

## **National Indian Education Study Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the National Indian Education Study?**

The National Indian Education Study (NIES) is a two-part study designed to describe the condition of education for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) students in the United States. The study was conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) at the request of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Indian Education (OIE).

Results of the study are divided into two parts. Part I presents the performance results of AI/AN students at grades 4 and 8 on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading and mathematics. Part II presents the results of a special survey of American Indian/Alaska Native students, their teachers, and their school administrators, focusing on native language and culture related to the education of AI/AN students.

The full report, as well the NIES Data Explorer and additional information, can be accessed at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nies/>.

### **What is the purpose of the NIES?**

The goal of the study is to describe the condition of education of American Indian/Alaska Native students by focusing on both their academic achievement (Part I) and educational experiences (Part II) in grades 4 and 8. This activity is part of a collaborative effort among Indian tribes and organizations, the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), and state and local education agencies toward meeting the challenging academic standards of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 for all students.

### **Who conducted the study?**

The study was conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) with support from the Office of Indian Education (OIE), U.S. Department of Education. NCES designed the study in consultation with a Technical Review Panel (TRP) whose members include American Indian and Alaska Native educators and researchers from across the country.

### **Who participated in NIES?**

About 9,900 AI/AN fourth-graders and 8,400 eighth-graders were assessed in either reading or mathematics in the 2009 NIES Part I. In addition to these AI/AN students who were assessed in Part I, fourth- and eighth-grade AI/AN students who participated in the NAEP science assessment were also selected to participate in the NIES Part II, which resulted in about 12,300 AI/AN fourth-graders and 10,400 eighth-graders participating in Part II. Students were identified as AI/AN based on official school records. The Part I and Part II samples included students attending public, private, Department of Defense (DoDEA), and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)-schools.

### **Did the sample for the NIES differ from the main NAEP sample?**

American Indian/Alaska Native students represent about 1 percent of the total student population in the United States. While sufficient for reliable reporting of national level results, a typical

NAEP AI/AN sample is often not large enough to provide reliable results by state or by region, or for variables such as gender, eligibility for free/reduced-price school lunch, or type of geographic location of the schools. Because the purpose of the current study was to probe more deeply into the reading and mathematics achievements of AI/AN students, the typical NAEP samples for this population of students were augmented to permit reporting of performance in greater detail.

### **What types of questions were asked in the NIES survey?**

In addition to the questionnaires administered as part of the 2009 NAEP assessments, AI/AN students and their teachers and school administrators also completed questionnaires specifically for the NIES. Most of the survey questions were multiple choice, but space at the end for additional comments was included. The questionnaires were developed with the guidance of a Technical Review Panel (TRP) assembled to advise the NIES.

Examples of the themes that were addressed by the student respondents include perceptions about school and learning, exposure to and knowledge of the AI/AN culture in school and at home, and the students' plans for the future. Teachers were asked questions about their general qualifications, experience with American Indian/Alaska Native culture, and preparation to teach American Indian/Alaska Native students. The demographic characteristics of students and staff, community involvement within the school, and the general emphasis on American Indian/Alaska Native culture and curriculum are some of the types of questions that were asked of school administrators.

### **How will the results of the NIES be used to further explore education and policy issues related to Indian education?**

The 2005 results of Part I of the NIES set a baseline for 21st century NAEP reading and mathematics performance of American Indian/Alaska Native students in grades 4 and 8. The 2007 and 2009 reports build on this information to form a more complete picture of the status of education for American Indian/Alaska Native students in the United States.

### **What is the President's Executive Order, and why is it important?**

Executive Order 13336, issued in 2004, is aimed at assisting American Indian/Alaska Native students in meeting challenging student academic standards set forth in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorized in 2001.

The order called for studies and reports on the current educational status of American Indian/Alaska Native students, including a compilation of comprehensive data on the academic achievement and progress of these students. The present study falls within the spirit of the compilation of information about education achievement called for by the executive order.

### **What is the Office of Indian Education (OIE), and what does it do?**

The mission of the Office of Indian Education, within the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), is to support the efforts of local educational agencies, Indian tribes and organizations, postsecondary institutions, and other entities to meet the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of American Indians and Alaska Natives so that these students can meet the standards set for all students.

### **Are there other NCES studies describing the education of American Indian/Alaska Native students?**

The NIES was first conducted in 2005 and reported in two parts, examining AI/AN students' performance in NAEP mathematics and reading assessments, and their educational experiences. It was conducted again in 2007 and 2009. NCES reports describing the condition of AI/AN students' education are available at

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005535>. Additional studies using NAEP data include the Status and Trends in the Education of American Indians and Alaska Natives: 2008, and an earlier status and trends report, and the American Indian and Alaska Native Children: Findings From the Base Year of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort (ECLS-B).

Four studies from NCES that use 2007-08 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) data describe characteristics of elementary and secondary public, private, and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools, focusing on school characteristics, school library media centers, principals, and teachers.

There are other recent reports using NAEP data from the Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) in the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). To find these reports, search the Education Resources Information Center known as ERIC.

### **About the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)**

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), was developed in 1969, and is the largest nationally representative assessment of what the nation's students know and can do in core subjects such as civics, mathematics, reading, science, U.S. history, and writing. Teachers, principals, parents, policymakers, and researchers all use NAEP results to assess progress and develop ways to improve education in America. The results of NAEP are published as The Nation's Report Card<sup>TM</sup>, and are available for the nation, states, and in some cases, urban districts. NAEP is administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education.

### **What subjects does NAEP assess, and how are the subjects chosen?**

Since its inception in 1969, NAEP assessments have been conducted in numerous academic subjects, including the arts, civics, economics, geography, mathematics, reading, science, U.S. history, and writing. In addition to these subjects, NAEP is developing computer-based writing assessments for fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade students, and is working on the development of an assessment of student literacy in technology and engineering. This assessment is scheduled for 2014.

Since 1988, the National Assessment Governing Board has been responsible for selecting the subject areas to be assessed. Furthermore, the Governing Board oversees development of the frameworks that underlie the assessments and the specifications that guide the development of the assessment instruments. The framework for each subject area is determined through a collaborative development process that involves teachers, curriculum specialists, subject-matter specialists, school administrators, parents, and members of the general public.

**What types of questions are asked in the NAEP assessments?**

NAEP questions are based on content frameworks developed by the Governing Board. NAEP asks both multiple-choice and open-ended questions in all assessments. After each assessment, a number of NAEP questions are released to the public. Questions released from the mathematics and reading assessments are available in the NAEP Questions Tool. The tool also provides the percentage of students who answered each question correctly, the content classification, the scoring guide for open-ended questions, and sample student responses.

**What are background questionnaires, and how are they used?**

NAEP collects background information that serves to fulfill reporting requirements of federal legislation and to provide a context for reporting student performance. The legislation requires that, whenever feasible, NAEP include information on special groups such as race/ethnicity, students eligible for the National School Lunch Program, gender, students with disabilities, and English language learners. View the NAEP background questionnaires at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/bgquest.asp>.

**Who participates in NAEP?**

NAEP assesses students in grades 4, 8, and 12 attending all types of schools (public and nonpublic). NAEP selects a stratified random sample across the country in each grade. NAEP has always endeavored to assess all students selected as a part of its sampling process, including students who are classified by their schools as students with disabilities and/or English language learners. Some students may participate with testing accommodations. Find out more about the NAEP policy of inclusion at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/inclusion.asp>.