

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 Maine has participated in NAEP state-by-state testing, in which results are provided for participating states since 1990. Maine's NAEP average scale scores in reading, mathematics, and science tend to be above the national public school average scores. Please note that NAEP does not report any results for individual students, schools, or school districts in Maine.

As computers and digital tools continue to evolve and play an increasingly important role in today's classrooms, NAEP is transitioning to updated digital assessments and administration platforms. These innovative assessments will expand and enrich our understanding of what students know and are able to do while also informing the development of future assessments. Beginning in 2017, the NAEP [mathematics](#), [reading](#), and [writing](#) assessments were administered to students throughout the nation on NAEP-provided tablets. Additional subjects were administered on tablets each year until the transition was complete. Throughout the transition, a small number of students participated in the assessment via paper and pencil. Administering this assessment via both table and paper and pencil assisted in the examination of differences in student performance between the two types of administration.

Is participation in NAEP state testing required?

YES. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 requires local school districts receiving Title 1 funding to participate in state NAEP testing at grades 4 and 8 in reading, and mathematics if they are selected for the NAEP Assessment.

The following assurances are listed in the documentation for any state to receive Title 1 funding:

The LEA agrees, if selected, to participate in the State National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 4th and 8th grade reading and mathematics carried out under section 303(b)(3) of the National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act (ESSA section 1112(c)(3)).

What are the requirements for participation in NAEP?

Every state that receives Title I, Part A funds must participate in NAEP's biennial state academic assessments of reading and mathematics in grades 4 and 8. Further, all LEAs that receive Title I, Part A funds and the schools within those LEAs are required to participate in these biennial State assessments of grades 4 and 8 reading and math if selected as part of a state's NAEP sample. State, LEA, and school participation in NAEP assessments, other than reading and mathematics assessments at grades 4 and 8, is voluntary.

Parents of children selected to participate in NAEP assessments must be informed before the administration of the assessment that their child may be excused from participation. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which administers the NAEP assessments, will assist schools, school districts, and states in notifying parents of students selected for NAEP samples. The manner of such notification shall be determined by the state, district, or school in which the

students are enrolled. NCES prepares, updates, and disseminate more detailed information on NAEP that is specifically designed for parents and the public.

Will the federal government provide assistance to SEAs and LEAs for their participation in NAEP assessments?

Starting in 2002, NAEP shared the responsibility for the administrative support with participating states, districts, and schools. NAEP has established the Assessment Management System website to notify schools and districts about its assessment activities. Further, NAEP supports a NAEP State Coordinator in each state who serves as the liaison between the State Education Agency and NAEP. The coordinator reviews NAEP assessment items and processes, coordinates the NAEP administration in the state, analyzes and reports NAEP data, and coordinates the use of NAEP results for policy and program planning. In addition, NAEP established a NAEP State Service Center to provide ongoing support, technical assistance, and training for the NAEP State Coordinators, answer information requests regarding NAEP, conduct meetings with the NAEP State Coordinators and the State Testing Directors, and maintain a NAEP Information Center.

When is the NAEP testing window?

The NAEP Assessment window is January 29, 2024 – March 8, 2024.

Are other national or international tests conducted?

NCES is conducting the NAEP 2024 Grade 8 Science assessment as well as the 2024 High School Transcript Study (HSTS). The HSTS is conducted in conjunction with NAEP. HSTS provides information about the courses high school graduates took during their high school years, how many credits they earned, the grades they received, and examines the relationship of these course taking patterns to the achievement of those graduates who participated in the twelfth-grade 2024 NAEP. The HSTS 2024 school sample includes public and private schools across the Nation. Participation in the High School Transcript Study is by invitation only.

The National Indian Education Study (NIES) is designed to describe the condition of education for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students in the United States. NIES is conducted under the direction of the National Center for Education Statistics on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Indian Education.

Some Students may also be selected to answer additional contextual questions, as part of the NAEP student survey questionnaire, for other special studies to help put NAEP achievement results into context and better understand how well education is meeting the needs of all students.

When are NAEP results reported?

The NAEP results in reading, mathematics, other content areas, and special studies conducted by NCES can be found at the www.nationsreportcard.com.

What are the responsibilities of selected schools?

Schools are responsible for identifying students who may need accommodations, planning testing locations, grouping the students taking the assessment, notifying parents, and getting students to their testing locations. 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 the initial needed student information, schools will be asked to furnish an updated student list with demographics the first week in January. All pre-assessments activities and surveys of teachers and principals are done online.

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

How much testing time will NAEP require of students?

NAEP does not assess all students. Instead, it tests a representative sample of the state's or nation's students. Since 2019, almost all NAEP assessments are digitally based and completed using tablets, with the exception of some pilot and research studies. The online assessments will take 120 minutes and any remaining paper and pencil assessments will take 90 minutes. Each participating student will take only one type of assessment in one subject area. Since NAEP uses matrix sampling, students take segments of the entire test which are then combined and statistically weighted to determine the state achievement for each assessment.

When will we find out which schools have been selected to participate?

The summer prior to the assessment year, Maine Superintendents are notified if they have schools that were selected to participate in NAEP. Individual school principals are notified in the beginning of the school year, if their respective school was selected to participate to allow the schools to reserve the scheduled assessment date for NAEP on their school calendars. There is some flexibility in the assignment of a testing day within the test window. The sooner a school responds to the notification letter, the more flexible the test administration schedule can be if you need an alternative date.

How is the NAEP sample selected?

NAEP uses a process called 'systematic sampling with probability proportional to size' to select a representative sample of Maine students. This sampling process is consistent across all states. For national assessments, the same procedure is used at a national level. In a probability sampling that is based on demographics, schools are grouped according to factors such as type of location (i.e., rural, suburban), diversity of student enrollment, and achievement on state tests onto an ordered list. 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.

Sometimes 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 number of students in the tested grade, larger schools have a higher probability of being selected. Students within a selected school are selected by simple, random sampling. Since about 30 students in a school are tested in each content area, students in a large school have a smaller chance of being selected. Therefore, NAEP sampling is constructed so that every student in the state or nation has approximately the same chance of being selected to participate in NAEP.

What do the NAEP assessments test?

NAEP conducts assessments in many content areas. State level results are usually available for grades 4 and 8 in reading, mathematics, and sometimes in science.

The National Assessment Governing Board is an independent, bipartisan board that sets NAEP policy and determines the NAEP assessment schedule that defines which content areas in addition to reading and mathematics are assessed and on what schedule.

Does NAEP allow accommodations?

Yes. NAEP allows commonly used accommodations. For the most part, these are the same accommodations that are used on the state assessment. All students in a school's tested grade or age group are eligible for selection in the NAEP sample. The Maine Department of Education expects that most students with disabilities and students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) will participate in NAEP using NAEP accommodations as appropriate, according to the state assessment guidelines. Only students currently assigned to take Maine's alternate assessments can be legitimately excluded from NAEP.

Should you have further questions or clarification, please contact Dr. Regina Lewis, Maine NAEP Coordinator at (207) 530-1355 or regina.lewis@maine.gov.