



## Who We Are

The **National Assessment Governing Board** is an independent, bipartisan board that sets policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), commonly known as The Nation's Report Card™. The assessment makes objective information on student performance available to policy-makers and the public at the national, state, and local levels. It has served an important role in evaluating the condition and progress of American education for more than three decades.

Created by Congress in 1988, the Governing Board is made up of 26 members, including governors, state legislators, local and state school officials, educators and researchers, business representatives, and members of the general public. Members are appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

In overseeing The Nation's Report Card, the Governing Board identifies subjects to be tested, determines the content and achievement levels for each assessment, approves all test questions, and takes steps to improve the reporting of results. The Governing Board also works to inform the public about The Nation's Report Card by communicating its results to a wide range of Americans including elected officials, educators, and the media.

### **An Independent, Widely-Representative Board**

When Congress established the Governing Board to oversee The Nation's Report Card, it ensured that the program would be conducted independently and free from inappropriate influences and special interests. By law, Board members can serve no more than two four-year terms and must represent a range of backgrounds:

- **Government and Public Policy** — Two current or former governors of different political parties; two state legislators of different political parties, two chief state school officers; one nonpublic school administrator or policymaker; one state school board member; and one local school board member;
- **Education** — Three classroom teachers representing the grade levels (4, 8, and 12) at which NAEP is given; three testing and measurement experts; two curriculum specialists; one elementary school principal and one secondary school principal; one local superintendent; and the director of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (ex officio);
- **The General Public** — Two parents and two additional members of the public (who may be parents) that are not employed by a local, state, or federal education agency; and one representative of the business community.



The **National Assessment of Educational Progress** is conducted as a representative-sample survey, and is administered by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics. The NAEP program includes:

- **Main NAEP** assessments are administered periodically using frameworks that change about every 10 years to reflect current approaches to instruction and measurement. Components of Main NAEP include:
  - **National NAEP** assessments, which provide results for students at grades 4, 8, and 12 in reading, mathematics, writing, science, U.S. history, geography, and other subjects;
  - **State-by-State** assessments, which began in 1990 and are administered to students at grades 4 and 8 in reading, mathematics, writing, and science; and
  - **Trial Urban District** assessments, which began in 2002, and report on the achievement of 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in 10 urban school districts that voluntarily participate in assessments of reading, mathematics, writing, and science.
- **Long-Term Trend** assessments, administered since the early 1970s, which are given nationally every four years to students at ages 9, 13, and 17 in reading and mathematics.

State participation in all NAEP assessments is voluntary, except for reading and mathematics tests in grades 4 and 8, in which states are required to take part every two years under the No Child Left Behind Act. All

students who participate in NAEP do so on a voluntary basis, and NAEP is forbidden by law to maintain or report information on individual students or schools.

## THE NATION'S REPORT CARD

The Nation's Report Card is the only nationally representative, continuing evaluation of the condition of education in the United States and has served as a national yardstick of student achievement since 1969. Through the National Assessment of Educational Progress, The Nation's Report Card informs the public about what America's students know and can do in various subject areas, and compares achievement data between states and various student demographic groups.

<http://nationsreportcard.gov>

## A National Yardstick for Student Achievement

The Governing Board is responsible for determining the content and design of each NAEP assessment. For each subject, the Board adopts a framework to describe the content and format of the tests at grades 4, 8, and 12. The frameworks are not intended to represent a specific curriculum or instructional approach, but to provide a general outline of what NAEP should test. The frameworks are developed through a comprehensive, national process

led by the Governing Board that involves the active participation of teachers, curriculum specialists, local school administrators, parents, and members of the general public.

After final approval by the Board, the frameworks are used to develop assessments and are widely disseminated to stakeholders. The Board has developed frameworks in reading, mathematics, writing, science, civics, U.S. history, geography, arts, economics (grade 12), and foreign languages (grade 12).

As part of its responsibilities, the Governing Board established three achievement levels — *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced* — that are the primary means of reporting the performance of students on The Nation's Report Card. The achievement levels represent an informed judgment of "how good is good enough" and help explain results of The Nation's Report Card beyond simple scores and averages.