Measure Up for Private Schools

NAEP News for the School Community

NAEP
NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

In This Edition

Spring/Summer 2016

Thank You!

Thank you to all private schools that participated in the NAEP 2016 assessment. It is only because of participation by schools like yours that NAEP is able to report results for private schools. Stay up to date on release plans and dates for the NAEP 2016 assessments by reading *Measure Up for Private Schools: NAEP News for the Private School Community*.

What's Happening in the World of NAEP for Private Schools?

Spring/Summer 2016

- Results from the NAEP 2014 technology and engineering literacy (TEL) assessment conducted in grade 8 will be released on May 17, 2016.
- The NAEP 2016 arts assessment conducted in grade 8 is being scored in Iowa City, Iowa.
- The NAEP 2016 digitally based pilots are being scored in scoring centers across the country.
- Private schools selected for NAEP 2017 will be notified and begin preparing for the assessment.

Fall 2016

- Results from the NAEP 2015 science assessment conducted in grade 8 will be released.
- NAEP representatives will help private schools selected for NAEP 2017 prepare for the assessment.

Winter 2016

- Private school students selected for NAEP 2017 will take the assessment between January 30 and March 10, 2017.

For more information about NAEP, visit: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard

Find us on: YouTube

NAEP 2017 Assessment

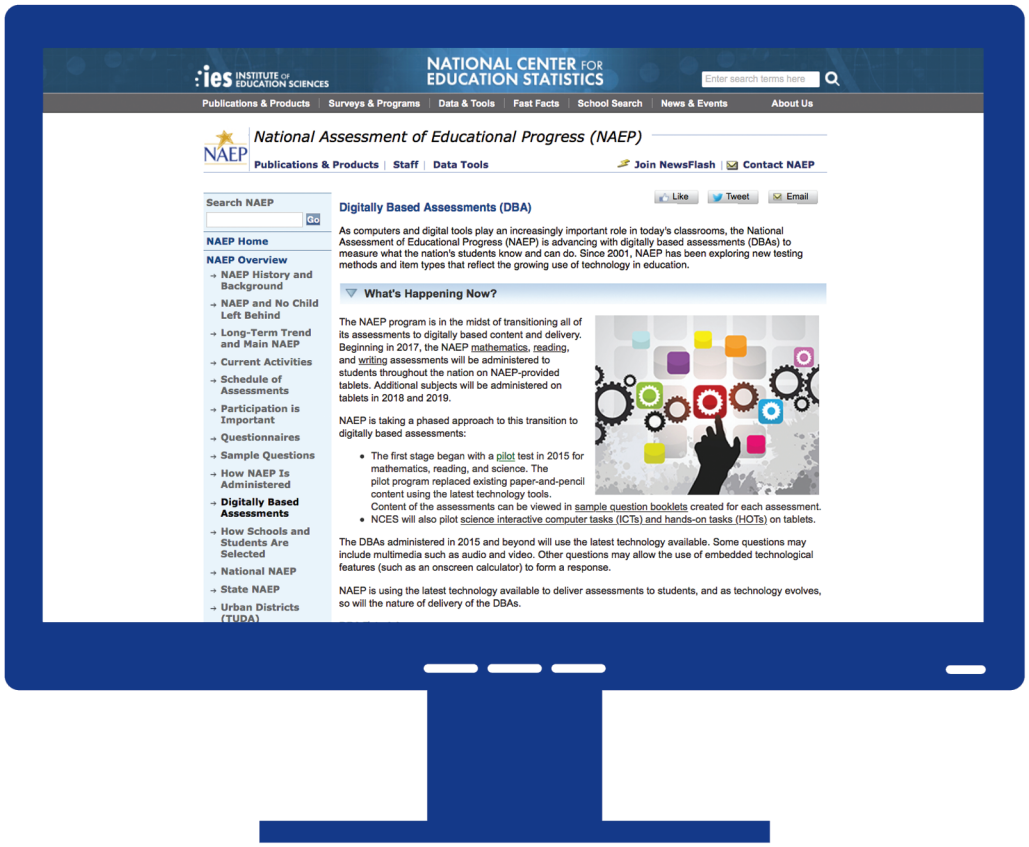
The NAEP 2017 program will include digitally based assessments in mathematics, reading, and writing in grades 4 and 8. For mathematics and reading, it will be the first time that NAEP will report national, public, and private school results collected via tablets. NAEP representatives will provide significant support to schools, bring all necessary materials and equipment, and administer the assessment.

Some fourth- and eighth-grade students will take paper-and-pencil versions of the mathematics and reading assessments to evaluate the differences between the two types of assessment administration.

Administering the assessment via both tablet and paper and pencil will inform understanding of the implications for reporting trends. In addition, schools and students may also be selected to participate in NAEP pilot testing in civics, geography, U.S. history, and other special studies.

Visit http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/nonpublicschools.aspx to learn more about the NAEP assessment in private schools.

Learn more about digitally based assessments at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/dba.



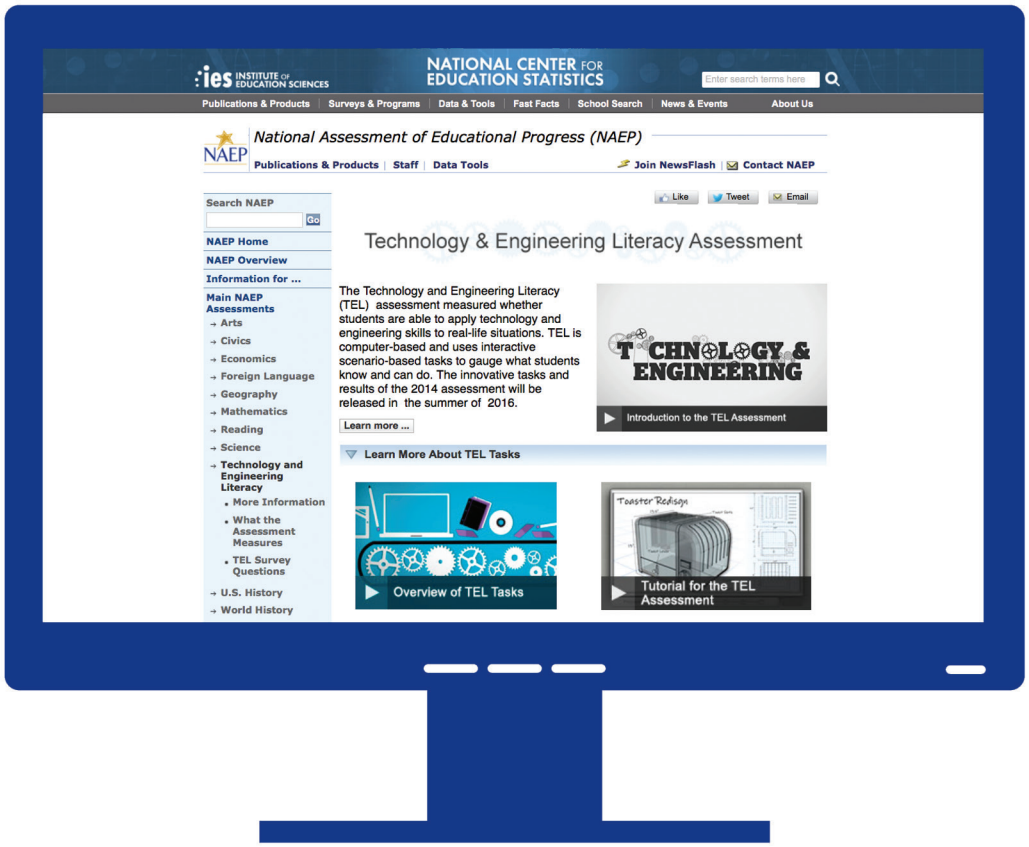
NAEP 2014 TEL Assessment

In winter 2014 the NAEP technology and engineering literacy (TEL) assessment was administered to a national sample of eighth-grade students in public and private schools. The TEL assessment measured students' ability to apply technology and engineering skills to real-life situations. TEL marks a departure from the typical NAEP assessment design because it was completely digitally based and included interactive scenario-based tasks—an innovative component of NAEP. Students were asked to perform a variety of these interactive tasks to solve problems within realistic scenarios. Examples of interactive tasks are available in the interactive version of the TEL framework. In addition to scenario-based tasks, TEL also relied on short-answer and multiple-choice questions to measure students' knowledge and skills. The innovative tasks and results of the 2014 assessment will be released on May 17, 2016.

Before the assessment began, students viewed a tutorial that helped them become familiar with the interface and how to use the program. NAEP representatives provided all the necessary materials to the school on assessment day, including laptop computers and earbuds. It took approximately 120 minutes for students to complete the assessment.

Students were also given a questionnaire to complete. The aim of the questionnaire was to allow NAEP to get a better understanding of students' opportunities to learn about technology both inside and outside the classroom and to provide more insight into how students interact with technology to solve problems, communicate with others, and learn more about the world around them.

Learn more about the TEL assessment by watching the *Introduction to the TEL Assessment, Overview of TEL Tasks,* and *Tutorial for the TEL Assessment* videos at https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/tel.



NAEP Behind the Scenes

Learn more about the people who work behind the scenes to make NAEP the gold standard of assessments.

In this interview, we talk with Lonnie Smith, the project technical lead for educational simulations and assessments at Educational Testing Service (ETS). ETS is the NAEP contractor responsible for NAEP item development and reporting. Lonnie has worked at ETS for more than 10 years and has worked on NAEP since 2010.

You have been at ETS and involved with NAEP for several years. What in your past training and experience best prepared for you for your current job?

I've been doing test development for various programs for over 10 years now, so I've learned a lot about all the tiny-but-important things that separate a great assessment from a mediocre one. And I've worked in software development, off and on, even longer. That turns out to be really helpful as the industry moves to more complex software-based assessments, where test creators have to think just as much about designing interactions and user interfaces and data formats as they do about writing good test questions or how to order the items on a test form.

As we discussed earlier in this newsletter, results from the TEL assessment will be released very soon. Tell us about what makes TEL different from other assessments that NAEP administers.

There are two major things that make TEL a really unusual NAEP assessment. First, TEL isn't closely related to any one particular course or part of the curriculum. Most NAEP assessments aren't like that. The NAEP reading and writing assessments, for example, assess skills that students mainly learn in the English language arts curriculum. TEL, by contrast, focuses on a wide range of technology literacy skills that students may have been taught in courses across the core curriculum, as well as in specialized computer literacy, engineering, or industrial technology coursework.

Second, the format of TEL is quite a bit different from any other large-scale assessment, in that such a large percentage of the assessment content is in the form of interactive scenario-based problem-solving tasks. Whereas most NAEP assessments are composed of 50 to 60 minutes of short, stand-alone test questions, students taking TEL had one or two of these scenario-based tasks. Tasks are roughly 10- to 30-minute experiences that take an overarching problem and embed it in a storyline. Students work through the scenario, solving different parts of the problem as they go. It's a neat way to do assessments, partly because students find it fun and engaging (we heard over and over again how much they liked the assessment), which we think helps them to do their best on the test. Tasks are a good way to do assessment because they let us assess complex skills in ways that would be very difficult with traditional short-answer/multiple-choice test forms and allow us to present much more authentic problem-solving activities.

You were involved in the development of TEL items for NAEP 2014. Tell us a bit about your experience working on TEL.

The two things that make TEL a really unusual assessment for NAEP also made it a really fun and challenging project to work on. The fact that TEL draws on skills from across the curriculum was a huge challenge in itself. Add to that the fact that NAEP assesses a nationally representative sample of students, and consider that while some students may have a lot of technology-related coursework, or be fortunate enough to go to schools where educational technology is very much at the forefront, other students may not have had many opportunities to learn and practice TEL skills. So, we were always trying to walk a fine line in asking challenging questions that would really do a good job of testing students at all levels of ability so we could get an accurate picture of what students are able to do.

The other thing that made TEL really exciting to work on was how much we all had to learn. TEL wasn't the first interactive assessment I had worked on, but it was definitely a whole different order of magnitude, and I had to throw myself head first into interactive content development. I had to learn about how to give art direction, how to manage programmers, how to design clear and intuitive interfaces, how to tell a story, and how to communicate a hundred relevant details to students quickly and effectively. In developing traditional assessments, it's not unusual to spend an entire afternoon working to get the wording of a question just

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right—and there is definitely the expectation of the same level of care with software-based assessments, only there are just so many more different aspects of the experience you have to craft.

How did you and your team begin to develop TEL assessment items (questions)?

First we started with a careful analysis of the framework—that's the document that lays out what skills and knowledge the assessment is supposed to measure. Then, we worked through an "evidence-centered design" process whereby we created a taxonomy of all the different skills we wanted to measure, came up with examples of different real-world activities students might do to demonstrate those skills, and listed different types of evidence of skill that they might produce while doing those activities.

Once we had set out that framework describing the types of things we wanted students to do and how we would evaluate their work, we went on to come up with questions and tasks that would fit in to that framework. We combed through all kinds of curricular materials—everything from textbooks and lesson plans to museum exhibits to educational games and simulations—to get ideas for what we wanted to do.

Once we had a good concept, we developed it into detailed storyboards, which presented a frame-by-frame blueprint for the finished task, including all the text, questions, problems, and detailed notes for things like character designs and how the interactive portions of the task would work. From there, we began working with artists and programmers to realize the design.

Throughout this process, we were continually going back for feedback from different panels of subject-matter experts and NAEP stakeholders, and incorporating this feedback into the tasks as they evolved.

Describe how this assessment incorporates elements of gaming and student interaction with the assessment.

We used a software platform, Unity 3D, which game developers use to create games on the web and mobile devices. This made it possible to include 3D models, animations, and simulations in our tasks. These not only made the tasks more appealing to students but also helped us measure technology skills in ways that wouldn't have been possible in a paper-and-pencil assessment.

What is the value of NAEP for private schools? Why should they participate?

Private schools, like all other educational institutions, are part of an overall educational ecosystem, and all parts of that ecosystem benefit from access to accurate information about how the system as a whole is performing.

NAEP is an incredibly valuable source of that kind of information on the educational system—no other program in the U.S. reports on K-12 performance with the same degree of rigor, geographical reach, or across a greater span of time. However, NAEP's data is only as good as its participants. It can't truly report on what our nation's students know and can do if private schools don't participate.

For more information on private school participation in NAEP visit:
http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/nonpublicschools.aspx.

The **NAEP** Experience

Private school teachers and staff discuss their experiences with NAEP.

In this section, we interview private school organization leaders, teachers, principals, heads of school, or other school staff who are participating in the upcoming NAEP assessments or experienced NAEP in their private school. Read about Jolene Wofford, Director of Community Relations at Great Lakes Academy in Plano, Texas.

How long have you been an educator? Why did you decide to work in a private school? What role do you think private schools play in the education system of the United States?

I've been an educator for more than 35 years; that includes teaching and administrative experience in Catholic, Christian, and other private schools. I chose to work in private schools for many reasons, including the smaller class size and the ability to develop deeper relationships with students. In my experience, private schools offer more time for the development of social skills and a focus on academics with less paperwork. I think private schools play an essential role in the U.S. education system. The traditional classroom model works for many students; however, it is not an optimal model for all students. Private schools are able to offer more individualized instruction, with a focus on educating the whole child which public schools may not be able to provide. It is important for parents to have options when it comes to meeting the educational needs of their child.

Tell us a little about Great Lakes Academy.

Great Lakes Academy is a nonprofit private school that offers a positive school experience to first- through twelfth-grade students, with average to above-average intelligence, diagnosed with various learning differences, Asperger's syndrome, AD/HD. Great Lakes Academy believes that nurturing each student's intellectual, emotional, and social life must be emphasized in the context of reasonable personal expectations, a positive environment, and a strong sense of community.

Your school recently participated in a NAEP assessment. Tell us what your NAEP school coordinator experience was like.

As the designated NAEP school coordinator for our school, I had regular communication with our friendly and helpful NAEP representative. The MyNAEP website was easy to use and made planning for assessment day easy. We notified parents and students about the assessment before testing day, and there were no questions or concerns. The NAEP representative was able to answer any questions I had and was very accommodating of our school and our students' needs.

How did assessment day go?

The NAEP representative brought the testing tablets to our school and set everything up as planned. At the agreed upon testing time, students arrived to begin the test. It was important for our students to have their classroom teacher present for the test. During testing I took a quick peek to see how the students were doing. They were actively engaged and were excited to use the tablets. At the end of the test, the NAEP representative packed up all the equipment and left the testing location in the same condition it was found earlier in the day. Everything went very smoothly. At Great Lakes Academy we are accustomed to structured flexibility, so there was minimal impact on students or teachers.

Why did your school decide to participate in NAEP?

NAEP offered an opportunity for Great Lakes Academy to participate in a national test (even though GLA would not receive individual student or school level results) that measured the educational progress of private schools across the country.

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To learn more about private school participation in NAEP, visit **http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/nonpublicschools.aspx**.
To read other NAEP Experience interviews, visit **https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/nonpublicschools_measureup.aspx**.
Did your private school participate in NAEP? Would you like to tell us about your experience?
Send us an email at **MeasureUpforPrivateSchools@westat.com**.

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