Trends in State Accommodations

(Closed Session)

November 19, 2026

Goal

This session will provide an overview of the current landscape of state assessment accommodations and examine how state policies and practices compare with NAEP. The discussion will provide context to the current state of accommodations e and may prompt Board members to consider whether policies for assessing students with disabilities and English learners warrant review.

This is a closed session because preliminary data on accommodations from the 2026 NAEP administration, and state testing accommodations data available through the Department of Education's EDFacts that are not yet publicly available will be shared.

Overview

Becky Dvorak, Assistant Director for Psychometrics, will introduce the session and purposes. Gina Ruehl of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) will offer a brief reminder of 2026 NAEP accommodations. Stephanie Frost, Director of the SAG Corporation, will then present findings from a compilation of state accommodations policy and data. Board members are encouraged to ask questions and discuss potential Board policy implications.

Background

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), states are required to test at least 95% of all students and 95% of each subgroup, including students with disabilities, on reading and math assessments used for state accountability purposes. States are permitted to allow accommodations for students with disabilities who have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or 504 plans, or for English learners. States have flexibility in what accommodations are offered. Similarly, the Board's policy NAEP Testing and Reporting on Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners states: "As many students as possible should be encouraged to participate in the National Assessment. Accommodations should be offered, if necessary, to enable students with disabilities and English language learners to participate, but should not alter the constructs assessed, as defined in assessment

frameworks approved by the National Assessment Governing Board." The NAEP policy requires inclusion of 85% of these students for reporting purposes.

NCES determines the available accommodations for NAEP, except in cases where a NAEP framework provides boundaries on what is allowable without compromising the construct. On state assessments, each state education agency has flexibility to establish their accommodations policy within the confines of applicable federal law (e.g., IDEA and ESSA).

The Board's policy was last updated in 2014. Since this time, state and NAEP testing has shifted from primarily paper and pencil administration to digitally-based assessments. This change, along with advancements in technology, have allowed testing programs to enhance accessibility through universal design features available to all students (e.g., zoom, color theming), and accommodations available based on needs of students with disabilities or English learners (e.g., magnification, extended time, text-to-speech in Spanish).

The Governing Board contracted with the SAG Corporation to compile public and non-public state and NAEP data to better understand the current accommodations landscape across the country, and to compare NAEP to state assessment programs. This information should help inform Board members in considering whether the Board's policy on students with disabilities and English learners warrants review.