

# ADMINISTER

a manual for Assessment Administrators

2007-2008



LONG-TERM TREND

# NAEP 2007–2008

## ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATOR MANUAL—LTT

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# 1

## INTRODUCTION TO NAEP

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### 1. NAEP Overview

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 (the Governing Board) 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. The Governing Board 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, 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 2002–2003 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;
- 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.

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

As a result of the NCLB legislation, NCES and the Governing Board 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 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.**

## **A. Characteristics of NAEP**

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### **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 during 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.

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**Here are additional facts about NAEP:**

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

The Governing Board selects the academic subject areas to be assessed and develops content “frameworks” or test blueprints.

**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 welcome 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). 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 that 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.

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## B. NAEP Organizational Structure

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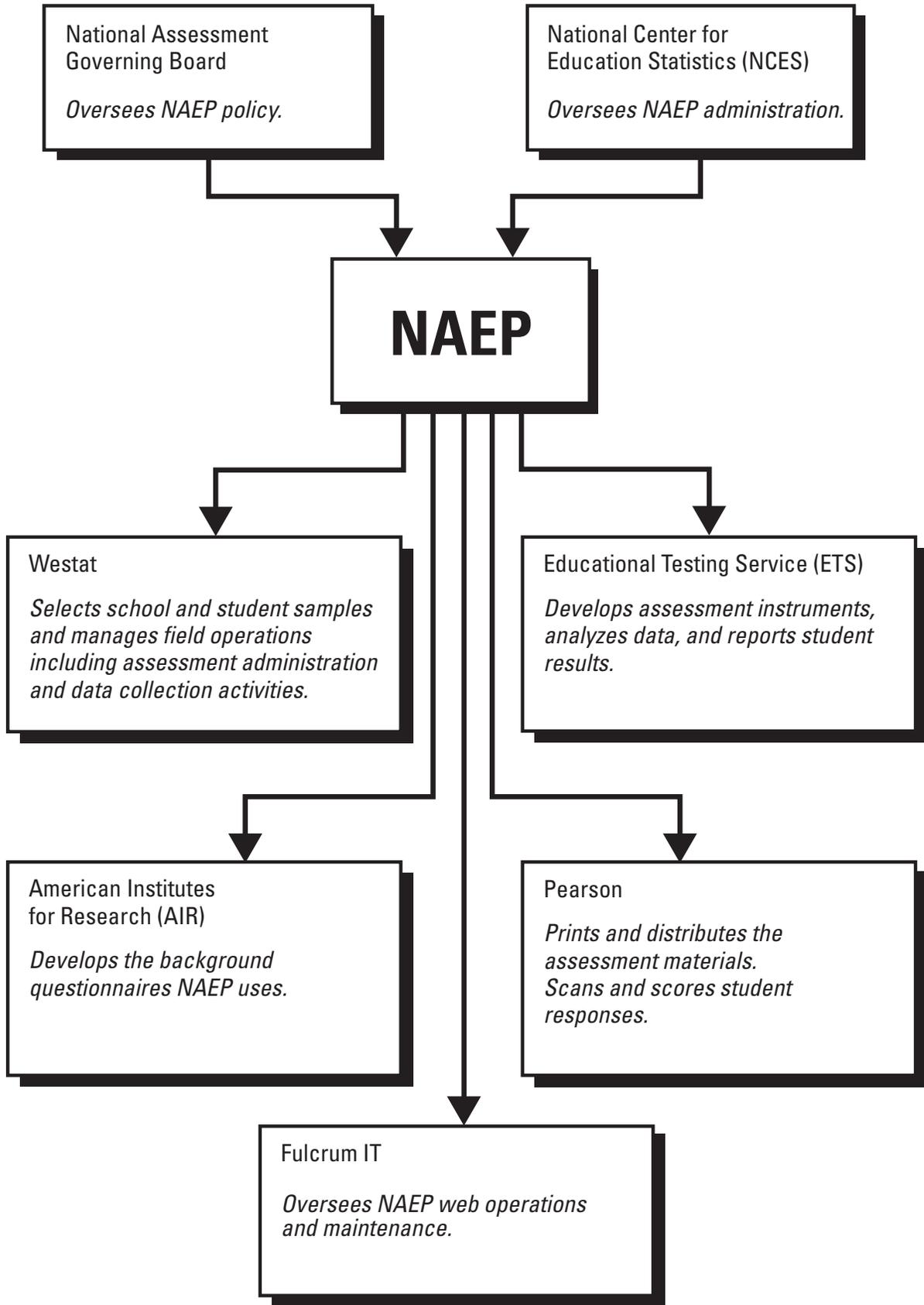
The chart on the next page shows the current organizational structure of NAEP.

The Commissioner of Education Statistics, who heads NCES in the U.S. Department of Education, is responsible, by law, for carrying out the NAEP project through competitive awards to qualified organizations. The Associate Commissioner for Assessment at NCES executes the program operations and technical quality control.

The Governing Board, appointed by the Secretary of Education but independent of the U.S. Department of Education, governs the program. Authorized to set policy for NAEP, the Governing Board is broadly representative of NAEP's varied audiences. The Governing Board selects the subject areas to be assessed and develops guidelines for reporting. While overseeing NAEP, the Governing Board often works with several other organizations. For example, the Governing Board has contracted with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to ensure that content is planned through a national process and with ACT, Inc. to identify achievement standards for the subjects and grades tested.

### **NCES contracts with private companies for test development and administration services.**

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) is responsible for developing the assessment instruments, analyzing the data, and reporting the results. Westat is responsible for selecting the school and student samples and managing field operations (including training, assessment administration, and data collection activities). Pearson Educational Measurement (Pearson) is responsible for printing and distributing the assessment materials and for scanning and scoring students' responses. American Institutes for Research (AIR) is responsible for developing the background questionnaires. Fulcrum IT is responsible for NAEP web operations and maintenance.



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## 2. The NAEP Program for 2007-2008

### A. Long-Term Trend (LTT)

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From October 8, 2007 through May 23, 2008, NAEP will be conducting the LTT assessments in reading and mathematics among 9-, 13-, and 17-year-old students. The LTT assessments are designed to collect information on the changes in the basic achievement of America's youth by monitoring trend lines first established in 1971 for reading and 1973 for mathematics. The last LTT assessment was in 2003-2004.

**There will be neither School nor Teacher Questionnaires for the LTT assessment.** There will be SD and/or ELL Questionnaires for students classified as SD and/or ELL.

### B. Science Interactive Computer Tasks Prepilot

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The new NAEP Science Framework for the 2009 science assessment calls for a series of interactive computer tasks, during which students will demonstrate their science knowledge and skills, especially their inquiry skills, using online tools. These items will be piloted during the 2008 field test. However, NAEP will be conducting a prepilot in October and November of 2007 to test procedures and items associated with computer delivery in preparation for the field test in 2008.

### C. Field Test Studies in Reading, Mathematics, and Science

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NAEP will conduct a field test from January 28 through March 7, 2008 in reading, mathematics, and science in grades 4, 8, and 12. The purpose of the field test is to try out new assessment items, materials, and procedures in preparation for the 2009 assessment.

### D. Arts Assessment

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NAEP will conduct an arts assessment from January 28 through March 7, 2008 in grade 8. The inclusion of the arts in NAEP 2008 will mark the fourth time the disciplines of music and visual arts have been assessed nationally. Music was first assessed in 1972 and visual arts in 1975. They were both last assessed in 1997. The information gleaned from an assessment of the arts on a national scale will broaden our understanding of what American students know and can do in two of the major arts disciplines.

## 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 for processing. NCES enforces strict confidentiality standards to ensure that no personally identifiable information is ever released to third parties. To protect the confidentiality of **all** NAEP materials, you must strictly observe NAEP rules and guidelines at all times.

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## A. NAEP 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 of students, their family background, teachers, and schools.

By statute (Pub. 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.

To fulfill the first requirement, NAEP has made sure since its inception that no identifying information on individual students or schools is included in its data releases or reports. The names of students who have taken NAEP never leaves 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, the Governing Board 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 all of the questions that make up 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 through the field manager or field director to the NAEP State Coordinator, 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://nationsreportcard.gov>.

## **B. 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.**

There is a press release available that you may give to school coordinators if they are faced with inquiries from the media. **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).

## **C. The NAEP Code of Ethics**

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The NAEP assessment teams are critical to NAEP's success. You conduct the assessments and are the face of NAEP in the schools. Assessment sessions must be administered in a standardized and professional manner for the results to accurately reflect the achievement of American students. Only if the sessions are conducted properly will each child have the opportunity to show what he/she knows and can do in the subject being assessed. If the data are not valid, not only will all analyses and reports be incorrect, but the 30-plus-year reputation of NAEP will be discredited.

Because you serve as a representative of NAEP, your attitude and conduct in working with school officials, teachers, and students must reflect the importance and seriousness of this project. Fulfilling your responsibilities in a professional manner will indicate to others that you consider the project worthy of the time and effort that students, parents, teachers, and school, district, and state staff have devoted to NAEP.

## NAEP Code of Ethics

NAEP is firmly committed to the collection of high quality, independent, and unbiased measures of student academic performance.

This Code of Ethics defines the principles that are the foundation for fair and accurate test administration and data collection. NAEP grantees, contractors, and subcontractors must ensure that all procedures, materials, training programs, and administrative guidelines are derived from these principles.

This Code of Ethics applies to all staff and contracted employees who are involved in the collection of NAEP data. Each individual must have the opportunity to review the Code before becoming a part of the NAEP team. Prior to collecting NAEP data, an individual must swear or affirm his/her commitment to uphold the principles stated in this Code.

The basic principles guiding NAEP data collection are accuracy, integrity, and respect.

ACCURACY		
<p><b>Accuracy ensures that NAEP results precisely reflect student achievement across the nation.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Sampled schools and sampled students who are eligible for the assessment are to be included in the assessment to the greatest extent possible.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Students shall be assessed using accommodations as specified in their education plans and offered by NAEP.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The NAEP testing environment shall be correctly structured and a positive atmosphere shall be established so that all students have a fair chance to perform to full capacity.</li></ul>
INTEGRITY		
<p><b>Integrity ensures that rigorous, ethical, and consistent procedures are used for NAEP test administration and data collection.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Persons administering and monitoring NAEP assessments shall comply with standard NAEP procedures for administering and monitoring the assessment.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Persons authorized by NAEP to have access to NAEP testing materials shall follow the NAEP Guidelines for Viewing Assessment Materials.</li><li>● NAEP staff and other proctors assigned to testing sessions shall receive clear, unambiguous guidance on testing procedures.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Deviations from proper procedures shall be documented, and those affecting student performance shall be reported immediately.</li></ul>
RESPECT		
<p><b>Respect ensures that students, school staff, and others affected by NAEP test administration and data collection are treated with professionalism, openness, and courtesy.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Schools shall be notified in advance of the assessment and provided all relevant information about NAEP, NAEP assessment procedures and schedules, and NAEP personnel who might be entering the school.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Test takers and other stakeholders shall have access to information about NAEP, including sample items and NAEP reports.</li><li>● Persons administering and monitoring NAEP assessments shall be sensitive to the needs of students, teachers, and the school when administering NAEP.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● NAEP staff members are to ensure the confidentiality of all information provided by students and school staff in response to assessment and questionnaire items.</li><li>● Any complaint or concern about a NAEP assessment shall be addressed directly by testing personnel in the field and promptly reported to NCES or its designee.</li></ul>

As a member of the NAEP data collection team, you are expected to abide by the NAEP Code of Ethics for Assessment Administration and Data Collection. This Code of Ethics is a set of principles that NAEP expects all staff members to follow. The Code defines principles that are the foundation for fair and accurate test administration and data collection.

If you have not previously done so during any past employment on NAEP, at the end of the in-person training, you will be asked to sign the following Oath of Office committing yourself to uphold the principles stated in the Code:

“I acknowledge that I have been instructed in and understand the NAEP Code of Ethics. I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will adhere to this Code of Ethics; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter.”

## 4. Goals of the NAEP 2007-2008 LTT Training Program

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

As an assessment administrator (AA), 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 2007-2008 reflect important priorities:**

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

Each piece of data you collect or procedure you carry out that affects statistical validity must also be double-checked by someone other than yourself for accuracy. Quality control (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 an AA, you are responsible for QC checking your own work, as well as that of your fellow AAs. Your supervisor is also responsible for the quality control of the work you do, and will conduct a series of QC checks 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.

## **5. 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.



### **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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