

EIMAC Fall 2007 Meeting
Assessment Subcommittee
October 16-17, 2007
Chair: Wendy Roberts, Delaware
Chair Elect: Kris Kaase, Mississippi

Tuesday, October 16, 2007

Updates from the National Assessment Governing Board
Charles Smith, Executive Director

- Secretary Margaret Spellings will announce seven new Board members (including a chief and representatives from publishing, state board, governor's office) and two re-appointees in the next few days. Will be sworn in at November board meeting.
- Two new staff members: Michelle Blair, research associate (new position) and Stephan Harris, communications (replacing Stephanie Germeraad)
- This year, civics, history, economics, reading, and math reports released. Forthcoming: Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) reading and math.
- Reporting has changed. The Board's Reporting and Dissemination committee has worked hard to make the reports more user-friendly. The Board holds embargoed briefings with congressional staff, chiefs, governors, and the media prior to public releases. Between 30-35 media outlets participate by phone or in person including local media, providing time to make clarifications, and questions are more sophisticated than several years ago. CommunicationWorks monitors media statements to identify inaccuracies and opportunities to clarify tables and narratives, and the inaccuracies have also decreased. The Board receives an increasing number of interviews by local media, asking sophisticated questions. Prior to the November board meeting, the joint NCES/Governing Board meeting will discuss clarifying tables and narratives on inclusions. Three local cable stations requested interviews on specific states, indicating move to the mainstream.
- Dave Gordon, chair of the Reporting and Dissemination subcommittee, and Dave Driscoll, chair of the Committee on Standards, Design, and Methodology (COSDAM), from reporting and technical perspectives, are both interested in improving reporting on inclusion rates, both short-term and long-term, in keeping with agreements made before the data collection. Moved tables on inclusion rates from appendix to narrative. Further changes will include putting the issue in context, taking a fresh look at the decision tree, and considering why there are differences, what they mean, and how to interpret them. At the most recent release, Dave Gordon reported California's high proportion of English language learners, not as an excuse, but as a way of showing how states differ.
- A new technical panel is examining 12th grade assessment and college/work readiness, chaired by Michael Kurst with members including John Campbell (University of Minnesota), John Connolly (University of Oregon), Michael Caine (Conference of Bar Examiners), University of Texas, Bob Mislevy (University of Maryland), and George Thornton (Colorado State), representing higher education, the workplace, and the military. The panel is working on a timeline through fall 2008, with hopefully changes for 2009.
- Darvin Winnick asked that Charles focus on improving outreach. Some examples are Teri Siskind's presentation to the board on the 2009 reading trend line, an outreach

dinner during out-of-town board meetings for local SEA, LEA business, state legislature, state board, and governor's office leaders, and answering frequent requests to speak.

- 12th grade preparedness being worked on by technical panel
- Trend line being considered
- Feedback on helpful materials/training is welcome

Feedback from states

- Early collaborations with states can help avoid basic methodological issues that states have with reports like the mapping report and the inclusion study.
- RESPONSE: The Governing Board begins with input from relevant stakeholders and is not involved with either the mapping report or the inclusion study. The Governing Board does not comment on state assessments or standards.

- Would like to know more about the CCSSO/Governing Board partnership
- RESPONSE: Too early to talk about

- 2009 reading framework update?
- RESPONSE: 2009 reading framework process is complete and online. New vocabulary component explained at prior EIMAC meeting by ETS

- Inclusion - how can EIMAC help?
- RESPONSE: Develop a consensus letter, bullet points, speaker for future board meeting, input on technical/developmental aspects as well as reporting

- What is the Governing Board's position on mapping studies?
- RESPONSE: No position, no advance knowledge of the report

Update on the Collaboration with the Association of Test Publishers (ATP)

Alan Thiemann, General Counsel

- Rationale for the ATP Best Practices Working Group (BPWG): ATP managing technical advisory committee under American National Standards Institute (ANSI); there was a need to address computer-based testing and other areas not covered through earlier efforts; ATP was involved with SIF on interoperability standards
- Context: Congress asked Spellings to encourage publishers to agree on standards and partner with CCSSO
- PowerPoint presentation describes Best Practices Working Group composition (ATP and AAP test committee) and states update
- Publisher concern that best practices are not prescriptive or proprietary (are voluntary, performance-oriented, and do not influence/harm any company---targets instead of how to meet them)
- Avoid reliability and validity issues and others that conflict with Standards on Psychological Testing ("joint standards")
- Willing to address ethics through introductory comment; ATP disagreeing on moving forward on ethics, anti-trust issue, position is that ethics are taken care of through state laws

- Would like to meet during 2007 to share early work with a small state group
- Develop joint working groups with Scope of Work for each topic
- BPWG will meet on January 9-11, 2008 (Tuesday through Thursday) in Monterey, CA - invitation for CCSSO to participate
- Will be session at spring ATP conference on March 3-5, 2008 in Dallas

State concerns

- By avoiding proprietary information, publishers will not be agreeing on best practices but will agree on lowest common denominator instead
- Publishers should agree not only on level but also on content (definitions). States agree that don't need to prescribe how to get there
- Some sense that ATP has moved too far ahead without state input
- States spent time spent on draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), specifically re working group areas
- Need to develop a funding mechanism for state involvement
- Topics of interest from the last assessment directors' meeting were contract management, scanning and scoring, item development, and test administration. These were expanded to include the following:
 - In addition to psychometrics, basic business practices
 - Contract management (scope of work changes, responsiveness, contract transition requirements)
 - Program management and/or project development (crosses other items)
 - Instructional Technology (IT) resources and application development including online assessment
 - Test administration and support (i.e. ancillary materials, customization)
 - Item development
 - Application development
 - Test development
 - Forms development
 - Printing, booklet production
 - Logistics (i.e. billing)
 - Technical writing for manuals and cross-checking documentation, other writing
 - Quality control
 - Scanning, scoring, and reporting
 - Customer service/relations
 - Psychometric support, technical manuals, assistance with peer reviews
 - Ethical business practices
- In their Requests for Proposals, states will identify which standards that vendors must follow in each state
- Vendors that follow standards may raise prices
- States concerned about customized billing, vendors working under old business practices not updated for customization

Assessment Directors Summit Review

Gloria Turner, AL

- 2007 reading and math release: state preparation and media reactions

- 2007 mapping study: questions about the methodology; purpose of the study; increasingly negative results as approaching 2013-14; lack of communication between NCES and ADs, more communication between NCES and NAEP State Coordinators (NSCs), varied communication between ADs and NSCs; presentation on NSC resources and working groups
- 2007-08 releases: state preparation and suggestions
- NAEP-TIMMS comparison
- GAO inclusion rate study: some sense that this seems to be a complex approach to answering a simple question about these rates over time within states and between states; questions about use of resulting data; questions about integrity of ELL/SWD Questionnaire completion; questions about methodology for comparing states
- Would like to meet by January 2008 to advise NCES on mapping study and inclusion rate study

Collecting Per Pupil Cost of Reading and Math Assessments by State

- Pat Roschewski (NE) asked that we discuss this topic and CCSSO has gotten requests for this information, probably from state legislatures
- Rolf can collect through Annual Accountability Profile
- Meaningless because of embedded NRT in one state, open-ended in some states, as well as variation in how the contract costs are detailed
- Assumes that assessment systems are comparable
- AIR tried to collect in last couple of years, was too difficult; Rolf collected it at one point
- Group feels that this data collection is too difficult due to lack of comparability and do not want to move forward at this time

Peer Review Letter from Kerri Briggs to States re Updated Peer Review

- Assessment/standards changes after peer review must go through peer review again (anything covered under peer review)
- What is the operating definition of a change? adding new items; changing content, standards, and assessment; accommodations
- Need some standardization across DOE staff when states ask about this
- SC already scheduled to go back through peer review, so willing to ask question, not sure has all details needed
- Have chiefs ask for clarification on what constitutes new aspects of assessment that require another peer review (copy and paste text from letter). ask for examples, mention negative impact on innovation, improvement
- Will all covered under peer review be re-reviewed or will just review new pieces?

Wednesday, October 17, 2007

Education Week's Quality Counts

Chris Swanson, EPE Research Center

- State Concerns

- Evidence that grading scale is valid and reliable, perhaps looks into this more, include states on technical advisory panel (transparent methodology, are considering whether or not to grade again, readers prefer grading)
- Timing of data submission. Currently receiving survey at a time when AYP efforts underway (August). Prefer later and/or longer window for submission
- Significant burden of data requests. Appreciate streamlining. Ed Week is considering asking for half of survey each year
- More hard copies sent to states (currently one)
- Sending original request to chief and other contacts
- Mapping responses to technology and Quality Counts (no plans to do this, discrete analyses)

Policy Maker's Guide to Test Development

Wes Bruce, IN and Chris Domaleski, GA

- EIMAC board agreed to solicit comments through October 26
- Sped person wondered why no mention of universal design

Assessment Director Conference Calls

- Will follow up via email about future of conference calls
- Debate about setting agenda for calls versus keeping them open, best schedule
- Schedule a call in November before Thanksgiving re update on mapping, exclusion, and ATP

End of Course Assessments

- Interest in collaborating on end of course assessments in small group

Recommendations from EIMAC

1. Send letters from the EIMAC assessment subcommittee and the Permanent Standing Task Force on Assessment to the National Assessment Governing Board and to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) regarding concerns about two upcoming studies related to the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) that are planned for release by NCES in winter/spring 2008.

Assessment directors also request that their input be sought much earlier in the process of design and methodology regarding any NAEP-related studies.

We recognize the desire of the National Assessment Governing Board and NCES to demonstrate and be a model for high quality objective scientific analyses. Therefore, we recommend the following in regard to the studies referenced above and any future studies:

NAEP/State Mapping Study –

- “Caveats” should be included prominently in the body of the report to set the context for the study along with limitations on interpretations of results
 - Recognize in the body of the report that there is not clear agreement among measurement professionals about the appropriateness of the methodology used

in the study, including a full review of literature related to the varied opinions and references

- Be transparent regarding the study methodology, including detailed information on the sources of the data sufficient for replication of the study
 - Copy assessment directors, in addition to NAEP State Coordinators, on all correspondence related to verification of data, pre-release briefings, etc.
- Proceed with caution, explicitly review threats to the validity of, and verify the validity of any study to compare the results of any previous NAEP/State Mapping Study to any future NAEP/State Mapping Studies

Study on Measuring Improvement in NAEP Inclusion Rates of Students with Disabilities –

- In addition to the bullets above concerning the NAEP/State Mapping Study,
 - Clarify the questions this study is intended to answer
 - Establish the validity of the report in part by examining potential non-random errors associated with the use of the decision tree and the integrity of the data collection via the Students with Disabilities/English Language Learners Questionnaire completed by the schools in the NAEP sample
 - Re-evaluate the purpose and/or appropriateness of making adjustments (re-centering) to establish benchmark participation rates
- In conjunction with appropriate groups, reexamine the framework for decision-making about NAEP participation for students with disabilities. Appropriate groups could include: Office of Special Education Program (OSEP), Assessing Special Education Students (ASES) Statewide Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS), and special education state leadership.
2. Seek ways to fund a cross-state collaborative project that will involve joint work with the Association of Test Publishers (ATP) beginning prior to the end of calendar 2007 and continuing throughout 2008 with the goal of producing a best practices document focusing on operations.
 3. Seek further clarification from the Office of the Assistant Secretary, Elementary and Secondary Education, regarding what constitutes a change in the standards and assessment systems as discussed in the September 5, 2007 USED letter on peer review. Some examples are provided in the letter, but states need further clarification on the degree of change that requires an additional peer review and the scope of that review.