

# National Assessment Governing Board

## Executive Committee

November 17, 2016

4:30–6:00 pm

### AGENDA

4:30 – 4:35 pm	Welcome and Agenda Overview <i>Terry Mazany, Chair</i>	
4:35 – 4:45 pm	Governing Board & Policy Updates <i>Bill Bushaw, Executive Director</i> <i>Lily Clark, Assistant Director for Policy and Research</i>	
4:45 – 5:00 pm	<b>ACTION:</b> Strategic Vision <i>Lucille Davy, Vice Chair</i>	Attachment A
5:00 – 5:20 pm	Evaluation of NAEP Achievement Levels <i>Mary Crovo, Deputy Executive Director</i> <i>Sharyn Rosenberg, Assistant Director for Psychometrics</i>  <b>ACTION:</b> Request for Delegation of Authority for Response to Achievement Levels Evaluation <i>Andrew Ho, COSDAM Chair</i>	Attachment B
5:20 – 5:35 pm	Long-Term Trend Overview and Update <i>Joe Willhoft</i>	Attachment C
5:35 – 6:00 pm	NAEP Research Grants <b>(CLOSED)</b> <i>Peggy Carr, NCES Acting Commissioner</i>	Attachment D

## Summary of the National Assessment Governing Board's Development of the Strategic Vision Draft —November 2016—

The National Assessment Governing Board began its Strategic Planning Initiative (Initiative) in 2014 by developing a framework to set priorities and goals. The Strategic Planning Framework development was led by the Executive Committee and was unanimously approved by the Board on August 8, 2015, concluding Phase I of the Initiative. At the August 2015 meeting, the Board met in small cross-committee groups to develop an initial list of activities that could be accomplished within five years to achieve the priorities specified in the Strategic Planning Framework. These conversations formed the basis for the first draft of the Strategic Plan.<sup>1</sup>

Upon approval of the Framework, Chair Mazany asked Vice Chair Lucille Davy to lead Phase II of the Initiative to guide the Board's development of its Strategic Plan. At the Board's November 2015 meeting, Vice Chair Davy led the Governing Board in its first plenary discussion of the draft Strategic Plan.

The Board's plan for Phase II included soliciting feedback from external education stakeholders to inform the Strategic Plan. The Board hired a consultant, Jim Kohlmoos, to conduct conversations with 22 individuals who are respected education leaders, familiar with NAEP, and represent a diverse range of perspectives to generate ideas for the Strategic Plan. In addition, the staff discussed the draft Strategic Plan priorities and activities with the Board's joint Policy Task Force with the Council of Chief State School Officers, representing state assessment experts. The external feedback was prepared for the Board's consideration at its March 2016 meeting and was discussed in a plenary session with Mr. Kohlmoos.<sup>2</sup>

At the May 2016 meeting, the Governing Board engaged in a detailed discussion of the revised draft Strategic Plan. The Board met first in small, cross-committee groups and then as the full Board in a plenary session. What emerged from the May 2016 meeting was a call for a significantly revised strategic document that would focus purely on the Board's work and be an inspiring, succinct, and effective public communications tool. Chair Mazany tasked the Executive Committee to revise the draft for discussion at the August 2016 Board meeting. The Executive Committee members were highly engaged in its June and July teleconference meetings. As a result, the May 2016 draft transformed into the now-called "Strategic Vision" draft. In addition to the Executive Committee's work, the draft Strategic Vision also went through numerous rounds of Board staff review and incorporated feedback from NCES.

At the August 2016 Board meeting, the Board discussed the Strategic Vision in small cross-committee groups and then as the full Board in a plenary session. In its discussions, the Governing Board affirmed its desire to impact student achievement through its activities in the Strategic Vision. The Board also made recommendations to refine the draft and indicated readiness for the Board to take action on the Strategic Vision at the November 2016 meeting.<sup>3</sup> Following the August meeting, the Executive Committee considered final changes to the Strategic Vision to reflect the Board's discussions.

**ACTION: The proposed Strategic Vision is attached for Executive Committee and full Board action at the November 2016 meeting.**

*Upon approval, the Board will conclude Phase II of the Initiative. Phase III—the final stage—is to implement the Strategic Vision.*

<sup>1</sup> An overview of the Strategic Planning Initiative and the Strategic Planning Framework are available here: <https://www.nagb.org/content/members/assets/documents/meetings/board-meetings/2015/2015-11/15-strategic-planning-initiative-update.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> A summary of the feedback provided for the March 2016 meeting is available here: <https://www.nagb.org/content/members/assets/documents/meetings/board-meetings/2016/2016-03/10-strategic-planning-initiative.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Refer to the August 2016 meeting minutes included in the November 2016 Board materials for the discussion summary.



## National Assessment Governing Board's **Strategic Vision**

Draft for Board Action - November 2016

**The Nation's Report Card, also known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), was developed in 1969 to answer the important question: "How are our nation's students doing?" The National Assessment Governing Board established this Strategic Vision to not only answer the first question, but also to expand NAEP's impact by addressing a second question: "How can NAEP provide information about how our students are doing in the most innovative, informative, and impactful ways?"**

Congress created the independent, bipartisan Governing Board in 1988 to set policy guidelines for The Nation's Report Card, which is the largest nationally representative, continuing evaluation of the condition of education in the United States. The Governing Board identifies NAEP subjects to be tested, determines the content and achievement levels for each assessment, approves all test questions, and takes steps to improve the form, reporting, and use of results.

The Governing Board partners with the National Center for Education Statistics, which administers the NAEP program, to inform a wide range of stakeholders—including policymakers, educators, researchers, business leaders, the media, and the general public—about what America's students know and can do in various subject areas, and compare achievement data over time and among student demographic groups. This allows the nation to understand where more work must be done to improve learning among all students.

The Governing Board fulfills its statutory mission by continuously reviewing and revising its policies and practices to ensure The Nation's Report Card measures and reports meaningful information to the public.

The educational landscape of the 21<sup>st</sup> century demands increased academic ambition, greater technological sophistication, improved civic participation, and expanded global perspectives for all students. In this time of rapid and accelerating change, it is essential for The Nation's Report Card to support innovation and address the need to improve student achievement, while maintaining its timeless promise to serve as the constant and unassailable measure of student achievement for our nation. To increase the value of The Nation's Report Card as a resource to impact student achievement, the Governing Board adopted this Strategic Vision with a dual focus on innovating to enhance NAEP's form and content and informing stakeholders to expand NAEP's dissemination and use.



## Inform

**The National Assessment Governing Board will promote The Nation's Report Card's wealth of information to facilitate the awareness and uses of NAEP in appropriate, timely, new, and meaningful ways. Examples of NAEP resources include: results; trends; test questions and tasks; studies; measurement innovations; frameworks that specify the content and design of NAEP assessments; and contextual variables about student demographics and educational experiences collected from students, teachers, and schools. The Governing Board will:**

- Strengthen and expand partnerships by broadening stakeholders' awareness of NAEP and facilitating their use of NAEP resources.
- Increase opportunities to connect NAEP to administrative data and state, national, and international student assessments.
- Expand the availability, utility, and use of NAEP resources, in part by creating new resources to inform education policy and practice.
- Promote sustained dissemination and use of NAEP information beyond Report Card releases with consideration for multiple audiences and ever-changing multi-media technologies.



## Innovate

**The National Assessment Governing Board will revise the design, form, and content of The Nation's Report Card using advances in technology to keep NAEP at the forefront of measuring and reporting student achievement. The Governing Board will:**

- Develop new approaches to update NAEP subject area frameworks to support the Board's responsibility to measure evolving expectations for students, while maintaining rigorous methods that support reporting student achievement trends.
- Continue improving the content, analysis, and reporting of NAEP contextual variables by considering the questions' relevance, sensitivity, and potential to provide meaningful context and insights for policy and practice.
- Research policy and technical implications related to the future of NAEP Long-Term Trend assessments in reading and mathematics.
- Research assessments used in other countries to identify new possibilities to innovate the content, design, and reporting of NAEP.
- Develop policy approaches to revise the NAEP assessment subjects and schedule based on the nation's evolving needs, the Board's priorities, and NAEP funding.
- Develop new approaches to measure the complex skills required for transition to postsecondary education and career.

***This Strategic Vision will focus the work of the Governing Board through the year 2020. By pursuing these priorities, the Governing Board will ensure that The Nation's Report Card provides the country with valuable data that measure and contribute to the improvement of student progress in achieving important knowledge and skills necessary for success as citizens in our democratic society.***

## Evaluation of NAEP Achievement Levels

### Background

Public Law 107-279 states:

*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.*

Even after being in use for about 25 years and undergoing previous evaluations (1993, 1998, 2009), the NAEP achievement levels are still considered to be on a trial basis. During his tenure as NCES Commissioner, Jack Buckley initiated a new evaluation to determine whether the trial status could be resolved.

### About the Evaluation

The National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), part of the Institute for Education Sciences (IES), is administering the current evaluation of the NAEP achievement levels. On September 29, 2014, NCEE awarded a contract to The National Academy of Sciences to perform this work.

Objectives for the evaluation include the following:

- Determine how "reasonable, valid, reliable and informative to the public" will be operationalized in this study.
- Identify the kinds of objective data and research findings that will be examined.
- Review and analyze extant information related to the study's purpose.
- Gather other objective information from relevant experts and stakeholders, without creating burden for the public through new, large-scale data collection.
- Organize, summarize, and present the findings from the evaluation in a written report, including a summary that is accessible for nontechnical audiences, discussing the strengths/weaknesses and gaps in knowledge in relation to the evaluation criteria.
- Provide, prior to release of the study report, for an independent external review of that report for comprehensiveness, objectivity, and freedom from bias.
- Plan and conduct dissemination events to communicate the conclusions of the final report to different audiences of stakeholders.

## Design

This study focuses on the achievement levels used in reporting NAEP results for the reading and mathematics assessments in grades 4, 8, and 12. Specifically, the study is reviewing developments over the past decade in the ways achievement levels for NAEP are set and used and will evaluate whether the resulting achievement levels are "reasonable, valid, reliable, and informative to the public." The study relies on an independent committee of experts with a broad range of expertise related to assessment, statistics, social science, and education policy. The project receives oversight from the Board on Testing and Assessment (BOTA) and the Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT) of the National Research Council.

Members of the interdisciplinary review committee were selected in early 2015 (see below):

Name	Affiliation
Dr. Christopher F. Edley, Jr. (Chair)	University of California at Berkeley
Dr. Peter Afflerbach	University of Maryland, College Park
Dr. Sybilla Beckmann	University of Georgia
Dr. H. Russell Bernard	University of Florida
Dr. Karla Egan	EdMetric LLC
Dr. David J. Francis	University of Houston
Dr. Margaret E. Goertz	University of Pennsylvania
Dr. Laura Hamilton	The RAND Corporation
Dr. Brian W. Junker	Carnegie Mellon University
Dr. Suzanne Lane	University of Pittsburgh
Ms. Sharon J. Lewis	Retired (formerly with the Council of the Great City Schools)
Dr. Bernard L. Madison	University of Arkansas
Dr. Scott Norton	Council of Chief State School Officers
Dr. Sharon Vaughn	The University of Texas at Austin
Dr. Lauress L. Wise	HumRRO

Additional information about the Committee and project activities is available at:

<http://www8.nationalacademies.org/cp/projectview.aspx?key=49677>. The first Committee meeting took place in Washington, DC on February 19-20, 2015. Governing Board staff attended the open session and made a presentation to the Committee on the history of the NAEP achievement levels setting activities. The second meeting of the Committee took place in Washington, DC on May 27-28, 2015. Governing Board staff attended the open session on the afternoon of May 27<sup>th</sup> to listen to panel discussions involving representatives of the media, state and local policymakers, advocacy organizations, and the Common Core State Standards assessment consortia, about interpretations and uses of NAEP achievement levels. Several additional meetings were conducted in the latter half of 2015 in closed session. The final report is expected to be released in late 2016.

### Next steps

The final report is expected to be available soon. Governing Board members will be briefed on the findings from the evaluation on Saturday morning, November 19<sup>th</sup>.

As stated in the NAEP legislation, the Commissioner of NCES will use the findings from the evaluation to decide whether the achievement levels should continue to be used on a “trial basis” or whether that designation can be removed. In addition, the final report may include conclusions and recommendations that have implications for future Governing Board achievement levels-setting activities. Public Law 107-279 also specifies that the Governing Board must prepare a formal response to the evaluation:

*Not later than 90 days after an evaluation of the student achievement levels under section 303(e), the Assessment Board shall make a report to the Secretary, the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate describing the steps the Assessment Board is taking to respond to each of the recommendations contained in such evaluation.*

COSDAM will lead the process of responding to the evaluation and considering any potential implications for future achievement levels-setting work, with input from the Executive Committee and the full Board. COSDAM will begin discussing a draft response via webinar in early December.

Due to the expected timing of the evaluation report release, it is likely that the 90 day window will conclude prior to the March 2017 Governing Board meeting.

**Therefore, we are requesting a joint delegation of authority to COSDAM and the Executive Committee** for formal approval of the report to the Secretary, the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate describing the steps the Governing Board is taking to respond to each of the recommendations contained in the evaluation.

## Long-Term Trend Overview and Update

### Background:

NAEP includes two national assessment programs—Long-Term Trend (LTT) NAEP and Main NAEP. While both assessments enable NAEP to measure student progress over time, there are similarities and differences between the two assessments. Both assessments measure reading and mathematics. The NAEP LTT assessment measures national educational performance in the United States at ages 9, 13 and 17. In contrast, the Main NAEP assessments focus on populations of students defined by grade, rather than age, and go beyond the national level to provide results at the state and district level. LTT trend lines date back to the early 1970s and Main NAEP trend lines start in the early 1990s. The content differs as well—for example, LTT math measures more “traditional” mathematics than the current Main NAEP math content.

The Main NAEP assessments in reading and mathematics are administered every two years, as required by law. The administration of NAEP LTT assessments in reading and mathematics at ages 9, 13, and 17 is also required by law, but the periodicity is not specified. The NAEP LTT assessments had been administered approximately every four years over the past two decades (and more frequently prior to that), but were last administered in 2012. The Governing Board postponed the NAEP LTT planned administration for 2016 to 2020, and then to 2024 due to budgetary constraints. Some stakeholders have expressed concern with the gap of 12 years between assessment administrations, which represents a cohort’s entire length of schooling. Other stakeholders argue that the NAEP LTT is not very useful now that Main NAEP provides trend information back to the early 1990s, and that it should be eliminated altogether.

### Next Steps:

In 2012, [the Future of NAEP panel](#) recommended exploring ways of consolidating or combining Long-Term Trend and Main NAEP data collections. This is a complex challenge due to the many differences in content, sampling, and administration of the assessments. To explore the feasibility of combining the data collection efforts, and to debate the relative merits of NAEP LTT, the Governing Board is organizing a symposium on the future of NAEP Long-Term Trend. The symposium will take place on the morning of March 2, 2017, immediately preceding the quarterly Governing Board meeting.

In advance of the symposium, Edward Haertel of Stanford University (who previously served as Chair of the Future of NAEP panel and Chair of COSDAM) is preparing a white paper of approximately 30 pages on the history of NAEP Long-Term Trend and a consideration of current issues. The white paper will be distributed to four additional participants, who will each prepare a shorter response (8-10 pages) on their perspective of the future of NAEP LTT. The papers will be disseminated in advance of the symposium and will serve as the basis for discussion during the March 2<sup>nd</sup> event. In addition, the participants will also discuss their perspectives and solicit external input at a planned session during the annual American Educational Research Association (AERA) conference in April, 2017.

During the May 2017 quarterly meeting, the Governing Board will discuss key takeaways and potential next steps regarding the future of the NAEP Long-Term Trend assessments.

## What Are the Differences Between Long-Term Trend NAEP and Main NAEP?

Although long-term trend and main NAEP both assess mathematics and reading, there are several differences, particularly in the content assessed, how often the assessment is administered, and how the results are reported. These and other differences mean that results from long-term trend and main NAEP cannot be compared directly.

	Long-Term Trend Assessment	Main NAEP Assessment
<b>Origin</b>	Reading series began in 1971. Mathematics series began in 1973.	Reading series began in 1992. Mathematics series began in 1990.
<b>Frequency</b>	Since 2004, long-term trend NAEP has measured student performance in <u>mathematics</u> and <u>reading</u> every four years. Last reported for 2008, it will be reported next for 2012.	Main NAEP assessments measure student performance in mathematics and reading every two years.
<b>Content Assessed</b>	<p>Long-term trend NAEP has remained relatively unchanged since 1990. In the 1970s and '80s, the assessments changed to reflect changes in curriculum in the nation's schools. Continuity of assessment content was sufficient not to require a break in trends.</p> <p><u>Mathematics</u> focuses on numbers and numeration, variables and relationships, shape and size and position, measurement, and probability and statistics. Basic skills and recall of definitions are assessed.</p> <p><u>Reading</u> features short narrative, expository, or document passages, and focuses on locating specific information, making inferences, and identifying the main idea of a passage. On average, passages are shorter in long-term trend reading than in main NAEP reading.</p>	<p>Main NAEP assessments change about every decade to reflect changes in curriculum in the nation's schools; new <u>frameworks</u> reflect these changes.</p> <p>Continuity of assessment content was sufficient not to require a break in trends, except in grade 12 mathematics in 2005.</p> <p><u>Mathematics</u> focuses on numbers, measurement, geometry, probability and statistics, and algebra. In addition to basic skills and recall of definitions, students are assessed on problem solving and reasoning in all topic areas.</p> <p><u>Reading</u> features fiction, literary nonfiction, poetry, exposition, document, and procedural texts or pairs of texts, and focuses on identifying explicitly stated information, making complex inferences about themes, and comparing multiple texts on a variety of dimensions.</p>
<b>Question formats</b>	Students respond to questions in multiple-choice format; there are also a few short answer questions (scored on a two-point scale). In reading, there are also a few questions requiring an extended answer (usually scored on a five-point scale).	Students respond to questions of several possible types: multiple choice, short answer, and extended answer. Constructed-response questions may be scored as correct or incorrect, or they may be scored on a multi-level scale that awards partial credit.

	Long-Term Trend Assessment	Main NAEP Assessment
<b>Students Sampled</b>	<p>Students are selected by age (9, 13, and 17) to represent the nation and to provide results for student groups such as Black, Hispanic, White, and sometimes others, by gender, family income, school location, and school type (public or private).</p> <p>Students with disabilities (SD) and English language learner (ELL) students are included using the same participation guidelines and with the same <u>accommodations</u> (as needed) in main NAEP.</p> <p>Since 2004, accommodations have been provided to enable participation of more SD and ELL students.</p>	<p>Students are selected by grade (4, 8, and 12). Students represent the <u>nation</u> and provide results for student groups such as Black, Hispanic, White, and sometimes others, by gender, family income, and school location and school type.</p> <p>In some assessments, samples are chosen to report on <u>states</u> or <u>selected large urban districts</u> and as a result, more students must participate.</p> <p>The <u>inclusion and accommodation</u> treatment is the same for main and for long-term trend assessments.</p>
<b>Administration</b>	<p>Long-term trend is assessed every four years, throughout the school year: in October through December for 13-year-olds, January through March for 9-year-olds, and March through May for 17-year-olds. See the <u>schedule</u> for all assessments (long-term trend as well as main NAEP).</p> <p>Test booklets contain three 15-minute blocks of questions, plus one section of student questions concerning academic experiences and demographics.</p> <p>There are no ancillary materials, such as calculators or manipulatives, provided.</p>	<p>Main NAEP mathematics and reading are assessed every two years (the odd-numbered years) at grades 4, 8, and 12. The administration takes place from late January through early March.</p> <p>Test booklets contain two 25-minute blocks, plus student questions concerning academic experiences and demographics.</p> <p>There may be ancillary materials provided with the test booklets.</p>

	Long-Term Trend Assessment	Main NAEP Assessment
<b>Results Reported</b>	<p>National-level performance and how it has changed since the 1970s is reported using scores on a 0-500 scale. Long-term trend also reports descriptive <u>performance levels</u> (150, 200, 250, 300, and 350) that have the same meaning across the three age levels. There are no achievement levels to correspond with those used in main NAEP.</p> <p>There are <u>student questionnaires</u>, but no teacher or school questionnaires.</p>	<p>Main NAEP has been reported since the 1990s for the nation and participating states and other jurisdictions, and since 2002 for selected urban districts. Performance and how it has changed over the past several years is reported using <u>scale scores and achievement levels</u>. Scores are reported using either a 0-300 or 0-500 scale, depending on the subject. The achievement levels reported are <i>Basic</i>, <i>Proficient</i>, and <i>Advanced</i>.</p> <p>Student results are reported in the context of the <u>questionnaires</u> given to the students' teachers and principals.</p>

Source: [https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/ltr\\_main\\_diff.aspx](https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/ltr_main_diff.aspx)

## NAEP Research Grants Program—Summary & Update Provided by NCES

NCES is developing a new research grants program to encourage and advance secondary analysis and methodological developments using NAEP data. The funded research proposals will be expected to align with the top current priorities of the NAEP program, as expressed by NCES and the Governing Board.

The Requests for Awards (RFAs) are currently in development, but the proposed major components of the NAEP Analysis Research Grants Program are as follows:

1. **Individual research grants** to be awarded in two categories<sup>1</sup>:
  - a. Secondary analysis of NAEP data to address specific, substantive educational research and policy questions (such as investigating the relationships between a set of survey variables and NAEP scores).
  - b. Statistical and psychometric methodology research to advance the science and analysis of NAEP data (such as tools that aid in the analysis and interpretation of NAEP data).
2. **Institutional grants** for developing NAEP data training workshops to instruct researchers and potential analysts of NAEP data on the proper procedures and tools to analyze NAEP.
3. **Pre-doctoral dissertation grants** to encourage the training, methodological development, and use of NAEP data for innovative early career scholars.<sup>2</sup>
4. **Internship programs** primarily for graduate students in statistics and educational measurement to support shorter analyses and research projects (though additional internships for high-school or undergraduate students may be included).<sup>3</sup>

An expert advisory panel was convened by NCES in October, 2016 to provide recommendations for the specific focus areas and suggestions for the structure of competitive grants program (but not the internship program). Representatives from NCES and the Governing Board staff presented goals and visions to the panel prior to the panel's main discussion. The advisory panel's synthesized recommendations for the high-priority areas of research will be reflected in the RFAs to ensure that the research proposals align with the interests of the NAEP program and best practices in the research community. NCES expects to award the research projects during Fiscal Year 2017.

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### NOTES REGARDING AWARD VEHICLES:

<sup>1</sup> The *individual research grants* are generally modeled after the original NAEP Secondary Analysis Grants programs (which were awarded until 2007) with two similar areas of focus. However, the awards made through this new program concerning individual or institutional grants will likely be administered through competitive cooperative agreements, which differ from traditional grants in that they allow for "substantial involvement" from the government.

<sup>2</sup> As the Institute of Education Sciences does not traditionally award funding directly to students, the *pre-doctoral dissertation grants* may be awarded through the institution accepting the cooperative agreement for the training programs.

<sup>3</sup> The *internship program* will be developed in collaboration with a NAEP contractor.