

Adopted: May 18, 2002



National Assessment Governing Board

Framework Development

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) to conduct a comprehensive, inclusive, and deliberative process to determine the content and format of all subject area assessments under the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Objectives developed and adopted by the Board as a result of this process shall be used to produce NAEP assessments that are valid and reliable, and that are based on widely accepted professional standards. The process shall include the active participation of educators, parents, and members of the general public. The primary result of this process shall be an assessment framework to guide NAEP development at grades 4, 8, and 12.

The Governing Board, through its Assessment Development Committee, shall carefully monitor the framework development process to ensure that all Board policies are followed; that the process is comprehensive, inclusive, and deliberative; and that the final Board-adopted framework, specifications, and background variables documents are congruent with the Guiding Principles, Policies and Procedures that follow.

Introduction

Since its creation by Congress in 1988, the National Assessment Governing Board has been responsible for determining the content and format of all NAEP subject area assessments. The Board has carried out this important statutory responsibility by engaging a broad spectrum of educators, policymakers, business representatives, and members of the general public in developing recommendations for the knowledge and skills NAEP should assess in various grades and subject areas. From this comprehensive process, the Board develops an assessment framework to outline the content and format for each NAEP subject area assessment.

Under provisions of the National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-279), Congress has authorized the Governing Board to continue its mandate for determining the content and format of NAEP assessments by requiring that:

- “the purpose [of NAEP] is to provide...a fair and accurate measurement of student academic achievement”
- “[NAEP shall]...use widely accepted professional testing standards, objectively measure academic achievement, knowledge, and skills, and ensure that any academic assessment authorized...be tests that do not evaluate or assess personal or family beliefs and attitudes or publicly disclose personally identifiable information;”
- “[NAEP shall]...only collect information that is directly related to the appraisal of academic achievement, and to the fair and accurate presentation of such information;”
- “the Board shall develop assessment objectives consistent with the requirements of this section and test specifications that produce an assessment that is valid and reliable, and are based on relevant widely accepted professional standards;”
- “the Board shall have final authority on the appropriateness of all assessment items;”
- “the Board shall take steps to ensure that all items selected for use in the National Assessment are free from racial, cultural, gender, or regional bias and are secular, neutral, and non-ideological;” and
- “the Board shall develop a process for review of the assessment which includes the active participation of teachers, curriculum specialists, local school administrators, parents, and concerned members of the public.”

Given the importance of these mandates it is incumbent upon the Board, in the design, conduct, and final action on the assessment framework, to ensure that the highest standards of test development are employed. The validity of educational inferences made using NAEP data could be seriously impaired without high standards and rigorous procedures for framework development.

Historically, the task of developing the framework for a NAEP assessment has been conducted by the Board through competitive procurements. It is imperative that contractors be fully informed of the Board’s policy regarding framework development, so that all deliverables under the contract meet statutory requirements and are acceptable to the Board. The purpose of the Policy on Framework Development, therefore, is to articulate the Guiding Principles, Policies and Procedures that will direct the framework development process.

Each of the following Guiding Principles is accompanied by Policies and Procedures. Full implementation of this framework development policy will require the appropriate framework contractor(s), to provide assurances to the Board, through the

NAGB staff, that all aspects of the Policies and Procedures for which they are responsible have been successfully completed. These assurances will be in writing, and may require supporting information prepared by the contractor and/or the Board staff.

This policy complies with the documents listed below which express widely accepted technical and professional standards for test development. These standards reflect the agreement of recognized experts in the field, as well as the policy positions of major professional and technical associations concerned with educational testing.

Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. (1999). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education.

Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education. (2004). Washington, DC: Joint Committee on Testing Practices.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Statistical Standards, September 2002.

Guiding Principles – Framework Development

Principle 1

The Governing Board is responsible for developing an assessment framework for each NAEP subject area. The framework shall define the scope of the domain to be measured by delineating the knowledge and skills to be tested at each grade, the format of the NAEP assessment, and preliminary achievement level descriptions.

Principle 2

The Governing Board shall develop an assessment framework through a comprehensive, inclusive, and deliberative process that involves the active participation of teachers, curriculum specialists, local school administrators, parents, and members of the public.

Principle 3

The framework development process shall take into account state and local curricula and assessments, widely accepted professional standards, exemplary research, international standards and assessments, and other pertinent factors and information.

Principle 4

The Governing Board, through its Assessment Development Committee, shall closely monitor all steps in the framework development process. The result of this process shall be recommendations for Board action in the form of three key documents: the assessment framework; assessment and item specifications; and background variables that relate to the subject being assessed.

Principle 5

Through the framework development process, preliminary achievement level descriptions shall be created for each grade being tested. These preliminary descriptions shall be an important consideration in the item development process and will be used to begin the achievement level setting process.

Principle 6

The specifications document shall be developed during the framework process for use by NCES and the test development contractor as the blueprint for constructing the NAEP assessment and items in a given subject area.

Principle 7

NAEP assessment frameworks and test specifications generally shall remain stable for at least ten years.

Policies and Procedures for Guiding Principles

Principle 1

The Governing Board is responsible for developing an assessment framework for each NAEP subject area. The framework shall define the scope of the domain to be measured by delineating the knowledge and skills to be tested at each grade, the format of the NAEP assessment, and preliminary achievement level descriptions.

Policies and Procedures

1. The assessment framework shall determine the extent of the domain and the scope of the construct to be measured for each grade level in a NAEP assessment. The framework shall cover grades 4, 8, and 12, where applicable, in a given subject area. The framework shall provide information to the public and test developers on three key aspects of the assessment: a) what should be measured; b) how that domain of content is most appropriately measured in a large-scale assessment; and c) how much of the content domain, in terms of knowledge and skills, should students know and be able to do at the basic, proficient, and advanced levels.

2. More specifically, the framework shall: a) articulate the purpose and scope of the assessment; b) define the content and skills to be tested at each grade; c) define the weighting of the item pool in terms of the content and process dimensions; d) describe the format requirements of the items and the assessment; e) include preliminary achievement level descriptions for each grade at the basic, proficient, and advanced levels; and f) contain sample items for each grade to be tested.

3. The primary audience for the assessment framework shall be the general public. Technical and subject-specific terminology should be used only when necessary, and shall be defined in the body of the framework or in a glossary. Where appropriate the framework should use tables, charts, and graphics to clearly and concisely communicate necessary information pertaining to the various assessment elements. The framework shall contain sufficient information to inform policymakers, educators, and others about the nature and scope of the assessment in a given subject area.

4. NAEP frameworks shall continue to be developed with the active participation of states. Content coverage in each subject and grade shall be broad, inclusive of content valued by states as important to measure, and reflect high aspirations for student achievement.

5. The framework shall not endorse or advocate a particular pedagogical approach to the subject area being assessed, but shall focus on important, measurable indicators of student achievement to inform the nation about what students know and are

able to do. While the framework shall not endorse pedagogy, it may facilitate reporting on various types of skills essential to achievement in the grade and subject area.

6. Where appropriate, the framework shall describe additional requirements of the assessment and administrative conditions which may be unique to a given subject area. For example, this may include a brief discussion of ancillary materials, use of technology, and other conditions.

7. Special studies, if any, to be conducted as part of the assessment in a given subject area shall be described in the framework. This description shall provide an overview of the purpose and rationale for the study, the nature of the student sample(s), and a discussion of the instrument and administration procedures.

8. Following Board adoption, the framework shall be widely disseminated in print and electronic versions.

Principle 2

The Governing Board shall develop an assessment framework through a comprehensive, inclusive, and deliberative process that involves the active participation of teachers, curriculum specialists, local school administrators, parents, and concerned members of the public.

Policies and Procedures

1. The guiding statute calls for the “active participation” of various NAEP audiences in the framework development process. Because this is a public endeavor it is important that all major constituents are represented in a fair and open process. The Governing Board’s framework development process shall be comprehensive in its scope and outreach; inclusive in its involvement of broad-based panel members and reviewers; and deliberative in considering all viewpoints and debating all pertinent issues in formulating the content and design of a NAEP assessment.

2. The framework development committees shall be constituted in such a way as to be representative in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, region of the country, and viewpoints regarding the content of the assessment under development. In addition, many different views shall be sought from various segments of the population in the review of materials and in soliciting public input and feedback. The level of “active participation” shall be documented in a report of the framework development process.

3. The framework development environment shall be open, balanced, and even-handed. To the greatest extent possible, the project deliberations will be protected from inappropriate influences of various interest groups. All issues and agendas shall be considered in a careful, objective, and respectful manner by all project committees and the Board.

4. Prior to implementation of the framework development process, the contractor shall identify procedures that will be used to clarify positions and views, roles and responsibilities of all project staff and committees, as well as how the process will work toward reaching an understanding of the scope, content, and design of the framework.

5. While the NAEP statute no longer requires a “national consensus process,” the Board will develop frameworks through involvement of broadly representative groups and individuals with diverse viewpoints, open discussion and deliberation of issues, and careful consideration, and revision when necessary, of framework recommendations prior to final Board action. The Board shall make the final decision on a framework and shall not delegate decisions on the content and format of NAEP assessments.

6. It is a requirement throughout the framework development process to obtain reviews of draft materials and general public input from a wide audience of stakeholders, including content experts (outside of the framework committees), curriculum and assessment staff of state and local education agencies, users of assessment data, those who are employed in the specific content area under consideration, policymakers, parents, and the general public. The constituency of “users and consumers” mentioned above may include scientists, mathematicians, journalists, civic leaders, authors, and others.

7. Written summaries of all hearings, forums, surveys, and committee meetings shall be made available to the framework committees in a timely manner, so that such information can best inform the decision-making process. The Assessment Development Committee and the Board shall receive written documentation and regular briefings on all project activities at their quarterly meetings.

8. Framework development panels shall consist of a policy oversight or steering committee comprised of representatives from key policy groups, business and industry, content experts, educators at the state and district level, users and consumers, parents, and the general public. At least 30 percent of this committee shall be composed of users and consumers in the subject area under consideration. Both public and private schools shall be represented on this committee.

9. The steering committee will receive the project charge directly from the Board, and shall formulate guidelines for the conduct of the framework development process, consistent with statutory requirements and Board policy. This oversight committee shall monitor the progress of the development work via meetings, teleconferences, and electronic communication. The final recommended documents from the project shall be reviewed by the oversight panel for recommendation to the Board at the completion of the deliberative process.

10. Development of the project documents shall be the responsibility of a project planning committee composed of content experts, educators at the state and district level, curriculum specialists, university professors, policymakers, users and consumers, business representatives, and members of the public. Classroom teachers shall be well

represented on this committee at all grade levels designated for the assessment under development. Teachers, administrators, and curriculum specialists shall be drawn from schools across the nation, including individuals who work with students from high-poverty and low-performing schools. Both public and private schools shall be represented on this committee.

11. The planning committee shall carefully consider the charge from the Governing Board and guidelines set forth by the project oversight committee in developing the assessment framework. The committee shall carry out its work through meetings, conference calls, and electronic communication. It shall be responsible for developing the major deliverables of the project: the framework, specifications, and background variables documents, under the direction of project staff.

12. Where appropriate, a third committee of technical experts shall be involved in the framework development process. This committee shall consist of psychometricians, state testing experts, and individuals involved in developing assessments in the content area under consideration. It shall be this panel's responsibility to uphold the highest technical standards for development of the NAEP framework and specifications. The committee shall respond to technical issues raised during the process and provide guidance to project staff and the project committees on technical aspects of the assessment specifications. As with the steering and planning committees, the technical panel will meet in-person, via teleconference, and through electronic communication.

13. The preceding Policies and Procedures for conducting the framework development process constitute one model of committee structure. A prospective contractor may propose an alternative plan, however the committees must be broad-based and representative of the type of groups and individuals identified above.

Principle 3

The framework development process shall take into account state and local curricula and assessments, widely accepted professional standards, exemplary research, international standards and assessments, and other pertinent factors and information.

Policies and Procedures

1. The NAEP framework development process shall be informed by a broad, balanced, and inclusive set of factors. The framework shall maintain a balance between curriculum reform in a field, exemplary research regarding cognitive development and instruction, and the nation's future needs and desirable levels of achievement. This delicate balance between "what is" and "what should be" is the essence of the NAEP framework development process.

2. The framework development process shall begin by thoroughly identifying major policy and assessment, issues in the content area, to be summarized in an issues paper. The primary audiences for the issues paper are the Board and the project

committees. Designed to serve as a springboard for committee deliberations and framework development, this paper shall elaborate on major issues providing both pros and cons, summarize the research, and cite trends in state standards and assessments.

3. The framework panels shall consider a wide variety of resources as the deliberations proceed, including but not limited to curriculum guides and assessments developed by states and local districts, widely accepted professional standards, scientific research, other types of exemplary research studies in the literature, key reports having significant national and international interest, international standards and assessments, other assessment instruments in the content area, and prior NAEP frameworks, if available.

4. In considering the relative importance of these sources of information in developing the framework, the project committees shall consider the charge as delivered by the Governing Board, the role and purpose of NAEP in informing the public about student achievement, constraints of a large-scale assessment, technical assessment standards, issues of burden and cost-effectiveness in designing the assessment, and other factors unique to the content area.

Principle 4

The Governing Board, through its Assessment Development Committee, shall closely monitor all steps in the framework development process. The result of this process shall be recommendations for Board action in the form of three key documents: the assessment framework; assessment and item specifications; and background variables that relate to the subject being assessed.

Policies and Procedures

1. When the framework development process is conducted for the Board by an outside contractor, the process shall be managed in an efficient, cost-effective manner, shall be completed in a timely fashion, and shall adhere to sound measurement practice.

2. The Board's Assessment Development Committee (ADC) shall be responsible for monitoring the framework development process that results in recommendations to the Board on the content and format of each NAEP assessment. Direction will be provided to the framework development contractor by the ADC and the Board, via NAGB staff, to assure compliance with the NAEP law, Board policies, Department of Education and government-wide regulations, and requirements of the framework contract.

3. The performance of work for the framework development process shall be subject to the technical direction of a Governing Board staff member, designated as the Contracting Officer's Representative. This individual shall work under the guidance of the ADC and the Board during all phases of the framework process.

4. During the framework process, the Board shall review work-in-progress and make modifications as necessary. The Board shall receive regular updates on the framework development process at its quarterly meetings. Updates shall be provided to the ADC as necessary during the framework development process via in-person meetings, teleconferences, printed material, and electronic communication.

5. At the conclusion of the framework development process, the Board will take final action on the recommended framework, specifications, and background variables documents. This action may result in modifications to one or more of the documents, which will be incorporated prior to dissemination.

6. The framework process shall also result in recommendations to the Board on background variables to be collected from students, teachers, and schools related to a particular subject area. Such variables shall be related to academic achievement and to the fair and accurate presentation of achievement information. Background variables shall meet criteria for being secular, neutral, and non-ideological, as stated in the Board's Policy on NAEP Item Development and Review, and will not assess personal or family beliefs and attitudes, or publicly disclose personally identifiable information. In recommending background variables, the Board's Policy on Collecting and Reporting Background Data shall also be followed. Recommendations on background variables shall take into account burden, cost, quality of the data to be obtained, and other factors.

7. Following adoption by the Board, the final framework, specifications, and background variables documents shall be provided to NCES at least 12 months prior to pilot or field testing, except in the case of unforeseen circumstances related to congressional action, budget limitations, or other extraordinary events.

Principle 5

Through the framework development process, preliminary achievement level descriptions shall be created for each grade being tested. These preliminary descriptions shall be an important consideration in the item development process and will be used to begin the achievement level setting process.

Policies and Procedures

1. The framework panels shall draft preliminary descriptions for basic, proficient, and advanced performance for all applicable grades in the content area under development. The panels shall use the Board's policy definitions for basic, proficient, and advanced achievement in developing the preliminary descriptions. The descriptions shall provide statements of what students should know and be able to do, as derived from the content and process dimensions of the assessment at each grade.

2. The preliminary descriptions shall be included in the framework draft that is widely circulated for public review and comment, to obtain broad input on the draft descriptions prior to Board action on the framework.

3. Once the Board has approved the framework document, NCES shall be provided with the preliminary achievement levels descriptions so that these definitions can guide development of NAEP test questions.

4. The preliminary descriptions approved by the Board shall also be provided to the achievement levels contractor to begin the level setting process.

Principle 6

The specifications document shall be developed during the framework process for use by NCES and the test development contractor as the blueprint for constructing the NAEP assessment and items in a given subject area.

Policies and Procedures

1. The assessment and item specifications shall produce an assessment that is valid and reliable, and based on relevant widely accepted professional standards. The specifications shall also be consistent with Board policies regarding NAEP design such as booklet and block (item sets within a booklet) structure, test administration conditions, accommodations for special needs students.

2. The primary audience for the specifications, or assessment blueprint, shall be the contractor(s) responsible for developing the assessment and test questions. The specifications shall be written in sufficient detail so that item writers can develop high quality questions based on the framework objectives for grades 4, 8, and 12, where applicable, in a given subject area.

3. The specifications shall include, but not be limited to: a) detailed descriptions of the content and process dimensions, including the weighting of those dimensions in the pool of questions at each grade; b) types of items; c) guidelines for stimulus material; d) types of response formats; e) scoring procedures; f) preliminary achievement level descriptions; g) administration conditions; h) description of ancillary or additional materials, if any; i) considerations for special populations; j) detailed information on special studies, if any; k) a substantial number and range of sample items with scoring guidelines for each grade level; and l) any unique requirements for the given subject area.

4. The specifications shall evolve from the framework document, and be carefully reviewed by technical experts involved in the process, prior to submission to the Governing Board.

Principle 7

NAEP assessment frameworks and test specifications generally shall remain stable for at least ten years.

Policies and Procedures

1. Development of a new subject area framework shall be guided by the schedule of NAEP assessments adopted by the Board.

2. In deciding when to conduct a new framework development process for an existing NAEP assessment, the Board shall consider factors such as exemplary research, curriculum and assessment reform, widely accepted professional standards, implications for existing trendlines, cost and technical issues, and other factors.

3. In rare circumstances, such as where significant changes in curricula have occurred, the National Assessment Governing Board may make changes to assessment frameworks and specifications before ten years have elapsed.

4. In those subjects and grades for which NAEP would provide confirmatory evidence about progress in achievement on state tests, the Board shall revise frameworks only when the rationale for doing so is compelling.

Approved by the National Assessment Governing Board— November 18, 2006

NAEP Schedule of Assessments		
Year	National	State
2005	Reading MATHEMATICS Science High School Transcript Study	Reading (4, 8) MATH (4, 8) Science (4, 8)
2006	U.S. History Civics ECONOMICS (12)	
2007	Reading (4, 8) Mathematics (4, 8) Writing (8, 12)	Reading (4, 8) Math (4, 8) Writing (8)
2008	Arts (8) Long-term trend	
2009	READING Mathematics* SCIENCE High School Transcript Study	READING (4, 8) Math (4, 8) SCIENCE (4, 8)
2010	U.S. History Civics Geography	
2011	Reading (4, 8) Mathematics (4, 8) WRITING	Reading (4, 8) Math (4, 8) WRITING (4, 8)
2012	Economics (12) WORLD HISTORY (12) FOREIGN LANGUAGE (12) PROBE: TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY [special study] Long-term trend	
2013	Reading Mathematics Science High School Transcript Study	Reading (4, 8) Math (4, 8) Science (4, 8)
2014	U.S. HISTORY CIVICS Geography	
2015	Reading (4, 8) Mathematics (4, 8) Writing	Reading (4, 8) Math (4, 8) Writing (4, 8)
2016	Arts (8) Long-term trend	
2017	Reading Mathematics Science High School Transcript Study	Reading (4, 8) Math (4, 8) Science (4, 8)

*New framework for grade 12 only.

NOTES:

- (1) Grades tested are 4, 8, and 12 unless otherwise indicated, except that long-term trend assessments sample students at ages 9, 13, and 17 and are conducted in reading and mathematics.
- (2) Subjects in **BOLD ALL CAPS** indicate the year in which a new framework is implemented or assessment year for which the Board will decide whether a new or updated framework is needed.

P.L. 107-279, Signed by President Bush November 5, 2002, which amended P.L. 107-110, Signed by President Bush January 8, 2002

TITLE III—NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

SEC. 301. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be referred to as the "National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act"

SEC. 302. NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD.

- a. ESTABLISHMENT- There is established the National Assessment Governing Board (hereafter in this title referred to as the 'Assessment Board'), which shall formulate policy guidelines for the National Assessment (carried out under section 303).
- b. MEMBERSHIP-
 - (1) APPOINTMENT AND COMPOSITION- The Assessment Board shall be appointed by the Secretary and be composed as follows:
 - A. Two Governors, or former Governors, who shall not be members of the same political party.
 - B. Two State legislators, who shall not be members of the same political party.
 - C. Two chief State school officers.
 - D. One superintendent of a local educational agency.
 - E. One member of a State board of education.
 - F. One member of a local board of education.
 - G. Three classroom teachers representing the grade levels at which the National Assessment is conducted.
 - H. One representative of business or industry.
 - I. Two curriculum specialists.
 - J. Three testing and measurement experts, who shall have training and experience in the field of testing and measurement.
 - K. One nonpublic school administrator or policymaker.
 - L. Two school principals, of whom one shall be an elementary school principal and one shall be a secondary school principal.
 - M. Two parents who are not employed by a local, State or Federal educational agency.
 - N. Two additional members who are representatives of the general public, and who may be parents, but who are not employed by a local, State, or Federal

educational agency.

(2) **DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES-** The Director of the Institute of Education Sciences shall serve as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Assessment Board.

(3) **BALANCE AND DIVERSITY-** The Secretary and the Assessment Board shall ensure at all times that the membership of the Assessment Board reflects regional, racial, gender, and cultural balance and diversity and that the Assessment Board exercises its independent judgment, free from inappropriate influences and special interests.

c. **TERMS-**

(1) **IN GENERAL-** Terms of service of members of the Assessment Board shall be staggered and may not exceed a period of 4 years, as determined by the Secretary.

(2) **SERVICE LIMITATION-** Members of the Assessment Board may serve not more than two terms.

(3) **CHANGE OF STATUS-** A member of the Assessment Board who changes status under subsection (b) during the term of the appointment of the member may continue to serve as a member until the expiration of such term.

(4) **CONFORMING PROVISION-** Members of the Assessment Board previously granted 3 year terms, whose terms are in effect on the date of enactment of the Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2001, shall have their terms extended by 1 year.

d. **VACANCIES-**

(1) **IN GENERAL-**

A. **ORGANIZATIONS-** The Secretary shall appoint new members to fill vacancies on the Assessment Board from among individuals who are nominated by organizations representing the type of individuals described in subsection (b)(1) with respect to which the vacancy exists.

B. **NOMINATIONS-** Each organization submitting nominations to the Secretary with respect to a particular vacancy shall nominate for such vacancy six individuals who are qualified by experience or

training to fill the particular Assessment Board vacancy.

- C. MAINTENANCE OF ASSESSMENT BOARD- The Secretary's appointments shall maintain the composition, diversity, and balance of the Assessment Board required under subsection (b).

(2) ADDITIONAL NOMINATIONS- The Secretary may request that each organization described in paragraph (1)(A) submit additional nominations if the Secretary determines that none of the individuals nominated by such organization have appropriate knowledge or expertise.

e. DUTIES-

(1) IN GENERAL- In carrying out its functions under this section the Assessment Board shall--

- A. select the subject areas to be assessed (consistent with section 303(b));
- B. develop appropriate student achievement levels as provided in section 303(e);
- C. develop assessment objectives consistent with the requirements of this section and test specifications that produce an assessment that is valid and reliable, and are based on relevant widely accepted professional standards;
- D. develop a process for review of the assessment which includes the active participation of teachers, curriculum specialists, local school administrators, parents, and concerned members of the public;
- E. design the methodology of the assessment to ensure that assessment items are valid and reliable, in consultation with appropriate technical experts in measurement and assessment, content and subject matter, sampling, and other technical experts who engage in large scale surveys;
- F. consistent with section 303, measure student academic achievement in grades 4, 8, and 12 in the authorized academic subjects;
- G. develop guidelines for reporting and disseminating results;
- H. develop standards and procedures for regional and national comparisons;
- I. take appropriate actions needed to improve the form, content, use, and reporting of results of any assessment authorized by section 303 consistent with the provisions of this section and section 303; and
- J. plan and execute the initial public release of National

Assessment of Educational Progress reports.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress data shall not be released prior to the release of the reports described in subparagraph (J).

(2) DELEGATION- The Assessment Board may delegate any of the Assessment Board's procedural and administrative functions to its staff.

(3) ALL COGNITIVE AND NONCOGNITIVE ASSESSMENT ITEMS- The Assessment Board shall have final authority on the appropriateness of all assessment items.

(4) PROHIBITION AGAINST BIAS- The Assessment Board shall take steps to ensure that all items selected for use in the National Assessment are free from racial, cultural, gender, or regional bias and are secular, neutral, and non-ideological.

(5) TECHNICAL- In carrying out the duties required by paragraph (1), the Assessment Board may seek technical advice, as appropriate, from the Commissioner for Education Statistics and other experts.

(6) REPORT- 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.

f. PERSONNEL-

(1) IN GENERAL- In the exercise of its responsibilities, the Assessment Board shall be independent of the Secretary and the other offices and officers of the Department.

(2) STAFF-

A. IN GENERAL- The Secretary may appoint, at the request of the Assessment Board, such staff as will enable the Assessment Board to carry out its responsibilities.

B. TECHNICAL EMPLOYEES- Such appointments

may include, for terms not to exceed 3 years and without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, not more than six technical employees who may be paid without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of such title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

- g. COORDINATION- The Commissioner for Education Statistics and the Assessment Board shall meet periodically--

(1) to ensure coordination of their duties and activities relating to the National Assessment; and

(2) for the Commissioner for Education Statistics to report to the Assessment Board on the Department's actions to implement the decisions of the Assessment Board.

- h. ADMINISTRATION- The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply with respect to the Assessment Board, other than sections 10, 11, and 12 of such Act.

SEC. 303. NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS.

- a. ESTABLISHMENT- The Commissioner for Education Statistics shall, with the advice of the Assessment Board established under section 302, carry out, through grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements with one or more qualified organizations, or consortia thereof, a National Assessment of Educational Progress, which collectively refers to a national assessment, State assessments, and a long-term trend assessment in reading and mathematics.

- b. PURPOSE; STATE ASSESSMENTS-

(1) PURPOSE- The purpose of this section is to provide, in a timely manner, a fair and accurate measurement of student academic achievement and reporting of trends in such achievement in reading, mathematics, and other subject matter as specified in this section.

(2) MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING- The Commissioner for Education Statistics, in carrying out the measurement and reporting described in paragraph (1), shall--

A. use a random sampling process which is consistent

- with relevant, widely accepted professional assessment standards and that produces data that are representative on a national and regional basis;
- B. conduct a national assessment and collect and report assessment data, including achievement data trends, in a valid and reliable manner on student academic achievement in public and private elementary schools and secondary schools at least once every 2 years, in grades 4 and 8 in reading and mathematics;
 - C. conduct a national assessment and collect and report assessment data, including achievement data trends, in a valid and reliable manner on student academic achievement in public and private schools in reading and mathematics in grade 12 in regularly scheduled intervals, but at least as often as such assessments were conducted prior to the date of enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001;
 - D. to the extent time and resources allow, and after the requirements described in subparagraph (B) are implemented and the requirements described in subparagraph (C) are met, conduct additional national assessments and collect and report assessment data, including achievement data trends, in a valid and reliable manner on student academic achievement in grades 4, 8, and 12 in public and private elementary schools and secondary schools in regularly scheduled intervals in additional subject matter, including writing, science, history, geography, civics, economics, foreign languages, and arts, and the trend assessment described in subparagraph (F);
 - E. conduct the reading and mathematics assessments described in subparagraph (B) in the same year, and every other year thereafter, to provide for 1 year in which no such assessments are conducted in between each administration of such assessments;
 - F. continue to conduct the trend assessment of academic achievement at ages 9, 13, and 17 for the purpose of maintaining data on long-term trends in reading and mathematics;
 - G. include information on special groups, including, whenever feasible, information collected, cross tabulated, compared, and reported by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, disability and limited English proficiency; and
 - H. ensure that achievement data are made available on a timely basis following official reporting, in a manner that facilitates further analysis and that includes trend lines.

(3) STATE ASSESSMENTS-

A. IN GENERAL- The Commissioner for Education Statistics--

(i) shall conduct biennial State academic assessments of student achievement in reading and mathematics in grades 4 and 8 as described in paragraphs (2)(B) and (2)(E);

(ii) may conduct the State academic assessments of student achievement in reading and mathematics in grade 12 as described in paragraph (2)(C);

(iii) may conduct State academic assessments of student achievement in grades 4, 8, and 12 as described in paragraph (2)(D); and

(iv) shall conduct each such State assessment, in each subject area and at each grade level, on a developmental basis until the Commissioner for Education Statistics determines, as the result of an evaluation required by subsection (f), that such assessment produces high quality data that are valid and reliable.

B. AGREEMENT-

(i) IN GENERAL- States participating in State assessments shall enter into an agreement with the Secretary pursuant to subsection (d)(3).

(ii) CONTENT- Such agreement shall contain information sufficient to give States full information about the process for decision-making (which shall include the consensus process used), on objectives to be tested, and the standards for random sampling, test administration, test security, data collection, validation, and reporting.

C. REVIEW AND RELEASE-

(i) IN GENERAL- Except as provided in clause (ii), a participating State shall review and give permission for the release of results from any test of its students administered as a part of a State assessment prior to the release of such data. Refusal by a State to release its data shall not restrict the release of data from other States that have approved the release of such data.

(ii) SPECIAL RULE- A State participating in

the biennial academic assessments of student achievement in reading and mathematics in grades 4 and 8 shall be deemed to have given its permission to release its data if the State has an approved plan under section 1111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

(4) PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES-

- A. **IN GENERAL-** The use of assessment items and data on any assessment authorized under this section by an agent or agents of the Federal Government to rank, compare, or otherwise evaluate individual students or teachers, or to provide rewards or sanctions for individual students, teachers, schools or local educational agencies is prohibited.
- B. **SPECIAL RULE-** Any assessment authorized under this section shall not be used by an agent or agents of the Federal Government to establish, require, or influence the standards, assessments, curriculum, including lesson plans, textbooks, or classroom materials, or instructional practices of States or local educational agencies.
- C. **APPLICABILITY TO STUDENT EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS-** Nothing in this section shall be construed to prescribe the use of any assessment authorized under this section for student promotion or graduation purposes.
- D. **APPLICABILITY TO HOME SCHOOLS-** Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect home schools, whether or not a home school is treated as a home school or a private school under State law, nor shall any home schooled student be required to participate in any assessment referenced or authorized under this section.

(5) REQUIREMENT- In carrying out any assessment authorized under this section, the Commissioner for Education Statistics, in a manner consistent with subsection (c)(3), shall--

- A. use widely accepted professional testing standards, objectively measure academic achievement, knowledge, and skills, and ensure that any academic assessment authorized under this section be tests that do not evaluate or assess personal or family beliefs and attitudes or publicly disclose personally identifiable information;
- B. only collect information that is directly related to the

- appraisal of academic achievement, and to the fair and accurate presentation of such information; and
- C. collect information on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, limited English proficiency, and gender.

(6) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE- In carrying out any assessment authorized under this section, the Commissioner for Education Statistics may provide technical assistance to States, localities, and other parties.

c. ACCESS-

(1) PUBLIC ACCESS-

- A. IN GENERAL- Except as provided in paragraph (3), parents and members of the public shall have access to all assessment data, questions, and complete and current assessment instruments of any assessment authorized under this section. The local educational agency shall make reasonable efforts to inform parents and members of the public about the access required under this paragraph.
- B. TIMELINE- The access described in this paragraph shall be provided within 45 days of the date the request was made, in writing, and be made available in a secure setting that is convenient to both parties.
- C. PROHIBITION- To protect the integrity of the assessment, no copy of the assessment items or assessment instruments shall be duplicated or taken from the secure setting.

(2) COMPLAINTS-

- A. IN GENERAL- Parents and members of the public may submit written complaints to the National Assessment Governing Board.
- B. FORWARDING OF COMPLAINTS- The National Assessment Governing Board shall forward such complaints to the Commissioner for Education Statistics, the Secretary of Education, and the State and local educational agency from within which the complaint originated within 30 days of receipt of such complaint.
- C. REVIEW- The National Assessment Governing Board, in consultation with the Commissioner for Education Statistics, shall review such complaint and determine whether revisions are necessary and appropriate. As determined by such review, the Assessment Board shall revise, as necessary and

appropriate, the procedures or assessment items that have generated the complaint and respond to the individual submitting the complaint, with a copy of such response provided to the Secretary, describing any action taken, not later than 30 days after so acting.

- D. REPORT- The Secretary shall submit a summary report of all complaints received pursuant to subparagraph (A) and responses by the National Assessment Governing Board pursuant to subparagraph (C) to the Chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.
- E. COGNITIVE QUESTIONS-

- (i) IN GENERAL- The Commissioner for Education Statistics may decline to make available through public means, such as posting on the Internet, distribution to the media, distribution through public agencies, or in response to a request under section 552 of title 5, United States Code, for a period, not to exceed 10 years after initial use, cognitive questions that the Commissioner for Education Statistics intends to reuse in the future.

- (ii) EXTENSION- Notwithstanding clause (i), the Commissioner for Education Statistics may decline to make cognitive questions available as described in clause (i) for a period longer than 10 years if the Commissioner for Education Statistics determines such additional period is necessary to protect the security and integrity of long-term trend data.

(3) PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION-

- A. IN GENERAL- The Commissioner for Education Statistics shall ensure that all personally identifiable information about students, their academic achievement, and their families, and that information with respect to individual schools, remains confidential, in accordance with section 552a of title 5, United States Code.
- B. PROHIBITION- The Assessment Board, the Commissioner for Education Statistics, and any contractor or subcontractor shall not maintain any system of records containing a student's name, birth information, Social Security number, or parents' name

or names, or any other personally identifiable information.

(4) PENALTIES- Any unauthorized person who knowingly discloses, publishes, or uses assessment questions, or complete and current assessment instruments of any assessment authorized under this section may be fined as specified in section 3571 of title 18, United States Code or charged with a class E felony.

d. PARTICIPATION-

(1) VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION- Participation in any assessment authorized under this section shall be voluntary for students, schools, and local educational agencies.

(2) STUDENT PARTICIPATION- Parents of children selected to participate in any assessment authorized under this section shall be informed before the administration of any authorized assessment, that their child may be excused from participation for any reason, is not required to finish any authorized assessment, and is not required to answer any test question.

(3) STATE PARTICIPATION-

- A. VOLUNTARY- Participation in assessments authorized under this section, other than reading and mathematics in grades 4 and 8, shall be voluntary.
- B. AGREEMENT- For reading and mathematics assessments in grades 4 and 8, the Secretary shall enter into an agreement with any State carrying out an assessment for the State under this section. Each such agreement shall contain provisions designed to ensure that the State will participate in the assessment.

(4) REVIEW- Representatives of State educational agencies and local educational agencies or the chief State school officer shall have the right to review any assessment item or procedure of any authorized assessment upon request in a manner consistent with subsection (c), except the review described in subparagraph (2)(C) of subsection (c) shall take place in consultation with the representatives described in this paragraph.

e. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS-

(1) ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS- The National Assessment Governing Board shall develop appropriate student

achievement levels for each grade or age in each subject area to be tested under assessments authorized under this section, except the trend assessment described in subsection (b)(2)(F).

(2) DETERMINATION OF LEVELS-

A. IN GENERAL- Such levels shall--

(i) be determined by--

(I) identifying the knowledge that can be measured and verified objectively using widely accepted professional assessment standards; and

(II) developing achievement levels that are consistent with relevant widely accepted professional assessment standards and based on the appropriate level of subject matter knowledge for grade levels to be assessed, or the age of the students, as the case may be.

B. NATIONAL CONSENSUS APPROACH- After the determinations described in subparagraph (A), devising a national consensus approach.

C. TRIAL BASIS- 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.

D. STATUS- The Commissioner for Education Statistics and the Assessment Board shall ensure that reports using such levels on a trial basis do so in a manner that makes clear the status of such levels.

E. UPDATES- Such levels shall be updated as appropriate by the National Assessment Governing Board in consultation with the Commissioner for Education Statistics.

(3) REPORTING- After determining that such levels are reasonable, valid, and informative to the public, as the result of an evaluation under subsection (f), the Commissioner for Education Statistics shall use such levels or other methods or indicators for reporting results of the National Assessment and State assessments.

(4) REVIEW- The National Assessment Governing Board shall provide for a review of any trial student achievement levels under development by representatives of State educational agencies or the chief State school officer in a

manner consistent with subsection (c), except the review described in paragraph (2)(C) of such subsection shall take place in consultation with the representatives described in this paragraph.

f. REVIEW OF NATIONAL AND STATE ASSESSMENTS-

(1) REVIEW-

- A. IN GENERAL- The Secretary shall provide for continuing review of any assessment authorized under this section, and student achievement levels, by one or more professional assessment evaluation organizations.
- B. ISSUES ADDRESSED- Such continuing review shall address--

- (i) whether any authorized assessment is properly administered, produces high quality data that are valid and reliable, is consistent with relevant widely accepted professional assessment standards, and produces data on student achievement that are not otherwise available to the State (other than data comparing participating States to each other and the Nation);

- (ii) whether student achievement levels are reasonable, valid, reliable, and informative to the public;-

- (iii) whether any authorized assessment is being administered as a random sample and is reporting the trends in academic achievement in a valid and reliable manner in the subject areas being assessed;

- (iv) whether any of the test questions are biased, as described in section 302(e)(4); and

- (v) whether the appropriate authorized assessments are measuring, consistent with this section, reading ability and mathematical knowledge.

(2) REPORT- The Secretary shall report to the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate, the President, and the Nation on the findings and recommendations of such reviews.

(3) USE OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS-

The Commissioner for Education Statistics and the National Assessment Governing Board shall consider the findings and recommendations of such reviews in designing the competition to select the organization, or organizations, through which the Commissioner for Education Statistics carries out the National Assessment.

g. COVERAGE AGREEMENTS-

(1) DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SCHOOLS- The Secretary and the Secretary of Defense may enter into an agreement, including such terms as are mutually satisfactory, to include in the National Assessment elementary schools and secondary schools operated by the Department of Defense.

(2) BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS SCHOOLS- The Secretary and the Secretary of the Interior may enter into an agreement, including such terms as are mutually satisfactory, to include in the National Assessment schools for Indian children operated or supported by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

SEC. 304. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) The term "Director" means the Director of the Institute of Education Sciences .

(2) The term "State" means each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia , and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico . 18

SEC. 305. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) I N G E N E R A L .—There are authorized to be appropriated—

(1) for fiscal year 2003—

A. \$4,600,000 to carry out section 302, as amended by section 401 of this Act (relating to the National Assessment Governing Board); and

B. \$107,500,000 to carry out section 303, as amended by section 401 of this Act (relating to the National Assessment of Educational Progress); and (2) such sums as may be necessary for each of the 5 succeeding fiscal years to carry out sections 302 and 303, as amended by section 401 of this Act.

(b) AVAILABILITY—Amounts made available under this section shall

remain available until expended.

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Adopted: May 18, 2002

National Assessment Governing Board

Item Development and Review

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the National Assessment Governing Board to require the highest standards of fairness, accuracy, and technical quality in the design, construction, and final approval of all test questions and assessments developed and administered under the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). All NAEP test questions or items must be designed and constructed to reflect carefully the assessment objectives approved by the National Assessment Governing Board. The final assessments shall adhere to the requirements outlined in the following Guiding Principles, Policies and Procedures for NAEP Item Development and Review.

The Governing Board's Assessment Development Committee, with assistance from other Board members as needed, shall be responsible for reviewing and approving NAEP test questions at several stages during the development cycle. In so doing, the Guiding Principles, Policies and Procedures must be adhered to rigorously.

Introduction

The National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-279) contains a number of important provisions regarding item development and review for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The legislation requires that:

- “the purpose [of NAEP] is to provide...a fair and accurate measurement of student academic achievement”
- “[NAEP shall]...use widely accepted professional testing standards, objectively measure academic achievement, knowledge, and skills, and ensure that any academic assessment authorized...be tests that do not evaluate or assess personal or family beliefs and attitudes or publicly disclose personally identifiable information;”

- “[NAEP shall]...only collect information that is directly related to the appraisal of academic achievement, and to the fair and accurate presentation of such information;”
- “the Board shall develop assessment objectives consistent with the requirements of this section and test specifications that produce an assessment that is valid and reliable, and are based on relevant widely accepted professional standards;”
- “the Board shall have final authority on the appropriateness of all assessment items;”
- “the Board shall take steps to ensure that all items selected for use in the National Assessment are free from racial, cultural, gender, or regional bias and are secular, neutral, and non-ideological;” and
- “the Board shall develop a process for review of the assessment which includes the active participation of teachers, curriculum specialists, local school administrators, parents, and concerned members of the public.”

Given the importance of these mandates, it is incumbent upon the Board to ensure that the highest standards of test fairness and technical quality are employed in the design, construction, and final approval of all test questions for the National Assessment. The validity of educational inferences made using NAEP data could be seriously impaired without high standards and rigorous procedures for test item development, review, and selection.

Test questions used in the National Assessment must yield assessment data that are both valid and reliable in order to be appropriate. Consequently, technical acceptability is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition, for judging the appropriateness of items. In addition, the process for item development must be thorough and accurate, with sufficient reviews and checkpoints to ensure that accuracy. The Guiding Principles, Policies, and Procedures governing item development, if fully implemented throughout the development cycle, will result in items that are fair and of the highest technical quality, and which will yield valid and reliable assessment data.

Each of the following Guiding Principles is accompanied by Policies and Procedures. Full implementation of this policy will require supporting documentation from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) regarding all aspects of the Policies and Procedures for which they are responsible.

This policy complies with the documents listed below which express widely accepted technical and professional standards for item development and use. These standards reflect the current agreement of recognized experts in the field, as well as the policy positions of major professional and technical associations concerned with educational testing.

Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. (1999). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), and National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME).

Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education. (2004). Washington, DC: Joint Committee on Testing Practices.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Statistical Standards, September 2002.

Guiding Principles – Item Development and Review

Principle 1

NAEP test questions selected for a given content area shall be representative of the content domain to which inferences will be made and shall match the NAEP assessment framework and specifications for a particular assessment.

Principle 2

The achievement level descriptions for basic, proficient, and advanced performance shall be an important consideration in all phases of NAEP development and review.

Principle 3

The Governing Board shall have final authority over all NAEP test questions. This authority includes, but is not limited to, the development of items, establishing the criteria for reviewing items, and the process for review.

Principle 4

The Governing Board shall review all test questions that are to be administered in conjunction with any pilot test, field test, operational assessment, or special study administered as part of NAEP.

Principle 5

NAEP test questions shall be accurate in their presentation and free from error. Scoring criteria shall be accurate, clear, and explicit.

Principle 6

All NAEP test questions shall be free from racial, cultural, gender, or regional bias, and shall be secular, neutral, and non-ideological. NAEP shall not evaluate or assess personal or family beliefs, feelings, and attitudes, nor publicly disclose personally identifiable information.

Policies and Procedures for Guiding Principles

Principle 1

NAEP test questions selected for a given content area shall be representative of the content domain to which inferences will be made and shall match the NAEP assessment framework and specifications for a particular assessment.

Policies and Procedures

1. Under the direction of the Board, the framework for each assessment shall be developed in a manner that defines the content to be assessed, consistent with NAEP's purpose and the context of a large-scale assessment. The framework development process shall result in a rationale for each NAEP assessment that delineates the scope of the assessment relative to the content domain. The framework shall consist of a statement of purpose, assessment objectives, format requirements, and other guidelines for developing the assessment and items.

2. In addition to the framework, the Board shall develop assessment and item specifications to define the: a) content and process dimensions for the assessment; b) distribution of items across content and process dimensions at each grade level; c) stimulus and response attributes (or what the test question provides to students and the format for answering the item); d) types of scoring procedures; e) test administration conditions; and f) other specifications pertaining to the particular subject area assessment.

3. The Board will forward the framework and specifications to NCES, in accordance with an appropriate timeline, so that NCES may carry out its responsibilities for assessment development and administration.

4. In order to ensure that valid inferences can be made from the assessment, the pool of test questions shall measure the construct as defined in the framework. Demonstrating that the items selected for the assessment are representative of the subject matter to which inferences will be made is a major type of validity evidence needed to establish the appropriateness of items.

5. A second type of validity evidence is needed to ensure that NAEP test items match the specific objectives of a given assessment. The items shall reflect the objectives, and the item pool shall match the percentage distribution for the content and cognitive dimensions at each grade level, as stated in the framework. Minor deviations, if any, from the content domain as defined by the framework shall be explained in supporting materials.

6. Supporting material submitted with the NAEP items shall provide a description of procedures followed by item writers during development of NAEP test questions. This description shall include the expertise, training, and demographic characteristics of the groups. This supporting material must show that all item writing

and review groups have the required expertise and training in the subject matter, bias and fairness reviews, and assessment development.

7. In submitting items for review by the Board, NCES shall provide information on the relationship of the specifications and the content/process elements of the pool of NAEP items. This shall include procedures used in classifying each item.

8. The item types used in an assessment shall match the content requirements as stated in the framework and specifications, to the extent possible. The match between an objective and the item format shall be informed by specifications pertaining to the content, knowledge or skill to be measured, cognitive complexity, overall appropriateness, and efficiency of the item type. NAEP assessments shall use a variety of item types as best fit the requirements stated in the framework and specifications.

9. In order to ensure consistency between the framework and specifications documents and the item pools, NCES shall ensure that the development contractor engages a minimum of 20% of the membership of the framework project committees in each subject area to serve on the item writing and review groups as the NAEP test questions are being developed. This overlap between the framework development committees and the item developers will provide stability throughout the NAEP development process, and ensure that the framework and specifications approved by the Board have been faithfully executed in developing NAEP test questions.

Principle 2

The achievement level descriptions for basic, proficient, and advanced performance shall be an important consideration in all phases of NAEP development and review.

Policies and Procedures

1. During the framework development process, the project committees shall draft preliminary descriptions of the achievement levels for each grade to be assessed. These preliminary descriptions shall define what students should know and be able to do at each grade, in terms of the content and process dimensions of the framework at the basic, proficient, and advanced levels. Subsequent to Board adoption, the final achievement level descriptions shall be an important consideration in all future test item development for a given subject area framework.

2. The achievement level descriptions shall be used to ensure a match between the descriptions and the resulting NAEP items. The achievement level descriptions shall be examined, and appropriate instruction provided to item writers to ensure that the items represent the stated descriptions, while adhering to the content and process requirements of the framework and specifications. The descriptions shall be used to evaluate the test questions to make certain that the pool of questions encompasses the range of content and process demands specified in the achievement level descriptions, including items within each achievement level interval, and items that scale below basic.

3. As the NAEP item pool is being constructed, additional questions may need to be written for certain content/skill areas if there appear to be any gaps in the pool, relative to the achievement level descriptions.

4. Supporting materials shall show the relationship between the achievement levels descriptions and the pool of NAEP test questions.

Principle 3

The Governing Board shall have final authority over all NAEP test questions. This authority includes, but is not limited to, the development of items, establishing the criteria for reviewing items, and the process for review.

Policies and Procedures

1. Under the guiding statute, a primary duty of the Governing Board pertains to “All Cognitive and Noncognitive Assessment Items.” Specifically, the statute states that, “The Board shall have final authority on the appropriateness of all assessment items.” Under the law, the Board is therefore responsible for all NAEP test questions as well as all NAEP background questions administered as part of the assessment.

2. To meet this statutory requirement, the Board’s Policy on NAEP Item Development and Review shall be adhered to during all phases of NAEP item writing, reviewing, editing, and assessment construction. The National Center for Education Statistic (NCES), which oversees the operational aspects of NAEP, shall ensure that all internal and external groups involved in NAEP item development activities follow the Guiding Principles, Policies and Procedures as set forth in this Board policy.

3. Final review of all NAEP test questions for bias and appropriateness shall be performed by the Board, after all other review procedures have been completed, and prior to administration of the items to students.

Principle 4

The Governing Board shall review all NAEP test questions that are to be administered in conjunction with any pilot test, field test, operational assessment, or special study administered as part of NAEP.

Policies and Procedures

1. To fulfill its statutory responsibility for NAEP item review, the Board shall receive, in a timely manner and with appropriate documentation, all test questions that will be administered to students under the auspices of NAEP. These items include those slated for pilot testing, field testing, and operational administration.

2. The Board shall review all test items developed for special studies, where the purpose of the special study is to investigate alternate item formats or new technologies

for possible future inclusion as part of main NAEP, or as part of a special study to augment main NAEP data collection.

3. The Board shall not review items being administered as part of test development activities, such as small-scale, informal try-outs with limited groups of students designed to refine items prior to large-scale pilot, field, or operational assessment.

4. NCES shall submit NAEP items to the Board for review in accordance with a mutually agreeable timeline. Items shall be accompanied by appropriate documentation as required in this policy. Such information shall consist of procedures and personnel involved in item development and review, the match between the item pool and the framework content and process dimensions, and other related information.

5. For its first review, the Board shall examine all items prior to the special study, pilot test or field test stage. In the case of the NAEP reading assessment, all reading passages shall be reviewed by the Board prior to item development. For each reading passage, NCES shall provide the source, author, publication date, passage length, rationale for minor editing to the passage (if any), and notation of such editing applied to the original passage. NCES shall provide information and explanatory material on passages deleted in its fairness review procedures.

6. For its second review, the Board shall examine items following pilot or field testing. The items shall be accompanied by statistics obtained during the pilot test or field test stage. These statistics shall be provided in a clear format, with definitions for each item analysis statistic collected. Such statistics shall include, but shall not be limited to: p-values for multiple-choice items, number and percentage of students selecting each option for a multiple-choice item, number and percentage not reaching or omitting the item (for multiple-choice and open-ended), number and percentage of students receiving various score points for open-ended questions, mean score point value for open-ended items, appropriate biserial statistics, and other relevant data.

7. At a third stage, for some assessments, the Board shall receive a report from the calibration field test stage, which occurs prior to the operational administration. This “exceptions report” shall contain information pertaining to any items that were dropped due to differential item functioning (DIF) analysis for bias, other items to be deleted from the operational assessment and the rationale for this decision, and the final match between the framework distribution and the item pool. If the technology becomes available to perform statistically sound item-level substitutions at this point in the cycle (from the initial field test pool), the Board shall be informed of this process as well.

8. All NAEP test items shall be reviewed by the Board in a secure manner via in-person meetings, teleconference or videoconference settings, or on-line via a password-protected Internet site. The Board’s Assessment Development Committee shall have primary responsibility for item review and approval. However, the Assessment Development Committee, in consultation with the Board Chair, may involve other

NAGB members in the item review process on an *ad hoc* basis. The Board may also submit items to external experts, identified by the Board for their subject area expertise, to assist in various duties related to item review. Such experts shall follow strict procedures to maintain item security, including signing a Nondisclosure Agreement.

9. Items that are edited between assessments by NCES and/or its item review committees, for potential use in a subsequent assessment, shall be re-examined by the Board prior to a second round of pilot or field testing.

10. Documentation of the Board's final written decision on editing and deleting NAEP items shall be provided to NCES within 10 business days following completion of Board review at each stage in the process.

Principle 5

NAEP test questions shall be accurate in their presentation, and free from error. Scoring criteria shall be accurate, clear, and explicit.

Policies and Procedures

1. NCES, through its subject area content experts, trained item writers, and item review panels, shall examine each item carefully to ensure its accuracy. All materials taken from published sources shall be carefully documented by the item writer. Graphics that accompany test items shall be clear, correctly labeled, and include the data source where appropriate. Items shall be clear, grammatically correct, succinct, and unambiguous, using language appropriate to the grade level being assessed. Item writers shall adhere to the specifications document regarding appropriate and inappropriate stimulus materials, terminology, answer choices or distractors, and other requirements for a given subject area. Items shall not contain extraneous or irrelevant information that may differentially distract or disadvantage various subgroups of students from the main task of the item.

2. Scoring criteria shall accompany each constructed-response item. Such criteria shall be clear, accurate, and explicit. Carefully constructed scoring criteria will ensure valid and reliable use of those criteria to evaluate student responses to maximize the accuracy and efficiency of scoring.

3. Constructed-response scoring criteria shall be developed initially by the item writers, refined during item review, and finalized during pilot or field test scoring. During pilot or field test scoring, the scoring guides shall be expanded to include examples of actual student responses to illustrate each score point. Actual student responses shall be used as well, to inform scorers of unacceptable answers.

4. Procedures used to train scorers and to conduct scoring of constructed-response items shall be provided to the Board, along with information regarding the reliability and validity of such scoring. If the technology becomes available to score

student responses electronically, the Board shall be informed of the reliability and validity of such scoring protocol, as compared to human scoring.

Principle 6

All NAEP test questions shall be free from racial, cultural, gender, or regional bias, and shall be secular, neutral, and non-ideological. NAEP shall not evaluate or assess personal or family beliefs, feelings, and attitudes, nor publicly disclose personally identifiable information.

Policies and Procedures

1. An item is considered biased if it unfairly disadvantages a particular subgroup of students by requiring knowledge of obscure information unrelated to the construct being assessed. A test question or passage is biased if it contains material derisive or derogatory toward a particular group. For example, a geometry item requiring prior knowledge of the specific dimensions of a basketball court could result in lower scores for students unfamiliar with that sport, even if those students know the geometric concept being measured. Use of a regional term for a soft drink in an item context may provide an unfair advantage to students from that area of the country. Also, an item that refers to any individual or group in a demeaning manner would be unacceptable.

2. In conducting bias reviews, steps shall be taken to rid the item pool of questions that, because of their content or format, either appear biased on their face, or yield biased estimates of performance for certain subpopulations based on gender, race, ethnicity, or regional culture. A statistical finding of differential item functioning (DIF) will result in a review aimed at identifying possible explanations for the finding. However, such an item will not automatically be deleted if it is deemed valid for measuring what was intended, based on the NAEP assessment framework. Items in which clear bias is found will be eliminated. This policy acknowledges that there may be real and substantial differences in performance among subgroups of students. Learning about such differences, so that performance may be improved, is part of the value of the National Assessment.

3. Items shall be secular, neutral, and non-ideological. Neither NAEP nor its questions shall advocate a particular religious belief or political stance. Where appropriate, NAEP questions may deal with religious and political issues in a fair and objective way.

The following definitions shall apply to the review of all NAEP test questions, reading passages, and supplementary materials used in the assessment of various subject areas:

- Secular – NAEP questions shall not contain language that advocates or opposes any particular religious views or beliefs, nor shall items compare one religion unfavorably to another. However, items may contain references to religions, religious symbolism, or members of religious groups where appropriate.

Examples: The following phrases would be acceptable: “shaped like a Christmas tree”, “religious tolerance is one of the key aspects of a free society,” “Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a Baptist minister,” or “Hinduism is the predominant religion in India.”

- Neutral and Non-ideological - Items shall not advocate for a particular political party or partisan issue, for any specific legislative or electoral result, or for a single perspective on a controversial issue. An item may ask students to explain both sides of a debate, or it may ask them to analyze an issue, or to explain the arguments of proponents or opponents, without requiring students to endorse personally the position they are describing. Item writers should have the flexibility to develop questions that measure important knowledge and skills without requiring both pro and con responses to every item.

Examples: Students may be asked to—

- compare and contrast positions on states’ rights, based on excerpts from speeches by X and Y
- analyze the themes of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s first and second inaugural addresses
- identify the purpose of the Monroe Doctrine
- select a position on the issue of suburban growth and cite evidence to support this position
- provide arguments either for or against Woodrow Wilson’s decision to enter World War I
- summarize the dissenting opinion in a landmark Supreme Court case

The criteria of neutral and non-ideological also pertain to decisions about the pool of test questions in a subject area, taken as a whole. The Board shall review the entire item pool for a subject area to ensure that it is balanced in terms of the perspectives and issues presented.

4. The Board shall review both stimulus materials and test items to ensure adherence to the NAEP statute and the policies in this statement. Stimulus materials include reading passages, articles, documents, graphs, maps, photographs, quotations, and all other information provided to students in a NAEP test question.

5. NAEP questions shall not ask a student to reveal personal or family beliefs, feelings, or attitudes, or publicly disclose personally identifiable information.