

# Selecting Private Schools and Students for Participation in NAEP

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is an essential measurement of student achievement in the United States.

- First administered in 1969, NAEP is the largest continuing and nationally representative assessment of what our nation's public and private school students know and can do in various subjects.
- NAEP is considered the gold standard of assessments because of its high technical quality. From developing frameworks and questions to the reporting of results, NAEP represents the best thinking of assessment and content specialists and teachers from around the nation.
- The schools and students participating in NAEP make an important contribution by representing other schools and students across the country.
- NAEP monitors academic progress over time and reports on student achievement nationally. The results are released as The Nation's Report Card.
- Elected officials, policymakers, school administrators, and teachers all use NAEP results to develop ways to improve education.

## Introduction

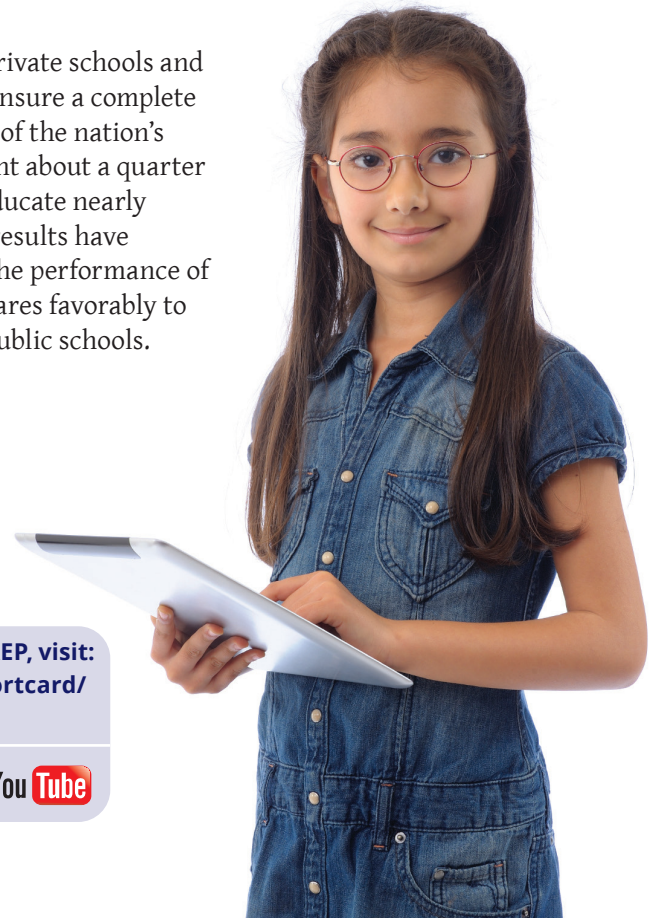
NAEP provides results on public and private school student achievement, instructional experiences, and school environment factors for the nation. Since NAEP is not designed to report results for individual students or schools, it is not necessary for every student in every school to take the assessment. Instead, an accurate picture of student performance is obtained by administering NAEP to a sample of students who represent the student population of the nation as a whole. Within this large national sample, smaller samples are drawn to represent the public school student population of individual states and large urban districts. Samples are also drawn to represent the overall private school student population, as well as the population of Catholic school students (who comprise about 40 percent of all private school students) and non-Catholic private school students.

To ensure that a representative sample of private school students is assessed, NAEP is given in a sample of schools whose students reflect the varying demographics of private schools nationwide. Within each selected school and grade to be assessed, students are chosen at random to participate in NAEP. Every student in a school that has been sampled for NAEP has the same chance of being chosen, regardless of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, English language learner status, or any other factors.

It is important that all selected private schools and students participate in NAEP to ensure a complete picture of the academic progress of the nation's students. Private schools represent about a quarter of all schools in the nation and educate nearly 10 percent of all students. NAEP results have consistently demonstrated that the performance of students in private schools compares favorably to the performance of students in public schools.

For more information about NAEP, visit:  
<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/nonpublicschools.aspx>

Find us on:



# The NAEP Sampling Process for Private Schools

The following steps are used each year to select a sample of private schools and students to participate in NAEP.

1

## Identify all potential private schools

An initial list of all private schools in the country is obtained from the Private School Universe Survey (PSS). The PSS has been conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) every 2 years beginning with the 1989-90 school year. The survey generates data on the number of private schools, teachers, and students in the United States and provides the best available list of all private schools to serve as a sampling frame for NCES surveys of private schools.



2

## Develop an ordered list for sampling

Using the list, private schools are classified into two groups, Catholic schools and non-Catholic schools. Each group is then sorted by (1) region of the country (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West); (2) school location, (city, suburb, town, rural); and (3) race/ethnicity composition of the schools.

The last sorting of the school list within each grouping is based on the size of enrollment for each school. This step assists in avoiding getting, by chance, too many large schools or small schools in the sample. However, larger schools have a greater probability of selection than smaller schools because their students represent a larger portion of all private school students in the country.



3

## Select the school sample

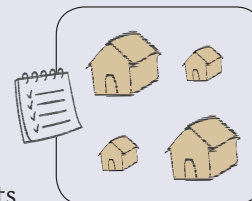
The sample of schools is drawn from the list for NAEP participation with a systematic sampling procedure. This procedure is based on the overall student population size and number of schools needed for the assessment. By proceeding systematically through the entire ordered list, schools of different sizes and characteristics are selected and a representative sample of students can be chosen.



4

## Confirm school eligibility

NAEP representatives review the list of sampled schools to verify that the schools are eligible for participation. Some reasons that would make a school ineligible include school closure or the school not having students in the grade being assessed.



5

## Within sampled schools, select students to participate in NAEP

In each sampled school, a list is compiled of all students within the grade to be assessed. From this list a sample of students is randomly selected for participation in the assessment. Every student in the sampled grade has an equal chance of being selected. After the sample is drawn, students are randomly assigned to participate in one subject area assessment. NAEP representatives work with each school to verify the accuracy of student demographic information.

