

NAEP FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The National Assessment of Educational Progress, NAEP, is also known as "The Nation's Report Card." NAEP has been administered as a national assessment since 1969, and Virginia has participated in NAEP state-by-state testing since 1990. Virginia's average scale scores on NAEP assessments in reading, mathematics, and science tend to be above the national public school average. Gains have been made in grade 4 reading, mathematics, and science and in grade 8 mathematics and science since Virginia's Standards of Learning assessment program began in 1998. Please note, NAEP does not report any results for individual students, schools, or school divisions in Virginia.

For the 2016-2017 school year, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) will be administering state and national operational NAEP assessments in reading and mathematics using tablets with keyboards and conducting a mode comparability study with the paper-and-pencil format of the test used during the 2015 administration. NCES also will be conducting NAEP national operational assessments in writing in grades 4 and 8, pilot assessments in mathematics and reading in grades 4 and 8, and pilot assessments in U.S. history, civics, and geography in grade 8. Except for the mode comparability study, the operational and pilot assessments will all be conducted on NAEP-provided tablets with keyboards. Students selected to complete the writing test will be provided with a mouse in addition to the tablet and keyboard. As NAEP transitions to technology based assessments, the pilot assessments will inform NCES on how to maximize the use of touch-enabled, mobile devices for upcoming assessments.

What do the NAEP assessments test?

NAEP assessments are administered in many content areas. State level results are usually available for grades 4 and 8 in reading, mathematics, and science. The current assessment schedule, set by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), is planned through the year 2024 and may be found at <https://www.nagb.org/naep/assessment-schedule.html>.

The NAGB is an independent, bipartisan board established by the United States Congress that sets NAEP policy and determines when NAEP will be administered and in which content areas.

When will we find out which schools have been selected to participate and the testing date?

Division Superintendents and Division Directors of Testing (DDOTs) will be notified by the end of October if they have schools that are selected to participate in NAEP. The NAEP test windows are predetermined, although some flexibility exists for schools in the assignment of a testing day within the overall test window. A school should respond to the notification promptly if a specific test administration date is being requested..

Is participation in NAEP state testing required?

Yes, the Code of Virginia ([§22.1-253.13:3](#)) states: "In order to assess the educational progress of students as individuals and as groups, each local school shall require the administration of appropriate assessments, which ... shall include ... the National Assessment of Educational Progress state-by-state assessment."

Since Virginia's NAEP results are used extensively as confirmatory evidence for any trends identified in the Standards of Learning assessment results, it is important that Virginia's students participate and do their best on NAEP.

How are schools and students selected to participate in NAEP?

Not all schools and students in Virginia or in the nation will be selected to participate in the NAEP assessments. A process called probability sampling is used to select a representative sample of Virginia's or the nation's students to complete NAEP. The probability sampling used for NAEP is based on demographics so schools are listed in order according to factors such as type of location (i.e., rural, suburban), minority enrollment, and achievement on state tests. A sample of schools is selected from this ordered list. This type of sampling allows statisticians to account for clustering effects when they analyze the test results. It also minimizes administration costs. A new sample is drawn every year that is independent from previous years.

It may seem that samples are not randomly selected, as some schools are selected multiple years in a row. Since the probability of a school's selection is related to the number of students in the tested grade, larger schools have a higher probability of being selected. Students in a selected school are then identified to participate in NAEP by simple, random sampling. Because 15-25 students in a school are tested in each content area, students in a large school have a smaller chance of being selected. NAEP sampling is constructed by statisticians so that every student in the state or nation has approximately the same chance of being selected.

When is the NAEP testing window?

The NAEP 2017 assessment window is January 30, 2017, through March 10, 2017.

Who administers NAEP?

The NCES contractor responsible for conducting the administration is Westat. Information concerning Westat may be found at www.westat.com.

The NCES Assessment Division currently has 12 contractors, plus contracts with individual states and other jurisdictions, working to carry out the NAEP Assessments. Eight major contracts awarded to four contractors comprise the NAEP Alliance that guides the major aspects of assessment design, item development, data collection, processing, scoring data analysis, and reporting. Other contractors are responsible for one or more aspects of NAEP operations. Information about the current and past contractors may be found at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/contracts/history.asp>.

What are the responsibilities of selected schools?

Schools are responsible for planning testing locations, grouping the students taking the assessment, identifying students who may need accommodations, notifying parents, and getting students to their testing locations in the school at the time of testing. School administrators and teachers are not required to be involved in the actual administration of the assessment; however, school staff should be available for proctoring each group session. Although the state's fall student data collection is used to provide NAEP with initial student information, schools will be asked to furnish an updated student list, to include demographic information, the first week in

January. All pre-assessment activities will be conducted online by school test coordinators designated by their principals.

NAEP requires that parents of students selected to take NAEP assessments be notified in writing that their child has been or may be selected and that each child's participation is voluntary. A sample parent notification letter, that may be adapted to satisfy this requirement, is available. Prior to the assessment, a dated copy of the information given to parents must be provided to NAEP field staff. Schools maintain a log of any parent refusals.

How much time will NAEP require of students selected to take the test?

The amount of time needed varies depending on which NAEP tests are being administered. In 2017, the mode comparability study in grades 4 and 8 for mathematics and reading will be administered using paper and pencil and will include two 25-minute blocks of test questions. All other NAEP assessments are digitally based and will be administered on tablets with keyboards with usually two 25-30 minute blocks of test questions. All NAEP operational assessments and pilot tests also include two short surveys about instructional factors such as instructional practices occurring in the school or other student factors such as how many days of school a student missed in the last month. With about 20 minutes for the background questions and time for directions, the total estimated time for students is approximately 90 minutes for the linking study paper and pencil assessments and 120 minutes for the digitally based assessments.

Are accommodations allowed on NAEP?

Yes, commonly used accommodations may be used on NAEP. For the most part, these are the same accommodations that the Standards of Learning assessments allow. All students in a school's tested grade or age are eligible for selection in the NAEP sample, and the Virginia Department of Education expects that most students with disabilities and students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) who are selected in the sample will participate in NAEP using NAEP accommodations as appropriate.

Virginia's guidelines for inclusion of students with disabilities and/or with limited English proficiency may be found at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/naep_natl_assessment_ed_progress/index.shtml

When and where are NAEP results reported?

NAEP results may be found online at <http://nationsreportcard.gov/>. The reporting timeline is shown below:

NAEP Assessment	Release or anticipated release
NAEP 2017 state and national mathematics and reading (grades 4 and 8)	Fall, 2017
NAEP 2017 national writing (grades 4 and 8)	2018
NAEP 2016 national arts (grade 8)	2017-2018
NAEP 2015 state and national mathematics and reading (grades 4 and 8)	October 28, 2015
NAEP 2015 state and national science (grades 4 and 8)	Summer, 2016

NAEP 2015 national mathematics and reading (grade 12)	April - May, 2016
NAEP 2014 national technology and engineering literacy (TEL) (grade 8)	Summer, 2016

Does NAEP report at the school division level?

Results for NAEP are typically reported only at the national or state level. However, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) provides the opportunity for school divisions and consortia of schools to participate in “Below-State NAEP.” Below-State NAEP participants must agree to follow all NAEP standards, procedures, and technical requirements and pay for the costs of all activities associated with the assessment.

In order to be considered for Below-State NAEP participation, each entity must submit a request to NCES by January 15 of the year preceding the NAEP administration. For inquiries on Below-State NAEP, please contact Gina Broxterman, NCES Below-State Coordinator, by e-mail at Gina.Broxterman@ed.gov or by telephone at (202) 502-7822 or Dr. Wendy Geiger, Virginia NAEP State Coordinator, by e-mail at Wendy.Geiger@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-2102.

What other national or international tests are being conducted this year in Virginia?

In 2017, three international assessments described below will be administered in the United States by NCES as national and international field tests in April through June..

1. Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

Conducted every four years since 1995, TIMSS has been a valuable vehicle for studying international trends in mathematics and science achievement in grades 4 and 8. TIMSS reports overall achievement as well as results according to four international benchmarks (advanced, high, medium, and low), by major content domains (e.g., number, algebra, and geometry in mathematics, and earth science, biology, and chemistry in science), and by cognitive domains (knowing, applying, and reasoning)

TIMSS is coordinated by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). IEA is an independent, international cooperative of national research institutions and governmental research agencies. It conducts large-scale comparative studies of educational achievement and other aspects of education.

2. International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS)

ICILS examines the outcomes of student computer and information literacy (CIL) across countries. CIL refers to an individual's ability to use computers to investigate, create, and communicate in order to participate effectively at home, at school, in the workplace, and in the community. ICILS asks how well students are prepared for life in the information age, exploring several key questions about student CIL and its contexts:

- How does student computer and information literacy vary within and between countries?
- What factors influence students' computer and information literacy?

- What can education systems and schools do to improve students' computer and information literacy?

Like TIMSS, ICILS is coordinated by IEA.

3. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)

PISA is an international assessment that measures 15-year-old students' reading, mathematics, and science literacy every three years. First conducted in 2000, the major domain of study rotates between mathematics, science, and reading in each cycle. PISA also includes measures of general and cross-curricular competencies, such as collaborative problem solving. By design, PISA emphasizes functional skills that students have acquired as they near the end of compulsory schooling.

PISA is coordinated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an intergovernmental organization of industrialized countries.

Why does Virginia and the United States participate in international assessments?

The United States participates in international studies primarily for two reasons:

- To learn about the performance of U.S. students and adults in comparison to their peers in other countries.
- To learn about the educational and work experiences of students and adults in other countries.

Student assessments are a common feature of school systems that are concerned about accountability and assuring students' progress throughout their educational careers. National or state assessments enable us to know how well students are doing in a variety of subjects and at different ages and grade levels compared to other students nationally or within their own state. International assessments, on the other hand, offer a unique opportunity to benchmark our students' performance to the performance of students in other countries. Similarly, international assessments of adult literacy enable us to compare U.S. adults with their international peers on literacy skills that support productive adult lives in the workplace and society.

International assessments of students also enable countries to learn from each other about the variety of approaches to schooling and to identify promising practices and policies to consider in their schools. International assessments of adults enable research on the correlates between adults' work and educational experiences and their skill levels within countries and cross-nationally.

NAEP and International Studies Contact Information

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