

On the way: Nation's first tech-literacy exam

Tech literacy to be added to Nation's Report Card beginning in 2012

From staff and wire reports

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In four years, American students are scheduled to be tested on technological literacy.

For the first time ever, technological literacy will become part of the National Assessment of Educational Progress

(NAEP), also known as the Nation's Report Card, the test's governing board has announced.

Beginning in 2012, the test will measure students' proficiency with technology in addition to reading, math, science, history, writing, and other subjects. The new test will mark the first time students' technology literacy has been assessed on a national level.

The National Assessment Governing Board has awarded a \$1.86 million contract to WestEd—a nonprofit educational research, development, and service agency based in San Francisco—to develop the 2012 NAEP Technological Literacy Framework.

Under this new contract, awarded through a competitive bidding process, WestEd will recommend the framework and specifications for the 2012 NAEP Technological Literacy Assessment. Ultimately, WestEd's work will lead to ways to define and measure students' knowledge and skills in understanding important technological tools, the Governing Board said. Board members then will decide which grade level—fourth, eighth, or 12th—will be tested in 2012.

“We are delighted to have WestEd help us lay the groundwork for an assessment in such an important area,” said Darvin Winick, chairman of the Governing Board, which sets policy for NAEP. “Technology is changing and moving very fast, so accurate evaluation of student achievement in this area is essential.”

NAEP's Technological Literacy Assessment comes at a time when there are no nationwide requirements or common definitions for technological literacy.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has developed a set of National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) for students, and the No Child Left Behind Act requires that students demonstrate technological

literacy by the end of the eighth grade.

Yet only a handful of states have adopted separate tests in this area, even as a growing chorus of business representatives and policy makers voices concern about the ability of American students to compete in a global marketplace and keep up with quickly evolving technology.

Several groups will help WestEd on this 18-month project, including ISTE, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the International Technology Education Association, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and the State Educational Technology Directors Association.

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