Next Generation NAEP

Goal

This goal for this session is for members to: (1) understand the design process and stakeholder engagement plan for the Next Gen NAEP initiative; (2) understand plans for how the Board will engage in the design process, including at quarterly Governing Board meetings; and (3) provide input on initial priorities, challenges, and guardrails to inform the design process.

Overview

Executive Director Lesley Muldoon will provide updates and outline the issues on which Board input is sought. The remaining time will be used for questions and discussion.

Background

Next Gen NAEP, launched in February 2026, is an initiative to modernize NAEP, while maintaining its gold standard reputation and prioritizing its three-decade trendline of student learning in math and reading.

The Next Gen NAEP initiative will examine:
- How can technology and AI speed up NAEP development and reporting timelines?
- How can we modernize and improve the NAEP platform and technology infrastructure?
- How can NAEP data become easier to access and use?
- What cost savings can be realized and reinvested into reporting more state-level NAEP data in subjects beyond math and reading?
- How can we minimize the burden for students, schools, and districts while reporting more state-level NAEP data?

Next Gen NAEP will use a human-centered design process that builds off insights and recommendations from a wide range of experts and stakeholders and will help evaluate and test innovations to help improve NAEP's development, analysis, reporting, and dissemination.

An Advisory Committee composed of assessment experts, experts in artificial intelligence and human-centered design, and state and district leaders will provide input and counsel to the Governing Board, IES, and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) throughout the year-long initiative.

The project will include three design "sprints" or phases – a discovery phase, a prototyping phase, and an application phase. Each sprint will include an in-person design workshop with participants from a range of technical backgrounds and experiences; throughout the project there will be multiple virtual engagements and interviews with experts in various disciplines and from a variety of backgrounds relevant to NAEP, broad stakeholder outreach, opportunities for public comment, and engagement with the vendor community to solicit ideas and input.

At each quarterly Governing Board meeting from March 2026 to March 2027, the Board will discuss emerging insights from the process, review recommendations and prototypes, and provide some direction to the Next Generation NAEP Advisory Committee and NAGB and NCES staff regarding priorities for the future of the program. This input will inform the set of recommendations and roadmap that will be the capstone of the year-long research and development effort.

The Governing Board and NCES expect to review the recommendations and roadmap in November 2026 and will consider taking action related to them in March 2027. Next Gen NAEP will also result in a series of publicly available reports for the field.