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Finalize National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Writing Achievement Levels Descriptions (ALDs)

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Finalize National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Writing Achievement Levels Descriptions (ALDs): Executive Summary

The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) developed a new framework for the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) writing assessment in grades 8 and 12, and the 2013 NAEP writing assessment in grade 4. As part of the framework development project preliminary achievement levels descriptions (ALDs) were crafted. In preparation for the development of the achievement levels for the 2011/2013 NAEP writing assessment in grades 4, 8, and 12, the Governing Board wished to evaluate the preliminary achievement level descriptions (ALDs) developed as part of the new framework project, as well as the achievement levels descriptions developed in 1998 and currently used for reporting writing results. The results of this evaluation study will be used to develop final descriptions for the 2011/2013 achievement levels setting process, and eventually the final ALDs, adopted by the Board, will be used to report the results of these assessments in the *Nation's Report Card* in writing.

The design of the project employed an iterative approach, engaging the efforts of content experts in the field as well as stakeholders and users of NAEP, both as crafters and reviewers of draft ALDs. The work involved four broad tasks, including

- Drafting initial ALDs by a group of content experts (Development Committee);
- Gathering broad-based comments on various drafts using a multifaceted approach;
- Multiple reviews and modifications, with final recommendations by the Development Committee;
- Preparation of final report and documentation of process.

Twelve content experts were identified to serve on the ALDs Development Committee, with 11 actually participating. Six experts attended an in-person meeting in Washington DC on March 19-20, 2011, while the remaining five joined the committee for several subsequent teleconference meetings from early-April to early-July.

The Statement of Objectives (SOO) required the contractor to operationalize the Board's policy definitions for each grade (4, 8, and 12) for writing. The operationalized descriptions needed to be consistent with the 2011 NAEP Writing Framework; the current achievement levels descriptions developed for the 1998 NAEP Writing Framework were identified in the SOO as the starting point of this work. Given that specific requirement, the experts also needed to take a reflective look at the 1998 NAEP writing framework that was the basis for these early ALDs. The first half-day of the in-person meeting was devoted to acquiring an understanding of all the inputs to the ALDs development process. Participants examined the content differences between the 1998 and 2011/2013 frameworks, if any. They also had several opportunities to engage in "calibration" discussions across grades since they were working mostly in grade-level groups. By the end of Day 1, preliminary drafts of the ALDs had begun to take shape. These would be developed, refined, and re-calibrated on Day 2 into initial drafts (Version 03.20.11).

At the conclusion of the meeting, initial drafts were crafted which were subsequently sent out to the remaining five experts for review and comment. Some minor revisions were suggested by the group. This became Version 4.01.11, and was used for the next project task, namely, gathering broad-based reviews and comments. Gathering broad-based comments on the initial set of draft ALDs was subsequently divided into four distinct tasks: (1) gathering input via the web from a volunteer group of stakeholders and users; (2) gathering feedback via two district-based focus groups; (3) gathering input via e-mail from members of the former 2011/2013 framework committee members; and (4) feedback solicited by NAGB.

For the first task a Delphi approach was used to gather comments from 15 professionals with a background in English/Language Arts via the web on three days, April 5, 6, and 7, 2011. Those agreeing to participate were sent draft ALDs (Version 4.01.11), as well as a link to the 2011/2013 Writing Framework. This independent panel reviewed the content of each Achievement Level Description, considered the progression from 4th to 8th to 12th grade within each of the three levels, and considered the progression of standards across the three levels of Basic, Proficient, and Advanced.

Participants were able to access the electronic survey at their convenience within a schedule that extended beyond the regular work day. Reminders were sent to ensure that participants would not miss a survey window. Respondents engaged in three rounds of survey input, and subsequent rounds presented findings from the previous rounds. The survey presented opportunities to comment on the Achievement Level Descriptions for Basic, Proficient, and Advanced for grades 4, 8, and 12, and the progression across levels and grades. Participants were encouraged to explain their views to their colleagues for the next round of input.

The first round of the Delphi process asked for indications of agreement with the Achievement Levels Descriptions or recommendations for changes. There was overwhelming support for the Achievement Levels Descriptions, especially when the participants were allowed to recommend edits. In Round 2 of the Delphi process, participants reviewed the edits that were recommended, and indicated which ones (if any) they supported. In this way, a participant could agree with someone else's recommendation, even if s/he didn't think of it during Round 1. The format for Round 3 was the same as for Round 2, participants were asked to indicate which recommendations they supported.

The consensus recommendations from Round 3 Delphi review were documented and distributed to the ALD Development Committee and considered in a series of teleconferences the week of April 18, 2011. Those recommendations considered relevant by the committee were incorporated into the next version of the ALDs (Version 4.18.11). All committee members evaluated the complete set of recommendations, since some recommendations addressed consistency across grade levels as well as those specific to a single grade.

The second task sought to gather feedback from a group of stakeholders. The format for this was two focus group meetings at a large school district in San Antonio TX. The purpose of these meetings was to elicit input from school administrators, teachers, parents, students, school board staff, and general public, including journalists. A total of 26 participants attended one of the two focus groups held over two days at the offices of a school district.

Each focus group was scheduled for about two hours. Participants were provided an advance packet of information about the meeting that included a copy of the 2011/2013 NAEP Writing Framework, the Board's policy definitions, the most current draft ALDS (Version 4-18-11), and the focus group agenda.

Both focus groups had many specific queries and minor recommendations for the Development Committee. Because the comments and issues were specific, they were all recorded and presented to the Development Committee, rather than working for consensus within the focus groups.

Task three tapped feedback from the original members of the Framework Committee. Both that feedback and that of the focus groups were considered by the Development Committee and resulted in modifications in the earlier drafts of the ALDs. This version (Version 5.27.11) was submitted to NAGB staff who conducted its own review. The Development Committee approved the final version with the NAGB modifications (Version 7.05.11) at a teleconference meeting in early July.

Final Recommended Achievement Levels Descriptions for the 2011/2013 NAEP Writing Assessment

PREAMBLE

The 2011/2013 NAEP Writing Framework encourages students to draw from a wide variety of approaches to thinking and writing when deciding how to develop and organize their ideas in relation to audience and purpose. For example, students may choose to use narrative to support the presentation of an argument or analysis and synthesis to convey ideas in a narrative. Responses will be evaluated for their use of effective approaches in the development and organization of their ideas.

Grade 4

BASIC

Fourth grade students at the Basic level write within the time allowed and use a few supporting details and examples relevant to the topic, the writer's purpose, and audience. Students loosely organize their writing into a beginning, middle, and end, occasionally providing transitions. They may also use logical groupings of ideas such as chronology, steps in a process, or main idea and details. Their word choice is mostly clear and appropriate for the topic. Simple complete sentences show minimal variety. The student's use of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, is mostly correct but has distracting errors that may interfere with the reader's understanding.

PROFICIENT

Fourth grade students at the Proficient level write within the time allowed using several supporting details and examples relevant to the topic, purpose, and audience. Students organize their writing using some logical groupings and relationships of ideas, such as compare and contrast or order of importance. They create and maintain coherence with an opening, appropriate transitions, and a logical ending. Varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and maintains the attention of the specified audience. Their sentences vary in length or type, such as exclamations or questions, in order to maintain the attention of the specified audience. Students demonstrate effective control of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, with few distracting errors.

ADVANCED

Fourth grade students at the Advanced level write within the time allowed and use sufficient supporting details and examples relevant to the topic, purpose, and audience. Their writing is organized effectively and shows a logical progression of ideas. They exhibit coherence throughout the writing with an engaging opening, effective transitions, and a fitting ending. Their precise and varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and successfully maintains the attention of the specified audience. They vary the length and complexity of sentences in order to engage the reader. The student's writing demonstrates consistent control of grammar, usage and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Version 7.05.11

Grade 8

BASIC

Eighth grade students performing at the Basic level should demonstrate an emerging ability to analyze the demands of a task and decide how to develop and organize their ideas in relation to the designated or implied audience and purpose. Their writing includes a few details or examples that support the development of their ideas and experiences, real or imagined. The writers at this level create a somewhat organized structure with some transitions. Their writing contains sentence variety and word choice that is sometimes appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Basic writers convey some sense of their attitude toward the topic. For the most part, they demonstrate a command of grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, and may have some distracting errors.

PROFICIENT

Eighth grade students performing at the Proficient level should demonstrate competence in the ability to analyze the demands of a task and decide how to develop and organize their ideas in relation to the designated or implied audience and purpose. Their writing includes relevant details and specific examples that support the development of ideas and experiences, real or imagined. Writers at this level create an organized structure that shows a logical, coherent sentence-to-sentence progression of ideas. Their sentences are varied in length and complexity. The writers' word choice should be appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. They consistently convey their attitude toward the topic. Their grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, are mostly correct and errors rarely distract the reader.

ADVANCED

Eighth grade students performing at the Advanced level should demonstrate the ability to draw from a wide variety of approaches to thinking and writing when deciding how to develop and organize their ideas in relation to audience and purpose. Their writing engages the reader through the use of precise words, details, and compelling examples that support and elaborate their ideas and experiences, real or imagined. Writers at this level create a well-organized, effective structure that shows a logical, coherent sentence-to-sentence progression of ideas. The sentences are varied and carefully crafted. Advanced writers demonstrate purposeful writing that conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic with richness and depth. Their grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling are consistently correct.

Version 7.05.11

Grade 12

BASIC

Twelfth grade writers at the Basic level should demonstrate an appropriate response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The organization usually maintains focus on the topic and purpose, and relationships among ideas are usually clear. For instance, examples, reasons, and/or anecdotes generally support the ideas. The writing contains some sentence variety or complexity. The word choice generally conveys meaning but occasionally may be limited and ineffective for the purpose and audience. Overall, the tone suits the writer's ideas, but it may fluctuate inappropriately in places. Writing at the Basic level reflects a general command of grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling, but may include several errors.

PROFICIENT

Writing by twelfth graders at the Proficient level should demonstrate a thoughtful and competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose. Relevant examples, reasons, or anecdotes develop ideas, support the topic, and suit the apparent intended audience. A clear organization shows the relationships among ideas and supports the purpose. Sentences are varied and are structured to clarify the relationships among ideas. Precise word choices reinforce the purpose of the writing and are appropriate for the topic and audience. The tone usually suits the purpose and audience. Writing at the Proficient level exhibits good control of grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling, with few if any errors.

ADVANCED

Writing by twelfth graders at the Advanced level should demonstrate an insightful response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose. Strong reasons, specific examples, and/or compelling anecdotes not only support the writer's ideas, but also provide any necessary elaboration. The organizational structure presents a natural, logical, and coherent progression of ideas. Skillfully crafted sentences enhance the response, reinforce the purpose, and engage the audience. Word choices are purposeful, precise, and at times powerful. Appropriate tone deftly conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic and the intended audience, while advancing the purpose of the writing. Writing at the advanced level exhibits a strong control of grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling, and may use these conventions to amplify and highlight the presentation of ideas.

Version 07.05.11

Finalize National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Writing Achievement Levels Descriptions (ALDs): Technical Report

Introduction

The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) developed a new framework for the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) writing assessment in grades 8 and 12, and the 2013 NAEP writing assessment in grade 4. As part of the framework development project preliminary achievement levels descriptions (ALDs) were crafted. In preparation for the development of the achievement levels for the 2011/2013 NAEP writing assessment in grades 4, 8, and 12, the Governing Board wished to evaluate the preliminary achievement level descriptions (ALDs) developed as part of the new framework project, as well as the achievement levels descriptions developed in 1998 and currently used for reporting writing results. The results of this evaluation study will be used to develop final descriptions for the 2011/2013 achievement levels setting process, and eventually the final ALDs, adopted by the Board, will be used to report the results of these assessments in the *Nation's Report Card* in writing.

Since the overall objective of this project was to develop achievement levels descriptions for the 2011 NAEP for grade 8 and 12 and the 2013 NAEP for grade 4, the Board engaged the services of Mid Atlantic Psychometric Services Inc. of Leesburg Virginia.

Contract Requirements

The Statement of Objectives[1] included the following:

- *Draft ALDs must be developed by content experts;*[2]
- *Several experts must be involved and must represent each grade and each genre of writing assessed by NAEP;*
- *Draft ALDs must operationalize the policy definitions established by the Board;*[3]

[1] Attachment A to Solicitation # ED-NAG-11-R-0001 (posted January 4, 2011)
[2] The Statement of Objectives stated that typically experts from the framework development panel have been engaged in this process since they are "…uniquely well-qualified for the task."
[3] The Board's policy and guidelines for implementation are provided in http://www.nagb.org/policies/pl-index.htm

- *Extensive and broad-based input on the draft ALDs must be collected for vetting;*[4]
- *ALDs must communicate requirements at each level in a clear and concise manner to subject-matter experts, students, teachers, parents, and policy makers;*
- *Through an iterative process of edits and reviews, the draft ALDs are modified and finalized for presentation to the Board.*

Project Design

The design of the project employed an iterative approach, engaging the efforts of content experts in the field as well as stakeholders and users of NAEP, both as crafters and reviewers of draft ALDs. The work involved four broad tasks, including

- Drafting initial ALDs by a group of content experts (Development Committee);
- Gathering broad-based comments on various drafts using a multifaceted approach;
- Multiple reviews and modifications, with final recommendations by the Development Committee;
- Preparation of final report and documentation of process.

Drafting the Initial ALDS

Twelve content experts were identified to serve on the ALDs Development Committee, with 11 actually participating. For budgetary reasons NAGB decided to limit the in-person participation to half of the members of the Development Committee, with the remaining identified experts participating in all future meetings via teleconference. Therefore, six experts attended an in-person meeting in Washington DC on March 19-20, 2011, while the remaining five joined the committee for four subsequent teleconference meetings in early- and mid-April, the end of May, and early-July. With one exception, each of the content experts had participated in the development of the writing Framework in 2007, and so had a familiarity with the work of NAEP, with NAGB, with the writing Framework, and most especially with the purposes and audiences of the achievement level descriptions. Members of the Development Committee are listed in Appendix A.

For the initial in-person meeting, the six participants received advance briefing materials that included the 2011/2013 NAEP Writing Framework; the 2007 NAEP Writing Framework that included the 2007 ALDs, used for reporting student performance from 1998 through 2007; the Board's policy definitions; a chart that compared and contrasted the old (1998) and new (2011) Frameworks; and a copy of the preliminary 1998 ALDs from the original 1998 Framework; a two-day agenda and a copy of the orientation materials. All briefing materials can be found in Appendix B, with the exception of those readily available on-line for which links are provided below.[5]

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[4] The Statement of Objectives stated that different formats have been used for collecting public comment including "…focus groups, in-person public comment forums, and on-line public comments collections."

[5] http://www.nagb.org/publications/frameworks/writing-2011.pdf;
http://www.nagb.org/publications/frameworks/writing-2007.pdf;

Since it had been several years since these content experts had been involved in the 2011/2013 framework development project, and most do not work with NAEP on a daily basis, it seemed advisable to spend some time reviewing various aspects of the framework. Beverly Chin, a member of the Development Committee, provided an overview of the NAEP 2011/2013 framework and the key differences between the 1998 and the 2011/2013 frameworks. Dr. Chin was the Senior Project Consultant to ACT during the NAEP 2011/2013 writing framework development project in 2007.

In addition, approximately the first half-day was devoted to review and discussion of the purposes of the ALDs, NAGB's policy definitions, the relationship of the ALDs to NAEP reporting scale, the fixed elements of the levels-setting process such as the Framework, test specifications, and item pool, the 2011 Framework overview, and procedures for crafting ALDs.

The Statement of Objectives (SOO) required the contractor to operationalize the Board's policy definitions for each grade (4, 8, and 12) for writing. The operationalized descriptions needed to be consistent with the 2011 NAEP Writing Framework; the current achievement levels descriptions developed for the 1998 NAEP Writing Framework were identified in the SOO as the starting point of this work. Given that specific requirement, the experts also needed to take a reflective look at the 1998 NAEP writing framework that was the basis for these early ALDs. They did this both in plenary session as well as grade-level groups. The first half-day was devoted to acquiring an understanding of all the inputs to the ALDs development process. Participants examined and discussed the content differences between the 1998 and 2011/2013 frameworks, if any. They also had several opportunities to engage in "calibration" discussions across grades since they were working mostly in grade-level groups. By the end of Day 1, preliminary drafts of the ALDs had begun to take shape. These would be developed, refined, and re-calibrated on Day 2 into initial drafts (Version 03.20.11).

At the conclusion of the meeting, initial drafts were crafted which were subsequently sent out to the remaining five experts for review and comment. Some minor revisions were suggested by the group. This became Version 4.01.11, and was used for the next project task, namely, gathering broad-based reviews and comments. Appendix C displays the draft ALDs developed during the March in-person meeting (Version 3.20.11), and the second iteration draft resulting from the review and recommendations by the five experts who did not attend the in-person meeting in conjunction with those who did attend (Version 4.01.11).

Finally, as is customary in work of this nature, participants were asked to complete a brief evaluation survey based on their experiences at the meeting. The purpose of the evaluation is to begin to gather some procedural validity data for support of the process. Process elements such as participants' level of satisfaction and confidence in the final drafts developed are important aspects of procedural validity, as well as success of the orientation and training materials, and the quality of the meeting logistics and facility.

The results were generally very positive. On the open-ended questions participants shared the strategies they considered as they crafted the draft ALDs. These included such approaches as comparing across achievement levels, experts' experiences in teaching, student-writers they have encountered, and the 2011 preliminary levels found in the Framework.

Table 1 displays the mean ratings for the clusters of questions on a rating scale from 5 (most positive) to 1 (least positive). The results for the full set of questions can be found in Appendix D.

Table 1
Mean ratings for Question Clusters on the Development Meeting Evaluation Survey

Question Numbers	Question Clusters	Mean Ratings
1-7	Helpfulness of briefing materials	4.61
8-19	Importance of process elements	4.84
20-31	Success of process elements in reaching goals	4.88
31-35	Success of draft ALDs in reflecting process inputs	4.66
36-44	Satisfaction with level of specificity of draft ALDs	4.83
45-47	Satisfaction with level of consensus across grades	4.83
48-50	Confidence that draft ALDs will result in levels that are reasonable, valid, and useful to the public	4.66
51-56	Quality of meeting logistics	5.00
57-62	Quality of meeting facility	4.97

Gathering Broad-Based Comments

This activity was subsequently divided into four distinct tasks: (1) gathering input via the web from a volunteer group of stakeholders and users; (2) gathering feedback via two district-based focus groups; (3) gathering input via e-mail from members of the former 2011/2013 framework committee members; and (4) feedback solicited by NAGB.

Comments via the Web

In order to gather information from stakeholders and users of NAEP information, English/Language Arts professionals were solicited through the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Other national organizations could have been solicited, but that group seemed particularly appropriate since the CCSSO is currently involved in work on the Common Core, and it is thought would have a number of members and associates interested in providing input to this process.[6] In addition many of the CCSSO members and/or contacts are individuals who are also cross-seeded with other relevant major national organizations. Through this mechanism we were able to contact approximately two dozen nominees, 16 of whom volunteered to participate in the process after reaching them personally and describing the level

[6] In a personal phone conversation with Rolf Blank, Program Director, Research, Education Indicators, CCSSO, the background of participants in which we were interested, as well as the technical and schedule requirements, were discussed. Generally we wanted to identify assessment and/or content experts in writing and/or language arts that span the grades that NAEP covers, who could meet the technical requirements of the task (access to the internet) and the schedule adopted (3 days in April). These experts need not necessarily be associated with a State Education Agency.

of commitment and requirements of the task.[7] Of the 15 participants, six were currently with a state education agency (SEA), three were consultants currently retired from an SEA, three were associated with a regional state-wide services agency, and the remaining three with a secondary school, a district-wide Title I program, and a not-for-profit agency. The list of participants and their current professional association appears in Appendix E.

A Delphi approach was used to gather comments from volunteers via the web during the week of April 4. Those agreeing to participate were sent ALDs (Version 4.01.11), as well as a link to the 2011/2013 Writing Framework. This independent panel reviewed the content of each Achievement Level Description, considered the progression from 4th to 8th to 12th grade within each of the three levels, and the progression of standards across the three levels of Basic, Proficient, and Advanced.

The methodology allowed for communication among participants, yet maintained an efficient and documented process at a low cost. The Delphi methodology is uniquely capable of addressing these challenges. The rounds of survey input of the Delphi study were planned to be presented through on-line surveys and the link was sent to participants via email. The purpose of the surveys was to gather input about the Achievement Level Descriptions from a separate panel of content experts, maximizing convenience and ease of response, while minimizing costs. The Delphi methodology is also advantageous in that participants are equally represented through written input, and they can ponder their responses rather than competing to respond. Their input is considered anonymously, so each comment is weighed on its own merits.

The study was conducted across three days, April 5, 6, and 7, 2011. Participants were able to access the electronic survey at their convenience within a schedule that extended beyond the regular work day.[8] Reminders were sent to ensure that participants would not miss a survey window.

Participants engaged in three rounds of survey input, and subsequent rounds presented findings from the previous rounds. The survey offered opportunities to comment on the Achievement Level Descriptions for Basic, Proficient, and Advanced for grades 4, 8, and 12, and the progression across levels and grades. Participants were encouraged to explain their views to their colleagues for the next round of input. The three blank survey forms used on each day of the procedure are included in Appendix E to this report.

Dr. Lynn Webb served as the facilitator of the Delphi process. As would happen during an in-person meeting, conference call, or web meeting, the facilitator must seek to clarify group consensus. Another similarity to the other meeting formats is that views expressed were transmitted 'verbatim' in the next rounds of the surveys. In other words, there was an effort to preserve the tone of the comment as well as the content. For example, if a participant presented an impassioned plea, it was not toned down or edited. When participants presented views or

[7] One participant had to withdraw at the last minute due to an unanticipated hospitalization.

[8] The access window extended approximately from 12:01 AM CST to 6 PM CST, about 18 hours that would accommodate most time zones and most work schedules. Tallies were calculated during the 6-hour period from 6 PM to midnight for the next day's survey.

arguments in attempts to sway their colleagues, the views were presented in their entirety during the next round.

The first round of the Delphi process asked for indications of agreement with the Achievement Levels Descriptions or recommendations for changes. There was overwhelming support for the Achievement Levels Descriptions, especially when the participants were allowed to recommend edits. Table 2 summarizes the percentage of participants who indicated support (yes) or support with edits, as well as the combined evaluation.

In Round 2 of the Delphi process, participants reviewed the edits that were recommended, and indicated which ones (if any) they supported. In this way, a participant could agree with someone else's recommendation, even if s/he didn't think of it during Round 1.

Most of the recommended changes to the Achievement Levels Descriptions were small edits. There were 81 changes presented in Round 2, and the participants' task was to indicate agreement with any or all of them. Following Round 2, the facilitator reviewed the responses and defined "consensus" as agreement with the comment from a minimum of five participants.

Table 2
Round 1 Percent Agreement with Grade-Appropriateness and Progression of ALDs from Level to Level, and Grade to Grade

Grade-Appropriateness	Yes	Yes/ with Edits	Combined Yes + Yes/Edits
4th Grade			
Basic	33%	60%	93%
Proficient	44	50	94
Advanced	40	60	100
8th Grade			
Basic	42	42	84
Proficient	71	29	100
Advanced	57	43	100
12th Grade			
Basic	57	43	100
Proficient	43	50	93
Advanced	50	50	100
Appropriate Progression Across Levels (Basic to Proficient to Advanced)			
4th Grade	31	56	87
8th Grade	29	57	86
12th Grade	60	27	87
Appropriate Progression Across Grades			
4th to 8th to 12th	54	31	85

The number of participants responding in Round 2 ranged from 10 to 15. Recommendations that were supported by four or fewer participants were not replicated in Round 3. Recommendations that achieved support from at least five participants were shown again in Round 3. In both Rounds 2 and 3, explanations or persuasions by participants were included for consideration. The only participant recommendations that were not replicated in subsequent rounds were comments addressing format of the Achievement Level Descriptions (e.g., bulleted points rather than paragraphs) and notations about punctuation. The format for Round 3 was the same as for Round 2, participants were asked to indicate which recommendations they supported. Table 3 shows the number of recommendations per Achievement Level Description that were considered in Rounds 2 and 3.

Table 3

Number of Recommendations for Changes per Achievement Level Descriptions

Achievement Level Descriptions	Round 2	Round3
4th Grade		
Basic	4	2
Proficient	9	4
Advanced	8	2
Progression	8	3
8th Grade		
Basic	8	6
Proficient	5	3
Advanced	7	4
Progression	6	2
12th Grade		
Basic	6	3
Proficient	8	4
Advanced	8	3
Progression	4	3
Total	81	39

As with the initial Development Committee meeting, Delphi participants were asked to evaluate the methodology following each round of the study. Table 4 displays the number of participants selecting each rating for each round on a rating scale from 5 (most positive) to 1 (least positive). The majority of participants gave a rating of Excellent for the variables of effectiveness, convenience, and user-friendliness.

Table 4[9]

Number of Participants Choosing Each Rating on the Delphi Evaluation Survey by Round/Criteria

	Excellent			>Satisfactory			Satisfactory			<Satisfactory			Poor		
	R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3
Effectiveness	7	9	9	4	3	4	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Convenience	13	9	12	1	4	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
User-friendliness	10	11	10	2	3	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Participants were also asked which methodology they would prefer to use for future tasks that are similar. Responses were similar across the three rounds, and are shown in Table 5.

[9] Tables 4 and 5 include responses from those participants who chose to complete the Evaluation survey of the process. Not all responded. Therefore, numbers may not sum to 15.

Participants overwhelmingly indicated a preference for rounds of surveys. The write-in responses for "other" included the rounds of surveys with additional methodologies.

Table 5
Percentage (Number) of Participants' Preferences for Various Survey Methodologies

Preferred methodology	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
Rounds of surveys (Delphi)	64% (9)	79% (11)	83% (10)
Telephone conference calls	7 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Face-to-face meetings	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
No preference	7 (1)	7 (1)	8 (1)
Other	21 (3)	14 (2)	8 (1)

Write-in comments submitted during the three evaluations are listed in Appendix E.

The consensus recommendations from Round 3 Delphi review were documented and distributed to the ALD Development Committee and considered in a series of teleconferences the week of April 18, 2011. Those recommendations considered relevant by the committee were incorporated into the next version of the ALDs (Version 4.18.11). All committee members evaluated the complete set of recommendations, since some recommendations addressed consistency across grade levels as well as those specific to a single grade. The complete set of Delphi recommendations appears in Appendix E along with the resulting next draft of the ALDs (Version 4.18.11).

Comments via the Focus Groups

In the past the public forum format has not been very productive in terms of eliciting relevant and useful comments from participants. First, they are not well-attended due to conflicts in personal schedules, site location. Second, there is perhaps minimal interest and understanding of the subject area or topic. As a consequence, the cost was judged to exceed the benefits of this approach.

Therefore, the contractor examined the underlying philosophy and policy context of the framework development and achievement levels development activities. Both placed a burden of broad, public input on the Board. However, broad-based, targeted public input seemed more appropriate in this case than broad-based, but unfocused, input. Therefore, we sought to have a "public forum" using a focus group format, a technique borrowed from the marketing arena. The intent was to involve groups identified in the NAEP legislation and NAGB policy that could come together to share their views on the draft ALDs, at a convenient time and in a location that was accessible to all who might be interested. We also wanted to provide those who indicated a willingness to be involved with relevant background information that would be useful to them as they reviewed the most recent draft ALDs.

With that in mind, we sought some assistance from the NAGB staff who could make contacts for us with a large local school district that would have access to school administrators, principals, curriculum specialists in writing/language arts, teachers of grades 4, 8, and 12, parents, students, school board members, and local community writers (e.g., local newspaper reporter). NAGB

staff was very successful in providing contacts for us to make arrangements with a large school district in Texas who met all the required needs to host the focus group. In addition, since the contract staff was going to TX to conduct the meeting we thought two focus group meetings while on-site would yield the maximum amount of feedback possible as well as give participants flexibility in the times they could attend.

On May 3 and 4, two focus groups were graciously hosted by the Northside Independent School District of San Antonio TX to elicit input from school administrators, teachers, parents, students, school board staff, and general public, including journalists. A total of 26 participants attended one of the two focus groups held over two days at the school district (afternoon May 3 and morning May 4). Each focus group was scheduled for about two hours. Participants were provided an advance packet of information about the meeting that included a copy of the 2011/2013 NAEP Writing Framework, the Board's policy definitions, the most current draft ALDS (Version 4-18-11), and the focus group agenda. Lists of participants and briefing materials can be found in Appendix F.

Focus group participants were provided with an overview of the project and then asked to comment on any concepts or terminology in the draft Achievement Levels Descriptions. In framing the context for the discussion, the facilitator asked the participants to imagine that they had read NAEP writing assessment results in the local newspaper and then talked with a neighbor or friend about students' performance in general and the achievement levels descriptions in particular. The participants considered the clarity of the ALDs within this scenario.

Both focus groups had many specific queries and minor recommendations for the Development Committee. Because the comments and issues were specific, they were all recorded and presented to the Development Committee, rather than working for consensus within the focus groups. The specific comments and issues presented to the Development Committee are included in Appendix F.

The Development Committee was already scheduled to meet the end of May, and at that time would consider two sets of feedback: (1) focus group comments (in Appendix F); and (2) the feedback from the next activity, namely the e-mail reviews from the members of the Framework Committee (in Appendix G).

Feedback from 2011/2013 Framework Committee Members

The final part of this task involved sending a request for comments on the ALDs (Version 4.01.11) to all members of the original Framework Committee.[10] In order to do this we had to depend on the e-mail addresses on file provided by NAGB staff. Since the Framework development was completed about four years ago, not all addresses were current. Consequently, the response was not overwhelming. The contractor did make an attempt to locate individuals

[10] The ALD version sent out for this review was a rather early version. E-mail requests were sent out on or about April 8, 2011, with a return deadline of Friday April 22. Consequently, the ALDs Version 4.01.11 was reviewed. The Development Committee considered the responses at the next set of teleconferences, which were scheduled for the week of May 23, 2011.

using internet searches as well as soliciting information from other experts in the field who might know. In most instances we were unsuccessful since "groups of convenience" such as framework committees generally do not maintain contact after the group disbands[11].

Table 6 summarizes the results of the e-mail solicitation. A unique e-mail address was used to request and receive responses, reviewalds@verizon.net. Since this may or may not have been recognizable to recipients, and could end up in spam filters, the SUBJECT listed on the e-mail was "NAEP Writing ALDs Review." All e-mails were sent with a return-receipt requested.

Table 6
Distribution of Requests/Responses for ALD Review by 2011/2013 Framework Committee Members

	Requests	Responses
Total Possible Participants	52	
Participants on Development Committee	7	
E-mails Requests Sent	45	
Participants with *"Undeliverable"* addresses		17
Return receipt received, but no response		6
Deleted e-mail without reading it		1
Declined after reading request		1
No further information on participants*		15
Responses received by deadline		5

*This category included those whose mail was not returned as "*undeliverable*", or no return receipt, or no response to request.

The Development Committee considered the responses received by the deadline. Two of the five sets of comments provided very substantive feedback that the Development Committee considered in detail at a subsequent teleconference meeting, incorporating many of the suggestions into the next version of the ALDs. They are incorporated in Appendix G (redacted). The Committee also considered an abbreviated version of the Preamble that had been developed using the desired elements the Committee had developed earlier. The longer version was shortened at NAGB's request.

Penultimate Recommendations from Development Committee

The penultimate recommendations from the Development Committee were worked on during the teleconference meetings held the week of May 23. This teleconference meeting considered the suggestions of the focus groups, as well as the reviews and comments by members of the original Framework Committee who had responded to the e-mail request. The Development Committee also agreed to a shortened version of the 'preamble' including only the most salient elements they felt should appear in a 'preamble' to the ALDs. These recommendations were submitted to NAGB staff in early June.

[11] In this case, we suspect that it was simply a case of too much time had elapsed between the final meetings of the Framework Committee meetings (2007) and the current contract meetings (2011).

NAGB Reviews

Although we have no specific details, we understand that during the month of June, after the ALDs Version 5.27.11 was submitted at NAGB's request, NAGB conducted their own reviews submitting the ALDs (Version 5.27.11) to content experts who were had not been involved in the process already. This review resulted in recommendations for changes to the ALDs. NAGB then requested that we submit these suggestions to the Development Committee for review and approval. We did so, and basically divided this task into two questions: (1) Do you approve the recommended changes; and (2) Do you agree with the shortened preamble submitted with the 5.27.11 version. These were Yes or No responses, with no other comments solicited or required.

Final Recommended ALDs by Development Committee

The final recommendations from the Development Committee are displayed below. They include a brief Preamble (identical for each grade), and the achievement levels descriptions for grades 4, 8, and 12 at Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. These were unanimously approved by the Committee on or about July 8, 2011 and are re-printed below.

Discussion and Summary

As with most processes, there is always room for improvement if and when similar procedures are executed in the future. We offer the following observations and suggestions based on the experiences of this contract.

Structure of Process

The importance of developing clear and meaningful achievement levels descriptions cannot be underestimated. Most standard setting experts would agree that the quality of the ALDs, will, in large measure, determine the cut scores when the standard-setting panels are convened. Therefore, this is a front-end loaded process, where the time and resources devoted to the process really matter. Mills and Jaeger[12] were the first to outline the steps in this process. And while their suggestions were for developing test-based descriptions, many of the steps apply equally well to framework-based descriptions. They include:

- Convening a development panel;
- Reviewing the test framework and specifications;
- Training the development panel in content and scoring methodologies to be used;
- Presenting the policy descriptions of the agency or legal authority;
- Familiarizing the panel with student writing at the various levels;
- Drafting descriptions;
- Reaching consensus.

[12] Mills, c.n. & Jaeger, R.M. (1998). Creating descriptions of desired student achievement when setting performance standards. In L.Hansche (Ed.), *Handbook for the development of performance standards: Meeting the requirements of Title I* (pp.75-85). Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.

Each of the above steps was included in this work except familiarizing the panel with student work (a deliberate decision to not obfuscate the task of developing ALDs with the levels of the scoring rubrics). However, what is not included in the Mills and Jaeger suggestions are the broad-based reviews so critical to the work of NAGB. Consequently, the emphasis and resources in the contract were largely devoted to the broad-based reviews. In our judgment, somewhat less emphasis on the "collective wisdom" gleaned from the broad-based reviews, and more emphasis on the actual development process is warranted. Or at the very least, a little more balance in the allocation of resources would be wise.

That being said, the Delphi process worked quite well and efficiently in this project, and should be considered for future NAGB projects. The use of electronic surveys is incredibly less expensive than a face-to-face meeting and was found to be enjoyable by participants. Experts that participated in that part of the process liked it and cooperation was very high.

The same can be said for the Focus Group activity. The two focus groups provided input from a different stakeholder group than the Delphi process, and worked well because of the graciousness and dutifulness of the host. If NAGB has similar good fortune to be so well received in future projects, then the focus group setting will be useful. However, the diligence of the host ensured adequate and appropriate representation of stakeholders, and this contribution should not be minimized.

The question is, for both of these procedures, from a cost-benefit analysis perspective, is the expense really worth it? Or would NAGB be better putting its resources into the front-end of the process, namely, developing the ALDs? With a little better timing (see below), for example, some naturally occurring groups could have been used to secure feedback at national meetings such as AERA/NCME in April, CCSSO's Large Scale Assessment in June, or other spring meetings in the field of writing/language arts. This could be done with minimal additional cost to the project.

Additionally, while we made every effort to execute "distance training" by ensuring that all reviewers had briefing materials or links to the 2011 NAEP Writing Framework and the Policy Definitions, we have no evidence that they accessed those documents or read them. If that was the case, then the "collective wisdom" is far less valuable to NAGB and to the process.

This is also a vote in favor of less dependence on current technologies such as teleconferencing, web-meetings, etc. and more on traditional face-to-face encounters. The initial meeting of the Development Committee went well; but a second meeting nearer to the end of the process would have been desirable. We would suggest using the current technologies only if they enhance the effort, not simply because they are available and *au current*. Probably this is an unrealistic expectation in budget-tight times.

Focus and Timing of Process

The focus and timing of the process could have been better. More time could have been used for executing each step of the process in a more orderly, sequenced fashion. Initially only 10 weeks had been allotted from time of contract award to development of final ALDs. Consequently, there was overlap of the steps; later steps were already beginning while earlier ones were still in

progress. While doable, it is not ideal for executing the steps of the process and giving each step the full consideration it deserves.

Process Recommendations

We offer the following set of recommendations based on the experiences of this work:

To ensure continuity between those involved in the framework development and those involved in the development of the ALDs, minimize the time elapsed between these two events;

To ensure ALD development and draft ALD vetting are given full and appropriate consideration, re-balance the resources and timing of both activities;

To maximize the best return on resource-investment consider vetting draft ALDs at national meetings of appropriate stakeholders, for example in this case, CCSSO, NCME, NCTE, National Writing Project events, ASCD, National PTA, etc.

To ensure "quality vetting" and not just a "smile index", consider using a nomination procedure for reviewers (much the same way that the standard-setting panels are initiated);

To ensure quality vetting, consider using "distance training" for the reviewers in the areas of understanding the framework, the purposes of the ALDs, policy definitions, etc.;

Use 21st century technology such as webinars, for achieving project goals only when doing so is likely to enhance the results, minimize time and cost, and result in a quality product;

Allow sufficient time in the process for each step to be properly sequenced and/or completed before moving on;

Finally, NAGB should consider mounting a long-term, multi-framework research effort to examine the centrality of the ALDs in the whole standard-setting endeavor, validating each step in the ALD development process, studying the impact of the quality of the ALDS on the resulting cut scores produced by standard-setting panels, and the impact on the reporting of NAEP results. ALD development is one of the few areas of standard setting that has gone unexamined, and needs more research data to understand its importance in the scheme of things.

Final Recommended Achievement Levels Descriptions for the 2011/2013 NAEP Writing Assessment

PREAMBLE

The 2011/2013 NAEP Writing Framework encourages students to draw from a wide variety of approaches to thinking and writing when deciding how to develop and organize their ideas in relation to audience and purpose. For example, students may choose to use narrative to support the presentation of an argument or analysis and synthesis to convey ideas in a narrative. Responses will be evaluated for their use of effective approaches in the development and organization of their ideas.

Grade 4

BASIC

Fourth grade students at the Basic level write within the time allowed and use a few supporting details and examples relevant to the topic, the writer's purpose, and audience. Students loosely organize their writing into a beginning, middle, and end, occasionally providing transitions. They may also use logical groupings of ideas such as chronology, steps in a process, or main idea and details. Their word choice is mostly clear and appropriate for the topic. Simple complete sentences show minimal variety. The student's use of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, is mostly correct but has distracting errors that may interfere with the reader's understanding.

PROFICIENT

Fourth grade students at the Proficient level write within the time allowed using several supporting details and examples relevant to the topic, purpose, and audience. Students organize their writing using some logical groupings and relationships of ideas, such as compare and contrast or order of importance. They create and maintain coherence with an opening, appropriate transitions, and a logical ending. Varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and maintains the attention of the specified audience. Their sentences vary in length or type, such as exclamations or questions, in order to maintain the attention of the specified audience. Students demonstrate effective control of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, with few distracting errors.

ADVANCED

Fourth grade students at the Advanced level write within the time allowed and use sufficient supporting details and examples relevant to the topic, purpose, and audience. Their writing is organized effectively and shows a logical progression of ideas. They exhibit coherence throughout the writing with an engaging opening, effective transitions, and a fitting ending. Their precise and varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and successfully maintains the attention of the specified audience. They vary the length and complexity of sentences in order to engage the reader. The student's writing demonstrates consistent control of grammar, usage and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Version 7.05.11

Grade 8

BASIC

Eighth grade students performing at the Basic level should demonstrate an emerging ability to analyze the demands of a task and decide how to develop and organize their ideas in relation to the designated or implied audience and purpose. Their writing includes a few details or examples that support the development of their ideas and experiences, real or imagined. The writers at this level create a somewhat organized structure with some transitions. Their writing contains sentence variety and word choice that is sometimes appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Basic writers convey some sense of their attitude toward the topic. For the most part, they demonstrate a command of grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, and may have some distracting errors.

PROFICIENT

Eighth grade students performing at the Proficient level should demonstrate competence in the ability to analyze the demands of a task and decide how to develop and organize their ideas in relation to the designated or implied audience and purpose. Their writing includes relevant details and specific examples that support the development of ideas and experiences, real or imagined. Writers at this level create an organized structure that shows a logical, coherent sentence-to-sentence progression of ideas. Their sentences are varied in length and complexity. The writers' word choice should be appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. They consistently convey their attitude toward the topic. Their grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, are mostly correct and errors rarely distract the reader.

ADVANCED

Eighth grade students performing at the Advanced level should demonstrate the ability to draw from a wide variety of approaches to thinking and writing when deciding how to develop and organize their ideas in relation to audience and purpose. Their writing engages the reader through the use of precise words, details, and compelling examples that support and elaborate their ideas and experiences, real or imagined. Writers at this level create a well-organized, effective structure that shows a logical, coherent sentence-to-sentence progression of ideas. The sentences are varied and carefully crafted. Advanced writers demonstrate purposeful writing that conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic with richness and depth. Their grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling are consistently correct.

Grade 12

BASIC

Twelfth grade writers at the Basic level should demonstrate an appropriate response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The organization usually maintains focus on the topic and purpose, and relationships among ideas are usually clear. For instance, examples, reasons, and/or anecdotes generally support the ideas. The writing contains some sentence variety or complexity. The word choice generally conveys meaning but occasionally may be limited and ineffective for the purpose and audience. Overall, the tone suits the writer's ideas, but it may fluctuate inappropriately in places. Writing at the Basic level reflects a general command of grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling, but may include several errors.

PROFICIENT

Writing by twelfth graders at the Proficient level should demonstrate a thoughtful and competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose. Relevant examples, reasons, or anecdotes develop ideas, support the topic, and suit the apparent intended audience. A clear organization shows the relationships among ideas and supports the purpose. Sentences are varied and are structured to clarify the relationships among ideas. Precise word choices reinforce the purpose of the writing and are appropriate for the topic and audience. The tone usually suits the purpose and audience. Writing at the Proficient level exhibits good control of grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling, with few if any errors.

ADVANCED

Writing by twelfth graders at the Advanced level should demonstrate an insightful response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose. Strong reasons, specific examples, and/or compelling anecdotes not only support the writer's ideas, but also provide any necessary elaboration. The organizational structure presents a natural, logical, and coherent progression of ideas. Skillfully crafted sentences enhance the response, reinforce the purpose, and engage the audience. Word choices are purposeful, precise, and at times powerful. Appropriate tone deftly conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic and the intended audience, while advancing the purpose of the writing. Writing at the advanced level exhibits a strong control of grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling, and may use these conventions to amplify and highlight the presentation of ideas.

Appendix A

Members of the ALD Development Committee

Appendix A

Appendix A

Members of the ALDs Development Committee

Phyllis Aldrich*
Adjunct Professor,
Skidmore College
Saratoga Springs, NY

Beverly Ann Chin*
Director English Teaching Program
University of Montana
Missoula, MT

Patricia Cobb*
4th Grade teacher
St. Mary Magdalen Catholic School
Altamonte Springs, FL

JoAnne Eresh*
Senior Associate for E/LA
Achieve, Inc.
Washington, DC

Nikki Elliott-Schuman
WA State Writing Specialist
Office of Superintendent
Olympia, WA

Barbara Kapinus
Senior Policy Analyst
National Education Association
Washington, DC

Andrea Keech*
8th Grade Language Arts Teacher
Northwest Junior High School
Iowa City, IA

Barbara Kolupke
Chair, English Department
Alamosa High School
Alamosa, CO

Patricia Mills*
Title III Bilingual/ESL Coordinator
Houston Independent School District
Houston, TX

Emily Butler-Smith
Senior Staff Developer
Reading & Writing Project
Teachers College, Columbia University
New York, NY

*Participated in the in-person meeting

Appendix B

Development Committee Meeting Briefing Materials

Appendix B

Mid-Atlantic Psychometric Services, Inc.
212 Ashton Dr. SW
Leesburg Virginia 20175-2527

703.771.4686 (Voice)
703.771.1415 (FAX)
Mapsinc2@verizon.net

March 9, 2011

Dear Participants,

Thank you for committing to participate in the National Assessment meeting to develop achievement level descriptions (ALDs) for the 2011/2013 NAEP writing assessment.

I am enclosing a briefing packet with the following items to assist you in preparing for the meeting:

1. NAEP 1998 Writing Preliminary ALDs, excerpted from the 1998 Framework (Appendix A);
2. NAEP 2007 Writing Framework with finalized (1998) ALDs (Appendix A);
3. NAEP 2011 Writing Framework with preliminary ALDs (Appendix D) ;
4. Figure 1.1: Comparison of 1998 and 2011 NAEP Writing Frameworks;
5. NAGB Policy Definitions;
6. Tentative Meeting Agenda;
7. NAGB Travel Expense Form

A good grasp of documents 1 through 5 will serve you in good stead at the meeting. Please bring all these materials with you.

Your travel tickets will be sent to you electronically on Friday March 11, or at the very latest, early next week. When you arrive in to Dulles, there is a kiosk in the Baggage Claim area with an array of hotels and phones to call your shuttle. Please make certain that you summon the correct hotel shuttle; there is more than one Hyatt at or near Dulles. Check the Meeting Agenda for the correct address, and perhaps confirm with driver when boarding.

The Travel Expense Form requires that you provide some receipts to the government for reimbursement. Look it over to ensure that you save all the needed receipts. We usually find it easy to fill in the form as we go along, but mail it back when you arrive home so that you can include your travel tickets and airport parking receipts etc.

I thought you might like to know about your colleagues before arrival, and at what grade level you will be working:

Grade 4	Phyllis Aldrich and Patricia Cobb
Grade 8	Patsy Mills and Andrea Keech
Grade 12	Beverly Chin and Jo Ann Eresh

We look forward to welcoming you to the DC area. We hope your travel will be safe, the meeting challenging, and your experiences worthwhile, both personally and professionally.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Mary Lyn Bourque,
Director

Preliminary Achievement Level Descriptions for the 1998 NAEP Writing (excerpted from *Writing Framework and Specifications for the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress*, Appendix A)

Grade 4

These achievement levels are proposed for first drafts, not final or polished student writing, that are generated within limited time constraints in a large-scale assessment environment.

Basic

Students performing at the basic level should be able to:

- Demonstrate appropriate response to the task in form, content, and language.
- Use some supporting details.
- Demonstrate organization appropriate to the task.
- Demonstrate sufficient command of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization to communicate to the reader.

Proficient

Students performing at the proficient level should be able to:

- Create an effective response to the task in form, content, and language.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the intended audience.
- Use effective organization appropriate to the task.
- Use sufficient elaboration to clarify and enhance the central idea.
- Use language appropriate to the task and intended audience.
- Have few errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization that interfere with communication.

Advanced

Students performing at the advanced level should be able to:

- Create an effective and elaborated response to the task in form, content, and language.
- Express analytical, critical, and/or creative thinking.
- Have unity of form and content in response to the writing task.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the intended audience.
- Use effective organization appropriate to the task.
- Show proficient use of transitional elements.
- Elaborate and enhance the central idea with descriptive and supportive details.
- Use language appropriate to the task and intended audience.
- Enhance meaning through control of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization.

Grade 8

These achievement levels are proposed for first drafts, not final or polished student writing, that are generated within limited time constraints in a large-scale assessment environment.

Basic

Students performing at the basic level should be able to:

- Demonstrate appropriate response to the task in form, content, and language.
- Maintain a consistent focus.
- Respond appropriately to the task.
- Demonstrate organization appropriate to the task.
- Use supporting details.
- Demonstrate sufficient command of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization to communicate to the reader.

Proficient

Students performing at the proficient level should be able to:

- Create an effective response to the task in form, content, and language.
- Express analytical, critical, and/or creative thinking.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the purpose and intended audience.
- Have logical and observable organization appropriate to the task.
- Show effective use of transitional elements.
- Use sufficient elaboration to clarify and enhance the central idea.
- Use language (e.g., variety of word choice and sentence structure) appropriate to the task.
- Have few errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization that interfere with communication.

Advanced

Students performing at the advanced level should be able to:

- Create an effective and elaborated response to the task in form, content, and language.
- Express analytical, critical, and/or creative thinking.
- Have well-crafted, cohesive organization appropriate to the task.
- Show sophisticated use of transitional elements.
- Use varied and elaborated supporting details in appropriate, extended response.
- Begin to develop a personal style or voice.
- Demonstrate precise and varied use of language.
- Use a variety of strategies such as analogies, illustrations, examples, anecdotes, and figurative language.
- Enhance meaning through control of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization.

Grade 12

These achievement levels are proposed for first drafts, not final or polished student writing, that are generated within limited time constraints in a large-scale assessment environment.

Basic

Students performing at the basic level should be able to:

- Demonstrate appropriate response to the task in form, content, and language.
- Demonstrate reflection and insight and evidence of analytical, critical, or evaluative thinking.
- Show evidence of conscious organization.
- Use supporting details.
- Reveal developing personal style or voice.
- Demonstrate sufficient command of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization to communicate to the reader.

Proficient

Students performing at the proficient level should be able to:

- Create an effective response to the task in form, content, and language.
- Demonstrate reflection and insight and evidence of analytical, critical, or evaluative thinking.
- Use convincing elaboration and development to clarify and enhance the central idea.
- Have logical and observable organization appropriate to the task.
- Show effective use of transitional elements.
- Reveal personal style or voice.
- Use language appropriate to the task and intended audience.
- Have few errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization that interfere with communication.

Advanced

Students performing at the advanced level should be able to:

- Create an effective and elaborated response to the task in form, content, and language.
- Show maturity and sophistication in analytical, critical, and creative thinking.
- Have well-crafted, cohesive organization appropriate to the task.
- Show sophisticated use of transitional elements.
- Use illustrative and varied supportive details.
- Use rich, compelling language.
- Show evidence of a personal style or voice.
- Display a variety of strategies such as anecdotes, repetition, and literary devices to support and develop ideas.
- Enhance meaning through control of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization.

Appendix B

Crafting Achievement Level Descriptions for the
2011/2013 NAEP Writing Assessment

Hyatt Dulles Hotel
2300 Dulles Corner Blvd Herndon VA 20171
703-793-6871 (V) 703-793-6894 (Fax)

March 19-20, 2011
Agenda

Saturday, March 19

8:00 – 9:00 Breakfast Chesapeake Boardroom
Lobby Level

9:00 Welcome and Introductions
Susan Loomis, National Assessment Governing Board
Mary Lyn Bourque, Consultant, Mid-Atlantic Psychometric Services

9:15 Orientation and review purposes of ALDs
Review of Board Achievement Level policy and Policy Definitions
ALDs answer the question, "How good is good enough?"
Describing cut points on the score scale
Describing regions on the score scale
Level of detail needed for ALDS (grain size)
Givens to the process: 2011/2103 Framework/Test Specs, PDs, 1998 ALDs
Procedures for crafting ALDs

Mary Lyn Bourque, Project Director

10:15 Overview of 2011/2013 NAEP writing framework
Relevant key differences between the 1998 and 2011 writing frameworks

Beverly Ann Chin, University of Montana
NAEP 2011/2013 Writing Project Consultant

10:45 BREAK

11:00 Discussion of 1998 writing ALDs Grade groups
Review and discussion of content links between the 1998 and 2011 frameworks, and identification of overlaps in content

12:00 Brief discussion across grades Plenary session

12:30 LUNCH

1:30 **Task 1**: Identification and discussion of content elements in 1998 and 2011 frameworks:

- Elements in common – 1998/2011
- Elements for possible elimination - 1998
- Elements for possible addition - 2011

3:00	Calibration discussion across grades	Plenary session
3:30	**Task 2:** Formulate initial drafts of ALDs	Grade groups
	Take PM break as needed	
5:00	Share preliminary drafts across grades	Plenary session
5:30	Adjourn	
	Dinner on your own	

Sunday, March 20

7:30 – 8:30	Breakfast	Chesapeake Boardroom
8:30	Calibration of preliminary drafts across grades	Plenary session
9:30	**Task 3**: Quality control and editing drafts Checking lists of elements from Day 1 to ensure nothing has been missed	Grade groups
10:30	BREAK and Check-out*	
10:45	**Task 4:** Formulating final drafts of ALDs	Grade groups
12:30	LUNCH	
1:30	Final calibration across grades	Plenary session
2:00	Refining final drafts of ALDs	
2:30	Debriefing and complete evaluation survey	
3:00	Adjourn**	

*You may bring luggage to Boardroom when you have checked out.

**Shuttles will be waiting outside Lobby entrance to transfer participants to Dulles.

Appendix B

NAGB Achievement Level Policy Definitions

Achievement Level	Definition
Advanced	This level signifies superior performance.
Proficient	This level represents solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter.
Basic	This level denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade.

Comparison of 1998—2007 and 2011 NAEP Writing Frameworks

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>1998—2007 Writing Framework</th><th>2011 Writing Framework</th><th>Explanation for Change</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Content of NAEP Writing Assessment</td><td>The 1998-2007 NAEP Writing Assessments measured three modes:

• Persuasive mode:
o Writing to convince
o Writing to construct an argument
o Writing to refute a position
• Informative mode:
o Description
o Explanation
o Analysis
• Narrative mode:
o First-person and third-person fictional stories, personal essays</td><td>2011 NAEP Writing Assessment measures three communicative purposes:

• To Persuade, in order to change the reader's point of view or affect the reader's action
• To Explain, in order to expand the reader's understanding
• To Convey Experience, real or imagined, in order to communicate individual and imagined experience to others</td><td>Purposes for writing are emphasized as a way of:

• Recognizing that most writing is influenced in significant ways by interaction between writer, purpose, audience, and topic.

• Focusing the writer's attention on the goal of the writing task and the needs of the audience.

• To Convey Experience is a broader representation of the kinds of writing students will be asked to do. In the 2011 Framework, "narrative" is viewed as an approach, not a purpose, and is a strategy also used in explanatory and persuasive writing.</td></tr>
<tr><td>On the 1998-2007 NAEP Writing Assessments, some writing tasks required students to write for a particular audience (e.g., a peer, school principal, or committee). For other writing tasks, an audience was not specified.</td><td>In 2011, a specific audience will be stated or clearly implied in all writing tasks at grades 4, 8, and 12.</td><td>• The specification of audience on all prompts and at all grades will encourage students to make decisions about how to develop and organize ideas ("approaches to thinking and writing") and how to craft language that meets the needs of the specified audience.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Design of NAEP Writing Assessment</td><td>Percentage of Writing Tasks for Each Writing Mode:

<table><tr><th></th><th>Grade 4</th><th>Grade 8</th><th>Grade 12</th></tr><tr><td>Persuasive</td><td>25%</td><td>33%</td><td>40%</td></tr><tr><td>Informative</td><td>35%</td><td>33%</td><td>35%</td></tr><tr><td>Narrative</td><td>40%</td><td>33%</td><td>25%</td></tr></table></td><td>Percentage of Writing Tasks for Each Writing Purpose:

<table><tr><th></th><th>Grade 4</th><th>Grade 8</th><th>Grade 12</th></tr><tr><td>To Persuade</td><td>30%</td><td>35%</td><td>40%</td></tr><tr><td>To Explain</td><td>35%</td><td>35%</td><td>40%</td></tr><tr><td>To Convey Experience</td><td>35%</td><td>30%</td><td>20%</td></tr></table></td><td>• An increase in the percentage of tasks for the persuasive purpose at grade 4 reflects emerging pedagogical practices in elementary schools and complements expectations for postsecondary preparedness at grades 8 and 12. The distribution also reflects a progression of emphasis on writing to explain and to persuade, though many students in all three grades will also write to convey experience, real or imagined.</td></tr>
</table>

Comparison of 1998—2007 and 2011 NAEP Writing Frameworks (continued)

	1998—2007 Writing Framework	***2011 Writing Framework***	***Explanation for Change***
Design of NAEP Writing Assessment	Paper and pencil assessment for grades 4, 8, and 12.	Recommendation to provide computer-based assessment at grade 4 by 2019. Computer-based assessment for grades 8 and 12.	• As eighth and twelfth graders have become accustomed to composing, revising, and editing on computers, a computer-based assessment will offer students an environment for writing that more accurately reflects how students compose. Students will also have the option of using commonly available editing, formatting, and text analysis tools to compose their response. • A 2011 computer-based assessment at grades 8 and 12 offers students the opportunity to compose in an environment that is similar to that of many writing situations in postsecondary education and training.
Evaluating Responses on the NAEP Writing Assessment	On the 1998-2007 assessment, evaluation criteria are defined as "general characteristics of writing by mode"; some characteristics (e.g., "organization" and "mechanics") apply to all three modes, whereas others are mode-specific (e.g., "develops character" for the narrative mode).	The 2011 NAEP Writing Assessment will evaluate three broad domains of writing in all students' responses: • Development of Ideas • Organization of Ideas • Language Facility and Use of Conventions	• The 2011 NAEP Writing Assessment clearly and consistently defines criteria for the evaluation of effective writing across grades. • Features of writing will be evaluated in relation to the purpose and audience specified in the writing task. • Development and organization of ideas will be evaluated for writers' use of relevant and effective approaches to thinking and writing (e.g., analyzing, evaluating, narrating, etc.).

Comparison of 1998—2007 and 2011 NAEP Writing Frameworks (continued)

	1998—2007 Writing Framework	***2011 Writing Framework***	***Explanation for Change***
Reporting NAEP Writing Assessment Results	On the 1998-2007 assessments, student performance was reported in two ways: • Scale scores • Achievement Level Descriptions Average scale scores are derived from the overall level of performance of groups of students on NAEP assessment items. For Writing, average scale scores have been expressed on a 0–300 scale. Achievement levels are performance standards set by NAEP that provide a context for interpreting student performance. These performance standards are used to report what students should know and be able to do at the Basic, Proficient, and Advanced levels of performance in each subject area and at each grade assessed.	For the 2011 NAEP Writing Assessment, reports on student performance may include a new component. Assessment results will be reported in three ways: • Scale scores • Achievement levels • *Profile of Student Writing*: A nationally representative sample of student responses at each grade will be closely analyzed in relation to the evaluative criteria used to score student writing. Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods, data will be analyzed in order to detect patterns between attributes of the responses and performance at the Basic, Proficient, and Advanced levels of achievement.	• The *Profile of Student Writing* enhances the traditional NAEP reporting methods—scale scores and achievement levels—by providing information about various dimensions of writing and about the relationship between those attributes and achievement.

3/17/2011

NAEP Writing Assessment 2011/2013

Developing Achievement Levels Descriptions:
Basic, Proficient, Advanced

Standard Setting Process

- Develop descriptions of performance categories (ALDs)
- Identify appropriate methodology
- Select representative panels
- Train panelists
- Determine initial cut scores
- Use feedback and other data to inform panelists' judgments

SS Process (con'td.)

- Provide consequences data to panelists
- Finalize cut scores
- Reach consensus on recommendations to NAGB
- Collect validity evidence (throughout process)
- Evaluate process and develop technical documentation

1

3/17/2011

NAGB Policy Definitions (PDs)

- Generic
- Not content/assessment specific
- Not grade-level specific
- Not item specific
- Provide global statements of *expectations* of the 'policy body', i.e. NAGB
- Calibrate B,P,A across grades/subjects
- Starting point of setting standards

Overview and Purposes of the ALDs

- ALDs *operationalize* the NAGB Policy Definitions of Basic, Proficient, and Advanced by content and grade
- Guide panelists in the standard setting process
- Guide the interpretation of the cut scores when NAEP results are reported

ALDs

- Usually developed by content experts
- Vetted in a larger community of experts and stakeholders
- May be useful (in preliminary form) to test developer
- Used in standard setting to identify regions of performance on the score scale
- Finalized/approved by policy body (NAGB)

2

3/17/2011

Characteristics of ALDs

- Describe specific knowledge and skills students should be able to know and do
- Describe competencies within a range on the scale (some easier, some harder)
- Statements in test-measurable terms, but not necessarily item specific (grain size)

Distinguishing Levels

- ALDs (B,P,A) must be distinguishable from one another based on grade level content
- Differences need to be measurable
- Differences must be evident between
  - Effective skill
  - Competent skill
  - Adequate skill
  - Developing skill
  - Marginal skill
  - Little or no skill

ALDs on NAEP Score Scale

0% 100%

Below Basic | Basic | Proficient | Advanced

3

3/17/2011

Inputs for the ALD Process

- NAGB Policy Definitions
- NAEP 2011/2013 Framework
- NAEP 1998 (2007) ALDs
- Your experiences as a framework developer
- Your own content expertise
- Your experience in field of writing/LA

Meeting Tasks

Day 1

- Task 1 – Identifying common, overlapping elements of 1998 and 2011 frameworks
- Task 2 – Formulating initial draft ALDs

Day 2

- Task 3 – Quality control and editing drafts
- Task 4 – Reaching consensus on Final drafts

Task 1

- Consider PDs
- Review 2011/2013 Framework
- Explore difference between 1998 and 2011 frameworks
- Look for common links
- Possible deletions from 1998 ALDs
- Possible additions from 2011 framework

4

3/17/2011

Task 2

- Formulate drafts
  - Sensitivity to nuances of language
  - Check for "drift" from PDs
  - Check "grain" size
  - Check that statements are "test measurable"
  - Smooth language from level to level
- Share initial work with other grade groups
- Note items needing some consideration on Day 2

Task 3

- Quality control
  - Are all critical elements (from Day 1) included?
  - Do the ALDs reflect the range of performance on the scale?
  - Do they reflect the Policy Definitions?
- Edit drafts
  - Are they stated in language suitable for reporting?
  - Are they likely to be understood by those outside the content area, e.g., parents, policymakers, etc.?

Task 4

- Final calibration across grades
- Final edits
- Final consensus

5

Appendix C

Initial Drafts of ALDs

Appendix C

Initial Crafting of 2011/2013 NAEP Writing Achievement Levels Descriptions

Grade 4

BASIC

Fourth grade students writing at the Basic level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses a few supporting details and examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. Coherence is loosely maintained with an opening, some transitions, and ending. Some ideas are conveyed with supporting detail. Students produce a response with a little evidence of organizational structure and may use logical grouping of ideas such as "chronology" or "steps in a process". Word choice is mostly clear and appropriate for the topic. Simple complete sentences show some variety in length. The student's use of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling is mostly correct but has distracting errors that may get in the way of the reader's understanding.

PROFICIENT

Fourth grade students writing at the proficient level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed using some supporting details and examples relevant to the purpose and audience. The organization shows logical grouping and relationships of ideas, such as compare and contrast or order of importance. Coherence is created and maintained with an opening, appropriate transitions, and a reasonable ending. Varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should have some variation in length or type, such as exclamations or questions, in order to maintain the attention of the specified audience. The student's writing demonstrates good control of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few distracting errors.

ADVANCED

Fourth grade students writing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses specific, supporting details and compelling examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. The writing should be organized effectively and show a logical progression of ideas. Students may choose to respond by using techniques such as cause and effect or writing about a problem and suggesting a solution. Strong coherence is maintained throughout the writing with an engaging lead, effective transitions, and compelling ending. Precise and varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and successfully maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should vary in length and complexity in order to engage the reader. The writing demonstrates strong control of grammar, usage and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few mistakes.

Version 3.20.11

Grade 8

BASIC

Eighth grade students performing at the Basic level should be able to produce a reasonably competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains a few details and examples that support the development of ideas. The response should be at least partially organized with a beginning, middle, and ending. The writing uses some sentence variety and word choice that is usually appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Students should use writing techniques and stylistic devices that somewhat convey the writer's attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics should be generally correct but may have some potentially distracting errors.

PROFICIENT

Eighth grade students performing at the Proficient level should be able to produce a thoughtful and competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains relevant details and specific examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have an organized beginning, middle, and ending, that shows a logical, coherent progression of ideas. Sentence structures are varied in length and complexity. Word choice is specific and appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Students should use writing techniques and stylistic devices that convey the writer's attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics should be mostly correct and rarely distract the reader.

ADVANCED

Eighth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a highly effective and insightful response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains vivid details and powerful examples that support, elaborate, and extend the development of ideas. The response should be well-organized, logical and coherent with an effective beginning, middle, and ending. A variety of carefully crafted sentences and a sophisticated vocabulary engage the reader. Students should demonstrate writing techniques and stylistic devices that convey the writer's attitude toward the topic with creativity, richness, and depth. Grammar, usage, and mechanics should be consistently correct.

Grade 12

BASIC

Twelfth grade students performing at the Basic level should be able to create an appropriate response to the topic, purpose and audience. Examples, reasons, and anecdotes generally support the ideas. The organization focuses on the topic and purpose and suggests relationships among some ideas. The writing contains minimal sentence variety or complexity. Word choice is limited and may be inappropriate for the purpose and audience. The tone may be bland or may fluctuate inappropriately between, for example, formal and casual, or serious and humorous. Students performing at the Basic level should demonstrate a general command of grammar, mechanics, and usage, but the writing may contain a few errors that impede understanding.

PROFICIENT

Twelfth grade students performing at the Proficient level should be able to create a competent response to a topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose. Relevant examples, reasons, or anecdotes support the topic and consider the audience. A clear organization provides a focus on the topic and underscores the purpose. Sentences are varied to maintain a reader's interest and express the relationships among ideas. Specific word choices reinforce the purpose of the writing and are appropriate for the topic and audience. The tone of the writing suits the purpose and audience, which may be formal or casual, distant or friendly, depending on the situation described in the writing assignment. Students performing at the Proficient level should demonstrate a command of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

ADVANCED

Twelfth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce an insightful response to the topic, audience, and purpose. Strong reasons, specific examples, and compelling anecdotes not only support, but also extend and deepen the ideas. The organizational structure presents a logical, coherent progression of ideas. Skillfully crafted sentences enhance the topic, reinforce the purpose, and engage the audience. Language choices are purposeful, precise, and often powerful. A consistent, appropriate tone deftly conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic and intended audience, while advancing the purpose of the piece. Writing at the advanced level demonstrates a strong control of grammar, usage, and mechanics and may use these conventions to amplify and highlight the presentation of ideas.

Version 3.20.11

Post-Meeting Reviewed Version
2011/2013 NAEP Writing
Achievement Levels Descriptions

Grade 4

BASIC

Fourth grade students writing at the Basic level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses a few supporting details and examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. Coherence is loosely maintained with an opening, some transitions, and ending. Some ideas are conveyed with supporting detail. Students produce a response with a little evidence of organizational structure and may use logical grouping of ideas such as **chronology** or **steps in a process**. Word choice is mostly clear and appropriate for the topic. Simple complete sentences show some variety in length. The student's use of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling is mostly correct but has distracting errors that may get in the way of the reader's understanding.

PROFICIENT

Fourth grade students writing at the proficient level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed using some supporting details and examples relevant to the purpose and audience. The organization shows logical grouping and relationships of ideas, such as compare and contrast or order of importance. Coherence is created and maintained with the opening, appropriate transitions, and a reasonable ending. Varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should have some variation in length or type, such as exclamations or questions, in order to maintain the attention of the specified audience. The student's writing demonstrates good control of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few distracting errors.

ADVANCED

Fourth grade students writing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses specific, supporting details and compelling examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. The writing should be organized effectively and show a logical progression of ideas. Students may choose to respond by using techniques such as cause and effect or writing about a problem and suggesting a solution. Strong coherence is maintained throughout the writing with an engaging lead, effective transitions, and compelling ending. Precise and varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and successfully maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should vary in length and complexity in order to engage the reader. The writing demonstrates strong control of grammar, usage and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few mistakes.

Version 4.01.11

Grade 8

BASIC

Eighth grade students performing at the Basic level should be able to produce a reasonably competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains a few details and examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have at least a partially organized structure. The writing uses some sentence variety and word choice that is usually appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should begin to convey some sense of their attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be generally correct but may have some potentially distracting errors.

PROFICIENT

Eighth grade students performing at the Proficient level should be able to produce a thoughtful and competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains relevant details and specific examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have an organized structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. Sentence structures are varied in length and complexity. Word choice is specific and appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should consistently convey their attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be mostly correct and rarely distract the reader.

ADVANCED

Eighth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a highly effective and insightful response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains vivid details and powerful examples that support, elaborate, and extend the development of ideas. The response should have a well-organized, effective structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. A variety of carefully crafted sentences and a sophisticated vocabulary engage the reader. Students should demonstrate purposeful writing that conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic with richness and depth. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be consistently correct.

Version 04.01.11

Grade 12

BASIC

Twelfth grade writing at the Basic level should demonstrate an appropriate response to the topic, purpose and audience. Examples, reasons, and/or anecdotes generally support the ideas. The organization focuses on the topic and purpose and suggests relationships among some ideas. The writing contains minimal sentence variety or complexity. Word choice is limited and may be inappropriate for the purpose and audience. The tone may fluctuate inappropriately between, for example, formal and casual, or serious and humorous. The draft text should reflect a general command of grammar, mechanics, and usage, but may include a few errors that impede understanding.

PROFICIENT

Twelfth grade Proficient level writing should be a demonstration of a competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose. Relevant examples, reasons, or anecdotes support the topic and consider the audience. A clear organization provides a focus on the topic and underscores the purpose. Sentences are varied to maintain a reader's interest and express the relationships among ideas. Specific word choices reinforce the purpose of the writing and are appropriate for the topic and audience. The tone of the writing suits the purpose and audience, which may be formal or casual, distant or friendly, depending on the situation described in the writing assignment. The draft text at the Proficient level should reflect the writer's command of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

ADVANCED

Twelfth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce an insightful response to the topic, audience, and purpose. Strong reasons, specific examples, and/or compelling anecdotes not only support, but also extend and deepen the ideas. The organizational structure presents a logical, coherent progression of ideas. Skillfully crafted sentences enhance the response, reinforce the purpose, and engage the audience. Language choices are purposeful, precise, and often powerful. A consistent, appropriate tone deftly conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic and intended audience, while advancing the purpose of the writing. Writing at the advanced level demonstrates a strong control of grammar, usage, and mechanics and may use these conventions to amplify and highlight the presentation of ideas.

Version 04.01.11

Appendix D

Development Committee Evaluation Survey and Results

Appendix D

Appendix D

National Assessment Governing Board
Achievement Levels Descriptions Development
Evaluation Survey

The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide written documentation of the process that NAGB has used to develop the draft Achievement Levels Descriptions for the 2011/2013 NAEP Writing assessment.

Your comments and judgments are important since they will provide a basis for judging the quality of this process, and for improving future processes.

Please do not put your name on this form. While we need information to examine the success of the various steps in the process, we want your feedback to remain anonymous. We want to assure you that these data will be reported only in the aggregate, ensuring that it will not be possible for anyone to link specific comments to any one individual.

Thank you for your input and for taking the time to provide your thoughtful insights.

ALDs Development Process

The following questions are designed to gather your judgments about the various aspects of the process itself.

1-7 Advance Briefing Materials

The process of developing the ALDs included sending out advance materials to all participants to prepare them for the meeting. For each of the items listed below, rate **how helpful** the advance materials were to you in completing your tasks at the meeting.

On this scale, 5 = Very Helpful, 4 = Helpful, 3 = Somewhat Helpful, 2 = Of Little Help, 1 = Not at all Helpful. Place a √ in the appropriate column.

Advance Materials	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
1. Letter and Tentative Meeting Agenda	6				
2. NAEP 1998 Writing Preliminary ALDs	4	1	1		
3. NAEP 2007 Writing Framework with finalized (1998) ALDs	4	2			
4. NAEP 2011 Writing Framework with Preliminary ALDs	5*				
5. Figure 1.1 Comparing the 1998 and 2011 Writing Frameworks	3	3			
6. NAGB Policy Definitions	4	2			
7. Timing of the arrival of materials	5	1			
Average rating = 4.61					

* 1 left blank

8–19 Importance of Process Elements in Developing the ALDs

The process of developing the ALDs was implemented using a series of steps. For each of the process components or steps listed below, rate **how important** they were in helping you perform the tasks and reaching the stated goals of the meeting.

On this scale 5 = Very Important, 4 = Important, 3 = Somewhat Important, 2 = Limited Importance, 1 = Unimportant. Place a √ in the appropriate column.

Process Elements	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
8. Orientation/Introduction to tasks	6				
9. Review of NAGB AL policy and Policy Definitions	4	2			
10. Review of score scale, regions on scale, grain size, givens to the process, distinctions in examinee behavior from Basic to Proficient to Advanced	4	1	1		
11. Procedures for crafting ALDs	5	1			
12. Review of 2011/2013 Frameworks and relevant differences between 2011/2013 and 1998 frameworks	5	1			
13. Review and discussion of content links between 2011 and 1998 frameworks	4	2			
14. Feedback and sharing with other grade groups	6				
15. Task 1: Grade group work to generate set of elements in common, additions, deletions	6				
16. Task 2: formulating initial drafts	5	1			
17. Calibration of initial drafts across grades	6				
18. Task 3: Quality control	5	1			
19. Formulating final drafts	6				
Average rating = 4.84					

20–31 Success of the Process Elements in Developing the ALDs

Using the same set of process components, we would like to know your opinion of **how successful** you feel each of these components have been in helping you reach the stated goals of the meeting.

On this scale 5 = Very Successful, 4 = Successful, 3 = Moderately Successful, 2 = Limited Success, 1 = Not successful at all. Place a √ in the appropriate column.

Process Elements	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
20. Orientation/Introduction to tasks	6				
21. Review of NAGB AL policy and Policy Definitions	4	2			
22. Review of score scale, regions on scale, grain size, givens to the process, distinctions in examinee behavior from Basic to Proficient to Advanced	4	2			
23. Procedures for crafting ALDs	5		1		
24. Review of 2011/2013 Frameworks and relevant differences between 2011/2013 and 1998 frameworks	5	1			
25. Review and discussion of content links between 2011 and 1998 frameworks	5	1			
26. Feedback and sharing with other grade groups	6				
27. Task 1: Grade group work to generate set of elements in common, additions, deletions	6				
28. Task 2: formulating initial drafts	6				
29. Calibration of initial drafts across grades	6				
30. Task 3: Quality control	5	1			
31. Formulating final drafts	6				
Average rating = 4.88					

31–35 Success of the ALDs in Reflecting the Inputs of the Process

The processes used in this meeting resulted in a set of descriptions of the performance of students in grades 4, 8, and 12 on the 2011/21013 NAEP Writing Assessment, answering the question, "How Good is good enough?" The ALDs will ultimately be used, albeit in a somewhat revised form perhaps, to develop recommendations for NAGB on the achievement levels cut scores to be used to report on student performance.

We would like your judgment on how well you believe each description (Basic, Proficient, and Advanced) for each grade level **reflects the inputs** that were the basis for their development. Those inputs included the NAGB Policy Definitions, the content of the 2011 Writing Framework, the specifications or design of the 2011 Writing Framework, the method for evaluating examinee responses to the assessment, and the reporting of the assessment results.

On this scale 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree. Place a √ in the appropriate column.

Input Elements	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
31. I believe that the **NAGB Policy Definitions** are appropriately reflected in the final draft ALDs	4	2			
32. I believe that the **content of the 2011/2013 writing framework** is appropriately reflected in the final draft ALDs	4	2			
33. I believe the **specifications or design of the 2011/2013 writing framework** is appropriately reflected in the final draft ALDs	4	2			
34. I believe the **methodology for evaluating examinee responses** to the assessment is appropriately reflected in the final draft ALDs	4	1	1		
35. I believe the final draft ALDs are appropriate for **reporting the performance of examinees** on the 2011/2013 NAEP Writing Assessment	5	1			
Average rating = 4.66					

If you checked "3" or lower on any of the above, please comment and explain any reservations you may have.

#34/3: There seems to be a conflict between reflecting the assessment methodology and crafting a description of performance that speaks to a variety of audiences.

36–44 Satisfaction with Level of Specificity

We would like to know **how satisfied** you are with the level of specificity of each of the final draft ALDs. Answer all questions, whether or not you personally worked at that grade level.

On this scale 5 = Very Satisfied, 4 = Satisfied, 3 = Moderately Satisfied, 2 = Limited Satisfaction, 1 = Not Satisfied at all. Place a √ in the appropriate column.

Achievement Levels by Grade	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
36. Grade 4 Basic	5	1			
37. Grade 4 Proficient	5	1			
38. Grade 4 Advanced	5	1			
39. Grade 8 Basic	5	1			
40. Grade 8 Proficient	5	1			
41. Grade 8 Advanced	5	1			
42. Grade 12 Basic	5	1			
43. Grade 12 Proficient	5	1			
44. Grade 12 Advanced	5	1			
Average rating = 4.83					

If you checked “3” or lower on any of the above, please comment and explain any reservations you may have.

45–47 Satisfaction with Level of Consensus Across Grades

We would like to know **how satisfied** you are that the final draft ALDs represents a consensus of the group.

On this scale 5 = Very Satisfied, 4 = Satisfied, 3 = Moderately Satisfied, 2 = Limited Satisfaction, 1 = Not Satisfied at all. Place a √ in the appropriate column.

Achievement Levels Across Grades	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
45. Consensus at the Basic level	5	1			
46. Consensus at the Proficient level	5	1			
47. Consensus at the Advanced level	5	1			
Average rating = 4.83					

If you checked "3" or lower on any of the above, please comment and explain any reservations you may have.

I was unable to remain for the entire discussion, but I assume a consensus will be reached.

48–50 Confidence in the Final Draft ALDs

We would like to know **how confident** you are that the final draft ALDS will result in achievement levels on the 2011/2013 NAEP Writing Assessment that are reasonable, valid, and useful to the public in interpreting examinee performance.

On this scale 5 = Fully Confident, 4 = Confident, 3 = Moderately Confident, 2 = Limited Confidence, 1 = Not Confident at all. Place a √ in the appropriate column.

Achievement Levels Across Grades	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
48. Confidence in the Basic level	4	2			
49. Confidence in the Proficient level	4	2			
50. Confidence in the Advanced level	4	2			
Average rating = 4.66					

If you checked "3" or lower on any of the above, please comment and explain any reservations you may have.

51–56 Logistics and Physical Facilities

How would you judge the **quality of the logistics** of the meeting?

On this scale 5 = Very good, 4 = Good, 3 = Acceptable, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor. Place a √ in the appropriate column.

Logistics of Meeting	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
51. Arrival/Departure Information	6				
52. Materials Needed for Meeting	6				
53. Roles/Responsibilities of NAGB staff	6				
54. Roles/Responsibilities of Contractor (MAPS) staff	6				
55. Roles/Responsibilities of Panel Members	6				
56. Amount of time allocated for each task	6				
Average rating = 5.0					

How would you judge the **quality of the physical facility** for the meeting?

On this scale 5 = Very good, 4 = Good, 3 = Acceptable, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor. Place a √ in the appropriate column.

Physical Facility	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
57. Amount of work space and room set-up	6				
58. Lighting in work room	5	1			
59. Any supplementary materials needed	6				
60. Hotel food service	6				
61. Hotel sleeping rooms	6				
62. Helpfulness of hotel staff	6				
Average rating = 4.97					

63. What strategies did you personally use to decide which student behaviors to include at each level?

#1 Comparing across achievement levels was really helpful;
#2 Years of teaching at __grade with superlative writers and personally studying this topic
#3 Refer to my grade __ students
#4 Kept referring to the 2011 preliminary drafts and checked within and across performance levels
#5 Previous/past students

64. Were there any problems you encountered that were not addressed by the training and on-going discussion at the meeting?

#2 No – it was lovely
#3 No
#4 No
#5 None

65. Do you have any suggestions for improving the process of developing ALDs in the future?

#2 Great job! Thank you.
#3 No
#4 Well organized and great support. Thank you.
#5 Excellent hotel. Tessa was great with all the arrangements. Thank you so much for an outstanding and positive experience.

Thank you very much for completing this evaluation form.

Appendix D

Appendix E

Delphi Procedure

Appendix E

Appendix E

Delphi Procedure Participants

April 5 – 7, 2011

Cristi Alberino
Education Consultant
CT State Department of Education
Hartford CT

Sheila Frost (retired)
Mississippi Bend Area SEA
Muscatine IA

Julie Harper
E/LA Curriculum and Instruction
DE State Department of Education
Dover DE

Adam M. Jones
E/LA Specialist
IN State Department of Education
Indianapolis IN

John H. Kennedy (retired)
ME Department of Education
Augusta ME

William M. Lynch (retired)
MD Department of Education
Baltimore MD

Claudette Morton
Rural Education Researcher/Consultant
Helena MT

Lisa Parry
Secondary English Teacher
Arlington School
Arlington SD

Tracy Fair Robertson
English Coordinator
VA Department of Education
Richmond VA

Marta Turner
Professional Development Administrator
Northwest Regional Educ. Services District
Hillsboro OR

Christine Tell
Director of State Services
Achieve Inc.
Washington DC

Billie McQuillan
Title 1 Programs
St. Paul Public Schools
St. Paul MN

Cindy Simmons
MS Department of Education
Jackson MS

Lynette Sledge
MD State Department of Education
Baltimore MD

Karen Durbin
Northwest Regional Educ. Services District
Hillsboro OR

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 1

1. Introduction

WELCOME to the first survey round to review the draft Achievement Levels Descriptions (ALDs) for the NAEP 2011/2013 Writing Assessment. This survey addresses the 3 descriptions (Basic, Proficient, and Advanced) for the 3 grade levels (4, 8, and 12).

In the first round, you will follow the survey questions to provide input about the current drafts of the Achievement Levels Descriptions. In tomorrow's round, you will see the input provided by everyone who responds to this survey.

Please complete your work by 6 pm EST today, so your input can be included. If you have problems using or answering the survey, please contact Dr. Lynn Webb at testing@lwebb.com

Page 1

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 1

2. Grade 4 Basic

Please read the draft Achievement Level Description for Grade 4 BASIC, below. You will be asked to provide any needed edits and answer questions.

BASIC 4

Fourth grade students writing at the Basic level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses a few supporting details and examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. Coherence is loosely maintained with an opening, some transitions, and ending. Some ideas are conveyed with supporting detail. Students produce a response with a little evidence of organizational structure and may use logical grouping of ideas such as "chronology" or "steps in a process". Word choice is mostly clear and appropriate for the topic. Simple complete sentences show some variety in length. The student's use of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling is mostly correct but has distracting errors that may get in the way of the reader's understanding.

1. Is the BASIC definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 4?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes
- ◯ Yes, with my edits

2. If the description above is not appropriate, please list your changes/edits here:

Page 2

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 1

3. Grade 4 Proficient

Please read the draft Achievement Level Description for Grade 4 PROFICIENT, below. You will be asked to provide any needed edits and answer questions.

PROFICIENT 4

Fourth grade students writing at the proficient level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed using some supporting details and examples relevant to the purpose and audience. The organization shows logical grouping and relationships of ideas, such as compare and contrast or order of importance. Coherence is created and maintained with an opening, appropriate transitions, and a reasonable ending. Varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should have some variation in length or type, such as exclamations or questions, in order to maintain the attention of the specified audience. The student's writing demonstrates good control of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few distracting errors.

1. Is the PROFICIENT definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 4?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes
- ◯ Yes, with my edits

2. If the description above is not appropriate, please list your changes/edits here:

Page 3

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 1

4. Grade 4 Advanced

Please read the draft Achievement Level Description for Grade 4 ADVANCED, below. You will be asked to provide any needed edits and answer questions.

ADVANCED 4

Fourth grade students writing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses specific, supporting details and compelling examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. The writing should be organized effectively and show a logical progression of ideas. Students may choose to respond by using techniques such as cause and effect or writing about a problem and suggesting a solution. Strong coherence is maintained throughout the writing with an engaging lead, effective transitions, and compelling ending. Precise and varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and successfully maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should vary in length and complexity in order to engage the reader. The writing demonstrates strong control of grammar, usage and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few mistakes.

1. Is the ADVANCED definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 4?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes
- ◯ Yes, with my edits

2. If the description above is not appropriate, please list your changes/edits here:

Page 4

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 1

5. Grade 4 Overall

Thank you for considering each of the three levels for Grade 4. Please consider the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced. (The three levels are repeated below for your convenience.)

BASIC
Fourth grade students writing at the Basic level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses a few supporting details and examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. Coherence is loosely maintained with an opening, some transitions, and ending. Some ideas are conveyed with supporting detail. Students produce a response with a little evidence of organizational structure and may use logical grouping of ideas such as "chronology" or "steps in a process". Word choice is mostly clear and appropriate for the topic. Simple complete sentences show some variety in length. The student's use of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling is mostly correct but has distracting errors that may get in the way of the reader's understanding.

PROFICIENT
Fourth grade students writing at the proficient level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed using some supporting details and examples relevant to the purpose and audience. The organization shows logical grouping and relationships of ideas, such as compare and contrast or order of importance. Coherence is created and maintained with an opening, appropriate transitions, and a reasonable ending. Varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should have some variation in length or type, such as exclamations or questions, in order to maintain the attention of the specified audience. The student's writing demonstrates good control of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few distracting errors.

ADVANCED
Fourth grade students writing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses specific, supporting details and compelling examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. The writing should be organized effectively and show a logical progression of ideas. Students may choose to respond by using techniques such as cause and effect or writing about a problem and suggesting a solution. Strong coherence is maintained throughout the writing with an engaging lead, effective transitions, and compelling ending. Precise and varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and successfully maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should vary in length and complexity in order to engage the reader. The writing demonstrates strong control of grammar, usage and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few mistakes.

1. Is the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced appropriate?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes
- ◯ Yes, with my edits

2. If the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced is not appropriate, please list your corrections/changes here:

Page 5

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 1

6. Grade 8 Basic

Please read the draft Achievement Level Description for Grade 8 BASIC, below. You will be asked to provide any needed edits and answer questions.

BASIC 8

Eighth grade students performing at the Basic level should be able to produce a reasonably competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains a few details and examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have at least a partially organized structure. The writing uses some sentence variety and word choice that is usually appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should begin to convey some sense of their attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be generally correct but may have some potentially distracting errors.

1. Is the BASIC definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 8?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes
- ◯ Yes, with my edits

2. If the description above is not appropriate, please list your changes/edits here:

Page 6

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 1

7. Grade 8 Proficient

Please read the draft Achievement Level Description for Grade 8 PROFICIENT, below. You will be asked to provide any needed edits and answer questions.

PROFICIENT 8

Eighth grade students performing at the Proficient level should be able to produce a thoughtful and competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains relevant details and specific examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have an organized structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. Sentence structures are varied in length and complexity. Word choice is specific and appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should consistently convey their attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be mostly correct and rarely distract the reader.

1. Is the PROFICIENT definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 8?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes
- ◯ Yes, with my edits

2. If the description above is not appropriate, please list your changes/edits here:

Page 7

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 1

8. Grade 8 Advanced

Please read the draft Achievement Level Description for Grade 8 ADVANCED, below. You will be asked to provide any needed edits and answer a few questions.

ADVANCED 8

Eighth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a highly effective and insightful response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains vivid details and powerful examples that support, elaborate, and extend the development of ideas. The response should have a well-organized, effective structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. A variety of carefully crafted sentences and a sophisticated vocabulary engage the reader. Students should demonstrate purposeful writing that conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic with richness and depth. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be consistently correct.

1. Is the ADVANCED definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 8?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes
- ◯ Yes, with my edits

2. If the description above is not appropriate, please list your changes/edits here:

Page 8

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 1

9. Grade 8 Overall

Thank you for considering each of the three levels for Grade 8. Please consider the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced. (The three levels are repeated below for your convenience.)

BASIC
Eighth grade students performing at the Basic level should be able to produce a reasonably competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains a few details and examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have at least a partially organized structure. The writing uses some sentence variety and word choice that is usually appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should begin to convey some sense of their attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be generally correct but may have some potentially distracting errors.

PROFICIENT
Eighth grade students performing at the Proficient level should be able to produce a thoughtful and competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains relevant details and specific examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have an organized structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. Sentence structures are varied in length and complexity. Word choice is specific and appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should consistently convey their attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be mostly correct and rarely distract the reader.

ADVANCED
Eighth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a highly effective and insightful response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains vivid details and powerful examples that support, elaborate, and extend the development of ideas. The response should have a well-organized, effective structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. A variety of carefully crafted sentences and a sophisticated vocabulary engage the reader. Students should demonstrate purposeful writing that conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic with richness and depth. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be consistently correct.

1. Is the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced appropriate?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes
- ◯ Yes, with my edits

2. If the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced is not appropriate, please list your corrections/changes here:

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 1

10. Grade12 Basic

Please read the draft Achievement Level Description for Grade 12 BASIC, below. You will be asked to provide any needed edits and answer questions.

BASIC 12

Twelfth grade writing at the Basic level should demonstrate an appropriate response to the topic, purpose and audience. Examples, reasons, and/or anecdotes generally support the ideas. The organization focuses on the topic and purpose and suggests relationships among some ideas. The writing contains minimal sentence variety or complexity. Word choice is limited and may be inappropriate for the purpose and audience. The tone may fluctuate inappropriately between, for example, formal and casual, or serious and humorous. The draft text should reflect a general command of grammar, mechanics, and usage, but may include a few errors that impede understanding.

1. Is the BASIC definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 12?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes
- ◯ Yes, with my edits

2. If the description above is not appropriate, please list your changes/edits here:

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 1

11. Grade 12 Proficient

Please read the draft Achievement Level Description for Grade 12 PROFICIENT, below. You will be asked to provide any needed edits and answer questions.

PROFICIENT 12

Twelfth grade Proficient level writing should be a demonstration of a competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose. Relevant examples, reasons, or anecdotes support the topic and consider the audience. A clear organization provides a focus on the topic and underscores the purpose. Sentences are varied to maintain a reader's interest and express the relationships among ideas. Specific word choices reinforce the purpose of the writing and are appropriate for the topic and audience. The tone of the writing suits the purpose and audience, which may be formal or casual, distant or friendly, depending on the situation described in the writing assignment. The draft text at the Proficient level should reflect the writer's command of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

1. Is the PROFICIENT definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 12?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes
- ◯ Yes, with my edits

2. If the description above is not appropriate, please list your changes/edits here:

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 1

12. Grade 12 Advanced

Please read the draft Achievement Level Description for Grade 12 ADVANCED, below. You will be asked to provide any needed edits and answer a few questions.

ADVANCED 12

Twelfth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce an insightful response to the topic, audience, and purpose. Strong reasons, specific examples, and/or compelling anecdotes not only support, but also extend and deepen the ideas. The organizational structure presents a logical, coherent progression of ideas. Skillfully crafted sentences enhance the response, reinforce the purpose, and engage the audience. Language choices are purposeful, precise, and often powerful. A consistent, appropriate tone deftly conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic and intended audience, while advancing the purpose of the writing. Writing at the advanced level demonstrates a strong control of grammar, usage, and mechanics and may use these conventions to amplify and highlight the presentation of ideas.

1. Is the ADVANCED definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 12?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes
- ◯ Yes, with my edits

2. If the description above is not appropriate, please list your changes/edits here:

Page 12

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 1

13. Grade 12 Overall

Thank you for considering each of the three levels for Grade 12. Please consider the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced. (The three levels are repeated below for your convenience.)

BASIC
Twelfth grade writing at the Basic level should demonstrate an appropriate response to the topic, purpose and audience. Examples, reasons, and/or anecdotes generally support the ideas. The organization focuses on the topic and purpose and suggests relationships among some ideas. The writing contains minimal sentence variety or complexity. Word choice is limited and may be inappropriate for the purpose and audience. The tone may fluctuate inappropriately between, for example, formal and casual, or serious and humorous. The draft text should reflect a general command of grammar, mechanics, and usage, but may include a few errors that impede understanding.

PROFICIENT
Twelfth grade Proficient level writing should be a demonstration of a competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose. Relevant examples, reasons, or anecdotes support the topic and consider the audience. A clear organization provides a focus on the topic and underscores the purpose. Sentences are varied to maintain a reader's interest and express the relationships among ideas. Specific word choices reinforce the purpose of the writing and are appropriate for the topic and audience. The tone of the writing suits the purpose and audience, which may be formal or casual, distant or friendly, depending on the situation described in the writing assignment. The draft text at the Proficient level should reflect the writer's command of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

ADVANCED
Twelfth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce an insightful response to the topic, audience, and purpose. Strong reasons, specific examples, and/or compelling anecdotes not only support, but also extend and deepen the ideas. The organizational structure presents a logical, coherent progression of ideas. Skillfully crafted sentences enhance the response, reinforce the purpose, and engage the audience. Language choices are purposeful, precise, and often powerful. A consistent, appropriate tone deftly conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic and intended audience, while advancing the purpose of the writing. Writing at the advanced level demonstrates a strong control of grammar, usage, and mechanics and may use these conventions to amplify and highlight the presentation of ideas.

1. Is the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced appropriate?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes
- ◯ Yes, with my edits

2. If the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced is not appropriate, please list your corrections/changes here:

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 1

14. Grades 4, 8 and 12

Finally, please consider the progression of achievement from Grade 4 to Grade 8 to Grade 12. (You may look back to earlier pages of the survey, if necessary.)

1. Is the progression of achievement from Grade 4 to Grade 8 to Grade 12 appropriate?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes
- ◯ Yes, with my edits

2. If the progression of achievement across grades is not appropriate, please list your changes/solutions here:

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 1

15. EVALUATION OF PROCESS

Your participation in these survey rounds is appreciated. Please take a minute to provide feedback about the process.

1. Please evaluate the first round of surveys as a means of collecting input.

	Excellent	More than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Less than satisfactory	Poor
Effectiveness	○	○	○	○	○
Convenience	○	○	○	○	○
User-friendliness	○	○	○	○	○

2. For future tasks that are similar, would you prefer to use this methodology of survey rounds, telephone conference calls, or face-to-face meetings?

- ○ Rounds of surveys
- ○ Telephone conference calls
- ○ Face-to-face meetings
- ○ No preference
- ○ Other (please specify)

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 1

16. General Comments

If you have any additional comments, please enter them here.

1. Comments

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 1

17. Thank You!

Thank you for participating in these survey rounds. Your input is highly valued!

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

1. Introduction

WELCOME to the second survey round to review the draft Achievement Levels Descriptions (ALDs) for the NAEP 2011/2013 Writing Assessment. This Delphi study allows you to consider input from colleagues, while maximizing efficiency and convenience in responding. The surveys address the 3 descriptions (Basic, Proficient, and Advanced) for the 3 NAEP grade levels (4, 8, and 12).

In the second round, you will consider responses from Tuesday's survey.

Please complete your work by 6 pm EDT today, so your input can be included. If you have problems using or answering the survey, please contact Dr. Lynn Webb at testing@lwebb.com

Page 1

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

2. Grade 4 Basic Results

In Round 1 you were asked: Is the BASIC definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 4?

15/16 people responded and the results were:
9: Yes, with my edits
5: Yes
1: No
These results show strong support for the Grade 4 BASIC Achievement Level Description, which is as follows:

BASIC 4

Fourth grade students writing at the Basic level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses a few supporting details and examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. Coherence is loosely maintained with an opening, some transitions, and ending. Some ideas are conveyed with supporting detail. Students produce a response with a little evidence of organizational structure and may use logical grouping of ideas such as "chronology" or "steps in a process." Word choice is mostly clear and appropriate for the topic. Simple complete sentences show some variety in length. The student's use of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling is mostly correct but has distracting errors that may get in the way of the reader's understanding.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

3. Grade 4 Basic Comments from Round 1

(Notations about punctuation and format will not be presented in the Delphi study.) Content comments listed in Round 1 are presented below. They are numbered to distinguish individual respondents.

Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to see implemented as a recommended change to the Achievement Level Description.

Round 1 Comments:
1. Within the time allotted, fourth grade students writing at the Basic level should be able to produce a draft using a few supporting details and examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. Coherence is loosely maintained through an opening, somewhat effective transitions, and an ending. Some ideas are conveyed with supporting detail(s). Students produce a response with little evidence of organizational structure. Basic logical groupings may be used, such as "chronology" or "steps in a process." Word choice is mostly clear and appropriate for the topic. Simple, complete sentences show some variety in length. Student use of grammar, usage, and mechanics (including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling) is mostly correct. A few distracting errors may get in the way of the reader's understanding.

2. Edit in the last sentence, "...but has distracting errors..." should be changed to ," ...but may have distracting errors...".

3. It seems high for the Basic level. I am concerned about the last line. Perhaps "The student's use of grammar, usage and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling is limited with distracting errors that may get in the way of the reader's understanding."

4. Some of the details cannot be measured? What does "a little evidence" mean? What would that look like?

5. Replace the 4th sentence with the following sentence and move it to the 2nd sentence in the description. (The organization of the writing is simple and may use a logical grouping of ideas such as “chronology” or “steps in a process”.)

Last sentence should be rewritten to state: (The student’s writing demonstrates a fair control of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with some distracting errors that may get in the way of the reader’s understanding.)

6. In general, I like the language associated with the twelfth grade basic definition more than the language used here (or in the eighth grade model). For example, the above reads "...sentences show some variety in length" while the twelfth grade basic reads "...writing containing minimal sentence variety or complexity." In addition, the above reads "Word choice is mostly clear and appropriate..." while the twelfth grade reads "Word choice is limited and may be inappropriate..."Perhaps I am being too picky, but I think the standard set for a fourth grade basic is higher than that set for twelfth grade. Ultimately, I would like the language used for grade twelve used (or used as a model) for grades four and eight. The connotations are just not close enough for me.

7. "but has distracting errors that may get in the way of the reader's understanding." should read "and has few distracting errors that may get in the way of the reader's understanding."

8. The CCSS levels are higher than what is required for NAEP at 4th grade. While we are not copying those indicators, the language is more precise than the above description. Rather than "loosely maintained" coherence could we say "Topic is clearly introduced with an opening, transitions and an ending."?
I would also eliminate the last part of the last sentence "i.e. but has distracting errors that may get in the way of reader's understanding." Mostly correct says it all and if this is Basic level.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

4. Grade 4 Proficient Results

In Round 1 you were asked: Is the PROFICIENT definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 4?

16/16 people responded and the results were:
8: Yes, with my edits
7: Yes
1: No
These results show strong support for the Grade 4 PROFICIENT Achievement Level Description, which is as follows:

PROFICIENT 4

Fourth grade students writing at the proficient level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed using some supporting details and examples relevant to the purpose and audience. The organization shows logical grouping and relationships of ideas, such as compare and contrast or order of importance. Coherence is created and maintained with an opening, appropriate transitions, and a reasonable ending. Varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should have some variation in length or type, such as exclamations or questions, in order to maintain the attention of the specified audience. The student's writing demonstrates good control of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few distracting errors.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

5. Grade 4 Proficient Comments from Round 1

(Notations about punctuation and format will not be presented in the Delphi study.) Content comments listed in Round 1 are presented below. They are numbered to distinguish individual respondents.

Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to see implemented as a recommended change to the Achievement Level Description.

Round 1 Comments

1. Use of order of importance or the structure of compare/contrast seems more advanced. While grade 4 students could point out similarities and differences, maintaining the order or structure in writing is advanced. Is there a way to indicate this within the definition?

2. Within the time allotted, fourth grade students writing at the proficient level should be able to produce a draft using some supporting details and examples relevant to the purpose and audience.
Student writing demonstrates good control of grammar, usage, and mechanics (including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling) with few distracting errors.

3. Edit in next to last sentnence:
"...variation in length or type..." should also include some form of complexity, like a compound sentence."

4. Requiring grade 4 students at the proficient level to use conpare/contrast or order of importanct is more advanced than proficient. I am concerned that 4th grade students will not be able to "maintain the attention of the specified audience."

5. In the last line I would consider beginning with "The student demonstrates....with few distracting errors in the draft." or "in the writing sample" or "The student demonstrates good control of written grammar...."

6. "Sentences should have some variation in length or type, such as exclamations or questions, in order to maintain the attention of the specified audience."
Exclamations or questions as varied sentences do not maintain the attention of audience if they are not used appropriately in context. The emphasis on these two sentence types as appropriate to hold attention is generalized and allows for the score of a written response without either of them to be lower when they are not employed. It becomes a "magic bullet" to lower a score.
Suggested revision:
"Sentences should have some variation in length and type, allowing the reader to engage in the text and follow the development of the ideas without rereading."

7. I think this works well, and I especially enjoy the included specificity of "exclamations or questions" in regard to sentence variety. In fact, I would like to see more of these types of specific suggestions in the other eight descriptions. They are very helpful to me as a teacher, and I would be evaluators would benefit from these, too.

8. Some of the descriptions cannot be measured. What is a "reasonable ending?" What does that look like? Could it be a closing? Generally unified with some transitions, a clear progression of ideas, and an introduction and closing.
What about style and voice? Some style and generally precise word choice."

9. The term "reasonable" in the third sentence seems vague. Would a more helpful alternative be "appropriate," "valid," or "logical"?

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8
- ☐ 9

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

6. Grade 4 Advanced Results

In Round 1 you were asked: Is the ADVANCED definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 4?

15/16 people responded and the results were:
9: Yes, with my edits
6: Yes
0: No
These results show strong support for the Grade 4 ADVANCED Achievement Level Description, which is as follows:

ADVANCED 4

Fourth grade students writing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses specific, supporting details and compelling examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. The writing should be organized effectively and show a logical progression of ideas. Students may choose to respond by using techniques such as cause and effect or writing about a problem and suggesting a solution. Strong coherence is maintained throughout the writing with an engaging lead, effective transitions, and compelling ending. Precise and varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and successfully maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should vary in length and complexity in order to engage the reader. The writing demonstrates strong control of grammar, usage and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few mistakes.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

7. Grade 4 Advanced Comments from Round 1

(Notations about punctuation and format will not be presented in the Delphi study.) Content comments listed in Round 1 are presented below. They are numbered to distinguish individual respondents.

Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to see implemented as a recommended change to the Achievement Level Description.

Round 1 Comments

1. Remove the word "compelling". It should read, uses specific, supporting details and examples. "Compelling" is too qualitative. While grade 4 advanced students should be able to produce an organized piece of writing, the use of problem/solution and cause/effect structure seems above grade 4. Most certainly students would have this skill as they move to middle school, however, mastering this organizational structure by grade 4 is unrealistic even for an advanced grade 4 student. Remove the third sentence.

2. Within the time allotted, fourth grade students writing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a draft using supporting details and compelling examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience.

3. Keep the type of sentence included in the next to last sentence, "...vary in type, length and complexity."

4. "Students may choose to respond by using techniques such as cause and effect or writing about a problem and suggesting a solution."
Advanced grade 4 students should be able to show a logical progression of ideas in an organized manner. Specifying cause/effect or problem/solution is too complex. Remove the third sentence.

5. " . . .in order to engage the reader and move him/her effortlessly through the text."

6. minor edit
Last sentence: The student's writing demonstrates strong control of grammar, usage and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few mistakes.

7. I would eliminate the word "strong" next to coherence and next to control. "Consistent" coherence and "The writing demonstrates control of grammar, etc." is clearer.

8. Some of the descriptions cannot be measured. How do you organize "effectively?" What does that look like? Unified with smooth transitions, a clear and logical progression of ideas, and an effective introduction and closing.
about style and voice? A consistent style with precise and vivid word choice.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

8. Grade 4 Progression Results

In Round 1 you were asked: Is the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced appropriate?

16/16 people responded and the results were:
9: Yes, with my edits
5: Yes
2: No

These results show strong support for the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced, which is as follows:

BASIC
Fourth grade students writing at the Basic level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses a few supporting details and examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. Coherence is loosely maintained with an opening, some transitions, and ending. Some ideas are conveyed with supporting detail. Students produce a response with a little evidence of organizational structure and may use logical grouping of ideas such as "chronology" or "steps in a process." Word choice is mostly clear and appropriate for the topic. Simple complete sentences show some variety in length. The student's use of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling is mostly correct but has distracting errors that may get in the way of the reader's understanding.

PROFICIENT
Fourth grade students writing at the proficient level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed using some supporting details and examples relevant to the purpose and audience. The organization shows logical grouping and relationships of ideas, such as compare and contrast or order of importance. Coherence is created and maintained with an opening, appropriate transitions, and a reasonable ending. Varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should have some variation in length or type, such as exclamations or questions, in order to maintain the attention of the specified audience. The student's writing demonstrates good control of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few distracting errors.

ADVANCED
Fourth grade students writing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses specific, supporting details and compelling examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. The writing should be organized effectively and show a logical progression of ideas. Students may choose to respond by using techniques such as cause and effect or writing about a problem and suggesting a solution. Strong coherence is maintained throughout the writing with an engaging lead, effective transitions, and compelling ending. Precise and varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and successfully maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should vary in length and complexity in order to engage the reader. The writing demonstrates strong control of grammar, usage and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few mistakes.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

9. Grade 4 Progression Comments from Round 1

(Notations about punctuation and format will not be presented in the Delphi study.) Content comments listed in Round 1 are presented below. They are numbered to distinguish individual respondents.

Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to see implemented as a recommended change to the Achievement Level Descriptions.

Round 1 Comments:

1. Basic students would have little evidence of an organizational structure. Proficient students would show logical grouping of ideas, and advanced students will show an effective organization. Defining types of organization is unnecessary at grade 4.

2. The proficient description does not refer to the WRITER'S purpose and audience.

3. I am wondering if requiring a draft with a beginning, transitions and an ending for Basic is a bit high for that level. I see that level as students who are limited but have some ability to communicate in writing. The expectation that a student at that level will use transitions and create a loosely cohesive piece may be expecting a lot from a 4th grader at the Basic level.
If there are only 3 levels, where do the lowest writers fit in? Does the lowest level writer still receive Basic? If so, then Basic is too advanced.

4. The progression form PROFICIENT to ADVANCED is weak in the area of sentence construction.

5. I just do not feel comfortable with the basic description. It does not seem far enough away from proficient, and it needs to be scaled back a bit.

6. Proficient to advanced
Precise and varied word choice enhances should be modified by adding "Some precise and varied word choice.."

7. Progression is defined by parallel language and sentence placement. I would recommend the following edits:
Basic
This should be 2nd sentence: The organization of the writing is simple and may use a logical grouping of ideas such as "chronology" or "steps in a process".
Last sentence: The student's writing demonstrates a fair control of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with some distracting errors that may get in the way of the reader's understanding.
Advanced
Last sentence: The student's writing demonstrates strong control of grammar, usage and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few mistakes."

8. In their first sentences, Basic 4 uses "a few supporting details," and Proficient 4 uses "some supporting details." Perhaps a more discriminating alternative for Basic 4 could be "one or more supporting details." One of the things that seems to demonstrate proficient/advanced over basic writing is the clarity of expression. The work of basic writers often requires the reader to infer what the writers meant. Therefore, "clearly" might better describe a key difference between basic writing and proficient/advanced: As in "... uses a few supporting details and examples clearly relevant to the writer's purpose and audience," for the Proficient and Advanced Level Descriptions.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

10. Grade 8 Basic Results

In Round 1 you were asked: Is the BASIC definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 8?

12/16 people responded and the results were:
5: Yes, with my edits
5: Yes
2: No
These results show strong support for the Grade 8 BASIC Achievement Level Description, which is as follows:

BASIC 8

Eighth grade students performing at the Basic level should be able to produce a reasonably competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains a few details and examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have at least a partially organized structure. The writing uses some sentence variety and word choice that is usually appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should begin to convey some sense of their attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be generally correct but may have some potentially distracting errors.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

11. Grade 8 Basic Comments from Round 1

(Notations about punctuation and format will not be presented in the Delphi study.) Content comments listed in Round 1 are presented below. They are numbered to distinguish individual respondents.

Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to see implemented as a recommended change to the Achievement Level Description.

Round 1 Comments:

1. Third sentence: drop "at least". If it has a well-organized structure that would supercede the partially organized one so the "at least" is not needed. If you want to keep that idea, I would state it differently: "The response should have a partially organized sturcture at a minimal."

2. In the 3rd sentence change "partially organized" to loosely organized structure. A basic grade 8 student should be able to show some evidence of structured organization.

3. I still see this as a high expectation for the Basic performance level. Students might not have generally correct grammar, usage and mechanics. Also, I am concerned about "a reasonably competent response." Can we consider "somewhat competent" or "limited competence?"

4. Again, I feel some of the languge here puts more on the eighth grader than it does the senior. This description reads "...the writing uses some sentence variety and word choice that is usually appropriate..." while the senior description states "...writing containts minimal sentence variety. Word choice is limited and may be inappropriate for the purpose and audience." There is, of course, a big difference between appropriate and innapropriate, yet both words are used in these descriptions of basic writing. I believe this has the potential to skew the evaluation of a piece of writing.

5. Question: The grade 4 descriptions indicate that the writing is completed within "the time allowed." Is this NOT a consideration at grade 8?

Basic: Delete "reasonably" from first sentence.

6. There are some distracting words which are difficult to measure: reasonably competent, a few details,some sense of topic....

Instead, suggestions include:
"Produce a response to the topic, purpose, and audience..."
"Limited sentence variety is demonstrated..."
"Writers have limited understanding of topic or audience...."

7. Some of the descriptions cannot be measured. How do you measure "reasonably competent?"

What about style and voice? Some style and generally precise word choice.
There's no mention of transitions in this description. They were there at grade 4-they are still important. Maybe...may lack transitions, some transitions, smooth transitions."

8. First sentence: “Reasonably competent” is vague to me. Would “minimal but appropriate” be better?

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

12. Grade 8 Proficient Results

In Round 1 you were asked: Is the PROFICIENT definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 8?

14/16 people responded and the results were:
4: Yes, with my edits
10: Yes
0: No

These results show overwhelming support for the Grade 8 PROFICIENT Achievement Level Description, which is as follows:

PROFICIENT 8

Eighth grade students performing at the Proficient level should be able to produce a thoughtful and competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains relevant details and specific examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have an organized structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. Sentence structures are varied in length and complexity. Word choice is specific and appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should consistently convey their attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be mostly correct and rarely distract the reader.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

13. Grade 8 Proficient Comments from Round 1

(Notations about punctuation and format will not be presented in the Delphi study.) Content comments listed in Round 1 are presented below. They are numbered to distinguish individual respondents.

Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to see implemented as a recommended change to the Achievement Level Description.

Round 1 Comments

1.Purpose and audience are vital at every level. Students must understand this is the basis for all writing. What about the idea of voice?
"Writers should consistently convey their attitude toward the topic." This would be better if it read, writers should demonstrate reasonable, but not always consistent attitue toward their topic."

2. Again this seems high. I would consider the response "competent" but I would not put in "thoughtful."
Also, errors "rarely distract the reader" seems high for most students in general, and the proficient level is minimum competency, not consistency.

3. Question: The grade 4 descriptions indicate that the writing is completed within "the time allowed." Is this NOT a consideration at grade 8?

4. Some of the descriptions cannot be measured. What is a "competent" response? Who decides the level of competency?
What about style and voice? Some style and generally precise word choice.
There's no mention of transitions in this description.

5. Third sentence: I would like to indicate somehow that the "organized structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas," could have minor lapses. Would " a completely or almost completely maintained organized structure that shows..." accomplish that?

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

14. Grade 8 Advanced Results

In Round 1 you were asked: Is the ADVANCED definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 8?

14/16 people responded and the results were:
6: Yes, with my edits
8: Yes
0: No

These results show strong support for the Grade 8 ADVANCED Achievement Level Description, which is as follows:

ADVANCED 8

Eighth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a highly effective and insightful response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains vivid details and powerful examples that support, elaborate, and extend the development of ideas. The response should have a well-organized, effective structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. A variety of carefully crafted sentences and a sophisticated vocabulary engage the reader. Students should demonstrate purposeful writing that conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic with richness and depth. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be consistently correct.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

15. Grade 8 Advanced Comments from Round 1

(Notations about punctuation and format will not be presented in the Delphi study.) Content comments listed in Round 1 are presented below. They are numbered to distinguish individual respondents.

Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to see implemented as a recommended change to the Achievement Level Description.

Round 1 Comments

1. Eighth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a highly effective and insightful response to the topic, purpose, and audience. Remove the word insightful; it is too subjective. Instead of a "sophisticated vocabulary" could we use writers should use highly specific word choice to enhance tone and voice?

2. To maintain a parallel structure the beginning of the 4th sentence should be 'writers' rather than 'students'.

3. ". . . engage the reader, moving him/her effortlessly from idea to idea."

4. Question: The grade 4 descriptions indicate that the writing is completed within "the time allowed." Is this NOT a consideration at grade 8?

Advanced: Replace the second sentence with "The writing contains very descriptive details and compelling examples that support, elaborate, and extend the development of ideas." Replace the fourth sentence with "The writing demonstrates a variety of carefully crafted sentences and a sophisticated vocabulary."

5. Some of the descriptions cannot be measured. What are "powerful details?" What does that look like? Sufficient, specific, and relevant details that are fully elaborated. How do you measure richness and depth?
What about style and voice? What is a "sophisticated vocabulary?" A consistent style with precise and vivid word choice. Instead of students "should" it should be Students demonstrate...it should be what students ARE doing, not what they should do.
Capitalization, punctuation, etc. IS consistently correct, not SHOULD be consistently correct.

6. I would change "highly effective and insightful response" in the first sentence to "effective and insightful response." Omit "richness and" in the phrase, "conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic with richness and depth."

7. Again, words like "vivid, insightful, sophisticated" may have various meanings to various raters

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

16. Grade 8 Progression Results

In Round 1 you were asked: Is the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced appropriate?

14/16 people responded and the results were:
8: Yes, with my edits
4: Yes
2: No

These results show strong support for the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced, which is as follows:

BASIC
Eighth grade students performing at the Basic level should be able to produce a reasonably competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains a few details and examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have at least a partially organized structure. The writing uses some sentence variety and word choice that is usually appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should begin to convey some sense of their attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be generally correct but may have some potentially distracting errors.

PROFICIENT
Eighth grade students performing at the Proficient level should be able to produce a thoughtful and competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains relevant details and specific examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have an organized structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. Sentence structures are varied in length and complexity. Word choice is specific and appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should consistently convey their attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be mostly correct and rarely distract the reader.

ADVANCED
Eighth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a highly effective and insightful response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains vivid details and powerful examples that support, elaborate, and extend the development of ideas. The response should have a well-organized, effective structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. A variety of carefully crafted sentences and a sophisticated vocabulary engage the reader. Students should demonstrate purposeful writing that conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic with richness and depth. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be consistently correct.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

17. Grade 8 Progression Comments from Round 1

(Notations about punctuation and format will not be presented in the Delphi study.) Content comments listed in Round 1 are presented below. They are numbered to distinguish individual respondents.

Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to see implemented as a recommended change to the Achievement Level Descriptions.

Round 1 Comments:

1. Advanced 5th sentence should begin with Writers not Students to be consistent.

2. I believe that the basic and proficient expectations are very high and close to Advanced. I think we should see more of a progression in the ability to use English correctly in each category. Also, levels should allow for fragments of an essay and may not reflect the inability of students to complete a cohesive essay in the time allotted.

3. The basic description is too demanding when compared to the twelfth grade basic description and is too close to the proficient description.

4. I would change "highly effective and insightful response" in the first sentence to "effective and insightful response." and omit "richness and" in the phrase, "conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic with richness and depth."

5. Question: The grade 4 descriptions indicate that the writing is completed within "the time allowed." Is this NOT a consideration at grade 8?
Progression is defined by parallel language and sentence placement. I would recommend the following edits:
Basic: Delete "reasonably" from first sentence.
Advanced: Replace the second sentence with "The writing contains very descriptive details and compelling examples that support, elaborate, and extend the development of ideas." Replace the fourth sentence with "The writing demonstrates a variety of carefully crafted sentences and a sophisticated vocabulary."

6. Add "clearly" before "support" for Proficient and Advanced.

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

18. Grade 12 Basic Results

In Round 1 you were asked: Is the BASIC definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 12?

14/16 people responded and the results were:
6: Yes, with my edits
8: Yes
0: No

These results show strong support for the Grade 12 BASIC Achievement Level Description, which is as follows:

BASIC 12

Twelfth grade writing at the Basic level should demonstrate an appropriate response to the topic, purpose and audience. Examples, reasons, and/or anecdotes generally support the ideas. The organization focuses on the topic and purpose and suggests relationships among some ideas. The writing contains minimal sentence variety or complexity. Word choice is limited and may be inappropriate for the purpose and audience. The tone may fluctuate inappropriately between, for example, formal and casual, or serious and humorous. The draft text should reflect a general command of grammar, mechanics, and usage, but may include a few errors that impede understanding.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

19. Grade 12 Basic Comments from Round 1

(Notations about punctuation and format will not be presented in the Delphi study.) Content comments listed in Round 1 are presented below. They are numbered to distinguish individual respondents.

Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to see implemented as a recommended change to the Achievement Level Description.

Round 1 Comments:

1. Edit:Next to last sentence.
Change to: " ...tone may fluctuate between,...humorous and may not suit the purpose and/or audience."
This seems to be a more reasonable expectation for the Basic level. I don't think that 4 and 8 are reflective of this level.

2. Not an edit, but a question: why is "time period allotted" not included?

3. Some of the descriptions cannot be measured. How do you measure "appropriate", a fluctuating tone, a "general" command of grammar?

4. Tone should be consistant for purpose and audience.
the last line should read, "but may include a few errors that don't impede understanding."

5. "inappropriately" could be replace with "inconsistently"

6. Question: The grade 4 descriptions indicate that the writing is completed within "the time allowed." Is this NOT a consideration at grade 12?
Replace last sentence with "Writing at the Basic level reflects a general command of grammar, mechanics, and usage, but may include a few errors that impede understanding."

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

20. Grade 12 Proficient Results

In Round 1 you were asked: Is the PROFICIENT definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 12?

14/16 people responded and the results were:
7: Yes, with my edits
6: Yes
1: No

These results show strong support for the Grade 12 PROFICIENT Achievement Level Description, which is as follows:

PROFICIENT 12

Twelfth grade Proficient level writing should be a demonstration of a competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose. Relevant examples, reasons, or anecdotes support the topic and consider the audience. A clear organization provides a focus on the topic and underscores the purpose. Sentences are varied to maintain a reader's interest and express the relationships among ideas. Specific word choices reinforce the purpose of the writing and are appropriate for the topic and audience. The tone of the writing suits the purpose and audience, which may be formal or casual, distant or friendly, depending on the situation described in the writing assignment. The draft text at the Proficient level should reflect the writer's command of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

21. Grade 12 Proficient Comments from Round 1

(Notations about punctuation and format will not be presented in the Delphi study.) Content comments listed in Round 1 are presented below. They are numbered to distinguish individual respondents.

Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to see implemented as a recommended change to the Achievement Level Description.

Round 1 Comments

1. Twelfth grade writing at the Proficient level demonstrates a competent response to a topic while addressing a specific audience and serving a clear purpose.

2. Add voice to this level; the tone and voice of the writing suits the purpose and audience.

3. This seems high for Proficient. The descriptors are very strong for this level: relevant, varied, specific, reinforcing, clear.

4. Again, "time period allotted" is missing.

5. Some of the descriptions cannot be measured. What is a "competent response?" How do you measure that? Isn't that an opinion? What does that look like? Sufficient, specific, and relevant details that are fully elaborated. How do you measure formal or casual, distant or friendly?
What about style and voice? A consistent style with precise and vivid word choice.
Instead of students "should" it should be "level reflects" not "should reflect."

6. Instead of "tone of writing suits" perhaps "tone of writing matches" purpose and audience.

7. Question: The grade 4 descriptions indicate that the writing is completed within "the time allowed." Is this NOT a consideration at grade 12?

Replace the first sentence with "Twelfth grade writing at the Proficient level should demonstrate a competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose."

Replace the last sentence with "Writing at the proficient level demonstrates good control of grammar, usage, and mechanics with few errors."

8. The last sentence does not indicate a level of the Proficient students' command. Possible revision: "... should reflect a command of grammar, usage, and mechanics with few if any errors that distract or impede understanding."

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

22. Grade 12 Advanced Results

In Round 1 you were asked: Is the ADVANCED definition of what students should know and be able to do appropriate for Grade 12?

14/16 people responded and the results were:
7: Yes, with my edits
7: Yes
0: No

These results show strong support for the Grade 12 ADVANCED Achievement Level Description, which is as follows:

ADVANCED 12

Twelfth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce an insightful response to the topic, audience, and purpose. Strong reasons, specific examples, and/or compelling anecdotes not only support, but also extend and deepen the ideas. The organizational structure presents a logical, coherent progression of ideas. Skillfully crafted sentences enhance the response, reinforce the purpose, and engage the audience. Language choices are purposeful, precise, and often powerful. A consistent, appropriate tone deftly conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic and intended audience, while advancing the purpose of the writing. Writing at the advanced level demonstrates a strong control of grammar, usage, and mechanics and may use these conventions to amplify and highlight the presentation of ideas.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

23. Grade 12 Advanced Comments from Round 1

(Notations about punctuation and format will not be presented in the Delphi study.) Content comments listed in Round 1 are presented below. They are numbered to distinguish individual respondents.

Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to see implemented as a recommended change to the Achievement Level Description.

Round 1 Comments

1. the writer's attitude toward the topic and intended audience (take out comma) while advancing the purpose of the writing.

2. The word "insightful" fits here.

3. Deftly? Clever or skillful, but deftly?

4. "Time period allotted' is missing.

5. Some of the descriptions cannot be measured. What are "compelling anecdotes?" What does compelling look like? How do you "deftly" convey the writers attitude? What about skillfully? What about style and voice? What is a "sophisticated vocabulary?" A consistent style with precise and vivid word choice.
Instead of students "should" it should be Students demonstrate...it should be what students ARE doing, not what they should do.
Capitalization, punctuation, etc. IS consistently correct, not SHOULD be consistently correct."

6. How do you quantify or explain "deftly"?

7. Question: The grade 4 descriptions indicate that the writing is completed within "the time allowed." Is this NOT a consideration at grade 12?
Replace the first sentence with "Twelfth grade writing at the Advanced level should demonstrate an insightful response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose."

8. Fifth sentence: "Often" powerful language choices is a stiff requirement for on-demand writing. Would "at times powerful" indicate a significant enough level of skill?

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

24. Grade 12 Progression Results

In Round 1 you were asked: Is the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced appropriate?

15/16 people responded and the results were:
4: Yes, with my edits
9: Yes
2: No

These results show strong support for the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced, which is as follows:

BASIC
Twelfth grade writing at the Basic level should demonstrate an appropriate response to the topic, purpose and audience. Examples, reasons, and/or anecdotes generally support the ideas. The organization focuses on the topic and purpose and suggests relationships among some ideas. The writing contains minimal sentence variety or complexity. Word choice is limited and may be inappropriate for the purpose and audience. The tone may fluctuate inappropriately between, for example, formal and casual, or serious and humorous. The draft text should reflect a general command of grammar, mechanics, and usage, but may include a few errors that impede understanding.

PROFICIENT
Twelfth grade Proficient level writing should be a demonstration of a competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose. Relevant examples, reasons, or anecdotes support the topic and consider the audience. A clear organization provides a focus on the topic and underscores the purpose. Sentences are varied to maintain a reader's interest and express the relationships among ideas. Specific word choices reinforce the purpose of the writing and are appropriate for the topic and audience. The tone of the writing suits the purpose and audience, which may be formal or casual, distant or friendly, depending on the situation described in the writing assignment. The draft text at the Proficient level should reflect the writer's command of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

ADVANCED
Twelfth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce an insightful response to the topic, audience, and purpose. Strong reasons, specific examples, and/or compelling anecdotes not only support, but also extend and deepen the ideas. The organizational structure presents a logical, coherent progression of ideas. Skillfully crafted sentences enhance the response, reinforce the purpose, and engage the audience. Language choices are purposeful, precise, and often powerful. A consistent, appropriate tone deftly conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic and intended audience, while advancing the purpose of the writing. Writing at the advanced level demonstrates a strong control of grammar, usage, and mechanics and may use these conventions to amplify and highlight the presentation of ideas.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

25. Grade 12 Progression Comments from Round 1

(Notations about punctuation and format will not be presented in the Delphi study.) Content comments listed in Round 1 are presented below. They are numbered to distinguish individual respondents.

Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to see implemented as a recommended change to the Achievement Level Descriptions.

Round 1 Comments:

1. The gap between Basic and Proficient is wide. Proficient seems very high relative to the Advanced and Basic expectations.

2. If the writing is timed, this should be reflected in the descriptors.

3. Question: The grade 4 descriptions indicate that the writing is completed within "the time allowed." Is this NOT a consideration at grade 12?
Progression is defined by parallel language and sentence placement. I would recommend the following edits:
Basic: Replace last sentence with "Writing at the Basic level reflects a general command of grammar, mechanics, and usage, but may include a few errors that impede understanding."
Proficient: Replace the first sentence with "Twelfth grade writing at the Proficient level should demonstrate a competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose."
Replace the last sentence with "Writing at the proficient level demonstrates good control of grammar, usage, and mechanics with few errors."
Advanced: Replace the first sentence with "Twelfth grade writing at the Advanced level should demonstrate an insightful response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose."

4. Add "clearly" before "support" for Proficient and Advanced. For describing the students' command of grammar, would the terms "adequate," "general," and "strong" be appropriate respectively for Basic, Proficient, and Advanced?

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

26. Grades 4, 8 and 12 Results

In Round 1 you were asked: Is the progression of achievement from Grade 4 to Grade 8 to Grade 12 appropriate?

13/16 people responded and the results were:
4: Yes, with my edits
7: Yes
2: No

These results show strong support for the progression of achievement from Grade 4 to Grade 8 to Grade 12. (There were no comments submitted with the ratings for this question.)

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

27. EVALUATION OF PROCESS

Your participation in these survey rounds is appreciated. Please take a minute to provide feedback about the process.

1. Please evaluate rounds of surveys as a means of collecting input.

	Excellent	More than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Less than satisfactory	Poor
Effectiveness	○	○	○	○	○
Convenience	○	○	○	○	○
User-friendliness	○	○	○	○	○

2. For future tasks that are similar, would you prefer to use this methodology of survey rounds, telephone conference calls, or face-to-face meetings?

- ○ Rounds of surveys
- ○ Telephone conference calls
- ○ Face-to-face meetings
- ○ No preference
- ○ Other (please specify)

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

28. General Comments

If you have any additional comments, please enter them here.

1. Round 2 Comments

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 2

29. Thank You!

Thank you for participating in these survey rounds. Your input is highly valued!

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

1. Introduction

WELCOME to the third survey round to review the draft Achievement Levels Descriptions (ALDs) for the NAEP 2011/2013 Writing Assessment. This Delphi study allows you to consider input from colleagues, while maximizing efficiency and convenience in responding. The surveys address the 3 descriptions (Basic, Proficient, and Advanced) for the 3 NAEP grade levels (4, 8, and 12).

In the third round, you will consider consensus responses from Wednesday's survey. You will continue to work towards consensus to finetune the recommendations regarding the Achievement Levels Descriptions.

Please complete your work by 6 pm EDT today, so your input can be included. If you have problems using or answering the survey, please contact Dr. Lynn Webb at testing@lwebb.com

Page 1

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

2. Grade 4 Basic

There is consensus that the BASIC definition of what students should know and be able to do is appropriate for Grade 4.

BASIC 4
Fourth grade students writing at the Basic level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses a few supporting details and examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. Coherence is loosely maintained with an opening, some transitions, and ending. Some ideas are conveyed with supporting detail. Students produce a response with a little evidence of organizational structure and may use logical grouping of ideas such as "chronology" or "steps in a process." Word choice is mostly clear and appropriate for the topic. Simple complete sentences show some variety in length. The student's use of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling is mostly correct but has distracting errors that may get in the way of the reader's understanding.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

3. Grade 4 Basic Consensus Comments from Round 2

In round 2, two comments received support from 7 of 15 participants, and they are presented below. Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to confirm as a recommended change for the Achievement Level Description.

Round 2 Comments

1. Edit in the last sentence, "...but has distracting errors..." should be changed to ," ...but may have distracting errors...".

2. In general, I like the language associated with the twelfth grade basic definition more than the language used here (or in the eighth grade model). For example, the above reads "...sentences show some variety in length" while the twelfth grade basic reads "...writing containing minimal sentence variety or complexity." In addition, the above reads "Word choice is mostly clear and appropriate..." while the twelfth grade reads "Word choice is limited and may be inappropriate..."Perhaps I am being too picky, but I think the standard set for a fourth grade basic is higher than that set for twelfth grade. Ultimately, I would like the language used for grade twelve used (or used as a model) for grades four and eight. The connotations are just not close enough for me.

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

☐ 1

☐ 2

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

Page 3

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

4. Grade 4 Proficient

There is consensus that the PROFICIENT definition of what students should know and be able to do is appropriate for Grade 4.

PROFICIENT 4
Fourth grade students writing at the proficient level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed using some supporting details and examples relevant to the purpose and audience. The organization shows logical grouping and relationships of ideas, such as compare and contrast or order of importance. Coherence is created and maintained with an opening, appropriate transitions, and a reasonable ending. Varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should have some variation in length or type, such as exclamations or questions, in order to maintain the attention of the specified audience. The student's writing demonstrates good control of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few distracting errors.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

5. Grade 4 Proficient Consensus Comments from Round 2

In round 2, three comments received support from 7 of 15 participants, and one comment received support from 6 participants; they are presented below. Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to confirm as a recommended change for the Achievement Level Description.

Round 2 Comments

1. Requiring grade 4 students at the proficient level to use compare/contrast or order of importanct is more advanced than proficient. I am concerned that 4th grade students will not be able to "maintain the attention of the specified audience."

2. I think this works well, and I especially enjoy the included specificity of "exclamations or questions" in regard to sentence variety. In fact, I would like to see more of these types of specific suggestions in the other eight descriptions. They are very helpful to me as a teacher, and I would be evaluators would benefit from these, too.

3. Some of the descriptions cannot be measured. What is a "reasonable ending?" What does that look like? Could it be a closing? Generally unified with some transitions, a clear progression of ideas, and an introduction and closing. What about style and voice? Some style and generally precise word choice."

4. The term "reasonable" in the third sentence seems vague. Would a more helpful alternative be "appropriate," "valid," or "logical"?

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

6. Grade 4 Advanced

There is consensus that the ADVANCED definition of what students should know and be able to do is appropriate for Grade 4.

ADVANCED 4
Fourth grade students writing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses specific, supporting details and compelling examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. The writing should be organized effectively and show a logical progression of ideas. Students may choose to respond by using techniques such as cause and effect or writing about a problem and suggesting a solution. Strong coherence is maintained throughout the writing with an engaging lead, effective transitions, and compelling ending. Precise and varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and successfully maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should vary in length and complexity in order to engage the reader. The writing demonstrates strong control of grammar, usage and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few mistakes.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

7. Grade 4 Advanced Consensus Comments from Round 2

In round 2, one comment received support from 8 of 14 participants, and one comment received support from 7 participants; they are presented below. Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to confirm as a recommended change for the Achievement Level Description.

Round 2 Comments

1. Remove the word "compelling". It should read, uses specific, supporting details and examples. "Compelling" is too qualitative. While grade 4 advanced students should be able to produce an organized piece of writing, the use of problem/solution and cause/effect structure seems above grade 4. Most certainly students would have this skill as they move to middle school, however, mastering this organizational structure by grade 4 is unrealistic even for an advanced grade 4 student. Remove the third sentence.

2. "Students may choose to respond by using techniques such as cause and effect or writing about a problem and suggesting a solution." Advanced grade 4 students should be able to show a logical progression of ideas in an organized manner. Specifying cause/effect or problem/solution is too complex. Remove the third sentence.

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

☐ 1

☐ 2

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

8. Grade 4 Progression

There is consensus that the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced is appropriate for Grade 4.

BASIC
Fourth grade students writing at the Basic level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses a few supporting details and examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. Coherence is loosely maintained with an opening, some transitions, and ending. Some ideas are conveyed with supporting detail. Students produce a response with a little evidence of organizational structure and may use logical grouping of ideas such as "chronology" or "steps in a process." Word choice is mostly clear and appropriate for the topic. Simple complete sentences show some variety in length. The student's use of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling is mostly correct but has distracting errors that may get in the way of the reader's understanding.

PROFICIENT
Fourth grade students writing at the proficient level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed using some supporting details and examples relevant to the purpose and audience. The organization shows logical grouping and relationships of ideas, such as compare and contrast or order of importance. Coherence is created and maintained with an opening, appropriate transitions, and a reasonable ending. Varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should have some variation in length or type, such as exclamations or questions, in order to maintain the attention of the specified audience. The student's writing demonstrates good control of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few distracting errors.

ADVANCED
Fourth grade students writing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses specific, supporting details and compelling examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. The writing should be organized effectively and show a logical progression of ideas. Students may choose to respond by using techniques such as cause and effect or writing about a problem and suggesting a solution. Strong coherence is maintained throughout the writing with an engaging lead, effective transitions, and compelling ending. Precise and varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and successfully maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should vary in length and complexity in order to engage the reader. The writing demonstrates strong control of grammar, usage and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few mistakes.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

9. Grade 4 Progression Consensus Comments from Round 2

In round 2, one comment received support from 9 of 15 participants, one comment received support from 7 participants, and one comment received support from 6 participants; they are presented below. Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to confirm as a recommended change for the Achievement Levels Description.

Round 2 Comments:

1. The proficient description does not refer to the WRITER'S purpose and audience.

2. I am wondering if requiring a draft with a beginning, transitions and an ending for Basic is a bit high for that level. I see that level as students who are limited but have some ability to communicate in writing. The expectation that a student at that level will use transitions and create a loosely cohesive piece may be expecting a lot from a 4th grader at the Basic level.
If there are only 3 levels, where do the lowest writers fit in? Does the lowest level writer still receive Basic? If so, then Basic is too advanced.

3. In their first sentences, Basic 4 uses "a few supporting details," and Proficient 4 uses "some supporting details." Perhaps a more discriminating alternative for Basic 4 could be "one or more supporting details." One of the things that seems to demonstrate proficient/advanced over basic writing is the clarity of expression. The work of basic writers often requires the reader to infer what the writers meant. Therefore, "clearly" might better describe a key difference between basic writing and proficient/advanced: As in "... uses a few supporting details and examples clearly relevant to the writer's purpose and audience," for the Proficient and Advanced Level Descriptions.

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

10. Grade 8 Basic

There is consensus that the BASIC definition of what students should know and be able to do is appropriate for Grade 8.

BASIC 8
Eighth grade students performing at the Basic level should be able to produce a reasonably competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains a few details and examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have at least a partially organized structure. The writing uses some sentence variety and word choice that is usually appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should begin to convey some sense of their attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be generally correct but may have some potentially distracting errors.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

11. Grade 8 Basic Consensus Comments from Round 2

In round 2, one comment received support from 9 of 14 participants, two comments received support from 7 participants, and 3 comments received support from 6 participants; they are presented below. Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to confirm as a recommended change for the Achievement Level Description.

Round 2 Comments:

1. In the 3rd sentence change "partially organized" to loosely organized structure. A basic grade 8 student should be able to show some evidence of structured organization.

2. I still see this as a high expectation for the Basic performance level. Students might not have generally correct grammar, usage and mechanics. Also, I am concerned about "a reasonably competent response." Can we consider "somewhat competent" or "limited competence?"

3. Again, I feel some of the language here puts more on the eighth grader than it does the senior. This description reads "...the writing uses some sentence variety and word choice that is usually appropriate..." while the senior description states "...writing contains minimal sentence variety. Word choice is limited and may be inappropriate for the purpose and audience." There is, of course, a big difference between appropriate and inappropriate, yet both words are used in these descriptions of basic writing. I believe this has the potential to skew the evaluation of a piece of writing.

4. There are some distracting words which are difficult to measure: reasonably competent, a few details, some sense of topic....Instead, suggestions include:
"Produce a response to the topic, purpose, and audience..."
"Limited sentence variety is demonstrated..."
"Writers have limited understanding of topic or audience...."

5. Some of the descriptions cannot be measured. How do you measure "reasonably competent?"
What about style and voice? Some style and generally precise word choice.
There's no mention of transitions in this description. They were there at grade 4-they are still important. Maybe...may lack transitions, some transitions, smooth transitions."

6. First sentence: "Reasonably competent" is vague to me. Would "minimal but appropriate" be better?

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

12. Grade 8 Proficient

There is consensus that the PROFICIENT definition of what students should know and be able to do is appropriate for Grade 8.

PROFICIENT 8
Eighth grade students performing at the Proficient level should be able to produce a thoughtful and competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains relevant details and specific examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have an organized structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. Sentence structures are varied in length and complexity. Word choice is specific and appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should consistently convey their attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be mostly correct and rarely distract the reader.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

13. Grade 8 Proficient Consensus Comments from Round 2

In round 2, one comment received support from 7 of 13 participants and two comments received support from 6 participants; they are presented below. Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to confirm as a recommended change for the Achievement Level Description.

Round 2 Comments

1. Again this seems high. I would consider the response "competent" but I would not put in "thoughtful." Also, errors "rarely distract the reader" seems high for most students in general, and the proficient level is minimum competency, not consistency.

2. Some of the descriptions cannot be measured. What is a "competent" response? Who decides the level of competency? What about style and voice? Some style and generally precise word choice. There's no mention of transitions in this description.

3. Third sentence: I would like to indicate somehow that the "organized structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas," could have minor lapses. Would " a completely or almost completely maintained organized structure that shows..." accomplish that?

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

14. Grade 8 Advanced

There is consensus that the ADVANCED definition of what students should know and be able to do is appropriate for Grade 8.

ADVANCED 8
Eighth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a highly effective and insightful response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains vivid details and powerful examples that support, elaborate, and extend the development of ideas. The response should have a well-organized, effective structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. A variety of carefully crafted sentences and a sophisticated vocabulary engage the reader. Students should demonstrate purposeful writing that conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic with richness and depth. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be consistently correct.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

15. Grade 8 Advanced Consensus Comments from Round 2

In round 2, one comment received support from 8 of 11 participants, two comments received support from 7 participants, and one comment received support from 6 participants; they are presented below. Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to confirm as a recommended change for the Achievement Level Description.

Round 2 Comments

1. Eighth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a highly effective and insightful response to the topic, purpose, and audience. Remove the word insightful; it is too subjective. Instead of a "sophisticated vocabulary" could we use writers should use highly specific word choice to enhance tone and voice?

2. To maintain a parallel structure the beginning of the 4th sentence should be 'writers' rather than 'students'.

3. Question: The grade 4 descriptions indicate that the writing is completed within "the time allowed." Is this NOT a consideration at grade 8?
Advanced: Replace the second sentence with "The writing contains very descriptive details and compelling examples that support, elaborate, and extend the development of ideas." Replace the fourth sentence with "The writing demonstrates a variety of carefully crafted sentences and a sophisticated vocabulary."

4. Some of the descriptions cannot be measured. What are "powerful details?" What does that look like? Sufficient, specific, and relevant details that are fully elaborated. How do you measure richness and depth?
What about style and voice? What is a "sophisticated vocabulary?" A consistent style with precise and vivid word choice. Instead of students "should" it should be Students demonstrate...it should be what students ARE doing, not what they should do.
Capitalization, punctuation, etc. IS consistently correct, not SHOULD be consistently correct.

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

16. Grade 8 Progression

There is consensus that the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced is appropriate for Grade 8.

BASIC
Eighth grade students performing at the Basic level should be able to produce a reasonably competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains a few details and examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have at least a partially organized structure. The writing uses some sentence variety and word choice that is usually appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should begin to convey some sense of their attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be generally correct but may have some potentially distracting errors.

PROFICIENT
Eighth grade students performing at the Proficient level should be able to produce a thoughtful and competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains relevant details and specific examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have an organized structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. Sentence structures are varied in length and complexity. Word choice is specific and appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should consistently convey their attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be mostly correct and rarely distract the reader.

ADVANCED
Eighth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a highly effective and insightful response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains vivid details and powerful examples that support, elaborate, and extend the development of ideas. The response should have a well-organized, effective structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. A variety of carefully crafted sentences and a sophisticated vocabulary engage the reader. Students should demonstrate purposeful writing that conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic with richness and depth. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be consistently correct.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

17. Grade 8 Progression Consensus Comments from Round 2

In round 2, one comment received support from 8 of 13 participants and one comment received support from 6 participants; they are presented below. Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to confirm as a recommended change for the Achievement Level Description.

Round 2 Comments:

1. Advanced 5th sentence should begin with Writers not Students to be consistent.

2. Question: The grade 4 descriptions indicate that the writing is completed within "the time allowed." Is this NOT a consideration at grade 8?
Progression is defined by parallel language and sentence placement. I would recommend the following edits:
Basic: Delete "reasonably" from first sentence.
Advanced: Replace the second sentence with "The writing contains very descriptive details and compelling examples that support, elaborate, and extend the development of ideas." Replace the fourth sentence with "The writing demonstrates a variety of carefully crafted sentences and a sophisticated vocabulary."

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

☐ 1

☐ 2

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

18. Grade 12 Basic

There is consensus that the BASIC definition of what students should know and be able to do is appropriate for Grade 12.

BASIC 12
Twelfth grade writing at the Basic level should demonstrate an appropriate response to the topic, purpose and audience. Examples, reasons, and/or anecdotes generally support the ideas. The organization focuses on the topic and purpose and suggests relationships among some ideas. The writing contains minimal sentence variety or complexity. Word choice is limited and may be inappropriate for the purpose and audience. The tone may fluctuate inappropriately between, for example, formal and casual, or serious and humorous. The draft text should reflect a general command of grammar, mechanics, and usage, but may include a few errors that impede understanding.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

19. Grade 12 Basic Consensus Comments from Round 2

In round 2, one comment received support from 8 of 13 participants and two comments received support from 6 participants; they are presented below. Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to confirm as a recommended change for the Achievement Level Description.

Round 2 Comments:

1. Edit:Next to last sentence. Change to: " ...tone may fluctuate between,...humorous and may not suit the purpose and/or audience."
This seems to be a more reasonable expectation for the Basic level. I don't think that 4 and 8 are reflective of this level.

2. Not an edit, but a question: why is "time period allotted" not included?

3. Question: The grade 4 descriptions indicate that the writing is completed within "the time allowed." Is this NOT a consideration at grade 12?
Replace last sentence with "Writing at the Basic level reflects a general command of grammar, mechanics, and usage, but may include a few errors that impede understanding."

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

20. Grade 12 Proficient

There is consensus that the PROFICIENT definition of what students should know and be able to do is appropriate for Grade 12.

PROFICIENT 12
Twelfth grade Proficient level writing should be a demonstration of a competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose. Relevant examples, reasons, or anecdotes support the topic and consider the audience. A clear organization provides a focus on the topic and underscores the purpose. Sentences are varied to maintain a reader's interest and express the relationships among ideas. Specific word choices reinforce the purpose of the writing and are appropriate for the topic and audience. The tone of the writing suits the purpose and audience, which may be formal or casual, distant or friendly, depending on the situation described in the writing assignment. The draft text at the Proficient level should reflect the writer's command of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

21. Grade 12 Proficient Consensus Comments from Round 2

In round 2, one comment received support from 8 of 13 participants, one comment received support from 7 participants, and two comments received support from 6 participants; they are presented below. Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to confirm as a recommended change for the Achievement Level Description.

Round 2 Comments

1. Again, "time period allotted" is missing.

2. Instead of "tone of writing suits" perhaps "tone of writing matches" purpose and audience.

3. Question: The grade 4 descriptions indicate that the writing is completed within "the time allowed." Is this NOT a consideration at grade 12?
Replace the first sentence with "Twelfth grade writing at the Proficient level should demonstrate a competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose."
Replace the last sentence with "Writing at the proficient level demonstrates good control of grammar, usage, and mechanics with few errors."

4. The last sentence does not indicate a level of the Proficient students' command. Possible revision: "... should reflect a command of grammar, usage, and mechanics with few if any errors that distract or impede understanding."

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

22. Grade 12 Advanced

There is consensus that the ADVANCED definition of what students should know and be able to do is appropriate for Grade 12.

ADVANCED 12
Twelfth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce an insightful response to the topic, audience, and purpose. Strong reasons, specific examples, and/or compelling anecdotes not only support, but also extend and deepen the ideas. The organizational structure presents a logical, coherent progression of ideas. Skillfully crafted sentences enhance the response, reinforce the purpose, and engage the audience. Language choices are purposeful, precise, and often powerful. A consistent, appropriate tone deftly conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic and intended audience, while advancing the purpose of the writing. Writing at the advanced level demonstrates a strong control of grammar, usage, and mechanics and may use these conventions to amplify and highlight the presentation of ideas.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

23. Grade 12 Advanced Consensus Comments from Round 2

In round 2, three comments received support from 6 of 13 participants; they are presented below. Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to confirm as a recommended change for the Achievement Level Description.

Round 2 Comments

1. "Time period allotted' is missing.

2. Question: The grade 4 descriptions indicate that the writing is completed within "the time allowed." Is this NOT a consideration at grade 12?
Replace the first sentence with "Twelfth grade writing at the Advanced level should demonstrate an insightful response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose."

3. Fifth sentence: "Often" powerful language choices is a stiff requirement for on-demand writing. Would "at times powerful" indicate a significant enough level of skill?

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

24. Grade 12 Progression

There is consensus that the progression from Basic to Proficient to Advanced is appropriate for Grade 12.

BASIC
Twelfth grade writing at the Basic level should demonstrate an appropriate response to the topic, purpose and audience. Examples, reasons, and/or anecdotes generally support the ideas. The organization focuses on the topic and purpose and suggests relationships among some ideas. The writing contains minimal sentence variety or complexity. Word choice is limited and may be inappropriate for the purpose and audience. The tone may fluctuate inappropriately between, for example, formal and casual, or serious and humorous. The draft text should reflect a general command of grammar, mechanics, and usage, but may include a few errors that impede understanding.

PROFICIENT
Twelfth grade Proficient level writing should be a demonstration of a competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose. Relevant examples, reasons, or anecdotes support the topic and consider the audience. A clear organization provides a focus on the topic and underscores the purpose. Sentences are varied to maintain a reader's interest and express the relationships among ideas. Specific word choices reinforce the purpose of the writing and are appropriate for the topic and audience. The tone of the writing suits the purpose and audience, which may be formal or casual, distant or friendly, depending on the situation described in the writing assignment. The draft text at the Proficient level should reflect the writer's command of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

ADVANCED
Twelfth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce an insightful response to the topic, audience, and purpose. Strong reasons, specific examples, and/or compelling anecdotes not only support, but also extend and deepen the ideas. The organizational structure presents a logical, coherent progression of ideas. Skillfully crafted sentences enhance the response, reinforce the purpose, and engage the audience. Language choices are purposeful, precise, and often powerful. A consistent, appropriate tone deftly conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic and intended audience, while advancing the purpose of the writing. Writing at the advanced level demonstrates a strong control of grammar, usage, and mechanics and may use these conventions to amplify and highlight the presentation of ideas.

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

25. Grade 12 Progression Consensus Comments from Round 2

In round 2, one comment received support from 8 of 10 participants and two comments received support from 6 participants; they are presented below. Please read the comments and then click on the numbers of any comments that you would like to confirm as a recommended change for the Achievement Level Description.

Round 2 Comments:

1. The gap between Basic and Proficient is wide. Proficient seems very high relative to the Advanced and Basic expectations.

2. If the writing is timed, this should be reflected in the descriptors.

3. Question: The grade 4 descriptions indicate that the writing is completed within "the time allowed." Is this NOT a consideration at grade 12?
Progression is defined by parallel language and sentence placement. I would recommend the following edits:
Basic: Replace last sentence with "Writing at the Basic level reflects a general command of grammar, mechanics, and usage, but may include a few errors that impede understanding."
Proficient: Replace the first sentence with "Twelfth grade writing at the Proficient level should demonstrate a competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose."
Replace the last sentence with "Writing at the proficient level demonstrates good control of grammar, usage, and mechanics with few errors."
Advanced: Replace the first sentence with "Twelfth grade writing at the Advanced level should demonstrate an insightful response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose."

1. Please indicate the number of any comments (above) that you want to be recommended as a change to the Achievement Level Description.

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

2. If you must provide clarification, please use this space.

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

26. EVALUATION OF PROCESS

Your participation in these survey rounds is appreciated. Please take a minute to provide feedback about the process.

1. Please evaluate rounds of surveys as a means of collecting input.

	Excellent	More than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Less than satisfactory	Poor
Effectiveness	○	○	○	○	○
Convenience	○	○	○	○	○
User-friendliness	○	○	○	○	○

2. For future tasks that are similar, would you prefer to use this methodology of survey rounds, telephone conference calls, or face-to-face meetings?

- ○ Rounds of surveys
- ○ Telephone conference calls
- ○ Face-to-face meetings
- ○ No preference
- ○ Other (please specify)

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NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

27. General Comments

If you have any additional comments, please enter them here.

1. Round 3 Comments

NAEP Writing ALDs Delphi Study Round 3

28. Thank You!

Thank you for participating in these survey rounds. Your input is highly valued!

“Write-ins” from Delphi Participants (Round 1)

This is an efficient way to provide feedback. Thank you for this opportunity.
This process is excellent. The program is easy-to-use. Thank you for the "previous" and "next" buttons, as they enable one to do quick comparisons between and among the various items being evaluated.
I had to begin the survey several times, as it "timed-out." While the survey works well, it is often advantageous to hear others opinions. A follow-up conference call would suffice.
Please allow the document to save responses if one is interrupted and must close and then come back in to the document.
I look forward to seeing other's comments and to continue to dialogue about these performance indicators.
I hope that referring back to my previous comments works for the study round. It seems inefficient to just repeat my former remarks. It may be more appropriate to use the last comment opportunity to elicit comments other than those already given.
I hope my comments are helpful in this process. I am really enjoying the work of analyzing these descriptions, and I look forward to reading what others have to say. Thank you for involving me!
This was a nice way to review the NAEP Achievement Levels for Writing. I feel that these levels are well on their way to being a good product. There are some changes that should be made; however. Having done this in my own state, I know that it's important that the descriptions are measurable and that examples are included. Please see my edits. Thanks for including me in the process.
The only suggestion I have is that the text in the standard could be manipulated with edits so we could read the edits more easily than as suggestions written in the boxes provide below.
I found it best to enter comments into word document and cut and paste into survey I discovered that if you use the "back arrow" rather than the << Prev button that the comments I entered on the page I was leaving were NOT saved Otherwise, I think this is an effective process.
Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of the process!

“Write-ins” from Delphi Participants (Round 2)

Thank you for capturing our feedback. I think this is a great way to provide revisions to the Writing Descriptors. It is nice to be able to see what others said; we seem to be in sync with our thoughts.
I believe this method allows us to avoid personalities.
the window that is open is not long enough for those of us on the west coast.
The process is fine. The only suggestion I might have would be to have 2 columns or 2 text boxes when reading the edits. On the left column would be the numbered edits for our choosing. On the right would be the original levels themselves. I am finding the back-and-forth process of reading the original then the revision a bit limiting, but this is just an FYI, perhaps, for the next round.
I noted that I have "no preference" for how meetings are held in the future - and I am not always comfortable with technology, but this survey was so easy to use! I would be open to calling or meeting in person, but you have really made the computerized process convenient, user-friendly, and comfortable.
I believe it is important that Proficient at the eighth grade level be strong. For too many students right now, the eighth grade is the end of their formal education and they must be competent. Again I would ask a way to save responses when interrupted.

“Write-ins’ from Delphi Participants (Round 3)

Again, this is a great way to collect feedback. Thanks for organizing and capturing our responses.
I think that there was confusion/misunderstanding about the purpose for the ALDs. I hope more is done to make sure that the purpose is understood next time. Perhaps there could be some type of on-line read-and-respond? Again, thanks for the opportunity to be a part of the process. It is always valuable and stimulating to collaborate with other educators about standards and expectations.

Recommendations from Delphi Study
2011/2013 NAEP Writing
Achievement Levels Descriptions
Grade 4

BASIC

Fourth grade students writing at the Basic level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses a few supporting details and examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. Coherence is loosely maintained with an opening, some transitions, and ending. Some ideas are conveyed with supporting detail. Students produce a response with a little evidence of organizational structure and may use logical grouping of ideas such as "chronology" or "steps in a process". Word choice is mostly clear and appropriate for the topic. Simple complete sentences show some variety in length. The student's use of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling is mostly correct but has distracting errors that may get in the way of the reader's understanding.

Recommendations from Delphi Study:
1. Edit in the last sentence, "...but has distracting errors..." should be changed to ," ...but may have distracting errors...".

2. The language associated with the twelfth grade basic definition is more precise than the language used for grades 4 and 8. For example, the above reads "...sentences show some variety in length" while the twelfth grade basic reads "...writing containing minimal sentence variety or complexity." In addition, the above reads "Word choice is mostly clear and appropriate..." while the twelfth grade reads "Word choice is limited and may be inappropriate..." The recommendation is to use language from grade 12 as a model for grades four and eight.

PROFICIENT

Fourth grade students writing at the proficient level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed using some supporting details and examples relevant to the purpose and audience. The organization shows logical grouping and relationships of ideas, such as compare and contrast or order of importance. Coherence is created and maintained with an opening, appropriate transitions, and a reasonable ending. Varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should have some variation in length or type, such as exclamations or questions, in order to maintain the attention of the specified audience. The student's writing demonstrates good control of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few distracting errors.

Recommendations from Delphi Study:
1. Requiring grade 4 students at the proficient level to use compare/contrast or order of important is more advanced than proficient. Students in 4th grade will not be able to "maintain the attention of the specified audience."

2. The included specificity of "exclamations or questions" in regard to sentence variety should be used in the other eight descriptions. They are very helpful to teachers and evaluators.

3. Some of the descriptions cannot be measured. What is a "reasonable ending?" What does that look like? Could it be a closing? Generally unified with some transitions, a clear progression of ideas, and an introduction and closing. What about style and voice? Some style and generally precise word choice.

4. The term "reasonable" in the third sentence seems vague. Would a more helpful alternative be "appropriate," "valid," or "logical"?

ADVANCED

Fourth grade students writing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses specific, supporting details and compelling examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. The writing should be organized effectively and show a logical progression of ideas. Students may choose to respond by using techniques such as cause and effect or writing about a problem and suggesting a solution. Strong coherence is maintained throughout the writing with an engaging lead, effective transitions, and compelling ending. Precise and varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and successfully maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should vary in length and complexity in order to engage the reader. The writing demonstrates strong control of grammar, usage and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few mistakes.

Recommendations from Delphi Study:
1. Remove the word "compelling". It should read: "…uses specific, supporting details and examples." "Compelling" is too qualitative.

2. "Students may choose to respond by using techniques such as cause and effect or writing about a problem and suggesting a solution." Advanced grade 4 students should be able to show a logical progression of ideas in an organized manner. Specifying cause/effect or problem/solution is too complex. Remove the third sentence.

PROGRESSION FROM BASIC TO PROFICIENT TO ADVANCED

Recommendations from Delphi Study:
1. The proficient description does not refer to the writer's purpose and audience.

2. Requiring a draft with a beginning, transitions and an ending for Basic is a bit high. Basic level students are limited but have some ability to communicate in writing. It may be expecting too much for a student at the Basic level to use transitions and create a loosely cohesive piece.

3. In their first sentences, Basic 4 uses "a few supporting details," and Proficient 4 uses "some supporting details." Perhaps a more discriminating alternative for Basic 4 could be "one or more supporting details." One thing that demonstrates proficient/advanced over basic writing is the clarity of expression. The work of basic writers often requires the reader to infer what the

writer meant. Therefore, "clearly" might better describe a key difference between basic writing and proficient/advanced: As in "… uses a few supporting details and examples clearly relevant to the writer's purpose and audience," for the Proficient and Advanced Level Descriptions.

2011/2013 NAEP Writing
Achievement Levels Descriptions
Grade 8

BASIC

Eighth grade students performing at the Basic level should be able to produce a reasonably competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains a few details and examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have at least a partially organized structure. The writing uses some sentence variety and word choice that is usually appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should begin to convey some sense of their attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be generally correct but may have some potentially distracting errors.

Recommendations from Delphi Study:
1. A high expectation for the Basic performance level. Students might not have generally correct grammar, usage and mechanics. What is "a reasonably competent response?" Instead consider "somewhat competent" or "limited competence?"

2. Some of the language puts more on the eighth grader than it does the senior. This description reads "...the writing uses some sentence variety and word choice that is usually appropriate..." while the senior description states "...writing contains minimal sentence variety. Word choice is limited and may be inappropriate for the purpose and audience." There is, of course, a big difference between appropriate and inappropriate, yet both words are used in these descriptions of basic writing. This has the potential to skew the evaluation of a piece of writing.

3. There are some distracting words which are difficult to measure: reasonably competent, a few details, some sense of topic....Instead, suggestions include:
"Produce a response to the topic, purpose, and audience..."
"Limited sentence variety is demonstrated..."
"Writers have limited understanding of topic or audience...."

4. Some of the descriptions cannot be measured. How do you measure "reasonably competent?" What about style and voice? Some style and generally precise word choice.
There's no mention of transitions in this description, although they were in Grade 4--they are still important. Maybe...may lack transitions, some transitions, smooth transitions."

5. First sentence: "Reasonably competent" is vague. Would "minimal but appropriate" be better?

PROFICIENT

Eighth grade students performing at the Proficient level should be able to produce a thoughtful and competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains relevant

details and specific examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have an organized structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. Sentence structures are varied in length and complexity. Word choice is specific and appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should consistently convey their attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be mostly correct and rarely distract the reader.

Recommendations from Delphi Study:
1. Seems high. Keep "competent" but not "thoughtful."

ADVANCED

Eighth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a highly effective and insightful response to the topic, purpose, and audience. The writing contains vivid details and powerful examples that support, elaborate, and extend the development of ideas. The response should have a well-organized, effective structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. A variety of carefully crafted sentences and a sophisticated vocabulary engage the reader. Students should demonstrate purposeful writing that conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic with richness and depth. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be consistently correct.

Recommendations from Delphi Study:
1. "Eighth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a highly effective and insightful response to the topic, purpose, and audience." Remove the word insightful; it is too subjective. Instead of a "sophisticated vocabulary" use " writers should use highly specific word choice to enhance tone and voice."

2. To maintain a parallel structure the beginning of the 4th sentence should be 'writers' rather than 'students'.

3. Question: The grade 4 descriptions indicate that the writing is completed within "the time allowed." Is this not a consideration at grade 8?
Advanced: Replace the second sentence with "The writing contains very descriptive details and compelling examples that support, elaborate, and extend the development of ideas." Replace the fourth sentence with "The writing demonstrates a variety of carefully crafted sentences and a sophisticated vocabulary."

4. Some of the descriptions cannot be measured. What are "powerful details?" Sufficient, specific, and relevant details that are fully elaborated. How do you measure richness and depth? What about style and voice? What is a "sophisticated vocabulary?" A consistent style with precise and vivid word choice.
Instead of students "should" it should be Students demonstrate...it should be what students ARE doing, not what they should do.
Capitalization, punctuation, etc. IS consistently correct, not SHOULD be consistently correct.

PROGRESSION FROM BASIC TO PROFICIENT TO ADVANCED

Recommendations from Delphi Study:

1. Advanced 5th sentence should begin with Writers not Students, to be consistent.

2. Question: The grade 4 descriptions indicate that the writing is completed within "the time allowed." Is this NOT a consideration at grade 8?
Progression is defined by parallel language and sentence placement. I would recommend the following edits:
Basic: Delete "reasonably" from first sentence.
Advanced: Replace the second sentence with "The writing contains very descriptive details and compelling examples that support, elaborate, and extend the development of ideas." Replace the fourth sentence with "The writing demonstrates a variety of carefully crafted sentences and a sophisticated vocabulary."

2011/2013 NAEP Writing
Achievement Levels Descriptions
Grade 12

BASIC

Twelfth grade writing at the Basic level should demonstrate an appropriate response to the topic, purpose and audience. Examples, reasons, and/or anecdotes generally support the ideas. The organization focuses on the topic and purpose and suggests relationships among some ideas. The writing contains minimal sentence variety or complexity. Word choice is limited and may be inappropriate for the purpose and audience. The tone may fluctuate inappropriately between, for example, formal and casual, or serious and humorous. The draft text should reflect a general command of grammar, mechanics, and usage, but may include a few errors that impede understanding.

Recommendations from Delphi Study:
1. Should "time period allotted" be included?

2.Replace last sentence with "Writing at the Basic level reflects a general command of grammar, mechanics, and usage, but may include a few errors that impede understanding."

PROFICIENT

Twelfth grade Proficient level writing should be a demonstration of a competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose. Relevant examples, reasons, or anecdotes support the topic and consider the audience. A clear organization provides a focus on the topic and underscores the purpose. Sentences are varied to maintain a reader's interest and express the relationships among ideas. Specific word choices reinforce the purpose of the writing and are appropriate for the topic and audience. The tone of the writing suits the purpose and audience, which may be formal or casual, distant or friendly, depending on the situation described in the writing assignment. The draft text at the Proficient level should reflect the writer's command of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Recommendations from Delphi Study:
1. "Time period allotted" is missing.

2. Instead of tone of writing "suits" perhaps change to tone of writing "matches" purpose and audience.

3. Replace the first sentence with "Twelfth grade writing at the Proficient level should demonstrate a competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose."
Replace the last sentence with "Writing at the proficient level demonstrates good control of grammar, usage, and mechanics with few errors."

4. The last sentence does not indicate a level of the Proficient students' command. Possible revision: "… should reflect a command of grammar, usage, and mechanics with few if any errors that distract or impede understanding."

ADVANCED

Twelfth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce an insightful response to the topic, audience, and purpose. Strong reasons, specific examples, and/or compelling anecdotes not only support, but also extend and deepen the ideas. The organizational structure presents a logical, coherent progression of ideas. Skillfully crafted sentences enhance the response, reinforce the purpose, and engage the audience. Language choices are purposeful, precise, and often powerful. A consistent, appropriate tone deftly conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic and intended audience, while advancing the purpose of the writing. Writing at the advanced level demonstrates a strong control of grammar, usage, and mechanics and may use these conventions to amplify and highlight the presentation of ideas.

Recommendations from Delphi Study:
1. "Time period allotted' is missing.

2. Replace the first sentence with "Twelfth grade writing at the Advanced level should demonstrate an insightful response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose."

3. Fifth sentence: "Often" powerful language choices is a stiff requirement for on-demand writing. Would "at times powerful" indicate a significant enough level of skill?

PROGRESSION FROM BASIC TO PROFICIENT TO ADVANCED

Recommendations from Delphi Study:
1. If the writing is timed, this should be reflected in the descriptors.

2. Progression is defined by parallel language and sentence placement. I would recommend the following edits:
Basic: Replace last sentence with "Writing at the Basic level reflects a general command of grammar, mechanics, and usage, but may include a few errors that impede understanding."
Proficient: Replace the first sentence with "Twelfth grade writing at the Proficient level should demonstrate a competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose."
Replace the last sentence with "Writing at the proficient level demonstrates good control of grammar, usage, and mechanics with few errors."
Advanced: Replace the first sentence with "Twelfth grade writing at the Advanced level should demonstrate an insightful response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose."

2011/2013 NAEP Writing
Achievement Levels Descriptions
After Committee Consideration of Delphi Recommendations

Grade 4

BASIC

Fourth grade students writing at the Basic level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses few supporting details and examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. Coherence is loosely maintained with an opening, some transitions, and ending. Some ideas are conveyed with supporting detail. Students produce a response with a little evidence of organizational structure and may use logical grouping of ideas such as **chronology** or **steps in a process**. Word choice is mostly clear and appropriate for the topic. Simple complete sentences show minimal variety in length. The student's use of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling is mostly correct but has distracting errors that may get in the way of the reader's understanding.

PROFICIENT

Fourth grade students writing at the proficient level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed using several supporting details and examples relevant to the purpose and audience. The organization shows some logical grouping and relationships of ideas, such as compare and contrast or order of importance. Coherence is created and maintained with the opening, appropriate transitions, and a logical closing. Varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should have some variation in length or type, such as exclamations or questions, in order to maintain the attention of the specified audience. The student's writing demonstrates good control of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few distracting errors.

ADVANCED

Fourth grade students writing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a draft within the time allowed that uses sufficient specific, supporting details and examples relevant to the writer's purpose and audience. The writing should be organized effectively and show a logical progression of ideas. Students may choose to respond by using techniques such as cause and effect or writing about a problem and suggesting a solution. Strong coherence is maintained throughout the writing with an engaging lead, effective transitions, and compelling ending. Precise and varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and successfully maintains the attention of the specified audience. Sentences should vary in length and complexity in order to engage the reader. The writing demonstrates strong control of grammar, usage and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling with few mistakes.

2011/2013 NAEP Writing
Achievement Levels Descriptions
After Committee Consideration of Delphi Recommendations

Grade 8

BASIC

Eighth grade students performing at the Basic level should be able to produce a limited and somewhat appropriate response to the topic, purpose, and audience within the time allowed. The writing often contains few details or examples that support the development of ideas. The response at this level often has at least a loosely organized structure. The writing contains limited sentence variety and word choice that is sometimes appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should begin to convey some sense of their attitude toward the topic. The writing should demonstrate a general command of grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, and may have some ~~potentially~~ distracting errors.

PROFICIENT

Eighth grade students performing at the Proficient level should be able to produce a competent response to the topic, purpose, and audience within the time allowed. The writing should contain relevant details and specific examples that support the development of ideas. The response should have an organized structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. Sentence structures should be varied in length and complexity. Word choice should be specific and appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers should consistently convey their attitude toward the topic. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be mostly correct and rarely distract the reader.

ADVANCED

Eighth grade students performing at the Advanced level should be able to produce a highly effective and reflective response to the topic, purpose, and audience within the time allowed. The writing should contain precise details and compelling examples that support, elaborate, and extend the development of ideas. The response should have a well-organized, effective structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. The writing should include a variety of carefully crafted sentences and highly specific choice of words that engage the reader. Writers should demonstrate purposeful writing that conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic with richness and depth. Grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, should be consistently correct.

Version 04.18.11

2011/2013 NAEP Writing
Achievement Levels Descriptions
After Committee Consideration of Delphi Recommendations

Grade 12

BASIC

Twelfth grade writing at the Basic level should demonstrate in the allowed time period an appropriate response to the topic, purpose and audience. Examples, reasons, and/or anecdotes generally support the ideas. The organization focuses on the topic and purpose and suggests relationships among some ideas. The writing contains minimal sentence variety or complexity. Word choice is limited and may be inappropriate for the purpose and audience. The tone may fluctuate inappropriately between, for example, formal and casual, or serious and humorous. Writing at the Basic level reflects a general command of grammar, mechanics, and usage, but may include a few errors that impede understanding.

PROFICIENT

Twelfth grade writing at the Proficient level should demonstrate in the allowed time period a competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose. Relevant examples, reasons, or anecdotes support the topic and consider the audience. A clear organization provides a focus on the topic and underscores the purpose. Sentences are varied to maintain a reader's interest and express the relationships among ideas. Specific word choices reinforce the purpose of the writing and are appropriate for the topic and audience. The tone of the writing matches the purpose and audience, which may be formal or casual, distant or friendly, depending on the situation described in the writing assignment. Writing at the Proficient level reflects good control of grammar, usage, and mechanics with few if any errors that distract or impede understanding.

ADVANCED

Twelfth grade writing at the Advanced level should demonstrate in the allowed time an insightful response to the topic, hat addresses a specific audience, and that serves a clear purpose. Strong reasons, specific examples, and/or compelling anecdotes not only support, but also extend and deepen the ideas. The organizational structure presents a logical, coherent progression of ideas. Skillfully crafted sentences enhance the response, reinforce the purpose, and engage the audience. Language choices are purposeful, precise, and at times powerful. A consistent, appropriate tone deftly conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic and intended audience, while advancing the purpose of the writing. Writing at the advanced level reflects a strong control of grammar, usage, and mechanics and may use these conventions to amplify and highlight the presentation of ideas.

Version 04.18.11

Appendix F

Focus Group Reviews

Appendix F

Appendix F

Writing Focus Group Participants
National Assessment of Educational Progress
Meeting Hosted by Northside Independent School District
San Antonio TX

Group 1: May 3, 2011, 1:30 – 4:00 PM

Karen Adler
Education Writer
NISD Communications Department

Carolyn Denney
Instructional Specialist
Elementary Reading

Lori Gallegos
Principal
Kuentz Elementary School

Lou Medina
Academic Dean
Warren High School

Kate Reed
NISD School Board
Chair, Academics Committee

Patricia Sanchez
Principal
Mireles Elementary School

Cindy Tyroff
Instructional Support, Secondary LA
NISD Central Office

Jenny Caputo
Education Writer
TASA Communications Director

Karen Freeman
NISD School Board
Vice President

Debbie Guerra
Instructional Support, Writing
NISD Central Office

Cornelius Phelps
Principal
Connally Middle School

Robert Rivard
Education Writer
Sam Antonio Express News

Julie Schweers
Instructional Support, Secondary LA
NISD Central Office

Appendix F

Writing Focus Group Participants
National Assessment of Educational Progress
Meeting Hosted by Northside Independent School District
San Antonio TX

Group 2: May 4, 2011, 8:30 – 11:00 AM

Melinda Clark
Teacher
Jefferson Middle School

Dave Gannon
Parent
Board Representative on NEIC

Tina Madrid
Writing Specialist
Knowlton Elementary School

Victoria McCormick
Teacher
Communications Arts High School

Kevin Wilson
Parent
Board Representative on NEIC

Susan Doll
Parent
Board Representative on NEIC

Alyssa Bennett
Grade 12 Student
John Jay Science and Engineering Academy

Cynthia Currie
Teacher
Oak Hills Terrace Elementary School

Herschel Giroux
Parent
Board Representative on NEIC

Michelle Payne
Teacher
Anson Jones Middle School

Paula Warden
Reading Specialist
Steubing Elementary School

Tracy Winstead
Teacher
Warren High School

Ronnie Jimenez
Grade 12 Student
Health Careers High School

Mid-Atlantic Psychometric Services, Inc.

212 Ashton Dr. SW
Leesburg Virginia 20175-2527

703.771.4686 (Voice)
703.771.1415 (FAX)
Mapsinc2@verizon.net

April 26, 2011

Dear Colleague,

On behalf of the National Assessment Governing Board I want to thank you for your willingness to participate in the review of the draft Achievement Levels Descriptions (ALDs) for the 2011/2013 National Assessment Of Educational Progress (NAEP) writing assessment. You review and suggestions for improving the descriptions are an essential part of the entire process.

The draft ALDs were crafted by a group of content experts who also participated in the development of the writing Framework. So far, these drafts have been reviewed by a much larger number of Framework developers, as well as broad groups of stakeholders from the states, including state writing/language arts curriculum directors, assessment experts, and those in the business community. We are now seeking input from specific groups at the local level, including school administrators, central office staff, school board members, teachers, parents, local professional writers, and students. Your comments and suggestions will be referred back to the drafting committee for their consideration before making a final recommendation to the National Assessment Governing Board in early June.

ALDs serve two primary functions: (1) they are used by the standard-setting panels that make recommendations to the Board regarding the cut scores on the writing assessment; and (2) they will be used to report student performance in writing when the NAEP results are released later this year or in early 2012.

I am enclosing some materials that you may find helpful in becoming acquainted with the NAEP writing, including:

- 2011/2013 Writing Framework document describing the assessment;
- Governing Board's Policy Definitions of the levels, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced; and
- DRAFT Achievement Levels Descriptions for your review and comments (Version 04.18.11).

On May 3rd or 4th you will be joined by Dr. Lynn Webb, the meeting facilitator, who will guide you through the review process. I am sure you find the meeting informative. I am also certain that you will enjoy meeting Dr. Webb, who is well-known for her interesting (and sometimes challenging) meetings.

I send my regrets in advance, since I will be unable to join you due to an earlier commitment. However, I want to congratulate Northside Independent School District for their willingness to host this meeting, and especially Dr. Linda Mora and her staff, who has been our point of contact for the meeting arrangements. I eagerly look forward to hearing about the meeting and reading your reviews and comments.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Lyn Bourque, Ed.D.
Program Director

Agenda for Focus Group 1

Language Arts and Writing Focus Groups
National Assessment of Educational Progress
National Assessment Governing Board
hosted by
Northside Independent School District
May 3, 2011 1:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Lynn Webb, Ed.D.
NAGB Representative: Susan Loomis, Ph.D.

AGENDA:

1:30 pm	Welcome and overview	Lynn Webb, Ed.D. Mid Atlantic Psychometric Services
1:50 pm	Achievement Level Descriptions: BASIC	All
2:20 pm	Achievement Level Descriptions: PROFICIENT	All
2:50 pm	Achievement Level Descriptions: ADVANCED	All
3:20 pm	Summary of Input	Lynn Webb, Ed.D.
3:30 pm	Thank you	Susan Loomis, Ph.D. National Assessment Governing Board
4:00 pm	Adjourn	

Agenda for Focus Group 2

Language Arts and Writing Focus Groups
National Assessment of Educational Progress
National Assessment Governing Board
hosted by
Northside Independent School District
May 4, 2011 8:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Facilitator: Lynn Webb, Ed.D.
NAGB Representative: Susan Loomis, Ph.D.

AGENDA:

8:30 am	Welcome and overview	Lynn Webb, Ed.D. Mid Atlantic Psychometric Services
8:50 am	Achievement Level Descriptions: BASIC	All
9:20 am	Achievement Level Descriptions: PROFICIENT	All
9:50 am	Achievement Level Descriptions: ADVANCED	All
10:20 am	Summary of Input	Lynn Webb, Ed.D.
10:30 am	Thank you	Susan Loomis, Ph.D. National Assessment Governing Board
11:00 am	Adjourn	

Appendix F

NAEP Achievement Levels:
Policy Definitions

BASIC

This level denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade.

PROFICIENT

This level represents solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter.

ADVANCED

This level signifies superior performance.

Focus Group Issues/Comments
CONSISTENCY ISSUES
A preamble should make clear that some students are below Basic, and explain why there are 3 levels.
All the details in each of 9 descriptions are GREAT!
Spelling is only mentioned for grades 4 and 8. Should it be in 12?
4th grade proficient line 2 doesn't say "writers" so perhaps it should be taken out of the other grades.
Writers/writing may not be consistent
Hyphenate adjectives, such as fourth-grade students
Grammar, mechanics, and usage may not increase from 4 to 8 to 12.
Check "few" and "rarely" in last lines across grades.
Is there a dip between 8th and 12th grades in using complex sentences, making other errors?
Advanced 4 and 12 say "strong control" but 8th says "consistently connect."
4th GRADE COMMENTS
4th: Why is cause & effect spelled out in Basic, but not advanced? (Compare/contrast, etc.)
Basic, Proficient, Advanced are usually capitalized, but not always. (See 4th P)
4th grade has inconsistent comma usage
Basic – change "such as" to "includes"
Take bold off
Basic – why is "topic" omitted in 4th grade?
"Voice" is missing in 4th grade.
Can we mention "developmentally appropriate"? Take the emphasis off the reader – saying "distracts from" Instead, "Words about grade level can be spelled incorrectly." 4th Basic example – Spelling of age-appropriate words is mostly correct.
Basic – sentence 2 – What does "loosely maintained" mean? Can an example be given?
Advanced says "lead" but Basic and Proficient say "opening." Be consistent? Is "lead" jargon?
Basic and Advanced say "ending" but Proficient says "closing."
Advanced line 4: "technique" should be "organizational strategy"
Advanced: line 2, sufficient specific – does that build from B & P? Do you mean plenty? Could you delete "sufficient?" In same line, delete "writers?"
Global question: Is a 30-minute assessment appropriate for 4th graders, who spend 15 minutes watching a bug crawl across the floor? What about pre-writing?
8th GRADE COMMENTS
"Should begin to convey" should be "should begin to maintain"
Basic – 3rd sentence – instead of "at least loosely" could we say "some elements"? Also, the Basic description for 4th grade had examples.
Last line of Basic – 8 to 12 – seems like the two should be reversed (or maybe the same for both?).
Proficient – compare length and complexity to 12th grade. Where did variety and complexity go?

Focus Group Issues/Comments
8th grade Proficient: last line, all others say “the writing should”
Advanced – change “effective structure” to “organizational strategy?”
Advanced – move “purposeful” in 2nd to last sentence to the first sentence.
12th GRADE COMMENTS
Basic – last line – does it refer to the piece as a whole? (impede understanding of the whole thing?)
Why does 12 say tone may fluctuate inappropriately? Take it out. Keep only positive statements, not negative ones.
Proficient: sentence 2 – support ideas, not topics. Take out “reasons” or “anecdotes”. The 8th grade version reads better.
Tone fluctuations. Proficient: tone of writing gives same example – does it build from Basic?
Word choice – 12th seems lower than 8th. (But 12th grade audience is more important.)
Use a positive context instead of negative.
Last line of Basic – 8 to 12 – seems like the two should be reversed (or maybe the same for both?).
Proficient – line 4 – what does “underscores” mean?
Proficient – misplaced clause in middle of text. Should be “Specific word choices reinforce the purpose of the writing and are appropriate for the topic and audience. The tone of the writing--which may be formal or casual, distant or friendly, depending on the situation described in the writing assignment—matches the purpose and audience.
Remove references to intended audience – it’s not the attitude about the audience.
Advanced – typo in line 2 (that)
Advanced – 6th line – change “Language choices” to “Word choices”
Advanced – last line – take out “may use.”
The tone is great!

Appendix G

Framework Committee Review and Feedback

Appendix G

Committee Comments (Author Redacted)

Here are my comments on the draft of the Achievement Level Descriptors. Overall, I think they are a good start. I believe the ALDs will continue to be a primary way to convey to the public what students know and are able to do in writing. On the key questions of whether they scale appropriately within grade and across grade, I think they do. I do, however, have some observations which I will share below.
My comments are primarily about the language itself and the stance of the descriptors. In this e-mail, I discuss the following:

- The characterization of Basic
- Adjustments to descriptors at the lower ends
- Balancing discussion of student performance vs. text
- Maintaining a focus on writing as a strategic communication act
- Two stylistic issues

Characterizing the Basic Level

Throughout the ALD process, beginning with their introduction in the previous Frameworks, the writing community has been concerned about the portrayal of the Basic level. Since there is a longstanding area of writing called "Basic Writing" that refers to *remedial* writing, interpretation of the description of the Basic AL needs to present the achievement at that level in strong positive terms in order to convey the intended sense of *partial mastery of challenging subject matter*. This is typically a matter of rhetoric and emphasis.

In this set, I believe that Basic at the Grade 4 level needs to present what the student can do more strongly. The first few sentences have a highly qualified tone to them. I believe they are attempting to accurately describe achievement, but the way that "a few supporting details" and other qualifiers show up may undercut the intended reading. I realize this is a particular challenge with 4th grade.

I would wonder about two issues. First, is it necessary to maintain the identical order of points, driven by the rubric, etc., in all grade levels? I know that's the kind of thing that documents such as these often do, but if it is possible to reorder, getting more quickly to what this student can do in terms of the skills of word choice, etc might contribute to a sense of partial mastery. If not, then perhaps concentrate on sentence-level revision. For example, does #2 sound more positive?

1. Coherence is loosely maintained with an opening, some transitions, and ending. Some ideas are conveyed with supporting detail. Students produce a response with a little evidence of organizational structure and may use logical groups of ideas such as 'chronology' or 'steps in a process.'

2. Students are able to use organize their piece into loosely coherent beginning, middle, and endings patterns, occasionally providing transitions for coherence. They may also use logical groupings of ideas such as chronology or steps in a process.

Positioning the descriptors at the lower ends

The comment above points to the challenge of characterizing performance in positive terms at the lower end. Rubrics for writing typically discuss performance at the lower end in terms of the problems that get in the way of a higher level response or what is missing — despite our best efforts to convey what is there and is accomplished.

Most of what rubrics construe as problem areas are ones that would characterize writing that is below Basic and shouldn't show up in the ALDs, however, the general way of talking about lower performing writing can still creep in a little at the Basic level. Across the grades, we would expect to see students who have "partially mastered' something able to demonstrate a skill or competency here and there, but not consistently. If it were consistent, then it would be Proficient.

This seems to be borne out by the descriptors that stress consistency at the Proficient level. This seems right to me. My question, though, is how much of the 'spottiness' do you need to stress at the Basic level? Some of the elements related to my concern about Basic above are ones that stress the spottiness and inconsistency at the Basic level. I think that if you move decisively into presenting proficient as having consistent control (as you typically do) it will be enough to show the jump from Basic to Proficient without stressing the spottiness of Basic. The issue is not what a Basic paper needs to do to be a Proficient paper, that's the job of the rubric. Rather it is to show what the Basic writer has mastered, albeit in a partial way.

Relative balance of discussion of student performance vs. discussion of text

One of the challenges of the ALDs is that they purport to discuss performance levels for students. Students have partially mastered or generally mastered challenging content. In writing, we have two quick samples to provide evidence of what is, of course, an inference to more general performance by the student. So, we are typically nervous about making too much of an inference. Yet the inference is at the core of what the ALDs are supposed to do: help the public draw inferences about student performance from the data.

These descriptions stay very close to 'rubric language' and move quickly to describing features of text. They read very much like holistic rubric descriptions for mid- to high-score levels. This may be the stance that NAEP or NAGB wants to move to (one that sticks closely to the writing as evidence), but I wonder whether this will help the public see the inferences about student performance that the ALDs represent. Might these be improved by referring more to the writer and what he/she can do? I believe that the descriptors for eighth grade, for example, do this more effectively than those at either 4th or 12th by using "students" or "writers" as the subject of several sentences followed by illustrations from the text to convey what such a writer might have done to suggest their skill or competency. My recommendation would be to move all the descriptors in this direction.

Sharp Focus on 'strategic' or 'appropriate' responses

Perhaps one of the most significant elements of the new 2011 Framework is its emphasis on writing as a process of flexible strategic communication. With this in mind, I note that there are few references to the ability to analyze the task and determine what is needed to accomplish the purpose outlined in the prompt. This focus on audience and purpose will distinguish 2011 and will probably result in quite different scoring patterns. We have already seen in pilot situations that texts that would have scored, say, a 5 in a previous NAEP are scoring, say, a 4 now because of the higher bar that audience and purpose account for in the scoring. So, it might be important to reference this in the ALDs.

To emphasize the notion of flexible and strategic composing to accomplish a purpose, the Framework seeks to work against a sense of writing as form…as in formula. To be more compatible with the Framework, comments about "appropriateness" or phrases like "well-chosen" or references to audience reception like "compelling" are preferred over comments that simply describe elements of form. Much of the descriptors do this well — and are to be commended. There are a couple of places that slip. I would recommend that a review of the penultimate draft focus on this element: choices made to effect some response from the reader with a view toward purpose.

Two stylistic issues

With this in mind (which as I said is generally well-done, particularly at Grade 12 by the way, I want to raise two stylistic issues. One issue is the word "should".

The word should shows up in several ways in the descriptors. The first use of the word seems most appropriate. The descriptors say that "students performing at the _____ level should be able to…" That strikes me as just right. I'm "proficient", so therefore I ought to be able to do this kind of thing fairly routinely. Maybe I didn't on a given day, but in general I 'should.' Other examples seem inappropriate. "Writers should begin to convey some sense of their attitude toward the topic." That reads like a directive. Does it mean "writers at the basic level are able to convey a sense of their attitude toward a topic" or that, formulaically, they should? Or in the sentence, "Grammar, usage, and mechanics should be consistently correct" I read the sound of a rubric: "these should be correct, and if not the piece should be moved down a notch." This would sound much different if the sentence were written to say "Students at the _____ level demonstrate" or "are able to" rather than "the writing should". So I would recommend a careful look at this word throughout the text.

The second issue relates to the question of who/what is the active agent in a sentence. In some sentences, it seems that the text is the agent as opposed to the writer. In a sentence like "The writing uses some sentence variety and word choice…" we see a verb (uses) that implies an active agent…like the writer as opposed to the written text. At one level this is a simple editing issue that you would no doubt catch in a final draft, but I raise it because looking at the question of agency might suggest places to strengthen the sense of the writer being strategic or addressing the audience, etc.

2011/2013 NAEP Writing Achievement Level Descriptions

[redacted]

April 15, 2011

General Observations

1. The draft ALD's present, in my view, a more narrow and mechanical view of writing than that presented in the Framework and Specifications for the 2011 NAEP Writing Assessment. The Framework and Specifications were written to reflect the notion that writing is an expression of thinking – a means of communicating thought and feeling – and that writers have many tools at their disposal in writing to convey ideas for a purpose. The Framework committees strove to move beyond static notions of the three "modes" (usually narrative, explanation and persuasion) by discussing the fluidity and interplay between these and other approaches in successful writing. Thus, for example, narrative might be used to support the presentation of an argument, while analysis and synthesis might be used to convey ideas in a narrative. Ideas about these various approaches and how they might be used are discussed as "approaches to thinking and writing" throughout the Framework and Specifications documents – in relation to task design, to assessment content, and to evaluation. I think that to disregard these ideas will diminish the impact of the 2011 NAEP Framework and Specifications for Writing and will make it difficult to distinguish between the 1998 and the 2011 Frameworks.

2. The point of view in the draft ALD's shifts between what the response demonstrates ("organization shows logical grouping and relationships of ideas"); the writer's apparent intention (e.g., "in order to maintain the attention of the specified audience"); and the reader's response (e.g., "engaging lead," "compelling ending"). These shifts occur throughout the ALD's, but are most frequent at Grade 4. I believe the Framework and Specifications consistently address the components of the *response* as a demonstration of what students should know and be able to do, and I recommend that the ALD's be written to maintain this perspective.

A related concern is the inconsistency of the language and perspective used in the opening summary statements for each achievement level. My preference would be to open with and maintain a focus on the qualities of the response. In my view, the opening sentences at Grade 12 are most appropriate and I suggest that the ALD's for Grades 4 and 8 use that same formulation.

3. Another inconsistency both within each grade and across the grades is the shift between simple and conditional verbs (e.g., "The organization shows…" versus "The organization should show…"). I suggest that the former is preferable and should be adopted throughout the document.

4. The Framework and Specifications identify three broad purposes for evaluation of responses (Specifications, p. 63):

- Development of ideas is effective in relation to the writer's purpose and audience.
- Organization is logical in relation to the writer's purpose and audience.
- Language facility and conventions support clarity of expression and the effectiveness of the writing in relation to the writer's purpose and audience.

While the three broad purposes are reflected to some degree in the draft ALD's, the representation of development of ideas insufficiently represents the Framework and Specifications in two ways. First, the Framework and Specifications talk about development of ideas in the context of the "depth and complexity" of ideas and of uses of various approaches to presenting ideas (e.g., analyzing, synthesizing, narrating, etc.). The draft ALD's do not appear to reflect these notions about how ideas might be developed.

Second, the draft ALD's do not always clearly show that "details and examples" are used in writing to present and develop ideas, not simply for the sake of using details and examples. I suggest that revision of the ALD's more clearly connect the two, and that it be clear that there is a hierarchy in the relationship between "ideas" and "use of details and examples."

5. The specificity of descriptors in some of the draft ALD's might be useful (e.g., "organization shows logical grouping and relationships of ideas, such as compare and contrast or order of importance"). However, in general the draft ALD's address the two purposes of " To Explain" and "To Persuade," but seem less appropriate as descriptions of responses written to "To Convey an experience, real or imagined." The examples of organization emphasize this impression.

6. Voice and tone are included in some ALD's but not others. Since these elements are included in the Framework and Specifications and in the rubrics for evaluation of writing, it would seem they should be consistently addressed in the ALD's. I would add that if these elements are included, they should be addressed in a similar manner so that it does not appear that the ALD's for different grades are addressing different things. For example, the use of the term "attitude" in the Grade 8 ALD's might appear to mean something different than the use of the term "tone" at Grade 12.

7. Sentence control/syntax is missing from most of the ALD's. The criteria for evaluation and the scoring rubrics articulate an expectation for control of sentences as well as sentence variety.

Note: These general observations apply across the ALD's for the three grades, so I will not repeat them below but will address other concerns and suggestions specific to each grade and achievement level.

Grade 4

General Observations

The Grade 4 ALD's do not refer to "topic" (e.g., writing relevant to the "topic, purpose and audience"). The scoring rubrics and the Grade 8 and 12 ALD's do include "topic."

Basic
The key descriptors ("a few," "some," "mostly") are consistent across the criteria and adequately reflect a demonstration of partial mastery.

The order of descriptors in this paragraph is not logical. I suggest the following order (in this and all ALD paragraphs) as more consistent with the expression of evaluative criteria presented in the Framework and Specifications:

- *opening statement with summary of the quality of the response*
- *ideas*
- *details and examples*
- *organizational structure*
- *coherence of ideas and uses of devices to establish and convey coherence*
- *word choice*
- *sentence control and variety*
- *grammar/usage/mechanics*

Proficient
The key descriptors are a little more elusive here, but seem to be primarily captured by the term "good." It may be useful to consider using this or equivalent terms more frequently to express the main impression of the writing at this level.

The use of the word "reasonable" as a descriptor for a conclusion is vague, and it is also an example of a shift to the point of view of reader response to the writing.

Advanced
The key descriptors here are the terms "effective" and "strong" (though "strong coherence" seems somewhat unusual as a descriptor). Again, it may be useful to consider more frequent use of these or equivalent terms to convey the main impression of the writing at this level.

Grade 8

General Observations
The language in these descriptors shifts between declarative descriptions ("The writing contains…") and conditional "(The response should…"). The former is more consistent with providing a description of achievement demonstrated in the writing and should be maintained e.g., "The response has a partially organized structure").

Basic
The opening summary statements in these ALD's are helpful, but the descriptor for Basic ("reasonably competent") is too vague and subjective. Perhaps "somewhat competent" or "sometimes competent" would be a better way to address the "partial mastery" found at this level.

The Basic ALD says the response at this level has "at least a partially organized structure" and the ALD's for Proficient and Advanced say the response demonstrates progression of ideas. Would it be helpful to add that at the Basic level the response has some logical *grouping* of

ideas, in order to distinguish it further from the logical progression of ideas observed in Proficient and Advanced work?

If descriptors for "attitude" are retained, the statement here ("Writers should begin to convey some sense…") represents a perspective related to the achievement level rather than specifically to the response, and therefore deviates from perspective of the other descriptors. A good edit might be: "The response conveys some sense of the writer's attitude toward the topic."

Proficient
The last sentence should read: "Grammar, usage and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation and spelling, are mostly correct and errors rarely distract the reader."

Advanced
I suggest deleting "highly" as a descriptor in the first sentence. It is redundant as a modifier for "effective."

Grade 12

General Observations
The progression of skill across levels is too great in these ALD's, with the problem being mostly in the Basic descriptors which do not seem consistent with the ALD policy statement. Although the ALD's are not designed to represent a progression across grade levels, it struck me that the description of Basic writing for Grade 12 makes it sound weaker than Basic writing at Grades 4 and 8.

Basic
The specific descriptors that seem problematic here are "minimal" and "inappropriate." These descriptors are too weak as descriptors for Basic writing and create too wide a gap between Basic and Proficient levels. I suggest that the description of Basic writing instead reflect the notions of "some" and "a little." These concepts are more accurate representations of partial mastery.

The second sentence ("Examples, reasons and/or anecdotes generally support the ideas") is unclear because it can be understood as a statement about the quality of development or about focus and organization. The statement should clearly address the quality of development of ideas.

In the third sentence, I suggest this revision: "The organization usually maintains a focus on the writer's topic and purpose, and relationships among ideas are usually clear."

Proficient
The general descriptor might be a somewhat fuller description of the quality of the response, as it is for grade 8. The descriptor for Grade 8 "thoughtful and competent" sounds somewhat stronger than simply "competent."

The descriptor for development should clarify that examples, reasons and/or anecdotes are used to develop ideas.

The description of organization might be more clearly expressed. Perhaps: “A clear organization supports the coherence of ideas and conveys the writer’s purpose.” (Note that “coherence” is articulated in the Basic and Advanced descriptors, but not here for Proficient.)

In the description of tone, “formal or casual” and “distant and friendly” seem redundant.

Since NAEP writing is draft writing, I wondered if the descriptor for grammar, usage and mechanics might acknowledge that although command of language is present, some errors might be present. Another consideration is that the descriptor for Basic says “a few errors … *impede* understanding,” so to fail to acknowledge that a few *distracting* errors may be present in Proficient writing creates too wide a gap between levels.

Advanced
Again, the general descriptor might be strengthened a bit (e.g., the Grade 8 Advanced descriptor is “effective and insightful”).

The syntax in the second sentence is awkward. I suggest: “Strong reasons, specific examples, and/or compelling anecdotes support and extend ideas.”

The shift from describing “word choice” to “language choices” is confusing because “language choices” could mean something different than word choice.

I like the descriptor for grammar, usage and mechanics here because it acknowledges that grammatical choices can enhance communication – that “correctness” of conventions is not the only consideration.

2011/2013 NAEP Writing
Achievement Levels Descriptions
After Committee Consideration of Focus Groups' and Framework Members' Comments

Grade 4

BASIC

Fourth grade students writing at the Basic level produce a draft within the time allowed that uses a few supporting details and examples relevant to the topic, the writer's purpose, and audience. Students organize their writing into loosely coherent beginning, middle, and ending patterns, occasionally providing transitions. They may also use logical groupings of ideas such as chronology, steps in a process, or main idea and details. Their word choice is mostly clear and appropriate for the topic. Simple complete sentences show minimal variety in length. The student's use of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, is mostly correct but has distracting errors that may get in the way of the reader's understanding.

PROFICIENT

Fourth grade students writing at the Proficient level produce a draft within the time allowed using several supporting details and examples relevant to the topic, purpose, and audience. Students organize their writing using some logical grouping and relationships of ideas, such as compare and contrast or order of importance. They create and maintain coherence with an opening, appropriate transitions, and a logical ending. Varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and maintains the attention of the specified audience. Their sentences vary in length or type, such as exclamations or questions, in order to maintain the attention of the specified audience. Students demonstrate control of grammar, usage and mechanics including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, with few distracting errors.

ADVANCED

Fourth grade students writing at the Advanced level produce a draft within the time allowed that uses sufficient supporting details and examples relevant to the topic, purpose, and audience. Their writing is organized effectively and shows a logical progression of ideas. Students respond by using approaches such as cause and effect or writing about a problem and suggesting a solution. They exhibit coherence throughout the writing with an engaging opening, effective transitions, and compelling ending. Their precise and varied word choice enhances the presentation of the writer's ideas and successfully maintains the attention of the specified audience. They vary the length and complexity of sentences in order to engage the reader. The student's writing demonstrates strong control of grammar, usage and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, with few errors.

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2011/2013 NAEP Writing
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Grade 8

BASIC

Eighth grade students performing at the Basic level should begin to demonstrate an ability to analyze the task and determine what is needed to accomplish the purpose for their audience within the time allowed. Their writing contains a few details or examples that support the development of ideas and conveys real or imagined experiences. The writers at this level create a loosely organized structure with some transitions. Their writing contains some sentence variety and word choice that is sometimes appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. Writers convey some sense of their attitude toward the topic. They demonstrate a general command of grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, and may have some distracting errors.

PROFICIENT

Eighth grade students performing at the Proficient level should demonstrate competence in their ability to analyze the task and determine what is needed to accomplish the purpose for their audience within the time allowed. Their writing contains relevant details and specific examples that support the development of ideas and conveys real or imagined experiences. Writers at this level create an organized structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. Their sentence structures are varied in length and complexity. The writers' word choice should be specific and appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. They consistently convey their attitude toward the topic. Their grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, are mostly correct and errors rarely distract the reader.

ADVANCED

Eighth grade students performing at the Advanced level should demonstrate flexible and strategic composing to accomplish the purpose for their audience within the time allowed. Their writing contains precise details and compelling examples that support, elaborate, and extend the development of ideas and conveys real or imagined experiences. Writers at this level create a well-organized, effective structure that shows a logical, coherent progression of sentences and ideas. The writer includes a variety of carefully crafted sentences and highly specific choice of words that engage the reader. Writers demonstrate purposeful writing that conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic with richness and depth. Their grammar, usage, and mechanics, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling are consistently correct.

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2011/2013 NAEP Writing
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Grade 12

BASIC

Twelfth grade writers at the Basic level should demonstrate in the allowed time period an appropriate response to the topic, purpose, and audience. Examples, reasons, and/or anecdotes generally support the ideas. The organization usually maintains focus on the topic and purpose, and relationships among ideas are usually clear. The writing contains some sentence variety or complexity. The word choice generally conveys meaning but sometimes may be limited and ineffective for the purpose and audience. Overall, the tone clarifies the writer's ideas, but the tone may fluctuate inappropriately in places. Writing at the Basic level reflects a general command of grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling, but may include several errors.

PROFICIENT

Writing by twelfth graders at the Proficient level should demonstrate in the allowed time period a thoughtful and competent response to the topic that addresses a specific audience and that serves a clear purpose. Relevant examples, reasons, or anecdotes develop ideas, support the topic, and consider the audience. A clear organization shows the relationships among ideas and supports the purpose. Sentences are varied and are structured to clarify the relationships among ideas, as well as to maintain the reader's interest. Specific word choices reinforce the purpose of the writing and are appropriate for the topic and audience. The tone usually suits the purpose and audience. Writing at the Proficient level exhibits good control of grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling, with few if any errors.

ADVANCED

Writing by twelfth graders at the Advanced level should demonstrate in the allowed time an insightful response to the topic, that addresses a specific audience, and that serves a clear purpose. Strong reasons, specific examples, and/or compelling anecdotes not only support, but also extend and deepen the ideas. The organizational structure presents a natural, logical, and coherent progression of ideas. Skillfully crafted sentences enhance the response, reinforce the purpose, and engage the audience. Word choices are purposeful, precise, and at times powerful. Appropriate tone deftly conveys the writer's attitude toward the topic and intended audience, while advancing the purpose of the writing. Writing at the advanced level exhibits a strong control of grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling, and may use these conventions to amplify and highlight the presentation of ideas.

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