

**National Assessment Governing Board**

**Meeting of July 30-31, 2020**

**Virtual**

**OFFICIAL SUMMARY OF GOVERNING BOARD ACTIONS**

**Complete Transcript Available**

**National Assessment Governing Board Members Present**

Haley Barbour, Chair  
Tonya Matthews, Vice Chair  
Dana Boyd  
Alberto Carvalho  
Gregory Cizek  
Tyler Cramer  
Frank Edelblut  
Rebecca Gagnon  
Paul Gasparini  
James Geringer  
Eric Hanushek  
Andrew Ho  
Patrick Kelly  
Terry Mazany  
Reginald McGregor  
Mark Miller  
Joseph O’Keefe  
Alice Peisch  
Beverly Perdue  
Nardi Routten  
Martin West  
Grover Whitehurst  
Carey Wright  
Mark Schneider (ex-officio)

**Governing Board Members Absent**

Christine Cunningham

**National Assessment Governing Board Staff**

Lesley Muldoon, Executive Director  
Lisa Stooksberry, Deputy Executive Director  
Michelle Blair

Stephaan Harris  
Donnetta Kennedy  
Laura LoGerfo  
Munira Mwalimu  
Tessa Regis  
Sharyn Rosenberg  
Angela Scott  
Anthony White

**National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)**

Lynn Woodworth, Commissioner  
Peggy Carr, Associate Commissioner  
Gina Broxterman  
Samantha Burg  
Jing Chen  
Jamie Deaton  
Alison Deigan  
Enis Dogan  
Patricia Etienne  
Elvira Germino Hausken  
Shaina Hilsey  
Eunice Greer  
Shawn Kline  
Daniel McGrath  
Nadia McLaughlin  
Taslina Rahman  
Holly Spurlock  
Bill Tirre  
Ebony Walton  
Bill Ward  
Grady Wilburn

**American Institutes for Research (AIR)**

Jack Buckley  
Christina Davis  
Kim Gattis  
Cadelle Hemphill  
Young Yee Kim  
Sami Kitmitto  
Gabrielle Merken  
Fran Stancavage

**Chief State School Officers, CCSSO**

Fen Chou  
Scott Norton

**CRP, Inc.**

Shamai Carter  
Arnold Goldstein  
Subin Hona  
Carolyn Rudd  
Edward Wofford

**Educational Testing Service (ETS)**

Jan Alegre  
Andrea Bergen  
Jay Campbell  
Peter Ciemins  
Gloria Dion  
Amy Dresher  
Gary Feng  
Robert Finnegan  
Dave Freund  
Paul Hilliard  
Laura Jerry  
Helena Jia  
Sharon Maloney  
John Mazzeo  
Daniel McCaffrey  
Jessica Miller  
Rupal Patel  
Hilary Persky  
Emilie Pooler  
Shannon Richards  
Sarah Rodgers  
Nancy Waters  
Karen Wixson

**Hager Sharp**

James Elias  
David Hoff  
Joanne Lim

### **The Hatcher Group**

Jenny Beard  
Ann Bradley  
Sami Ghani  
Robert Johnston  
David Loewenberg  
Alex Sanfuentes  
Devin Simpson

### **Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO)**

Monica Gribben  
Thanos Patelis  
Anne Woods

### **Management Strategies**

Brandon Dart  
Harrison Moore

### **Optimal Solutions Group**

Imer Arnautovic  
Brian Cramer  
Harrison Greene

### **Pearson**

Kevin Baker  
Scott Becker  
Cindy Flockhart  
Paula Rios  
Pat Stearns  
Cathy White  
Llana Williams

### **Reingold**

Kathleen Kenney  
Jessica Murray

### **Westat**

Chris Averett  
Greg Binzer

Lauren Byrne  
Beryl Carew  
Zully Hilton  
Lisa Rodriguez  
Rick Rogers  
Keith Rust  
Steve Schneider  
Desrene Sesay

### **WestEd**

Matthew Gaertner  
Georgia Garcia  
Cynthia Greenleaf  
Mark Loveland  
Megan Schneider  
Steve Schneider  
Sarah Warner

### **Other Attendees/Speakers**

Therese Abeita  
Kim Ackermann, TX Education Agency  
Judith Anderson, U.S. Department of Education  
Annette Campbell Anderson, Johns Hopkins University  
Vickie Baker, WV Department of Education  
Angela Battaglia, UT State Board of Education  
Nathaniel Beers, HSC Health Care System  
Rebecca Bennett, MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Rolf Blank, STEM K–12 Research  
Collin Bonner, CO Department of Education  
Fred Bost, Cognia  
Tamika Brinson, FL Department of Education  
Jennifer Cain, MN Department of Education  
Hannah Cheever, National Center on Education and the Economy  
Teena Chopra, Wayne State University  
Lily Clark, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
Kelly DeCamp  
William Donkersgoed, WY Department of Education  
Donna Dubey, NH Department of Education  
Sandra Durden, RTI International  
Kari Eakins, WY Department of Education  
Jeremy Ellis, MO Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Andrea Faulkner, NC Department of Public Instruction  
Chester Finn, Thomas B. Fordham Institute  
James Forester, U.S. Department of Education

Michael Friesenhahn  
Laura Goadrich, AR Department of Education  
Raymond Hart, Council of the Great City Schools  
Christy Hovanetz, Foundation for Excellence in Education  
Linda Jacobson, The 74  
Carol Jago, California Reading and Literature Project at UCLA  
Amy Jones, House Committee on Education and Labor  
Marie Julienne, Office of Indian Education  
Stan Kenton  
Paul Kleinert, ID State Department of Education  
Andrew Kolstad, P20 Strategies LLC  
Beth LaDuca, OR Department of Education  
Bob Lee, MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Regina Lewis, ME Department of Education  
Tamara Lewis, MD State Department of Education  
Brian Lloyd, MI Department of Education  
Rebecca Logan, OK State Department of Education  
Shelley Loving-Ryder, VA Department of Education  
Kara Marchione, Senate HELP Committee  
Ted McConnell, CivXNow Coalition  
Robert Moran, Senate HELP Committee  
Fritz Mosher, Consortium for Policy Research in Education  
Raina Moulian, AK Department of Education and Early Development  
Philip Olsen, WI Department of Public Instruction  
P. David Pearson, University of California, Berkeley  
Lizzette Reynolds, Foundation for Excellence in Education  
Matt Robinson, Foundation for Excellence in Education  
Linda Rosen  
Renee Savoie, CT State Department of Education  
Debra Silimeo, Silimeo Group  
Michael Slattery, Huntington Ingalls Industries-Technical Solutions Division  
Peggy Sorensen, OH Department of Education  
Sarah Sparks, Education Week  
Mark Stephenson, KS Department of Education  
Matthew Stern, Senate HELP Committee  
Christy Talbot, American Educational Research Association  
Anand Vaishnav, Education First  
Sheila Valencia, University of Washington  
Kate Walsh, National Council on Teacher Quality  
Frank Zilic

## **Opening Remarks**

Haley Barbour, Chair, called the session to order at 1:30 p.m. and welcomed attendees to the July 30, 2020, National Assessment Governing Board (Governing Board) meeting held virtually.

## **Approval of July 2020 Agenda**

Chair Barbour requested a motion for approval of the July 2020 agenda. Rebecca Gagnon made a motion to accept the agenda, and this motion was seconded by Tonya Matthews. No discussion ensued and the motion passed unanimously.

## **Approval of May 2020 Board Meeting Minutes**

Chair Barbour requested a motion for approval of the minutes of the May 2020 Governing Board meeting. Marty West made a motion to approve the May 2020 minutes, and Gagnon seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

## **Approval of June 2020 Board Meeting Minutes**

Chair Barbour requested a motion for approval of the minutes of the June 2020 Governing Board meeting. Patrick Kelly made a motion to approve the June 2020 minutes, and Gagnon seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

## **Action: Nomination of Board Vice Chair for Term Beginning October 1, 2020 and Ending September 30, 2021**

Terry Mazany nominated Alice Peisch to serve as Vice Chair for the next one-year term beginning on October 1, 2020. Peisch accepted the nomination, which the Governing Board unanimously approved.

## **Action: Release Plan for the 2019 Nation's Report Cards in Reading and Mathematics, Grade 12**

Rebecca Gagnon made a motion to accept the release plan for the 2019 Nation's Report Cards in Reading and Mathematics, grade 12. There was no discussion and the motion was unanimously approved.

## **Action: Achievement Levels Work Plan**

Andrew Ho reported that the Achievement Levels Work Plan was initially presented during the March 2020 quarterly Board meeting and, following Board discussion, some text was added. During a July 17, 2020 meeting of the Committee on Standards, Design and Methodology, Committee members revised the amended plan by removing the additional text and returning to the original version of the plan. Ho offered a motion to approve the Achievement Levels Work Plan as presented in May. Carey Wright seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **NAEP 2021: Updates and Overview**

After the committee action items, Barbour turned the Governing Board's attention to the primary focus of the meeting, continued deliberations and recommendations for NAEP 2021.

The Governing Board's Executive Director, Lesley Muldoon, updated members on NAEP 2021 discussions and activities and provided context for the discussions on NAEP 2021 at this meeting. Muldoon reviewed activities, beginning in March 2020 with nationwide school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In May, the Board met and discussed NAEP 2021 and deemed it too soon to make decisions about an assessment administration starting in January 2021.

At that time, Board members asked for more information and input from stakeholders, including policymakers and educators in large school districts. On June 29, the Board received an update on operational risks from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and a panel discussion with leaders from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), and the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS), followed by continued discussion on NAEP 2021. Board members requested guidance from public health officials before making a recommendation. Muldoon informed the Governing Board that August 28 is the deadline for NCES to decide whether to proceed with a full sample for testing. Other options include proceeding with a thin sample of approximately half the full sample size or to ask for a waiver to postpone reading and mathematics assessments until 2022.

Muldoon provided more information regarding school reopening plans for the 2020-2021 school year. She mentioned that each day brings more information about what school could look like this year, considering the scope of virtual learning and public health safety measures. Muldoon stated 11 of the 15 largest school districts will provide virtual instruction for the beginning of the school year. One is undecided and three will operate using a hybrid model of instruction. While some states are providing in-person instruction, others are delaying the beginning of the school year or have not decided about the mode of instruction. Additionally, many families are exploring alternative options to public education, including private schools and homeschool options.

Muldoon conceded that while plans are forming, there are still many unknowns about the virus, including whether a surge could result in future school closures during the January to March 2021 timeframe that coincides with NAEP administration. Also, Congress has not approved the additional expenses needed to administer a full sample for NAEP 2021.

Muldoon informed the Board that by the end of this meeting they would need to make some decisions regarding assessments. The first decision is about amending the NAEP Assessment Schedule to postpone 8th grade U.S. History and Civics and reschedule long term trend for 17-year-olds until 2022. Muldoon acknowledged the importance of the non-mandated assessments and stated that postponing them reflects the impact of the pandemic and limited resources. Most importantly, the Board also needs to decide on the mandated reading and mathematics assessments, advising the NCES Commissioner either to proceed with preparations or to seek a waiver from Congress to postpone NAEP until the 2021–2022 school year and continue with a biennial assessment schedule.

Muldoon provided potential outcomes for both scenarios. If proceeding, the assessment could provide information about learning during the pandemic, overall and for different populations. This information would benefit policymakers by offering objective information, which would compensate for the lack of data due to the suspension of state assessments in spring 2020. However, she conceded that NAEP may be perceived as tone-deaf to the concerns and needs of communities and schools if testing proceeds.

If the Governing Board recommended seeking a waiver, it would reduce the burden on schools and students, acknowledge that it might not be possible or feasible to administer the assessment in certain scenarios, and enable collecting NAEP data in 2022 when conditions are likely to be more favorable. However, a reduced sample could risk accurate state reporting of student progress in 2021.

Muldoon informed the Board that, in order to reach their decision, they must consider the operational considerations for NAEP 2021, the Congressional perspective on NAEP 2021, the public health perspectives for NAEP 2021, and deliberate on the potential actions. She recognized the dilemma that the Board would need to decide without complete data due to rapidly changing conditions, but that a decision must be made—to continue preparations to proceed as long as it remains feasible to do so or to request a waiver to postpone the assessments to 2022. To inform their decision-making, the rest of the meeting on Thursday would comprise three sessions: (1) additional information from NCES; (2) a panel discussion of Congressional staffers; (3) presentations by public health and medical experts. Following Muldoon’s presentation, Barbour opened the floor for discussion, but there was none.

### **Recess**

The July 30, 2020, Governing Board meeting recessed at 2:04 p.m. for a break, followed by closed sessions from 2:30 to 4:20 p.m.

### **Operational Considerations for NAEP 2021 (CLOSED)**

Under the provisions of exemption 9(B) of § 552b of Title 5 U.S.C., on July 30, 2020, the Governing Board met in closed session from 2:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. to receive a briefing from Peggy Carr and Enis Dogan of the National Center for Education Statistics.

Enis Dogan presented information about potential risks to data quality for NAEP in 2021 due to COVID’s varying impacts on schools in the 2020-21 academic year and NAEP’s sampling methodology and administration procedures. The threats to data quality include challenges in sampling schools and students, changes in test administration procedures and conditions, and potential issues in data analysis.

Peggy Carr described potential impacts of the 2021 administration on the NAEP budget under different scenarios, including proceeding with a full sample (contingent upon receiving additional funds) or switching to a “thin” or reduced sample (if additional funds are not received by late August).

Board members asked questions and requested additional information about data quality risks and potential strategies for better understanding and mitigating the concerns. NCES stated that they will provide additional information about specific milestones and timelines for potential data quality risks, and that they will continue to keep the Board updated about the impact of NAEP 2021 on the budget for 2021 and beyond.

### **Congressional Perspectives on COVID-19 and Implications for NAEP (CLOSED)**

Under the provisions of exemption 9(B) of § 552b of Title 5 U.S.C., on July 30, 2020, the Governing Board met in closed session from 3:15 p.m. to 4:20 p.m. to receive briefings from Congressional staff.

Robert Moran, Kara Marchione, and Amy Jones shared their thoughts on NAEP 2021 and engaged in discussion in response to Board member questions; Jacque Chevalier Mosely was unable to attend due to an unanticipated conflict. The Congressional policy directors indicated that there is bipartisan, bicameral support for NAEP and that the COVID relief bill introduced in late July did include an additional \$65 million to support proceeding with a full NAEP 2021 reading and mathematics administration if it is feasible to do so. They emphasized the nation's need for NAEP data if at all feasible but also expressed an interest in learning more about potential risks to data quality and utility and keeping up to date about key issues related to the 2021 NAEP administration.

### **Recess for Break**

The July 30, 2020, Governing Board meeting recessed at 4:20 p.m. for a transition to the open session. The meeting reconvened at 4:30 p.m.

### **Public Health Perspectives on NAEP 2021**

Tonya Matthews introduced the panel of public health experts.

Annette Campbell Anderson is a faculty member at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education, Deputy Director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Safe and Healthy Schools, and co-founder of the eSchool+ Initiative. The eSchool+ Initiative is a multidisciplinary effort to develop a school reopening tracker. The tracker includes data from 50 states and other organizations (e.g., CCSSO) and is continually updated. The tracker uses 12 indices related to reopening and presents a visual overview of the variety of plans across states.

The 12 indices are divided into two areas—(1) operational and (2) equity and ethics. Operational categories include core academics, COVID-19 protection, before and after school programs, school access and transportation, student health services, and food and nutrition. Equity and ethics categories include parent choice; teacher and staff choice; children of poverty and systemic disadvantage; students with special needs, English learners, and gifted students; privacy; and engagement and transparency. States are rated on whether they mentioned the issues in each category in their reopening plans. The tracker does not include a qualitative rating of how well they addressed the issues.

As of July 30, 2020, more than 20 states had addressed all 12 categories compared to only 16 states when the tracker was launched. States and organizations are most focused on core academics, COVID protection, school access and transportation, and food and nutrition, which are addressed in all plans. Less attention is being paid to teacher and staff choice (30 states) and children of poverty and systemic disadvantage (44 states). Next steps for the eSchool+ Initiative include examining subcategories, taking a deeper look at districts, and adding a global perspective.

Teena Chopra is an epidemiologist and professor of infectious diseases at Wayne State University who is working with both the university and K-12 schools in Detroit on reopening plans. At Wayne State University, most classes will be online. In-person classes will keep a 10-foot distance between people based on newer evidence that the virus can travel farther than six feet. Because the risk to students and teachers is important, Chopra recommends: (a) outdoor classes when comfortable because transmission is lower outdoors than indoors, (b) facial covering for all students 2 years old or older, and (c) hand washing.

Nathaniel Beers is the President of HSC Health Care System and spoke on behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) as a member of the executive committee of the Council of School Health that produced the guidance released by the AAP in June 2020. Taking a whole child perspective, the AAP looked at the risks of keeping schools closed and the risks of being in school in person. The AAP recommendations for schools are:

- Create school reopening plans in the context of community spread.
- Be prepared for continuing shifts in the disease and evolving evidence; plans need to be flexible.
- Plans should be developmentally appropriate (e.g., different plans may be needed for elementary schools than middle and high schools).
- Schools need clear guidance for safety precautions, such as which supplies are needed, how to conduct daily cleaning, and how and when to deep clean.
- Prepare clear communication plans for staff and families.
- Ensure stakeholders (e.g., staff and families) feel safe.

Following the panelists' presentations, Board members asked questions and discussed the public health issues related to reopening schools and conducting assessments. Marty West asked if there was information on or predictions of how schools will be providing instruction in early 2021 when NAEP is scheduled. Although none of the experts had any information on the trajectory of the disease in 2021, Beers added that once flu season starts it will be difficult to identify whether a symptomatic person has flu, COVID-19, or both which will make it more difficult to manage the spread of COVID-19.

Tyler Cramer asked Chopra about her suggestion for students to be spaced 10 feet apart, especially considering the impact on classroom layout. He asked, how long will social distancing need to continue after the community rate of spread of the disease is low? Chopra referenced a study showing the virus can travel 10 feet. Further, social distancing will be needed until a vaccine is available and a certain percentage of the population is vaccinated. The AAP recommends face coverings and protective procedures and suggests that only 3 feet distance

suffices, acknowledging the space limitations in schools. Peggy Carr added that NCES is planning to assess ten students in each session to maintain distance between students.

Patrick Kelly commented on Beers statement that the most important issue is to ensure everyone feels they are safe. NAEP brings test administrators, who are not typically part of the school community, into the school. Anderson said parents need to believe it is safe for their children to return to school or participate in NAEP. Beers added that it will be important for NAEP to communicate their procedures, including testing of staff. He expects a higher refusal rate than usual for NAEP participation. Chopra agreed with Anderson and Beers, adding the stringency of screening of NAEP staff will be important. She suggested test administration staff should wear face masks and face shields, so teachers and families feel safe. Anderson noted the importance of having a clear contact tracing plan for NAEP test administrators with a communication plan if transmission occurs during assessment.

Reginald McGregor asked if the Johns Hopkins metric could identify where it would be acceptable to conduct NAEP. Anderson stated the tracking initiative does not provide ratings of the plans and is not meant to give a qualitative judgement. The eSchool+ Initiative acknowledges that there is still more to learn about the process for opening schools. As of July 30, Beers stated community spread is uncontrolled in 22 to 33 states, depending on how spread is defined and measured. Further, he cited how Israel could not control community spread, especially in middle schools and high schools, when they opened schools. He cited a recent article in the Journal of the American Medical Association on the association between school closures and community spread of COVID-19 (<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2769034>).

Several Board members asked, what will happen when there is a COVID-19 case in a school? School reopening plans are based on small groups of children. If there is a case, all students in the group will switch to online learning. If there are more cases in a school, across groups, then the school should close until there is a downward trend and no new cases are reported in the affected school for two to three weeks. Anderson reported that states have different plans for what to do when there is a case and there is no consistency across the plans. Beers added there is even more variation in district plans. He concluded timely testing is needed, different decisions might be appropriate for elementary schools versus middle and high schools, and the pandemic might result in not being able to implement a national assessment in a consistent way given the different plans across states and districts.

Barbour thanked the panelists and the meeting was adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

### **COVID-19 and Policy Implications for NAEP**

Chair Barbour opened the July 31, 2020 session at 10:32 a.m. after confirming a quorum was present. He opened the floor to discussion of whether the Board should recommend continuing with plans to conduct NAEP in 2021.

Barbour indicated he is in favor of collecting data as soon as possible after the school closures and disruptions to inform educators about what worked and did not work in teaching during the pandemic. Conducting the assessment in 2021 is predicated on receiving additional Congressional funding for the increased cost to implement NAEP with safety precautions related

to COVID-19. Some members agreed it is important to test in 2021 because states did not test in 2020 and some may not test in 2021. Even if NAEP cannot be conducted as in a traditional year, they would like to see NAEP collect some information. Several members agreed and noted cancelled testing impacts disadvantaged students. Rick Hanushek and others suggested taking a broader view of NAEP, beyond 2021 and in context with state assessments. He talked about the problem of NAEP not assessing students who do not attend school in person and subsequent threats to the quality of NAEP data which could damage NAEP's reputation.

Hanushek discussed the possibility of using state assessment data to provide estimates of bias for the students not attending school in person. However, it was noted that score availability will be limited to 2019 data for most students because states did not conduct summative testing in 2020 and other testing, such as SAT and ACT for high school students, was cancelled as well. He expressed a desire to work on the problem of measuring achievement for students not in schools as well as exploring options to conduct NAEP virtually in the future. Gregory Cizek commented all NAEP assessments have some unreliability and lack some validity. He suggested for NAEP 2021, instead of saying "not reliable" and "not valid" that the message should be about the degree of reliability and validity.

Alice Peisch suggested, with support from several other Board members, pursuing parallel paths to continue NAEP 2021 preparations and plans to request a waiver from Congress to postpone until 2022 if it is necessary to do so. In response, Peggy Carr reported that school and teacher questionnaires will be operational on September 1, 2020 to begin collecting information, regardless of the decision on NAEP 2021. NCES has a set of milestones and decision points for determining whether they can proceed with the assessment that they will share with the Board.

Another group of members leaned toward requesting a waiver for NAEP 2021 because the threats to the quality of the data, the health risks, and limited Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) participation point toward not being able to administer NAEP in a meaningful way. Several members cited that conducting NAEP during a pandemic could be seen as tone deaf to the burdens of schools teaching under social distance conditions and the health risks to students and staff. Andrew Ho expressed concerns about being able to test educational progress accurately in 2021, leading to a situation where the next "accurate" NAEP would not be until 2023. He stated that it risks NAEP's reputation and would be a burden to schools. While acknowledging the importance of knowing how much learning has been lost due to the pandemic, he has serious doubts that NAEP 2021 results will be usable. He requested that doubts about the usability of NAEP 2021 results could be included in the motion. Beverly Purdue added that NAEP data is not important enough to overcome the risks. Alberto Carvalho suggested that moving forward with NAEP 2021 is like pretending that nothing has happened.

Russ Whitehurst and Mark Schneider indicated that it is not the Governing Board's role to request a waiver, and that the Board should consider the roles of NCES and the Secretary of Education. Schneider noted that NCES will need to focus on the technical feasibility of a 2021 administration, including critical milestones about participation and data quality. He expressed concern about receiving additional funding to conduct the 2021 assessments and still not being able to conduct them.

Rebecca Gagnon asked how students not attending school in person would be designated for analyses and reporting. Carr indicated that NAEP analyses will differentiate between students who refuse to participate and those who are excluded because they are absent from school either for traditional reasons or because they are participating in class virtually. Full population estimates require 95 percent participation rates and expectations are that 25-45 percent of students' parents are opting for full-time virtual instruction in the fall. In the past, when NAEP experienced large exclusions of students of disabilities and English learners, analysts were able to model the impact of excluding those students. However, NAEP had some additional data about those students to do the modeling. They will not have the same information about students who could be excluded from NAEP in 2021 due to virtual schooling. Carey Wright suggested requesting information on these students to enable modeling the impact of their exclusion. Further discussion among Board members and NCES staff indicated some of the additional funding requested from Congress would be used for future repercussions related to the pandemic.

Gregory Cizek expressed support for continuing to proceed with preparations for 2021 and noted that validity and reliability are not dichotomous but rather exist on a continuum. Several members endorsed the idea of continuing to proceed with 2021 until and unless a point is reached where it is impossible to proceed. Jim Geringer suggested that the Board consider a motion to continue preparations. Board members discussed whether the motion should be directed at advising the NCES Commissioner to continue proceeding rather than speaking directly to Congress. Some Board members suggested that the motion express doubt about whether it will ultimately be possible to proceed and expressed the importance of postponing until 2022 if 2021 cannot be carried out.

Lesley Muldoon suggested that the Board recess for lunch and that the staff work to incorporate the comments from the discussion into a draft motion, which she then proposed to send to Board members by email. Alberto Carvalho requested that if there is a vote on a Resolution, that it take place later in the afternoon because he must step away for approximately two hours to prepare for a hurricane approaching Florida.

### **Recess for Break**

The July 31, 2020, Governing Board meeting recessed at 12:06 p.m. for a lunch break. The meeting reconvened at 1:06 p.m.

### **Action: NAEP Assessment Schedule**

Barbour called for a vote to amend the NAEP assessments schedule to postpone eighth grade U.S. History and Civics from 2021 to 2022. There was no discussion and all members who were present approved. Barbour called for another vote to reschedule long-term trend for 17-year-olds to 2022. There was no discussion and the Board unanimously approved the schedule change. The revised NAEP Assessment Schedule is appended to these minutes.

### **Action: Resolution on Plans for 2021 NAEP**

Barbour asked Muldoon to read the proposed Resolution aloud that was distributed by email. Board members briefly discussed the Resolution and suggested further consideration to clarify the role of the NCES Commissioner, the importance of a legal liability waiver, and whether or not the decision to proceed should be contingent on receiving additional funds. NCES staff

indicated that continuing to proceed with preparations for 2021 puts the NAEP budget at risk and will have downstream implications for future administrations if additional funds are not received.

Barbour made a motion to vote on the Resolution as read aloud earlier by Muldoon, which Gagnon seconded. A roll call vote was conducted. Twelve voted in favor and nine were opposed. One member was absent and two were not present for the vote (Carvalho and O’Keefe). After the Reading Framework discussion, Gagnon raised a point of order on the basis that the Chair had made the motion; she made a motion to reconsider the vote on the Resolution of Plans for NAEP 2021 to ensure that it followed Robert’s Rules of Order and to allow Carvalho to participate. Paul Gasparini seconded the motion. The Board held a second vote by roll call with two additional members present. There were 13 votes in favor and 10 votes against the Resolution. The Resolution is appended to these minutes.

### **2025 NAEP Reading Framework Policy Discussion**

Dana Boyd thanked the Framework Development Panel for their work. She presented the components undergirding each framework process – guiding principles, draft recommendations from a panel, public comment, and Board discussion.

Boyd reminded the Governing Board that in 2018, the Assessment Development Committee (ADC) oversaw an extensive review of the Reading Framework to determine anticipated changes. Based on the review and Board discussion, the Board adopted a formal charge to a framework panel to request necessary changes to maximize the value of NAEP and enhance measurement and reporting. Mark Miller noted several policy issues guided the Development Panel’s work.

In response to the Board’s request to develop update recommendations that maximize value and extend depth, P. David Pearson, Reading Panel Chair, started by noting the areas in which updates are proposed: (a) definition and model, (b) scaffolding and knowledge, (c) disciplinary contexts, (d) cognitive targets, (e) purpose, (f) text, and (g) reporting.

In light of the public comment received, Pearson focused on the first few update areas. Regarding the need for an updated definition of reading comprehension, Pearson noted changing trends and new research from the last 20 years about reading, learning, and text, along with developments in policy and assessments. He explained that the definition in the current NAEP framework, adopted in 2004, served as the basis for an expanded definition. Four evidence sources were considered to update the definition: (1) the 2002 RAND volume on reading for understanding; (2) disciplinary literacy, i.e., what about texts and practices that are common to reading across the disciplines of science, social studies, and literature, as well the texts that are unique to each discipline; (3) emerging work on new and digital literacies; and (4) the latest scholarship on how people learn, summarized in the 2018 edition of the National Academy of Sciences report *How People Learn*. The Framework Development Panel also incorporated information from the expanded scientific understanding of neural developments, sociocultural factors, and the structure of learning environments.

Next, Pearson discussed how scaffolds in NAEP reading have evolved as NAEP moved to digital assessments. He described different types of scaffolding and noted that all scaffolds would be available to all students. Knowledge scaffolds preview the topic to promote greater understanding of the overall text while being careful not to provide information to answer a particular test item. Metacognitive scaffolding invites students to self-assess their progress on the assessment. Finally, an example of a motivation scaffold is a virtual avatar collaborator in a scenario-based task.

Pearson indicated that while the current reading passages cover a varied range of topics to test knowledge, the 2025 framework would build on this approach while introducing new ways to account for the prior knowledge students bring. For instance, material will be presented to provide topical context to students, without cueing answers, and when reporting results from the assessment, the updated framework acknowledges ways to use students' self-reports or knowledge of key concepts to expand insights available from NAEP Report Cards in Reading.

While there are commonalities in text genre, structure, and purpose across disciplines, the updated framework and assessment would address differences in how texts are examined and understood across science, social studies, and literature. Scale scores for reading in these disciplines would then be reported. With respect to complexity, state and national standards guided the 2025 framework to propose an emphasis on particular text features informed by both quantitative and qualitative analyses. At the same time, Pearson highlighted that the needs for authenticity and relevance to students required the 2025 framework to expand what counts as text.

Finally, the framework proposes expanded reporting to maximize value and extend the depth of measurement. Repositioning the framework to be informed by a sociocultural model and disciplinary contexts also encourages these expansions in reporting. Enhancements would include disaggregating language status and reporting socioeconomic status within race and ethnicity.

Pearson concluded by noting how these recommendations answer the Board's charge to the framework update's Visioning and Development Panels.

Paul Gasparini provided an overview of the public comments. Overall, the public was mostly supportive of the new definition and model, purpose, disciplinary contexts, and expanding cognitive targets. There was broad support for situating cognitive processes of reading in a sociocultural context, but there were also critical questions. Stakeholders were most concerned with the framework's approaches to scaffolding, using commissioned texts, and NAEP's collection and reporting of contextual variables.

Boyd asked members for feedback on the draft framework to support further ADC discussion on next steps. Russ Whitehurst requested more information from NCES regarding their framework implementation concerns, as noted in read-ahead materials. Carr commented that the framework does not sufficiently address student at the lowest level of the distribution. She said she would like a better sense of what these students can do, stating that NCES knows a lot about what they

cannot do. She would like the new framework to pay more attention to the bottom 25% and bottom 10%, including passages and items that these students are able to complete.

Holly Spurlock, NCES, indicated scaffolding ideas need more clarification. Spurlock noted studies alluded to in the draft framework would need to be prioritized because they guide the development of the new assessment design. She spoke of different ways to collect information, including questionnaires and survey items when measuring cognitive constructs.

Whitehurst inquired about the prospects for maintaining stable reporting of student achievement trends under the framework update as currently proposed. Carr acknowledged the new framework may threaten trend. Enis Dogan elaborated that adding a subscale could also have ramifications for the likelihood of maintaining trend. Carr offered suggestions to maintain trend, such as bridge studies, while noting budget implications. Andrew Ho encouraged the framework panel to include connections to the current framework to maintain trend, since it is the aim of the Governing Board to measure progress. Although trend was not explicitly mentioned in the Board's charge to the panel, it is still important. He encouraged the Board to work to maintain trend.

Carey Wright expressed support for the new reading definition, particularly its acknowledgement of foundational skills. She agreed with Ho's concerns about trend and worried about the cost of the changes. Whitehurst also expressed concerns about cost as well as measurement. Wright asked for more information about the sociocultural approach to reading. Pearson explained that the fundamental distinction between a cognitive and sociocultural approach to understanding reading is the elevation of the contextual surroundings, including home, school, and community and encouraged Board members to turn to different resources to learn more about the approach. The Panel recommends this approach because research on cognition and development raises the importance of context in understanding what is read. Pearson clarified that the framework panel is not abandoning old ideas; they are expanding on them. Wright asked how NAEP would control for different sociocultural factors. Pearson clarified that the recommended 2025 framework would measure opportunity to learn in schools and communities rather than control for differences.

Eunice Greer, NCES, added although NAEP already employs a wide diversity of text passages, and she clarified that that NAEP Reading assessment development looks to vary the purposes and activities presented to students to support robust measurement of student achievement. The sociocultural perspective, she summarized, is consistent with this goal.

Eric Hanushek wondered how the theory of learning aligns with measuring comprehension. There was additional discussion with several Board members requesting an example of how to use sociocultural assessment. Patrick Kelly gave an example of reading the Federalist Papers, which are complex and many of his students initially struggle to read. He says he teaches one of his classes using sociocultural touchstones to add contextual evidence and supplements the assignment with readings with which his students are familiar, which supports them in drawing parallels between the texts. Kelly added that the desire to maintain trend should not be the highest priority, if trend is based on a measure that is not equitable.

Whitehurst countered that there must be a compelling reason to break trend. He expressed concern that the new Reading Framework would not be comparable to NAEP assessments in other subject areas. He also questioned why cognitive science appears as dismissed in favor of the sociocultural model. He said he would like to see the framework bridge the gap between the two in a less dramatic fashion.

Whitehurst cautioned that NAEP is intended to report on equity issues. He asserted that equity in the construction of the assessment is only an appropriate focus when individual student scores are produced. He worried about updating the assessment in a way that would gloss over equity issues that need to be reported on, e.g., by simply making the assessment easier. Whitehurst also disagreed with augmenting the contextual questionnaire with additional items supporting an explanatory role for the NAEP Reading Assessment, i.e., the statutory role of NAEP does not include providing explanations. He advocated the primary consideration of the Board is for the framework to measure reading comprehension. Whitehurst summarized that disrupting trend would be a mistake, especially in light of the need for stable measurement during the COVID-19 crisis.

Some of Whitehurst's comments focused on specific comments made during the public comment period. Gasparini reminded the Board the Panel collected comments from several additional sources and is actively reviewing the feedback. Carr reassured the Governing Board that NCES would not proceed with a framework that is not thoroughly reviewed and vetted, and that any assessment would be standardized for all students.

Wright posited that future teacher professional development will possibly need to be adjusted to match the new framework. She cautioned the Board not to conflate instruction with assessment.

Boyd noted that ADC and the Committee on Standards, Design, and Measurement (COSDAM) should meet and further discuss the draft framework update. She reminded the Board that no decisions are being made at today's meeting.

Miller and Muldoon reminded the Board that the Panel has received feedback from several stakeholders and will incorporate that feedback into a subsequent draft before Board action. Muldoon also explained that special studies would be needed for certain assessment features in the framework, but those features would only be implemented if supported by this research.

Pearson concluded by remarking that although NAEP does not provide individual reporting, the assessment should account for all individuals and should be in a format that reflects how reading occurs in the worlds of work, school, and everyday life. Pearson registered several clarification opportunities in the draft 2025 framework and stated the Panel will revise the draft framework based on all of the feedback it has received.

### **Farewell Remarks**

Rebecca Gagnon stated her service to the Governing Board has had the most remarkable impact on her life.

Andrew Ho remarked that his Governing Board term has been the most rewarding service experience of his career. He charged the Board to maintain trend. He noted his wish to see more testing and measurement expertise on the Board; he suggested that the Board should include two scholars in testing and measurement and two experts in state assessment who do not overlap with state legislators. Ho talked about the tension between pushing the envelope and, as former Board member David Driscoll often said, “sticking to your knitting.” He also suggested creating a standing technical committee, comparable but complementary the NCES Design and Analysis Committee (DAC), to advise the Board on the technical work that it oversees as part of its Congressionally-mandated responsibilities (e.g., frameworks, achievement levels, preparedness).

Terry Mazany noted how grateful he was to have the memories of his eight years on the Board. He commented about bringing innovation into the “hollow square” of the Board table, and he reminisced about flying a drone at one meeting. Mazany worked with four executive directors and several staff. He concluded by noting that the stakes are high for NAEP—failure would be catastrophic. There is no option but for the Governing Board and NCES to continue to innovate to be relevant.

Father Joe O’Keefe reminded everyone that the Governing Board oversees the only assessment that looks at all students, including those in private schools. He emphasized the importance of assessing civics. He learned more on this Board than any other board on which he served and has used information he learned through the Board with practitioners. The Governing Board expanded his imagination and understanding. He described his service as a wonderful experience of camaraderie which touched his intellect and heart.

**Meeting Adjourned**

Board Chair Barbour adjourned the meeting at 4:27 p.m.

I certify to the accuracy of the minutes.



November 5, 2020

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Chair

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Date



# National Assessment of Educational Progress

## Schedule of Assessments

Approved July 31, 2020

The *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Authorization Act* established the National Assessment Governing Board to set policy for NAEP, including determining the schedule of assessments. (P.L. 107-279)

Year	Subject	National Levels Assessed	State Grades Assessed	TUDA Grades Assessed
2019	Reading Mathematics Science Transcript Studies	4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12	4, 8 4, 8	4, 8 4, 8
2020	Long-term Trend*	9, 13 year olds		
2021	Reading Mathematics	4, 8 4, 8	4, 8 4, 8	4, 8 4, 8
2022	Civics U.S. History Long-term Trend*	8 8 17 year olds		
2023	Reading Mathematics Science Technology and Engineering Literacy Transcript Studies	4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12 8 8	4, 8 4, 8	4, 8 4, 8
2024	Long-term Trend	~		
2025	<b>READING</b> <b>MATHEMATICS</b> Civics U.S. History	4, 8 4, 8 8 8	4, 8 4, 8	4, 8 4, 8
2026				
2027	Reading Mathematics <b>SCIENCE</b> Technology and Engineering Literacy Transcript Studies	4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12 4, 8 8	4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12 4, 8 8	4, 8 4, 8 4, 8
2028	Long-term Trend	~		
2029	Reading Mathematics <b>CIVICS</b> <b>U.S. HISTORY</b> <b>WRITING</b>	4, 8 4, 8 4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12 4, 8, 12	4, 8 4, 8 8 4, 8, 12	4, 8 4, 8 4, 8

**NOTES:**

\* Long-term Trend (LTT) assessment not administered by computer until 2024. All other assessments will be digitally based.

~ LTT assessments sample students at ages 9, 13, and 17 and are conducted in reading and mathematics.

**BOLD ALL CAPS** subjects indicate the assessment year in which a new or updated framework is implemented, if needed.

**Approved July 31, 2020**

## **Resolution to Continue with Preparations for 2021 NAEP Reading and Mathematics**

**Whereas**, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is authorized by Congress and is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what our nation's elementary and secondary school students know and can do;

**Whereas**, since 1969, NAEP has been the nation's foremost resource for measuring student progress and identifying differences in student achievement across various student subgroups;

**Whereas**, the National Assessment Governing Board was established by Congress to "formulate policy guidelines for the National Assessment" (20 USC §9621(a));

**Whereas**, the Governing Board is charged with providing advice to the Commissioner for Education Statistics in carrying out the National Assessment (20 USC §9622(a));

**Whereas**, the NAEP Authorization Act requires that NAEP be administered in public and private schools in reading and mathematics every 2 years in grades 4 and 8;

**Whereas**, the Every Student Succeeds Act mandates that states participate in the biennial reading and mathematics NAEP assessments in grades 4 and 8;

**Whereas**, Congress authorized the Governing Board to determine additional NAEP subjects to be assessed beyond the mandated assessments in reading and mathematics;

**Whereas**, the COVID-19 global pandemic has impacted the education of virtually all K-12 students in U.S. public and private schools;

**Whereas**, the global pandemic is likely to exacerbate longstanding educational inequities for under-served students;

**Whereas**, in a time of such unprecedented disruption to education and assessment, there is a need to collect reliable and valid data to understand and compare student achievement across the nation, states, select large urban districts, and various student subgroups to support effective policy, research, and resource allocation;

**Whereas**, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has developed contingency plans to mitigate health and safety risks during the administration of NAEP in schools in the midst of the pandemic;

**Whereas**, the U.S. Congress is considering the appropriation of additional funding to allow NCES to implement contingency plans;

**Whereas**, NCES is identifying critical milestones that will inform whether to proceed with data collection;

**Whereas**, it may not be possible to administer NAEP and report results in a valid and reliable manner consistent with NCES' statistical standards;

**Whereas**, the Governing Board has policy oversight for the NAEP program, and in consultation with the Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics, seeks to uphold NAEP as the gold standard in student assessment;

**Therefore, the National Assessment Governing Board advises NCES to continue preparations to administer the 2021 NAEP Reading and Mathematics Assessments as safely as possible unless NCES determines that accurate reporting of educational achievement and progress is not technically possible. The Governing Board will continue to work with NCES to understand the evolving status of state, school, and student participation based on school operations and health and safety factors to determine whether it becomes necessary to seek a waiver from Congress to postpone these assessments from 2021 to 2022.**

# National Assessment Governing Board

## Assessment Development Committee

### Report of July 13, 2020

**Assessment Development Committee (ADC) Members:** Dana Boyd (Chair), Mark Miller (Vice Chair), Christine Cunningham, Frank Edelblut, Paul Gasparini, Patrick Kelly, Reginald McGregor, Nardi Routten.

**Governing Board Staff:** Lesley Muldoon, Lisa Stooksberry, Michelle Blair, Sharyn Rosenberg.

**NCES Staff:** Holly Spurlock, Eunice Greer, et al.

**Other Attendees:** Logged in WebEx Platform.

#### **Briefing: Reaping the Rewards of Reading for Understanding (SV #5)**

In introducing the session, Chair Dana Boyd and Vice Chair Mark Miller noted that the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) is the umbrella organization over NCES, and some years ago, IES launched a large series of research efforts to respond to stagnating reading achievement. IES funded a synthesis report to document the key findings in over 200 articles that came out of those research efforts. The National Academy of Education released the report, titled [\*Reaping the Rewards of the Reading for Understanding Initiative\*](#). The report features findings and common themes about the nature and development of reading comprehension, as well as how it is assessed and how it is reflected in curriculum and instruction in pre-K through grade 12. Boyd welcomed five of the report's co-authors to summarize the lessons learned.

Two of the five co-authors serve on the Development Panel for the NAEP Reading Framework Update project. Altogether, the five co-authors joined the ADC to summarize the findings from the recently released National Academy of Education report, with a particular emphasis on the findings relevant to the assessment of reading comprehension. The co-authors were:

- Amy I. Berman, National Academy of Education
- Annemarie S. Palincsar, University of Michigan
- P. David Pearson, University of California, Berkeley
- Gina Biancarosa, University of Oregon
- Panayiota Kendeou, University of Minnesota

The presenters started by noting the approximately \$120 million investment by IES to examine underlying processes of reading comprehension and identify malleable processes that may be targets of interventions for enhancing reading comprehension. This effort, broadly known as the

Reading for Understanding Initiative, also included developing and testing interventions designed to improve reading comprehension. The *Reaping the Rewards* synthesis report was written by six sub-teams charged with carefully reviewing the approximately 200 research articles that were produced through the Initiative. One of these sub-teams focused exclusively on research findings for the assessment of reading comprehension.

The assessment research centered on findings from 10 different assessment programs. Constructs included: (1) global literacy (defined as the deployment of a constellation of cognitive, language, and social reasoning skills, knowledge, strategies, and dispositions, directed towards achieving specific reading purposes); (2) components of reading (including word recognition and decoding, vocabulary, morphological awareness, sentence processing, efficiency, and reading comprehension); and (3) screening and diagnostics (including letter sounds, phonological awareness, word recognition, spelling, vocabulary, following directions, syntactical knowledge, sentence comprehension, listening comprehension, reading comprehension).

The authors observed that reading in today's society involves reading for a purpose, integrating information across multiple texts, evaluating source credibility, and navigating digital information and communication environments. The authors noted that scenario-based assessments have the capacity to address these aspects of reading with an authenticity that supports robust measurement of reading comprehension. More broadly, with expanded types of tasks, texts, and types of questions associated with these texts, research efforts provided important insights on the independent and joint influence of the reader, the task, and the text within a sociocultural context on comprehension.

Notably, the authors summarized that several assessments examined across the Reading for Understanding Initiative were able to capture and report on changes in instruction. In addition, several assessments introduced innovations to directly address the inherent influence of background knowledge (readers' varying knowledge of different topics that may or may not be related to the texts they read). This type of knowledge has always been a challenge for reading comprehension assessments. Traditionally, assessments aimed to eliminate rather than integrate this knowledge by including content that reduced knowledge demands. The authors noted that this approach is less than optimal because background knowledge is an integral component of reading comprehension, and it is one of the factors that carries the largest variability. In response to this challenge, the specific assessment innovations examined in the Reading for Understanding Initiative included: measuring prior knowledge directly, providing access to additional content during the assessment (e.g., videos, audio, definitions, diagrams) that supported students' prior knowledge, and structuring the sequence of sources (from general to specific) to facilitate knowledge acquisition.

In summarizing the takeaways for assessment, the authors concluded that studies in the Reading for Understanding Initiative had a profound impact on assessment, resulting in a new generation of reading assessments that feature more authentic conceptualization of reading comprehension, while emphasizing instructional sensitivity and value. They also briefly discussed the Reading for Understanding Initiative’s takeaways for instruction. In summarizing the full research portfolio of the Initiative, the authors commented that several of the takeaways in their synthesis report are also reflected in the public comment draft of the NAEP Reading Framework Update.

Members of the ADC asked a few clarifying questions and thanked the presenters for their extensive work to synthesize these important findings.

### **Update: 2025 NAEP Reading Framework (SV #5)**

Chair Boyd reviewed that the Governing Board initiated the 2025 NAEP Reading Framework project to develop needed updates to the current framework. The Framework Development Panel has worked at a steady pace through the global COVID-19 pandemic to produce a public comment draft of the framework. The 30-day public comment period – now ongoing – began on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Both Boyd and Miller congratulated and thanked the Panel for reaching this major milestone. They then welcomed WestEd Project Co-Director Mark Loveland and WestEd Reading Content Lead, Cynthia Greenleaf, to provide a project update.

Loveland summarized the project timeline and the elements of public comment outreach, which has registered extensive engagement to date, even with a few days remaining. Greenleaf provided a tour of the key features of the public comment draft of the 2025 NAEP Reading Framework. She noted that the draft framework grounds the NAEP Reading Framework in the most recent theoretical and research-based understandings of reading comprehension. This grounding is achieved by noting that sociocultural context is an important aspect of what NAEP must address in its assessment of reading comprehension.

Greenleaf then discussed recommendations in the draft framework that related to readers, texts, tasks, and sociocultural context.

Michelle Blair noted the ongoing policy issues that the ADC started discussing in March 2020, including:

- Questionnaire items in the assessment, rather than solely in questionnaires
- Student choice, e.g., in selecting passages, tasks, etc.
- Commissioned text
- New subscales
- Race by socioeconomic status breakouts in initial reporting
- More English learner breakouts in initial reporting

As public comment is summarized and key policy themes emerge, Blair noted that this list will be refined to add those policy issues. Greenleaf then summarized how the public comment draft framework relates to these issues.

Greenleaf noted that research has converged in showing there are important components of what might be called socioemotional learning that are central to reading comprehension. For example, it is important to provide students with a purpose for their reading, before they start engaging with a text. So, the draft framework calls for a purpose-driven approach. Students will be given a purpose before they start to read that involves both why they are reading the passage and what they will be doing after they read. She then noted contextual questions that would help NAEP stakeholders in their interpreting and understanding results from the 2025 NAEP Reading Assessment. To increase accuracy of students' self-reports, the Panel proposes that some of these questionnaire items appear within the assessment blocks typically devoted solely to assessment items. The goal would be capture students' interest, knowledge, and familiarity with similar tasks to provide a more comprehensive view of the reader, and consequently, student performance.

The Committee discussed the merits and possible pitfalls of essentially embedding questionnaire items into the assessment. Some Committee members noted that questionnaire items that support the validity of scenario-based tasks could possibly be considered, but other Committee members noted that several states have student privacy laws that could discourage them from participating in the assessment simply because these extra questions are included.

Greenleaf summarized how student choice, commissioned text, and emphasizing disciplinary texts all support a more authentic reading assessment that capitalizes on the accumulated research insights over the last 16 years since the NAEP Reading Framework was last updated.

After clarifying questions from the ADC, Chair Boyd concluded the session by noting that several of the changes being discussed for the NAEP Reading Framework relate to the Governing Board's Strategic Vision. The Vision could help the Committee determine which of the framework updates are aligned with the impact that the Board wants NAEP to have.

**Action: 2025 NAEP Mathematics Assessment and Item Specifications (SV #5)**

Vice Chair Miller recalled that in November 2019 the Governing Board adopted a framework update for the 2025 NAEP Mathematics Assessment. In January 2020, Committee discussion turned toward the specifications that NCES needs for their item development work. The Committee on Standards, Design and Methodology also participated in this discussion. This discussion resulted in feedback that was then used to update the specifications. The ADC brought the updated draft to the full Board at the March 2020 quarterly Board meeting. No

additional issues were raised. At the May 2020 quarterly Board meeting, the full Board delegated authority to the ADC to take action on the final set of Specifications, which will guide NCES in building the updated assessment.

Blair summarized the clarification revisions conducted since May 2020, which included sharpening the phrasing in two of the five NAEP Mathematical Practices introduced in the 2025 NAEP Mathematics Framework. Miller asked if the ADC had any additional questions or concerns. Hearing none, he called for a vote to approve the 2025 NAEP Mathematics Specifications. The motion carried and was unanimously approved.

**Discussion: The Next Strategic Vision**

Boyd noted that each committee is setting aside time to discuss the Governing Board’s next Strategic Vision. She introduced Lisa Stooksberry, who shared a brief update about recently received NCES feedback on the Vision document. Then, the Committee moved into discussion about whether or not the list of strategic priorities was adequately comprehensive. ADC expressed support for the priorities, while noting one refinement that was needed in the priority addressing framework and assessment updates.

Boyd adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m. E.T.

I certify the accuracy of these minutes.

  
Dana Boyd, Chair

November 10, 2020  
Date

**National Assessment Governing Board**  
**Committee on Standards, Design and Methodology**  
**Report of July 17, 2020**

**Closed Session: 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.**

**COSDAM Members:** Andrew Ho (Chair), Alice Peisch (Vice Chair), Gregory Cizek, Jim Geringer, Rick Hanushek, Russ Whitehurst, and Carey Wright.

**Governing Board Staff:** Executive Director Lesley Muldoon, Deputy Executive Director Lisa Stooksberry, Michelle Blair, Laura LoGerfo, and Sharyn Rosenberg.

**NCES Staff:** Commissioner James Lynn Woodworth, Associate Commissioner Peggy Carr, Jing Chen, Enis Dogan, Pat Etienne, Elvie Germino-Hausken, Shawn Kline, Daniel McGrath, Nadia McLaughlin, Taslima Rahman, Holly Spurlock, Bill Tirre, Bill Ward, and Grady Wilburn.

**Other Attendees:** Educational Testing Service: Amy Dresher, Helena Jia, John Mazzeo, Daniel McCaffrey and Emilie Pooler. Westat: Chris Averett, Greg Binzer and Keith Rust.

**NAEP 2021 Data Quality (Closed Session)**

Chair Andrew Ho called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m. and requested a moment of silence in memory of the 138,000 people in the United States who have lost their lives to COVID-19.

Ho noted that this is his last regular quarterly Board meeting and reiterated his three priorities as COSDAM Chair: maintaining trends, linking studies, and partnerships (especially with NCES).

Enis Dogan of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) described potential risks to data quality if the NAEP Reading and Mathematics assessments were to proceed in January – March 2021 as planned. The threats to data quality include challenges in sampling schools and students, changes in test administration procedures and conditions, and potential issues in data analysis.

In terms of threats to obtaining representative samples, NCES can only test students who are physically in school; this excludes students in schools that are engaged in virtual-only instruction and students who choose to participate in virtual-only instruction even if they attend schools with an option for some in-person learning. In addition, states, districts, schools, and students may refuse to participate in 2021, given the perceived health and safety risks and limited time for in-person instruction. Consequently, the results may only reflect the portion of

students receiving in-person instruction, in schools that are open and willing to let in the NAEP test administrators. Adjusting for non-response bias will be difficult to the extent that the students attending school in person are different from students not attending school in person in unpredictable ways.

Changes in test administration conditions and procedures (such as wearing personal protective equipment, conducting smaller sessions over multiple days, remote training and scoring) may make it difficult to disentangle true changes in achievement from other confounding factors. Consequently, it will be difficult to compare results from 2021 to 2019 and, within 2021, differences across states and differences among student groups. Finally, the psychometric quality of items may be affected by unusually large numbers of students who have not received instruction on some material covered by the assessment.

Some COSDAM members noted that the proportion of students who will attend school in person during January – March 2021 may be high enough to enable statistical adjustment, and that it is important to get a handle on learning losses as soon as possible. Other members argued that there is a significant risk to the reporting of trends, and that it would be more prudent to postpone the NAEP Reading and Mathematics assessments to 2022 when the data are much more likely to be interpretable.

**Open Session: 3:30 – 4:00 p.m.**

**COSDAM Members:** Andrew Ho (Chair), Alice Peisch (Vice Chair), Gregory Cizek, Jim Geringer, Rick Hanushek, Russ Whitehurst, and Carey Wright.

**Governing Board Staff:** Executive Director Lesley Muldoon, Deputy Executive Director Lisa Stooksberry, Michelle Blair, Laura LoGerfo, Sharyn Rosenberg, and Angela Scott.

**NCES Staff:** Commissioner James Lynn Woodworth, Associate Commissioner Peggy Carr, Samantha Burg, Jing Chen, Alison Deigan, Enis Dogan, Pat Etienne, Elvie Germino-Hausken, Shawn Kline, Daniel McGrath, Nadia McLaughlin, Taslima Rahman, Emmanuel Sikali, Holly Spurlock, Bill Tirre, Ebony Walton, Bill Ward, Grady Wilburn, and Angela Woodard.

**Other Attendees:** American Institutes for Research: George Bohrnstedt, Markus Broer, Kim Gattis, and Young Yee Kim. CRP: Ed Woffard. Education First: Anand Vaishnav. Educational Testing Service: Amy Dresher, Helena Jia, John Mazzeo, Daniel McCaffrey and Emilie Pooler. Hager Sharp: Joanne Lim. Hatcer Group: Devin Simpson. HumRRO: Monica Gribben and Thanos Patelis. Optimal Solutions Group: Brian Cramer. Pearson: Cathy White. RTI: Sonya Powers. Westat: Chris Averett, Greg Binzer, Lisa Rodriguez, and Keith Rust. Other: Will Donkersgoed (Wyoming NAEP state coordinator), Laura Goadrich (Arkansas NAEP state coordinator), David Hoff (independent consultant), Raina Mouljian (Alaska NAEP state coordinator), and Renee Savoie (Connecticut NAEP state coordinator).

## **ACTION: Achievement Levels Work Plan**

Ho stated that he was putting forth a motion to amend the Achievement Levels Work Plan that the Board adopted in March. During the March COSDAM discussion, the four members who were present added some language that states in part, “alternative achievement level setting approaches should be explored.” Ho explained that in the months since that March conversation, this language has been misunderstood to mean that the Governing Board is changing its definition of NAEP Proficient. For example, the NAEP Validity Studies Panel put forth a proposal that begins, “The National Assessment Governing Board has begun the process of revisiting the NAEP achievement levels” and refers to “current plans to reset standards.”

Ho noted that he had consulted with Gregory Cizek, who served as Chair of the Achievement Levels Working Group that had laid out the original plan before the March edits. Ho and Cizek agreed that the language added in March was unnecessary given that the rest of the work plan already gathers appropriate validity evidence, and that the language added in March is misleading because it leads to the impression that the Governing Board is lowering and weakening its standards.

Ho stated that he does not want the Achievement Levels Work Plan to lead others to question the Board’s Congressionally mandated authority to set the NAEP achievement levels. Therefore, he put forth the following motion:

### **To amend the Achievement Levels Work Plan to that originally proposed by the Achievement Levels Working Group in March 2020.**

The amendment is reflected by the following edits to page 7 of the work plan:

“The Board recognizes that some stakeholders may hold misconceptions of the achievement levels. For example, legislators or education writers have sometimes confused performance at the *NAEP Proficient* level with grade-level performance. ~~Alternative achievement level setting approaches should be explored to evaluate whether they may reduce misconceptions or misuse.~~ To ~~reduce~~ respond to these misconceptions, we propose ~~two lines of work. First, we will commission a review of alternative achievement level setting approaches, including achievement level descriptors and achievement level setting procedures. This review should summarize tradeoffs, for example between the cost of changing achievement level setting approaches and benefits related to reducing misconception and misuse.~~ Second, we propose to work to create and provide materials and to conduct new outreach activities. The first step to addressing the misconceptions is to better understand how various stakeholder groups are interpreting and using the NAEP achievement levels. The NAS evaluation included reviews of existing materials and conversations with multiple audiences to begin to understand and articulate how various stakeholder groups are interpreting and using the NAEP achievement levels. The NAS evaluation did uncover several existing misconceptions about the NAEP achievement levels, and the Board will need to conduct additional work to more fully understand actual interpretations and uses of the NAEP achievement levels. We will need to develop and refine additional materials in formats most relevant to targeted audiences, (e.g.,

print, video, workshops) to address existing misconceptions and promote appropriate use. It would also seem desirable to engage in a companion evaluation effort to assess the effectiveness of these new materials and outreach activities.”

Five members voted in favor of the motion, one member was opposed, and there was one abstention.

During the full Board discussion on July 30, Ho put forth this motion to the full Board; it was seconded by Carey Wright and approved unanimously. The revised Achievement Levels Work Plan is attached to these minutes.

### **Discussion of Strategic Vision**

Ho noted that the purpose of this final discussion was to hear any comments, concerns, or questions about the draft Strategic Vision that was revised based on the Board’s feedback at the May quarterly meeting, in preparation for anticipated action during the next quarterly Board meeting on July 31. Ho described the two priorities for which COSDAM has primary responsibility: *“Link NAEP resources with external data sources and disseminate what is learned from these sources so that NAEP can inform policy and practice in understandable and actionable ways”* and *“Develop a body of validity evidence to improve the interpretation and communication of NAEP achievement levels to ensure that they are reasonable, valid, and informative to the public.”*

COSDAM members asked questions about the preamble, the number of strategic priorities, and plans for creating a more public-facing document. No one raised any concerns that would prevent them from approving the Strategic Vision at the upcoming Board meeting.

I certify the accuracy of these minutes.



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Andrew Ho, Chair

August 25, 2020

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Date



## **National Assessment Governing Board Achievement Levels Work Plan**

### Overview

The National Assessment Governing Board has developed a comprehensive work plan (the Plan) to fully respond to the [National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine \(NAS\) evaluation of NAEP achievement levels](#). The ultimate aim of the Plan is to develop a body of evidence that provides a sound basis for removal of the trial status of the NAEP achievement levels. Other related goals are to develop, for Governing Board members and other interested stakeholders, a summary of the validity evidence supporting the interpretation of NAEP achievement levels and to facilitate clear, accurate, and informative reporting of NAEP achievement level results to the public. The Plan described here includes a list of activities (and associated timelines) to be pursued in conjunction with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). COSDAM will provide oversight for the Plan’s implementation, in conjunction with other committees and NCES, as appropriate.

### Background

The Governing Board issued an initial response to the NAS evaluation in December 2016 (see Appendix A) and adopted a revised policy on [Developing Student Achievement Levels for NAEP](#) in November 2018. This Plan provides detail about how each of the seven recommendations from the evaluation will be addressed (using guidance from the revised policy statement, where appropriate), including roles and priorities for accomplishing the work. Supplementing this Plan is a statement of intended purpose and meaning of NAEP (see Appendix B).

As indicated above, a primary aim of the Plan is to develop a body of evidence that provides a sound basis for removal of the trial status of the NAEP achievement levels. According to the NAEP legislation (PL 107-279), “The achievement levels shall be used on a trial basis until the Commissioner for Education Statistics determines, as a result of an evaluation under subsection (f), that such levels are reasonable, valid, and informative to the public.” The proposed Plan aligns to those priorities; the criteria “Reasonable,” “Valid,” and “Informative to the Public”

have been indicated in the proposed responses to the NAS Committee recommendations described below.

Input from NCES suggests that the criterion of “informative to the public” as particularly important, where “the public” is interpreted to be groups who are responsible for using NAEP results directly and/or communicating information about NAEP achievement levels to others, including, but not limited to, state and federal legislators, education administrators at all levels, researchers and policy makers who use NAEP data, and media who cover education).

*The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014; hereafter the *Standards*) comprise a collection of professional best practices for all aspects of assessment, including achievement level setting. The following Plan was informed by the guidance provided in the *Standards*.

#### Responding to Recommendations #1, 2, and 3 (Valid)

*Recommendation #1: Alignment among the frameworks, the item pools, the achievement-level descriptors, and the cut scores is fundamental to the validity of inferences about student achievement. In 2009, alignment was evaluated for all grades in reading and for grade 12 in mathematics, and changes were made to the achievement-level descriptors, as needed. Similar research is needed to evaluate alignment for the grade 4 and grade 8 mathematics assessments and to revise them as needed to ensure that they represent the knowledge and skills of students at each achievement level. Moreover, additional work to verify alignment for grade 4 reading and grade 12 mathematics is needed.*

*Recommendation #2: Once satisfactory alignment among the frameworks, the item pools, the achievement-level descriptors, and the cut scores in NAEP mathematics and reading has been demonstrated, their designation as trial should be discontinued. This work should be completed and the results evaluated as stipulated by law: (20 U.S. Code 9622: National Assessment of Educational Progress: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/20/9622> [September 2016]).*

*Recommendation #3: To maintain the validity and usefulness of achievement levels, there should be regular recurring reviews of the achievement-level descriptors, with updates as needed, to ensure they reflect both the frameworks and the incorporation of those frameworks in NAEP assessments.*

The first three recommendations of the evaluation are inter-related. Recommendation #1 is focused on reading and math and covers all of the ALDs throughout the process, whereas Recommendation #3 is more general and primarily focused on monitoring the reporting ALDs. To some extent, Recommendation #3 has already been substantially addressed by the recently updated and approved Governing Board policy on NAEP achievement level setting. One remaining element related to Recommendation #3 is the development of a timeline and process for reviewing ALDs, along with prioritization for content areas beyond reading and math—a task that the Governing Board is now pursuing. An Achievement Levels Procedures Manual to

address the implementation of the policy will include details about the process for conducting these studies.

The Governing Board does not have direct responsibility for Recommendation #2. The NCES Commissioner makes the decision about the trial status and is not required to adhere to this NAS recommendation.

Regarding Recommendation #1, there are general policy definitions that apply to all NAEP assessments. These policy ALDs are elaborated into several different types of content ALDs under the revised Board policy. Additional clarity on the labels and uses of different types of ALDs should be described in the Achievement Levels Procedures Manual, including:

- Content ALDs developed with an assessment framework (generally by content area) are used to inform item development.
- Content ALDs that apply to a framework overall (across content areas) are used to conduct standard setting. These ALDs may be created as part of the framework development process or by re-convening framework panels (or similar individuals) after the assessment has been administered, prior to standard setting.
- Reporting ALDs, as described in the Board's revised policy statement, will be created following administration of an assessment to communicate about what performance at each NAEP achievement level indicates about what students do know and can do.

Addressing Recommendation #1 should focus on the current reporting ALDs for mathematics and reading at grades 4, 8, and 12. The methodology will be similar to what was done to evaluate the alignment and revise the 2009 NAEP Reading ALDs for grades 4, 8, and 12 (Donohue, Pitoniak, & Beaulieu, 2010) and the 2009 NAEP Mathematics ALDs for grade 12 (Pitoniak, Dion, & Garber, 2010). This process will generate new reporting ALDs that comply with the revised Board policy statement. A potential additional step is to examine and/or document the alignment between the item pools and the NAEP frameworks, including information about the extent to which each NAEP administration faithfully represents the NAEP frameworks. Finally, alignment of cut scores can be evaluated using item maps, as part of the work to review and revise the reporting ALDs. Frameworks should be taken as a given; validation of the frameworks is beyond the scope of this work and evidence for their validity results from the Board's framework development process.

The following table provides a draft of the activities, timeline and responsibilities for responding to Recommendations 1-3. Work will begin with reading and mathematics ALDs (based on 2019 data, to be used in reporting 2021 results). Reporting ALDs for other subjects will be reviewed and revised according to when they next appear on the NAEP Assessment Schedule. In accordance with Principle 4 of the Board policy on NAEP achievement level setting, reporting ALDs will be reviewed and revised on a regular basis (at least every 3 administrations or every 10 years, or when there is a major framework update). For example, the NAEP Mathematics and

Reading ALDs will need to be revisited following the 2025 administrations under the revised assessment frameworks.

<b>Proposed Activity</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
COSDAM approval of Achievement Levels Procedures Manual (described in policy statement)	COSDAM	May 2020
Conduct studies to examine and/or document alignment between NAEP Math and Reading Frameworks and item pools for grades 4, 8, 12	NCES	December 2020
Conduct studies to review and revise Math and Reading ALDs at grades 4, 8, and 12  Conduct studies to review and revise U.S. History, Civics, and Science ALDs at grade 8	NAGB	Contract awarded summer/fall 2020; complete by summer 2021 (reading/math); for other subjects the timeline will be determined by Assessment Schedule (ALDs updated in time for reporting of next administration after 2020)
Full Board action on revised Reporting ALDs	NAGB	Math/Reading at grades 4, 8, 12 (August 2021); for other subjects the timeline will be determined by Assessment Schedule (Board action will take place prior to release of results)
Conduct studies to examine and/or document alignment between NAEP U.S. History, Civics, Science, and TEL Frameworks and item pools for grade 8	NCES	December 2021

Responding to Recommendation #4 (Informative to the Public)

*Recommendation #4: Research is needed on the relationships between the NAEP achievement levels and current or future performance on measures external to NAEP. Like the research that led to setting scale scores that represent academic preparedness for college, new research should focus on other measures of future performance, such as being on track for a college-*

*ready high school diploma for 8th-grade students and readiness for middle school for 4th-grade students.*

Recommendation #4 is interpreted as articulating the need to provide context and relevance for NAEP results to show where NAEP fits in the constellation of other major assessments and external indicators of student achievement that are familiar to the general public, such as international assessments and indicators of postsecondary preparedness. Because NAEP and external indicators typically have different purposes, administration conditions, target populations, and other distinguishing characteristics, the purpose of this particular recommendation is not to make judgments about which results are “right” or “wrong” but to make the reporting of NAEP results more meaningful, useful, AND informative to the public.

This recommendation refers to both linking studies of NAEP and other measures of student achievement, as well as efforts to use NAEP to predict future performance. There are many different existing measures of student achievement, and we are aware of several efforts to link NAEP to various other measures, particularly in math, reading, and science. In order to consider what new studies might be pursued, it is important to better understand the resources that already exist, in addition to discussing how new efforts fit into the Board’s ongoing work and Strategic Vision.

The Governing Board’s work on reporting and dissemination includes the production of infographics and other descriptive reporting that describe student achievement in terms of several contextual variables. This work has typically been done using scale scores but could be expanded to include achievement level information, possibly including efforts to provide descriptive information about contextual factors associated with performance at the *NAEP Basic*, *NAEP Proficient*, and *NAEP Advanced* achievement levels.

To address the issue of how best to synthesize and report information about how NAEP relates to other assessments and indicators, the Governing Board has commissioned a technical memo on recommendations for synthesizing relevant findings from multiple studies in ways that are informative to a general audience. The purpose of this effort is to explore how to place NAEP in a meaningful context of other familiar assessments and indicators, and to generate additional ideas. The following table provides a draft of the activities, timeline and responsibilities for responding to Recommendation 4.

<b>Proposed Activity</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Review of technical memo on various ideas (including pros/cons) for synthesizing and representing findings about how other assessments and external indicators of student performance relate to NAEP (including a summary of existing linking studies) and what the findings mean for NAEP.	NAGB	Spring 2020
As the Governing Board works to develop its next Strategic Vision, deliberations will take place as part of that effort to determine how to approach the goal of making NAEP more relevant by connecting NAEP results to important real world indicators of student achievement.	NAGB	August 2020
Decision on additional studies that should be pursued to connect NAEP to other assessments and external indicators of student performance	NAGB/NCES	November 2020

Responding to Recommendations #5 & #6 (Reasonable, Valid, Informative)

*Recommendation #5: Research is needed to articulate the intended interpretations and uses of the achievement levels and collect validity evidence to support these interpretations and uses. In addition, research to identify the actual interpretations and uses commonly made by NAEP’s various audiences and evaluate the validity of each of them. This information should be communicated to users with clear guidance on substantiated and unsubstantiated interpretations.*

*Recommendation #6: Guidance is needed to help users determine inferences that are best made with achievement levels and those best made with scale score statistics. Such guidance should be incorporated in every report that includes achievement levels.*

The *Standards* clearly indicate that any validation plan should begin with specifying the intended interpretations and uses of test scores. It is important to recognize that NAEP ALDs do not make claims about the achievement levels predicting performance on other current or future criteria (e.g., college readiness); however, strong claims *are* asserted about mastery of the content covered by relevant NAEP frameworks. Therefore, Recommendations #5 and #6 are related and should be considered together. The Governing Board is currently working on developing a statement of intended purpose and meaning for NAEP, which includes intended interpretations and uses for scale scores and achievement levels at a general level. The full Board discussed this document at the November 2019 Board meeting and is expected to take action during the upcoming March 2020 Board meeting (Appendix B). The Reporting and Dissemination Committee and COSDAM have provided initial guidance on an interpretative guide for the NAEP achievement levels.

After the Board reaches consensus about the intended interpretations and uses, the next step is to gather and document the evidence that exists related to those interpretations and to identify areas where additional evidence may be needed. This would take the form of building validity arguments to document the evidence that exists to support intended interpretations and uses; separate activities would be appropriate for supporting NAEP *scale scores* and NAEP *achievement levels*.

Gathering and summarizing validity evidence regarding interpretations of NAEP scale scores should primarily be a responsibility of NCES. This may be a matter of gathering and synthesizing documentation of existing NCES procedures that provided validity evidence for NAEP interpretations (e.g., qualifications of item writers, procedures for reviewing items, pilot testing, cognitive labs, etc.). This activity would also help to uncover areas where more research and evidence is needed.

Gathering and summarizing validity evidence regarding interpretations of NAEP achievement levels is a responsibility of the Governing Board (via COSDAM). Research undertaken to address Recommendation #1 should also provide evidence to address part of Recommendation #5, because the ALDs represent the intended meaning of NAEP achievement level categories.

In contrast to the established traditions for validating score meaning (e.g., the *Standards*), broadly endorsed procedures or criteria for gathering and evaluating evidence regarding score (or achievement category) use do not yet exist. Nonetheless, the interpretative guide contemplated by COSDAM and R&D would be one source of evidence to address Recommendations #5 and #6.

The Board recognizes that some stakeholders may hold misconceptions of the achievement levels. For example, legislators or education writers have sometimes confused performance at the *NAEP Proficient* level with grade-level performance. To respond to these misconceptions, we propose to work to create and provide materials and to conduct new outreach activities. The first step to addressing the misconceptions is to better understand how various stakeholder groups are interpreting and using the NAEP achievement levels. The NAS evaluation included reviews of existing materials and conversations with multiple audiences to begin to understand and articulate how various stakeholder groups are interpreting and using the NAEP achievement levels. The NAS evaluation did uncover several existing misconceptions about the NAEP achievement levels, and the Board will need to conduct additional work to more fully understand actual interpretations and uses of the NAEP achievement levels. We will need to develop and refine additional materials in formats most relevant to targeted audiences, (e.g., print, video, workshops) to address existing misconceptions and promote appropriate use. It would also seem desirable to engage in a companion evaluation effort to assess the effectiveness of these new materials and outreach activities.

Recommendation #6 (need for explicit guidance about when to use scale scores versus achievement levels) appears to be very narrow in scope, referring specifically to the

inappropriateness of using the percentage above a cut score to describe changes over time and across groups. To best address Recommendation #6, the interpretative guide should explicitly include information about which inferences are best made with scale scores versus achievement levels.

Effective communication of the NAEP achievement levels is an important aspect of Recommendations #5 and #6. There is a need to better understand how users interpret the policy definitions and ALDs for *NAEP Basic*, *NAEP Proficient*, and *NAEP Advanced*. For example, what does “solid academic performance” mean, and is it possible to describe this educational goal more effectively?

Further development of these ideas (and others) will be needed to address these recommendations, and the staff plans to convene an ongoing advisory group on communication of NAEP achievement levels. The following table provides a draft of the activities, timeline and responsibilities for responding to Recommendations #5 and #6.

<b>Proposed Activity</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Convene ongoing advisory group to discuss and provide feedback on the development of materials for communicating NAEP achievement levels	NAGB/NCES	Spring 2020 – Spring 2021
Collect information about current uses of NAEP achievement levels via focus groups and evaluate appropriateness of interpretations and uses that are not directly intended	NAGB	Spring/summer 2020
Adopt statement of intended purpose and meaning of NAEP (Appendix B)	NAGB	March 2020
Improve communications of what NAEP frameworks and achievement levels represent	NAGB/NCES	Ongoing
Develop and finalize interpretative guide for NAEP achievement levels; iterative drafts will be discussed by COSDAM and R&D	NAGB	Spring 2020-Spring 2021
Collect and document validity evidence to support intended interpretations and uses of NAEP achievement levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect and summarize validity evidence to support intended interpretations and uses of NAEP scale scores</li> </ul>	NAGB  NCES	Spring 2021  Spring 2021

Responding to Recommendation #7 (Valid)

*Recommendation #7: NAEP should implement a regular cycle for considering the desirability of conducting a new standard setting. Factors to consider include, but are not limited to: substantive changes in the constructs, item types, or frameworks; innovations in the modality for administering assessments; advances in standard setting methodologies; and changes in the*

*policy environment for using NAEP results. These factors should be weighed against the downsides of interrupting the trend data and information.*

Recommendation #7 has been addressed by inclusion in the revised policy statement (Principle 4). It will be necessary to develop a process for carrying out a cut score review, but this should occur under COSDAM's purview as part of the development of the Achievement Levels Procedures Manual.

## References

- American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education [AERA, APA, & NCME]. (2014). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. Washington, DC: AERA.
- Donahue, P., Pitoniak, M., & Beaulieu, N. (2010). *Final report on the study to draft achievement-level descriptions for reporting results of the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress in reading for grades 4, 8, and 12*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Evaluation of the Achievement Levels for Mathematics and Reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
- Pitoniak, M., Dion, G., & Garber, D. (2010). *Final report on the study to draft achievement level descriptions for reporting results of the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress in mathematics for grade 12*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

## **National Assessment Governing Board’s Response to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2016 Evaluation of NAEP Achievement Levels**

### *Legislative Authority*

Pursuant to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) legislation (Public Law 107-279), the National Assessment Governing Board (hereafter the Governing Board) is pleased to have this opportunity to apprise the Secretary of Education and the Congress of the Governing Board response to the recommendations of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine evaluation of the NAEP achievement levels for mathematics and reading (Edley & Koenig, 2016).

The cited legislation charges the Governing Board with the authority and responsibility to “develop appropriate student achievement levels for each grade or age in each subject area to be tested.” The legislation also states that “such levels shall be determined by... a national consensus approach; used on a trial basis until the Commissioner for Education Statistics determines, as a result of an evaluation under subsection (f), that such levels are reasonable, valid, and informative to the public; ... [and] shall be updated as appropriate by the National Assessment Governing Board in consultation with the Commissioner for Education Statistics” (Public Law 107-279).

### *Background*

NAEP is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what our nation’s elementary and secondary students know and can do. Since 1969, NAEP has been the country’s foremost resource for measuring student progress and identifying differences in student achievement across student subgroups. In a time of changing state standards and assessments, NAEP serves as a trusted resource for parents, teachers, principals, policymakers, and researchers to compare student achievement across states and select large urban districts. NAEP results allow the nation to understand where more work must be done to improve learning among all students.

For 25 years, the NAEP achievement levels (*Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced*) have been a signature feature of NAEP results. While scale scores provide information about student achievement over time and across student groups, achievement levels reflect the extent to which student performance is “good enough,” in each subject and grade, relative to aspirational goals.

Since the Governing Board began setting standards in the early 1990s, achievement levels have become a standard part of score reporting for many other assessment programs in the US and abroad.

## Governing Board Response

### *Overview*

The Governing Board appreciates the thorough, deliberative process undertaken over the past two years by the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine and the expert members of the Committee on the Evaluation of NAEP Achievement Levels for Mathematics and Reading. The Governing Board is pleased that the report concludes that the achievement levels are a meaningful and important part of NAEP reporting. The report states that, “during their 24 years [the achievement levels] have acquired meaning for NAEP’s various audiences and stakeholders; they serve as stable benchmarks for monitoring achievement trends, and they are widely used to inform public discourse and policy decisions. Users regard them as a regular, permanent feature of the NAEP reports” (Edley & Koenig, 2016; page Sum-8). The Governing Board has reviewed the seven recommendations presented in the report and finds them reasonable and thoughtful. The report will inform the Board’s future efforts to set achievement levels and communicate the meaning of NAEP *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced*. The recommendations intersect with two Governing Board documents, the Strategic Vision and the achievement levels policy, described here.

On November 18, 2016, the Governing Board adopted a Strategic Vision (<https://www.nagb.org/content/nagb/assets/documents/newsroom/press-releases/2016/nagb-strategic-vision.pdf>) to guide the work of the Board through 2020, with an emphasis on innovating to enhance NAEP’s form and content and expanding NAEP’s dissemination and use. The Strategic Vision answers the question, “How can NAEP provide information about how our students are doing in the most innovative, informative, and impactful ways?” The Governing Board is pleased that several of the report recommendations are consistent with the Board’s own vision. The Governing Board is committed to measuring the progress of our nation’s students toward their acquisition of academic knowledge, skills, and abilities relevant to this contemporary era.

The Governing Board’s approach to setting achievement levels is articulated in a policy statement, “Developing Student Performance Levels for the National Assessment of Educational Progress” (<https://www.nagb.org/content/nagb/assets/documents/policies/developing-student-performance.pdf>). The policy was first adopted in 1990 and was subsequently revised in 1995,

with minor wording changes made in 2007. The report motivates the revision of this policy, to add clarity and intentionality to the setting and communication of NAEP achievement levels.

The seven recommendations and the Governing Board response comprise a significant research and outreach trajectory that the Governing Board can pursue over several years in conjunction with key partners. The Governing Board will implement these responses within resource constraints and in conjunction with the priorities of the Strategic Vision.

### *Evaluating the Alignment of NAEP Achievement Level Descriptors*

*Recommendation #1: Alignment among the frameworks, the item pools, the achievement-level descriptors, and the cut scores is fundamental to the validity of inferences about student achievement. In 2009, alignment was evaluated for all grades in reading and for grade 12 in mathematics, and changes were made to the achievement-level descriptors, as needed. Similar research is needed to evaluate alignment for the grade 4 and grade 8 mathematics assessments and to revise them as needed to ensure that they represent the knowledge and skills of students at each achievement level. Moreover, additional work to verify alignment for grade 4 reading and grade 12 mathematics is needed.*

The report's primary recommendation is to evaluate the alignment, and revise if needed, the achievement level descriptors for NAEP mathematics and reading assessments in grades 4, 8, and 12. The Governing Board intends to issue a procurement for conducting studies to achieve this goal. The Governing Board has periodically conducted studies to evaluate whether the achievement level descriptors in a given subject should be revised, based on their alignment with the NAEP framework, item pool, and cut scores. The Governing Board agrees that this is a good time to ensure that current NAEP mathematics and reading achievement level descriptors align with the knowledge and skills of students in each achievement level category. In conjunction with the response to Recommendation #3, the updated Board policy on NAEP achievement levels will address the larger issue of specifying a process and timeline for conducting regular recurring reviews of the achievement level descriptions in all subjects and grades.

The Governing Board agrees strongly with the recommendation that, while evaluating alignment of achievement level descriptors is timely, it is not necessary to consider changing the cut scores or beginning a new trend line at this time. The NAEP assessments are transitioning from paper-based to digital assessments in 2017, and current efforts are focused on ensuring comparability between 2015 and 2017 scores. The Governing Board articulated this in the 2015 Resolution on Maintaining NAEP Trends with the Transition to Digital-Based Assessments (<https://www.nagb.org/content/nagb/assets/documents/policies/resolution-on-trend-and-dba.pdf>).

*Recommendation #2: Once satisfactory alignment among the frameworks, the item pools, the achievement-level descriptors, and the cut scores in NAEP mathematics and reading has been*

*demonstrated, their designation as trial should be discontinued. This work should be completed and the results evaluated as stipulated by law: (20 U.S. Code 9622: National Assessment of Educational Progress: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/20/9622> [September 2016]).*

Ultimately, the Commissioner of Education Statistics is responsible for determining whether the “trial” designation is removed. The Governing Board is committed to providing the Commissioner with the information needed to make this determination in an expedient manner.

### *Regular Recurring Reviews of the Achievement Level Descriptors*

*Recommendation #3: To maintain the validity and usefulness of achievement levels, there should be regular recurring reviews of the achievement-level descriptors, with updates as needed, to ensure they reflect both the frameworks and the incorporation of those frameworks in NAEP assessments.*

The Board’s current policy on NAEP achievement levels contains several principles and guidelines for *setting* achievement levels but does not address issues related to the continued use or reporting of achievement levels many years after they were established. The revised policy will seek to address this gap by including a statement of periodicity for conducting regular recurring reviews of the achievement level descriptors, with updates as needed, as called for in this recommendation. The Governing Board agrees that it is important to articulate a process and timeline for conducting regular reviews of the achievement level descriptors rather than performing such reviews on an ad hoc basis.

### *Relationships Between NAEP Achievement Levels and External Measures*

*Recommendation #4: Research is needed on the relationships between the NAEP achievement levels and concurrent or future performance on measures external to NAEP. Like the research that led to setting scale scores that represent academic preparedness for college, new research should focus on other measures of future performance, such as being on track for a college-ready high school diploma for 8th-grade students and readiness for middle school for 4th-grade students.*

In addition to the extensive work that the Governing Board has conducted at grade 12 to relate NAEP mathematics and reading results to academic preparedness for college, the Governing Board has begun research at grade 8 with statistical linking studies of NAEP mathematics and reading and the ACT Explore assessments in those subjects. This work was published while the evaluation was in process and was not included in the Committee’s deliberations. Additional studies in NAEP mathematics and reading at grades 4 and 8 are beginning under contract to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The Governing Board’s Strategic Vision includes an explicit goal to increase opportunities for connecting NAEP to other national and

international assessments and data. Just as the Board's previous research related grade 12 NAEP results in mathematics and reading to students' academic preparedness for college, the Governing Board anticipates that additional linkages with external measures will help connect the NAEP achievement levels and scale scores to other meaningful real-world indicators of current and future performance.

### *Interpretations and Uses of NAEP Achievement Levels*

*Recommendation #5: Research is needed to articulate the intended interpretations and uses of the achievement levels and collect validity evidence to support these interpretations and uses. In addition, research to identify the actual interpretations and uses commonly made by NAEP's various audiences and evaluate the validity of each of them. This information should be communicated to users with clear guidance on substantiated and unsubstantiated interpretations.*

The Governing Board's Strategic Vision emphasizes improving the use and dissemination of NAEP results, and the Board's work in this area will include achievement levels. The Governing Board recognizes that clarity and meaning of NAEP achievement levels (and scale scores) are of utmost importance. The Governing Board will issue a procurement to conduct research to better understand how various audiences have used and interpreted NAEP results (including achievement levels). The Governing Board will work collaboratively with NCES to provide further guidance and outreach about appropriate and inappropriate uses of NAEP achievement levels.

### *Guidance for Inferences Made with Achievement Levels versus Scale Scores*

*Recommendation #6: Guidance is needed to help users determine inferences that are best made with achievement levels and those best made with scale score statistics. Such guidance should be incorporated in every report that includes achievement levels.*

The Governing Board understands that improper uses of achievement level statistics are widespread in the public domain and extend far beyond the use of NAEP data. Reports by the Governing Board and NCES have modeled appropriate use of NAEP data and will continue to do so. This recommendation is also consistent with the goal of the Strategic Vision to improve the dissemination and use of NAEP results. The Governing Board will continue to work with NCES and follow current research to provide guidance about inferences that are best made with achievement levels and those best made with scale score statistics.

## *Regular Cycle for Considering Desirability of Conducting a New Standard Setting*

*Recommendation #7: NAEP should implement a regular cycle for considering the desirability of conducting a new standard setting. Factors to consider include, but are not limited to: substantive changes in the constructs, item types, or frameworks; innovations in the modality for administering assessments; advances in standard setting methodologies; and changes in the policy environment for using NAEP results. These factors should be weighed against the downsides of interrupting the trend data and information.*

When the Board’s achievement levels policy was first created and revised in the 1990s, the Board was setting standards in each subject and grade for the first time and had not yet considered the need or timeline for re-setting standards. To address this recommendation, the Governing Board will update the policy to be more explicit about conditions that require a new standard setting.

### *Board’s Commitment*

The Governing Board remains committed to its congressional mandate to set “appropriate student achievement levels” for the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The Board appreciates the report’s affirmation that NAEP achievement levels have been set thoughtfully and carefully, consistent with professional guidelines for standard setting, and based on extensive technical advice from respected psychometricians and measurement specialists. The Board also takes seriously the charge to develop the current achievement levels through a national consensus approach, involving large numbers of knowledgeable teachers, curriculum specialists, business leaders, and members of the general public throughout the process. This is only fitting given the Governing Board’s own congressionally mandated membership that explicitly includes representatives from these stakeholder groups.

The Governing Board remains committed to improving the process of setting and communicating achievement levels. The Governing Board is grateful for the report recommendations that will advance these aims.

### *Reference*

Edley, C. & Koenig, J. A. (Ed.). (2016). *Evaluation of the Achievement Levels for Mathematics and Reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

## The Intended Meaning of NAEP Results

The primary purpose of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as the Nation’s Report Card, is to measure the educational achievement and progress of the nation’s students at established grades and ages in relation to the content of NAEP frameworks. NAEP results also enable comparisons of what representative students know and can do among states and jurisdictions, among various demographic groups, and over time.

The authorizing legislation for NAEP and the National Assessment Governing Board states that the purpose of the NAEP program is broadly to, “conduct a national assessment and collect and report assessment data, including achievement data trends, in a valid and reliable manner on student academic achievement in public and private elementary schools and secondary schools...” (Public Law 107-279, Section 303(b)(2)(B)). That legislation also prohibits NAEP from maintaining any system of personally identifiable information. Thus, NAEP assesses the educational progress of groups of representative students, not individuals.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) develops numerical score scales for each NAEP subject. NAEP scale scores convey the degree to which students have mastered the content described in the NAEP assessment frameworks, with higher scores indicating greater levels of mastery.

The Governing Board is charged with setting NAEP achievement levels and has established [general policy definitions](#) for *NAEP Basic*, *NAEP Proficient*, and *NAEP Advanced*. Percentages at or above achievement level cut scores indicate the percentage of students in a group who *meet or exceed* the knowledge and skills represented by specific content achievement level descriptions. These specific descriptions are found in the NAEP [assessment frameworks](#) and [reports](#). Additional information about the NAEP achievement level descriptions can be found in the Governing Board policy statement on [Developing Student Achievement Levels for NAEP](#).

NAEP results describe educational achievement for groups of students at a single point in time, progress in educational achievement for groups of students over time, and differential educational achievement and progress among jurisdictions and subpopulations. NAEP results measure achievement and progress; however, NAEP results alone cannot indicate either why or how progress has occurred. Educational policies and practices that concur with NAEP progress may have caused this progress or been coincidental.

There are several features of NAEP that distinguish it from many other assessment programs. For example:

- 1) NAEP produces results for the nation and participating states and jurisdictions, in public and private schools. NAEP does not produce results for individual students or schools.
- 2) NAEP measures progress based on successive cohorts of students. NAEP does not produce results about the growth of individual students or groups of students over time.
- 3) NAEP assessments are based on independent assessment frameworks developed through a national consensus approach described [here](#). NAEP frameworks do not represent any single state or local curricula.

**Summer 2020 Quarterly Board Meeting**  
**Reporting and Dissemination Committee**

**Meeting on Release Plan and Strategic Vision**  
**July 16, 2020**  
**3:15 - 4:05 pm**

**Governing Board Members:** Chair Rebecca Gagnon, Vice Chair Father Joseph O’Keefe, Tyler Cramer, Governor Beverly Perdue, Marty West

**Governing Board Members Absent:** Alberto Carvalho, Tonya Matthews, Terry Mazany.

**Governing Board Staff:** Laura LoGerfo, Stephaan Harris, Lesley Muldoon, Angela Scott, Lisa Stooksberry

**National Center for Education Statistics Staff:** Samantha Burg, Eunice Greer, Daniel McGrath, Nadia McLaughlin, Taslima Rahman, Emmanuel Sikali, Holly Spurlock, Ebony Walton, Angela Woodard

**Contractors:** AIR: Kim Gattis, Cadelle Hemphill, Yee Kim Young; CRP: Shama Carter, Subin Hona, Edward Wofford; Education-First: Anand Vaishnav; ETS: John Mazzeo; Hager Sharp: James Elias, David Hoff, Joanne Lim; HumRRO: Monica Gribben; Optimal Solutions: Brian Cramer; The Hatcher Group: Ann Bradley, Robert Johnston, Devin Simpson; Reingold: K Kenney, Jessica Murray; RTI: Sandra Olivarez-Durden, Sonya Powers; Silimeo Group: Debra Silimeo; Westat: Chris Averett, Lauren Byrne

**Council of Chief State School Officers-Affiliated Guests:** Vickie Baker (West Virginia); Regina Lewis (Maine); Raina Moulian (Alaska), Renee Savoie (Connecticut)

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**Release Plan**

Reporting and Dissemination Committee Chair Rebecca Gagnon called to order the committee’s first-ever virtual meeting at 3:15 pm. The meeting agenda comprised two items: (1) discuss and take action on the proposed release plan for the 2019 NAEP results in Reading and Mathematics for grade 12; and (2) deliberate on the draft priorities for Strategic Vision 2025.

Tyler Cramer made a motion to send the release plan to the full Board for action, which was seconded by Marty West. The committee members then discussed the plan in detail. Rebecca Gagnon commented that the release should set the context for why the NAEP program includes grade 12 and why the ACT and SAT cannot substitute for NAEP. Consider who uses grade 12 NAEP data and why, then center the release activities around those stakeholders and their values.

Marty West expressed strong support for a virtual release event that lasts only an hour. The release event will begin with an introduction by Governing Board Chair Haley Barbour, after which National Center for Education Statistics’ Commissioner Lynn Woodworth will present data about grade 12 students from federal data sources other than NAEP. Following Dr.

Woodworth, Associate Commissioner Peggy Carr will share highlights from the grade 12 results and field data-related questions from the livestream audience.

Once the presentation of the results is complete, two Board members will address questions from key stakeholder groups, collected and curated in advance of the release event. The committee recommended eliciting substantive questions by offering select key stakeholders previews of the data. The Board and its communications contractor anticipate a robust virtual audience for the event, given a dearth of assessment data currently available for release, a lack of competition from other events, and the prevalent interest in grade 12 students' achievement.

### Strategic Vision

With the release plan approved, the committee turned to the draft Strategic Vision in whole, and in particular, the priorities most relevant to the Reporting and Dissemination Committee. Rebecca Gagnon praised this latest draft for thoughtfully incorporating prior feedback and for a simple, focused presentation. Father Joseph O'Keefe proposed the idea of a Frequently Asked Questions list to accompany the Strategic Vision as a way to maintain the graceful simplicity of the Strategic Vision draft but address questions stakeholders may have about the Board's work and NAEP, e.g., how NAEP differs from state assessments.

Tyler Cramer expressed appreciation to the staff and Mr. Vaishnav for eliciting and compiling stakeholder feedback. The R&D Committee leads the Board's strategic partnership activities, which undergirds much of the Strategic Vision, thus finding, convening, and targeting these audiences represent the committee's core mission and the Board's. The Board must balance deepening engagement with core users and broadening the universe of partners and audiences.

Mr. Cramer urged the Board first to identify current users of NAEP to learn how they use which NAEP-related products and the degree to which they use those products correctly and second to identify prospective NAEP users to learn about their resource needs. How can the Board help facilitate and accelerate the use of NAEP by these prospective users? The Board generally -- and R&D specifically -- should help others correctly interpret NAEP results and learn new applications of NAEP data.

Elaborating on this point, Mr. West and Mr. Cramer discussed how NAEP can be used both directly and indirectly. For example, the audiences the Board met in El Paso, Texas at the March Board meeting may use NAEP without realizing it, perhaps through policies developed by their state education agency that address gaps found in NAEP data or reflect findings from the state mapping study. Teachers in El Paso may not find a need to use NAEP directly in their classrooms, which is understandable and acceptable. But NAEP may wield an influence in their curriculum and instruction indirectly.

Mr. Cramer registered a desire for more explanatory detail about the linking studies mentioned in the draft; he suggested using the word interoperability to capture how all data sources should work with each other seamlessly, rather than linking data in piecemeal fashion. Mr. West appreciates the value of linking studies but encouraged the Board not to make this "wonky" goal the first goal in the Strategic Vision. The current Strategic Vision lists the priorities in no order, however, Board members inferred an order of importance from the presentation. Thus, the current Strategic Vision priority #4 about promoting the use of NAEP data to improve student

achievement should be presented first in the list to reflect its prominence. Mr. West also wondered how the three priorities listed under the pillar of Innovate actually reflect innovation.

The draft of the Strategic Vision under discussion included the adjective “high-quality” to describe uses of NAEP that should be disseminated as models for other users. However, Mr. West noted that determining what is considered “high-quality” is a tricky and tough task, which may prove more problematic than rewarding. Perhaps the Board should *call attention* to accurate, valid, thoughtful uses of NAEP, without necessarily disseminating those uses. Finally, Mr. West exhorted the staff to rephrase the preamble to declare “flat out that our #1 priority is to maintain the value of NAEP as the gold standard.”

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 pm.

I certify the accuracy of these minutes.



September 30, 2020

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Rebecca Gagnon, Chair

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Date



**NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD  
RELEASE PLAN FOR THE  
NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP)**

***The Nation’s Report Card: 2019 Reading and Mathematics – Grade 12***

The national results of the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading and Mathematics assessments for grade 12 students will be released to the public in late October 2020. Typically, results from these assessments are released a year after administration, however, the shift to digital-based assessment required additional quality control processes and statistical checks. The release will be held virtually to comply with public health norms in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

The event will be webcast live for a national audience and last approximately 60 minutes. It will include data presentations by both the Commissioner and Associate Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The Commissioner will share other grade 12 data that NCES collects through other vehicles, such as longitudinal surveys and statistical programs. The Associate Commissioner will release and present the grade 12 NAEP results.

Following the data presentations, the focus will shift to two Governing Board members who will respond to comments and/or questions from stakeholders invested in reading and mathematics, secondary education, the workforce, and higher education. The stakeholders will submit their comments and/or questions in advance, whether by video or in only text. If by text only, a voiceover will read their submitted comments while their photo appears on screen. The solicited comments/questions will serve as springboards for the featured Governing Board members to elaborate on the results and connect the results to policy. Board staff will collaborate with the communications contractor to identify stakeholders to submit questions or comments along with a twelfth-grade student and a high school teacher or administrator. This will be a relatively short segment, about 20 minutes in duration. The session should offer opportunities for dynamic and informative conversation about NAEP Grade 12 and spotlight the expertise on the Board.

Note that Board members are welcome to recommend colleagues and/or acquaintances to submit a question or comment. Ideally, staff will receive a considerable number of comments or questions to feature at the release event itself and in social media promotion after the event.

## **DATE AND LOCATION**

The release event will occur in late October 2020 via virtual platform. The Chair of the Reporting and Dissemination Committee will set the release date, in accordance with Governing Board policy, in collaboration with the National Center for Education Statistics, and following Committee acceptance of the final report card.

## **ACTIVITIES BEFORE THE RELEASE**

In the weeks before the release event, the Governing Board will mount a social media campaign to build interest in the release, with special focus on stakeholders involved in secondary education and the transition from secondary education to postsecondary life courses, whether workforce or higher education. The Board's [website](#) will dedicate a webpage to release events.

Shortly before the release, NCES will host a call for members of the media, during which NCES will present highlights and answer questions. NCES will oversee an embargoed website with results available to stakeholders approved for access by NCES, including Congressional staff and media. The goal of these activities is to provide a comprehensive overview of the findings, to deepen understanding of the results, and to help ensure accurate reporting to the public.

## **REPORT RELEASE**

The Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics will release the report card on the [NAEP website](#)—at 12:01am the day of the release event. The Governing Board press release, the full and abridged versions of the 2019 NAEP Reading and Mathematics Assessment Frameworks, and related materials will be posted on the Board's web site. The site will feature links to social networking sites and multimedia material related to the event.

## **CENTRAL MESSAGES**

Activities before and after the release, as well as the release itself, will promote several critical messages. First, data from NAEP provide invaluable information about the knowledge and skills that twelfth-graders have. Second, data from other NCES collections offer rich insight into the postsecondary choices and pathways grade 12 students pursue. Third, the discussion will connect results for grade 12 to results for grades 4 and 8, which have inspired national, state, and local efforts to narrow subgroup differences in performance across both subjects.

## **ACTIVITIES AFTER THE RELEASE**

The Governing Board's communications contractor will work with Board staff to coordinate

additional post-release communications efforts—which could include such strategies as a social media chat or major presentation—to target communities and audiences. Video clips of the release event will be publicized on social media. The goal of these activities is to extend the life of the results and provide value and relevance to stakeholders.