

WHEN JOHNNY TAKES THE TEST



By Melanie K. Fields, Sarah H. Leslie, and Anita B. Hoge

It is commonly known that the Chinese government keeps a "dangan" on its citizens. As *The New York Times* INTERNATIONAL explains, the dangan is a "file opened on each urban citizen when he or she enters elementary school, and it shadows the person throughout life, moving on to high school, college, employer." It is further explained that "... the dangan [file] contains political evaluations that affect career prospects and permission to leave the country... the file is kept by one's employer. The dangan affects promotions and job opportunities... any prospective employer is supposed to examine an applicant's dangan before making hiring decisions."¹

China is a communist country, so this comes as little surprise. Citizens living in the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave are free from such government intrusion and control — aren't they?

What right-thinking American would dream that our government would actually collect information on anyone's private attitudes, values and beliefs, and thus mimic the practice of a totalitarian regime?

If you think this is impossible, simply ask to see a copy of a national test your child will take in school. You will be told the test is "secure," that the "integrity" of the test can't be compromised. That because the test will be used in the future, you, the parent, may not even visit the school to read it. In fact, tests "administered for evaluation of student performance" are exempt from parental access under the Freedom of Information Act.² And if you request that the school allow you to see a test, you will come away with the impression that national security is at stake.

Why all the hoopla? Nine-year-olds take these tests! Are schools suggesting that you will help your children to cheat? Is that why you can't see your child's test? Or could there be another reason? Is talk of test "security" a smokescreen? We think so, and the remainder of this article sets out to show you why.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

Each year, certain children are selected to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). It is a national test mandated by Congress; however, participation by states according to federal law is voluntary. Many states are considering using the NAEP as their state assessment, supplanting norm-referenced tests and locally or state-developed tests.³

The NAEP test is called "The Nation's Report Card." It assesses subjects such as reading, writing, mathematics, and other subjects included in the National Education Goals, eight new mandates for education reform associated with AMERICA 2000/GOALS 2000. The NAEP is conducted by the Commissioner of Education Statistics under the auspices of a National Assessment Governing Board. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), under the oversight of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) in the U.S. Department of Education, oversees the collection of NAEP data.

What Happens

When Johnny Takes The Test?

If your child is one of the students selected to take the test, a letter from school is likely to come home with your child. It will read much like the one in Exhibit 1. Exhibit 1 comes from page 41 of the *NAEP Manual for Assessment Administrators** which is the instruction book for administering the test. You will read this letter and probably think nothing of it. There is nothing in it to set off alarm bells — at least not at first glance. But read it carefully since we will be referring to it frequently.

Johnny will go to school and be called out of his regular classes for the test. Johnny and the other selected children will be assembled in the cafeteria, library or someplace special where he will be told he is taking a test on reading skills or math. He will be asked to follow very specific instructions from his principal, who is usually the person administering the test.

The principal will read from a prepared script, which is a set of instructions for the children. This is so all children hear the same instructions according to the NAEP manual. Johnny will be called when it is his turn to walk up to the principal to get his test booklet and maybe a pencil, and return to his seat, keeping his booklet face down. No one has a clue up to this point that something is amiss — unless one happens to see the script from which the principal just read. Johnny will complete the test booklet in the allotted time, the books will be collected, he will

In response to requests from some schools, NAEP has prepared a parental information letter (shown below) which explains the assessment and its importance. If your school requires parental notification, you may use or modify the letter as you see fit.

PARENT INFORMATION LETTER

January, 1992

Dear Parent:

Approximately 225 schools per state including (school) have been selected for participation in the 1992 National Assessment of Educational Progress, Trial State Assessment. The National Assessment is a continuing survey of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of young Americans and the subjects they are taught in school. This assessment will focus on mathematics at the eighth-grade level and on reading and mathematics at the fourth-grade level.

A sample of about 30 students was randomly selected to participate in each assessment session in our school. The parents of each selected student are receiving this letter to inform them about the study.

The assessment takes about 1 3/4 hours of a student's time and is confidential. To ensure confidentiality, National Assessment results are not reported to, or about, individual students, schools, or districts. Students' names are not recorded on any of the assessment materials taken from the school or reported in any way. Participation in the program will not affect your child's grades or progress in school.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress is an important activity to keep us, as parents and citizens, informed about what American youth are learning. We wanted to inform you of the survey and let you know that the participation of every selected child is greatly appreciated.

Cordially,

Exhibit 1

go back to class, and no one will be the wiser.

What Is Amiss?

The first obvious indication that something is not quite right occurs when the children are asked to fill out the questionnaire which accompanies each test. These questions are referred to as "background questions." However, when shown these questions, parents will furrow their brows and ask what these questions have to do with math or reading? This proves to be a very good question.

The *NAEP Assessment Administrators Training Example* contains explanations of the questions and how to assist the children in responding should they have any trouble. As one can see in Exhibit 2, there are twenty "background questions" (from pp. READ 5,6, and 7). They accompany each NAEP test, including the math test.

The National Assessment Governing Board justifies these nosy questions this way, "The 'non-cognitive items' — on family background, teachers... form the basis... for NAEP's reporting categories and analyses." In fact, in this same memo, issued in July of 1994, NAEP indicates they are considering "a first time parent questionnaire..." [emphasis added]

Although the controversial parent survey has been aban-

Exhibit 2

SECTION 1

This section has 20 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet. Fill in only one oval for each question.

- Which best describes you?
 - White (not Hispanic)
 - Black (not Hispanic)
 - Hispanic ("Hispanic" means someone who is Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or from some other Spanish or Hispanic background.)
 - Asian or Pacific Islander ("Asian or Pacific Islander" means someone who is Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, Asian American, or from some other Asian or Pacific Island background.)
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native ("American Indian or Alaskan Native" means someone who is from one of the American Indian tribes, or one of the original people of Alaska.)
 - Other (what?) Write your answer on the line. TS001401
- If you are Hispanic, what is your Hispanic background?
 - I am not Hispanic.
 - Mexicano, Mexican American, or Chicano
 - Puerto Rican
 - Cuban
 - Other Spanish or Hispanic background TS001401
- Were you born in one of the 50 states of the United States, in the District of Columbia, or in one of the United States territories?
 - Yes
 - No TS001401
- How often do the people in your home speak a language other than English?
 - Never
 - Sometimes
 - Always TS001401
- How far in school did your mother go?
 - She did not finish high school.
 - She graduated from high school.
 - She had some education after high school.
 - She graduated from college.
 - I don't know. TS001401
- How far in school did your father go?
 - He did not finish high school.
 - He graduated from high school.
 - He had some education after high school.
 - He graduated from college.
 - I don't know TS001401

- Does your family get a newspaper regularly?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I don't know TS000901
- Is there an encyclopedia in your home?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I don't know TS000901
- Are there more than 25 books in your home?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I don't know. TS000901
- Does your family get any magazines regularly?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I don't know TS000901
- How much television do you usually watch each day?
 - None
 - 1 hour or less
 - 2 hours
 - 3 hours
 - 4 hours
 - 5 hours
 - 6 hours or more TS001401
- How much time do you usually spend on homework each day?
 - I don't usually have homework assigned.
 - I have homework but I don't usually do it.
 - 1/4 hour or less
 - 1 hour
 - More than 1 hour TS001401
- About how many pages a day do you have to read in school and for homework?
 - More than 20
 - 16-20
 - 11-15
 - 6-10
 - 5 or fewer TS001401

- Did you go to preschool, nursery school, or day care before kindergarten?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I don't know TS000901
- Within the past two years, how many times have you changed schools because you changed where you lived?
 - None
 - One
 - Two
 - Three or more TS000901
- From kindergarten through fourth grade, for how many grades have you gone to school in this state?
 - Less than one grade
 - 1-2 grades
 - 3 or more grades TS001401
- How often do you discuss things you have studied in school with someone at home?
 - Almost every day
 - Once or twice a week
 - Once or twice a month
 - Never or hardly ever TS001401
- How often do you use a computer for schoolwork?
 - Almost every day
 - Once or twice a week
 - Once or twice a month
 - Never or hardly ever TS001401
- Does either your mother or your stepmother live at home with you?
 - Yes
 - No TS001401
- Does either your father or your stepfather live at home with you?
 - Yes
 - No TS001401

Exhibit 3

TASK 3 ADMINISTER THE SESSION

The general procedures for administering the assessment are the same for the reading and mathematics sessions, although there are a few specific differences. The general procedures are discussed first in this section, followed by specific information for each particular session type.

- General Procedures
- Using the Script

You will use one of the scripts in Appendix B at the end of this manual to administer each session. Since the script for the mathematics session is different from the one for the reading session, you must be sure to use the correct script. The script includes:

- An introduction to the assessment;
- Instructions for distributing booklets;
- Instructions for responding to extended open-ended questions;
- Instructions for coding a section of the booklet cover;
- Directions from the booklets that are read to the students;
- The timing of each section; and
- Directions for administering the math estimation booklet (math sessions only)

The script must be read **WORD FOR WORD** (but with expression) to ensure that all sessions are administered uniformly. The only liberty you may take with the script is the very first line which reads "Hello. My name is ____." If you feel more comfortable not introducing yourself to students who may already know you, you may omit this line. The remainder of the script must be read verbatim, without additions or deletions.

Note that in the script, instructions to you, the Assessment Administrator, are in bold, capital letters. Do not read these to the students.



done (for now), it is important to understand what was proposed. Among other things, NCEs wanted to know:

- How many of the following items are in the home: color television, telephone, car that runs, refrigerator, bicycle, vacuum cleaner, microwave oven, telephone answering machine, dishwasher, videocassette recorders, stereo system, cassette recorder.
- Whether the family received income from stocks, mutual funds, rental property, royalty, estates, trusts, Social Security, welfare, food stamps or alimony.
- The family's total combined income.
- Whether there are certain kinds of television programs the child is not allowed to watch.
- How many books are in the home.
- How often the child sings, dances, plays music or puts on a show for adults in the family.
- How often the child sees adults in the family writing, using mathematics or reading.⁴

The Trouble With Confidentiality

By now some alarm bells should be going off. This is a congressionally-mandated test. This test is given by a federal agency. The federal government gets the results of these tests. And we can assume that the government isn't asking Johnny if he talks to you about school just to take up space in the booklet.

But wait, you say, the letter about the test that came home with Johnny said it was "confidential". Well, yes, it did say "confidential." A quick read would lead the average reader to believe that no child's information is linked to him personally in any way. *This, we assert, is the exact illusion NAEP intends to create.*

Look at the letter again. It does not say *anonymous*. It says *confidential*. There is a significant difference between confidential and anonymous. Anonymous means just that — no way to personally link the individual to the information. Confidential means that personal identity is linked to the information, much like the information kept by your doctor. It is confidential because only authorized persons have access to it. In this case, the government thinks you should trust them to have access to personal information and to act honorably with it.

Note also in the parent information letter the statement: "To ensure confidentiality, National Assessment results are not reported to, or about, individual students, school, or districts." The key word here is "reported." There is a vast difference

4th GRADE READING SESSION SCRIPT

(NOTE: INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATOR ARE IN BOLD CAPITAL LETTERS AND SHOULD NOT BE READ TO THE STUDENTS.)

INTRODUCTION

(Hello. My name is (YOUR NAME). Today you will be participating in a special study on American education. The study is called the National Assessment of Educational Progress, and it involves thousands of students your age from schools across the country. I want to begin by telling you the purpose of this study and explaining how the results will be used. To make sure that all students are told the same thing, I will be reading to you from this script.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress is sponsored by the U.S. government. Its goal is to find out what students your age know and can do in different school subjects. In the next 90 minutes, you will be asked to show how well you can understand what you read. You will also be asked questions about yourself and your school experience.

When the study is over, your answers will be combined with information from other students all over the country. The results will help government leaders, school administrators, and teachers to determine what students are learning. Because the study will have an impact on schools and students all over the country, we hope that you will do the best that you can.

DISTRIBUTE MATERIALS

Now I would like to give you the things you will be using. Before I hand out your materials, please clear your desks. As I call your name, please come forward to get a booklet and pencil. After you get your booklet, turn it face down on your desk and do not open it until I tell you to. If you need another pencil after we begin, please raise your hand.

READ STUDENTS' NAMES FROM ADMINISTRATION SCHEDULE. DISTRIBUTE BOOKLETS AND PENCILS. RECORD A "/" OR "A" IN PRESENT OR ABSENT COLUMN OF THE ADMINISTRATION SCHEDULE. DOUBLE-CHECK THAT THE STUDENT'S NAME ON THE ADMINISTRATION SCHEDULE MATCHES THE NAME ON THE POST-IT FOR EACH STUDENT. REMOVE POST-IT BEFORE GIVING MATERIALS TO STUDENT.

CODING THE BOOKLET COVER

Please turn your booklet over. Code your grade, birth date, sex, and zip code in the box at the top of the booklet. Write "4" in the box labeled "Grade". Then fill in the oval next to the number in the grid below the box. In the box labeled "Birthday", write the month and year you were born and fill in the correct ovals. Next, write "M" for male or "F" for female in the box labeled "Sex" and fill in the correct oval. In the box labeled zip code, write the zip code of your home address. Be sure to fill in the ovals completely.

WRITE THE SCHOOL'S NAEP ID NUMBER ON THE BLACKBOARD. Next, write this number (REPEAT NUMBER) in the boxes labeled "School number" and fill in the corresponding ovals below the boxes.

BOOKLET DIRECTIONS

Now turn your book over and open it to the Directions on the first page. Read them to yourself as I read them out loud.

SHOW DIRECTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE OF THIS SCRIPT. READ ALL THE DIRECTIONS, EXAMPLES, AND ANSWERS VERBATIM AND SLOWLY. DO NOT ADMIT ANY MORE STUDENTS TO THE SESSION.

Exhibit 4

between *reporting* data and *collecting* data. NAEP is not saying they are not *collecting* data on individual children; they are saying that they do not *report* the data with individual identity attached. Technically, in terms of the wording of the letter, they are not lying. They rely on the hope that the parent will not know the true meaning of the words chosen.

Form # 10014/29
 Layout 6/92

School #: 11912110211 Session type: MATH # 1
 School Name: FULTON ELEMENTARY Grade: 4
 Administrator's Name: _____

Orig Sample 30 } ADD
 # Suppl. Sample 1 }
 • TOTAL IN SAMPLE 31
 # Withdrawn 1 } SUBTRACT
 # Excluded 1 }
 • TO BE ASSESSED 29

Absent (MAKE UP IF 4 OR MORE ABSENT)
 # Assessed (Orig) _____ } ADD
 # Assessed, Makeup _____ }
 • TOTAL ASSESSED _____

Original session scheduled for
 Day/Date: MON/FEB 3
 Time: 9:00 A.M.
 Location: RM 214
 Makeup session scheduled for:
 Day/Date: _____
 Time: _____
 Location: _____

- Race/Ethnicity Codes:
- W • White not Hispanic
 - B • Black not Hispanic
 - H • Hispanic heritage
 - A • Asian/Pacific Islander
 - I • American Indian/Alaskan Native
 - O • Other

Student #	First	Student's Name	Last	Birth date Month/Year	Sex	Homeroom or Other Locator	R	# IEP (9)	# LEP (5)	Booklet or Exc. Student Quex. No.	Present (✓) or Abs (A)	Student #	Teacher #	Period #
01	TOM	ARCHER		6-82	M	4A	W			13-10027-9	✓	01	01	1
02	CASEY	BAILEY		10-81	M	4B	W			14-67210-3	✓	02	02	1
03	JOHN	BLOCK		2-83	M	4B	B			15-10004-7	✓	03	02	1
04	HENRY	BOICE		9-82	M	4A	W			16-10009-8	✓	04	01	1
05	AMY	BURNS		1-82	F	4B	W			17-10017-8	A	05	02	1
06	ERIN	COLLINS		8-82	F	4A	W			18-10022-5	✓	06	01	1
07	JAMES	DANNON		4-82	M	4A	W	X		95-51472-1		07	EXCLUDED	
08	ANN	ERGEN		7-82	F	4A	W			19-10028-2	✓	08	01	1
09	SARAH	GILGEN		1-83	F	4B	W			20-10032-3	✓	09	02	1
10	STACY	HANDLER		12-82	F	4B	W			21-10003-5	✓	10	02	1
11	MARIA	HERNANDEZ		10-81	F	4A	H			22-10010-0	✓	11	01	1
12	JOE	JACKSON		2-82	M	4B	H	X		23-10016-1	✓	12	02	1
13	MARK	KELLY		5-82	M	4A	B			24-10058-9	✓	13	01	1
14	KIM	LIU		3-82	F	4B	A			25-67241-3	✓	14	02	1
15	JOHN	MARKEE		2-82	M	4B	W							WITH DRAWN

2 of the Administrators Manual. Notice the paragraph in bold letters reminding the administrator to match the "post it" on the test booklet with the child's name on the Administration Schedule. The "post it" is a slip of paper on which the administrator writes the name of the child before attaching it to that child's test booklet. Remember, the "post it" with the child's name must match what is on the Administration Schedule.

Now the mystery begins to unfold as we get a further glimpse into the internal workings of the test. Follow along.

Exhibit 5a

How Johnny Gets Bar-Coded

A third item of interest on the parent letter is the sentence "Students' names are not recorded on any of the assessment materials taken from the school." It is true that your child's name is not recorded on the test booklet. But, your child's name is recorded elsewhere.

Here is the clue: remember the "script" referred to earlier? The script is simply a set of instructions for taking the test and it is to be read to all children taking the NAEP. The Administrators Manual is very emphatic that this be done to the letter. Witness page 51 of the Administrators Manual, where administrators are given their instructions. They are told to read the script

WORD FOR WORD (but with expression) to ensure that all sessions are administered uniformly. The only liberty you may take with the script is the very first line which reads 'Hello. My name is ___' ... The remainder of the script must be read verbatim, without additions or deletions. (Exhibit 3)

The administrator is also warned: "Note that in the script, instructions to you, the Assessment Administrator, are in bold, capital letters. Do not read these to the students." All one has to do is read the bold capital letters to know why!

Please refer to Exhibit 4. This is the actual script the test administrator must read to the students from pages READ 1 and

internal workings of the test. Follow along.

Please refer to Exhibit 5A, which appears on page 57 of the Training Example. You will see a sample Administration Schedule. This is the list of children chosen by the government to take the NAEP test. This list is sent to the school and each school is responsible for assuring that the children on the list take the NAEP test. Note that for each name on each line there is a unique number seven columns to the right. We draw your eye to student 02, Casey Bailey. Her booklet number in the column headed "Booklet or Exc. Student Quex. No." is 14-67210-3." Also, notice that Casey is checked "present" in the eighth column, just to the right of the booklet number in Exhibit 5A. This will be important later.

Now, look at Exhibit 5B (from p. 60). You will see a copy of the cover of a NAEP test booklet. What number do you see under the bar code? 14-67210-3. Yes, it is the same number. The test booklet number matches the number next to Casey Bailey's name on the Administration Schedule!

Tracking Johnny to the Data Bank

Refer back to Exhibit 1, the sample letter to parents, that states that "Students names are not recorded on any of the assessment materials taken from the school..." You now know that this statement is not true. Your child's name does not appear on the test booklet itself. The "post it" is used for that!

But, as the script instructs, the "post it" is taken off before the booklet is given to your child.

The Administration Schedule, however, does contain both your child's name and the number of the test booklet he/she used. Examine Exhibit 6, especially the bottom right corner. This is the NAEP packing list of materials to be returned with test booklets, from page 76 of the *Administrators Manual*. Please note that it says, "Band Booklets with Administration Schedule." To doubly confirm that this is true, on page 60 we read "Students' names must not be written on the cover or inside of any assessment booklet. A student's name should only appear on the Administration Schedule."

This Administration Schedule contains both your child's name and the number of the test booklet he/she used. It is then shipped off to NAEP, along with the test booklets, for scoring.

The Truth About Tracking

Refer again to the "background questions" Johnny is asked to answer (Exhibit 2). Why does the government want this information? Why is Johnny's name conclusively linked to that information? What is the government going to do with this information? What have they done with it in years past? Why aren't you told your child will be asked to disclose this information? Why is it collected without permission in the first place?

It has been vehemently denied that the federal government is doing any of this. In fact, William Randall, chairman of NAEP's National Assessment Governing Board publicly states:

No National Assessment data may be stored in a way that permits personally identifiable information about individual students and their families to be maintained. As required by law, all information about individual students and their families collected by the National Assessment, shall remain *confidential*. In fact, the names of individual students participating in the National Assessment *never leave the school* where the student attends.⁵

You now know that the last part of this statement is not true. Your child's name and number do leave the school. But what about the first part of this statement?

The NAEP National Assessment Governing Board adopted policies May 13, 1995 that states that they will abide by federal

91-92
Grade 4
Age 9

SECTION
1 | BI
2 | M1
3 | M10
4 | M12
5 | M4
6 | MB

BOOK
M14RG

GRADE: 4
BIRTHDAY: OCT 8 11
SEX: M
ZIP CODE: 09136 2

THE NATIONS REPORT CARD

SCHOOL: 19A / 101

14-67210-3

DO NOT USE

Exhibit 5b

law: "all information collected by NAEP about individual students and schools shall remain strictly *confidential*. No NAEP data may be stored in a way which permits *personally identifiable information* about individual students and their families to be maintained." [emphasis added] But, do they abide by the law?

We have already come to realize the difference between confidential and anonymous. But what does "personally identifiable" mean? The commissioner of NCES, Emerson J. Elliott, explains in a 7/11/94 letter to researcher Anita Hoge:

NCES distinguishes between *individually identified* and *individually identifiable* data. *Individually identified* data records contain actual student identifiers, such as name or social security numbers. None of NAEP's student files contain individually identified data. *Individually identifiable* data records can be matched with other records or files by cross-referencing individuals for analysis of data.⁶

"Individually identifiable" data, then, is a bureaucratic definition that means that the data is *able* to be *identified*. To confirm this, we find a definition in the *NCES Field Restricted Use Data Procedures Manual* (3/31/93, B-2) for test data:

Individually Identifiable Information — Any item, collection, or grouping of information pertaining to an individual and maintained by the National Center of Education Statistics or one of its contractors, including, but not limited to the individual's education, financial transactions, medical history and criminal or employment history, and containing the name, or an identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual, such as a fingerprint, voiceprint, or photograph.

Did your elected officials realize that the language contained in the Federal Privacy Act (Sec. 552a of Title 5, U.S. Code) would end up meaning just the opposite? What is the "post it" if not a personal identifier? And, what is the Administration

Schedule with your child's name and test number on it if it isn't personally identifiable? NAEP circumvents federal laws with its "post it" note maneuverings and semantic gymnastics. This is key to understanding the next thing that happens to Johnny's test.

What Happens to Johnny's Test Data?

When Johnny's name, number and test are shipped back, who will have access to this data? The answer may shock you. Here is a list of 29 research organizations, academic institutions, companies, and contractors which have access to restricted use NAEP data bases that contain individually identifiable information:

- AERA-Appalachia Education
- Arizona Dept. Ed, Res & Dev
- Boston Col - Center Study Testing
- Bureau of Census. Popula. Div.
- CTB/Macmillan/McGraw-Hill

- Dept. of Agriculture, Eco. Res. Ser.
- ED Office of Research
- Economic Policy Institute
- Educational Testing Service
- LMP Associates, Inc.
- MPR Associates, Inc.
- Montana State Attorney General
- NCREL-North Central Reg. Ed. Lab.
- Penn State Univ., Voc. and Ind. ED
- RAND, Inc.
- SERVE, SouthEstm REG. Vision, Ed
- Stanford U, Nat'l Bureau Econ.
- Texas Education Agency
- U Michigan, Sch Education
- U New Mexico, Col. ED
- U Southern Calif., CF
- U Tennessee, Sch. Education
- U.S. Nat'l Ed Goal Panel
- U.S. Dod, Manpower Data Centr
- UCLA, Center Evaluation Study
- VA TECH, Res. Eval. & Policy
- Westat
- American Institute of Research
- National Computer Systems⁵

Packing List
NAEP - 1992

Seq 00001

Ship to: Assessment Administrator Name
Sherwood Elementary School
123 Main Street
Hometown, WI 12345

NAEP School #: SSA-118
Sherwood Elementary School

Session Type: Math Sprial
Reading Sprial

Assessment Date: 02/05/92
Makeup Date: 02/07/92
Number of students to attend: 5

Section I. Materials:	# Received from NAEP	# of Items Returned to NAEP	Used	Unused	Section III Held for Makeup
Math Sprial Grade 4 Booklets and M29T Booklets (458 460)	3 bundle(s)	used <u>30</u> unused <u>3</u>			
Reading Grade 4 booklets (923 925)	3 bundle(s)	used <u>23</u> unused <u>5</u>			<u>5</u>
Cassette Tape M29T	01		<u>1</u>		
Timer	02		<u>1</u>		
Calculators - TI 108	18		<u>18</u>		
Calculator Pover	01		<u>1</u>		
Math Pover	01		<u>1</u>		
Reading Pover	01		<u>1</u>		
Tape Recorder	01		<u>1</u>		

Section II Miscellaneous

Identification Sheet	3
Geometric Shapes	10
Ruler	10
School Characteristics and Policies Questionnaire (SCPD)	1
Excluded Student Questionnaires	10
Teacher Questionnaires	10
Roster of Questionnaires	2
Assessment Notification Letter	2
Parents Information Letter	1
Pad of Appointment Cards (140)	2
Post a note pad	2
Return Postage Paid Labels	2
Supplemental Shipping Envelope	1
Clipboard	2
Stamping Tape	2
"Do Not Disturb" Sign	2
Bundle Slips	6

Packing Diagram

Packing List

Small Box containing
Calculators
Cassette Tape
Tape Recorder
Timer
Roster of Questionnaires
Completed Questionnaires
Administration Schedule
NAEP Identification Sheet
Used Booklets
Clipboard
Posters
Unused Questionnaires
Unused Booklets

top

Math Session only

Band Booklets with Administration Schedule by Identification Sheet

bottom

PLEASE RETURN ALL UNUSED MATERIALS

Exhibit B

be obtained by computer on-line:

NCES maintains data files on two mainframe systems. The bulk of the data is maintained by Boeing Computer Services. Additional data are maintained on a system at the National Institutes of Health. While the data are maintained for use by NCES analysts, other researchers may access the data on the Boeing System. Those who wish to use the NCES data must first receive approval through NCES. Then Boeing will set up a user ID for the client. The user must sign a contract with Boeing in order to be charged for the connect time while utilizing NCES data. All data available for tape sale can be accessed on the Boeing System. Boeing maintains sanitized versions of NCES data files in order to satisfy privacy requirements.⁶

How could private testing data on an individual child be used? Remember Johnny's attitudes have just been assessed. Refer back to Exhibit 1, where the Parent Information Letter acknowledges that the NAEP assesses student "attitudes." He has just been asked twenty personal background questions. (See Exhibit 2) He will be assessed again in four years. And, you have just learned that this information is not private, nor anonymous. There are obvious Orwellian scenarios.

For example, the new trend in marketing techniques is called psycho-graphics. This is psycho-behavioral marketing that is used to predict future behavior. Marketing firms are looking at something called "energy levels" of people. Energy is defined in marketing as what makes you the person that you are. What motivates you? What are your values? Are you a risk taker? Do you accept change? Coupled with income data, demographic data, and health data this constitutes a complete psychological profile. One such study is called VALS, the Values and Lifestyles Study.

Is the NAEP data valuable? Yes! The more detailed the data collected, the better the profit. Does this account for the high number of intrusive, consumer-oriented questions on the proposed NAEP parent survey?

What could NAEP data be used for? Information is big business. Companies would pay enormous amounts of money to know *who* would be predisposed to buy their product. What about someone running for president? What about influencing public opinion? It is conceivable that certain contractors or sub-contractors could utilize education information and sell it for purposes of marketing a

product or influencing public opinion, or worse.

Now you know why this tangled web of bureaucratic ambiguities and half-truths should be of concern to *all* American citizens, not just parents of school-age children.

How Johnny's Teacher Is Tracked

As if it's not bad enough that Johnny's privacy is violated, the information given by Johnny is linked to his teacher and his/her teaching methods. Teachers are also given an assessment of sorts, but it is called a questionnaire.

The *Administrators Manual* (page 27) describes the Teacher Questionnaire as follows: "... to survey teaching practices of the teachers of the students to be assessed..." [emphasis added]. It asks teachers about "background characteristics and educational training..." Remember, children are also asked "background questions." It also probes "teacher's instructional

Exhibit 7

practices... as they relate to the students selected for the assessment...."

Here is how teachers are tracked. A Roster of Questionnaires is filled out which links the teacher to the Teacher Questionnaire in the same manner that the test booklet and the Administration Schedule link the children. See Exhibit 7 from page 31 of the *Training Example*.

Note the column next to the teacher's name. It is numbered "teacher 01, 02" and so on. Now look in the second to the last column (Teacher #) of the Student Administration Schedule

ered ill-suited to their job.⁷

We must remind the reader that student test results under various education reform measures and proposals are the controversial new "outcomes" of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) that measure a child's feelings, attitudes, behaviors, values and beliefs. Will teachers (and schools) be penalized if their students do not score the proper "attitude" on the NAEP?

Pulling Johnny Out

So what can parents do? We propose the removal of children from participation in the NAEP test. However, there is a hitch to this.

Whenever scientific study is done, the researcher attempts to control, or to take into account all the variables. The NAEP is a longitudinal study, which means that in order to be longitudinal, it must meet at least two criteria — individual identity is involved, and the participants are re-assessed at a later date.

Students who take the NAEP in grade four will be the very same students who take it in grade eight, and so on. The nature of longitudinal studies is to re-examine, or re-test the same subject in order to measure changes in individual progress. That is why personal identity must be attached to the participants taking the test.

However, on the NAEP, one of the variables taken into account is the student who for one reason or another does not take, or does not complete the test.

The cover of the booklets provides spaces to enter codes for some of these "variables." On Exhibit 5B note the column on the test booklet cover marked "AD" to the right center of the page. That is the code to indicate the "outcome of the session." These codes include:

- In session full-time. Student at least attempted to complete the booklet.
- Session incomplete. Specify the reason. Use this code when the session was interrupted and no student was able to complete the booklet. Reasons may include fire drills, equipment failures, etc. (pg. 65)

Parents should be alerted to Exhibit 5B and the meaning of the last box in the column, just to the right of "AD:" an "ABS." In Exhibit 8 we learn this stands for "Absent. Use ABS codes in next column to explain why student was absent from session." [From page 65 of the *Administrators Manual*, emphasis ours.]

The administrator is to indicate why each child is absent. The possible "whys" include "parent refusal... to allow student to participate in the assessment," Read carefully through the list of Absent Codes on page 66 of the *Administrators Manual* in Exhibit 9.

It is apparent that NAEP has all bases covered. If you refuse to let your child take the test, NAEP knows, and if your child

ADMINISTRATION CODES

The seven Administration Codes are defined below. The most frequently used code is "1", meaning that the student was in the session full time. If the student was absent, enter the letter "A" in the box, code the last oval and code the reason for his/her absence in the ABS box using the codes on the next page, consulting school records as necessary.

- 1 - In session full-time. Student at least attempted to complete the booklet. Most booklets will receive this code.
- 2 - In session full-time, but no response in booklet.
- 3 - In session part-time. Student left and did or did not return. Specify the reason on booklet cover (e.g., student refusal after starting booklet). Also, note on booklet cover the section number when student left and the section number when the student returned, if s/he did return.
- 4 - Session incomplete. Specify the reason. Use this code when the session was interrupted and no student was able to complete the booklet. Reasons may include fire drills, equipment failures, etc.
- 5 - Student ineligible. Use this code when you are told or discover after the session begins that the student is not eligible for the assessment. Explain fully on the booklet cover how you determined the student was ineligible.
- 6 - Other, specify. Use this code for any situation which is not covered by the other codes, such as the discovery of a page missing from a booklet. Explain the situation fully on the booklet cover.
- A - Absent. Use ABS codes in next column to explain why student was absent from session. (See explanation of ABS codes on next page.)

Exhibit B

(Exhibit 5A). Here we find "01, 02" and so on. This means the teacher's answers to the Teacher Questionnaire can be linked to the results of the child's test.

This questionnaire probes into the teaching methods of each teacher. It would seem logical that since NAEP is collecting data on how teachers teach, and then correlating it to what students know, that the government would have ample explanation as to what methods of teaching produce the best result. The current debate over whole language vs. the phonics method of teaching reading is one example.

Numerous education reform plans and documents connect student assessment test performance directly to teacher incentives, as well as school rewards and penalties. Teachers could lose out on promotions and schools could be shut down if student test results aren't up to par. We have just demonstrated how NAEP student results are connected with teacher performance. In the near future teachers who cannot produce the desired student outcomes on an assessment test will be consid-

refuses, NAEP knows. No matter what you do, once your child is selected, NAEP knows.

Many parents have pulled their children out of public and even private schools to avoid this type of testing altogether. We endorse this course of action. However, we caution those who privately educate their children to use discernment regarding any standardized test. There is ample evidence that in the future all children may be compelled to take tests such as the NAEP.

For those parents who must keep their children in the classroom, there is a way. This way would require that parents make choices that categorize their children under the "Temporary absence" code by ensuring that their children have unscheduled absences for both the original testing period and the make-up session.

Naturally, NAEP wants as many of the selected students as possible to be tested. And they have provided for this by requiring a make up session: "If four or more students were absent (not counting student and parent refusals), you must schedule a make-up session..." (pg. 61). "Four" appears to be the magic number for norming the test.

It is possible for the NAEP to adjust its test norming if only a few parents/students refuse to take the test. *However, it is not as easy to adjust test norming to temporary, unscheduled, unpredictable absences. A great number of temporary absences might cause some chaos in the testing process, including the "make-up" sessions.* Not only will this protect many children from intrusive testing, it will foul up NAEP's collection and norming of the data. The more the merrier!

Conclusion

Federal Law authorizing the NAEP (P.L. 100-297) states: "It is not the purpose of this Act to authorize the collection or reporting of information on student attitudes or beliefs or on other matters that are not germane to (relevant to) the acquisition and analysis of information about academic achievement." But NAEP is in fact doing just that.

Sadly, this research indicates that we have a government out of control. It is invading your privacy and the privacy of your children's lives. Now that you have seen the documentation with your own eyes, take your children out of the NAEP test and other assessment tests. Encourage your friends, neighbors, and family members to do the same. Spread the word far and wide.

Please, protect your children and grandchildren!

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For supplementary documentation and resource material, order "Womb To Tomb" and/or "Talking Papers" by Anita Hoge.

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ABSENT CODES	
1 -	Temporary absence (less than 2 weeks). Student is not in school temporarily due to illness, disability, or excused absence.
2 -	Long-term absence (more than 2 weeks). Student has been absent from school 2 weeks or more due to an illness or disability.
3 -	Chronic truant. Student only attends school occasionally, if ever.
4 -	Suspended or expelled from school.
5 -	Parent refusal. Parent officially notified school that he/she refuses to allow student to participate in the assessment.
6 -	Student refusal. Student refused to participate in the assessment before being given an assessment booklet.
7 -	In school, did not attend session. Use if student was known to be in school on day of assessment but, for example, was not released by teacher.
8 -	In school, but not notified of assessment because of disruptive behavior.
9 -	Other. Use this code for any absence not covered by other codes. Specify the reason completely on booklet cover (e.g., student came to room after session started).

Exhibit 9

Endnotes:

1. *New York Times* INTERNATIONAL Monday, March 16, 1992.
2. Quote is from Prince William County Public Schools, Prince William Virginia, letter dated October 3, 1994.
3. *Filling the Gaps, An Overview of Data on Education Grades K through 12* by Sharon A. Babbitt, Peggy Quin and Patricia Dohs. NCES: Washington, D.C., 1992, p. 5. #NCES 92-132.
4. Source: National Assessment Governing Board, as reported in *The Washington Times*, 1994, "Critics say test probe of parents is too nosy."
5. NCES Field Restricted Use Data Procedures Manual, March 31, 1993, p. C-5.
6. Emerson Elliott replies to questions from Anita Hoge's Dec. 17, 1993 memo, attachment.
7. The Iowa Hornbeck report spells out the reform plan for teachers and schools in vivid detail. It can be ordered from Global Education Research Foundation, 7021 Shendan Dr., Des Moines, IA 50322 for a \$10 donation.

*Exhibits are from the NAEP Manual for Assessment Administrators, Fourth Grade, 1992 Trial State Assessment and the NAEP Assessment Administrators Training Example, 1992 Trial State Assessment.

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