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Nota di contenuto	Front Matter -- Foreword -- Acknowledgments -- Contents -- Executive Summary -- 1 The Proposed Voluntary National Tests and Their Evaluation -- 2 Test Specifications -- 3 Item Development and Review -- 4 VNT Pilot and Field Test Plans -- 5 Inclusion and Accommodation -- 6 Reporting -- References -- APPENDIX A Workshop on Item and Test Specifications for VNT -- APPENDIX B Workshop to Review VNT Pilot and Field Test Plans -- APPENDIX C Workshop on VNT Item Development -- APPENDIX D Source Documents -- Appendix E Descriptions of Achievement Levels for Basic, Proficient, and Advanced -- APPENDIX F Revised Item Development and Review Schedule for VNT -- APPENDIX G Observations of Cognitive Labs and Bias Reviews -- APPENDIX H Biographical Sketches.
Sommario/riassunto	In his 1997 State of the Union address, President Clinton announced a federal initiative to develop tests of 4th-grade reading and 8th-grade mathematics that would provide reliable information about student performance at two key points in their educational careers. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the Voluntary National Tests (VNT)

would create a catalyst for continued school improvement by focusing parental and community-wide attention on achievement and would become new tools to hold school systems accountable for their students' performance. The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) has responsibility for development of the VNT. Congress recognized that a testing program of the scale and magnitude of the VNT initiative raises many important technical questions and requires quality control throughout development and implementation. In P.L. 105-78, Congress called on the National Research Council (NRC) to evaluate a series of technical issues pertaining to the validity of test items, the validity of proposed links between the VNT and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), plans for the accommodation and inclusion of students with disabilities and English-language learners, plans for reporting test information to parents and the public, and potential uses of the tests. This report covers phase 1 of the evaluation (November 1997-July 1998) and focuses on three principal issues: test specifications and frameworks; preliminary evidence of the quality of test items; and plans for the pilot and field test studies, for inclusion and accommodation, and for reporting VNT results.
