

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

Influence Index: 100

Citation

National Assessment of Educational Progress: The Nation's Report Card. National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education.

Description

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), commonly known as the "Nation's Report Card," is the definitive source of information for state-to-state comparisons in educational achievement. For this reason, it is of paramount importance to education policy makers, practitioners, and researchers alike. NAEP has been conducted since 1969 under the leadership of the Commissioner of Education Statistics, the head of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the statistical arm of the U.S. Department of Education. Policy for NAEP is set by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). An independent bipartisan body appointed by the Secretary of Education, NAGB is comprised of governors, state legislators, local and state school officials, educators, business representatives, and members of the general public.

Over the years, every state has established its own unique system of student assessments. However, NAEP is the only on-going, nationally and state-representative assessment that enables one to reliably: (1) analyze changes in achievement over time and (2) compare results across the states and jurisdictions. It periodically tests students at grades 4, 8 and 12 in 11 subject areas: reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, world history, civics, geography, the arts, economics, and foreign language.

The NAEP assessment program consists of three main strands: the national, state, and long-term trend assessment programs. The National assessment follows the framework of the governing board and provides results for the country as a whole and for its regions by combining state results with sample data from nonparticipating states. The State assessments, first conducted in 1990, employ the same framework as the National assessment and test representative samples of students from each state. The long-term trend NAEP, administered nationally every four years to youth ages 9, 13, and 17 in math and reading, is designed to measure change over time for the nation as a whole. In the most recent addition to the NAEP program, the Trial Urban District Assessment began periodically testing students in a small number of large urban districts in 2002.

Under the No Child Left Behind Act, every state in the nation is required to participate in State NAEP assessments in mathematics and reading (at grades 4 and 8) as a condition of receiving federal funding. Each participating state reports test results with student background information so that the results can be disaggregated and analyzed by group. This type of data includes information on student gender, race and ethnicity, poverty level, special education status, and English language learner designation.

Funding for NAEP (the second largest expenditure within IES) reflects the federal government's investment in tracking student achievement and measuring educational reform. In 2006 the final appropriation for NAEP exceeded 93 million dollars and the President's request for 2007 would increase that figure by 4.5 percent. The 4 million dollar increase would fund work to prepare for implementation of state-level assessments at the 12th grade level in 2009.

For More Information

Information and reports are available online at nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard and through the NAEP Data Explorer at nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde.