

Existing tests cannot be compared, panel says

Eds: Hold for release at noon EDT

By ROBERT GREENE

AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Comparing results from the array of standardized tests that schoolchildren already take would not work as a substitute for national tests proposed by President Clinton, an expert panel said today.

In a report requested by Congress, the special committee took no position on whether there should be national tests that measure individual reading and math performance against a uniform standard.

The panel from the independent, advisory National Research Council did say that existing tests developed by states and private companies are too diverse for the results to be compared one to the other or to national or international benchmarks.

Clinton proposed early last year that a voluntary national test be developed for fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math as a way for parents to know better how their children and schools are performing.

Marshall S. Smith, the acting deputy secretary of education, said the report shows that a national test is needed.

"We've believed all along that it was important for states and communities to have a challenging benchmark in effect to measure their progress against in reading and math," he said. "I think it's important for parents in Louisiana to know how their students are doing compared with students in Massachusetts, in Minnesota or California."

Congress, in a spending bill last fall, limited the work that could be done on the tests. But the issue will be debated again when lawmakers consider a 1999 spending bill for the Education Department.

Opponents say the tests are unnecessary because existing tests already give a good picture and the federal government should not be determining standards. Other opponents say the tests would harm blacks and Hispanics from poor school districts.

Rep. Bill Goodling, R-Pa., chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee, said the finding "is neither surprising nor disappointing."

"This study shows that there is already a vast array of tests at the state and local level," he said. "Any attempt by the Clinton administration to implement new federal tests would violate state and local authority and disrupt recent and expensive state education reforms."

[robert&greene]

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
COMMISSION ON BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AND EDUCATION
2101 Constitution Avenue Washington, DC 20418

BOARD ON TESTING AND ASSESSMENT
Michael J. Feuer, Ph.D., Director

202-334-3087
202-334-3584 FAX

July 22, 1998

Mr. Michael Cohen
Special Assistant to the President for Education
Old Executive Office Building, Room 224
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Mr. Cohen:



Enclosed is a copy of the published report, Equivalency and Linkage of Educational Tests: interim report. Submission of this interim report is required by Grant No. ED-98-CO-0005 between the National Academy of Sciences and the U.S. Department of Education. The study on which this report is based was completed by the National Research Council's Board on Testing and Assessment through its Committee on the Equivalency and Linkage of Educational Tests.

If you have questions about the contents of this report, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Feuer, Director
Board on Testing and Assessment

Enclosure

c: Michael Feuer
Rebecca LaPlante
Brenda Buchbinder

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
COMMISSION ON BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AND EDUCATION

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BOARD ON TESTING AND ASSESSMENT
Michael J. Feuer, Ph.D., Director

202-334-3087
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January 16, 1998

Mr. Michael Cohen
Special Assistant to the President for Education
Old Executive Office Building, Room 224
Washington, DC 20502

Mike
Dear ~~Mr.~~ Cohen:

As you know, the National Academy of Sciences has been asked to undertake three concurrent studies to inform ongoing deliberations over proposed voluntary national tests in reading and mathematics. H.R. 2264 requires that the Academy consult with the National Governors' Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Assessment Government Board, the White House, and the Congress in carrying out this study of the feasibility of developing an equivalency scale to link existing state and/or commercial tests. The purposes of this letter are (i) to solicit your inputs regarding potential committee members for this equivalency and linking study; and (ii) to suggest a framework for regular consultations throughout the duration of the study.

The purpose of the equivalency and linking study is to evaluate the feasibility of developing an equivalency scale to compare results from existing state and/or commercial tests and link them to each other and to the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Under the aegis of its Board on Testing and Assessment, the Academy is assembling a committee of experts to undertake this study. We are seeking individuals with qualifications and substantive experience in at least the following areas: psychometric aspects of test linkage, statistics, state and district testing policy and practice, large-scale assessment, and mathematics and reading content. We welcome your suggestions for potential committee members *as soon as possible*. A report on the Academy's findings is to be delivered to the White House and the Congress by September 1, 1998. Since we are moving very quickly to meet this deadline, we would appreciate receiving your suggestions for potential committee members by January 23, 1998.

Mr. Cohen
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Our goal is to arrange a regular monthly meeting with representatives of the various organizations and agencies specified in H.R. 2264, in order to provide opportunities for ongoing input and consultation. Academy staff will telephone you shortly to arrange the details. Please let us know who will be the contact person in your organization.

I look forward to working with you on this important study, and hope to hear from you soon.

Thank you for your kind assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "M. Feuer", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael J. Feuer, Director
Board on Testing and Assessment

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COMMISSION ON BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AND EDUCATION

2101 Constitution Avenue Washington, DC 20418

BOARD ON TESTING AND ASSESSMENT
Michael J. Feuer, Ph.D., Director

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MEMORANDUM VIA FACSIMILE

TO: Michael Cohen, Special Asst. to the President for Education 202/456-7028

FROM: Michael Feuer, Director, Board on Testing and Assessment 202/334-3584

DATE: February 17, 1998

SUBJECT: First Meeting of the Committee on Equivalency and Linkage of Educational Tests, February 20, 1998 and Consulting Group Members Telephone Conference Call, February 19, 1998

PAGES: 4

This fax memo follows my letter to you of January 16 concerning P.L. 105-78, and your role in the National Academy of Sciences study of the feasibility of developing an equivalency scale to link existing state and/or commercial tests to each other and to NAEP. This memo is sent to provide you with information on the first meeting of the Committee on Linkage and Equivalency of Educational Tests, which will take place on Friday, February 20.

The attached agenda includes a block of time on Friday (10:30 am -12:00 pm), part of which has been devoted to hearing remarks you may wish to make about perspectives or concerns about this study from the perspective of the organization you represent.

In response to several inquiries, we would like to arrange a short telephone conference call prior to the meeting of the full Committee. Among many things, this would be a good time to set up our regular consultative meetings. It works for most calendars to have this call take place on Thursday, February 19 at 12:00 ET. Are you able to participate? Email Cadelle Hemphill at chemphil@nas.edu with your appropriate telephone number for the conference operator.

Additional project information about the Committee is available on the Internet at www.nas.edu ("Current Projects"). I am also attaching a preliminary timeline for the study.

I look forward to talking with you; please remember to email the appropriate telephone number to Cadelle Hemphill at chemphil@nas.edu. Thank you.

**National Research Council/National Academy of Sciences
BOARD ON TESTING AND ASSESSMENT**

Committee on Equivalency and Linkage of Educational Tests

First Meeting

February 20-21, 1998

**National Academy of Sciences -- Room GR104
2101 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC**

AGENDA

Friday, February 20, 1998

OPEN SESSION

10:30 am

**Welcome and Opening Remarks
Review the Major Study Issues
Review the Committee's Charge
Introduction of Committee Members, Staff and
Invited Guests
Paul Holland, Committee Chair
Michael Feuer, BOTA Director
Remarks from the Contracting Agency
Holly Spurlock, Department of Education**

Discussion of Selected Relevant Research

- *A Primer on Test Equating: some terminology, basic results, intuitions and relations to IRT*
- *Linking Statewide Tests to the NAEP: Stability of Results*
- *Projecting to the NAEP Scale: Results from the North Carolina End-of-Grade Testing Program*
- *Linking to Large-Scale Assessment: An Empirical Evaluation*
- *Content Analysis Project -- State and NAEP Mathematics Assessments*
- *Content Congruence as a Factor in the Linking of State Assessments to NAEP*
- *Linking Statewide Test to NAEP: Accuracy of Combining Test Results Across States*

12:00 pm

Lunch



1:00 pm	Discussion of the Relevant Research Continues
2:00 pm	Discussion of the Main Themes to Emerge from the Research and Issues that Revolve Around NAEP as a Special Testing Program
3:00 pm	BREAK
4:00 pm	Preliminary Framing of Questions
5:00 pm	Discussion of Technical, Content and Format Issues

Committee on Equivalency and Linkage of Educational Tests***Timeline***

February 20-21	First Committee Meeting Washington, DC
March 25-26	Second Committee Meeting Beckman Center Irvine, CA
April	Draft interim report
May 1-2	Tentative Third Committee Meeting Place TBD
May 15	Interim report into review
June 15	Interim report delivered
June 30	Draft of final report mailed to Committee members
July 7-8	Final Committee Meeting Woods Hole, MA
July 15	Final report into review
August 25-30	Final edits
September 1	Final report delivered

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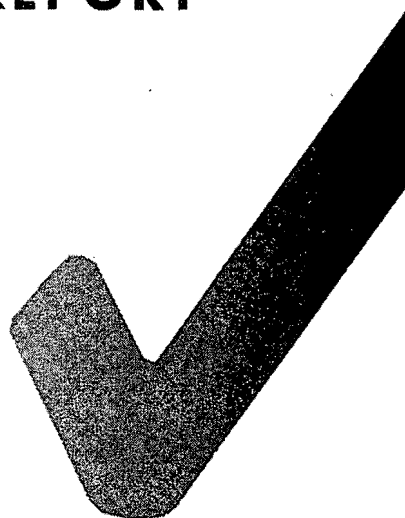
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Equivalency and Linkage of Educational Tests

INTERIM REPORT



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