Maximizing Meaningful Inclusion of English Learners on NAEP: Report of Technical Advisory Panel on Uniform National Rules for NAEP Testing of ELLs

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CDE Bilingual Coordinators Network Meeting

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Purpose

- Review the NAEP Technical Advisory Panel recommendations on Uniform Rules for Testing ELLs
- Encourage feedback & comments for the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB)

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About NAEP

- Nation's report card since 1969
- Survey assessment: Tests stratified random sample of population to estimate performance across US, states, & 11 urban districts, by key demographic subgroups
- Produces national and state results on common yardstick to measure progress (no individual student results)
- Core Subjects: Math & Reading in gr.4 & 8: Two 25-min blocks of items per subject
- All districts and schools are required to participate under NCLB

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The issue

- Although NAEP has become more inclusive of ELLs over time…
  - From 33% assessed in 1992 to 80% assessed in 2007 on Gr. 4 reading
- Inclusion rates vary significantly across states & districts…
  - E.g., in 2007 on Gr. 4 reading:
    - NJ excluded 53.4%, while CA excluded 6.7%
    - Houston excluded 35.1%, while LA excluded 4.2%

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ELs Excluded from NAEP

Highest and Lowest 4 States

State	Percent Excluded
New Jersey	53.4%
North Dakota	50.8%
Maryland	50.8%
Kentucky	45.5%
Idaho	12.9%
Mississippi	10.6%
Montana	7.8%
California	6.7%

*** - 4th Grade Reading, 2007 NAEP Administration**

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ELs Excluded from NAEP TUDA Districts

TUDA	% ELL	% Excluded	% of ELL Excluded
Atlanta	3	2	66.7%
DC	9	4	44.4%
Austin	32	14	43.8%
Cleveland	7	3	42.9%
Houston	37	13	35.1%
Chicago	21	4	19.0%
Charlotte	11	2	18.2%
NYC	18	3	16.7%
Boston	29	4	13.8%
SD	42	3	7.1%
LA	48	2	4.2%

*** - 4th Grade Reading, 2007 NAEP Administration**

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Why Do States and Districts Differ in Their Exclusion Rates?

- Under current rules for Students with Disabilities and ELL students, States and TUDA districts follow the accommodation and modification rules used for the State's NCLB test.
- If a State offers an accommodation or modification that are not allowed for NAEP, the student is excluded from NAEP.

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Ad Hoc Committee on NAEP Testing & Reporting of SWDs & ELLs

- Composed of NAGB board members
- Authorized two technical advisory panels to address substantial variation in exclusion & accommodation rates
- Provided guiding principles for TAPs
  - comparability of who is assessed & how
  - maximum access and meaningful participation
  - validity of NAEP framework constructs
  - feasibility of implementation

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Charge to the Expert Panel

Propose a set of uniform national rules, which

- Provide that students with a similar level of English proficiency are tested on NAEP the same way, regardless of where they live.
- Maximize student access and meaningful participation.
- Ensure that the constructs in NAEP frameworks are measured and that all students may be placed on the same scale.

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Charge to the Expert Panel

- Permit only accommodations or translations that maintain the validity, reliability, and comparability of NAEP data.
- Are feasible, logistically and financially, and without detrimental consequences.

Recommend follow-up studies on the implementation and impact of recommended procedures.

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Expert Panel Members

- **Sharif Shakrani** (Chair), Professor of Measurement and Quantitative Methods, Michigan State University
- **Jamal Abedi**, Professor of Education, University of California, Davis
- **Diane August**, Senior Research Scientist, Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, DC
- **Robert Linquanti**, Senior Researcher, Project Director for English Learner Evaluation & Accountability Support, WestEd, San Francisco, CA
- **Phil Morse**, Coordinator, Student Testing Unit, Los Angeles Unified School District; President, National Assn. of Test Directors

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Expert Panel Members, cont'd.

- **Charlene Rivera**, Executive Director, Center for Equity and Excellence in Education, George Washington University, Washington, DC
- **Maria Santos,** Executive Director, Office of English Language Learners, New York City Department of Education
- **Josefina Tinajero**, Dean, College of Education, Professor of Bilingual Education, University of Texas at El Paso

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Meetings

- In-person meeting May 1, 2009
- Five teleconferences during May, June, and July
- Discussions & recommendations documented in report, reviewed & accepted by all panel members

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Recommendations

1. All English language learners selected for the NAEP sample who have been in United States schools for one year or more should be included in the National Assessment.

- This policy should be implemented with the disaggregated reporting of ELL test results by detailed information on English language proficiency and the availability of accommodations that maximize meaningful participation.

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Recommendations

2. Students should be offered ELL-responsive accommodations that maintain the constructs in the NAEP framework, including

- Items and directions in plain language.
- Side-by-side Spanish-English test booklets.
- Word-to-word bilingual glossaries without definitions.
- Extra time.
- Other accommodations currently allowed by NAEP.

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Recommendations

- Accommodations should be selected by qualified school personnel with knowledge of the student's level of English proficiency.
- Reading assessment passages should *not* be modified, but directions should be in plain language without unnecessary complexity unrelated to the constructs assessed.

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Recommendations

3. Prompts, directions, and items in all NAEP assessments should be written in plain language.

- Such material should be free of unnecessary linguistic complexity irrelevant to the construct being tested.
- But the level of item difficulty should not be changed.
- All NAEP assessments should undergo a plain language review.

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Recommendations

4. Develop test blocks on existing NAEP scale at both low and high ends of difficulty. Low-end block should be offered to those ELL students *who would otherwise be excluded*.

- Such targeted testing would reduce standard errors, provide more information about low and high-achieving students, and reassure local decision-makers that ELLs can meaningfully participate in NAEP.

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Recommendations

5. Disaggregate and report NAEP results for ELLs by the best available standardized test data on level of English language proficiency.

- Although existing state ELP assessments are not consistent, data obtained from them should be used for research and analysis purposes.
- As soon as possible, NAEP should develop its own brief ELP test to report ELLs as advanced, intermediate, or beginner/low.

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Recommendations

6. Collect additional background information on English language learners tested, including

- Number of years living in US
- Years attending schools in US
- Years receiving instruction primarily in English

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Recommendations

7. Report results for former English language learners who have been reclassified as English proficient.

- Collect data on number of years since student exited ELL services or was reclassified.
- Encourage states to maintain these data to provide a more complete picture of long-term success of ELLs in U.S. schools.

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Recommendations

8. To obtain high and comparable participation rates across states and districts, make special efforts to solicit cooperation of officials deciding participation of individual students.

- Establish a high common goal of 95% participation among all ELLs in U.S. schools for one year or more.
- Jurisdictions that do not reach this policy goal should be designated in NAEP reports as falling below the desired participation rate.

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Recommendations

9. Adopt an aggressive timeline for innovation and research, including
   - Test items written in plain language.
   - A short test of English language proficiency.
   - Targeted testing with blocks of items at low and high levels of difficulty.
   - Computerized administration when feasible.

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Recommendations

- Consider establishing a new framework in Spanish-language literacy to assess reading of ELLs and others instructed in Spanish
  - To enhance participation by states where bilingualism is a policy goal.

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Next Steps

- NAGB solicits input & feedback via public hearings & written comments on ELL and SWD panel recommendations (LA,10/19; DC, 11/9)
- Ad Hoc Committee reviews recommendations and public input, makes recommendation to NAGB
- NAGB decides recommendations to adopt

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