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*Program Authority:* 20 U.S.C. 1087a, *et seq.*

**Richard Lucas,**

*Acting Chief Operating Officer, Federal Student Aid.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[Docket No.: ED-2025-SCC-1141]

### Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget for Review and Approval; Comment Request; National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2027

**AGENCY:** National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Department of Education (ED).

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, the Department is proposing a revision of a currently approved information collection request (ICR).

**DATES:** Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before April 1, 2026.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments and recommendations for proposed

information collection requests should be submitted within 30 days of publication of this notice. Click on this link [www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain](http://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain) to access the site. Find this information collection request (ICR) by selecting "Department of Education" under "Currently Under Review," then check the "Only Show ICR for Public Comment" checkbox. *Reginfo.gov* provides two links to view documents related to this information collection request. Information collection forms and instructions may be found by clicking on the "View Information Collection (IC) List" link. Supporting statements and other supporting documentation may be found by clicking on the "View Supporting Statement and Other Documents" link.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For specific questions related to collection activities, please contact Matt Soldner, 202-453-7441.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Department is especially interested in public comment addressing the following issues: (1) is this collection necessary to the proper functions of the Department; (2) will this information be processed and used in a timely manner; (3) is the estimate of burden accurate; (4) how might the Department enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (5) how might the Department minimize the burden of this collection on the respondents, including through the use of information technology. Please note that written comments received in response to this notice will be considered public records.

*Title of Collection:* National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2027 Science Pilot 30-day Clearance Package.

*OMB Control Number:* 1850-0928.

*Type of Review:* Revision of a currently approved ICR.

*Respondents/Affected Public:* Individuals and Households; State, Local, and Tribal Governments.

*Total Estimated Number of Annual Responses:* 17,960.

*Total Estimated Number of Annual Burden Hours:* 10,625.

*Abstract:* The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a federally authorized survey of student achievement at grades 4, 8, and 12 in various subject areas, such as mathematics, reading, writing, science, U.S. history, and civics.

NAEP is conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education. NCES is responsible for designing and

executing the assessment, including designing the assessment procedures and methodology, developing the assessment content, selecting the final assessment content, sampling schools and students, recruiting schools, administering the assessment, scoring student responses, determining the analysis procedures, analyzing the data, and reporting the results.

The National Assessment Governing Board (henceforth referred to as the Governing Board or NAGB), appointed by the Secretary of Education but independent of the Department, is a bipartisan group whose members include governors, state legislators, local and state school officials, educators, business representatives, and members of the general public. The Governing Board sets policy for NAEP and is responsible for developing the frameworks and test specifications that serve as the blueprint for the assessments.

NAEP consists of two assessment programs: the NAEP Long-term Trend (LTT) assessment and the main NAEP assessment. The LTT assessments are given at the national level only and are administered to students at ages 9, 13, and 17 in a manner that is very different from that used for the main NAEP assessments. LTT reports mathematics and reading results that present trend data since the 1970s. LTT does not provide scores for individual students or schools.

The main NAEP assessments report current achievement levels and trends in student achievement at grades 4, 8, and 12 for the nation and, for certain assessments (*e.g.*, reading and mathematics), states and select urban districts (*i.e.*, Trial Urban District Assessment, or TUDA). The main NAEP assessments provide results on subject-matter achievement, instructional experiences, and school environment for different student populations (*e.g.*, all fourth-graders) and groups within those populations (*e.g.*, sex [male and female students], race/ethnicity groups). NAEP does not provide scores for individual students or schools.

The NAEP assessments contain two different types of items: "cognitive" assessment items, which measure what students know and can do in an academic subject, and "survey" or "non-cognitive" items, which gather information such as demographic variables, as well as construct-related information, such as courses taken. The

survey portion includes a collection of data from students, teachers, and school administrators. Since NAEP assessments are administered uniformly using the same sets of test forms across the nation, NAEP results serve as a common metric for all states and select urban districts. The assessment stays essentially the same from year to year, with only carefully documented changes. This permits NAEP to provide a clear picture of student academic progress over time.

The possible universe of student respondents for NAEP 2027 is estimated to be 12,000 students at grade 8 attending the approximately 308 public and private schools in a variety of states and the District of Columbia and may include Bureau of Indian Education Schools.

This request is to conduct NAEP in 2027, specifically for the Grade 8 Science Pilot.

NAEP will administer the assessment using school devices and the internet. For schools that cannot meet the minimum specification for the use of school devices, NAEP will provide an alternate delivery model utilizing NAEP Chromebooks. NAEP has transitioned to primarily administer on school devices with a staged approach so that trends can be measured across time. NAEP conducted a School-based Equipment study in 2024 (OMB #1850-0803 v.347) as well as a Field Test in 2025 (OMB #1850-0803 v.353) to provide more information about student and school interactions with the eNAEP system on school devices, as compared to NAEP Chromebooks and Surface Pros, to inform the use of school devices at a larger scale in NAEP assessments beginning in 2026. Also, a 2026 bridge study will compare NAEP devices and school devices to evaluate whether scores from the two different assessment models are comparable. Note: in this study, some schools that qualify to be assessed on school devices will be assessed on NAEP devices, since the two different school types (*i.e.*, those qualified to assess on school devices, and those not qualified to assess on school devices) may have different characteristics. This will allow the study to establish a common linking population.

This submission is the 30-day component of the 2027 NAEP Clearance package, which follows the 60-day submission and public posting on the **Federal Register**. Final early communication materials and Assessment Management System (AMS) screens are available in this 30-day package, which will be used to notify the public of the upcoming assessment and prepare schools for the 2027

Science Pilot. This Clearance Package will have one amendment, which is planned to be submitted in July 2026, and which will replace any remaining drafted materials with final versions for the 2027 NAEP assessments.

**Ross Santy,**

*Chief Data Officer, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development.*

[FR Doc. 2026-04094 Filed 2-27-26; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### Annual Notice of Interest Rates for Variable-Rate Federal Student Loans Made Under the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program

**AGENCY:** Federal Student Aid, Department of Education.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Chief Operating Officer for Federal Student Aid announces the interest rates for Federal Direct Stafford/Ford Loans (Direct Subsidized Loans), Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford/Ford Loans (Direct Unsubsidized Loans), and Federal Direct PLUS Loans (Direct PLUS Loan), Assistance Listing Number 84.268, with first disbursement dates before July 1, 2006, and for Federal Direct Consolidation Loans (Direct Consolidation Loans) for which the application was received before February 1, 1999. The rates announced in this notice are in effect for the period July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Travis Sturlaugson, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202. Telephone: 202-377-4174 or by email: [travis.sturlaugson@ed.gov](mailto:travis.sturlaugson@ed.gov).

If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability and wish to access telecommunications relay services, please dial 7-1-1.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Direct Subsidized Loans, Direct Unsubsidized Loans, Direct PLUS Loans, and Direct Consolidation Loans (collectively referred to as “Direct Loans”) may have either fixed or variable interest rates, depending on when the loan was first disbursed or, in the case of a Direct Consolidation Loan, when the application for the loan was received. Direct Subsidized Loans, Direct Unsubsidized Loans, and Direct PLUS Loans first disbursed before July 1, 2006, and Direct Consolidation Loans for which the application was received before February 1, 1999, have variable interest rates. For these loans, a new rate is determined annually and is in effect

during the period from July 1 of one year through June 30 of the following year.

Direct Subsidized Loans, Direct Unsubsidized Loans, and Direct PLUS Loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 2006, and Direct Consolidation Loans for which the application was received on or after February 1, 1999, have fixed interest rates that apply for the life of the loan.

This notice announces the interest rates for variable-rate Direct Loans that will apply during the period from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. Interest rate information for fixed-rate Direct Loans is announced in a separate notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Interest rates for variable-rate Direct Loans are determined in accordance with formulas specified in section 455(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA) (20 U.S.C. 1087e(b)). The formulas vary depending on loan type and when the loan was first disbursed or, for certain Direct Consolidation Loans, when the application for the loan was received. The HEA specifies a maximum interest rate for these loan types. If the interest rate formula results in a rate that exceeds the statutory maximum rate, the rate is the statutory maximum rate.

### Variable-Rate Direct Subsidized Loans, Direct Unsubsidized Loans, and Direct PLUS Loans

For Direct Subsidized Loans and Direct Unsubsidized Loans with first disbursement dates before July 1, 2006, and for Direct PLUS Loans with first disbursement dates on or after July 1, 1998, and before July 1, 2006, the interest rate is equal to the lesser of—

- (1) The bond equivalent rate of 91-day Treasury Bills auctioned at the final auction held before the June 1 immediately preceding the 12-month period to which the interest rate applies, plus a statutory add-on percentage; or
- (2) 8.25 percent (for Direct Subsidized Loans and Direct Unsubsidized Loans) or 9.00 percent (for Direct PLUS Loans).

For Direct Subsidized Loans and Direct Unsubsidized Loans with first disbursement dates on or after July 1, 1995, and before July 1, 2006, the statutory add-on percentage varies depending on whether the loan is in an in-school, grace, or deferment status, or in any other status. For all other loans, the statutory add-on percentage is the same during any status.

The bond equivalent rate of 91-day Treasury Bills auctioned on May 27, 2025, is 4.36 percent.

For Direct PLUS Loans with first disbursement dates before July 1, 1998,