



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

DATE

Dear Principal or Administrator:

Thank you for participating in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). These assessments are vital to measuring the academic skills and progress of the students in our nation and in each state. These tests, which are known as the Nation's Report Card, have been providing a consistent national measure of student performance since 1990. While students take many different assessments throughout the year, NAEP is the only periodic assessment that provides a consistent gauge of student learning across the country and over time. It is important for NAEP to assess as many students selected to participate as possible. Assessing representative samples of students, including students with disabilities and English learner (EL) students, helps to ensure that NAEP results accurately reflect the educational performance of all students, and can continue to serve as a meaningful measure of U.S. students' academic achievement over time. When students, parents, teachers and principals participate in the NAEP and NAEP survey, they are helping to inform decisions about how to improve public education for all students, including public education for children with disabilities and EL students.

Accommodations, including those that are legally required, in the testing environment or administration procedures are available for students with disabilities and EL students to support their participation in the NAEP assessments.¹ Some accommodations are actually built-in features – or universal design elements – of the digitally based assessments that are available to all students. Other accommodations, such as additional test time, are available upon request and consistent with the student's IEP and/or 504 plan as applicable. Staff at each school should select from among appropriate accommodations allowed by NAEP. For students with disabilities, accommodations generally fall under four categories, including test timing (e.g., extended time, breaks during testing), presentation (e.g., directions read aloud, Braille version), setting (e.g., small group, one-on-one), and response format (e.g., pointing to answers, oral responses given to a scribe). For EL students, accommodations are available that include bilingual booklets and other accommodations to meet the linguistic needs of each student. Decisions about accommodations should be made by a qualified professional familiar with the student, using objective indicators of disability status and English proficiency in accordance with guidance provided by NAEP and subject to review by the NAEP assessment coordinator. Every state decides what accommodations the students in that state are eligible to receive.

¹ For more information on NAEP testing accommodations for students with disabilities who have individualized education programs (IEPs) or plans developed under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (504 Plan) and on NAEP testing accommodations for ELs, *see* National Assessment Governing Board, NAEP Testing and Reporting on Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners, Policy Statement (updated Aug. 2, 2014), available at https://www.nagb.gov/content/dam/nagb/en/documents/policies/naep_testandreport_studentswithdisabilities.pdf.

We encourage you to ensure that, for the grades or classrooms selected, the greatest possible number of students with disabilities and EL students participate in the NAEP assessments. NAEP expects most students with disabilities and EL students to participate in the NAEP sample. The only students eligible for exclusion are students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and EL students who have been enrolled in U.S. schools less than one full academic year before the NAEP assessment and cannot access NAEP.

Please keep in mind that NAEP does not produce results for individual students or schools. All results are summarized only at the national and state levels (and for a few large urban districts). In other words, the NAEP assessments provide a high-level picture of educational performance and progress for all students and are among the most visible and important indicators of educational performance in this country. We very much appreciate your support in making NAEP as inclusive as possible.

Sincerely,

Supreet Anand

Katherine Neas

Acting Assistant Deputy Secretary, Office of
English Language Acquisition

Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of Special
Education and Rehabilitative Services