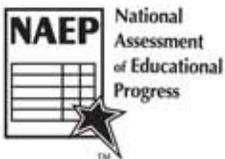


# SUPERVISE

AA MANUAL FOR SUPERVISORS



NAEP 2007 TRAINING PACKAGE

# PART 2

# NAEP 2007

## SUPERVISOR MANUAL

### Table of Contents

# 1

<b>THE SUPERVISOR ROLE IN NAEP 2007 .....</b>	<b>1.1</b>
<b>1.1 Background of NAEP .....</b>	<b>1.1</b>
1.1.1 Characteristics of NAEP .....	1.2
<b>1.2 The NAEP Program for 2007.....</b>	<b>1.4</b>
1.2.1 Reading, Mathematics, and Writing.....	1.4
1.2.2 Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA).....	1.5
1.2.3 Pilot Studies in Reading and Mathematics .....	1.5
1.2.4 Two Special Studies .....	1.5
1.2.5 The NAEP Sample for 2007 .....	1.6
1.2.6 Assessment Session Types .....	1.7
1.2.7 NAEP 2007 Questionnaires.....	1.7
1.2.8 MySchool Website.....	1.8
<b>1.3 The Security of Assessment Materials and Confidentiality Issues .....</b>	<b>1.8</b>
1.3.1 Guidelines for Viewing Assessment Materials.....	1.8
1.3.2 Requests From News Media .....	1.9
<b>1.4 Goals of the NAEP 2007 Training Program .....</b>	<b>1.10</b>
<b>1.5 The Supervisor Role.....</b>	<b>1.11</b>
<b>1.6 Manual Format.....</b>	<b>1.12</b>

# 2

<b>MANAGING ASSESSMENT TEAMS .....</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>2.1 Set the Tone for Accountability and High Quality .....</b>	<b>2.1</b>
2.1.1 Creating a Team Atmosphere .....	2.2
2.1.2 Promoting Accountability Among Your Team.....	2.3
2.1.3 Using Quality Control Activities to Promote High Quality Among Your Team .....	2.6
2.1.4 Setting Clear Expectations .....	2.6

<b>2.2</b>	<b>Communicating With ACs.....</b>	<b>2.7</b>
2.2.1	Conducting Report Calls.....	2.8
2.2.2	Promoting Two-Way Communication .....	2.9
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Counseling and Disciplinary Process (CDP).....</b>	<b>2.10</b>
2.3.1	Giving Project-Specific Feedback.....	2.11
2.3.2	Evaluating the Severity of Performance Problems .....	2.15
2.3.3	Using the Counseling and Disciplinary Process to Correct Problems .....	2.16
2.3.4	Documenting Feedback.....	2.18
2.3.5	Guidelines on Written Documentation .....	2.21
2.3.6	Using the Documentation Log .....	2.22
2.3.7	Immediate Terminations .....	2.24

# 3

## **SELECTING THE STUDENT SAMPLE..... 3.1**

### **3.1 Prepare for Student Sampling ..... 3.1**

3.1.1	Receive Information About Sampling From Your Field Manager .....	3.4
3.1.2	Determine Which Schools Have E-Filed .....	3.5
3.1.3	Suggestions for Organizing the Sample Selection Process .....	3.5

### **3.2 Review the Sampling Process..... 3.6**

Procedure 1. Use the Sampling Checklist to Prepare the Student List for Sampling .....	3.9
1A. Review the List of Students.....	3.9
1B. Number the Students on the List.....	3.10
1C. Recheck the Numbering of Students.....	3.12
1D. Compare the School's Student List and Actual Enrollment From the SCS .....	3.13
Procedure 2. Use the Student Data System (SDS) to Select the Student Sample .....	3.13
Procedure 3. Indicate the Sample on the List of Students.....	3.16
Procedure 4. Recheck That the "X" is Recorded on the Correct Student Lines .....	3.16
Procedure 5. Record Sampled Students in the SDS .....	3.16
5A. Enter Information About Sampled Students in the SDS.....	3.16
5B. Demographic Variables Codes Used on NAEP 2007 Administration Schedules.....	3.18
5C. Verify the Data Entry of Student Information .....	3.18
Procedure 6. Run the SDS Data Check .....	3.18

Procedure 7. For Schools Sampled <u>After</u> November 26, Record Information on the Administration Schedules .....	3.22
7A. Record Sampled Students' Information on the Administration Schedules.....	3.22
7B. Verify the Recorded Student Information .....	3.22
Procedure 8. Transmit SDS Data to Westat Daily .....	3.23
<b>3.3 Using Other Staff to Assist in Sampling Procedures .....</b>	<b>3.23</b>
<b>3.4 Special Situations.....</b>	<b>3.24</b>
3.4.1 School Will Only Participate If We Assess All Students .....	3.24
3.4.2 School Will Only Participate If We Assess Fewer Students .....	3.24
3.4.3 Sampled On-Break Students in Multi-Track Year-Round Schools.....	3.25
3.4.4 Sampling in Private Schools.....	3.25

# 4

## **PREPARING MATERIALS FOR ACS AND SCHOOLS .... 4.1**

<b>4.1 Overview of Sample Types and Subjects Assessed .....</b>	<b>4.1</b>
<b>4.2 Prepare the School Folders .....</b>	<b>4.4</b>
4.2.1 Overview of Preparing School Folders .....	4.4
4.2.2 Schedule to Receive School Folder Contents .....	4.4
4.2.3 Affix the Appropriate Labels to the School Folder .....	4.4
4.2.4 Record Information on the Front of the School Folder .....	4.6
4.2.5 Affix the Appropriate Labels to the Quality Control Booklet (QCB) .....	4.7
4.2.6 Print the Necessary Forms to be Placed in the School Folder ...	4.8
4.2.7 Place Forms and Materials in the School Folder and Prepare the School Folder Transmittal Form .....	4.9
4.2.8 School Folder Materials for Nonpublic Schools.....	4.11
4.2.9 Ship the School Folders, and Grades 4 and 8 School and Teacher Questionnaires to ACs .....	4.11
<b>4.3 Prepare the Preassessment Packets for Schools .....</b>	<b>4.12</b>
4.3.1 Overview of Preparing Preassessment Packets .....	4.12
4.3.2 Preassessment Packet Contents .....	4.13
4.3.3 Prepare the Instructions for the School Coordinator Brochure ...	4.14
4.3.4 Obtain the Appropriate Parent Letter for Public Schools From the MySchool Website .....	4.15
4.3.5 Prepare the SD and/or ELL Questionnaires .....	4.15
4.3.6 Prepare the SD and/or ELL Roster of Questionnaires .....	4.16
4.3.7 Prepare the Grade 12 School Questionnaire and Grade 12 Roster of Questionnaires.....	4.18
4.3.8 Prepare the NIES Packet, If Applicable .....	4.20
4.3.9 Preparing the Preassessment Packet .....	4.22
4.3.10 Ship Preassessment Packets to Schools .....	4.22

#### **4.4 Assemble the School Folders and Preassessment Packets ..... 4.23**

- 4.4.1 Determine Where You Will Assemble the School Folders and Preassessment Packets ..... 4.23
- 4.4.2 Organize the Assembly Task..... 4.25

# 5

## **CONDUCTING QUALITY CONTROL ACTIVITIES ..... 5.1**

### **5.1 Overview of Quality Control Activities ..... 5.1**

### **5.2 Conduct Quality Control Field Visits ..... 5.2**

- 5.2.1 Overview of Responsibilities..... 5.2
- 5.2.2 Scheduling Field Visits ..... 5.2
- 5.2.3 Using the Field Assessment Team Quality Control Form In-Person Version..... 5.3
- 5.2.4 Conducting the QC Observation at the School..... 5.8
- 5.2.5 Completing the Front Cover of the Form ..... 5.11

### **5.3 Conduct Quality Control Telephone Follow-up Calls ..... 5.14**

- 5.3.1 Content of the Assessment Team Quality Control Form Telephone Follow-up Version..... 5.14
- 5.3.2 Using the Telephone QCF ..... 5.16

### **5.4 Provide Quality Control Feedback ..... 5.17**

- 5.4.1 In-Person Observation Feedback ..... 5.17
- 5.4.2 Telephone Follow-up Feedback ..... 5.18
- 5.4.3 Additional Feedback Procedures..... 5.19

### **5.5 Update the SCS..... 5.19**

### **5.6 Other Quality Control Activities ..... 5.19**

- 5.6.1 Observation Protocol ..... 5.19
- 5.6.2 Observation Checklist Items ..... 5.20
- 5.6.3 Interactions Between HumRRO and NAEP Staff Members ..... 5.20

### **5.7 Reviewing School Folders After the Assessment ..... 5.21**

### **5.8 Collect Missing Student Demographic Data ..... 5.24**

- 5.8.1 Introduction..... 5.24
- 5.8.2 NAEPQC Procedures ..... 5.24
- 5.8.3 Working With the Excel File Attached to a NAEPQC E-mail Message..... 5.29
  - 5.8.3.1 Saving the Excel File to Your Hard Drive ..... 5.29
  - 5.8.3.2 Opening and Updating the Excel File ..... 5.32
  - 5.8.3.3 Reattaching the File to the Reply E-mail Message..... 5.33

5.8.4	Ad Hoc Issues .....	5.35
5.8.5	Other Ways to Respond to NAEPQC Issues.....	5.39
5.8.5.1	Fax the Excel File .....	5.39
5.8.5.2	E-mailing the Excel File .....	5.39

# 6

## **WORKING WITH TWELFTH-GRADE SCHOOLS ..... 6.1**

<b>6.1</b>	<b>Overview .....</b>	<b>6.1</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Plan Your Visit .....</b>	<b>6.2</b>
6.2.1	Prepare to Meet With the Right Resources on Hand .....	6.2
6.2.2	Determine If the NAEP State Coordinator Has Visited the School.....	6.3
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Meet With the School Coordinator.....</b>	<b>6.3</b>
6.3.1	Recognize Each Encounter With a School Coordinator Will Be Unique.....	6.3
6.3.2	Set the Right Tone.....	6.4
6.3.3	Document Your Visit While Visiting the School .....	6.4
6.3.4	Follow the Suggested Guidelines for Conducting Your Visit ....	6.4
<b>6.4</b>	<b>Communicate Your Findings to the Assessment Coordinator .....</b>	<b>6.9</b>

# 7

## **UNDERSTANDING SPECIAL PROCEDURES ..... 7.1**

<b>7.1</b>	<b>Overview of Special Procedures and Studies for NAEP 2007 .....</b>	<b>7.1</b>
7.1.1	State Information Form.....	7.2
7.1.2	National Indian Education Study (NIES).....	7.2
7.1.3	Student Sampling Summary Report (SSSR).....	7.5
7.1.4	Extended Student Background Questionnaire (ESBQ).....	7.9
7.1.5	Small Bundles of Reading Booklets .....	7.9
7.1.6	Take-All Schools With No Classroom Indicator.....	7.10
7.1.7	New Enrollee Procedures.....	7.12

# 8

## **COMPLETING STAFF EVALUATIONS ..... 8.1**

<b>8.1</b>	<b>Importance of Staff Evaluations .....</b>	<b>8.1</b>
8.1.1	Providing and Documenting Feedback for Use in Evaluations.	8.1
<b>8.2</b>	<b>Overview of the Data Collector Evaluation Process.....</b>	<b>8.1</b>
<b>8.3</b>	<b>Completing Evaluations for NAEP Fieldworkers .....</b>	<b>8.5</b>
<b>8.4</b>	<b>Discussion With Team Members—How to Say What Needs to Be Said .....</b>	<b>8.14</b>

# 9

8.5	<b>NAEP-Specific Guidelines for Rating Individual Performance Categories .....</b>	<b>8.17</b>
8.6	<b>Data Collector Evaluation Form Review and Sign-Off .....</b>	<b>8.21</b>
	<b>COMPLETING OTHER SUPERVISORY ACTIVITIES .....</b>	<b>9.1</b>
9.1	<b>Your Role at the AA and AC Trainings .....</b>	<b>9.1</b>
	9.1.1 Your Role at AC Training.....	9.1
	9.1.2 Your Role at AA Training.....	9.2
9.2	<b>Schedule and Supervise ACs .....</b>	<b>9.2</b>
9.3	<b>Monitor AC and AA Hours .....</b>	<b>9.6</b>
	9.3.1 Review and Approve AC Time and Expense Reports.....	9.8
	9.3.2 Enter AC Hours in the Hours Tracking System (HTS).....	9.9
9.4	<b>Approve and Monitor AC and AA Travel .....</b>	<b>9.11</b>
	9.4.1 Approving and Submitting TERs for Payment.....	9.11
9.5	<b>Use the Pearson Materials Tracking System (MTS) to Monitor Booklet Security .....</b>	<b>9.12</b>
9.6	<b>Ensure All SCS Entries Are Current .....</b>	<b>9.13</b>
9.7	<b>Reporting to Your Field Manager .....</b>	<b>9.15</b>

# 10

	<b>UNDERSTANDING ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES.....</b>	<b>10.1</b>
10.1	<b>Field Time and Expense Report .....</b>	<b>10.1</b>
	A. Identifying Information – Top Section .....	10.4
	B. Time – Middle-Left Section.....	10.5
	C. Project Information – Middle Section.....	10.6
	D. Expenses – Middle-Right Section.....	10.7
	E. Adjustment(s) to Pay – Bottom-Left Section.....	10.11
	F. Certification and Approval – Bottom-Right Section.....	10.12
10.2	<b>Trip Expense Report (TER).....</b>	<b>10.15</b>
	A. Identifying Information – Top-Left Section.....	10.16
	B. Trip and Project Information – Top-Right Section.....	10.17
	C. Expenses – Middle Section .....	10.17
	D. Clarification/Notes – Bottom-Left Section.....	10.19
	E. Office Use – Bottom-Right Section.....	10.19
10.3	<b>Submitting TERs for Approval and Payment .....</b>	<b>10.19</b>
10.4	<b>Sending T&amp;Es/TERs via FedEx .....</b>	<b>10.20</b>

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# A

## APPENDIXES

### Appendix A

NAGB Policies ..... A.1

### Appendix E

Preassessment Packet Contents ..... E.1

### Appendix F

Assessment Team Quality Control Form In-Person Version QxQs..... F.1

### Appendix G

Assessment Team Quality Control Form Telephone Follow-up  
Version QxQs ..... G.1

### Appendix I

SDS User's Guide..... I.1

### Appendix J

SCS User's Guide..... J.1

### Appendix K

Other Systems User's Guides ..... K.1

# 1

## THE SUPERVISOR ROLE IN NAEP 2007

This chapter provides a brief introduction to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and reviews the supervisor role in the NAEP 2007 program.

### 1.1 Background of NAEP

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a congressionally mandated project administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) branch of the U.S. Department of Education. The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) provides overall policy direction for the NAEP program, including selecting the academic subject areas to be assessed and developing content frameworks that specify assessment content. NAGB is an independent, bipartisan group whose members include governors, state legislators, local and state school officials, educators, business representatives, and members of the general public.

Often called “the Nation’s Report Card,” NAEP is the only nationally representative, continuing assessment of what America’s students know and can do in various subject areas. Through 1988, NAEP reported only on the academic achievement of the nation as a whole. Beginning in 1990 with the Trial State Assessment (TSA), however, states participated in NAEP on a volunteer basis in order to receive state-level results. In 1996, the authorizing statute no longer considered the state component to be “trial.”

A significant change to state NAEP occurred in 2001 with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, also referred to as the “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001” (NCLB) (Pub. L. 107-110). NCLB impacted state NAEP beginning in the 2002–03 school year in the following areas:

- all states and districts are required to participate in NAEP assessments of reading and mathematics<sup>1</sup> at grades 4 and 8 biennially as a condition of receiving Title I funds;

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<sup>1</sup> State participation in science and writing remains voluntary.

- a federally-funded full-time NAEP State Coordinator could be hired in each state; and
- the NCES contractor staff administers the NAEP assessments, thereby greatly reducing the burden on school staff.

As a result of the NCLB legislation, NCES and NAGB implemented the following policies and procedures:

- parental notification is required for all NAEP assessments;
- there are procedures in place for interested parties wishing to view secure assessment items;
- there are procedures in place for those wishing to formally file a complaint; and
- the minimum participation level is raised to 85 percent of originally selected schools in order to receive reported results in all reported subjects, including science and writing.

**NAEP reports student performance nationally and for states. It does not report information on the performance of individual schools or individual students.**

### 1.1.1 Characteristics of NAEP

#### NAEP is

- an assessment at grades 4, 8, and 12 that allows student educational achievement to be compared across states and regions of the country;
- an assessment that identifies the percentage of students in the nation who meet standards for Advanced, Proficient, or Basic performance in a variety of subjects;
- a yardstick that state educators, legislators, and governors can use to gauge the effectiveness of state educational policies;
- the only reliable, ongoing measurement tool that members of Congress, the President, and other policymakers and researchers can use to review student progress during the past 30 years at the national level; and
- a source of information that allows the public to assess the academic performance of students in their state and the nation as a whole.

#### NAEP provides

- state and national performance results in reading, mathematics, science, and writing;
- national student performance results in U.S. history, geography, civics, the arts, foreign language, world history, and economics;
- long-term trends in national student performance in reading and mathematics over the past 30 years; and

- 
- comparisons in student performance based on factors such as race/ethnicity, gender, public and nonpublic schools, level of parental education, prior course-taking, and classroom/school conditions and practices.

In addition:

**An independent body decides what is tested.**

NAGB selects the academic subject areas to be assessed and develops content “frameworks,” or test blueprints. NAGB is an independent, bipartisan group whose members include governors, state legislators, local and state school officials, educators, business representatives, and members of the general public.

**NAEP ensures confidentiality.**

No information on individual students, families, or schools is included in NAEP data releases or reports. Likewise, no records are kept that connect students’ names with the answers they gave on the assessment. It is against federal law to identify any student participating in NAEP. The law specifies severe penalties for anyone revealing the identity of students taking NAEP.

**Participation in NAEP is designed to cause minimal disruption of school activities.**

Most students spend only 90 minutes of their time taking NAEP. No student preparation time is necessary. Assessments are conducted by NAEP staff and take place either in school classrooms or other locations in the school selected by school officials. School officials are always invited to observe the assessment.

**NAEP encourages inclusion of special needs students.**

The national and state NAEP assessment procedures encourage inclusion of students with disabilities (SD) and English language learners (ELL) students. To include the highest possible percentage of sampled students, NAEP permits most commonly offered testing accommodations for special needs students during the assessment.

**NAEP uses a variety of assessment formats.**

NAEP includes both multiple-choice and open-ended questions, which require students to write an answer that, depending on the question, can range from a few words to more than a page. Recent NAEP assessments have also used stimulus materials, including mathematics manipulatives and other materials, to augment the traditional multiple-choice format.

**NAEP administers background information questionnaires to explore factors and practices that influence learning.**

Students, teachers, and school administrators are surveyed to collect contextual background information regarding student and school characteristics, instructional practices, and curricula. NAEP asks only questions directly related to the appraisal of academic achievement. The input in the questionnaires is used only to analyze overall academic achievement. Individual performance is not evaluated.

## 1.2 The NAEP Program for 2007

While the “What’s New for NAEP” article in *Overview* magazine focuses on the vital role NAEP plays in shaping education policy and highlights this cycle’s updates, this section provides more details on the NAEP assessments for the school year 2006–07. The assessments, to be conducted from January 22 through March 2, 2007, consist of the following components:

- national assessments of reading and mathematics at grades 4 and 8, and writing at grades 8 and 12;
- state assessments in reading and mathematics at grades 4 and 8, and writing at grade 8;
- the Trial Urban District Assessments (TUDA) at grade 4 in reading and mathematics, and grade 8 in reading, mathematics, and writing;
- pilot studies in mathematics at grades 4 and 8, and in reading at grades 4, 8, and 12; and
- two special studies:
  - The National Indian Education Study (NIES 2007), and
  - Socioeconomic Status (SES) Study.

Each of these components is described in more detail in the following sections.

### 1.2.1 Reading, Mathematics, and Writing

The subjects for NAEP 2007 at the national and state levels are reading and mathematics at grades 4 and 8, and writing at grades 8 and 12. NAEP 2007 writing is voluntary for states and TUDA districts. Those that have chosen not to participate this year in writing, in either a state- or TUDA-level assessment, are Alaska, Maryland, Nebraska, Oregon, South Dakota, and the District of Columbia. In these jurisdictions, a small number of students will take the writing assessment to represent the nation.

Also, although the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools will participate in reading and mathematics at grades 4 and 8; a small number of students will be sampled for national writing as well. Puerto Rico will participate only in mathematics at grades 4 and 8.

Except for the small number of students participating in the NIES, each assessment requires approximately 90 minutes of student time to administer, including distribution and collection of materials.

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## 1.2.2 Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA)

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In 2001, NAGB and the Council of the Great City Schools successfully petitioned Congress to fund a NAEP urban school district assessment feasibility study. The first TUDA was conducted in 2002 in five urban districts and the District of Columbia. In 2003, the TUDA included four additional urban districts.

The following districts will participate in the NAEP 2007 TUDA: Atlanta City, Austin Independent School District, Boston School District, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, City of Chicago School District 299, Cleveland Municipal School District, District of Columbia Public Schools, Houston Independent School District, Los Angeles Unified School District, New York City Public Schools, and San Diego City Unified School District. All of these districts also participated in the NAEP 2005 TUDA.

These urban school districts are in high minority and high-density communities. Five are very large school districts, with 100,000 to over 1 million students, while the other six districts have between 50,000 and 100,000 students. Additional criteria used for district selection include SES, the percent of minority students, and the number of schools within the district.

## 1.2.3 Pilot Studies in Reading and Mathematics

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Pilot studies of new assessment items will be conducted in mathematics at grades 4 and 8, and in reading in grades 4, 8, and 12. The pilot studies will be administered in the same classrooms as the operational assessments, with pilot booklets spiraled with the operational assessment booklets. In grade 12, the only operational assessment is writing; about one in nine students will take the pilot reading assessment.

## 1.2.4 Two Special Studies

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**(NIES).** NCES will conduct the NIES in 2007 for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Indian Education (OIE). This federally-funded study, a follow-up to the first study in 2005, is designed to collect data on the educational experiences of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students at grades 4 and 8 throughout the United States. The goal of the NIES is to describe the condition of education of AI/AN students in the nation and to ensure that programs serving AI/AN children are of the highest quality and meet these children's unique culturally-related academic needs.

The study consists of two parts:

- the NAEP 2007 reading and mathematics assessments with AI/AN students at fourth and eighth grades, and
- the Indian Education Survey (the NIES survey)—a separate survey focusing on issues of Indian education.

The NIES 2007 will include a larger sample than in 2005 in order to enhance the reporting of results for AI/AN students. At grades 4 and 8, all BIA schools and students will be included in the sample. In addition, in six states (Washington, Oregon, Arizona, North Carolina, Minnesota, and Michigan) the public school sample at grades 4 and 8 will be increased somewhat so that AI/AN results can be reported for these states. Six other states (Alaska, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Oklahoma) typically have enough AI/AN students to report results for these students. Therefore, it is anticipated that the increased sample will allow reporting of AI/AN results for at least 12 states, as well as national and regional reporting.

**SES Study.** The SES Study is a pilot study designed to explore different ways of measuring the SES of NAEP-sampled students. Currently, NAEP uses participation in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) as an indicator; however the results of this study may provide a more accurate barometer of SES.

States will be notified in mid- to late-September if they have schools that have been selected for the SES Study.

### 1.2.5 The NAEP Sample for 2007

NAEP 2007 will be conducted in a sample of about 16,000 public and nonpublic schools, and will involve about 900,000 students. The public school sample includes a state oversample in California (double sample), Texas (50% increased sample), and Florida (50% increased sample). The oversample of these three states is in recognition of their diverse populations. The increased sample sizes will permit meaningful breakdowns of the results and significantly improve the precision of national and state estimates, both overall and by demographic subgroups.

A summary of the estimated 2007 public school sample is given in Table 1-1.

**Table 1-1. Estimated Number of Students in the NAEP 2007 School Sample\***

Components	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 12	Totals
National/state/TUDA mathematics	174,000	170,300		
National/state/TUDA reading	171,200	167,500		
National/state/TUDA writing		152,000		
Total students	345,200	489,800		
National writing			20,000	
Reading pilot test	9,139	12,742	2,000	
Mathematics pilot test	1,523	1,529		
Total students	355,862	504,071	22,000	881,933
<i>Total schools</i>	<i>7,680</i>	<i>7,425</i>	<i>625</i>	<i>15,730</i>

\* From "Sample Design for 2007 NAEP," June, 2006 memorandum.

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## 1.2.6 Assessment Session Types

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NAEP 2007 will include only one assessment type per school for a given grade. All subject area assessments, including pilot tests, will be in a single spiral and administered together.

## 1.2.7 NAEP 2007 Questionnaires

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Fourth- and eighth-grade subject area teachers will be asked to complete a questionnaire about their background and teaching practices. Principals at grades 4, 8, and 12 will be asked to complete a questionnaire about school characteristics. There are also questionnaires about students identified as SD and ELL that the teachers most knowledgeable about these sampled students will be asked to complete. Teachers and principals will have the option of completing the questionnaires either online or in the traditional booklet format (except for the SD and ELL Questionnaires, which are not available online). Students also respond to background questions as part of the assessment.

Additionally, students in schools selected for the SES Study will also complete the Enhanced Student Background Questionnaire (ESBQ). AI/AN students selected for NAEP in all sampled schools will complete the NIES Student Questionnaire; the teachers of those students and the principal of those schools will complete the NIES Teacher and the NIES School Questionnaires, respectively.

A summary of all the questionnaires for NAEP 2007 is given in Table 1-2.

**Table 1-2. Questionnaires for NAEP 2007**

Component	Comments
<b>Student core and student subject-specific</b>	Embedded in test booklets for reading, mathematics, and writing
<b>Teacher</b>	Grade 4: Combined language arts (reading) and mathematics Grade 8: Separate language arts (reading/writing) and mathematics Can be completed online
<b>School</b>	One at each grade level in all schools selected for NAEP Can be completed online
<b>SD and ELL Questionnaires</b>	An SD Questionnaire is completed for each student identified as having a disability; an ELL Questionnaire is completed for each student identified as an English language learner
<b>Indian Education Survey</b>	NIES Student Questionnaire for all AI/AN students NIES Teacher and School Questionnaires Administered in NAEP sampled grade 4 and 8 schools that have one or more AI/AN students
<b>ESBQ</b>	Five-minute survey administered to students in a small sample of schools selected for the SES study

### 1.2.8 MySchool Website

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Schools in the NAEP sample have the opportunity to access the MySchool website. The website gives school staff information about their specific school assessment, including the date of the assessment, the NAEP State Coordinator's name and e-mail address, parent notification procedures, and (where applicable) instructions for preparing and submitting a list of grade-eligible students from which the sample will be selected. Schools can update information about their school using a link to the School Data Collection Form.

NAEP State Coordinators can post messages on MySchool about the various stages of the assessment. Schools that sign up for the MySchool website will receive several e-mail messages encouraging them to access the website at relevant times. These messages will be sent after schools agree to participate in the assessment; about 2 weeks before schools are visited or sent the preassessment materials; a few days before the assessment; and after the assessment has been completed in their school.

## 1.3 The Security of Assessment Materials and Confidentiality Issues

NAEP student data is strictly confidential. To ensure confidentiality, students' names are removed at the school from all completed assessment materials before they are shipped to Pearson Educational Measurement (Pearson) for processing. NCES enforces strict confidentiality standards to ensure that no personally identifiable information is ever released to third parties. In order to protect the confidentiality of **all** NAEP materials, you must strictly observe NAEP rules and guidelines at all times.

### 1.3.1 Guidelines for Viewing Assessment Materials

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Since its inception, NAEP has administered both cognitive test questions and background questionnaires. The test questions assess student knowledge and skills in academic subject areas. The background questionnaires provide information for reporting categories and collecting noncognitive data related to achievement, on students, their family background, teachers, and schools.

By statute (P.L. 107 -110), "the public shall have access to all assessment data, questions, and complete and current assessment instruments" of NAEP with two important exceptions:

1. "Personally identifiable" information about individual students, their families, and schools must remain confidential in accordance with the Federal Privacy Act (Sec. 552a of Title 5, U.S. Code); and
2. Access to cognitive questions may be restricted to maintain security if such questions are to be reused. Breaches of security are punishable as a felony.

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To fulfill the first requirement, NAEP has made sure since its inception that no information on individual students or schools is included in its data releases or reports. The names of students who have taken NAEP shall not leave the school building in which the assessment is administered, and all information collected by NAEP about individual students and schools will remain strictly confidential.

To fulfill the second requirement, NAGB adopted a strict policy on how to handle requests to see NAEP assessment booklets. All requests to view NAEP assessment booklets must be handled in the following ways:

**If a request is made to view the background questions asked in the student’s assessment booklets, you must provide copies of the NAEP Sample Questions Booklet.**

The Sample Questions Booklets contain the NAEP background questionnaires. You will receive a supply of Sample Questions Booklets from Westat, and the booklets will also be posted on the MySchool and NAEP websites.

**If a request is made to view the actual test questions by school staff members, parents, or anyone else, that person or persons must submit a written request to NCES.**

Under the statute, all secure cognitive questions must be made available within 45 days after a written request, provided test security is maintained. All written requests to view test questions should be sent to the NAEP State Coordinator or the field manager, who in turn will contact NCES.

**In addition, never, under any circumstance, allow anyone to examine materials completed by students or school staff.**

Copying or duplicating actual assessment booklets is never permitted. Following each assessment, NAEP releases approximately 25 percent or more of the test questions. The questions appear in the NAEP reports and on the NAEP website. You should encourage any interested party to view the previously released NAEP test questions on the NAEP website at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>.

### **1.3.2 Requests From News Media**

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Representatives of local news media may ask you for information about the state or national assessment and the local school’s involvement. **All such inquiries should be referred to school officials who are responsible for handling requests from the press.**

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE WESTAT STAFF TO MAKE COMMENTS REGARDING THE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT FOR PUBLICATION OR BROADCAST.**

This is to ensure that a uniform statement on the national assessment is being presented in all parts of the country.

**NO ASSESSMENT SESSION MAY BE HELD IF MEDIA ARE PRESENT AT THE SESSION.** Occasionally, school personnel or the media have requested to photograph or videotape NAEP sessions. Under no circumstances will NAEP permit videotaping or photographs to be taken of any part of an actual assessment. Newspaper or broadcast reporters and photographers are not permitted to observe a NAEP session. To accommodate the needs of the media without disrupting the assessment, a videotape and photographs simulating the assessment are available upon request. Media coverage of NAEP after the assessment is completed is the prerogative of local school officials. You should leave all arrangements and/or interviews to the school officials who grant the media permission to enter the school. Reporters requesting more information should be referred to Sherran Osborne at NCES (202-502-7420).

## 1.4 Goals of the NAEP 2007 Training Program

Ensuring the data you collect is of the highest quality has always been the top priority for NAEP. It is critical that the procedures for collecting data are followed exactly as NAEP intended.

As a supervisor, many of your responsibilities directly affect the reliability and accuracy of the data collected. NAEP has procedures in place that ensure the data you collect have statistical validity.

**Statistical validity means the data collected are accurate and reliable, and have been collected in a uniform manner across schools. NAEP goals for 2007 reflect important priorities:**

### **Ensure Statistical Validity Through Quality Control.**

Each piece of data you collect or procedure you carry out that affects statistical validity will also be double-checked by someone other than yourself for accuracy. QC checks are an integral and necessary part of NAEP's quality assurance program. The checks are designed to ensure the integrity of NAEP assessments, to identify and correct potential errors, and to guide corrective actions, when necessary. As a supervisor, you are responsible for supervising assessment coordinators (ACs) and assessment administrators (AAs) and ensuring the accuracy of their work by conducting a series of QC checks throughout each assessment. Your field manager is also responsible for the quality control of the work you do, and will conduct a series of QC as well.

### **Promote the NAEP Code of Ethics.**

The NAEP Code of Ethics is a set of principles that NAEP expects all staff to abide by when administering the assessment and collecting NAEP data. The Code outlines the three principles – accuracy, integrity, and respect – that guide all NAEP procedures and the actions of all NAEP staff. The Code also outlines how these principles are reflected in NAEP procedures and in the actions of its staff.

For further information about the Code of Ethics, refer to the article “NAEP Code of Ethics” in *Overview* magazine.

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### **Protect the Security and Confidentiality of NAEP Materials.**

NAEP materials contain sensitive information that must be protected in many different ways. Some information cannot leave the school, some information can only be seen by field staff that have signed the Affidavit of Nondisclosure, and some information must be destroyed entirely. The terms “security” and “confidentiality” refer to specific ways this information must be treated by field staff. These are outlined in greater detail at later points in this manual, as well as the AC and AA manuals.

## **1.5 The Supervisor Role**

The purpose of this manual is to describe the main responsibilities for Westat Supervisors for the NAEP 2007 program. Each chapter describes the Supervisor role and responsibilities for each of the following areas.

- **Managing Assessment Teams** – Chapter 2 reviews your role in managing your teams of ACs and AAs, including communication, setting performance expectations, providing and documenting feedback and disciplinary actions.
- **Selecting the Student Samples** – Chapter 3 describes your responsibilities for selecting student samples for schools that do not e-file.
- **Preparing Materials for ACs and Schools** – Chapter 4 describes your responsibilities for preparing and sending School Folders for ACs and Preassessment Packages for schools.
- **Conducting NAEP Quality Control Activities** – Chapter 5 reviews your role in conducting NAEP quality control activities, including in-person observations, telephone follow-up calls, and ensuring complete student demographic data.
- **Working With Twelfth-Grade Schools** – Chapter 6 reviews Grade 12 participation issues and describes your responsibilities for conducting a planning visit to each Grade 12 public school in your assignment.
- **Understanding Special Procedures** – Chapter 7 provides an overview of the special procedures for NAEP 2007 and your responsibilities for each.
- **Completing Staff Evaluations** – Chapter 8 describes your role and responsibilities in completing staff evaluations for ACs and AAs, including communicating the evaluation results as necessary.
- **Completing Other Supervisory Activities** – Chapter 9 describes your other supervisory activities, such as monitoring AC and AA hours, travel and booklet security, ensuring the School Control System is updated, and reporting to your field manager.
- **Understanding Administrative Responsibilities** – Chapter 10 describes your administrative responsibilities, such as completing Time and Expense (T&E) and Trip Expense Reports (TERs).

## 1.6 Manual Format

There are a series of icons used throughout the manual. The table below identifies the icons and their meanings.



This icon indicates the task you are about to complete impacts the statistical validity of the assessment. Expect these items to have a quality control procedure attached to them.



This icon indicates a quality control check or “QC check” will be required.



This icon indicates the NAEP materials you are working with must be kept secured and/or confidential.



This icon indicates the data must be entered in the School Control System (SCS) website. Details for entering data in the SCS are provided in Appendix J, the *SCS User's Guide*.



This icon indicates the task or materials are related to NIES.



### **Voices of Experience:**

These boxes offer tips and practical advice from experienced NAEP staff who have honed their skills in the field.

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## Chapter 1 Summary

Upon completing this chapter, you should now be able to

- describe NAEP's background and characteristics,
- describe the NAEP program for 2007,
- understand NAEP's security and confidentiality policies, and
- describe the goals of this training program and the supervisor's role.

# 2

## MANAGING ASSESSMENT TEAMS

**Managing ACs and AAs is one of the most important supervisor responsibilities. From setting expectations to communicating both positive and constructive feedback, effective staff management ensures high quality assessment teams and data.**

NAEP provides a magazine designed for field staff who supervise others, called *Leadership – Building an Effective Team*. The magazine presents articles on general supervisory and management practices, and is to be used in conjunction with this chapter to help you manage field staff. These NAEP-specific practices will be useful when having discussions with your assigned assessment coordinators (ACs) regarding their staff and supervision. Periodically reviewing the magazine and this chapter is encouraged throughout the testing period.

Managing field staff involves three basic fundamentals:

- setting the tone for the project;
- communicating with your ACs; and
- giving and documenting project-specific performance feedback.

Effective execution of all these fundamentals is critical to the success of your teams of ACs and assessment administrators (AAs), as well as to the overall success of NAEP 2007. Although you will work primarily with ACs, your example will impact and set the tone for your teams.

### 2.1 Set the Tone for Accountability and High Quality

As a supervisor, it is your job to set the tone of the project for your ACs, who, in turn, should do the same for their AAs. The *Leadership* magazine describes how to create a team atmosphere that will promote high-quality data collection and accountability among all team members by setting clear expectations for each stage of NAEP 2007.

### 2.1.1 Creating a Team Atmosphere

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It's important to stress to your ACs that we are all part of the overall NAEP 2007 team, and that the large team is broken into smaller ones, each overseen by a supervisor. As a supervisor for NAEP 2007, you are the team leader responsible for your ACs and their teams of AAs. Consult the *Leadership* magazine for tips.

NAEP 2007 has one goal, which is common to all project positions on NAEP, from home office staff to each AA: **data collection of the highest, most valid statistical quality**. Each team member is responsible and accountable for the combined end product of NAEP. By promoting the shared team accountability, each team member will feel the responsibility of producing high quality work every day.

Here are some points to cover with your ACs.

- Emphasize they are working with you, not for you.
- Lay out clearly your expectations for high quality and accountability among all team members.
- Establish yourself as a resource for your ACs.
- Communicate that everyone is an important part of the team and will help each other.
- Encourage your ACs to ask questions.
- Explain how you will help them succeed.
- Set up the weekly report schedule for each AC as well as several group conference calls, and review your expectations for these calls (see *Leadership* magazine).

Here are some other guidelines for creating a team atmosphere.

- Be fair—treat all team members equally.
- Be predictable and consistent in your behavior with all team members.
- Acknowledge when you don't know the answer and then actively strive to obtain it.
- Exhibit empathy—put yourself in the team member's place.
- Involve the team member(s) in finding solutions to problems.
- Express confidence in your team and each team member.
- Show your enthusiasm for the project and its goals.
- Don't share rumors or speculation, and discourage gossip among your team members.

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You can encourage loyalty to yourself, the team, NAEP, and Westat by demonstrating that quality yourself in the following ways:

- Be genuinely interested in the welfare of your team members and support their best interests with other team members, other teams, and the home office.
- Support the decisions made by the home office to your team members. Express any concerns and criticisms you have for those decisions only to your own supervisor.
- Encourage staff that you may have formerly supervised to create a bond with their current supervisor. If they call you with questions or issues related to NAEP, firmly encourage them to redirect their questions to their current supervisor.

You also must understand when and what type of information you should provide to your team members. Provide reliable information on an “as-needed basis” and share only that which directly affects their work, along with clarification of project rules and protocols. Also share your appraisal of how well the project is progressing, as well as specific changes in procedures that may occur. If you forward everything you receive from the home office and the field, you run the risk of overwhelming your team with information they don’t need. The result may be that they lose the ability to distinguish the necessary from the unnecessary and miss important communications, even those requiring responses.

### **2.1.2 Promoting Accountability Among Your Team**

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In order to promote accountability among your team members, you should insist your ACs respect and follow the organizational reporting structure of NAEP as illustrated in Exhibit 2-1. Using this structure, you should specify which contacts should be made through you and which contacts can be made directly (with a copy to you).

ACs should make the following contacts only through you. In other words, they should send information to you, and you will forward the information (with or without edits) to the appropriate party. ACs should NOT contact these people directly without field manager approval:

- NAEP State Coordinators and coaches;
- home office staff, including operations, accounting (other than the NAEP Field Room), programming, and statistical staff;
- AC/AA teams reporting to other supervisors (unless by arrangement of the involved supervisors);
- Other NAEP Alliance members, including Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO), Educational Testing Service (ETS), Pearson Educational Measurement (Pearson), etc.;
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES); and
- NAEP State Service Center.

**ACs may contact the following people directly, but should always copy you on their messages.** Of course, you may direct ACs to go through you when contacting these staff as well, particularly if you have any concerns. That is your prerogative as the supervisor.

NAEP Field Room (including questions about NAEP payroll and expense reimbursements)

Telephone number: 1-800-627-6237  
E-mail: NAEP\_Payroll@Westat.com

NAEP Warehouse

Telephone number: 1-301-330-7079  
E-mail: NAEPWarehouse@Westat.com

NAEP Help Desk

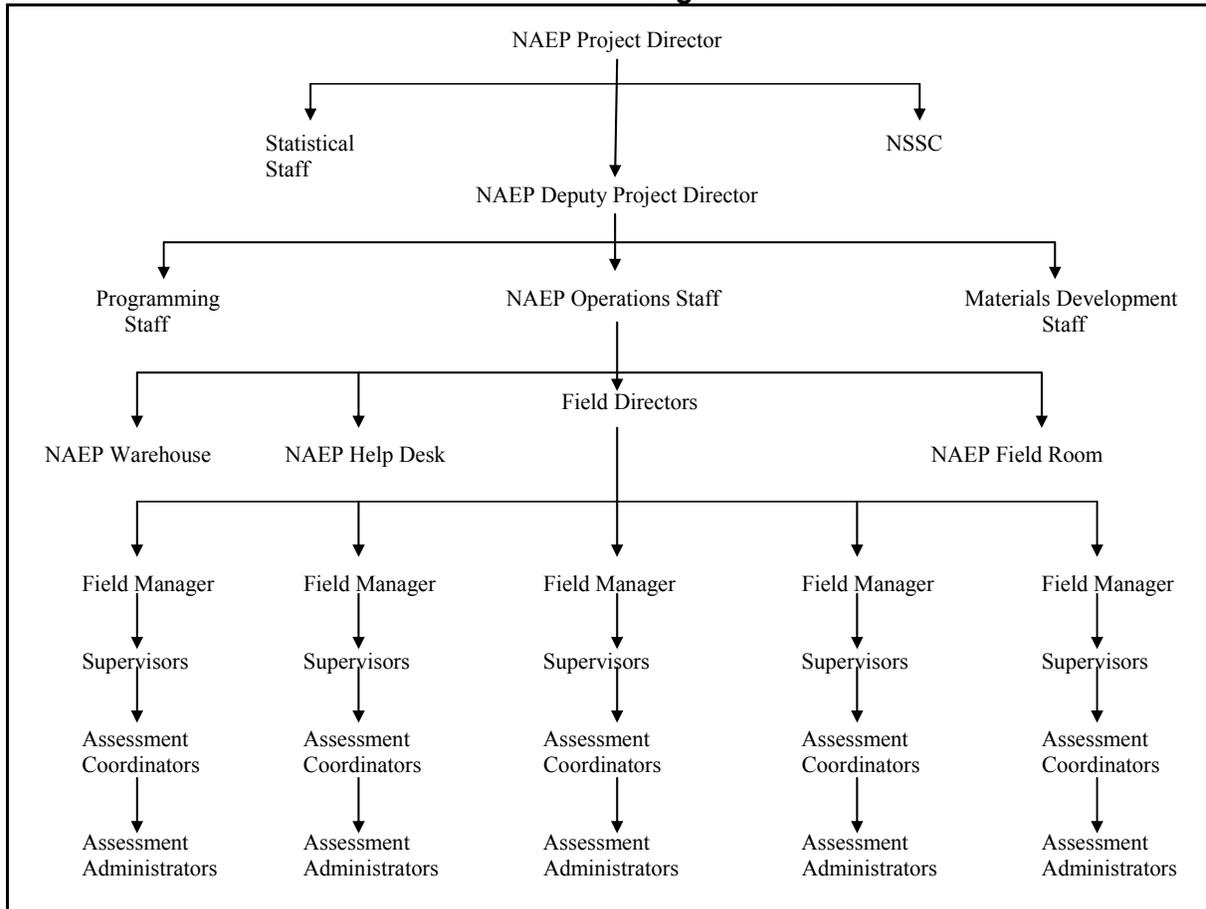
Telephone number: 1-888-499-6237  
E-mail: NAEPStaff@Westat.com

Pearson shipping/receiving

Telephone number: 1-888-627-6237  
E-mail: NAEP@Pearson.com

Other ACs on your team

**Exhibit 2-1. NAEP Westat Organization Structure**



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As specified in Exhibit 2-1, you should also respect and follow the NAEP organizational structure. Be sure your contacts follow the protocol established by your team leader—the field manager. You should always go through your field manager when making the following contacts:

- NAEP State Service Center (NSSC);
- NAEP State Coordinators;
- supervisors assigned to the field managers;
- home office programmers and statisticians; and
- home office operations staff.

You are not expected to contact any of the following:

- NAEP Alliance members (except Pearson shipping/receiving and HumRRO staff to arrange observations, although you should always copy your field manager on these messages);
- the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES); and
- the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB).

Let your ACs know you follow the organizational structure as it applies to you and that you expect your ACs to follow the same protocol. All supervisory staff (field directors, field managers, supervisors, and ACs) should be constantly reinforcing, both in word and deed, the need to follow the organizational structure.

In addition, as the person accountable for your teams' performance, you should insist you hear about any problems or irregularities in the field from your ACs before you hear about them from schools, NAEP State Coordinators, other ACs/AAs, observers, or the home office. Remind ACs there are very few situations that can't be rectified in some manner if they are addressed immediately and appropriately. However, you can't assist them if you aren't informed. Let your ACs know that neglecting to inform you about problems or irregularities is unacceptable and damages the reputation of NAEP, Westat, and the team. When you strongly communicate this expectation to your ACs, they, in turn, should also set the expectation with their AAs, who are most likely to be at the forefront of issues that arise in the classroom.

### 2.1.3 Using Quality Control Activities to Promote High Quality Among Your Team

As the team leader, establish quality control as an expected component of everyone's assignment. Promote the idea of producing high-quality work among your ACs, as well as the expectation that everyone's work (yours and theirs) will be regularly and consistently checked for errors and completeness. Communicating this expectation will remove the sensitivity of checking people's work. It will, instead, become a **routine** activity.



Quality control checking begins early in each phase of NAEP. Arrange for ACs to send in the first products (such as results of preassessment visits; School Folders for completed schools, etc.) of each cycle of their assignment for your review. You should immediately follow through with specific feedback. Your feedback will ensure irregularities are corrected early in the field period.

Based on your impressions from the AC and AA trainings, plan to conduct staff observations as early in the field period as possible, and arrange to meet with the staff immediately after the session to provide feedback. This feedback must be documented and kept for future reference (see section 2.3 for more information on documenting feedback).

During the field period, routinely discuss the specific results of the **telephone quality control (QC)** calls with your ACs. If the situation warrants it, document your discussions for future reference (see section 2.3 for more information on documenting feedback). Decide when retraining is necessary and how best to provide it. ACs also like to hear when they get excellent reviews from school coordinators.

Also regularly review production reports from the School Control System (SCS) with ACs so they realize their work and their team's work is being closely monitored by you as well as many others, including NCES. Let them know you use the reports to spot irregularities they may have overlooked. Show your ACs what you look for in the reports. Explore with the AC the reasons behind irregularities. You may find the AC has been reluctant to share some problem (such as a deficiency in computer skills) for which you can offer assistance.

### 2.1.4 Setting Clear Expectations

The most effective way to get your ACs to conduct their NAEP-related tasks in a desirable fashion is to communicate clear expectations for each phase of NAEP. Questions about procedure should be addressed to you and not a peer or another supervisor. Sometimes ACs hear from their colleagues that other supervisors are handling a procedure differently than you. **Discourage this use of "the grapevine" for getting procedural information.** At the same time, avoid criticizing a colleague's approach by saying something like, "There are probably several ways to accomplish this task, but this way will work best in our case." You want staff to turn only to you for dependable, reliable information.

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Here are some general guidelines for setting expectations for ACs:

- Be specific, rather than general, in assigning responsibility for tasks. Don't suggest an activity and assume the ACs will take on the responsibility. Delegate specific assignments.
- Put your expectations in writing. If you have a telephone conversation in which you state your expectations, follow it up with an e-mail that restates your understanding of the conversation. Listen for and promptly correct any misunderstandings about what you expect.
- Break assignments down into specific tasks and be very clear about what you need.
- Set firm deadlines by which each activity must be completed and information delivered to you. Remember to communicate your deadline clearly. Ask for frequent updates on progress from everyone.
- Offer assistance when necessary to keep your team on schedule.
- Always follow through to ensure deadlines are met.

You should be consistent in how you present your expectations to all your ACs. However, once you've communicated the expectations, you may need to adjust your method of follow-up to fit the individual. Some staff will require less supervision than others to complete a task. While it may seem tedious to customize your approach, you have to remember your team is made up of individuals. Each one may need something different from you to achieve maximum performance, and that is an important part of your job as a supervisor.

Each phase of NAEP has its own set of tasks and goals. However, you should also tailor your expectations for performance based on the goals of each phase: preassessment activities, assessment activities, and post-assessment activities, remembering that phases can overlap once assessments have begun.

## 2.2 Communicating With ACs

The *Leadership* magazine contains essential information on communicating with your staff, and should be read in conjunction with the information in this section.

One of your most important roles as a supervisor is to take your new ACs from training and help them navigate through real life scenarios in the field. You will continue motivating your experienced ACs and help them to succeed in the more difficult situations. Effective communication is the foundation of managing field staff. In this section we will review the following:

- conducting report calls; and
- promoting two-way communication.

## 2.2.1 Conducting Report Calls

Your weekly report call is one of the best tools you have to establish good communication with your ACs. This weekly call can help ACs develop a better understanding of their job and the priorities of their various tasks, as well as provide you a fuller picture of what's happening in specific assignments. This call is also the means by which you can motivate or provide corrective action for an individual and in a private manner.

**Report Call Agendas**—As much as possible, conduct your report call with each AC during the same time period each week. This will help you and your ACs plan their time efficiently. It also allows ACs to prepare for the call by having the necessary information in front of them. Finally, solicit agenda items from your ACs. Not only will it make them feel a part of the process, it will also allow them to formally add agenda items of importance to them.

### Preparing for the Report/Conference Call

What the supervisor should do:	What the AC should do:
1. Review the School Logs you have provided and the SCS. Run reports applicable to this stage of the project. Highlight or note any missing or conflicting data in the logs or SCS entries. These should be discussed during the report call. Determine the cause and establish a plan to correct.	1. Review the School Folders and update the School Log and SCS. Run reports applicable to this stage of the project. Correct or update information.
2. Review any special information the home office may have requested, such as status of preassessment visits. Convey this before the report/conference call so ACs can be prepared. Provide clear directions on how to obtain the information, in what format it should be reported, and when the information is needed.	2. Be prepared to discuss special home office information requests. Ask for clarification as necessary. Review the timeline for providing the requested information.
3. Review answers to agenda items and questions.	3. Be prepared to answer agenda questions.



#### Voice of Experience:

One supervisor prints a copy of the agenda for each AC. During the individual report call, notations are made relevant to that particular AC. Each copy is filed separately and can be date-referenced to determine if follow-up is necessary.

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You should also schedule occasional **group conference calls**. They build team spirit and allow everyone to hear the same thing. Try to schedule a group conference call at the beginning of each new critical phase to review procedures and answer questions. Then schedule another conference call about 2 weeks into the new phase to discuss any changes in procedure, to address problems discovered in the new phase, and to allow ACs to ask questions with everyone hearing the same response. Your field manager can provide you with the necessary information to set up these calls.

Take notes during the conference call or ask for a volunteer to do so. After the call, edit the notes and forward them to everyone so there is written confirmation of what was addressed and so anyone unable to attend the call is kept up to speed. If there are critical concerns and not everyone can participate at the same time, you can offer a choice of two call-in times so a greater number of ACs can be a part of the call.

## 2.2.2 Promoting Two-Way Communication

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Your *Leadership* magazine discusses in detail how to promote two-way communication between you and your teams. The basis of good communication involves:

**Listening Actively.** A great deal can be learned about how things are going by letting the AC talk without interruption. Many times, ACs will call you just to relate what happened that day. Sometimes, the less you say the more you'll learn not only about what happened, but also how the AC handles those types of situations. As the person talks, he/she will verbally work through the issues and often provide his/her own solutions, which you can then validate.

**Asking Questions.** A second way to facilitate communication is to ask questions designed to elicit thoughtful responses. There are four basic types of questions. By structuring your questions in an effective way, you will encourage the appropriate response for each situation.

**Closed questions are very direct and to the point.**

- They restrict the range of participants' possible responses, but are useful in gathering specific data quickly. However, improper use can make the participant think he/she is being interrogated and feel defensive.

**Example:** "Did you complete the makeup at Charles High School?"

**Open questions establish a broad topic area.**

- They allow the participant to participate fully, and allow more freedom of response. They are therefore useful in all types of discussions. One drawback is they can be very time-consuming since the other party may bring up irrelevant topics.

**Example:** "How would you handle this situation differently the next time?"

**Probes are used to gain further information.**

They ask the participant to clarify and elaborate upon what he/she has just said.

**Example:** “I’m not sure I understand your thinking on this; could we review it once more?”

**Mirrors restate the participant's last comment.**

- They give the participant a chance to hear again what was just said and to verify what he/she said was what he/she meant. This is an effective method of avoiding misunderstanding.

**Example:** “As you see it, then, the school coordinator was already upset before you arrived?”

**Ask “who,” “what,” “when,” and “where” questions instead of “why” questions.** A person seldom knows the answer to a “why” question.

Also, asking a question to which you clearly have an answer may cause the AC to feel that you do not trust him/her.

## 2.3 Counseling and Disciplinary Process (CDP)

Westat has implemented a policy—the **Counseling and Disciplinary Process**—that applies to all company projects. It is a tool that you will use to implement corrective action with field staff. The goals of the CDP are to:

- document performance accurately for use during the evaluation process;
- provide a progressive process that has a positive impact on performance;
- allow flexibility to determine an appropriate response dependent upon the circumstances of each situation;
- prevent performance issues through mentoring and counseling;
- resolve issues before they become major problems; and
- minimize time and money spent on attrition, recruiting, and travel.

A supervisor must constantly and appropriately use feedback to motivate staff and correct problems. Positive feedback can be general (“You are doing a great job.”) or specific (“You handled the conflict between Mary and John brilliantly.”). The more specific you are with positive reinforcement, the more effective you are in promoting similar behavior. **As a supervisor, your obligation is to give both positive and negative project-specific feedback to your ACs, as appropriate.**

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## 2.3.1 Giving Project-Specific Feedback

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What is feedback? Our use of the term refers to “*an evaluative response*” that’s provided about a process or activity meant to keep the process or activity on course. To provide helpful feedback, consider the following before delivering your comments:

- Can you deliver the feedback privately? If not, you should wait until you can.
- Is this an appropriate time?
- Can he/she do anything about it? Let your AC know you expect him/her to be resourceful, but don't expect the unreasonable.
- Am I willing to help him/her work through it? When you offer corrective comments to an AC, consider your responsibility to provide support if the person works to change.
- Identify your own issues as well as your responsibility or ownership of issues.
- Be aware of when an AC may need encouragement or validation rather than the specifics of feedback. This is particularly applicable when working with a new AC or one who is trying to improve a skill that is difficult for him/her.
- How will you provide feedback? Most importantly, provide the feedback in private. Be direct and authentic. Feedback, when corrective, can be uncomfortable, but is required both for the sake of the project and for strengthening the relationship between you and your teams.

Most people find it difficult to provide negative feedback. Here are a few general guidelines to follow when such a response is necessary:

- Make sure you intend to be helpful. Digs and sarcasm are inappropriate. Do not turn this into a critique of the person.
- Realize that ACs want to know how they are performing as long as your evaluation is fair and constructive. Base feedback on facts, not opinion or personality.
- Be as specific as possible. Begin with any positive feedback. Exactly what tasks does the supervisor do well? What tasks and areas does the supervisor need to improve? How can improvement be facilitated? Do not generalize. It is too easy to agree in principle and not agree on the specific method for carrying it out.

Unfortunately, we cannot always be positive about someone’s behavior or performance. As a result, it is necessary to provide feedback that is often labeled and perceived as “negative.” If presented in the correct manner, however, such feedback need not be negative at all. Feedback meant to correct a problem should be clear, accurate, and presented in a neutral manner.

A dialogue of such feedback might go something like this:

**SV:** “Hello, Selma. I’m calling because I was reviewing your report and noticed there was a lot of missing data. Is now a good time to go over this?”

**AC:** “Sure.”

**SV:** “I need to understand what the problem is and how we can fix it.”

**AC:** [EXPLAINS PROBLEM]

**SV:** “I think I understand now. Do you have some thoughts on how this problem can be avoided in the future?”

**AC:** [OFFERS SOLUTION]

**SV:** “Yes, I think it is a good idea to meet with the AAs to explain the importance of collecting complete and accurate data. Now that you also understand how to run the appropriate report, this should help you monitor the information better. Let’s review the data daily and see how this is going in one week.”

Present feedback from the perspective of a **mentor** and it will be better received. Always try to create a relationship based on mutual confidence and honesty between you and the AC. Let the AC know your goal is to help him/her succeed and grow in the position, and possibly advance to more responsible positions.

Be firm and honest with your feedback and don’t allow justifications by the AC to sway you. Also, compare his/her performance with the ideal, emphasizing where improvement or change is required. You can assist the AC in developing a plan to improve performance and/or attitudes. Show the AC you share responsibility for his/her performance by asking how you can assist in helping him/her improve. Express confidence in his/her ability to improve.

When problems arise, involve the AC in the solution with questions such as “What might you do differently next time? How do you think you might better have handled the problem? What did you learn from this experience?” Avoid vocalizing emotional reactions to what the AC is telling you. Instead of “How in the world could you have allowed that to happen?”, consider responding with “OK, let’s establish the exact details on what happened so we can work together to come up with an appropriate way to handle this situation.” You want the AC to feel free to discuss mistakes and problems with you without fear of retribution. Substituting the words “situation” and “issue” for ones like “mistake” and “problem” that carry the connotation of guilt and blame will help achieve this goal.

Exhibit 2-2 is a checklist of some specific techniques to use when giving constructive or corrective feedback. Keep in mind that you, in turn, should be open to receiving feedback from your ACs.

## Exhibit 2-2. Constructive/Corrective Feedback Checklist

### Constructive/Corrective Feedback Given to Improve Performance

Constructive/Corrective Feedback Steps	Do	Do <u>Not</u>
<b>1) Describe the situation from your perspective.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use neutral tone and expression</li> <li>● Use specifics and details</li> <li>● Focus on the tasks and how they are carried out</li> <li>● Include dates and number of times incident occurred</li> <li>● Describe how others perceive the behavior</li> <li>● Describe the result of the behavior on others (client, team member, etc.)</li> <li>● Point out patterns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have this discussion in front of other people</li> <li>● Emphasize the personal aspect of the issue</li> <li>● Allow the employee to begin justifying behavior one incident at a time</li> </ul>
<b>2) Ask team member for perspective and information on possible extenuating circumstances.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ask open-ended questions</li> <li>● Listen carefully and actively</li> <li>● Acknowledge team member's comments</li> <li>● Recognize team member may need to "vent"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interrupt</li> <li>● Discount or contest feelings</li> <li>● Take comments personally</li> </ul>
<b>3) Get agreement (from team member) on existing problem.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Keep conversation focused on the problem</li> <li>● Try alternative approach if no agreement on problem is reached</li> <li>● Try to get acknowledgement of the consequences of the behavior</li> <li>● Ignore attempts at extraneous or "deflecting" conversation</li> <li>● Have team member take ownership of the problem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assume silence means agreement</li> <li>● Waste time if there is no agreement on the problem</li> </ul>

## Exhibit 2-2. Constructive/Corrective Feedback Checklist (continued)

## Constructive/Corrective Feedback Given to Improve Performance

Constructive/Corrective Feedback Steps	Do	Do <u>Not</u>
<b>4) Discuss why behavior is occurring or problem exists.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure team member received needed information and understood it</li> <li>• Not receiving recognition for good performance</li> <li>• Lack of aptitude</li> <li>• Lack of motivation</li> <li>• Preferences or style differences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make assumptions about the cause of the behavior</li> <li>• Make generalizations, such as, "You always..."</li> </ul>
<b>5) Identify ways to remove obstacles to successful performance.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask for and consider team member's ideas and suggestions</li> <li>• Provide any needed training or resources.</li> <li>• Work with team member to clarify expectations</li> <li>• Try to make the situation "win-win"</li> <li>• Give suggestions on how you might have dealt with the situation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make decisions unilaterally</li> <li>• Assume you know what is best for the team member</li> </ul>
<b>6) Set clear expectations and consequences.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarize problem</li> <li>• Set clear expectations for improvement</li> <li>• Set a definite timeline for improvement</li> <li>• Explain consequences if no improvement occurs</li> <li>• Follow up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set consequences that you can't or won't implement</li> </ul>

## Exhibit 2-2. Constructive/Corrective Feedback Checklist (continued)

### Constructive/Corrective Feedback Given to Improve Performance

Constructive/Corrective Feedback Steps	Do	Do <u>Not</u>
7) <b>Get commitment from team member on the solution.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be sure team member understands your expectations and how to meet them</li><li>• Recognize the team member always has a choice</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mistake “intellectual assent” for commitment</li><li>• Assume the team member wants to work to improve the problem</li><li>• Assume silence means agreement</li></ul>
8) <b>Follow up promptly at the agreed-upon time.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicate with team member concerning progress or lack of progress</li><li>• Identify any future discussions to be held</li><li>• Get closure on the situation</li><li>• Praise his/her successes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Let the process “fizzle out” or get lost in the shuffle</li></ul>

Documentation of this process is critical and is reviewed in sections 2.3.4, 2.3.5, and 2.3.6.

### 2.3.2 Evaluating the Severity of Performance Problems

During the field period, you may identify a performance problem that requires more than mentoring and counseling. These situations may involve violations of the Westat Code of Conduct, NAEP procedures, or school regulations. Your response will depend on the severity of the problem, which generally fit into one of two categories:

**Routine** – issues that usually can be resolved with corrective feedback.

**Critical** – issues that have a serious, detrimental effect on the project.

Each type requires a different response from the supervisor.

**Routine issues** are the problems you deal with on a fairly regular basis, such as Time & Expense (T&E) Report issues, arriving late to an assessment session, or resistance to guidance. Supervisors and ACs handle most routine issues. Project management provides advice and intervenes when necessary.

As the name implies, **critical performance issues** are much more serious. These types of problems can have a particularly adverse effect on the project and must be addressed immediately. Critical issues can be serious performance problems such as refusal to follow

AC or supervisor directions, or they may be severe problems that require an immediate **Stop Work Order** while an investigation is conducted. These include:

- failure to follow critical study protocol as stated in the Fieldworker Employment Guide, at training, or in procedure materials;
- breaches of security or the Confidentiality pledge;
- complaints from school personnel/team members such as:
  - employee used inappropriate language,
  - employee made racial or ethnic slurs,
  - employee made comments of a sexual nature,
  - employee borrowed money,
  - employee attempted to sell a product or service,
  - employee appeared drunk or under the influence of drugs,
- religious, political, or other proselytizing;
- refusal to follow supervisor or AC directions or Westat policies;
- harassment of others; or
- unauthorized use of equipment or project materials

**NOTE: This is not an exhaustive list.**

When a supervisor or AC identifies a serious critical performance issue, he/she should notify his/her supervisor immediately. The severity of the problem will determine whether the AC, the supervisor, field manager, or field director leads the disciplinary response. **Stop Work Order investigations are handled by the field director or home office.**

### 2.3.3 Using the Counseling and Disciplinary Process to Correct Problems

CDP is a progressive process that relies on the specific circumstances to determine what corrective action is appropriate in each case. Even slight differences in the circumstances may require a totally different response. Always keep in mind that **flexibility** is key in applying the process. The process can have up to three stages, but you may not need to use every step outlined below for every situation you encounter. The stages are:

- corrective feedback,
- verbal warning, and
- formal action plan.

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**Corrective feedback** that was previously discussed is an appropriate starting point for most routine issues. The **verbal warning** or **formal action plan** comes into play if corrective feedback fails to correct routine issues. For serious, critical issues, a verbal warning or even a formal action plan may be implemented immediately. For severe, critical issues that require a **Stop Work Order investigation**, the appropriate response depends on the outcome of the investigation.

Corrective feedback is ongoing throughout the assignment. There are no formal actions indicating the beginning or end of corrective feedback. A verbal warning may be required for serious performance problems, which differs from corrective feedback in its formality. A verbal warning is a structured conversation that is **carefully documented**. Your tone should convey the serious nature of the discussion.

Before issuing a **verbal warning**, you need four key pieces of information:

- the specific performance problem,
- the concrete goals that the data collector must meet,
- the specific timeline for meeting those goals, and
- the consequences if the goals are not met.

Once you have this information prepared, you are ready to have a conversation with the fieldworker. When you call, make the purpose of the call very clear. Explicitly state that a verbal warning is being issued because of the performance problem(s). Tell the fieldworker that goals must be met within the timeline set. Make sure the fieldworker understands the consequences if the goals are not met. During your conversation, take notes on the fieldworker's response. The fieldworker's reactions, both positive and negative, should be noted in the Documentation Log. To avoid misunderstanding, we recommend all verbal warnings be summarized in an e-mail and sent to the fieldworker. During the timeframe set by the verbal warning, the fieldworker's performance must be monitored closely. Depending on the situation, more frequent contact with the fieldworker may encourage compliance. Verbal warnings must be documented in the employee's Documentation Log. See section 2.3.6 for more information in using the Documentation Log.

**Formal action plans:** These are initiated by the home office after consultation with the field director and field manager. Project management will work with the field director and other members of the team to design the plan. Formal action plans are used when verbal warnings have failed to correct problems or, on occasion, as a first step when the performance issues are especially serious or severe.

A formal action plan must have:

- clear descriptions of procedures and protocols that must be followed to correct problems;
- specific goals for each problem; and

- a timeline for meeting each goal. If appropriate, intermediate checkpoints can provide evidence that progress is being made and goals are obtainable.

Everyone must understand the consequences of failing to meet plan goals, which may include release from the project or termination from Westat, depending on the nature of the problem.

The plan must include the names of staff—in most cases, the field supervisor—who will monitor performance and communicate with the data collector.

All actions are documented using a Documentation Log. Home office staff or the field director will discuss the formal action plan with the fieldworker. The field manager, supervisor, or AC may participate in the call, depending on the management plan. After the call, the home office should send a letter outlining the details of the formal action plan and the fieldworker's agreement to follow the plan. All personnel involved in monitoring the fieldworker's performance should receive a copy.

### 2.3.4 Documenting Feedback

Documenting the feedback you give to field staff is a critical part of your job as a supervisor. You should document each conversation with an AC that involves feedback. Start by creating a file folder for each AC. Again, each of you must create a system and files that work for you. Perhaps, for example, you prefer to have separate files for various activities, such as evaluations. Keep all your documentation about that AC and his/her team in that folder. You'll find this documentation useful in three types of situations:

- Completing the AC's evaluation and helping the AC complete the evaluations for his/her AAs;
- Reviewing progress and follow-up; and
- Terminating\* field staff, if necessary.

\* Decisions to terminate staff members must be discussed with your field manager before any action is taken.

Although most of you will not need the documentation for the third situation, it is always better to be prepared. Also, documentation provides evidence that each staff member has been handled the same way, with fair and equal treatment.

If a staff member's behavior violates any of the terms of the NAEP Code of Ethics, Oath of Office, Pledge of Confidentiality, or Affidavit of Nondisclosure, you must carefully document the behavior, all circumstances surrounding the behavior, all measures taken to address the issues, and the times and methods used for advising the staff member that the behavior is unacceptable. This documentation is necessary to support your evaluation of the employee's performance, decision to terminate, and the employee's eligibility for rehire.

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All behavior that jeopardizes the validity of the assessment, breaches security, or violates standard rules for appropriate behavior in schools should immediately be documented in an e-mail message and forwarded to your field manager. As part of your documentation, a copy of the e-mail should be printed and placed in the employee's file folder. Just as you require notification from your staff about problems that have occurred, so does your field manager require knowledge about the situation from you before hearing about it from other sources like schools, NAEP State Coordinators, or the government.

As discussed in section 2.3.3, the CDP relies on the specific circumstances to determine what corrective action is appropriate in each case. Actual circumstances will dictate what documentation is required. Follow this guidance when documenting corrective actions:

- **Documented Corrective Feedback.** Speak with the staff member, preferably on a call separate from the weekly report call time. This places emphasis on giving him/her notice that something needs improvement. Be firm and respectful. Do not “soften the blow” with jokes or little compliments. Be sure to tell the staff member how their actions or lack of action affects the study. Provide information on how the staff member can improve. Answer questions; counsel from your experience. Set a **specific goal** for the staff member with a **specific date** for accomplishing the correction.
  - Take notes. For **every** call that involves correcting a staff member, keep a notepad at hand. Capture the main points of both sides of the call to aid in documentation. Once you have the final e-mail or memo written, you may discard the notes. You should review this e-mail with your field manager before sending it to him/her.
  - Follow up with an e-mail to the employee reiterating this conversation using the notes mentioned above. Your field manager must be copied on this e-mail (see below).
- **Verbal Warning.** If the staff member fails to follow your advice or slides into old patterns after a couple of weeks, consult with your field manager to decide how to proceed. You may want to have a three-way conference call to help the staff member understand the serious nature of the problem and to offer another chance to comply. Specific goals and a timeline for meeting those goals should be clearly stated. Everyone should have copies of prior documentation available. Keep the conversation on the subject at hand. Once the discussion has ended, hang up and start a new call between you and your field manager to ensure privacy. Each of you should document the details of this conference call.
- **Formal Action Plan.** If performance does not improve or additional infractions occur, it may be time to move to the next stage in the disciplinary process—a formal action plan. By now you've had one or more conversations with the field manager about the problem and are ready to draft a plan. Schedule a conference call with the employee to discuss the details of the formal action plan:
  - clearly state the issue and required actions;
  - set specific goals and deadlines for accomplishing those goals;

- outline consequences if goals are not met; and
- identify the person responsible for monitoring performance during the plan.

If the problem is serious and jeopardizes the staff member's job, you should say so. After concluding the phone call, draft an e-mail summarizing your discussion, including the employee's agreement to follow the plan, and send to your field manager for approval. Then, send the approved e-mail to the employee. Again, you must print the e-mail, along with receipt and delivery notices. Copy your field manager. If the staff member does not pick up the message within 24 hours, print the e-mail and FedEx it for delivery with signature required.

- In some cases, the serious nature of the problem may warrant a verbal warning or a formal action plan without prior corrective action. Follow the guidelines described above to ensure proper documentation of any corrective action taken.

As mentioned above, all verbal discussions with field staff involving serious reprimands should be carefully documented in an e-mail and sent to your field manager, and must include the following:

- the date, your name, the staff member's name, and a list of everyone copied;
- enough detail so anyone could understand what was discussed and why;
- an outline of everything you said and everything said by the staff member;
- specific details on what you have told the staff member you expect and by when;
- a mention of any previous discussions on this topic with dates;
- attachments of any reports or documents that back up your reason for this reprimand; and
- stay professional in these memos. Imagine the staff member reading them. Be sure these notes reflect your cool, reasoned reflections and even-handedness.

DO NOT include any comments that could be misconstrued by others. Specifically, make

- no reference to ethnicity, race, or national origin;
- no reference to age, race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation;
- no reference to any disability or significant health problem the staff member might have (suspected or verified);
- no mention of financial status or address;
- no mention of personal or family problems;
- no mention of marital status, family composition, or living arrangements;
- no reference to military record;

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- no foul language, unless you are quoting the staff member verbatim; and
  - no opinions, speculations, or emotional statements. Use facts—nothing subjective.

### **2.3.5 Guidelines on Written Documentation**

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It is essential that careful documentation be maintained on every employee from the point of hiring to the project's end. The files containing this documentation should be returned to the home office at the end of the project. These files are used to document performance and behavior—positive and negative. Their primary purpose is in tracking performance throughout a project to support and enhance the performance evaluation process. When necessary, they also substantiate the facts that lead to a person's involuntary job termination. Writing documentation of performance, therefore, is a vital part of your role. Westat has developed a set of guidelines that supervisory staff must adhere to when recording comments in an employee's project file, as well as in e-mail communications or any other written record. These guidelines comply with Westat's Counseling and Disciplinary Process (CDP). The focus of the guidelines is to ensure that all documented information about an employee is fact-based and directly related to the employee's job performance. Confidentiality should be a prime concern in housing these files, which must be stored in a locked and secure area.

What constitutes "documentation?" Documentation is any written record of a person's performance, including all hard-copy materials such as handwritten comments on reports or other company documents, as well as electronic documentation. Nonverbal discussion of a person's performance not intended to be shared with the person (e.g., e-mails to field managers, field directors, or home office staff) are classified as written documentation and should be treated with the same care as the aforementioned types of records. Types of documentation include but are not limited to:

- training evaluations and exercise performance,
- e-mails and other electronic documents,
- documentation from Quality Control Booklets,
- letters,
- faxes,
- receipts, Time and Expense Reports (T&Es), and Trip Expense Reports (TERs),
- reports from the SCS or other sources,
- records of verbal communications, and
- the Documentation Log (see section 2.3.6).

When documenting verbal discussions, notes must be recorded within 24 hours and should include the items mentioned in section 2.3.4.

All documentation should be:

- limited to facts, direct observations, or firsthand accounts of behavior or conversations;
- free from inferences regarding motivation for, the willfulness of, or the factors affecting poor performance;
- focused on what is known regarding the person's performance and the identifiable effects of that performance deficiency; and
- nothing subjective: no opinions or emotional statements.

Proofread the documents before submitting them as final. Review what you have written to eliminate any information not directly related to performance, such as references to a person's race or other items mentioned in section 2.3.4. Examples of appropriate comments include the following:

- Mary converted four schools this week, which is twice what she did the week before.
- Susan was late calling in for her weekly reporting call for the third week in a row.
- Juan made mistakes in recording his mileage 4 weeks in a row, despite calling this to his attention each time and reviewing how to record mileage correctly.

**Furthermore, documentation requested by or submitted to Westat's legal department (whether by you or someone else) must be marked "Privileged and Confidential." For hard-copy documents, "Privileged and Confidential" must appear at the top of the page and, for e-mails, the phrase must appear in the subject line.**

Remember that you must also document what you did to correct the problem (such as providing additional training) and the results. Although we are focusing on documenting problems, you are encouraged to record times when you have commended staff on exceptional performance.

### 2.3.6 Using the Documentation Log

The Documentation Log (see Exhibit 2-3) is basically a formal record of calls for use when providing formal corrective feedback. A Documentation Log has to be completed and maintained when you implement a verbal warning, a formal action plan, or a Stop Work Order investigation. It provides a structure to record steps, actions, feedback, and resolution of field staff problems. The Documentation Log is a useful tool to demonstrate that every reasonable attempt was made to retrain a fieldworker who exhibits problem behavior. It is important to document that staff problems are given full consideration and due process should termination be necessary.

**Exhibit 2-3. Documentation Log**  
*Documentation Log*

Page \_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_

**Data collector:** \_\_\_\_\_ **WINS#** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Incident:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make a separate entry for each contact about a problem with a data collector.*

Date	Time	Mode of Contact* E/T/W/IP	Description of Situation/ Follow-up Action	Action Taken	Comments	Project Staff Involved Name/Project Position	Attachments Y/N**
						1. 2. 3.	
						1. 2. 3.	
						1. 2. 3.	
						1. 2. 3.	

\* Types of Contacts = E/e-mail T/telephone W/written IP/in-person

\*\*Attachments = Poor Performance/Problem Behavior Checklist, reports, e-mails, letters, etc.

Completing a Documentation Log is very similar to filling out a record of calls. Once the heading section is completed, each row of the Documentation Log summarizes one form of contact about a fieldworker's problem behavior (Description of Incident). A line should be completed each time you communicate with the fieldworker or any other individuals involved in the corrective feedback process. The date, time, and mode of contact (e-mail, telephone, written, or in-person) should be recorded, then a short description of the situation, followed by any action you may have taken. In the next section you should record your comments for this particular problem. Next, enter all names and the project positions for all staff members involved in each step of the **formal action plan** or **Stop Work Order investigation**; there should always be at least two project staff involved during this process. Then record whether this contact requires the attachment of additional documentation/evidence, such as e-mails or letters.

Maintain the Documentation Log with its supporting materials in the assessment team's personnel file. Use multiple copies of this form should the situation require more than four contacts. You will need to refer to this documentation when completing staff evaluations.

The Documentation Log will be in your NAEP Docs folder on the laptop.

### 2.3.7 Immediate Terminations

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There are situations in which an employee's behavior requires immediate termination. Some examples of reasons for immediate termination are:

- State, district, or school staff request that the person not work in schools. This may occur because a school staff member overheard a NAEP staff member make a derogatory remark about the school or students.
- Confidentiality or security of NAEP materials is intentionally breached.
- NAEP field staff member fails the FBI background check.
- Inappropriate behavior such as:
  - falsifies data,
  - is dishonest in dealings with NAEP or Westat,
  - sells or attempts to sell products to respondents,
  - gross or repeated insubordination (states a refusal to adhere to Westat policy or project protocols),
  - loss, destruction, or misuse of a company laptop, including hardware or software,
  - harassment (of colleagues, in-house staff, respondents, clients, etc.),
  - theft (persistent over-charges after warnings, unauthorized use of incentives or advances),
  - unauthorized use of equipment (including rental cars) or project materials,

- 
- bizarre, disruptive, rude, or persistently unprofessional (includes dress, telephone use, etc.),
  - inappropriate litigation against Westat, a client or respondent, etc.,
  - substance abuse, or
  - persistent unreliability (travels and/or trains but does no work or disappears with no word).

Complete documentation is required all situations for which termination is being considered. The documentation must clearly support the inappropriateness of the staff member's behavior and must include records of warning, witnesses, dates, names, discussion with supervisors, and all other facts. In extreme cases, confirmation of the facts may result in a fieldworker's termination from all field projects (i.e., termination from Westat).

If you think an immediate termination is warranted, please consult your field manager immediately. These situations must be fully documented and the employee must be informed of the reason(s) for termination.

## Chapter 2 Summary

Upon completing this chapter, you should now be able to:

- set appropriate expectations for high quality and accountability for your assessment teams;
- communicate effectively with your ACs;
- provide appropriate feedback to ACs; and
- provide appropriate documentation, if necessary.