



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

How often is NAEP administered?

NAEP is currently scheduled to be administered every year ([see NAEP Schedule](#)) to grades 4, 8, and 12. A long term-trend study is administered to students by ages 9, 13, and 17. On the even numbered years, NAEP administers a variety of subjects to obtain a national sample. On odd numbered years, NAEP administers Math and Reading and obtains state and national samples. Long-term trend studies are conducted every four years. Detroit Public Schools also participate in the Trial Urban District Assessment Program which is delivered during the state sampling years.

How are schools selected for NAEP?

Schools are selected by statistical selection survey methodology called probability sampling proportional to size. The goal of this sampling procedure is to get a representative sample of the nation and/or state. In order for the sample to be representative, NAEP uses this procedure to ensure that demographic and achievement characteristics of the sample are consistent and representative of the nation and/or state. In order to achieve the most accurate representation of the state during state sampling years, some schools may be selected more frequently than others.

How are the results used?

The results are released in the Nations Report Card after the assessment period. These results are used to improve state and federal education policy. The results are often discussed in federal and state appropriations issues. A great deal of educational research is conducted with NAEP data.

How do NAEP results compare to state results?

The methodology of the sampling, the methods of testing, the [assessment frameworks](#), and the criteria for performance levels of each subject are different than MEAP, therefore there is no direct method for comparing results. The results are considered as one factor in the larger picture of student achievement measures.

How are the NAEP tests different than the MEAP tests?

In each administration, students are matrix sampled to take only one subject. Within the subject area, they are given a sample of questions. The

test is timed and the total actual time on the test is about an hour. About half of the test items are constructed response (mostly short answer fill-in the blank). NAEP also includes a background questionnaire which asks the students research based questions regarding their studying and learning activities. A questionnaire is also administered to the teaching staff.

What do school administrators have to do?

The Michigan Department of Education in cooperation with the National Center for Educational Statistics strives to reduce the administrative burden on school staff and create a positive experience for the students. The process begins with the Chief Academic Officer of the MDE notifying the District Superintendent in April of the year prior to the assessment about which particular schools have been selected in their district. This is followed by notification to the District Assessment Coordinator and the School Principal. In the fall, the NAEP State Coordinator (NSC) will contact the principal with detailed information. The principal will designate a school coordinator and fill out a one page School Data Collection Form (usually takes about 5-15 minutes). The NAEP School Coordinator will receive further details. The NSC will use the state Student Database System (SDS) to submit a list of students for each school. The duties of the School Coordinator are to coordinate a pre-assessment visit by the NAEP Assessment Coordinator which will include arranging for a testing room(s), handle local scheduling details, protocols for guest staff conduct, and for any student accommodations. Close to the testing date, the School Coordinator will send a parent notification letter home. The School Coordinator should be prepared to provide assistance on the test date, but NAEP administrators will conduct the assessment. The NAEP Assessment Coordinator will provide proctors (NAEP Assessment Administrators) and all assessment materials. The NAEP Assessment Coordinator may request some assistance from the school if there is an unusually high number of accommodations or for special accommodation circumstances.

Who gets tested?

Depending on the test and subjects, students are selected from grades 4, 8, 12 or for the long term trends study ages 9, 13, and 17. Depending on the size of the school, all students may be selected, or if the school is large, NAEP may take a smaller probabilistic sample (this is defined by NAEP statisticians and depends on the study but usually around 90-140 students). This determination will be made at the time of the Assessment Coordinators pre-Assessment visit.

How does NAEP handle accommodations?

NAEP encourages the participation of students with some limited English proficiency and students with disabilities. NAEP has a policy to provide for as many accommodations as reasonably possible. Most accommodations are very similar to MEAP. A [summary table](#) is provided by the Michigan Department of Education. When School Coordinators are making accommodation decisions a general rule is, to include students if they take MEAP with or without accommodations (or an equivalent exam). School Coordinators should discuss each student with the NAEP Assessment Coordinator and are especially invited to seek further assistance from the NSC if they have any questions.

How long does the NAEP assessment take?

The entire process from the time the students enter the room until the time they are permitted to return to their assigned room is about 90 minutes.

Can a school or student decline to participate?

The Michigan State School Code requires participation for all Michigan schools and the Federal No Child Left Behind law stipulates that Title I funds will be withdrawn for failure of grade 4 and 8 participation. NAEP will accommodate schools with a schedule conflict or snow day. If a school declines to participate, the schools MI-SAS accreditation will be withdrawn by the Michigan Department of Education in accordance with the Michigan State School Code. Student participation is voluntary. The School Coordinator must send home a parent notification letter prior to the NAEP assessment to inform the parents/guardians of the voluntary nature of the test.

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