

War with a unique advisory capability specific to optimization of warfighter health and performance that is not otherwise available to the SecWar from within the Department. While other DoW advisory bodies focus broadly on strategic defense technology (e.g., the Science, Technology, and Innovation Board) or standard clinical healthcare delivery (e.g., the Defense Health Board), no other body is dedicated exclusively to the holistic optimization, rapid validation, and field-integration of human performance capabilities across Total Force Fitness (TFF) domains.

Securing this highly specialized, multi-disciplinary expertise through traditional federal hiring is prohibited by civil service recruiting timelines and caps. Fulfilling these requirements via commercial advisory contracts is cost-prohibitive, lacks the long-term continuity required for multi-year strategic programs, and cannot legally provide the independent, collective consensus advice authorized under FACA.

The Council represents an exceptionally cost-effective resource. Its membership will be drawn from volunteer subject matter experts who are highly specialized in human performance. Special Government Employee Members serve without compensation and receive only travel and per diem reimbursement for official council-related business. Once chartered, the Council and its subcommittees function as a standing advisory body, capable of initiating critical evaluations and reports without the delays associated with new procurements or contracts.

6. *If the consultation is a committee renewal, a summary of the previous accomplishments of the committee and the reasons it needs to continue:* N/A.

7. *Explanation of why the committee/subcommittee is essential to the conduct of agency business:* The Council directly advances the Administration's core national security priorities by providing independent advice and recommendations ensuring America's warfighters' physical attributes fully align with the goal of deterring adversaries through strength—not weakness—by producing lethal, operationally ready warriors prepared physically, psychologically, for successful large-scale, high kinetic, combat operations against peer adversaries who are imbued with the essential Warrior Ethos to win decisively. The American people have entrusted the DoW and its Commanders with the Nation's most vital asset—the American Warfighter. The Commissioned and Non-Commissioned

Officers leading Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Guardians hold direct responsibility for the physical fitness, mental acuity, and combat focus of their teams. The modern battlefield demands physiologic resilience while operational stress impacts performance, recovery, and physiological health. The DoW maintains weapon systems and equipment with precision, discipline, and accountability, yet does not currently manage Warfighter performance with that same level of rigor. That gap directly impacts readiness, increases operational risk, and limits warrior lethality and effectiveness. Warfighter Performance Optimization (WPO) is the Department's approach to closing this gap. By building on and modernizing the principles of TFF, WPO will provide leaders with the data, tools, capabilities, and resources required to understand Warfighter performance, anticipate degradation, and take necessary actions. WPO will deliver a unified operational approach to accelerate readiness, dominance, and peak performance across the Force. The DoW treats the Warfighter as a readiness capability, held to the same disciplined evaluation, maintenance, and optimization the DoW demands of every asset that preserves combat power, optimizes performance, combats Operator Syndrome, and maximizes mission readiness to achieve total victory on any battlefield anywhere and anytime.

A component to WPO is alleviating the impact of allostatic load—the cumulative wear-and-tear on the Warrior's body from repeated exposure to stress. Many military occupations require constant readiness, prolonged separation from family, high-stakes decision-making, physical and psychological trauma, and repeated exposure to danger, often over decades. WPO and TFF work together to prevent, identify and manage combat and operational stress issues as early as possible, before they become medical problems. The Council's advice and recommendations will serve to support WPO initiatives on Warrior physiological and psychological maintenance, longevity, mobility/flexibility and stress mitigation, preparing American Warfighters to better able to handle the rigors and stress of the job in a military career.

The Council's advice and recommendations will allow the DoW to create, manage, and sustain a rapid pipeline to identify, validate, and scale innovations and capabilities that give our warfighting teams a decisive edge. This means aggressively fielding data analytics, wearables, and cutting-edge

technologies across modernized TFF domains that improve performance in demanding operational environments, not just in a lab.

The Council efforts will provide a critical component in advancing the DoW's essential core business of restoring the warrior ethos, rebuilding our military and reestablishing deterrence with its focus on building and maintaining a ready, lethal fighting force prepared to dominate all aspects of battlespace and achieve peace through strength.

Dated: October 23, 2026.

Stephanie J. Bost,

Alternate OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, Department of Defense.

[FR Doc. 2026–21900 Filed 10–26–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6001–FR–P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

National Assessment Governing Board

Committee and Quarterly Board Meetings

AGENCY: National Assessment Governing Board, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice of open and closed meetings.

SUMMARY: This notice sets forth the agenda, time, and instructions to access the National Assessment Governing Board's (hereafter referred to as the Board or Governing Board) standing committee meetings and quarterly Governing Board meeting. This notice provides information to members of the public who may be interested in attending the meetings and/or providing written comments related to the work of the Governing Board. The meetings will be held either in person and/or virtually, as noted below. Members of the public, whether participating in person or virtually, must register in advance. A registration link will be posted on the Governing Board's website, www.nagb.gov, no later than five (5) business days prior to each meeting.

DATES: The Quarterly Board Meeting and Standing Committee meetings will be held on the following dates:

Quarterly Board Meeting

November 19, 2026, from 9:05 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., EST

November 20, 2026, from 10:40 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. EST

Standing Committee Meetings

Executive Committee

November 19, 2026, from 8:15 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. (EST)

Assessment Development Committee

November 20, 2026, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. (EST)

Committee on Standards, Design and Methodology

November 20, 2026, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. (EST)

Reporting and Dissemination Committee

November 20, 2026, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. (EST)

ADDRESSES: TBD.**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Angela Scott, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Governing Board, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202; telephone: (202) 245-6234; email: Angela.Scott@ed.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:*Statutory Authority and Function:*

The Governing Board is established under the National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act (20 U.S.C. 9621). Information on the Governing Board and its work can be found at www.nagb.gov. Notice of the meetings is required under section 1009(a)(2) of 5 U.S.C. chapter 10 (commonly known as the Federal Advisory Committee Act). The Governing Board formulates policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The Governing Board's responsibilities include:

(1) selecting the subject areas to be assessed; (2) developing appropriate student achievement levels; (3) developing assessment objectives and testing specifications that produce an assessment that is valid and reliable, and which are based on relevant, widely accepted professional standards; (4) developing a process for review of the assessment, which includes the active participation of teachers, curriculum specialists, local school administrators, parents, and concerned members of the public; (5) designing the methodology of the assessment to ensure that assessment items are valid and reliable, in consultation with appropriate technical experts in measurement and assessment, content and subject matter, sampling, and other technical experts who engage in large-scale surveys; (6) measuring student academic achievement in grades 4, 8, and 12 in the authorized academic subjects; (7) developing guidelines for reporting and disseminating results; (8) developing

standards and procedures for regional and national comparisons; (9) taking appropriate actions needed to improve the form, content, use, and reporting of results of an assessment; and (10) planning and executing the initial public release of NAEP results.

Standing Committee Meetings

The Governing Board's standing committees will meet to conduct regularly scheduled work. Standing committee meeting agendas and meeting materials will be posted on the Governing Board's website, www.nagb.gov, no later than five (5) business days prior to the meetings. Members of the public may attend the open sessions and may register via the website. Minutes of prior standing committee meetings are available at <https://www.nagb.gov/governing-board/quarterly-board-meetings.html>.

Standing Committee Meetings

Thursday, November 19, 2026

Executive Committee (In-Person).

8:15 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. (EST), Closed Session.

The Executive Committee will meet in closed session on Thursday, November 19, 2026, from 8:15 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., to discuss the NAGB budget and receive updates on the Board's strategic priorities. This session must be closed because the discussion may impact current and future NAEP contracts and budgets and must be kept confidential to maintain the integrity of the Federal budgeting and acquisition processes. Public disclosure of this information would significantly impede implementation of the NAEP assessment program if conducted in open session. Such matters are protected by exemption 9(B) of the Government Sunshine Act, 5 U.S.C. 552b(c).

Friday, November 20, 2026

Assessment Development Committee (In-Person).

8:30 a.m. to 9:50 a.m. (EST), Open Session.

9:50 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. (EST), Closed Session.

The Assessment Development Committee will convene in open session on Friday, November 20, 2026, from 8:30 a.m. to 9:50 a.m., and in closed session from 9:50 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. From 8:30 a.m. to 8:35 a.m., the committee will review the agenda. From 8:35 a.m. to 9:35 a.m., the committee will receive an update on the NAEP Civics Framework. From 9:35 a.m. to 9:50 a.m., the committee will discuss a process for evaluating the 2026 NAEP Contextual Questionnaires. The

committee will transition to closed session from 9:50 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., to discuss the plans for the NAEP Long-Term Trend content documentation. This meeting will be closed to the public because it will involve discussion of unreleased assessment information and confidential budget and procurement information. Public disclosure of this information would reveal unreleased assessment content, and proprietary contract costs of the current NAEP contractors, independent government cost estimates for future assessments, and would have an adverse financial effect and significantly impede the implementation of future assessments if conducted in open session. These matters are protected from public disclosure under exemption 9(B) of the Government Sunshine Act, 5 U.S.C. 552b.

Committee on Standards, Design and Methodology (In-Person).

8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. (EST), Closed Session.

10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. (EST), Open Session.

The Committee on Standards, Design and Methodology will meet in closed session on Friday, November 20, 2026, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., followed by an open session from 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. From 8:30 a.m. to 9:20 a.m., the committee will discuss plans for multi-stage testing (MST), and from 9:20 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., the committee will receive updates on 2026 evaluations and methodology in progress. This meeting will be closed to the public because it will involve discussion of unreleased and preliminary assessment data. Public disclosure of this information would reveal unreleased assessment data and content and impede the implementation of future assessments if conducted in open session. These matters are protected from public disclosure under exemption 9(B) of the Government Sunshine Act, 5 U.S.C. 552b. From 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., the committee will meet in open session to discuss the committee's priorities for 2027 and beyond.

Reporting and Dissemination Committee (In-Person).

8:30 a.m. to 9:20 a.m. (EST), Open Session.

9:20 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. (EST), Closed Session.

The Reporting and Dissemination Committee will meet on Friday, November 20, 2026. The committee will convene in open session from 8:30 a.m. to 9:20 a.m., and in closed session from 9:20 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The chair will welcome the committee from 8:30 a.m. to 8:40 a.m., followed by a strategic communications update from 8:40 a.m.

to 9:00 a.m. The committee will then discuss the evaluation of the 2026 NAEP Contextual Questionnaires from 9:00 a.m. to 9:20 a.m. The committee will meet in closed session from 9:20 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. to discuss the release plan for the 2026 NAEP results. This session must be closed because the results have not been released to the public. Public disclosure of this confidential information would significantly impede implementation of the NAEP assessment program if conducted in open session. These matters are protected from public disclosure under exemption (9)B of the Government Sunshine Act, 5 U.S.C. 552b.

Quarterly Governing Board Meeting

The plenary sessions of the Governing Board's November 2026 quarterly meeting will be held on the following dates and times:

Thursday, November 19, 2026

9:05 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (EST), Hybrid Meeting.

9:05 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. (EST), Open Session.

12:45 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. (EST), Closed Session.

2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. (EST), Open Session.

3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (EST), Closed Session.

On Thursday, November 19, 2026, the Board will meet in open session from 9:05 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. The open session will begin at 9:05 a.m. with welcome remarks from Mark White, Chair of the Governing Board, followed by approval of the November 2026 agenda, and the August 2026 meeting minutes. At 9:15 a.m. to 9:45 a.m., U.S. Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education Kirsten Baesler, will deliver remarks and administer the oath of office to new and reappointed members. From 9:45 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., newly appointed and reappointed members will deliver remarks.

At 10:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m., Lesley Muldoon, Executive Director of the Governing Board, will provide updates on the Board's work. From 10:45 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., Matthew Soldner, Acting Commissioner, NCES, will report on key activities at NCES. The Board will receive updates on the NAEP Civics Framework from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Following a 15-minute transitional break to closed session, the Board will receive a briefing on embargoed data for the 2026 NAEP Grades 4 and 8 Reading and Mathematics from 12:45 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. This session must be closed because the presentation and discussion will include information on the budget and the federal acquisition process, as

well as data which cannot be released to the public at this time. Public disclosure of this confidential information would significantly impede the implementation of the NAEP assessment program if conducted in open session. Such matters are protected by exemption 9(B) of the Government Sunshine Act, 5 U.S.C. 552b.

The board will meet in open session from 2:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m., to discuss and take action on the NAEP Achievement Level Descriptions for Reading and Mathematics Grades 4 and 8. Following a 15-minute transitional break, the Board will meet in closed session to discuss State Trends in Test Accommodations from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. This session must be closed because disclosure of this confidential information would significantly impede implementation of the NAEP assessment program if conducted in open session. Such matters are protected by exemption 9(B) of the Government in the Sunshine Act, 5 U.S.C. 552b.

The Board will continue in closed session from 4:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., for a member discussion on board governance matters and strategic priorities going forward. This discussion pertains to information of a personal nature and disclosure would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. This session will be closed pursuant to exemption 6 of the Government Sunshine Act, 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(6).

The Thursday, November 19, 2026, session will adjourn at 5:00 p.m.

Friday, November 20, 2026

10:40 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (EST), Hybrid Meeting.

10:40 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (EST), Open Session.

On Friday, November 20, 2026, the Board will meet in open session from 10:40 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. From 10:40 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., the Board will discuss and take action on the release plan for NAEP 2026 Reading and Mathematics results. From 11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., the Board will receive a briefing on opportunities for members to contribute to communications about NAEP results and Board policies. The Board will hear reports from its standing committees from 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The November 20, 2026 Governing Board meeting will adjourn at 12:00 p.m.

Instructions for Accessing and Attending the Meetings

Registration: Members of the public may attend open sessions of the standing committee meetings in person

only and may attend the full Governing Board on November 19–20, 2026, either in person or virtually. Attendance at closed sessions is limited to individuals approved to participate. A link to the final meeting agenda and information on how to register for the open and closed sessions will be posted on the Governing Board's website, www.nagb.gov, no later than five (5) business days prior to the meeting. Registration is required to attend the meeting, whether in person or virtually.

Public Comment: Written comments related to the work of the Governing Board and its standing committees may be submitted to the attention of the DFO, either via email to Angela.Scott@ed.gov, or in hard copy to the address listed above in the For Further Information Contact section. Written comments related to the standing committee meetings and the full Governing Board meeting should be submitted no later than close of business five (5) days prior to each meeting and should reference the relevant agenda item.

Access to Records of the Meeting: Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 1009, the public may inspect the meeting materials and other Governing Board records at 500 D Street SW, Washington, DC 20024, by emailing Angela.Scott@ed.gov to schedule an appointment. The official verbatim transcripts of the open meeting sessions will be available for public inspection no later than thirty (30) calendar days following each meeting. Requests for the verbatim transcriptions may be made via email to the DFO.

Reasonable Accommodations: The meeting location is accessible to individuals with disabilities. If you need auxiliary aid or service to participate in the meeting (for example, an interpreter, assistive listening device, or materials in alternate format), notify the DFO listed in this notice by close of business on November 12, 2026.

Electronic Access to this Document: The official version of this document is the one published in the **Federal Register**. Internet access to the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations is available through GovInfo at www.govinfo.gov. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). To use the PDF formatted document, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the Adobe website. You may also access documents of the Department published in the **Federal Register** by using the article search feature at: www.federalregister.gov.

Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Authority: Pub. L. 107–279, title III, section 301—National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act (20 U.S.C. 9621).

Lesley Muldoon,

Executive Director, National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), U.S. Department of Education.

[FR Doc. 2026–21827 Filed 10–26–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Critical Material List; Addition of Helium

AGENCY: Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation, Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The United States (U.S.) Department of Energy (DOE) is issuing this notice to advise the public that DOE added helium to the DOE Critical Material List. This notice also provides the link to the assessment that forms the justification for including helium on the Critical Material List. Helium is non-substitutable for multiple critical energy functions, including: semiconductor manufacturing, leak testing natural gas infrastructure, and quantum computing, along with being essential to key medical/scientific applications. Demand for helium is also growing as it enables advanced semiconductor manufacturing, which is essential for SI and data center supply chains.

ADDRESSES: The assessment that forms the justification for including helium on the Critical Material List can be found on DOE's website: <https://www.energy.gov/cmm/what-are-critical-materials-and-critical-minerals>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Questions may be addressed to Jacob Ward, U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation, Office of Analysis and Strategy, Forrestal Building, Room CM–1, 1000 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20585; (202) 430–2229; jacob.ward@doe.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 7002(a)(2) of the Energy Act of 2020 (Pub. L. 116–260, div. Z, 134 Stat. 2418) defines “critical materials” to be: any non-fuel mineral, element, substance, or material that the Secretary of Energy determines has high risk for supply chain disruption and serves an essential function in one or more energy

technologies, including technologies that produce, transmit, store, and conserve energy (referred to here as a critical material for energy) or a critical mineral (as designated by the Secretary of the Interior).¹

On August 4, 2023, DOE published its Notice of Final Determination on 2023 DOE Critical Materials List (“Critical Materials List”).² The Critical Materials List includes the following:

Critical materials for energy: aluminum, cobalt, copper*, dysprosium, electrical steel* (grain-oriented electrical steel, non-grain-oriented electrical steel, and amorphous steel), fluorine, gallium, iridium, lithium, magnesium, natural graphite, neodymium, nickel, platinum, praseodymium, terbium, silicon*, and silicon carbide*.³

Critical minerals: The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), published a 2022 final list of critical minerals that includes the following 50 minerals: Aluminum, antimony, arsenic, barite, beryllium, bismuth, cerium, cesium, chromium, cobalt, dysprosium, erbium, europium, fluorspar, gadolinium, gallium, germanium, graphite, hafnium, holmium, indium, iridium, lanthanum, lithium, lutetium, magnesium, manganese, neodymium, nickel, niobium, palladium, platinum, praseodymium, rhodium, rubidium, ruthenium, samarium, scandium, tantalum, tellurium, terbium, thulium, tin, titanium, tungsten, vanadium, ytterbium, yttrium, zinc, and zirconium.

The critical materials for energy included on the Critical Material List are based on the criticality assessed in the short- and medium-term. A detailed description of DOE's methodology can be found in its Critical Minerals Assessment published on its website in July 2023.⁴ On May 22, 2025, metallurgical grade coal for steelmaking was added to DOE's list of critical materials for energy.⁵

¹ Section 7002(a)(2) of the Energy Act of 2020, Public Law 116–260, div. Z, 134 Stat. 2418 is codified at 30 U.S.C. 1606(a)(2).

² Notice of Final Determination on 2023 DOE Critical Materials List, 88 FR 51792 (August 4, 2023), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/08/04/2023-16611/notice-of-final-determination-on-2023-doe-critical-materials-list>.

³ Asterisks (*) indicate materials not designated as critical minerals by the Secretary of Interior.

⁴ Critical Materials Assessment (July 2023) https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/doe-critical-material-assessment_07312023.pdf.

⁵ Energy Department Designates Coal Used in Steelmaking as a Critical Material, Strengthening U.S. Energy and Manufacturing Security (May 2025) <https://www.energy.gov/articles/energy-department-designates-coal-used-steelmaking-critical-material-strengthening-us>.

By this notice, the Secretary of Energy advises the public of the addition of helium to DOE's Critical Material List. The assessment that forms the justification for including helium on the Critical Material List can be found on DOE's website: <https://www.energy.gov/cmm/what-are-critical-materials-and-critical-minerals>. The assessment concludes that helium is needed globally for semiconductor manufacturing and other key energy applications. Meeting the policy goal of building U.S. SI infrastructure will require expansion of semiconductor production and thereby supports the determination that helium is a DOE critical material.

Furthermore, this action directly supports the President's policy goal of “Winning the AI Race: America's AI Action Plan”⁶ and “Advancing United States Leadership in Artificial Intelligence Infrastructure”.⁷

Signing Authority

This document of the Department of Energy was signed on October 21, 2026, by Audrey Robertson, Assistant Secretary, Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation, pursuant to delegated authority from the Secretary of Energy. That document with the original signature and date is maintained by DOE. For administrative purposes only, and in compliance with requirements of the Office of the Federal Register, the undersigned DOE Federal Register Liaison Officer has been authorized to sign and submit the document in electronic format for publication, as an official document of the Department of Energy. This administrative process in no way alters the legal effect of this document upon publication in the **Federal Register**.

Signed in Washington, DC, on October 23, 2026.

Jennifer Hartzell,

Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, U.S. Department of Energy.

[FR Doc. 2026–21884 Filed 10–26–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450–01–P

⁶ White House Unveils America's AI Action Plan (April 2025) <https://www.whitehouse.gov/releases/2025/07/white-house-unveils-americas-ai-action-plan/>.

⁷ Advancing United States Leadership in Artificial Intelligence Infrastructure (January 2025) <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/04/14/2025-06380/reinvigorating-americas-beautiful-clean-coal-industry-and-amending-executive-order-14241>.