



National Assessment Governing Board

National Assessment of Educational Progress

April 28, 1997

Michael Cohen
Assistant to the President
for Education
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mike:

We are delighted that you have agreed to discuss the President's national test initiative with the Governing Board and are looking forward to your presentation.

Enclosed, for your information, is a copy of the full agenda for the May Board meeting and a list of Governing Board members.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Roy Truby
Executive Director

Enclosure

800 North Capitol Street, N.W.
Suite 825, Mailstop 7583
Washington, D.C. 20002-4233
Phone: (202) 357-6938
Fax: (202) 357-6945

National Assessment Governing Board

Meeting of May 8 - 10, 1997

*The Madison Hotel
15th and M Streets, NW
Washington, DC*

AGENDA

Thursday, May 8

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Achievement Levels Committee (Closed) <i>Michael Nettles, Chair</i>	<i>Executive Chambers 1 & 2</i>
3:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Subject Area Committee #2 (Closed 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.) <i>Marilyn McConachie, Chair</i>	<i>Drawing Room 1</i>
5:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Executive Committee (Closed 6:30 - 7:00 p.m.) <i>William T. Randall, Chair</i>	<i>Drawing Rooms 3 & 4</i>

Friday, May 9

8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	<i>Dolly Madison Ballroom</i>
8:30 - 8:45 a.m.	Approval of the Agenda and Introduction of New Board Members <i>William T. Randall, Chair</i>	<i>Dolly Madison Ballroom</i>
	Executive Director's Report <i>Roy Truby</i>	
8:45 - 9:30 a.m.	President Clinton's Initiative on Voluntary National Tests <i>Michael Cohen</i> <i>Assistant to the President, for Education</i>	
9:30 - 10:00 a.m.	NAEP Update <i>Pascal D. Forgione, Jr.</i> <i>Commissioner, NCES</i>	
10:00 - 12:00 p.m.	Committee Meetings	
	Joint Meeting Subject Area Committees #1 and #2 <i>Marilyn McConachie, Co-Chair</i> <i>William Moloney, Co-Chair</i>	<i>Drawing Rooms 1 & 2</i>
	Design and Methodology Committee <i>Mark Musick, Chair</i>	<i>Drawing Rooms 3 & 4</i>
	Reporting and Dissemination Committee <i>Michael Guerra, Chair</i>	<i>Arlington Room</i>
12:00 - 1:45 p.m.	Working Lunch Briefing on the 1996 NAEP Science Report Card <i>Pascal D. Forgione, Jr., NCES</i>	
1:00 - 1:45 p.m.	Briefing and Discussion on Science Achievement Levels (Closed) <i>Michael Nettles, NAGB</i>	
1:45 - 2:45 p.m.	Panel Discussion Reading Initiative <i>Carol Rasco, Director</i> <i>America Reads Challenge</i>	
	Math Initiative <i>Judy Wurtzel, Director</i> <i>Eighth Grade Math Initiative</i>	

Friday, May 9 (con't.)

2:45 - 3:00 p.m. Break

3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Board Discussion on NAEP Redesign

Saturday, May 10

8:30 - 9:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast *Dolly Madison Ballroom*

9:00 - 9:45 a.m. Presentation on National Academy of Education's Report,
Assessment in Transition, Monitoring the Nation's
Educational Progress *Dolly Madison Ballroom*
 George Bohrnstedt
 Project Director, American Institutes for Research

9:45 - 12:00 noon Committee Reports

Subject Area Committee #2
Marilyn McConachie, Chair

Subject Area #1 and #2 Joint Committee
Marilyn McConachie, Co-Chair
William Moloney, Co-Chair

Reporting and Dissemination Committee
Michael Guerra, Chair

Design and Methodology Committee
Mark Musick, Chair

Achievement Levels Committee
Michael Nettles, Chair

Executive Committee
Mary R. Blanton, Vice-Chair

12:00 Noon Adjournment

The next scheduled meeting of the Governing Board
is August 1 - 2, 1997. The meeting site will be:
The Ritz Carlton Hotel
Pentagon City
Arlington, VA

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD

(January 1997)

HONORABLE WILLIAM T. RANDALL, Chair

Former Commissioner of Education

State of Colorado

Denver, Colorado

MARY R. BLANTON, Vice Chair

Attorney

Blanton and Blanton

Salisbury, North Carolina

PATSY CAVAZOS

Principal

W.G. Love Accelerated School

Houston, Texas

CATHERINE A. DAVIDSON

Secondary Education Director

Central Kitsap School District

Silverdale, Washington

EDWARD DONLEY

Former Chairman

Air Products & Chemical, Inc.

Allentown, Pennsylvania

***HONORABLE JAMES EDGAR**

Governor of Illinois

Springfield, Illinois

JAMES E. ELLINGSON

Fourth-Grade Classroom Teacher

Probstfield Elementary School

Moorhead, Minnesota

THOMAS H. FISHER

Director Student Assessment Services

Florida Department of Education

Tallahassee, Florida

MICHAEL J. GUERRA

Executive Director

National Catholic Education Association

Secondary School Department

Washington, DC

EDWARD H. HAERTEL

Professor

School of Education

Stanford University

Stanford, California

JAN B. LOVELESS

District Communications Specialist

Midland Public Schools

Midland, Michigan

MARILYN B. McCONACHIE

Former School Board Member

Glenbrook High Schools

Glenview, Illinois

WILLIAM J. MOLONEY

Superintendent of Schools

Calvert County Public Schools

Prince Frederick, Maryland

HONORABLE ANNETTE MORGAN

Former Member
Missouri House of Representatives
Jefferson City, Missouri

MARK D. MUSICK

President
Southern Regional Education Board
Atlanta, Georgia

MITSUGI NAKASHIMA

Former President
Hawaii State Board of Education
Honolulu, Hawaii

MICHAEL T. NETTLES

Professor of Education & Policy
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan

HONORABLE NORMA PAULUS

Superintendent of Public Instruction
Oregon State Department of Education
Salem, Oregon

HONORABLE ROY ROMER

Governor of Colorado
Denver, Colorado

HONORABLE EDGAR D. ROSS

Former (State) Senator
Christiansted, St. Croix
U.S. Virgin Islands

FANNIE L. SIMMONS

Math Coordinator
District 5 of Lexington/Richland County
Ballentine, South Carolina

ADAM URBANSKI

President
Rochester Teachers Association
Rochester, New York

DEBORAH VOLTZ

Assistant Professor
Department of Special Education
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

MARILYN A. WHIRRY

Twelfth-Grade English Teacher
Mira Costa High School
Manhattan Beach, California

DENNIE PALMER WOLF

Senior Research Associate
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Cambridge, Massachusetts

RAMON C. CORTINES

Acting Assistant Secretary of Education
Office of Educational Research and
Improvement
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC

Play - Jones
- I can't
with me
do it all
on my
no doll
pull out

Pratt
ach / sym
Went 1 h
I - CMA

NAGB MEETING

1. PURPOSE OF TESTING INITIATIVE

-- 4TH GRADE READING, 8TH GRADE MATH, BASED ON NAEP CONTENT FRAMEWORKS AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS, TESTS FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

-- FOCUS ON BASIC SKILLS AT KEY TRANSITION POINTS, USING WIDELY ACCEPTED STANDARDS

-- NOT JUST A TESTING INITIATIVE, BUT AN ACHIEVEMENT INITIATIVE--INTENDED TO PROMPT SERIOUS STATE AND COMMUNITY EFFORTS TO PREPARE KIDS (AMERICA READS, MATH DIRECTIVE)

Identifying

PRESIDENT HAS CHALLENGED EVERY STATE TO PARTICIPATE; SUPPLEMENT NOT REPLACE STATE STANDARDS AND TESTING

Try

MARK M.'S COMPARISONS BETWEEN STATE AND NAEP ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS -- BENCHMARKING FOR STATES AND FOR PARENTS; MAKE SURE THAT PARENTS CAN HAVE THE SAME CONVERSATION AROUND DINNER TABLE FOR OWN KIDS THAT CONGRESSIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES HAVE WHEN NAEP IS RELEASED

Basic Design

2. STATUS UPDATE

Consult
with Mary
at 5:15

RFP ON STREET -- POSSIBLE SEPARATE CONTRACTORS FOR EACH

CCSSO DEVELOPING TEST SPECIFICATIONS

WEBPAGE

MEETINGS WITH EXPERTS--TESTING AND SUBJECT MATTER

STATE SIGN-UP (MD, MI, NC, DODEA, CA? OTHERS COMING IN NEXT FEW MONTHS)

EXPLORING WORKING WITH CITIES AS WELL

3. CONGRESSIONAL ISSUES

Indicate on the account
not - Spent on

AUTHORITY IN FIE TO DEVELOP TESTS -- COMPARABLE TO STANDARDS

POSSIBILITY OF BIPARTISAN SUPPORT ON HILL --RIGGS, CASTLE AND DEMS -- THOUGH FAR FROM UNANIMOUS SUPPORT

4. KEY ISSUE -- HOW TO CREATE MECHANISM TO MOVE TOWARD NATIONAL RATHER THAN FEDERA, TO PROVIDE BROAD INPUT AND ADVICE, AND TO MAKE SURE THAT FINAL PRODUCT IS CONSISTENT WITH NAEP CONTENT FRAMEWORK AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS, AND TO PROVIDE SUCH ASSURANCE IN COMPELLING AND CREDIBLE WAY TO PUBLIC

---WE ARE EXPLORING OPTIONS

---SOME HAVE SUGGESTED NAGB-LIKE STRUCTURE; SOME HAVE SUGGESTED MAKING NECESSARY STATUTORY CHANGES IN ORDER TO GIVE THIS REPSONSIBILITY TO NAGB

--- WE ARE OPEN AND INTERESTED IN IDEAS

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD

Current Responsibilities:

1. Select subject areas to be assessed
2. Develop student performance levels for each age and grade in each subject area to be tested
3. Develop assessment objectives and test specifications through national consensus
4. Design methodology of the assessment
5. Develop guidelines for reporting and disseminating results
6. Develop standards and procedures for interstate, regional and national comparisons; and,
7. Take appropriate actions needed to improve the form and use of the National Assessment

Proposed Responsibilities for Individual Test

1. To develop assessments of individual student performance in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math, which are based on the content frameworks and assessment objectives for NAEP in those subject areas and grade levels, and which include student performance levels consistent with (or: comparable to, equivalent to) the student performance levels in NAEP in those subject areas and grade levels. In order to develop these individual assessments, NAGB shall:
 - o Develop assessment objectives and test specifications
 - o Design methodology of the assessment
 - o Conduct (review) pilot and field tests and make adjustments as necessary
 - o Conduct studies necessary to determine that test is consistent with NAEP content framework and achievement levels, and report results of studies to (Secretary? House and Senate Committees?)
 - o Conduct studies to link individual math test to TIMSS
2. Develop policies and procedures for licensing the tests to test publishers, States and school districts
3. Each year after tests are administered, arrange for public release and widespread dissemination (including on the Internet)

of test items, correct answers, scoring procedures, examples of student work, etc.

4. Develop new forms of test each year, for administration beginning in Spring 1999.

5. Work with states on a voluntary basis to facilitate school, district, state, regional and national comparisons based on individual results.

Issues to Address:

1. Administration: Does NAGB carry out its work (e.g., issue RFP's for test development, R&D) through NAGB staff or through NCES/OERI staff?

2. Determining subject areas and grade levels for individual testing: Do we limit NAGB's authority for individual tests to the current plan, or do we give it more general authority to develop individual tests in the subject areas and grade levels of its choosing (though it must begin with current plan)? The President (1) will not want to go back to Congress if he wants NAEP-based individual tests in additional subjects and grade levels (2) may not want to give away (to NAGB) his ability to initiate additional tests. Can we give Secretary authority to determine additional subject areas/grade levels, and then tell NAGB to develop them?

3. Timing of initial test administration: How serious is the danger that the test development schedule will be delayed if/when NAGB assumes responsibility? Do we specify in law that initial test administration must be in 1999, or do we rely on our public commitments and the momentum of the work underway? Should NAGB have the authority to delay initial administration if it determines the tests are not ready? If the tests are not ready, wouldn't the best course of action be for NAGB to delay for a year (perhaps treating 1999 as a trial administration)?

4. Transition: How do we draft legislation so that it carries the clear expectation that NAGB will pick up on the work already underway and keep going, rather than starting over again? Does this argue for making NAGB an advisory committee right away?

5. Prohibitions: NAGB and ED must be prohibited from collecting and/or reporting test data from individual students. NAGB must be prohibited from restricting the purposes for which states or districts can use the test (including for high stakes).

6. Risks: Legislation drafted to meet the above specifications will have to include language authorizing an individual-level test. If the final bill does not contain such a provision, will that undermine our ability to use FIE -- on the grounds the Congress specifically considered and rejected authority for an individual test.

7. **Establishing NAGB as an advisory committee:** (1) We need to look carefully at nominations for positions that may/will become open before any of them are filled. (2) We need to get NGA Exec. Committee members on board [if they want a role for ACHIEVE in this, ACHIEVE can help states judge how well aligned state standards are with NAEP]. (3) We need to try to get Riggs, Castle, G. Miller, Kildee, Jeffords, Kennedy and Bingaman to support new NAGB role, through executive action and through legislation.



National Assessment Governing Board

National Assessment of Educational Progress

May 27, 1997

Michael Cohen
Assistant to the President
for Education
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mike:

Thank you once again for your presentation to the Governing Board. The Board members were grateful for the opportunity to discuss the President's voluntary national test initiative with you. Of particular interest are the connections with NAEP redesign, achievement levels, and the Governing Board itself. We look forward to continuing discussions with you on these matters.

For your information, I am enclosing a copy of the transcript of your session.

Sincerely,

Roy Truby
Executive Director

Enclosure

800 North Capitol Street, N.W.
Suite 825, Mailstop 7583
Washington, D.C. 20002-4233
Phone: (202) 357-6938
Fax: (202) 357-6945

National Test Presentation

12

1 then we will open it up for dialogue and discussion
2 with Mike about this whole set of issues, and I am
3 sure other ones that will come up. Thank you for
4 being here.

5  MR. COHEN: Thank you, Bill. I am happy
6 to be here. I knew as I was preparing for this
7 meeting this morning that I was coming to talk to a
8 very important group, but until Roy's report, I didn't
9 realize that I was also coming to talk to a
10 prestigious group, or at least I had forgotten that I
11 was coming to talk to a prestigious group, but I am
12 glad that I am in such good company this morning.

13 Let me just digress for a moment. I
14 enjoyed, Roy, your historical presentation, and it
15 reminded me of two things. One little known footnote
16 to history is that when the Alexander-James group was
17 doing its work, I was commissioned to write a paper
18 for them on the design of state assessment systems,
19 which to this day I am convinced is really the pivotal
20 input that they received in shaping their
21 recommendations.

22 I was also reminded -- one of the first

1 times that I talked to NAGB was -- I guess it would
2 have been in early 1990. I was at the National
3 Governor's Association at the time and the governors
4 had just completed the Charlottesville Education
5 Summit and were in the process of writing national
6 goals. My job was to explain to NAGB what the
7 governors had in mind for NAEP by way of monitoring
8 progress towards achieving the goals. Safely 8 years
9 or 7 years later, I can tell you they weren't sure at
10 the time. But I wasn't allowed to say that. So we
11 engaged in an exercise of interpreting various
12 sections of various documents that the governors in
13 the Bush Administration produced, much like
14 determining the significance of the difference between
15 achievable versus feasible performance standards.
16 Checker Finn on NAGB at the time likened it to
17 interpreting the Talmud. And all of a sudden for the
18 first time I got a sense of how they must have put
19 that document together. In any event, I am pleased to
20 have had an opportunity to reflect on those moments as
21 you all were getting started this morning.

22 I want to talk to you about the

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 President's initiative for national testing. As I
2 brief you on that, I ask you to be thinking about one
3 of the issues that we all are thinking about, which is
4 how best to structure a relationship between that
5 effort and this Board, and that is an important issue.
6 It is not an easy one. I will share some thoughts
7 with you on that and ask you to share your thoughts on
8 that with me as well.

9 As I am sure you are all aware, in his
10 State of the Union Address last February, the
11 President proposed a National Testing initiative
12 focused on 4th grade reading and 8th grade math, and
13 explicitly based on the content frameworks and
14 achievement levels that you all have developed in
15 those subject areas and grade levels. In a non-
16 technical sense, we are envisioning an individual
17 version of NAEP, if you will. A test that when
18 students take and parents get the results back, they
19 will know how well their student -- whether or not
20 their students are meeting basic, proficient, or
21 advanced levels of achievement as you all define them
22 in NAEP.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 We have focused explicitly and purposely
2 on reading and math because they are basic skills. We
3 have focused on 4th and 8th grade level because in
4 reading at the 4th grade level and in math at the 8th
5 grade level, they are pivotal transition points. As
6 you well know, in grade school, the first three years
7 are basically spent teaching children to read. And
8 after that point, children read to learn or are at
9 least expected to read to learn. If they haven't
10 mastered a basic level of reading proficiency by that
11 point, the rest of their schooling career is in some
12 jeopardy. Similarly, students who have not achieved
13 a high level of proficiency in math by the 8th grade,
14 including mastering algebra, are far less likely to
15 put themselves on a trajectory that will lead to
16 college or preparation for the kind of jobs that they
17 will be confronting in the future. So we have been
18 quite deliberate about the grade levels and subject
19 areas that we have picked.

20 We don't see this as simply a testing
21 initiative, that is, the point of this is not simply
22 to find out how are we doing, though as I will say in

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS

1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 a minute, that is a critical point in this. But we
2 really think of this more as an achievement
3 initiative. The idea is to use the standards -- use
4 the performance standards as a way of mobilizing state
5 and community efforts that are focused on helping
6 prepare kids to meet standards in reading and math.
7 So, for example, an equally important part of the
8 President's education agenda, and I think Carol Rasco
9 will be here later today to talk about that, is the
10 America Reads initiative, which is focused on
11 preparing everybody to read independently well by the
12 4th grade. We see those two going hand-in-hand in
13 that sense.

14 The tests are voluntary. No state is
15 required to use them. They are not tied to the
16 receipt of any federal funds except for the fact that
17 we have made clear that at least in the first year of
18 administration, in 1999, we intend for the Federal
19 Government to underwrite the cost of administering and
20 scoring, which we estimate now to be in the ballpark
21 of \$10.00 to \$12.00 per student. We have left open at
22 this point the issue of whether the Federal Government

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 would continue to provide that kind of support in
2 subsequent years. But except for that piece of it,
3 there is no funding tied to it for any state or local
4 community that participates.

5 One other reason that we think this is
6 very important is you know that when the NAEP results
7 are released, national and/or state-by-state, you
8 provoke a very important conversation in the country
9 about how well we are doing. Are we making progress
10 or not? Are we making enough progress? Are we making
11 progress with all of the children that we need to
12 focus on? That has always been the strength of NAEP
13 is that you provide an honest, accurate, credible kind
14 of information that policy makers and the public can
15 rely on in general for focus of conversations about
16 where we are in the country and where we need to go.

17 The next time the NAEP results are
18 released, when you release the state-by-state math
19 results in a little while, that conversation will be
20 provoked once again. But it will be provoked
21 principally on the front page of the newspaper, we
22 hope. It will be provoked principally in

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

(202) 234-4433

1 Congressional hearings and in legislative meeting
2 rooms, but it will not happen, you know, in anyone's
3 kitchen table or in anyone's kitchen. Parents are not
4 going to sit down and talk about whether their kid is
5 making the kind of progress that is needed because
6 that information won't be available to them. No
7 parent is going to know whether or not their child is
8 reading at the basic level or the advanced level.
9 They won't know whether their 8th grader is stacking
10 up against international standards at all. That
11 information is not available to them. We think it
12 ought to be available, and the purpose of this testing
13 initiative is essentially to make that information
14 available. So that by the spring of 1999, parents all
15 over the country can have that kind of conversation
16 about whether their child is moving on course or not
17 against the kind of standards that they are, in fact,
18 going to be judged against in the real world.

19 One of the things we found quite
20 impressive is a graph, Mark, that I first saw you use
21 when you talked to the National Education Goals Panel
22 I guess about a year ago comparing the percentage of

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

(202) 234-4433

1 students that meet NAEP proficient levels on a state-
2 by-state basis with the percentage of students that
3 particular states say are meeting their standards.
4 That was a rather dramatic and stunning chart. I am
5 sure you all remember it. But you know, there are
6 states in this country in which based on the
7 information that the state testing program provides,
8 80 percent of the students are meeting state
9 standards, when in fact 20 to 30 percent are meeting
10 the proficient standard that you all have designed.
11 We think parents in those states ought to have
12 accurate information about how well their children are
13 doing. This, again, is a critical tool for doing
14 that.

15 So that, in a nutshell, are the basic
16 purposes behind this. Let me give you sort of a quick
17 overview of where we are in the process. We are
18 proceeding to develop the tests. An RFP for the
19 development contract is on the street now. Is that
20 right, Ray? I guess the award date is sometime in
21 early September. If you have any real questions, ask
22 Ray or Gary. Gary Phillips, behind me, is leading the

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

(202) 234-4433

1 effort in the department to oversee the development of
2 that testing. He is really doing quite a good job at
3 that.

4 The chief state school officers have been
5 asked to develop the item specifications in much the
6 same way that they do for NAEP. There is a Web page,
7 the address of which I can't remember, that makes all
8 the information that we have about the test available
9 to anyone who wants it. The test will be designed so
10 that it is consistent with the basic psychometric
11 testing standards so that it can be used in a variety
12 of ways. The 8th grade test will be available in both
13 Spanish and English, that is for math. The reading
14 test is a test of reading and therefore is in English
15 only -- or a test of reading and English, and
16 therefore it is an English-only test.

17 Basically, we are proceeding with the
18 development process. The field testing will be done
19 next spring. We expect the test to be available for
20 initial administration in the spring of 1999. We are
21 slowly beginning to engage the states in discussions
22 about participating in the testing initiative. The

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

(202) 234-4433

1 chief state school officers group has endorsed the
2 initiative, and so far Maryland, Michigan, and North
3 Carolina have -- or the governor, the chief, and the
4 State Board of Education in some fashion or another
5 have indicated an interest in participating in this.
6 We have ongoing conversations with a number of other
7 states that are also indicating an interest, and I
8 expect over the next few months, you will see more and
9 more states come on board, which in some sense is, as
10 I think about this, pretty remarkable given that the
11 test is not developed yet. So this is starting --
12 there is starting to be a build-up of interest in the
13 states on this.

14 We have begun discussions with cities. As
15 you know, cities often have their own testing
16 programs, either on top of or independent of the
17 state, and we are detecting some real interest in
18 cities also, which I think is very important because
19 it can send a very powerful message that in our urban
20 areas, the expectations for those students must be as
21 high as they are for everyone else, and there needs to
22 be efforts both to set those expectations to measure

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 performance and to engage in the activities necessary
2 to prepare students to meet those standards. So we
3 think that could be a positive development as those
4 discussions unfold.

5 There was a hearing at the House Education
6 Subcommittee last week on this initiative. I would
7 say several things about that. One is we see evidence
8 of bipartisan support for this initiative. A number
9 of the Democrats on the committee -- Dale Kilde and
10 George Miller, among others, were very supportive of
11 this as was the subcommittee chairman, Frank Riggs,
12 and Mr. Castle from Delaware, who if memory serves me
13 well served on this Board at one point. It would also
14 be fair to say that we have less than unanimous
15 support for this on the committee, and there are some
16 signs of concern and opposition, and we are going to
17 do everything we can to work with folks who are
18 expressing those concerns.

19 One issue, and I want to close on this
20 point -- one issue that we are thinking very hard
21 about, though we are in the early stages of thinking
22 about it, is it is clear that if this test is going to

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 be well received and widely used, as widely used and
2 as well received as NAEP is, then we are going to have
3 to take some steps to make sure, first of all, that
4 this is seen as a national test and not an education
5 department test, if you will. There is going to need
6 to be a mechanism to insure that there is involvement
7 in the process of overseeing the development of the
8 test. We need to make sure frankly that at the end of
9 the day, and in some sense this is the most critical
10 bottom line, that what makes this test valuable or
11 what will make this test valuable is its link, as I
12 said earlier, to the content framework and achievement
13 levels that this Board has set. And at the end of the
14 day and at various points along the way, we will need
15 some ways of assuring people that, in fact, that is
16 where we are headed and that the test meets those two
17 characteristics. So we have been trying to think
18 about how we can do that over and above the various
19 evaluation contracts and studies that will be led and
20 so on and so forth.

21 One of the thoughts that keeps coming up
22 or one of the issues that a number of people have

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 raised with us is to build the connection between this
2 initiative and NAGB. You ought to have some
3 responsibility and influence on this. Now as you well
4 know, at this point in time you are prohibited from
5 playing a role on an individual test. But as you well
6 know, at this point in time we are all looking to the
7 reauthorization of this group. So it provides an
8 opportunity to think about making some statutory
9 changes. We are in the very early stages of thinking
10 about this. We have not made any decisions or
11 commitments, but we are really trying to struggle with
12 what an advisory or governing structure for this
13 initiative might look like. I wanted you to know
14 that, and I think this might be a good opportunity for
15 you to begin to think about that and how NAGB and this
16 test might intersect. Either now or in the future, we
17 would welcome your comments or thoughts about that.
18 I think this is about the point at which I will stop
19 and see if there are comments, thoughts, questions, or
20 reactions. thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thanks, Mike. What
22 about reactions or questions? Advice?

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 MR. COHEN: We are always open to advice.

2 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Are there any points
3 anyone would like to make? Yes, Marilyn?

4 MS. WHIRRY: Mr. Cohen?

5 MR. COHEN: Yes.

6 MS. WHIRRY: Do you see any -- or do you
7 have any concerns that if this test were to continue,
8 which we hope it will, that there could be political
9 input in the future that might be a negative kind of
10 thing in working with the test? I am not talking
11 about now, but I am talking about in the future, where
12 it becomes more politicized? Is there a chance -- do
13 you worry about a chance that that could happen?

14 MR. COHEN: I have learned in the four-
15 plus years since I have been in this administration,
16 I worry about almost anything having a chance of being
17 politicized, even if they weren't politicized before.
18 So that is always a concern. On the other hand, I
19 think there is tremendous support for this kind of
20 step. I mean, keep in mind that these are basic
21 skills. We are not proposing, for example, to have a
22 national test in U.S. history. The public

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 overwhelmingly supports national standards, national
2 tests, basic skills, and basically having the
3 mechanisms to provide parents and students and
4 teachers with the information they need to know on
5 where students are, where schools are, et cetera. So
6 I think -- I guess I think there is always a danger in
7 a field like this that there will be -- how can I put
8 this -- first of all, we are operating in a political
9 arena. This is the government, after all, and so
10 there will be, in the best sense of the word, I think,
11 a political debate and discussion about this and we
12 welcome that. I think, as we have seen from time to
13 time in the past, this may become a target for groups
14 that don't share our agenda or I suspect share a great
15 support for public education. But I think that is not
16 where the public is overall, and I don't think we
17 ought to let the prospect of some attacks like that
18 stop us from doing what is right.

19 MS. WHIRRY: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Bill?

21 MR. MOLONEY: I will first say, from the
22 perspective of a district superintendent, I think this

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 is a surpassingly good idea. And it is for the good
2 of our nation to be greatly hoped that you succeed.
3 However, I would offer one caution and one suggestion.
4 As your remarks made clear, the opposition to this
5 will be extraordinary. As my own Congressman, Steny
6 Hoyer, pointed out to me in a recent conversation, the
7 inertial forces of the status quo, well known in this
8 city, are not to be underestimated. Maryland was, as
9 you said, one of the three states to support this, and
10 much credit is owing to our state superintendent,
11 Nancy Grasmick, and our State Board led by Christopher
12 Cross. However, I would tell you that if this
13 initiative had been put to a vote of the state's 24
14 superintendent's, a secret ballot, it would not have
15 commanded 2 of 24 votes.

16 MR. COHEN: You are on your own in
17 Maryland, huh?

18 MR. MOLONEY: Now in all of this, and our
19 own high stakes test was given last week and is the
20 subject of a citizen boycott through much something
21 not unlike what has occurred in a different context in
22 Michigan, there is great suspicion. We say national

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

(202) 234-4433

1 but not federal. We say voluntary but not mandatory.
2 But a lot of the citizens kind of nod and their eyes
3 become gimlet like and they say, we don't believe
4 that.

5 The suggestion is this. As you put this
6 together, and you asked us to give some thought to the
7 formation of an advisory unit, I think there is a
8 great resource that can hopefully be applied in some
9 way in this body. NAEP, which is even older than this
10 Board, has nearly 30 years, if you will, standing on
11 the course surrounding a test that is voluntary and
12 mandatory, that is national without being federal. So
13 I would just make the suggestion that as you are at
14 this very important crossroads, whatever it is you are
15 about, to the extent it can be joined to whatever it
16 is that we are about, I think by degrees, at least,
17 the suspicion and the resistance can be mitigated.
18 Because we do have a certain standing on the course
19 and would not automatically be seen as a suspicious
20 new thing coming from the usual suspects, as we are
21 sometimes viewed out there. So I would hope that
22 there would be an opportunity for the strongest kind

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 of role so that our resources could be joined to
2 yours. But this is tremendously important, a
3 wonderful initiative, and I would certainly wish you
4 all the best.

5 MR. COHEN: Thank you, Bill. As I should
6 -- by way of response -- first of all, as one of the
7 usual suspects, I should say that I welcome your
8 suggestion that we look for a way to join the
9 resources of this body, which are in large measure
10 your credibility and your track record, to this
11 effort. And that is precisely why I put the issue on
12 the table. I should also tell you that I am a parent
13 of two school children in Maryland, and I was actually
14 thrilled as a parent, in addition to as an
15 administration official, when Maryland chose to
16 participate. I am sorry that you are so -- your
17 support is so -- you don't have more support among
18 your colleagues there. Because one of the things that
19 I have found as a parent in Maryland is that while the
20 Maryland Performance Assessment Program I think is
21 quite good and is having a positive impact on what is
22 happening in the classroom, it is in fact quite

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 frustrating as a parent to have your kid go through
2 those tests. When my son was in the first cohort when
3 the third grade test was given, it was the best week
4 he had in school. It was the most engaging activities
5 he had in the whole year. But he came back and asked
6 me, what do you mean I am not going to get the results
7 on this test? Right? I am not going to find out how
8 well I did? I tried to explain matrix sampling to
9 him, but as a third grader, he hadn't been well enough
10 prepared for that discussion.

11 I think that is the value of this test.
12 It is that parents are going to get some information
13 that they desperately need and don't get from either
14 the state or local testing programs in the state. We
15 ought to have a side conversation about how we can get
16 more people to understand that.

17 MS. BLANTON: Mike, I had a couple of
18 questions along with throwing a suggestion out on the
19 table. One thing I wondered, and I am not sure Gary
20 has spoken to this either when we have had brief
21 conversations about this, is the issue of aggregating
22 data in your scheme of things. Are we going -- is

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 your intent simply to provide individual scores on
2 this test or is there going to be an effort to
3 aggregate data so that parents would not only see how
4 Johnny did in comparison to the NAEP achievement
5 levels, the NAGB achievement levels, as superimposed
6 on this test somehow, and that still is an enigma to
7 me since it is not the same test, but also whether or
8 not Johnny and his colleagues in his school and in his
9 district are going to be looked at in any larger
10 context. Because then it seems to me that you are
11 reinventing the wheel in some sense in that because
12 there is not a clear link between our two efforts, you
13 are going to end up doing the same thing we are doing
14 only from the bottom up rather than from the top down.
15 And I want to hear your response to that.

16 Then the second question is if there is
17 going to be a link, have you begun to think about what
18 that might be and what your sort of initial thoughts
19 are?

20 And the third part of that kind of follows
21 from that. And that is as you know, we have been
22 undergoing a redesign. One of the things that we have

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 been looking at is this idea of a short form of our
2 test that could be used by states, localities, and
3 even as an individual -- potentially as an individual
4 test that states could use and could embed in their
5 own state testing programs and that would give that
6 link. It would give you an individual estimate of how
7 a child will do on the NAEP reading test or math test
8 and an achievement level and have you thought about
9 the intersection of these two efforts focusing on that
10 kind of initiative? That is a lot of questions.

11 MR. COHEN: I will do the best I can to
12 answer them. Gary, anytime you want to join me up
13 here would be fine. I guess first on the aggregation
14 issue, let me go back a step. Our notion is the
15 department will essentially develop the tests and make
16 them available. We will license the test to test
17 publishers or to states or local school districts that
18 administer their own tests. At that point, what
19 happens with the individual results and whether and
20 how they are aggregated essentially is a state or
21 local decision. I would presume in the main, if you
22 just look around the country at state and local

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 testing practices, that sooner or later in some
2 fashion or another somewhere around the time that the
3 student and his or her parents get the results back,
4 there is generally school-by-school or district-by-
5 district reporting as well. So that there is an
6 aggregation process, but that occurs differently in
7 different states and different communities, and we see
8 the decision about whether and how to aggregate and
9 report and so on and so forth essentially being left
10 to the state and local level, and in that context,
11 therefore, continuing with the national and state NAEP
12 as well to provide the kind of picture that you
13 currently provide. There may be some point down the
14 road when, as we see how state and local reporting
15 practices develop, when we may want to take another
16 look at that. But at least for the foreseeable
17 future, as far as I could tell, the sampling approach
18 that you are taking and the individual approach that
19 we are suggesting in addition to that, that both are
20 going to be needed and ought to proceed.

21 I have forgotten the rest of your
22 questions. Linking -- remind me again? I mean, the

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

(202) 234-4433

1 last question was basically how do we connect these
2 two.

3 MS. BLANTON: I guess the one before that
4 was the linking. How you are going to superimpose --
5 how you are imagining these achievement levels that we
6 have set actually being superimposed on the test, or
7 whether you are just going to use them kind of as a
8 guide.

9 MR. COHEN: I am going to defer to Gary to
10 answer. I find in the position I am in, there is a
11 point at which I ought to stop messing in the
12 technical details and let people more capable at that
13 than I deal with it. Gary, that is your introduction.

14 MR. PHILLIPS: All right. Thank you. I
15 think you had two questions. One is how will the
16 linking be done, and two was how is this related to
17 the market basket. The linking will be done
18 essentially the same way that the NAEP-TIMSS link is
19 being linked except the methodology is likely to be a
20 little more sophisticated in that if you are familiar
21 with the NAEP-TIMSS link, the decision was made to not
22 have both students take the same test. We will have

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 both students take the same test so we can get a good
2 correlation between this test and NAEP. But
3 essentially, it is the same sort of methodology. And
4 that will be done independently of the testing program
5 and also independently of NAEP. So it will not burden
6 NAEP. It will not burden the testing program. It
7 would be a separate activity. It will be done one
8 year in advance, so that by the time the test is
9 administered that link is already known and available
10 to be used in the reporting.

11 The question about how is this related to
12 the market basket, I think the Board needs to spend
13 some time on this and to think this through. The
14 design of this test is similar but not identical to
15 the market basket, and the differences and
16 similarities, I think, need to be discussed. This is
17 really a good time -- if there ever were a good time
18 for this test to occur, this is probably it for NAEP,
19 because you are in the middle of a redesign activity,
20 and you need to be thinking through what this test is
21 all about and how it relates to your plans under the
22 redesign. So that when the RFP is written this

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 summer, that can be accommodated. I would recommend
2 that this be a topic of discussion at the next Board
3 meeting this summer.

4 MS. BLANTON: Just if I could follow up --
5 because as you know too, we are sort of in the middle
6 of looking with states at their state assessments and
7 seeing how links can be framed between the trial state
8 assessments and their own state assessments, and that
9 seems another avenue for kind of getting at this same
10 issue and maybe with a broader applicability. So I do
11 feel like it is a wonderful time, and I am delighted
12 that you all are going to sort of share this with us
13 so that we can not duplicate efforts but build on one
14 another's efforts and see if eventually we can
15 actually come to one of these wonderful places where
16 things actually work together rather than working
17 against one another.

18 I think states are looking -- as we saw
19 from that Ramsey's report yesterday, states are
20 looking not so much for yet another stand alone test,
21 but for some way to use what is already there and to
22 get the links that will enable them to piggyback on

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 what they are doing in a way that is going to give a
2 richer meaning.

3 MR. HAERTEL: Is there any possibility of
4 linking the national test to the market basket rather
5 than linking the national test to the original matrix
6 sample NAEP? Those two tests would be much more
7 similar in content and therefore the linking would be
8 defensible and would be expected to hold up a little
9 better across time.

10 MR. PHILLIPS: Well, what the national
11 test would link to would depend on what NAEP is doing.
12 You haven't decided yet to do the market basket. If
13 you are doing the market basket, that would be an
14 obvious choice. If you are not, then we would link to
15 the regular matrix sample bib spiraled assessment.

16 MS. WOLF: Maybe we can get you back again
17 into the discussion. We know that a test like this
18 can and will galvanize attention. The question is
19 whether it will galvanize change. And I think that
20 has everything to do with the larger system in which
21 it is embedded, both what comes before 4th grade and
22 the systems that are put in place to help districts

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 and localities to make use of the data, not to just
2 wring their hands over the data. So the question I
3 have for you, and to some extent it is probably a
4 question for Ray as well, is on the front end, what
5 initiatives are there besides America Reads, or is
6 that the sole one, with the incline to doing well, and
7 on the back end, what initiatives are you thinking of
8 that will help people to use the data, to draw
9 inferences from it, to think about practice?

10 MR. COHEN: Let me -- I think we will
11 probably all want to say something on that. In terms
12 of preparation -- first of all, in addition to America
13 Reads, let me remind you that America Reads includes
14 not only an effort to create a tutoring initiative to
15 supplement in-class instruction, but it has a very
16 strong early childhood component including the
17 continued expansion of Headstart and early Headstart,
18 and a significant outreach effort to the parents,
19 starting literally when youngsters are born to make
20 sure that parents understand all that we are learning
21 about early child development and the kinds of things
22 that they need to do at home that can really make a

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 difference.

2 We kind of think of Title I as a pretty
3 significant component of preparing students for this.
4 It is aimed at the same kinds of high standards. We
5 continue or the Department continues to look for ways
6 of highlighting effective practices so that people can
7 use Title I funds as effectively as possible. The
8 Eisenhower funds are available for professional
9 development and the like. So we think a range of
10 federal resources that are already there can be
11 usefully focused on both subject areas and grade
12 levels.

13 At the direction of the President, there
14 is an inter-agency group led by the Education
15 Department and the National Science Foundation to look
16 at all available federal resources that could be
17 targeted to help states and communities and schools
18 prepare kids for 8th grade math. We think that needs
19 to look not just at federal resources but non-federal
20 resources as well. So we are at the early stages of
21 trying to identify those resources and think
22 strategically about how to connect them to the

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 schools.

2 In some sense, the fundamental message
3 here is we have got to use the resources that are
4 already there in as focused and targeted and effective
5 way as possible. We have got to use these initiatives
6 to remind communities, parents, business, et cetera
7 that this is going to take a concerted effort and a
8 sustained effort, and part of the President's
9 leadership in this is to keep reminding people of
10 that. That is why at least until he injured his
11 knee, he had a very aggressive travel schedule, which
12 he will soon resume, to literally lead a crusade
13 around this. I mean, this really -- he is really
14 quite serious about this, that this is not just a test
15 to put down and tell people, well, good luck, see how
16 you can do and the problem is yours afterwards.
17 Consistent with both the relatively limited federal
18 role and his effort to expand the resources that we
19 are putting into education, we are going to do
20 everything we can to maximize all the resources going
21 into this and to help people be as strategic and as
22 thoughtful as possible about how to use them.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Any other
2 questions?

3 MS. MCCONACHIE: From the point of view of
4 a long time local policy maker and a state policy
5 maker, I hear what I think Bill Randall called a lot
6 of racket in the system about testing, many different
7 kinds of testing, many different places, a national
8 test, NAEP, relatively uncoordinated at this point.
9 We are in a transition phase with the start-up of a
10 very exciting new initiative. From the point of view
11 outside of Washington, it needs to be coordinated into
12 a system where we can see the moving parts, and as
13 Mary said, they work together. It is difficult to see
14 that now as one would expect in the start-up phase,
15 but I think it is very important that they be closely
16 coordinated as soon as possible. You said that you
17 are looking at governance issues. I hope that those
18 are governance issues and not advisory board issues.
19 An advisory board to a federal agency is nothing more
20 than perhaps a collection of names and suits, and the
21 independence and the non-partisanship of a governing
22 board is very important to give the credibility that

1 you are looking for. So I have a need to see things
2 coordinated more closely and to see them as
3 independent of partisan efforts that necessarily are
4 part of the environment of the department. So I
5 encourage you in that endeavor in figuring out how to
6 coordinate and how to governance that. Because it is
7 certainly going to be very, very fruitful if we target
8 focus as you suggested.

9 MR. COHEN: While I think the Department
10 may have done a better job than you do in keeping a
11 lot of its activities out of the partisan arena, in
12 the main I agree with what you are saying. We have no
13 trouble in looking to create an independent group to
14 oversee this test. The question of how to do that and
15 who it ought to be is the one that we are focusing on.
16 But this is not about an effort for us to control the
17 test. This is about an effort for us to get a test
18 that is out there that people can use that will have
19 both the technical qualities and the political
20 credibility, if you will, to be used.

21 Just one or two other quick thoughts. I
22 think we do need to work on getting at least the

1 efforts -- the national efforts coordinated here. But
2 there is a lot of other testing activity underway,
3 state and local as well as the kind of things that we
4 have been talking about, and I would be frankly
5 somewhat wary about too concerted an effort to make
6 sure that all of that is coordinated. If you think
7 back to the very first question about the extent to
8 which all of this is likely to be subject to political
9 attack, I think the more it seems as though a group
10 that even meets in Washington is trying to coordinate
11 everything about testing, I think the slower our
12 progress will be. To a considerable extent, both NAGB
13 and the initiative I am talking about are tools for
14 people at the state and local level to use, and we
15 need to design and carry out these activities in ways
16 that make it possible for people at the state and
17 local level to sensibly coordinate these pieces with
18 their own and let a lot of the coordination occur at
19 that level rather than trying to get it all set here.
20 At least my thinking and everything I have learned
21 over the last -- at least the last four or five years
22 -- is that we need to build a fair amount of

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 flexibility into this so that people can work it in
2 ways that make the most sense for them, and finding
3 the right balance between that and coordination and
4 basically design characteristics is the stuff of
5 interesting conversations.

6 MS. MCCONACHIE: I very much agree. That
7 was perceptive. And thank you for that last note.
8 Lest I be understood, I am not at all sure that
9 another governing board for another testing system is
10 needed.

11 MR. COHEN: I didn't think that was what
12 you were saying.

13 MS. MCCONACHIE: Working vigorous here
14 might help us coordinate things. I admire the Gary's.
15 I am not calling him Gary anymore because obviously
16 there is more than one of him for all the things that
17 he is doing.

18 MR. COHEN: No, actually there is only
19 one. He works 24 hours a day.

20 MS. MCCONACHIE: I am sure he does and
21 well. But I am not at all sure that a separate agency
22 is in the best interest of the kind of coordination

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 that is needed, without going so far as to intrude on
2 the flexibility that is really important at the state
3 and local levels.

4 MR. MUSICK: Thank you, Bill. If we could
5 take just a 30-second time out. Michael, you have
6 made a great contribution here unknowingly because we
7 have an invitation from a member of this Board to meet
8 in his home state and the Board has been somewhat
9 hesitant to entertain that because he is from Hawaii.
10 But you have just heard Mike say that meeting in
11 Washington is a detriment and Hawaii would be as far
12 as we could go and be in a member's home state from
13 Washington. So I hope --

14 MR. COHEN: Mark, most of my greatest
15 contributions have, in fact, been unknowingly. I
16 would be willing to go so far as to help the Board at
17 that meeting --

18 MR. MUSICK: And present your linking
19 paper perhaps, which we have cited on many, many
20 occasions. Two or three quick observations and
21 hopefully there is a suggestion embedded in here
22 somewhere. I think as you noted earlier, the public

1 overwhelmingly supports national standards and
2 national tests, at least every survey and poll that we
3 see. Of course the public also overwhelmingly
4 supports national norm reference tests that produce
5 national averages and which we think tells us more
6 than they really do. But I think we start on this
7 effort from a good base and at least a public
8 perception that we need standards and testing.

9 I was in a meeting yesterday with
10 representatives of 15 states of the persons who
11 produce the state report cards that are now in use in
12 lots of our states, and a person there made a good
13 observation. When we were talking about this subject,
14 he said, I think it is a matter of will and cost. The
15 will being do states want to face some of this
16 unpleasantness that you talked about earlier because
17 there are different standards afoot in the country?
18 And then-Governor Bill Clinton, years ago when
19 Arkansas agreed to participate in a state NAEP program
20 in 1985, he said -- and I have used this 100 times --
21 "You are always better off knowing where you are than
22 not knowing, and that is why we are going to

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 participate in this program." Lots of folks said why
2 are these southern states doing this? They are going
3 to be at the bottom. Why does Arkansas want to know
4 where it is? And it was because once you got that
5 base, you use that and you build on it. So I think
6 the President is right. He will have to sell this,
7 and I think he believes in it and he has helped us
8 deal with the political will. The public support is
9 there, but the persons who are going to make the
10 decisions about some of this need a bit -- need to
11 have that case made.

12 And there are others who can help as well
13 as the President. I was in a state last week and I
14 was asked about his before a legislative committee.
15 I gave my pitch for it, and I think if the committee
16 had voted -- not because of what I said -- I think
17 they would have voted for it. But then someone said
18 is this the test that Diane Ravitch and Checker Finn
19 have endorsed and I said yes. About a third of the
20 committee was then, that might have been not disposed
21 to vote for it, was for it. I mean the persons who
22 knew of Diane's and Checker's history.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS

1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 MR. COHEN: They speak to a different
2 audience than some of the rest of us.

3 MR. MUSICK: And yet that coalition
4 between those two forces, as you said, is powerful.
5 The other question about cost, and you mentioned the
6 \$10.00 to \$12.00 figure, I hope you will work to keep
7 this cost in that range. Because our states like to
8 pay \$2.00 for a test. They like to buy these off-the-
9 shelf norm reference tests and you get them for about
10 \$3.00 or \$4.00. I argued with these folks that you
11 ought to be willing to pay twice as much for a really
12 good test. But what twice as much means is a matter
13 of, I guess, conjecture. But I urge you to work to
14 keep it in that range.

15 Finally, you said, Mike, that you need to
16 work to build a connection between this initiative and
17 the National Assessment Government Board. I guess I
18 would argue that the connection is already there
19 because of the achievement levels. And I cannot
20 imagine this initiative not using the achievement
21 levels. I can't imagine you reporting on scale score
22 and other ways. You are going to use the achievement

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS

1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 levels, I believe, and therefore, like it or not, we
2 are joined at some part here, and I think we -- I
3 think the only hesitation, if there is any hesitation,
4 is we are in this redesign and this is going to become
5 a very big tail and an important tail on the NAEP dog
6 potentially. But I think the Board -- I personally
7 would welcome the opportunity to see where this thing
8 is going. It is NAEP and we can't argue that it is
9 NAEP and it is not NAEP, or it is not NAEP but it is
10 NAEP. And if it is NAEP, it needs to be somehow
11 within the NAEP tent or the NAEP framework, of which
12 this Board is a part. And so, I would urge you to
13 look at that. The one criticism I have had from some
14 of my psychometric friends, which I just dismiss, is
15 that this will erode NAEP at 4th and 8th grade. The
16 NAEP 4th grade reading trend and the NAEP 8th grade
17 math trend will no longer be viable. We will corrupt
18 it. And I say, fine, if that means that young people
19 are reading better and doing math better at the 8th
20 grade. I don't think we -- we are very conscious
21 about trend lines at NAEP, but this is one trend line
22 we would corrupt if it really meant that our

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 youngsters were doing better.

2 MR. COHEN: If the way to corrupt the
3 trend line is to best prepare the kids, I think it is
4 a risk worth taking.

5 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Okay. Any other
6 comments or questions? Yes, Jan?

7 MS. LOVELESS: I live in Michigan and so
8 there has been a lot of interesting conversations in
9 the Midland public schools about the test. I heard
10 one of our local school board members say that when he
11 thinks about this test, he thinks about somebody
12 opening the oven door frequently to see if the cake is
13 done. We already have so many tests. Our governor
14 has talked about piloting the tests and embedding it.
15 The new test that we give in Michigan, can you
16 speculate for us how you see things going in the
17 future if this test catches on as you hope it will?

18 MR. COHEN: I think that is going to vary
19 quite a bit from state to state to tell you the truth
20 partly because -- well, everybody says they over-test.
21 Some test in fact a lot more than others. So I think
22 there is sort of a general reaction that whenever

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 there is a new test that comes along, people say we
2 are really doing too much of that. It is sort of like
3 every time there is a new innovation that comes along,
4 you sort of get a sense that there is a segment of the
5 education community that will say, oh yes, we did that
6 last year and now we are on to something else. So I
7 think some of that commentary is sort of inevitable.
8 You at least need to talk it through. I don't say
9 discount it, but it needs to be talked through to sort
10 of get -- to find out where people really are.

11 I would see in most cases these tests
12 supplementing what states or local communities are
13 already doing, though again that is going to vary from
14 place to place. I surely would not want a state that
15 has gone through the effort of developing its own
16 standards to say, oh, forget it and let's just take
17 this stuff. That is not what this is intended to do.
18 But because the standards that states have set for
19 themselves are, in fact, independent from each other
20 and not in any clear way referenced to any external
21 benchmark, the fact of the matter is when in Michigan
22 you tell parents that they are meeting the state

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 standards, at some level the question is going to be
2 there, well is that good enough? What does that
3 really mean for kids who are going to enter a world
4 that is substantially bigger than Michigan. And I
5 think, again, at least at these subject areas and
6 grade levels, this is a way of sort of giving folks a
7 check point. Yet, if we have a series of reading
8 tests in Michigan or wherever -- in fact, I hope you
9 do -- in the early grades, they ought to be far more
10 diagnostic in nature, and you want to be basically
11 figuring out where a kid needs help, when a kid needs
12 help, and so on and so forth. But I would see this
13 test as being the one that, if nothing else, tells
14 parents your kid is on track. We have got some
15 independent verification over and above all the other
16 ways we have determined this that in fact your kid can
17 read at a nationally acceptable level, if you will.

18 I think in sort of a common sense kind of
19 way, that is the way I would see this being used and
20 similarly for math. It is -- neither one on their own
21 are going to be the tests, nor should they be the
22 tests that drive the curriculum. Neither one on their

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS

1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

(202) 234-4433

1 own are going to be the tests that provide all the
2 individual diagnostic information. But they are going
3 to be -- so you need other assessments for that and
4 again states will vary in how they do that. But I
5 think the public, and parents in particular, really
6 need a kind of information that is just not available
7 any other way, and to me that is the way to think
8 about this.

9 MS. LOVELESS: I agree with you, by the
10 way.

11 MR. COHEN: I always like it when people
12 say that.

13 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Well thank you, Mike.
14 Ray, any comments that you would like to make at this
15 time?

16 MR. CORTINES: I think it has been
17 covered.

18 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Okay.

19 MR. CORTINES: I think this afternoon's
20 discussion is going to be very important with Carol
21 Rasco and Judy Wurtzel, and I hope again in the spirit
22 of collaboration. Because they are going to be

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 talking about the tool box that is really very
2 important before and very important after, and I think
3 that your comments and suggestions and constructive
4 criticism can be very helpful.

5 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Well, thank you very
6 much. And again, I think it is clear that there is
7 some support, some concern, some interest, and that we
8 can talk about these things on one level and then that
9 next level is the difficult one. To me, that is the
10 strength of this group and of other groups that we
11 have got to be willing to tackle that piece of it.
12 This is kind of like we used to say in the beginning
13 of the standards movement. Standards are -- it is
14 easy to talk about and tough to do well. It is kind
15 of the same thing here too. We can talk about it, but
16 when we get to that next level, it is going to take a
17 lot of good work on the part of people to do this well
18 so that it can accomplish this dream and the goals
19 that you have for it. So let us know if there is --
20 I think we have said that the NAGB Board is willing to
21 assist if and when asked. And we recognize our below
22 the state level restriction in our authorization, so

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701



National Assessment Governing Board

National Assessment of Educational Progress

June 2, 1997

Honorable Richard A. Riley
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On May 9, Michael Cohen, Assistant to the President for Education, briefed the Governing Board on the President's voluntary national test initiative in fourth grade reading and eighth grade mathematics. During his presentation, Mr. Cohen raised the issue of governance and invited advice from the Board. This letter, which has been reviewed by our Executive Committee, is to serve as an initial response, prompted by his invitation and by inquiries from the Hill and others.

We have carefully considered the proposed initiative. In so doing, we found ourselves returning to one central conclusion: that the voluntary national test initiative is, in essence, NAEP. The proposed tests will be based on NAEP frameworks. Results are to be reported using achievement levels established by the Governing Board. There is an implicit reliance on NAEP's reputation for quality and integrity. The use of NAEP as the basis for the voluntary test initiative is purposeful and makes it difficult to argue that the initiative is not NAEP.

If the voluntary test initiative is NAEP, it follows that it should be included under the NAEP governance and operations structure (comprised of the Governing Board, NCES, and various contractors), as opposed to creating a separate, and possibly competing, structure. We believe that the initiative will have a better chance of success if it is made a part of NAEP and that there are important, related reasons for following this course.

One reason is to protect the integrity of the National Assessment program itself and to enable the voluntary test initiative to benefit from that integrity. The link to NAEP is a fundamental part of the voluntary test initiative, relying on NAEP's challenging content and its standards-based reporting. Some observers worry that this link could have negative consequences for the National Assessment program. For example, participation in the voluntary test initiative could affect the ability to draw representative samples for the National Assessment. This in turn could affect the strength of the comparability of the voluntary national test results to the National Assessment. These two activities are interdependent. Decisions and actions that affect the National Assessment will, ultimately, affect the voluntary national test and vice versa.

800 North Capitol Street, N.W.
Suite 825, Mailstop 7583
Washington, D.C. 20002-4233
Phone: (202) 357-6938
Fax: (202) 357-6945

The Secretary - Page 2

Coherent policies are needed to ensure over time that results of the National Assessment and the voluntary test initiative are comparable, technically sound, and achieved through procedures that are well coordinated and operationally feasible. We do not see how this could be accomplished in an efficient, cost effective manner, if at all, should policies and operational strategies for the respective activities be developed by separate agencies. Such coherence is most likely where there is a single governance and operations structure and least likely where there are multiple structures.

For example, the Governing Board changes NAEP frameworks periodically. Reading and mathematics frameworks both are nearing the ten-year mark and may need to be revised. Framework revisions could affect test design for NAEP and also for the voluntary reading and mathematics tests, because they are to be based on NAEP frameworks. Obviously, the respective test development and testing cycles, contract schedules, and user needs would all require consideration and balancing. A single governance and operations structure would, as a matter of course, take all of these factors into account as a part of policy development and program planning. A separate structure for the voluntary test initiative would operate under a different set of incentives and assumptions. This could lead to ambiguity of roles, uncertainty about key decisions, and inadequate coordination with NAEP policies and implementation strategies. The added costs and duplication of effort also argue against having a separate structure for the voluntary test initiative.

A temporary "wall" has been erected during the current development phase between the NAEP program and the voluntary test initiative. This has been explained as a means for the Department to move expeditiously on the voluntary test initiative. It is based also on the fact that the current development phase is being supported by separate funding and separate legislative authority and that NAEP lacks specific authority to develop an individual student test. As a result, the Governing Board is not involved, nor has it sought to be involved, in the activities associated with the voluntary test initiative. However, because of our responsibility for NAEP and the inquiries we have received, we are now thinking about these issues. For the sake of the integrity, effectiveness, and coherence of both the National Assessment and the voluntary test initiative, logic and experience argue for the Governing Board to be the policy body for the voluntary national test initiative.

Considerations in whether to have the Board involved in the governance of the voluntary test initiative should be the Board's composition, independence, and experience. The Board is broadly representative of state and local interests. Its members include two governors and two state legislators of both parties, two chief state school officers, a member of a state board of education, a local school board member, a representative of private schools, a district superintendent, elementary and secondary principals, and three teachers. In addition, test specialists, curriculum specialists, a business representative, and members of the general public round out the Board's membership. By law, the Board is independent of the Secretary and the Department of Education.

The Secretary - Page 3

The Board's composition makes it well-suited to develop policies that directly affect state, local and private schools. Its independence could help ameliorate the debate about the national versus federal character of the voluntary test initiative. Its nine-year experience governing NAEP suggests that it has the immediate capacity to set policy for the proposed voluntary national test initiative. A new, separate body would need a significant amount of time for initial appointments, organizing itself, and becoming well-grounded on many varied technical and policy matters.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these initial thoughts to you. Many of these matters will need to be addressed through NAEP reauthorization. Toward that end, we look forward to continued conversations with you on these and related matters.

Sincerely,



William T. Randall
Chairman

cc: Michael Cohen
Marshall Smith



FOR RELEASE
August 26, 1997

**RILEY CALLS FOR NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD
POLICY ROLE IN VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS**

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley announced on CBS' *Face the Nation* last Sunday that he plans to ask Congress to authorize the bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) to set policy for the voluntary national tests in 4th-grade reading and 8th-grade mathematics.

Riley said the administration will submit legislation to Congress that will expand NAGB's authority to include setting policy for the voluntary national tests. Riley's proposal is designed to assure that the voluntary national tests are responsive to and earn the confidence of parents, teachers, communities, states and local school districts.

President Clinton earlier this year proposed the annual voluntary national tests in 4th-grade reading and 8th-grade mathematics based on high standards for student achievement. The tests are to be based on the highly respected National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and for math, also will be linked to the Third International Mathematics and Science Study.

NAGB, an independent, bipartisan board established by Congress in 1989, formulates policy guidelines for NAEP, a series of assessments which measure student performance in a variety of subjects in grades 4, 8 and twelve. The board is responsible for selecting the subject areas to be assessed under NAEP; for setting appropriate student performance levels; for developing assessment objectives and test specifications through a national consensus approach;

-MORE-

for developing guidelines for reporting and disseminating NAEP results; for determining the appropriateness of test items and ensuring they are free from bias, and for taking actions to improve the form and use of NAEP.

Riley and the President have noted previously that the tests will be a valuable resource for parents, teachers and school districts to use in helping states and local school districts in their efforts to raise standards and improve student achievement.

###



FOR RELEASE
August 26, 1997

RILEY CALLS FOR NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD POLICY ROLE IN VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley announced on CBS' *Face the Nation* last Sunday that he plans to ask Congress to authorize the bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) to set policy for the voluntary national tests in 4th-grade reading and 8th-grade mathematics.

Riley said the administration will submit legislation to Congress that will expand NAGB's authority to include setting policy for the voluntary national tests. Riley's proposal is designed to assure that the voluntary national tests are responsive to and earn the confidence of parents, teachers, communities, states and local school districts.

President Clinton earlier this year proposed the annual voluntary national tests in 4th-grade reading and 8th-grade mathematics based on high standards for student achievement. The tests are to be based on the highly respected National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and for math, also will be linked to the Third International Mathematics and Science Study.

NAGB, an independent, bipartisan board established by Congress in 1989, formulates policy guidelines for NAEP, a series of assessments which measure student performance in a variety of subjects in grades 4, 8 and twelve. The board is responsible for selecting the subject areas to be assessed under NAEP; for setting appropriate student performance levels; for developing assessment objectives and test specifications through a national consensus approach;

-MORE-

for developing guidelines for reporting and disseminating NAEP results; for determining the appropriateness of test items and ensuring they are free from bias, and for taking actions to improve the form and use of NAEP.

Riley and the President have noted previously that the tests will be a valuable resource for parents, teachers and school districts to use in helping states and local school districts in their efforts to raise standards and improve student achievement.

###

Total Pages: 10

LRM ID: RJP121

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
Washington, D.C. 20503-0001

Friday, August 29, 1997

LEGISLATIVE REFERRAL MEMORANDUM

URGENT

TO: Legislative Liaison Officer - See Distribution below
FROM: *Janet R. Forsgren*
Janet R. Forsgren (for) Assistant Director for Legislative Reference
OMB CONTACT: Robert J. Pellicci
PHONE: (202)395-4871 FAX: (202)395-6148

SUBJECT: EDUCATION Draft Bill on Authorizing the National Assessment Governing Board to develop policy for voluntary national tests in reading and mathematics

DEADLINE: NOON Tuesday, September 2, 1997

In accordance with OMB Circular A-19, OMB requests the views of your agency on the above subject before advising on its relationship to the program of the President. Please advise us if this item will affect direct spending or receipts for purposes of the "Pay-As-You-Go" provisions of Title XIII of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990.

COMMENTS: The Education draft bill would implement the President's proposal for annual voluntary national tests in 4th-grade reading and 8th-grade mathematics. The deadline is firm.

DISTRIBUTION LIST

AGENCIES:

61-JUSTICE - Andrew Fois - (202) 514-2141

EOP:

Kenneth S. Apfel
Michael Cohen
Barry White
Patricia A. Smith
Timothy A. Rosado
Naomi M. Tinklepaugh
Robert M. Shireman
Daniel J. Chenok
Jonathan H. Schnur
William R. Kincaid
Robert G. Darnus
William P. Marshall
Constance J. Bowers
James C. Murr
Janet R. Forsgren

LRM ID: RJP121 SUBJECT: EDUCATION Draft Bill on Authorizing the National Assessment Governing Board to develop policy for voluntary national tests in reading and mathematics

**RESPONSE TO
LEGISLATIVE REFERRAL
MEMORANDUM**

If your response to this request for views is short (e.g., concur/no comment), we prefer that you respond by e-mail or by faxing us this response sheet. If the response is short and you prefer to call, please call the branch-wide line shown below (NOT the analyst's line) to leave a message with a legislative assistant.

You may also respond by:

(1) calling the analyst/attorney's direct line (you will be connected to voice mail if the analyst does not answer); or

(2) sending us a memo or letter.

Please include the LRM number shown above, and the subject shown below.

**TO: Robert J. Pellicci Phone: 395-4871 Fax: 395-6148
 Office of Management and Budget
 Branch-Wide Line (to reach legislative assistant): 395-7362**

**FROM: _____ (Date)
 _____ (Name)
 _____ (Agency)
 _____ (Telephone)**

The following is the response of our agency to your request for views on the above-captioned subject:

_____ Concur

_____ No Objection

_____ No Comment

_____ See proposed edits on pages _____

_____ Other: _____

_____ FAX RETURN of _____ pages, attached to this response sheet

DRAFT
August 29, 1997
9:45 AM

Honorable Newt Gingrich
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Enclosed for the consideration of the Congress is a bill to authorize the bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board to develop policy for the voluntary national tests in 4th-grade reading and 8th-grade mathematics advocated by the President. Also enclosed is a section-by-section analysis of the bill. I am sending an identical letter to the President of the Senate.

Earlier this year, the President called for the development of these annual tests, which will be a valuable resource for ^{as} parents, teachers, and school districts to use in helping States and local school districts in their efforts to raise standards and improve student achievement. These tests would be based on the highly respected National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a series of assessments that measure student performance in a variety of subjects in the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades, using ^{of kind}

The National Assessment Governing Board is a bipartisan board established by Congress in 1989 to independently formulate policy guidelines for the NAEP. Among other duties, the Board is responsible for developing appropriate student performance levels; developing assessment objectives and test specifications through a national consensus approach; developing guidelines for reporting and disseminating NAEP results; and determining the appropriateness of test items and ensuring that they are free from bias.

The enclosed legislation would give the Board similar responsibilities with respect to the voluntary national tests. The Board's involvement in the development and oversight of these tests will ensure that they are responsive to, and earn the confidence of, parents, teachers, school districts, and States. In light of the numerous steps that need to be taken for these tests to be ready for use in the spring of 1999, as we intend, I urge the Congress to act promptly on this proposal.

Sample of
Students in the
National
on
participating
States

Continue

Page 2 - Honorable Newt Gingrich

The Office of Management and Budget advises that there is no objection to the submission of this proposal, and that its enactment would be in accord with the program of the President.

Yours sincerely,

Richard W. Riley

Enclosures

9:45 AM

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives
of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

(1) develop test objectives and specifications; *test methodology*;
guidelines for test administration, including guidelines for
inclusion of, and accommodations for, students with disabilities
and students with limited English proficiency; guidelines for
reporting test results, including the use of performance levels;
and guidelines for test use;

1 (2) have final authority over the appropriateness of
2 cognitive items; and

3 (3) ensure that all items selected for use on the tests
4 are free from racial, cultural, or gender bias.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DRAFT
August 29, 1997
9:45 AM

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Section 1 of the bill would authorize the National Assessment Governing Board, established under section 412 of the National Education Statistics Act of 1994, to formulate policy guidelines for voluntary national tests of reading or mathematics for which the Secretary of Education uses funds appropriated to the Department of Education, such as funds appropriated for the Fund for the Improvement of Education under Title X of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

Sec. 2. Section 2 of the bill would direct the Board, in carrying out section 1, to: (1) develop test objectives and specifications; guidelines for test administration, including guidelines for inclusion of, and accommodations for, students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency; guidelines for reporting test results, including the use of performance levels; and guidelines for test use; (2) have final authority over the appropriateness of cognitive items; and (3) ensure that all items selected for use on the tests are free from racial, cultural, or gender bias.

* * * * *



Voluntary **NATIONAL TESTS**

4th Grade Reading • 8th Grade Mathematics

In his State of the Union Address on February 4, 1997, the President named education as his "number one priority for the next four years." He also issued a call to action -- a 10-point plan -- for ensuring that Americans have the best education in the world. The first point is:

■ Set rigorous national standards with voluntary national tests in 4th-grade reading and in 8th-grade mathematics to make sure our children master the basics.

■ Contracts Information

■ Content Frameworks

■ What's New

■ What Are the Voluntary National Tests?

■ President Clinton's Education Town Hall Meeting

■ President Announces 15 Large Urban School Districts to Participate in Tests

■ 4th Grade Reading Test Draft Item Specifications

■ 8th Grade Mathematics Test Draft Item Specifications

■ Relevant Reports

■ Testimony, Press Releases, and other information

■ Public Meeting Schedule

■ Overview

For questions or additional comments, please contact: NationalTests@ed.gov

What Are the Voluntary National Tests in 4th Grade Reading and 8th Grade Mathematics?

The President proposed in his State of the Union Address on February 4, 1997, a voluntary, annual reading test in English at grade 4 and a math test at grade 8. These tests will, for the first time in history, provide parents and teachers with information about how their students are progressing compared to other states, the nation, and other countries. An individual student's reading achievement level in the fourth grade, and his or her mathematics achievement level in the eighth grade, will be related directly to information obtained from two state-of-the-art educational assessment surveys -- the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Parents can see how their own children measure up to the highest standards of performance at the national and international levels.

The tests will be based on challenging content standards already established through a national consensus process. The content -- or test items -- for both the reading and math tests will be based on the content frameworks developed for the NAEP. The NAEP content frameworks are developed through an extensive consensus building process in which a broadly representative panel of teachers, education specialists and members of the public, come to agree on what is important for all students to know and be able to do in various subjects. In a similar way, an international consensus on what students should

be able to do in various subjects. In a similar way, an international consensus on what students should know in mathematics was reached among the 41 countries participating in TIMSS. Students who take the national test in 8th grade mathematics will be able to see how their performance compares to their international peers through TIMSS. The U.S. Department of Education will fund the development of the new examinations and provide continued technical assistance; however, it will not administer, score, or report individual test results. It is left to the State or local school district to determine how they will report student performance.

Who Will Use the New Voluntary National Tests?

The new tests will be made available to states, districts, schools, teachers, and other individuals to assess students in the spring of every year, beginning in spring 1999. Many commercial test publishers will likely offer the tests as a component of their product line. Use of the tests will be strictly voluntary and decisions about whether or not to participate will not affect continuing participation in Federal programs. It is expected that reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities or with limited English proficiency will be provided by the school administrator. With each year's administration of NAEP and TIMSS, linking studies will be conducted to relate the scores on these national tests to the NAEP and TIMSS scales.

After each administration, the entire test along with answers, scoring guides and other materials will be released to the public and placed on the Internet. The test will then be used by teachers or parents for a variety of purposes.

When Will the Voluntary National Tests be Administered?

The new tests will be developed during 1997 and 1998 with a full administration planned in the spring of 1999. Beginning in 1999, the test will be made available to test publishers, states, districts, and others under a licensing agreement or similar compact. Information regarding the development and award of Department contracts for test development is available under the Contracts Information section of this web page.

Who Is Developing These Tests?

Four committees are currently developing the blueprint for the voluntary national tests: The National Test Panel, The Technical Advisory Group, The Reading Committee and The Mathematics Committee.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded the national test development contract to an alliance that includes some of the nation's most respected test publishers and a bipartisan council on basic skills. The American Institutes for Research (AIR) will oversee the multi-year effort. The responsibilities of the project subcontractors are:

- ☐ Riverside Publishing will help develop the reading test;
- ☐ Harcourt Brace Educational Measurement will help develop the mathematics test;
- ☐ Westat, Inc. will design and conduct the pilot and field tests;
- ☐ California Test Bureau/McGraw Hill and National Computer Systems, Inc. will be responsible for scoring the field test;
- ☐ Educational Testing Services will assist with data analysis and other technical issues; and
- ☐ Council for Basic Education will oversee the coordination of the National Advisory Committee meetings.

For further information, see the press release for the award.

Since February of 1997, the Department had been holding a series of public meetings with assessment experts, test publishers, state and local officials, and the general public to discuss development issues.

Complete transcripts for all public meetings including committee meetings are available at this web site.

How Are the Voluntary National Tests Different from NAEP/TIMSS?

Although the new tests will be based on the NAEP framework and, in the case of mathematics, linked to TIMSS, unlike NAEP and TIMSS the new tests will be expressly designed to produce student-level scores. NAEP and TIMSS do not produce student level scores because they test a random sample of students in order to produce estimates of overall state and national level student achievement. Some of the differences between the two tests are as follows:

NAEP and TIMSS	New Reading and Math Tests
Only a random sample of students is tested	All students in participating communities are tested
No student takes all of the items on the test	All students take all of the items on the test
Includes multiple choice and performance items	Is about 80% multiple choice, with 20% constructed response (students produce their own answers), including one extended constructed response item. About 50% of test time will be devoted to constructed response.
45-60 minutes of achievement item testing per student	Up to 90 minutes of achievement item testing
Yields a TIMSS or NAEP score for countries and states	Yields a student test score plus a predicted student TIMSS and NAEP score



Last updated August 27, 1997

**The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB)
and the Voluntary National Tests**

September 8, 1997

Under the Administration's proposed legislation, the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) will be responsible for formulating policy guidelines for the voluntary national tests, just as it is for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

NAEP is a sample test of core subjects that tracks the progress of the nation as a whole and of 43 participating states, but which does not provide individual student, school, or district level results. NAGB will have the same responsibilities for both NAEP and the voluntary national tests.

What is the National Assessment Governing Board?

The NAGB is a bipartisan group of 26 persons appointed by the Secretary to formulate policy guidelines for the National Assessment of Educational Progress. In the exercise of its responsibilities, NAGB is independent of the Secretary and other officers of the Department of Education. By law, NAGB consists of:

- two governors, who are not members of the same political party; 3
- two state legislators, who are not members of the same party;
- two chief state school officers; (1)
- one school district superintendent;
- one member of a state board of education;
- one member of a local board of education;
- three classroom teachers;
- one business representative;
- two curriculum specialists;
- three testing and measurement specialists;
- one nonpublic school representative;
- two school principals; and
- four representatives of the general public.

In appointing individuals to NAGB, the Secretary selects from among nominations he receives from organizations representing the categories of individuals listed above.

What will be the responsibilities of the National Assessment Governing Board with regard to the voluntary national tests?

In formulating policy guidelines for the voluntary national tests, as it does for NAEP, the NAGB will be responsible for:

- developing the test objectives and test specifications that will guide the developers in writing test items and developing the tests;
- developing the test methodology, which will include linking the voluntary national tests with the appropriate NAEP reading and math tests and with the math test from the Third

International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS);

- developing the guidelines that will govern administration of the tests, including the guidelines for inclusion of and accommodations for students with disabilities and limited English proficient students;
- developing the guidelines for how test results will be reported to parents, teachers, and students, including the use of achievement levels;
- developing guidelines for appropriate uses of the tests by states, school districts, and schools;
- ensuring that all items in the tests are free of racial, cultural, or gender bias; and
- final authority for the appropriateness of the items in the tests.

Is it too late for the National Assessment Governing Board to assume oversight and policymaking authority for the voluntary national tests?

No. It is not too late for NAGB to exercise these responsibilities.

- **Precedent Exists for Involving NAGB at this Stage.** Bringing NAGB on board to set policy and provide oversight for the voluntary national tests at this juncture has a precedent in the past. When NAGB was first authorized in 1988, the Board was established after draft test specifications used to design the NAEP mathematics assessment had been developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), under contract with the Department of Education. These specifications, which had been developed through a national consensus process involving local teachers, parents, administrators and others, were turned over to NAGB when the Board met for the first time. The specifications were ultimately approved by NAGB, with some modifications.

A similar process has been followed in developing the Voluntary National Tests. Using the existing NAEP frameworks for 4th grade reading and 8th grade math as the foundation, the CCSSO has again been contracted to manage a national consensus process involving teachers and other experts to develop the specifications for the voluntary national tests. The specifications are now in draft form, and can be turned over to NAGB for review, necessary modifications, and final approval.

- **The Test Development Process Has Closely Tracked the Approach Typically Used by NAGB.** Even after NAGB became fully established, it has continued to contract with CCSSO, through a competitive award, for the development of NAEP specifications. The same approach has been followed in the development of the voluntary national tests.

The Department of Education has kept NAGB members and staff well-informed of progress in test development. Two members of NAGB sit on the panels preparing specifications for the voluntary national tests. The full NAGB membership has received

briefings on national test development from Department of Education staff. Moreover, NAGB staff have been invited to and attended all major meetings associated with the national test development process. Thus, when legislation giving NAGB oversight and policy-setting responsibility for the voluntary national tests is enacted, NAGB will be well-prepared to act expeditiously.

- **NAGB Will Have all Necessary Authority for Developing the Voluntary National Tests in the Context of the Existing Contract.** The contractor for the voluntary national tests is responsible for writing test items based on the test specifications, administering a pilot test of test items, administering a field test of the test form, and assembling the final tests. The contractor is also responsible for linking the test to NAEP and TIMSS (so parents, students and teachers will be able to compare student performance to those benchmarks), and for preparing guidelines for reporting, test security and test use.

Draft test specifications for the voluntary national tests are now available. When NAGB is given statutory authority, it will review, modify (if necessary), and approve these specifications. The contractor has begun preliminary writing of test items, but the test development contract will be modified to ensure that the NAGB-approved specifications are used, and that all items developed for the tests will conform to the NAGB specifications -- even if rewriting of items is necessary. NAGB will also review all test items for bias, and will approve final items for the test.

In addition to its role in item development, NAGB will also take on responsibility for reviewing and approving guidelines developed by the contractor for reporting, test use and test security. NAGB will also review and approve the contractor's procedures for linking the test to NAEP and TIMSS.

The contractor has begun to assemble advisory committees on reading, math and technical matters, although these committees have yet to be established. The contractor is also preparing to contact schools to participate in the pilot test. These activities will continue, as appropriate, when NAGB assumes authority.

The bottom line is that NAGB can easily assume all of its responsibilities for the voluntary national tests in reading and math, and that any modifications in the test development contract necessary to conform test development to NAGB policy can and will be made.

**The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB)
and the Voluntary National Tests**
September 8, 1997

Under the Administration's proposed legislation, the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) will be responsible for formulating policy guidelines for the voluntary national tests, just as it is for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

NAEP is a sample test of core subjects that tracks the progress of the nation as a whole and of 43 participating states, but which does not provide individual student, school, or district level results. NAGB will have the same responsibilities for both NAEP and the voluntary national tests.

What is the National Assessment Governing Board?

The NAGB is a bipartisan group of 26 persons appointed by the Secretary to formulate policy guidelines for the National Assessment of Educational Progress. In the exercise of its responsibilities, NAGB is independent of the Secretary and other officers of the Department of Education. By law, NAGB consists of:

- two governors, who are not members of the same political party;
- two state legislators, who are not members of the same party;
- two chief state school officers;
- one school district superintendent;
- one member of a state board of education;
- one member of a local board of education;
- three classroom teachers;
- one business representative;
- two curriculum specialists;
- three testing and measurement specialists;
- one nonpublic school representative;
- two school principals; and
- four representatives of the general public.

In appointing individuals to NAGB, the Secretary selects from among nominations he receives from organizations representing the categories of individuals listed above.

What will be the responsibilities of the National Assessment Governing Board with regard to the voluntary national tests?

In formulating policy guidelines for the voluntary national tests, as it does for NAEP, the NAGB will be responsible for:

- developing the test objectives and test specifications that will guide the developers in writing test items and developing the tests;
- developing the test methodology, which will include linking the voluntary national tests with the appropriate NAEP reading and math tests and with the math test from the Third

International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS);

- developing the guidelines that will govern administration of the tests, including the guidelines for inclusion of and accommodations for students with disabilities and limited English proficient students;
- developing the guidelines for how test results will be reported to parents, teachers, and students, including the use of achievement levels;
- developing guidelines for appropriate uses of the tests by states, school districts, and schools;
- ensuring that all items in the tests are free of racial, cultural, or gender bias; and
- final authority for the appropriateness of the items in the tests.

Is it too late for the National Assessment Governing Board to assume oversight and policymaking authority for the voluntary national tests?

No. It is not too late for NAGB to exercise these responsibilities.

- **Precedent Exists for Involving NAGB at this Stage.** Bringing NAGB on board to set policy and provide oversight for the voluntary national tests at this juncture has a precedent in the past. When NAGB was first authorized in 1988, the Board was established after draft test specifications used to design the NAEP mathematics assessment had been developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), under contract with the Department of Education. These specifications, which had been developed through a national consensus process involving local teachers, parents, administrators and others, were turned over to NAGB when the Board met for the first time. The specifications were ultimately approved by NAGB, with some modifications.

A similar process has been followed in developing the Voluntary National Tests. Using the existing NAEP frameworks for 4th grade reading and 8th grade math as the foundation, the CCSSO has again been contracted to manage a national consensus process involving teachers and other experts to develop the specifications for the voluntary national tests. The specifications are now in draft form, and can be turned over to NAGB for review, necessary modifications, and final approval.

- **The Test Development Process Has Closely Tracked the Approach Typically Used by NAGB.** Even after NAGB became fully established, it has continued to contract with CCSSO, through a competitive award, for the development of NAEP specifications. The same approach has been followed in the development of the voluntary national tests.

The Department of Education has kept NAGB members and staff well-informed of progress in test development. Two members of NAGB sit on the panels preparing specifications for the voluntary national tests. The full NAGB membership has received

briefings on national test development from Department of Education staff. Moreover, NAGB staff have been invited to and attended all major meetings associated with the national test development process. Thus, when legislation giving NAGB oversight and policy-setting responsibility for the voluntary national tests is enacted, NAGB will be well-prepared to act expeditiously.

- **NAGB Will Have all Necessary Authority for Developing the Voluntary National Tests in the Context of the Existing Contract.** The contractor for the voluntary national tests is responsible for writing test items based on the test specifications, administering a pilot test of test items, administering a field test of the test form, and assembling the final tests. The contractor is also responsible for linking the test to NAEP and TIMSS (so parents, students and teachers will be able to compare student performance to those benchmarks), and for preparing guidelines for reporting, test security and test use.

Draft test specifications for the voluntary national tests are now available. When NAGB is given statutory authority, it will review, modify (if necessary), and approve these specifications. The contractor has begun preliminary writing of test items, but the test development contract will be modified to ensure that the NAGB-approved specifications are used, and that all items developed for the tests will conform to the NAGB specifications -- even if rewriting of items is necessary. NAGB will also review all test items for bias, and will approve final items for the test.

In addition to its role in item development, NAGB will also take on responsibility for reviewing and approving guidelines developed by the contractor for reporting, test use and test security. NAGB will also review and approve the contractor's procedures for linking the test to NAEP and TIMSS.

The contractor has begun to assemble advisory committees on reading, math and technical matters, although these committees have yet to be established. The contractor is also preparing to contact schools to participate in the pilot test. These activities will continue, as appropriate, when NAGB assumes authority.

The bottom line is that NAGB can easily assume all of its responsibilities for the voluntary national tests in reading and math, and that any modifications in the test development contract necessary to conform test development to NAGB policy can and will be made.



National Assessment Governing Board

National Assessment of Educational Progress

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 2, 1997

Contact: Lawrence Feinberg
(202) 357-6942

National Assessment Governing Board Plans to Develop Voluntary National Tests Based on NAEP Assessments

The National Assessment Governing Board has set out plans for developing voluntary national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics, based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Under the Appropriations Act for 1998, passed by Congress and signed by the President in mid-November, the Board has been granted "exclusive authority" over development of the proposed exams. The law prohibits any pilot testing of questions or field tests before October 1, 1998, and also provides for studies and evaluations by the National Academy of Sciences.

At its regular quarterly meeting in Washington on November 22, the Board adopted procedures for making decisions about the contract and specifications for developing the test questions and design. It promised wide public input into its deliberations.

"We will carry out the job Congress has asked us to do--develop an individualized version of the National Assessment of Educational Progress," said Mark D. Musick, chairman of the independent, bipartisan 26-member Governing Board, which has set policy for NAEP since 1988. The proposed tests would show students whether they can meet NAEP's standards for basic, proficient, or advanced performance.

According to a House-Senate conference report, the new tests, designed for individual students, are required to "be based on the same content and performance standards as are used for NAEP," which is given to groups of students to measure academic achievement. Congress directed that the tests be "linked to NAEP to the maximum extent possible," which the Board will try to make sure is done.

Over the past 27 years, results from National Assessment exams have been reported for the nation, regions, and states, but not for individual students.

"The Board plans to act deliberately and fairly," Musick said. "We will hold public hearings. We will listen carefully. We want to give plenty of opportunity for a wide range of views to be considered."

-MORE-

800 North Capitol Street, N.W.
Suite 825, Mailstop 7583
Washington, D.C. 20002-4233
Phone: (202) 357-6938
Fax: (202) 357-6945

Musick added: "We are aware of the difficulties and challenges that are part of the directives from the President and Congress. We are not unaware of the complexity and controversy surrounding the voluntary national tests. We believe that this task was given to the Board because it has proven since 1988 that it is fair, bipartisan, deliberative, and independent as it tackles complex and controversial issues."

The Board's plans include the following:

- A special committee will review the five-year, \$65 million test development contract awarded by the Department of Education on August 15 to a group of major test publishers, headed by American Institutes for Research. The committee, composed of seven Board members, will make recommendations to the full Board. Under the law, NAGB has until February 11 to approve, modify, or terminate the contract. If the contract is rescinded, the Board has authority to negotiate a new one.

- A special meeting of the Board will be held on January 22 in Washington to deal with national test development issues.

- The Board's two academic committees will begin the process of developing specifications for the reading and mathematics tests by reviewing recommendations of the expert panels convened last summer by the Department of Education. The panels were set up under a contract with the Council of Chief State School Officers and MPR Associates. On September 25, Education Secretary Richard Riley announced that he would not approve the specifications proposed by the panels or forward them to the test development contractor.

- The Board will hold public hearings on test specifications this winter. It aims to adopt final specifications at its meeting scheduled for March 7 and 8 in Seattle, WA.

- The Board will review all test questions to make sure they cover the same content and meet the same standards of appropriateness and being free from bias that are used in NAEP.

- The Board will meet with representatives of the National Academy of Sciences, which will be conducting three Congressionally mandated studies related to development of the national test. The Academy studies deal with (1) the feasibility of developing a common scale to compare commercial and state tests and NAEP; (2) evaluation of national test items and design for technical quality and validity and whether they "can be used for tracking, graduation, or promotion of students;" and (3) recommendations to avoid discriminatory use of existing and new tests. The reports are due to Congress by September 1, 1998, with an interim report on the equating study due June 15.

- The Board will consider policies for test reporting and use through a process that ensures wide consultation and input.

-MORE-

- The Board will seek to complete all preliminary development work by September 30, 1998, so there can be pilot testing and field testing later, as determined by law.

"The Governing Board has not endorsed a voluntary national test and we have not opposed a voluntary national test," Musick said. "The Board is doing what Congress has asked us to do.

"The position of the Board has been that if there is to be a test that essentially is an adaptation of NAEP, then it should come under the NAEP umbrella," he continued. "If the country finds that useful and Congress funds it and moves forward, we hope to develop a test that is worthy of consideration."

The contract review committee, which begins work immediately, is headed by William T. Randall, a former NAGB chairman who was state Commissioner of Education in Colorado for many years. Other Board members on the committee include vice-chairman Mary Blanton, of Salisbury, NC, a lawyer and general public member of NAGB; James Ellingson, of Moorhead, MN, a fourth grade teacher; Thomas Fisher, director of student assessment for the Florida Department of Education; Edward Haertel, a professor at Stanford University, who is an expert in educational testing; and Deborah Voltz, assistant professor of special education at the University of Louisville.

Also serving is a new Board member, Diane Ravitch, former Assistant Secretary of Education under President Bush. Ravitch is a senior research scholar at New York University and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

The National Assessment Governing Board, established by Congress in 1988, includes governors and state legislators of both parties, local school officials, teachers, testing experts, and business and public representatives. The Board sets policy for NAEP, including test content and performance standards.

Since 1970, the National Assessment, based on nationally-representative samples of students, has been the only source of reliable, continuing information about what American students know and can do in various academic subjects. Since 1990, it has provided the only comparable state-by-state data on academic achievement, based on representative samples of students in each participating state. Over the past seven years, 48 states have participated in NAEP and agreed to have results reported according to NAEP performance standards.

###



National Assessment Governing Board

National Assessment of Educational Progress

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 2, 1997

Contact: Lawrence Feinberg
(202) 357-6942

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD PLANS TO DEVELOP VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS BASED ON NAEP ASSESSMENTS

The National Assessment Governing Board has set out plans for developing voluntary national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics, based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Under the Appropriations Act for 1998, passed by Congress and signed by the President in mid-November, the Board has been granted "exclusive authority" over development of the proposed exams. The law prohibits any pilot testing of questions or field tests before October 1, 1998, and also provides for studies and evaluations by the National Academy of Sciences.

At its regular quarterly meeting in Washington on November 22, the Board adopted procedures for making decisions about the contract and specifications for developing the test questions and design. It promised wide public input into its deliberations.

"We will carry out the job Congress has asked us to do--develop an individualized version of the National Assessment of Educational Progress," said Mark D. Musick, chairman of the independent, bipartisan 26-member Governing Board, which has set policy for NAEP since 1988.

The proposed tests would show students whether they can meet NAEP's standards for basic, proficient, or advanced performance.

According to a House-Senate conference report, the new tests, designed for individual students, are required to "be based on the same content and performance standards as are used for NAEP," which is given to groups of students to measure academic achievement. Congress directed that the tests be "linked to NAEP to the maximum extent possible," which the Board will try to make sure is done.

Over the past 27 years, results from National Assessment exams have been reported for the nation, regions, and states, but not for individual students.

"The Board plans to act deliberately and fairly," Musick said. "We will hold public hearings. We will listen carefully. We want to give plenty of opportunity for a wide range of views to be considered."

-MORE-

800 North Capitol Street, N.W.
Suite 825, Mailstop 7583
Washington, D.C. 20002-4233
Phone: (202) 357-6938
Fax: (202) 357-6945

Musick added: "We are aware of the difficulties and challenges that are part of the directives from the President and Congress. We are not unaware of the complexity and controversy surrounding the voluntary national tests. We believe that this task was given to the Board because it has proven since 1988 that it is fair, bipartisan, deliberative, and independent as it tackles complex and controversial issues."

The Board's plans include the following:

- A special committee will review the five-year, \$65 million test development contract awarded by the Department of Education on August 15 to a group of major test publishers, headed by American Institutes for Research. The committee, composed of seven Board members, will make recommendations to the full Board.

Under the law, NAGB has until February 11 to approve, modify, or terminate the contract. If the contract is rescinded, the Board has authority to negotiate a new one.

- A special meeting of the Board will be held on January 22 in Washington to deal with national test development issues.

- The Board's two academic committees will begin the process of developing specifications for the reading and mathematics tests by reviewing recommendations of the expert panels convened last summer by the Department of Education.

The panels were set up under a contract with the Council of Chief State School Officers and MPR Associates. On September 25 Education Secretary Richard Riley announced that he would not approve the specifications proposed by the panels or forward them to the test development contractor.

- The Board will hold public hearings on test specifications this winter. It aims to adopt final specifications at its meeting scheduled for March 7 and 8 in Seattle, WA.

- The Board will review all test questions to make sure they cover the same content and meet the same standards of appropriateness and being free from bias that are used in NAEP.

- The Board will meet with representatives of the National Academy of Sciences, which will be conducting three Congressionally mandated studies related to development of the national test.

The Academy studies deal with (1) the feasibility of developing a common scale to compare commercial and state tests and NAEP; (2) evaluation of national test items and design for technical quality and validity and whether they "can be used for tracking, graduation, or promotion of students;" and (3) recommendations to

-3-

avoid discriminatory use of existing and new tests. The reports are due to Congress by September 1, 1998, with an interim report on the equating study due June 15.

- The Board will consider policies for test reporting and use through a process that ensures wide consultation and input.

- The Board will seek to complete all preliminary development work by September 30, 1998, so there can be pilot testing and field testing later, as determined by law.

"The Governing Board has not endorsed a voluntary national test and we have not opposed a voluntary national test," Musick said. "The Board is doing what Congress has asked us to do."

"The position of the Board has been that if there is to be a test that essentially is an adaptation of NAEP, then it should come under the NAEP umbrella," he continued. "If the country finds that useful and Congress funds it and moves forward, we hope to develop a test that is worthy of consideration."

The contract review committee, which begins work immediately, is headed by William T. Randall, a former NAGB chairman who was state Commissioner of Education in Colorado for many years. Other Board members on the committee include vice-chairman Mary Blanton, of Salisbury, NC, a lawyer and general public member of NAGB; James Ellingson, of Moorhead, MN, a fourth grade teacher; Thomas Fisher, director of student assessment for the Florida Department of Education; Edward Haertel, a professor at Stanford University, who is an expert in educational testing; and Deborah Voltz, assistant professor of special education at the University of Louisville.

Also serving is a new Board member, Diane Ravitch, former Assistant Secretary of Education under President Bush. Ravitch is a senior research scholar at New York University and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

The National Assessment Governing Board, established by Congress in 1988, includes governors and state legislators of both parties, local school officials, teachers, testing experts, and business and public representatives. The Board sets policy for NAEP, including test content and performance standards.

Since 1970, the National Assessment, based on nationally-representative samples of students, has been the only source of reliable, continuing information about what American students know and can do in various academic subjects. Since 1990, it has provided the only comparable state-by-state data on academic achievement, based on representative samples of students in each participating state. Over the past seven years 48 states have participated in NAEP and agreed to have results reported according to NAEP performance standards.

#