

An Introduction to NAEP for Private Schools



“CAPE supports NAEP as an accurate measure of student achievement in the United States. Participation is essential for producing private school results. We urge schools to do so.”

Joe McTighe
Executive Director, Council for American
Private Education (CAPE)



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The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what our nation's students in public and private schools know and can do in a variety of subjects such as mathematics, reading, science, and writing. NAEP provides a common measure of student achievement across the country. It is referred to as the gold standard of assessments because of its high technical quality and because it represents the best thinking of assessment specialists, education experts, teachers, and content specialists from around the nation. NAEP results are released as The Nation's Report Card.

Teachers, parents, policymakers, and researchers all use NAEP results to assess progress and develop ways to improve education in the United

States. NAEP is a trusted resource and has been providing valid and reliable data on student performance since 1969.

NAEP is an essential measure of student achievement in both public and private schools. Note the following:

- The schools and students selected to take the assessment represent the diversity of our nation's schools and students.
- NAEP reports on student achievement nationally. NAEP is not designed to provide individual school and student scores. NAEP follows strict confidentiality guidelines that prohibit the identification of participating schools and students.

How are schools selected?

Each year, a new sample of schools is drawn for NAEP. The sample is based on data from the Private School Universe Survey (PSS). The PSS collects and stores data on more than 30,000 private schools in the 50 states and the District



of Columbia. The number of private schools sampled for NAEP varies from year to year, depending on the number of subjects being assessed and the extent of reporting for different types of private schools.

Who determines the content of NAEP?

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), a division within the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, administers the assessment. NCES is responsible for the development of the questions, the administration of the assessment, scoring, conducting analyses, and reporting the results. Each NAEP assessment is built from a content framework that specifies what students should know and be able to do in a given subject and grade. The National Assessment Governing Board, which sets policy for NAEP, oversees the creation of the NAEP frameworks.

The NAEP program

NAEP has evolved to address the changing educational landscape through its transition to digitally based assessments. Digitally based assessments allow NAEP to collect new types of data that provide depth in understanding of what students know and can do in core academic subjects. NAEP digitally based assessments use new testing methods and question types that reflect the growing use of technology in education. Some questions may include multimedia, such as audio and video. Other questions may allow the use of embedded technological features, such as an onscreen calculator, to form a response, or may engage students in solving problems within realistic scenarios.

NAEP is administered by highly trained representatives, most of whom are former teachers or principals. NAEP representatives bring all materials and equipment to the school on assessment day. Individual students take NAEP in one subject only.



The Importance of Private School Participation

Private schools have participated in NAEP for decades and are an integral part of providing a complete picture of U.S. education.

Private schools represent about 25 percent of schools in the nation and educate approximately 10 percent of our nation's students. Without the participation of private schools in NAEP, any report of trends in student achievement at the elementary, middle, and high school levels would be incomplete. By participating, your students have an important role in representing thousands of other private school students throughout the country.

NAEP has consistently demonstrated over time and across subjects that the performance of students in private schools compares positively to that of students in public schools and the rest of the nation. The performance of students attending private schools can be examined

on the NAEP website at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/nonpublicschools.asp>.

On this site you can also view a short four-minute video and hear heads of schools and teachers discuss their experiences with NAEP and the value of NAEP for private schools.

"In the interest of compiling a complete picture of private education in America, SBACS encourages Baptist schools to join other non-public schools by participating in NAEP projects."

Edward E. Gamble
Executive Director, Southern Baptist
Association of Christian Schools

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“The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod strongly encourages Lutheran schools who are invited to participate in NAEP to do so and to contribute our data in order to provide a complete picture of private education in America.”

Terry L. Schmidt
Director of Schools, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

Endorsements

For many years, more than 30 national, regional, and state private school organizations have provided letters endorsing private school participation in NAEP. These organizations include the Council for American Private Education, the National Catholic Educational Association, the Association of Christian Schools International, and the National Association of Independent Schools. These organizations value the data that NAEP provides and encourage their member schools to participate.

Private school results

NAEP results for private schools are generally reported for overall private schools, Catholic

schools (in which 40 percent of all private school students are educated), and Other Private (non-Catholic) schools. Some years, when school samples are large enough, and depending on the level of participation, results for other groups of students can be reported.

While private school participation is an integral component of reporting national NAEP results, results specifically for overall private schools can only be reported when 70 percent of schools selected for NAEP participate in the assessment.

“The NAEP survey results can be a very useful tool to Jewish Day Schools, who can utilize the data to encourage parents to provide their children with a private, rather than a public, school education.”

Rabbi Dovid Nojowitz
National Director, The National Society
for Hebrew Day Schools

Participation

It is vitally important that private school students are represented in reports of our nation’s educational progress. Once you have agreed to participate, a local NAEP representative will work directly with your designated school coordinator to make assessment arrangements.

What is involved?

NAEP assessments are generally conducted between the last week in January and the first week in March. NAEP representatives work with each school to identify an assessment date within this time period that best fits the school’s schedule. NAEP representatives bring all materials and equipment, including tablets, to the school on assessment day. Schools only need to provide space for the assessment and electrical outlets.

Students in schools selected to take the assessments will spend approximately 120 minutes, including transition time and directions, completing the assessments as well as the student questionnaire. The questionnaire

provides contextual information about students’ opportunities to learn in and outside of the classroom as well as their educational experiences.

Each principal will be asked to

- designate a school coordinator, and
- include the NAEP assessment date on the school calendar.

The NAEP representative will then work with the school coordinator to complete various tasks highlighted below.

- **Register on the MyNAEP website.** Schools selected for NAEP can access detailed information about the assessment on this site. Schools may choose to register for the MyNAEP website by following these simple steps:
 - Go to www.mynaep.com.
 - On the right side of the screen, select Please register.
 - Enter your MyNAEP registration ID.

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“The National Catholic Educational Association encourages Catholic schools to participate in NAEP and to use the results, which are an independent measure of student achievement, as a benchmark against which to measure success and to discover areas that need improvement.”

Thomas Burnford
Interim President, National Catholic
Educational Association

More information, including the school-specific MyNAEP registration ID, is sent to schools at the beginning of each school year.

- **Provide a list of eligible students.** NAEP uses a complete list of students in the selected grade to draw a random sample of students to participate in the assessment.
- **Inform parents.** By law, before the administration of the assessment, parents of students selected for NAEP must be informed that their child may be (or has been) selected, may be excused from participation for any reason, and is not required to finish the assessment or answer all test questions.





- **Complete other preassessment activities with guidance and support from the NAEP representative.** In December, the NAEP representative responsible for administering NAEP in your school will contact you and discuss how best to complete various tasks to prepare for the assessment.
- **Ensure that students attend the session on assessment day.** The school coordinator should be available prior to the assessment start time to ensure that students report to the session for which they are selected. The school coordinator and/or teachers of selected students are encouraged to remain in the room during

“ACTS supports NAEP. It is the crucial results obtained from NAEP that allow Christian and private schools to document and track the academic levels and compare those with public education.”

R. Jay Nelson
Executive Director, Association of
Christian Teachers and Schools

the assessment, although they are not required to do so.

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What are the responsibilities of the NAEP representatives?

NAEP representatives work directly with schools. All NAEP staff have completed a thorough qualifications review, including submitting fingerprints for an FBI clearance and signing an oath of confidentiality. A NAEP representative will be assigned to provide the school coordinator with instructions and guidance for completing preassessment activities and ensuring a successful assessment, and lead the team of NAEP staff on the day of assessment.

Private school results online

NAEP assesses a representative sample of private school students at grades 4, 8, and 12. Several different breakdowns of results are available depending on the years and level of participation.

With high levels of private school student participation, NAEP can help provide answers to important questions such as the following:

- How has private school student performance in NAEP subjects changed over time?

- How does the performance of students in private schools compare to the performance of public school students?
- How do coursetaking patterns relate to student performance?

Additional data tools. Along with an overview of NAEP data for private schools, more specific results are available through the NAEP Data Explorer at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata>. Teachers can use the NAEP Questions Tool at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrlsx/landing.aspx> to see how student performance compares nationally on specific items.

An interactive approach to reporting

NAEP results are easy to access in an interactive website at <http://nationsreportcard.gov>. The results from past assessments in a wide variety of subjects at grades 4, 8, and 12 for public and private school students can be explored in more detail with interactive graphics, downloadable data, and enhanced features for viewing results.

“Christian schools form a vital part of American education opportunities. When Christian schools actively engage with NAEP, they have an opportunity to show their impact through the resulting data. That’s just one reason ACSI urges Christian schools to participate in NAEP testing.”

Dan Egeler
President, Association of Christian
Schools International

Online Resources

If you want to...	Visit...
Find out more information about NAEP in general	http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard
Learn more about the role of private schools in NAEP	http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/nonpublicschools.asp
View a short 4-minute video about the value of private school participation in NAEP	http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/nonpublicschools.asp
Read about the content development of the assessment	http://www.nagb.org
Locate assessment results	http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata
View sample questions	http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrlsx