the complex skills required for transition to postsecondary education and career.*”

At the broadest level of policy, The Nation’s Report Card, also known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), provides a platform to change the nation’s valuation of what is important in student learning and create a paradigm shift in America’s education system about what matters and gets measured. The Governing Board has the opportunity to determine if there is a compelling national interest that warrants changes in NAEP to signal such a shift.

Exploratory Approach

To address its charge, the Committee considered the trends that most likely will shape the future, and thereby determine, to a great extent, the skills and knowledge students will need. Through meetings with expert panels and commissioning focused research papers, the Committee pursued the answers to the following three research questions:

1. ***Work of the future (readiness for what?):*** What are we, as a nation, preparing students for? Changes in the workplace are not only inevitable, but are accelerating, driven by technological advances, demographic shifts, and social changes. The growing prevalence of self-driving vehicles, the widespread use of robots, and advances in artificial intelligence are signs of existing innovations poised to dramatically change the jobs available to young Americans. Young Americans hold different expectations about work, and the ways in which people connect and communicate with each other are also changing. How will the workplace change given these trends and emerging

technologies? How will our communities change given these trends and how will the nature, content, and delivery of education opportunities change?

2. ***Requisite skills for future work (skills for what?):*** With a better understanding of the future workplace, we can better understand the skills that young Americans will need to succeed. But should we consider more than just workplace skills? What about skills like citizenship and financial literacy? How do these skills factor into the question of measuring postsecondary preparedness?
3. ***Measures of preparedness (measures for what?):*** Finally, what metrics exist to capture the skills that young Americans will need in the workplace, for their roles in their communities, and in their personal lives? Can such metrics include data from sources in addition to or instead of assessments? Additionally, what metrics do not exist but are needed to help the nation better understand if students are prepared as they exit high school, regardless of which paths they take—through college or other postsecondary learning experiences or directly to the workforce?

Beliefs and Values

Based upon its investigations to answer the three research questions, the Committee identified the following beliefs and values that will guide its final recommendation(s) to the Board:

- We believe that high school graduation remains an important transition in a young person's life, and that the nation needs to know if the culmination of PK-12 schooling and other experiences have prepared students for life following high school.
- We value the multiple pathways that young Americans take following high school, and challenge the notion that all high school graduates must immediately enroll in a four-year college to be successful in life.
- We believe that academic knowledge remains critical for students' success, and that other crosscutting cognitive skills such as creativity and problem-solving are increasingly important for postsecondary preparedness.
- We confirm that a comprehensive measure of the degree to which young Americans are prepared for life after high school, regardless of the pathway they pursue, does not currently exist.
- We recognize that in the United States, education policy formulation and implementation remain the responsibilities of states. Therefore, whatever measures are established to document students' postsecondary preparedness should be available not

only as a national measure but also as a measure of each state's progress in preparing young people for life after high school.

- As the agency established by the United States Congress to set policy for The Nation's Report Card, we believe it is the National Assessment Governing Board's responsibility, in partnership with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and stakeholders, to identify thoughtful and meaningful approaches to providing the American public with measures that indicate how we as a nation are preparing America's youth for their lives following high school.

NAEP's Assets

By law NAEP must remain a low-stakes assessment with generalized results and is prohibited from gathering data in a way that could generate individual school or student scores. Thus, any reports to the American public on measures of postsecondary preparedness will be provided at the national, state level, and Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) level, assuming sufficient funding and the voluntary participation of states and TUDA districts. These requirements protect NAEP results against misuse and enable the Governing Board to engage in groundbreaking work in reporting on postsecondary preparedness.

NAEP has a portfolio of established measures, which have the potential to provide critical indicators of postsecondary preparedness. These include:

- NAEP Frameworks & Assessments – NAEP frameworks and assessments can be used to determine 12th grade student knowledge and skills in areas including: reading, mathematics, science, writing, civics, U.S. history, geography, economics, technology and engineering literacy, and the arts.
- NAEP's High School Transcript Study – NAEP's High School Transcript Study collects a variety of measures which could be utilized in a report on postsecondary preparedness.
- NAEP Student, Teacher, and Principal Surveys – NAEP has a long history of collecting information from students and teachers and reporting that information alongside NAEP assessment results to provide context about students' learning opportunities, school climates, teachers' experiences, and related characteristics to understand if, how, and why those data correlate with student achievement.

In addition, the Governing Board may consider creating new NAEP measures and/or incorporating non-NAEP data sources to populate a more complete report card on postsecondary preparedness (for example, other NCES survey data, data collected by other federal or state agencies, etc).

Developing Potential Recommendations

The Committee's conversations to date have focused on its desire to contribute to the nation's understanding of postsecondary preparedness, but more discussion is needed on what the Governing Board and NCES could and should pursue. Regardless of the ultimate claim that NAEP would make or the measures it would use, the Governing Board needs to identify the critical constructs that define postsecondary preparedness. This leads to the following potential recommendation:

Draft Recommendation #1: The Governing Board should create a new NAEP framework that identifies the comprehensive set of knowledge and skills necessary to indicate postsecondary preparedness for any pathway after high school.

Presuming the Committee recommends the creation of a new postsecondary preparedness framework, the Governing Board and NCES would collaborate in conducting the necessary research about what measures exist within NAEP or beyond NAEP and what measures would need to be developed for that framework. Based on the data available, a preparedness framework most likely would be based on a system of indicators derived from multiple sources. In recommending the Governing Board engage in further work to report on postsecondary preparedness indicators, the Committee should consider what, ultimately and realistically, its desired report card would look like. The Committee's preferences will shape the scope of its second recommendation, which might include one or more of the options listed below in #2 A-E.

Draft Recommendation #2: The Governing Board should commit, to the extent that it can, given its statutory authority and what is technically defensible, to measure and report on the postsecondary preparedness of students in grade 12 by utilizing one or more of the following approach(es):

- A. **Align Existing NAEP Assessments with Postsecondary Preparedness Indicators:** As NAEP frameworks and test items are revised, the Board and NCES could shift the knowledge and skills measured within each subject assessment to better align with the constructs identified in the NAEP Postsecondary Preparedness Framework.
- B. **Enhance and Elevate NAEP's Contextual Variables:** Within the context of existing NAEP assessments, develop and include contextual questions that capture dimensions of preparedness and contribute to changing the national narrative on what is important in student achievement by increasing the focus on contextual variables in the initial reporting of NAEP results.
- C. **Develop a New NAEP Postsecondary Preparedness Assessment:** Develop a new voluntary NAEP assessment for postsecondary preparedness knowledge and skills

that could be offered at grade 12 (and possibly earlier) at the national, state, and TUDA levels.

- D. **Create a New NAEP Report Card Utilizing Extant NAEP Measures:** Design a new NAEP Report Card that utilizes existing measures across NAEP, including assessment data, contextual variables, and the High School Transcript Study to issue a report to the nation with a more complete analysis of postsecondary preparedness measures.
- E. **Serve as a Clearinghouse of Postsecondary Preparedness Indicators using NAEP and External Data Sources:** Broker data from various sources beyond NAEP to capture a wider range of achievement measures that are more reflective of, and customizable to, students' learning pathways, by reporting on industry-recognized credentials, workplace learning experiences, apprenticeships, etc.

What are the challenges?

As we consider what our recommendations to the Governing Board should be, we should give due consideration to the challenges in pursuing this work. Endeavoring to define and measure postsecondary preparedness in a way that encompasses skills needed for both college and career marks a dramatic departure from how the Governing Board has approached this issue in the past.

In deciding what and how NAEP might report on postsecondary preparedness, the Board must conduct a review of our statutory authority. The Board should give credence to the language we use to describe those skills and guard against any negative connotations that may be associated with the terms “soft,” “basic,” and “non-cognitive” skills. And while some may debate the worthiness of including those types of skills more prominently within NAEP, we note that OECD has made substantial use of these types of variables with great acceptance and demand for them. While the prohibition against NAEP providing individual student results limits the usability of the data, it also creates the critical low-stakes environment for the Governing Board to pioneer new indicators of student success.