

NAEP: LOOKING AHEAD

THE NAEP-STATE PARTNERSHIP

JANUARY 29-30, 2013

SHAPING THE FUTURE

OF NAEP AND LARGE-SCALE ASSESSMENT

OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has undertaken a comprehensive effort to position the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for the future, and identify the role that NAEP should play in the decades ahead. This has included understanding the need for - and challenges with - making changes to NAEP. The goals of this effort are for NAEP to remain relevant in a rapidly changing environment and to continue its historic role as the gold standard for large-scale assessments. Based on both internal and external conversations, it has become clear that NAEP may need to be substantially reengineered in order to address four emerging trends:

- 1 New and more complex skill requirements for all students such as those defined by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS);
- 2 Rapidly changing technology that is influencing how schools teach and how students learn;
- 3 Emerging computer-based assessments that allow measurement of new skills in more meaningful and efficient ways; and
- 4 Increasing interest in cross-national comparisons.

2011-2012

Planning for a new NAEP began in January 2011. Staff planning activities identified two major needs:

Identifying requirements for upcoming contracts.

NAEP is administered by NCES with a team of contractors that design the assessments, develop the items, collect the data, score and report the results, and support states and districts in various aspects of the program. A new five-year procurement cycle is scheduled to begin in March 2013.

Meeting with experts and stakeholders, especially state and district partners.

In August 2011, NCES met with a diverse group of experts in assessment, measurement, and technology. Their ideas about the future of NAEP shaped a second meeting with state and district stakeholders in January 2012. Following the second meeting, NCES staff evaluated all of the recommendations, which led to the identification of four key areas requiring further discussion with the states.

2013

In January 2013, NCES convened a workshop of state and district assessment staff to develop and prioritize recommendations within the key areas. The focus of the workshop was established with background presentations on the four key areas, and participants were assigned to corresponding working groups.

The four key areas discussed at the 2013 workshop were

*An Innovations Laboratory:
Thirteen Goals for Assessment
Programs of the Future*

Presenter Randy Bennett, Educational Testing Service (ETS)

Group Facilitator Lou Fabrizio, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

*Using Technology in NAEP and
State Assessments*

Presenter Stephen Lazer, ETS

Group Facilitator Michael Stetter, Delaware Department of Education (Retired)

Delivering Meaningful Results

Presenter Liza Cordeiro, West Virginia Department of Education

Group Facilitator Shelley Loving-Ryder, Virginia Department of Education

*Sharing Data, Knowledge
and Information*

Presenter Scott Norton, Council of Chief State School Officers

Group Facilitator Debra Silimeo, Hager Sharp

During the plenary session, Susan Pimentel, Vice Chair of the National Assessment Governing Board and a consultant during the development of the CCSS, discussed NAEP as an integral part of a national system of assessments, including international, state, and district assessments, as well as assessments measuring the CCSS.

Peggy Carr, Associate Commissioner of NCEC, charged participants with developing recommendations for the future of NAEP, for NAEP support of states as they develop their assessments, and for strengthening the NAEP-State partnership.

During the remainder of the workshop, participants met in working groups to discuss the needs of their states and districts, the future of assessment, and the role and future of NAEP. Each working group developed five recommendations and a member presented them to the total group for a vote on the top five priorities. This report summarizes the workshop outcomes.

While several themes emerged from the workshop, one was front and center in all of the presentations and discussions:

NAEP must embrace the changing landscape of educational assessment, identify the place it will hold in the next 10 years, and quickly begin positioning itself for the future.

Each of the following priorities must be considered within this:



RELEVANCE

NAEP's role in the emerging national system of large-scale assessment. Participants were emphatic that NAEP must change or become irrelevant. They recommended that NCES:

- + Include the continuing NAEP functions of serving as an independent indicator of state and district performance in core content areas, conducting 12th-grade assessments, and conducting assessments in the non-core content areas such as history, civics, and economics;**
- + Define a unique role (what sets it apart from other assessments) for NAEP and its importance to assessment in the nation; and**
- + Aggressively communicate this message (including the recommendations below, if implemented) to the stakeholders (e.g., states, districts, schools, parents, and policy makers).**

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RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

NAEP's role as a research and development entity. Participants urged NAEP to:

- + Use its resources and position to conduct research and evaluation to improve NAEP and assessments throughout the country;
- + Expand communication with state assessment programs sharing the findings of NAEP research such as that conducted on 4th graders to determine if the use of computers for a writing assessment was affected by the fourth graders' familiarity with computers; and
- + Establish two-way communications to support state and district assessment personnel for not only learning from NAEP research efforts, but for recommending issues for study.

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BEST PRACTICES

NAEP's role in providing information to states and districts about lessons learned and best practices. Participants discussed at length NAEP's unique position to:

- + Serve as the repository for lessons learned and best practices in assessment.
- + Establish processes to gather and communicate back to the field lessons learned and best practices from state assessments, as well as those of the two Consortia assessments.

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TECHNOLOGY

NAEP's role in leading the field in the use of technology in education and in assessment methodologies. Participants were in agreement that the use of technology is and will continue to be a major issue in educational assessment, and urged NAEP to:

- + Provide leadership on best practices for computer-based testing (CBT) (e.g., appropriate terminology, technology-based assessment versus paper-and-pencil, item development, test administration and security);
- + Provide guidance on protecting the integrity of test results;
- + Conduct rapid-response research on minimum optimal technology specifications and on the dilemmas and opportunities presented by different devices (e.g., screen sizes, scrolling, keyboards, pixilation, graphics), and provide guidance and technical assistance to states that are transitioning to CBT;
- + Provide guidance on best practices for administration (e.g., standardization, logistics, length of test window, security procedures, staff training); and
- + Conduct research on psychometric issues such as assessing "soft skills" and bias in technology access.

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COMMUNICATION

NAEP-State partnership — Communication was the central theme and participants urged two-way efforts. Participants agreed that NAEP must:

- + Enhance its partnership with the states with an increased focus on sharing information;
- + Share information as quickly as possible, so that it is actionable;
- + Change the current practice of developing fully vetted lengthy reports before meaningful information is released;
- + Use quicker release of information in “real time” through social media such as Twitter;
- + Create shorter, more focused reports for different stakeholders (based on market research for interests);
- + Create shorter more focused reports including data on different student groups and achievement gaps, contextual data/profiles of groups at different performance levels, and item-level data and distractor analyses;
- + Help states and districts put together a coherent story, including how results from NAEP relate to the CCSS and other assessment programs; and
- + Provide automated tools that are easy for states and districts to use.

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