



FROM THE PRESIDENT

By James C. Impara, Buros Institute for Consultation and Outreach and Caveon Test Security

2006 Annual Meeting News

There is good news and more good news about the 2006 Annual Meeting in San Francisco. All NCME sessions, including the Professional Development and Breakfast, will be held in the Hotel Nikko. That is a very nice hotel and it is relatively convenient to the Moscone Convention Center, which will be the Headquarters for the annual meeting. According to Robert Smith, the AERA meeting coordinator, many of the Division D and H sessions will be held at the Parq 55 Hotel, which is very close to the Nikko. There are only 400 rooms in the Nikko's AERA/NCME block of rooms. If you want to stay at the Nikko, you should make your reservations early.

The Program Co-chairs, Chad Buckendahl and Leslie Lukin, have made their decisions about sessions and the program is excellent. Because all of our sessions are at the Nikko, we were able to get additional rooms for sessions.

In addition to an excellent program, the Training and Professional Development Committee (chaired by Lori Nebelsick Gullett) has an excellent slate of Professional Development sessions to offer. Some of these have been done in the past, and some are new this year. Please sign up early. If you are unable to sign up early, someone will be on the Third floor of the Hotel Nikko to accept your credit card to buy an admission ticket for the sessions that make. (Note that if there are too few advance registrations for the training sessions, they will be canceled, so please don't wait until you arrive to sign up.)

As noted in the last Newsletter, the registration costs have increased. AERA did a survey of other organizations to learn about their costs to see if they were going to be overpriced because of the increased cost of meeting in San Francisco. They learned that they were very much under priced. They have raised their registration fees for the 2006 meeting and will raise them again within the next few years. At its October meeting, the NCME Board also raised some conference registration fees. The Board felt quite strongly about holding the line for students, however, so the major increases were for Non members. The table below shows the price structure for the 2006 NCME Annual Meeting Registration.

Registrant	Advanced Registration	On-site Registration
Member	\$110	\$125
Non-Member	\$170	\$185
Student member	\$35	\$35
Student non-member	\$50	\$50
Guest	\$25	\$25
Breakfast	\$25	
Fitness Run/Walk	\$20	

If you register for both NCME and AERA the registration cost is the sum of the two registration fees. Note that the costs for a Non-member to register are the same as the cost of Member registration and the price of joining for a year. If you know of anyone who might attend and who is not a member, encourage them to join and receive the other benefits of membership.

Other News

The NCME web site move to the Rees Group has been completed. Although there remain some minor problems, they are being resolved. We will also be working with The Rees Group to develop a member's only page that you can use to access the on-line journals and to renew your membership electronically.

NCME, AERA, and APA have agreed to form a Management Committee to begin the process of determining if the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* are in need of revision and, if so, to begin the process by appointing a Joint Committee. The NCME representative to the Management Committee is Barbara Plake. Other members are Suzanne Lane, representing AERA, and Wayne Camara, representing APA. This is an outstanding committee to undertake the management aspects of the next set of test standards. When you see any of them at the NCME meeting, please express your appreciation to them for their willingness to serve.

A search is underway for a new editor for EM:IP. The term for this position is three years and will begin officially at the end of 2006. We are trying to identify the new editor to help make the transition smooth. If you are interested in doing this or if you want to nominate someone, please contact Terry Ackerman (taackerm@uncg.edu). He will advise you about what you need to do to apply or nominate.

TEST DIRECTORS AND NCME—A LONG AFFILIATION

By Peter Hendrickson, Everett Public Schools, NATD President

School district and state agency test directors have never been busier. In our modest-sized district (18,000 students) we'll have some 34,000 bar-coded, secure test documents to receive, administer, and dispatch for scoring this spring. That's a 200+ percent increase over test-year 2000 with stable student enrollment over the same period. We've had to invent procedures for a secure chain of custody, provide written assurances that every proctor is thoroughly trained, and document testing anomalies as never before. High schools have class schedules turned upside down for two weeks, and starting this year, make-ups are not allowed during the test window. The three week April/May window has become separate weeks in March, April, and August. And this is just for high school.

Never has the appetite been so great for local assessments, particularly those that can inform, even shape instruction. We're building item banks, annotating score guides, conducting scoring conferences and rebuilding assessment management systems to collect, validate, store, report and analyze student data for teacher, administrator, parent and student access. Requests from researchers arrive weekly. And this week I conducted two closely supervised sessions for nine parents who petitioned to review their children's spring 2005 secure test documents as a FERPA right.

National considerations have found us, too. The devastations of Katrina, Rita and Wilma displaced thousands of families dispersing children to schools far from their homes. School records are at risk with the compromise of several data management systems. This risk of information loss is compounded by the exodus of test directors and data managers from New Orleans and other cities.

National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) testing touches many more schools and classrooms than in earlier years. Never has there been greater inclusion of handicapped learners in state and federal testing with a broad array of accommodations available. And the growth of English Language Learners (ELL) with federal testing mandates leaves no month without a testing agenda.

For National Association of Test Director (NATD) members this means that more than ever we are compelled to collaborate to perform our jobs well in service of student learning. With accountability tied in so many ways to test results, our jobs have transcended the technical considerations to build ever closer partnerships with curriculum and instruction.

It was that same sense of cooperation that created NATD in 1983, springing from the earlier Large City Test Directors association. Current NCME President Jim Impara recounts in his companion piece for our NATD Newsletter, "It first met as the NATD at the annual conference of NCME in that year. One aspect of the relation between the two organizations is that since 1984 NCME has provided one of its program slots to NATD. This is a guaranteed slot and the content and

speakers are all decided by NATD." Last year I invited Jim, and fellow NCME members Gage Kingsbury, Karen Banks and Greg Cizek to give papers at a panel on ethical considerations in large scale testing. This year President Elect Bonnie Wilkerson has invited panelists Eva Baker, Gage Kingsbury and Judith Arter on the topic, "Beyond NCLB: From Measuring Status to Informing Improvement."

NATD is also represented in NCME by a Board Member who, when nominated, was a test director. Duncan MacQuarrie, now of Harcourt Publishing, fills that position. Duncan was a test director in Tacoma (WA) Schools and is a former state agency test director. Jim further stated, "NCME would like very much to increase the involvement of NATD members in NCME activities."

What is NATD?

NATD is a professional organization for persons managing the testing systems in local and state agencies primarily in the U.S. and Canada. We both construct and use standardized tests with increasing attention to classroom based evaluation. Many of us also conduct program evaluations. Most are also members of Division H (AERA) and several are NCME members. We primarily represent districts where enrollment is large enough to create specialist positions. Few of us chose test directing as a career path after graduate school. We came to our jobs from school psychology, school administration, teaching, instructional technology and from business, research or other fields outside education.

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Our goals are:

- To share information about testing in educational settings.
- To encourage the appropriate use of testing in educational settings.
- To improve the applications of measurement to students and educational programs.
- To encourage research in the area of elementary and secondary school testing and measurement.

NATD members meet once yearly during the AERA and NCME annual conferences. We publish a semi-annual newsletter and annual proceedings from the NATD/NCME symposium plus occasional publications. A listserv provides a forum for collaboration and inquiry during the year. Our Board of Directors meets by conference call regularly during the year and members serve on various state and national boards, advisory groups and commissions including the Joint Committee on Testing Practices. Many NATD members have adjunct faculty appointments at colleges and universities.

NATD monitors legislation affecting testing and seeks to have member representation on panels which study testing issues or set testing standards. The organization also promotes communication among members and provides mailing labels to employers who wish to send job postings to its members. NATD periodically surveys its membership to compile information on assessment trends and member needs and shares the results with the membership.

Working Together

While most of us conduct program evaluations, we consume more research than we create. We would value closer working relationships with measurement professionals and researchers. Ideally these relationships would transcend filling requests for data files with student demographic and achievement information. NCME's increased interest in the applied measurement issues is heartening.

Many of us are graying and we welcome the graduate students who intern with us and fill the increasing vacancies. We're not sure that the regular graduate curriculum fully prepares students for the logistical and political rigors of large scale and classroom based assessments. NATD Secretary Steve Schellenberg of St. Paul (MN) has suggested a careers in measurement panel representative to address, "What graduate school didn't teach you about running a K-12 test program."

Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice is widely read and discussed. We would welcome a wider authorship to represent NATD interests. Curiously our careers neither profit greatly from publishing in refereed journals nor are they enriched by sabbaticals, which are virtually unknown in K-12 education.

NATD remains grateful for the continuing relationship with and support from NCME with the annual symposium. We look forward to closer ties between the organizations in the years ahead.

SO – What Does a Test Director DO?

A "Day in the Life" of Peter Hendrickson from Spring 2005, Evergreen Public Schools, Vancouver, WA

This morning before school, I met with our secondary physical education coordinator to resolve an obesity cut score issue using CDC data. Later the IT Director pledged further support respecting FERPA protection as we rolled out our revised standards-based report cards. We agreed that a vendor had overstated the measurement utility of her computer managed instruction software. Our mathematics assessment Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) briefed me on proposed changes to test maps for spring end-of-grade instruments. We looked again at item characteristics of a pilot administration of an integrated math test. We also spent some time figuring out how to generate growth scores for her high school ELL students. I stole an hour from phone calls and emails to move a block of state test data into SPSS to create frequency distributions and percentile tables for our educational psychologists to use in Focus of Concern screenings. After school dismissed, my secretary and I trained building test coordinators to administer the WASL at their schools.

NAEP STATE COORDINATORS AND COACHES

By Donna O'Neill, Montana NAEP Coordinator, and Gordon Ensign, NAEP State Coach

Introduction to NAEP

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often referred to as "The Nation's Report Card," is the only nationally representative, continuous assessment of what students across the United States know and can do. Since 1969, NAEP has been measuring student progress in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, geography, civics, and the arts in grades 4, 8 and 12. In addition to these curricular areas, NAEP has over the years conducted "special studies" of interest to educators and policy makers: for example, analyses of high school transcripts, use of technology in classrooms, computer literacy, and career/occupational development. Recently, NAEP has become a required assessment for all states in Reading and Mathematics in grades 4 and 8 as stipulated by the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Legislation.

Role of the NAEP State Coordinator

As the scope and importance of NAEP as an indicator of student progress has increased, so too has the need for better coordination of NAEP activities with the assessment and accountability efforts underway in virtually every state. Beginning in 2002, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the federal agency responsible for the operation of NAEP, has provided to states funding for a full-time NAEP State Coordinator position. The primary responsibility of the Coordinator is to act as a liaison between the State Education Agency and NAEP to facilitate the appropriate and effective administration, reporting, and use of NAEP assessments in conjunction with state level assessments.

Key tasks of the NAEP State Coordinator are the following:

1. Implement and coordinate NAEP activities within the state;

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2. Secure the cooperation of schools selected for NAEP assessments;
3. Clarify NAEP and state policies regarding student participation, exclusion and accommodations;
4. Review NAEP assessment materials including subject frameworks and test items, administration materials and procedures, and reports;
5. Promote understanding of NAEP and its role and relationship to state-level assessments;
6. Provide information through publications, websites, presentations and seminars to educators, policy makers, and the public about the purposes and function of NAEP;
7. Coordinate the analyses and interpretation of the state level NAEP results;
8. Advocate for assessment literacy and the appropriate administration, reporting, and use of all assessments within the state;
9. Engage in ongoing personal professional development.

The Role of the NAEP Coordinator in Montana

As NAEP Coordinator for Montana, it is my aim to keep the state informed and involved with the Nation's Report Card at many different levels and intervals, creating a matrix of activities to be done. These include:

- Coordinating the administration of NAEP within the state. This coordination includes recruiting schools to participate in the assessment, answering any questions they may have, and assisting with student list submissions. Assessments can be very disruptive to instruction, but the NAEP assessment is designed to cause minimal disruption both in time and resources. Electronic file submissions and messaging helps makes this process as seamless as possible.
- Promoting understanding of NAEP within Montana's borders. This is a challenge and an opportunity, as it is the fourth largest state in the nation with 147,046 square miles. There are 848 schools and 436 districts in Montana. The communication method our schools most desire is visiting the school site. Since this is not possible, particularly during our long winters, other methods used to communicate with schools are through Web-page information designed for those interested in NAEP data, news releases, and regional meetings with superintendents and school administrators.
- Coordinating the analyses and interpretation of NAEP data and the preparations of special state-level reports. These analyses and reports permit state officials to draw implications for policies and/or programs at the state and local level. Montana is working on funding issues for schools; the data provided by the NAEP Coordinator was one source of information used in the research process for the future state funding model.
- Coordinating communication of NAEP assessment data within state.

- Working with the State Superintendent and the Director of Communications for accurate and timely release of NAEP results.
- Presenting workshops at conferences such as the Title I Conference and Montana State Reading Conference.
- Coordinating and monitoring the review of NAEP assessment data within the state.
- Increasing the capacity and awareness regarding assessments within the state office.

Increased awareness and understanding of assessments at the local level is also valuable to the State Department. The NAEP Coordinator can often be a source of additional expertise when needed in state and local level assessment issues.

Resources Provided to NAEP State Coordinators

NCES has reinforced its commitment to the NAEP State Coordinator program by providing a variety of resources and materials to assist the Coordinators and the states in the administration and use of NAEP.

First among those resources is the NAEP State Service Center (NSSC) located at Westat in Rockville, MD. The NSSC has as its single purpose the training and support of NAEP State Coordinators. In addition to providing both technical and non technical materials and publications, the NSSC staff organizes regular and frequent Internet-based training and information sessions for Coordinators. The topics of these sessions range across all phases of the assessment process including gaining cooperation of schools, responding to parental concerns, interpreting state and NAEP assessment policies, data collection strategies, assessment literacy, using data analysis and reporting tools, and preparing and presenting both written and oral reports.

NAEP Coordinators are supported and encouraged to participate actively in Web-based trainings, conferences and seminars such as those sponsored by National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES) and the Council of Chief of State School Officers (CCSSO). The University of Maryland offers the Graduate Certificate Program in Large Scale Education Assessment. Such specialty training increases the skills the NAEP Coordinator has available to help local district and state level colleagues.

NCES also provides a variety of technical support staff and materials to assist Coordinators. Software tools such as the NAEP Data Explorer and the State Report Generator have been developed to enhance Coordinators' abilities to quickly and accurately analyze, interpret and report NAEP results. NSSC staff provides Coordinators with regular training in the use of these materials.

NAEP Coaches as a Coordinator Resource

One of the innovative aspects of the training and support system provided to NAEP State Coordinators is the NAEP "Coach." For each NAEP State Coordinator, the NAEP State Service Center provides a coach, whose role is to support the

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Coordinator, make training sustainable, and help fill the gaps between knowing and doing – that is, between participating in training and going back home to do the job. Coaches do this by:

- Engaging in ongoing consulting, guiding, and mentoring;
- Providing individualized feedback; and
- Providing feedback to the NAEP program in support of the Coordinator.

Coaches communicate NAEP's commitment to the state and enhance the NAEP partnership with the state. Coaches do not supervise Coordinators; rather, they provide a link between the NAEP State Service Center and the Coordinator and offer assistance at the Coordinator's request.

Coaches are available to provide consultation by telephone, email, and the Internet; to travel to the states when needed; and to attend training workshops and other gatherings of the NAEP Coordinators. Coaches themselves also receive training, materials, and support from the NAEP State Service Center and in turn use these resources to organize and provide training opportunities to Coordinators.

There are currently eight NAEP coaches who divide up the 50 states and Puerto Rico. All of these Coaches are former assessment directors at state or district levels, and they represent many years of experience and training as a resource for the NAEP State Coordinators and their states.

**IN MEMORIAM
DR. NAMBURY RAJU**

Nambury Raju, Distinguished Professor of Psychology at Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) and former NCME Board member, passed away in October, 2005. He will be missed by his NCME colleagues.



**WESTED/CRESST ASSESSMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY COMPREHENSIVE CENTER**

By Stanley Rabinowitz, WestEd

Under NCLB, assessment and accountability systems are the major levers for improving student achievement—by signaling goals, focusing instruction, and providing information that states, districts, schools, and teachers can use to guide reform

efforts. States and districts need substantial knowledge and skills to fully implement, evaluate, and improve their assessment and accountability systems in order to reach the overarching NCLB goal of academic proficiency for all students. The WestEd/CRESST Assessment and Accountability Comprehensive Center (AACC) will provide to the newly-formed system of Regional Comprehensive Centers (RCCs) and States, and through them, to local districts and schools, the best knowledge and resources to improve the development, implementation, revision, and evaluation of their assessment and accountability systems. The AACC is part of a new federal technical assistance system that includes four other content comprehensive centers, the regional education laboratories, and research and technical assistance centers focusing on the needs of students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

AACC resources will target the following priority areas: establishing assessment and accountability systems that include and support special needs students, particularly low SES students, special education students, and English Language Learners; using data from large-scale assessment programs and formative assessments to diagnose needs, guide instruction, and monitor student and program progress; implementing efficient and user-friendly integrated statewide data systems that support both instructional and administrative needs; designing accountability systems that measure both status and growth in a reliable and valid manner; and meeting the unique challenges of high school assessment and accountability.

The WestEd/CRESST partnership will offer RCCs and States a national perspective on research-based resources and access to established collections of effective models, processes, research syntheses, toolkits, and software systems to fulfill specific State assessment and accountability needs. AACC products will include state assessment and accountability profiles, descriptions of promising practices, and training packages and tools. Our dissemination strategies emphasize use of the Web to manage and share information, support interactive communication, facilitate communities of practice, and support training activities.

The AACC will provide essential pieces in the education support network that are requisite for effective reform. These pieces include:

- identification and evaluation of relevant research studies and other technical assistance resources;
- synthesis across bodies of research;
- benchmarking and identification of best practices;
- translation into materials, training, and other resources useful for those working with state and district education systems; and
- dissemination of such knowledge and resources.

AACC reviews will include an analysis of context factors that affect program and resource success including environmental conditions, readiness factors, and essential support systems. For more information, contact Dr. Stanley Rabinowitz, AACC director, at srabino@wested.org.

REFLECTIONS

By Susan M. Brookhart, Duquesne University and Brookhart Enterprises LLC

This is the final issue of the *NCME Newsletter* under my editorship. I would like to thank many people who helped me immensely in the last three years. First, I had a wonderful Editorial Advisory Board: Robert Ankenmann, Judy Arter, Scott Bishop, Micheline Chalhoub-Deville, Katie Fisk, Joan Herman, Sharon Lewis, Duncan MacQuarrie, Wendy McColskey, Hillary Michaels, Carol Parke, S.E. Phillips, Barbara Plake, and Doug Rindone. This was a working board. Every quarter, they assisted me with ideas for news, features, and articles. Second, three successive NCME Presidents have contributed newsworthy and timely "From the President" columns: Suzanne Lane, Dave Frisbie, and Jim Impara. They helped put the "news" in "Newsletter." Third, I need to say a special thank-you to Carol Parke. She served as compositor-extraordinaire for my first three issues (March, June, and September, 2003) while I was waiting for a computer upgrade that would allow me to do the composition myself. Fourth, thanks to all the contributors. Some volunteered, some responded to requests, and some even put up with my nagging. The result was, I thought, some pretty interesting stuff.

I looked over the *Newsletters* for the last three years and found that in addition to conference information and other organizational news and announcements, award notices, and the like, we have had a steady stream of articles that can be broadly clustered into three topic areas. They include (1) the growing strength of the accountability movement (discussions of NCLB, models for measuring AYP, standards for technical reports, NAEP, measuring readiness, and so on), (2) the growing interest in formative assessment (including a series of articles on the balance between classroom and large-scale assessment), and (3) accommodating students with special needs (discussions of both legal and technical considerations). We also have had features about other professional organizations (AERA Division D, the AERA Classroom Assessment SIG, NATD, and several articles by the Outreach and Partnerships Committee). I learned a lot reading and publishing these.

There have been two innovations in the *Newsletter* format during the last three years, too. The first was an economy measure by NCME; beginning with the June, 2005, edition, the *Newsletter* is completely online. The second was an addition, in 2005, to the annual awards coverage in the *Newsletter*. Instead of just announcing who won the various awards, we have asked each of the winners to contribute a column describing the substance of their work. It has been wonderful to help share information about innovations in the field with the membership in this way.

As I made preparations for this issue and realized I was going to write this "reflections" piece, I thought it might be a good idea to offer a similar opportunity to the Newsletter Advisory Board members. One, Judy Arter, has taken me up on this invitation. Her "Letter to the NCME Membership" appears below. And finally, best wishes to the new Editor. Scott Bishop will edit *Newsletter* volumes 14 through 16, 2006 through 2008.

LETTER TO THE NCME MEMBERSHIP

By Judy Arter, Assessment Training Institute

I would like to thank NCME for the opportunity to serve on the newsletter advisory committee for the past three years. As NCME continues to mature and grow, we have seen a broadening of the interests of the NCME membership to include reliability, validity, and usability concerns at the classroom level. Ensuring that classroom teachers have the assessment expertise to accurately and continuously monitor student learning and use assessment results and materials to maximize student learning must remain an essential aspect of our responsibilities as NCME members.

We can't take assessment out of the hands of teachers and do it for them. There aren't enough measurement specialists in the world to do the work that teachers must do. Because of the importance of classroom assessment to student motivation and student/teacher decision-making, teachers need to develop their own expertise in assessment in terms that are relevant to their daily lives and needs.

Teachers need to know not only how to obtain accurate results, but how to use the results to maximize student learning. The latter includes providing descriptive rather than evaluative feedback to students, and using the assessment process and materials to help students understand where they are going, where they are now, and how to close the gap. Students are ultimately the individuals who must internalize the self-assessment and correction process. Their classroom assessment experience is the mechanism for accomplishing this goal. Teachers need to be confident in answering the question. "Am I good enough to engineer the classroom assessment environment to maximize student motivation and avoid unintended negative side consequences?"

The best standardized test results in the world cannot make up for possible inadequacies in assessment at the classroom level. Thank you for allowing me to bring these perspectives to the NCME newsletter over the past three years.

13th International Objective Measurement Workshop

April 5-7, 2006
Berkeley, California, USA

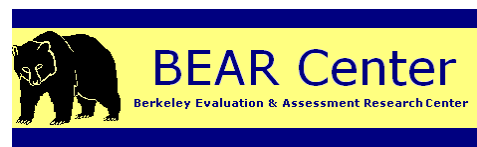
Theme: Measurement as a Constructive Endeavor

Deadline for submitting symposia and individual papers:
January 16, 2006

Papers focusing on the relationship between the theoretical foundations of objective measurement and the practical use of measures in the field are particularly welcome.

For more information: <http://bearcenter.berkeley.edu/IOMW2006>

Hosted by: BEAR Center, Graduate School of Education
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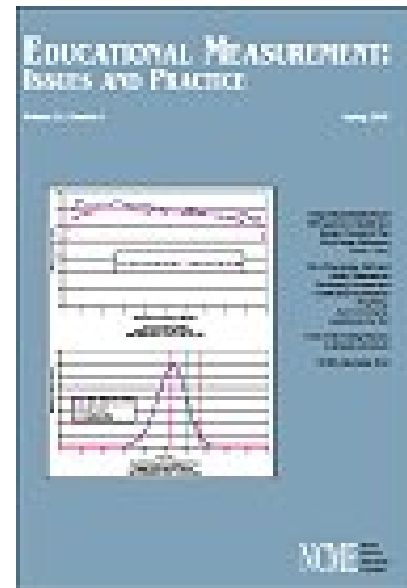
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NCME and Blackwell Publishing are pleased to announce that *Journal of Educational Measurement*, Volumes 1 through 37, and *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, Volumes 1 through 23, are now available online at www.blackwell-synergy.com. NCME members have free online access to this important archive, as well as the current volumes of both journals.

For information on how to register for online access, NCME members should contact Judy Curley of Blackwell Synergy Support at (800) 759-6102 or (781) 388-8332, or via email at jcurley@bos.blackwellpublishing.com.



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Call for Nominations: EM:IP Editor

The NCME Publications Committee is soliciting nominations for the editor of *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*. The next EM:IP editor will be responsible for issues appearing between January 2007 and December 2009. Nominations will be screened by the NCME Publications Committee. The committee offers a slate to the president who, in turn, makes a recommendation for appointment to the NCME Board of Directors. This appointment process is designed to provide for a smooth transition between the incoming and outgoing editors.

Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice is a quarterly publication that is aimed at practitioners and users of tests, as well as professional educators, legislators, school personnel, and interested citizens. Its primary purpose is to promote a better understanding of educational measurement and to encourage reasoned debate on current issues of practical importance to educators and the public. EM:IP also provides one means of communication among NCME members and between NCME members and others concerned with educational measurement issues and practices.

If you are interested in this position, if you would like to nominate a colleague, or if you would like additional information, please contact Terry Ackerman, Publications Committee Chair, by email (taackerm@uncg.edu) or by phone (336-334-3474). Deadline for nominations is February 1, 2006.