

confidential business information (CBI). Information so marked will not be disclosed except in accordance with procedures set forth in 40 CFR part 2. A copy of the comment that does not contain CBI must be submitted for inclusion in the public record. Information not marked confidential may be disclosed publicly by NAGB without prior notice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Patricia Hanick, NAEP ALS Project Manager, ACT, Inc., 2255 North Dubuque Road, P.O. Box 168, Iowa City, IA 52243-0168, Telephone: (319) 337-1452 or (800) 525-6930, e-mail: Hanick@ACT.org.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Electronic copies of this ICR can be obtained from the contact person listed above.

I. Information Collection Request

NAGB is seeking comments on the following Information Collection Request (ICR).

Title: An Investigation of Alternative Methods for Scale Anchoring and Item Mapping in the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Affected Entities: Parties affected by this information collection are persons included in a broadly representative sample including persons identified as panelists for field trials, pilot studies, achievement levels-setting (ALS) meetings, and validation research for the 1996 Science NAEP.

Abstract: The purpose of this information collection activity is to gather information for NAGB regarding the selection of exemplar items from the 1996 Science NAEP. Exemplar items are used as one of the primary means of communicating student performance relative to the NAEP achievement levels. The criteria for selecting exemplar items is critical to the "message" portrayed by the items. Congress has deemed that the achievement levels must be shown to be reasonable, valid, and informative to the public.

Part One of the study has been completed and examined the statistical criteria by comparing various scale anchoring and item mapping methodologies. The results of these systematic comparisons will be judged not only statistically, but also according to the degree to which they agree with expert judgments about item difficulty. This mail survey is designed to collect responses from the expert judges. Because these individuals have participated in the process of setting achievement levels from the 1996 Science NAEP, they are likely to be keenly interested in the ALS process.

Each prospective respondent will be sent a copy of the achievement levels descriptions for one of the three grades assessed (4th, 8th or 12th) along with a selection of approximately one-half of the items that have been released for public review for that grade. Items in the released blocks will be divided so that the distribution of items across the ACT NAEP-Like scale is approximately the same. The mailing will include an addressed, postage-paid envelope.

Respondents will be asked to read the achievement levels descriptions carefully. They will be asked to provide their own judgments of the difficulty of the set of released items. Then they will be asked to indicate whether the item would be a good exemplar for Basic, Proficient, or Advanced levels. Finally respondents will be asked for their interpretation of reports of NAEP achievement data.

The respondents' judgmental classifications will be compared to the "empirical" classifications using the various statistical criteria. Respondents will have determined which, if any, achievement descriptions match the items best, with respect to the knowledge and skill required for a correct response. The mapping criterion that matches the content-based classification best would seem to represent the best statistical criterion to use in selecting exemplar items. Thus, the response criterion that categorized items by levels most frequently chosen by respondents will be considered the "best" criterion to use for selecting exemplar items.

No third party notification or public disclosure burden is associated with this collection.

Burden Statement: The estimated total respondent burden is 141 hours, and the average burden per respondent is 1.0 hour. This is a one-time survey.

Neither small business nor other small entities are included in the survey.

II. Request for Comments

NAGB solicits comments to:

(i) Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is an appropriate method to determine the "message" portrayed by the items regarding the achievement levels to the public.

(ii) Enhance the accuracy, quality, and utility of the information to be collected.

(iii) Evaluate whether the design of this survey maximizes the response rate, i.e. the number of selected persons who will respond, given the desire to have the sample be broadly representative of persons with some interest in the educational progress of K-12 students

in the general content of the discipline of science.

Records are kept of all public comments and are available for public inspection at the U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment Governing Board, Suite 825, 800 North Capitol Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Roy Truby,

Executive Director, National Assessment Governing Board.

[FR Doc. 99-19916 Filed 8-2-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation: Meeting

AGENCY: National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation, Department of Education.

What Is the Purpose of This Notice?

The purpose of this notice is to announce the upcoming meeting of the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation. Parts of this meeting will be open to the public, and the public is invited to attend those portions.

When and Where Will the Meeting Take Place?

We will hold the meeting on September 15, 1999 beginning at 9:00 a.m. at The Latham Hotel, 3000 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007. You may call the Hotel on (202) 726-5000 to inquire about room accommodations.

What Access Does the Hotel Provide for Individuals With Disabilities?

The meeting site is accessible to individuals with disabilities. If you will need an auxiliary aid or service to participate in the meeting (e.g., interpreting service, assistive listening device, or materials in an alternate format) notify the contact person listed in this notice at least two weeks before the scheduled meeting date. Although we will attempt to meet a request received after that date, we may not be able to make available the requested auxiliary aid or service because of insufficient time to arrange it.

What Are the Functions of the Committee?

The National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation was established by the Secretary of Education under section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended by Public Law 105-244. The

Committee's responsibilities are to (1) evaluate the standards of accreditation applied to applicant foreign medical schools; and (2) determine the comparability of those standards to standards for accreditation applied to United States medical schools.

What Are the Issues To Be Considered at This Meeting?

The National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation will review the standards of accreditation applied to medical schools by several foreign countries to determine whether those standards are comparable to the standards of accreditation applied to medical schools in the United States. Discussions of the standards of accreditation will be held in sessions open to the public. Discussions that focus on specific determinations of comparability are closed to the public in order that each country may be properly notified of the decision. Beginning August 30, 1999, you may call to obtain the identity of the countries whose standards are to be evaluated during this meeting.

The Committee also will review the guidelines it uses to make comparability determinations and decide what revisions are necessary. This discussion of the guidelines will be open to the public.

Who Is the Contact Person for the Meeting?

Please contact Bonnie LeBold, who is the Executive Director of the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation, if you have questions about the meeting. You may contact her at the U.S. Department of Education, ROB-3, Room 3082, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-7563, telephone (202) 260-3636, fax: (202) 260-5049. Individuals who use telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

Greg Woods,

Chief Operating Officer, Student Financial Assistance.

[FR Doc. 99-19931 Filed 8-2-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Office of Science

Office of Science Financial Assistance Program Notice 99-22; Experimental Program To Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR); Building EPSCoR-State/National Laboratory Partnerships

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy.
ACTION: Notice inviting research grant applications.

SUMMARY: The Office of Basic Energy Sciences (BES) of the Office of Science (SC), U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), in keeping with its energy-related mission to assist in strengthening the Nation's scientific research enterprise through the support of science, engineering, and mathematics, announces its interest in receiving grant applications for collaborative partnerships between academic or industrial researchers from states eligible for the DOE/EPSCoR Program and researchers at DOE's National Laboratories, facilities, and centers. The purpose of the DOE/EPSCoR program is to enhance the capability of designated states to conduct nationally-competitive energy-related research and to develop science and engineering manpower in energy-related areas to meet current and future needs. The purpose of this program notice is to initiate and promote partnering and collaborative relationships that build beneficial energy-related research programs.

DATES: Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a brief preapplication. All preapplications, referencing Program Notice 99-22, should be received by DOE by 4:30 P.M., E.D.T., October 6, 1999. A response to the preapplications encouraging or discouraging a formal application will be communicated to the applicant within approximately thirty days of receipt. The deadline for receipt of formal applications is 4:30 P.M., E.S.T., January 12, 2000, in order to be accepted for merit review and to permit timely consideration for award in Fiscal Year 2000.

ADDRESSES: All preapplications, referencing Program Notice 99-22, should be sent to Dr. Matesh N. Varma, Division of Materials Sciences, SC-132, Office of Science, U.S. Department of Energy, 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, MD 20874-1290.

After receiving notification from DOE encouraging submission of a formal application, applicants may prepare formal applications and send them to: U.S. Department of Energy, Office of

Science, Grants and Contracts Division, SC-64, 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, MD 20874-1290, ATTN: Program Notice 99-22. This above address must also be used when submitting applications by U.S. Postal Service Express, any commercial mail delivery service, or when hand carried by the applicant.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Matesh N. Varma, DOE/EPSCoR Program Manager, Division of Materials Sciences, SC-132, Office of Science, U.S. Department of Energy, 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, MD 20874-1290, Telephone: (301) 903-3209, Facsimile: (301) 903-9513 or Internet E-mail address: matesh.varma@science.doe.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: To continue to enhance the competitiveness of states and territories identified for participation in the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR), DOE encourages the formation of partnerships between academic and industrial researchers in EPSCoR states and the researchers at DOE's National Laboratories, facilities and centers in scientific areas supported by DOE. These collaborations should address areas of research of current interest to the Department. Undergraduate and graduate students should be active members of the research team, and it is highly desirable that a student spend a summer or academic-year at the National Laboratory, facility or center. Subcontracting arrangements with DOE National Laboratories will not be permitted. DOE continues to restrict EPSCoR eligibility to the following states and territory: Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Program Funding

It is anticipated that approximately \$750,000 will be available in FY 2000 for research that encourages and facilitates collaborative efforts between researchers from EPSCoR states and researchers at DOE's National Laboratories, facilities, and centers. Multiple-year funding of grant awards is expected subject to satisfactory progress of the research, the availability of funds, and evidence of substantial interactions between the EPSCoR researchers and the National Laboratory partner. Awards are expected to range up to a maximum of \$75,000 annually with terms from one to three years. The number of