NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD

REPORTING & DISSEMINATION COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Friday, November 20, 2026

8:30 – 10:30 am EST

Horne

8:30 – 8:40 am	**Welcome** *Michelle Cantú-Wilson, Chair*	
8:40 – 9:00 am	**Strategic Communications Update** *Laura LoGerfo, Assistant Director for Reporting and Analysis*	
9:00 – 9:20 am	**Evaluating the 2026 NAEP Contextual Questionnaires** *Nadia McLaughlin, NCES*	
9:20 – 10:30 am	**Release Plan for 2026 NAEP Results (CLOSED)** *Laura LoGerfo* *Ebony Walton, NCES*	*Attachment A*

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD
RELEASE PLAN FOR THE
NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP)

The Nation's Report Card: 2026 Reading and Mathematics

The national, state, and urban district results of the 2026 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading and Mathematics (grades 4 and 8) will be released to the public in Winter 2027 on a specific day to be announced.

GOALS

The goals of the Nation's Report Card release are: (1) to optimize the number of stakeholders who learn about the 2026 NAEP results; (2) to amplify the value and importance of NAEP; and (3) to help NAEP data be interpreted and used appropriately by primary audiences, e.g., state and district policymakers.

CENTRAL MESSAGES

This upcoming release represents the third release of data after the pandemic disrupted schooling. Activities for the release will promote three primary messages, which may be shifted or supplemented once the Committee learns the results. However, three overall messages will remain the same. First, NAEP provides uniquely authoritative and objective data for the nation, for states, and for districts to measure the full scope of learning in the post-COVID era and to compare scores over time. Second, the assessment results highlight states and districts which can be examined further for best practices and lessons learned. Third, NAEP data are most valuable when providing keen insights into state and district performance, which strengthens the Board's encouragement of more state-level data.

PRE-RELEASE ACTIVITIES

The Governing Board has successfully shifted from a tight focus on actual release day to a robust, broad dissemination strategy not only after the release but also before the release. Activities planned and completed prior to the release are essential to prepare the field for the 2026 results. The 2026 NAEP administration occurred amidst extensive changes in the Department of Education and within the NAEP program itself, i.e., new assessment frameworks for both the reading and mathematics assessments and NAEP

administration mostly on school-provided devices. To facilitate accurate understanding and use of the 2026 NAEP data, the Governing Board and NCES are collaborating on pre-release communications efforts.

Beginning November 30, the Board will adhere to a steady pace of both digital and traditional press outreach through email newsletters, social media channels, video posts, blog posts, and op-eds. The Board's communications focus will focus on the Board's role in NAEP, thus complementing NCES' communications. NAGB messaging will cover first the new frameworks, then the release date announcement, the new achievement level descriptions, and finally, reminders about what the 2024 NAEP results revealed and who the 2026 cohorts of NAEP participants are, i.e., eighth-graders were in second grade when COVID hit. None of this content will include or intimate any secure information.

In early January (exact date to be determined), the Board will learn the 2026 NAEP results in a secure, confidential, embargoed briefing. In the same general timeframe, NCES will host data workshops for state education agency personnel, such as state assessment directors, and district personnel, such as district assessment directors, to pore through their embargoed data with NCES staff and contractors. These workshops help states and districts to plan and prepare for the release. Much closer to the release itself, NCES will conduct embargoed briefings on the results with Department leadership and Congress as well as with the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Governors Association, and the Council of the Great City Schools.

Throughout January and early February, NAGB and NCES staff will meet with other organizations invested in the forthcoming results, such as the Education Writers Association and the Education Commission of the States, not to share 2026 data in advance but to inform them about the tools and resources at their disposal once the data are released to facilitate their accurate interpretation of the results.

A few days prior to the release, NCES will host a webinar to explain the embargoed results to education journalists working on deadline. These media webinars are essential in helping the media interpret the results and address their questions as they write their stories.

RELEASE

The Acting Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics will release the report card at the NAEP website—http://nationsreportcard.gov—at 12:01am the day of the release. At the same time, the Governing Board press release, the full and abridged versions of the Reading and Mathematics Frameworks, and a 90-second video sharing

an overview of the results will be posted on the Board's web site. The release date will be determined by the Chair of the Reporting and Dissemination Committee, in accordance with Governing Board policy.

The release plan leverages widespread interest in the results and addresses various audiences at multiple levels of investment in understanding and using the results. First, the plan calls for a very brief video of Acting Commissioner Matthew Soldner explaining selected highlights from the results. Along with the release, the Board will produce a series of 10-12 second videos, spotlighting a specific result or subgroup and/or targeted to a specific stakeholder audience, creating 'bite-size' content that can be packaged and distributed for journalists and/or on social media platforms. Second, the Board will pitch Board member op-eds and support pitches for major network morning shows on the 2026 NAEP results. By noon on the day of release, the NAEP results will have circulated widely among traditional and social media. This multi-pronged approach ensures that NAEP results reach as many stakeholders as possible at different depths of interest.

In the late afternoon on release day, the Board plans to host an event that will mark the accomplishment that this NAEP release represents and essentially preview what the post-release strategy will include. The event will open with remarks from Acting NCES Commissioner Matthew Soldner and Governing Board Executive Director Lesley Muldoon. Then the focus will shift to a moderated discussion about what the results showed overall, what was not discussed in media reporting about the results, and what data deserve analysis and attention next. Participants will include NCES Reporting Lead Ebony Walton, a board member to be confirmed, and a neutral moderator. Such a discussion will serve as an implicit debut of the post-release strategy.

POST-RELEASE ACTIVITIES

In the days and weeks after the release of the 2026 data, the Governing Board plans in-person activities as well as op-eds featuring Board members to disseminate and explain the NAEP 2026 data. A series of public discussions with organizations will delve deeply into specific results from NAEP 2026. For example, the Board will convene for the quarterly meeting in Indianapolis soon after the official release of the NAEP 2026 results. An outreach event there will focus on Indiana's results and how the Indiana state education agency uses NAEP data in their decision-making. Another example may be an event with the National Center for Learning Disabilities, which could feature NCES staff highlighting NAEP results about students with disabilities.

These public discussions may occur by webinar, in person, on podcast, at conferences, through social media channels, etc. None are planned yet, but staff are in contact with

organizations to begin next steps. These efforts will be supplemented by email newsletters, social media posts, and op-eds written by Board members. In addition, the Board plans to stimulate secondary analyses of NAEP data by policy researchers, beginning with the release event in which panel participants will point to questions researchers and media may wish to pursue next.