TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

Student Assessment Division

Test Security Supplement

2008–2009

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Purpose of this Supplement

Maintaining the security and confidentiality of the Texas state assessment program is crucial for ensuring valid test scores and providing standard and equal testing opportunities for all students. Given the high stakes associated with student performance and the increasing complexity of the assessment program, test administration personnel face new challenges in managing the testing requirements at the local level. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) Student Assessment Division developed the *Test Security Supplement* to help guide districts in implementing these requirements and to foster best practices for maintaining a secure testing program.

First introduced in fall 2005, the *Test Security Supplement* has been revised annually to address the most frequently reported problems and challenges experienced in previous administrations and to alert districts about possible issues they may face in the upcoming testing year. In 2006, TEA released the *Secure Materials Supplement* in response to an increased focus on the loss and late return of secure test materials distributed to school districts and the additional measures implemented to collaboratively ensure the successful return of these items. The topics covered in the *Secure Materials Supplement* were later incorporated into the *Test Security Supplement* in order to provide a single resource to testing personnel.

The information contained in the *Test Security Supplement* is organized from the perspective of issues a district testing coordinator might encounter before, during, and after a test administration and is meant to provide guidance on how required tasks can be performed as directed. **This document is not intended to replace any procedures or instructions contained in the *2009 District and Campus Coordinator Manual* or test administrator manuals**. It is provided to testing personnel as a supplement to further support incident-free test administrations.

General Information and Key Changes in Test Security

Several key changes that impact test security have been incorporated into the *2009 District and Campus Coordinator Manual*. Some of these changes reflect the continued implementation of the recommendations made by TEA's Task Force on Test Integrity and the agency's ongoing efforts to improve security measures in the state's assessment program. In June 2007, TEA introduced a comprehensive 14-point plan designed to assure parents, students, and the public that test results are meaningful and valid. Several aspects of this plan were implemented during spring 2008 testing, while other measures will be instituted over the next few years. A summary of this year's measures and other key changes is provided to highlight the issues that will impact testing personnel.

Additional information, such as common errors TEA has observed in previous years' administrations, has been included throughout this supplement to clarify and heighten awareness of situations that can lead to testing irregularities. The following icon will appear next to sections and/or topics where this information has been added:

Denotes additional information regarding common errors
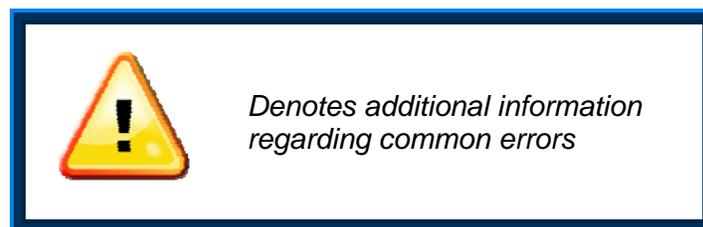
14-Point Plan Measures Introduced for 2009 Administrations

Beginning with the 2009 administrations, TEA will promote test security and confidentiality by implementing the following new/updated measures:

Model Policy on Test Integrity and Test Security Procedures

Recommendation 12 from the 14-point test security plan was for TEA to develop a model policy on test integrity and test security procedures for possible adoption by local school boards. The rationale proposed for the implementation of this recommendation was as follows:

> *Procedures to help ensure test security and confidentiality are spelled out in the District and Campus Coordinator Manual that is produced annually for the state assessment program. All individuals involved in the administrations of the state assessments are required to sign oaths indicating they understand test security and confidentiality requirements. By providing a model policy to local school boards for their review and consideration, there is an expectation that districts would be more cognizant of state test security requirements for district personnel.*

District coordinators from across the state were contacted and asked to submit any locally-developed materials that had proven to be helpful in ensuring compliance with state-mandated test security and confidentiality requirements. A focus group consisting of district coordinators was then formed to review the materials submitted, assist in the development of a "best practices" implementation plan, and discuss possible content for the model policy. It was the opinion of the focus group that the *Test Security Supplement* already serves as a "best practices" document and should be used for the implementation of the model policy. Suggestions from the group for improving the supplement were considered and changes have been incorporated into this document for the 2008–2009 school year. For example, a bulleted list of documents that TEA requires districts/campuses to maintain for five years has been added. As another example, text has been included to remind districts to identify homebound students needing to test and to develop plans to ensure assessments are administered to those students.

The following model policy, to be considered for possible local adoption, was developed based on focus group input.

Model Policy

The (Name of District/Charter) shall comply with all procedures established by TEA in its annual test administration manuals with regard to test security and confidentiality. The superintendent shall be responsible for ensuring that:

- procedures are developed to assure the security and confidentiality of state assessments are in compliance with all requirements established by TEA
- district and campus testing personnel are trained in test security and confidentiality, as well as test administration procedures, in accordance with TEA's published requirements
- any violation of the state's security or confidentiality procedures is reported to TEA in accordance with established procedures

TEA's *Test Security Supplement* shall serve as the "best practices" document to guide the district in the implementation of this policy.

Honor Statements

In spring 2008, students in grades 9 and 10 as well as exit level examinees were asked to sign an honor statement immediately prior to taking Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) or TAKS (Accommodated) assessments. This measure will be extended in 2009 to include students taking TAKS Modified (TAKS-M) at grades 9, 10, and 11, and the following language will now appear on the TAKS–M examinee's answer document:

> By signing my name, I agree that I will not give or receive unauthorized assistance during the test. I understand that giving or receiving unauthorized assistance during the test is cheating and may result in the invalidation of my test results.

In preparation for the inclusion of honor statements during 2008 testing, districts were encouraged to send families advance notification so parents would have an opportunity to speak to their children about the importance of not providing or receiving assistance on a test and the consequences that can result if cheating occurs. A sample letter containing suggested language was made available to districts at that time to aid in communicating information about the new measure. A copy of that sample correspondence is located in Appendix A of this supplement and can be adapted and sent to the parents of students scheduled to take TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), or TAKS–M in 2009 at the applicable grade levels.

Test administrators for TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), and TAKS–M will be provided instructions for prompting students to complete the honor statement, but will not be required to verify that examinees have signed the statement.

Previously Implemented 14-Point Plan Measures

Descriptions of the 14-point measures that were introduced in the *2007-2008 Test Security Supplement* have been retained in this year's supplement for historical and continuity purposes. Updates have been added to some of these measures, which are listed below.

Seating Charts

Seating charts must be completed for each test session conducted by the district, including sessions that result from students being moved or relocated for any reason (overflow and/or consolidation of students, original testing areas becoming unsuitable, etc.). Seating chart examples have been provided in Appendix B of this supplement, and electronic copies can be accessed on the Student Assessment Division website at the following address:

http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/admin/security/index.html

Districts may create seating chart templates that best suit their needs; however, the following minimal information must be collected for each test session:

1. The location of the test session must be recorded, including the district and campus names and the room designation. Provide a brief description of the testing area (e.g., classroom, library, cafeteria).

2. The assessment that is being administered at this location must be indicated, including the specific test administered, the subject area (e.g., reading, writing), and the grade level.

3. The first and last name(s) of the test administrator(s)/monitor(s) conducting or involved in the test session must be recorded.

4. The first and last name of each student participating in the assessment must be indicated on the chart at the location where the student was seated for testing. Districts and campuses may include additional information if they choose to do so.

> Incident reports submitted since this measure's inception have revealed some common mistakes campuses have made while implementing this requirement. Several irregularities have resulted from failures to update or complete seating charts after students have been relocated or when late-arriving examinees have been added to test sessions. Reports have also indicated that students have been permitted to record their own information on seating charts and in some cases have been directed by test administrators to complete seating charts for entire groups of examinees. Both situations pose an unnecessary security risk, as each has been shown to contribute to other errors (i.e., students being allowed to handle secure materials). For this reason, seating charts should be completed only by trained testing personnel.

Local Investigations and Disciplinary Actions Taken Against Educators and Students

Two additional reporting procedures were introduced beginning with the 2008 administrations. The first of these required districts to submit the findings from any local investigations conducted in response to the loss of secure materials or irregularities classified as a potential referral to the TEA Educator Certification and Standards Division. Prior to 2008, information of this nature was typically included in a district's incident report documentation and/or the required Corrective Action Plan. As part of the implementation of the 14-point security measures, the guidelines for submitting this information were updated in the *2008 District and Campus Coordinator Manual* to require districts to report any disciplinary action taken against an educator as a result of district investigations. A Corrective Action Plan template was created for the collection of this information, and an electronic version of this document was posted on the Student Assessment Division website at the following address:

http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/admin/incidents/index.html

The second procedure put into place in accordance with the security plan required districts to report any disciplinary action taken against a student for cheating on a state assessment, such as invalidation of the student's test or suspension. An online form, *Locally Determined Disciplinary Action Taken Against Student(s),* was developed for collecting this information and can be accessed and completed via the Student Assessment Division website at:

http://www.txetests.com/DAF/choosedistrict.asp

> Data collected during the spring 2008 test administrations suggest that some districts may have misinterpreted this measure to include instances where disciplinary action was taken in response to an incident that was not cheating-related (i.e., a student violated the district's cell phone policy but did not use the device to gain an unfair advantage). To clarify, districts are required to submit an online report only for situations where it has been determined that a student has cheated or when disciplinary action has been taken as a result of a student's involvement in a cheating incident.

Document Retention

At a minimum, districts are required to maintain the following documents for a period of five years following a test administration:

1. Testing irregularity and investigation documentation

    Examples:

    ► Statements from individuals involved
    ► Verification of training

    ► District investigative reports
    ► Corrective Action Plans

2. Inventory and shipping records

    Examples:

    ► Packing lists
    ► Documentation of any materials loaned to other districts
    ► District inventory records

    ► FedEx tracking numbers/freight bill numbers
    ► Records of contact with TEA and/or Pearson

3. Signed security oaths for all testing personnel (with the exception of the district testing coordinator and superintendent/chief administrative officer oaths, which are mailed to the state's testing contractor)

    Examples:

    ► Principal oaths
    ► Campus coordinator oaths
    ► Test administrator oaths (general)

    ► Test administrator oaths (administration-specific)
    ► TELPAS rater and verifier oaths

4. Seating charts

Districts may decide how this documentation is to be stored – e.g., scanned and kept in an electronic format, hard copy – as long as the information is secure and can be retrieved if necessary. Districts may also choose to establish local policies requiring the retention of additional documents.

On-Site Monitoring

TEA used independent test monitors to conduct visits to districts and campuses throughout the 2008 testing year. The Student Assessment Division will continue to coordinate with other TEA divisions in 2009 to identify campuses where testing will be monitored and/or where visits will occur.

New Procedures Involving Oaths

Security oaths were revised for 2008 testing to more closely follow the order of events that occur before, during, and after an administration. These changes were intended to increase awareness and accountability by requiring individuals to acknowledge before being allowed to participate in testing that they have been trained and that they will comply with rules governing the assessment program and then to affirm by their signature after the administration has concluded that they have complied with assessment procedures.

Updates to security oaths for 2009 have been made in response to requests from district coordinators. These changes introduce a new oath that test administrators will sign after receiving training on general test administration procedures and test security. Test administrators will still sign an administration-specific oath when they have been trained for and have completed each administration. Test administrators who conduct an oral administration of an assessment will now also be required to complete an additional section that has been added to the administration-specific oath.

To illustrate how these modifications might impact a district's training schedule, a sample timeline is provided in *figure 1* below. (Please note that the following example is to demonstrate the timing associated with the general and administration-specific test administrator oaths and does not include all spring 2009 administrations.)

Figure 1: Sample Training Timeline
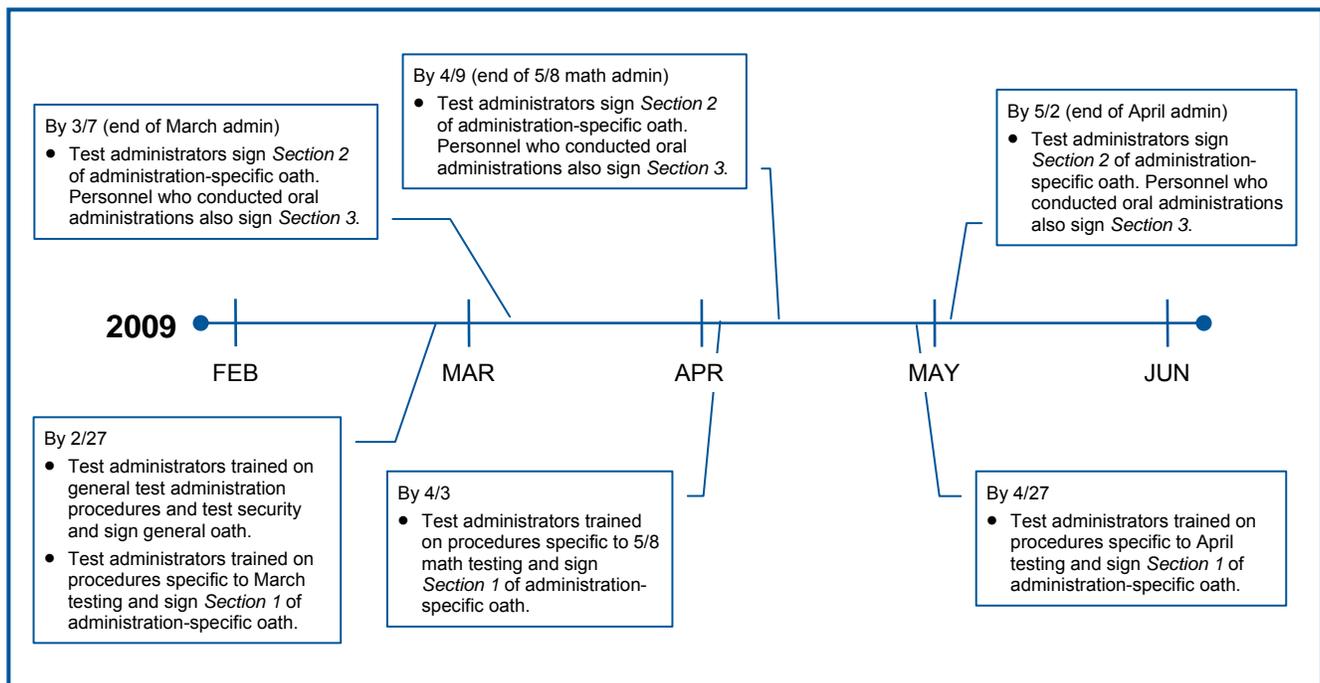
Oral Administrations

As the Student Assessment Division continues to place additional emphasis on the procedures governing oral administrations, district and campus coordinators are asked to stress in their training sessions and during testing the proper manner in which this activity is to be conducted. Test administrators giving an oral administration must be instructed that they are viewing secure content and that responding to test items, recording the information they see, viewing or scoring examinees' responses, or discussing the content of the test is strictly prohibited.

⚠️ A substantial number of the oral administration irregularities reported to TEA involved teachers solving the confidential test items in the test administrator's copy of the assessment and/or mentally scoring their examinee's responses. In many of these cases, test administrators asserted that they were simply "passing time" in between reading each item, were curious about how well the student was doing, and/or were unaware that their actions were prohibited. No matter how well intended these individuals' actions may have been, all testing personnel conducting oral administrations are expected to strictly adhere to the established procedures and be cognizant that these types of irregularities constitute a serious breach in confidentiality.

Active Monitoring

Inadequate monitoring during an administration remains one of the most common mistakes made and is a major contributor to other errors. Failing to ensure proper oversight can limit a district's assurance that confidentiality has been maintained and can result in the invalidation of students' tests.

District testing coordinators should continue to emphasize during training the importance of active monitoring. Test administrators should confirm that students are working only on the subject-area test being administered that day and that examinees do not have access to unauthorized materials. Grade 3 students using scorable test booklets should be regularly reminded to respond to every question, and test administrators for all other grade levels are required to verify that students have recorded their responses on their answer documents. Principals and campus testing coordinators should confirm that test administrators are performing these activities in each testing room.

⚠️ Additional guidance has been provided in this year's supplement to help coordinators address errors that may result due to inadequate monitoring. This information can be found in the section titled "Common Testing Irregularities – How to Avoid and Address Them" and, hopefully, will give testing personnel a means by which the impact on students and the district can be minimized if these situations arise.

Overview of Materials Security

According to 19 TAC §101.61, all test materials must be handled in strict accordance with the instructions contained in the *2009 District and Campus Coordinator Manual* and in the test administrator manuals. Trained, certified personnel and/or their trained designees are the only individuals authorized to have access to test materials. In addition, all secure items must be properly monitored and accounted for during testing and kept in locked storage when not in use.

District testing coordinators are responsible for ensuring that all secure materials have been accounted for, both upon receipt in the district and prior to returning the materials to the state's testing contractor. Every test booklet and Linguistically Accommodated Testing (LAT) linguistic simplification guide displays a bar code containing a unique security number used for tracking purposes. Districts are required to implement any controls necessary to ensure accurate and reliable tracking of all secure items and must maintain inventory and shipping records for at least five years in the event that a discrepancy arises or the receipt of the district's materials cannot be confirmed.

To assist coordinators in identifying sections and individual topics that pertain directly to maintaining the security of test materials, the following "lock" icon will appear next to these items throughout this supplement:

Denotes secure materials topic(s)

For additional information regarding some best practices that have been employed in the field, please refer to Appendix C of this document.

Differentiating Between Secure and Nonsecure Items

Appendix D of this supplement provides a summary of the types of secure and nonsecure test materials that are sent to districts and identifies which items must be returned in the scorable shipment and which are returned in the nonscorable shipment. All bar-coded secure materials must be shipped back to the testing contractor at the end of each test administration; however, only a portion of the nonsecure materials must be returned. Districts should note that some nonsecure items may contain student information that must be kept confidential.

What Can You Do to Make Sure Your Program is Secure?

Things to Consider BEFORE an Administration

Planning for the Receipt, Storage, and Distribution of Materials

Sound planning plays a key role in ensuring the proper handling and successful return of all secure materials. Because test materials are stored at campuses for much of the time they are in the district, it is essential that campus coordinators also plan accordingly. It will be important for district testing coordinators to verify that the campuses have sufficient measures in place and are implementing these procedures for tracking secure materials. Listed below are some considerations coordinators should take into account when planning for an administration.

☑ **Prepare for the receipt and storage of test materials.**

____ Do you carefully review the advance letter and materials list so you will know exactly which and how many materials will arrive from the testing contractor? (These documents should be available online approximately one month before each test administration.)

____ Based on the materials list, do you verify that each campus will have sufficient quantities of test materials? (If additional materials are required, it is often more efficient to compile the needs of all of the district's campuses and submit a single order to the state's testing contractor.)

____ Is your secure area large enough to store all materials you will receive from the contractor, including shipments for administrations that overlap?

____ Do you have enough room to sort all the materials you will receive for each administration?

____ Do you have a plan in place for keeping each administration's materials organized and separate? (Do not mix administrations when you return materials. Materials returned in boxes labeled incorrectly take longer to process.)

____ If additional materials are ordered, have you identified how you will store, distribute, and track these items after they are received?

____ Have you identified all personnel who will be authorized to have access to materials?

____ Have campuses identified all individuals who will have access to the secure storage area?

____ Are campuses prepared to receive their shipment? Do they have adequate secure storage space and room to inventory and sort materials?

☑ **Prepare for the distribution of test materials.**

____ Have you established procedures for distributing and tracking overage materials? Do you have a tracking document or some other means you can use to record the security numbers and destination of all booklets?

____ Have you established a secure method for transferring materials to campuses?

____ Are the individuals transporting the materials authorized to handle secure materials?

____ Have you established sign-off procedures to identify who is responsible for materials when they are not in your possession?

____ Do campus coordinators have Materials Control Forms ready to use when distributing test materials to test administrators each day? Do they have a tracking document for recording overage or additional materials they receive, as well as for booklets that may be transferred between campuses?

____ Does each campus have check-in/check-out procedures established and documented?

____ Do campus coordinators know that they should verify and account for all booklets each day?

____ Have arrangements been made to ensure that secure materials will not be accidentally discarded by custodial personnel?

____ Do campus coordinators have procedures in place to ensure the proper packing and return of materials to the district coordinator?

____ Do campus coordinators have procedures for verifying that all answer documents are correctly submitted for processing after testing?

____ Do you have a process for ensuring that overage is accounted for after the administration?

Receiving and Distributing Test Materials

For most administrations, secure and nonsecure materials are combined into one shipment, which will arrive in the district approximately two to three weeks before testing. For all other administrations, the secure and nonsecure materials will be shipped independently. In the case of separate shipments, districts normally receive the nonsecure materials about three weeks in advance of the secure shipment, and they will be divided by administration into a WHITE district coordinator box, district overage box(es), and campus box(es). The secure materials will typically arrive two to three weeks before testing. Regardless of the shipping method, it is imperative that all secure materials be physically inventoried upon receipt.

Test material overage is assigned to the district. Any additional materials that are required at a campus must be tracked to that campus. This also applies to secure materials that are transferred between campuses within a district or between districts.

The ultimate responsibility of accounting for test materials falls upon the district testing coordinator; however, campus coordinators play an integral role in supporting this task. Using some type of tracking process such as the Materials Control Form can greatly assist in your ability to locate all secure materials in your possession throughout a test administration.

☑ **Receive, inventory, and store test materials.**

____ Have you verified the shipment of test materials? (For all shipments, check that all boxes are accounted for by verifying the testing program noted on the box and label and the sequence of numbers displayed on the boxes – e.g., Box 35 of 55.)

____ Have all secure materials been placed in locked storage when not in use? Have materials for different administrations been kept separate?

☑ Distribute test materials to campuses.

____ Are you documenting the distribution of materials to the campuses?

____ Have materials been successfully transferred to the campuses? (Campus materials will be packaged in separate boxes with brightly colored labels.) **DO NOT DELAY** in forwarding them to the campuses.

____ Have you confirmed that all campuses have physically inventoried their shipments and verified the completeness of all test booklet packets that have been received?

____ Have all campuses provided you with their requests for additional materials, if needed? It will be more efficient to first collect this information from all campuses so a single order for additional materials can be placed with the state's testing contractor.

Handling Testing Disruptions

Disruptions in testing generally involve serious situations that can usually be resolved when properly handled. Having a plan in place to address unforeseen events can contribute to a successful resolution and can help to ensure that there is minimal impact on students. District testing coordinators should contact the Student Assessment Division as soon as possible to discuss the situation when something unforeseen occurs. To prepare for any unexpected disruptions, the district should consider the following questions:

____ Are all campuses aware of what to do if a disruption takes place during testing?

____ Have testing personnel been instructed as to whom they should contact if a problem arises?

____ Does each campus have a plan in place for securing test materials and maintaining confidentiality in the event of a disruption during testing? (Remember that <u>the safety of students and staff is the first consideration</u>.)

When you phone TEA for guidance in handling a disruption, being prepared to answer the following questions will help Student Assessment staff assess the situation:

What happened and where did the disruption take place? What's the nature of the disruption?

How many examinees are affected and are they being monitored while the situation is being assessed?

How far have test sessions progressed? Can testing be resumed the same day? If so, will there be sufficient time for students to finish their assessments?

What are other options for continuing testing as soon as possible, considering the situation?

If testing cannot resume the same day, what efforts can be made to maintain test security and integrity?

Training

Training is one of the most effective activities in which a district testing coordinator can invest time and resources. Preparing for and conducting as many training sessions as possible will be one of the district coordinator's best tools for avoiding mistakes. Make certain that adequate time is allocated for these sessions so that all major topics are addressed, and be sure to conduct all training for campus coordinators by the deadline(s) specified in the Calendar of Events in the _2009 District and Campus Coordinator Manual._

☑ **Develop a training plan.**

____ Have you attended district coordinator training?

____ Have you signed your security oath?

____ Have you reviewed the training guidelines and familiarized yourself with the current _2009 District and Campus Coordinator Manual_?

____ Have you scheduled a sufficient number of training sessions (including make-up sessions) and allowed enough time to adequately train campus coordinators?

____ Have you given coordinators ample notice of the scheduled training dates?

____ Have you made facility arrangements for holding training sessions?

____ Have you developed training materials for the sessions? Have you included topics on the previously introduced as well as new requirements of the 14–point plan and the new procedures for signing oaths?

____ Have you assembled training materials or guidelines that campus coordinators should use for their test administrator training?

> Refer to the Student Assessment Division website to access the December 2008 Education Service Center training PowerPoint presentation for material that can be used in your local training sessions.

☑ **Train campus coordinators on what to do BEFORE each test administration.**

____ Read and be familiar with the coordinator and test administrator manuals.

____ Sign a security oath.

 ____ Be knowledgeable of the secure materials topics that pertain to the proper procedures for storing, distributing, and tracking secure items.

 ____ Know when shipments arrive and verify immediately that all materials have been received.

 ____ Ensure that your campus has sufficient quantities of materials. Be sure to take into account special administrations that require additional Form 1 booklets (oral administrations, dyslexia bundled accommodations, etc.).

____ Designate test administrators and monitors. (Remind coordinators about the qualification guidelines for participating in state assessments. Encourage campuses to identify and train as many personnel as possible.)

____ Identify the certified professional who will be responsible for each (if any) paraprofessional who will be participating in testing.

____ Make sure to schedule a sufficient number of training sessions (including make-up sessions) and allow enough time to adequately train all testing personnel.

____ Make the necessary facility arrangements to hold training sessions, and give testing personnel ample notice of training dates.

____ Conduct training sessions, verify attendance, and retain attendance sign-in sheets. Encourage coordinators to retain copies of training materials and agendas in case questions arise or testing irregularities occur.

____ Ensure that procedures are in place for transferring examinees and testing materials from one area to another and that testing personnel are aware of the monitoring requirements when doing so. (Remind coordinators that students should handle their materials only during the test session and are never permitted to transport these items outside the testing environment.)

____ Arrange for testing rooms and organize test sessions. Be sure to take make-up testing into consideration when applicable.

____ Determine how the campus will accommodate students who may need extra time to complete their assessments. Although campuses are not required to test beyond the regular school hours, coordinators should identify and prepare for issues that tend to arise later in the day – e.g., students needing to transfer responses, collecting materials, checking for blank answer documents, etc.

____ Make sure to have a sufficient number of blank seating charts prepared (be sure to account for areas used for overflow or for consolidating late testers.) Ensure that the charts have space on which to record the required information and are appropriate for the layout of each test session.

____ Confirm that you have received and used updated information regarding the testing requirements and accommodations for students receiving special education and Section 504 services.

____ Review ID sheets and applicable answer documents.

____ Supervise the verification of precoded materials and answer documents.

____ Supervise the hand-gridding of scorable test booklets and blank answer documents.

____ Walk through each testing room prior to testing and verify that no visible instructional aids are present and that the environment is appropriate for testing. (Keep in mind that many errors involving a failure to conceal instructional aids result from transferring examinees to rooms that the campus did not originally intend to use as testing areas.)

____ Confirm that all eligible examinees have been accounted for and have been assigned the correct test.

____ Ensure that arrangements have been made to assess any homebound students who have been identified as eligible testers.

☑ **Train campus coordinators on what to do DURING each test administration.**

🔒 ____ Verify and account for all materials before and after testing each day.

🔒 ____ Use a Materials Control Form when distributing secure test materials to test administrators.

____ Verify that all test administrators have been issued the correct assessments, answer documents, manipulatives, and test administrator manuals.

____ Confirm that all students have been directed to and are present in their designated testing areas.

____ Monitor testing (i.e., visit each testing area to ensure test administrators are actively monitoring and periodically reminding students to record their responses on the answer document).

____ Confirm that a seating chart has been completed for each test session. Make sure seating charts are also completed for test sessions involving students who have been moved or transferred. Remind test administrators to record seating information for any late-arriving examinees.

____ Verify that all calculator memories have been cleared and that all testing areas have a sufficient number of allowable reference materials.

____ Ensure that students are being issued the appropriate tests and have the correct corresponding answer document.

____ Ensure that all test administrators are personally distributing test materials to examinees – do not allow students to pass materials to one another. To avoid switching answer documents, test administrators should be especially careful when issuing materials to students with the same or similar names.

____ Be aware of any appearance of impropriety (i.e., make sure coordinators and test administrators know how to avoid situations that might lead to allegations of viewing, discussing, or scoring test materials).

____ Ensure that test administrators are verifying that students have marked their responses on their answer documents or their scorable test booklets before they leave the testing room.

____ Be accessible in case problems arise.

☑ **Train campus coordinators on what to do AFTER each test administration.**

____ Direct the collection of materials from the test administrators.

🔒 ____ Account for every answer document.

🔒 ____ Account for every test booklet and secure linguistic simplification guide (this includes any overage or transferred materials).

____ Verify that the correct score code has been marked on each answer document and that all hand-gridding and transcribing have been properly completed. (Remind coordinators that testing personnel may not erase stray marks or darken answer-choice circles on students' answer documents and scorable test booklets.)

____ Confirm that each examinee has recorded responses on his or her answer document. If a blank answer document is discovered during this process, the district **must** contact the TEA Student Assessment Division to request permission to transcribe any responses the student may have recorded in the test booklet.

____ Follow procedures for properly boxing and labeling materials for return to the district testing coordinator. Do not combine TAKS materials [which includes TAKS (Accommodated) and TAKS–M] with Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) or Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) materials, and do not mix materials from one administration with any other.

____ Recheck the secure storage area for stray items (especially overage or unused materials) before returning materials to the district coordinator.

____ Maintain all inventory records and packaging information in the event a problem arises and materials need to be accounted for.

Things to Consider __DURING__ an Administration

Monitoring and Oversight

During testing, district coordinators should be available to answer questions and resolve issues. Monitoring campuses during an administration can help confirm that procedures are being followed and can minimize the risk of error. Principals and campus testing coordinators play a crucial role in this effort, as they in turn are required to ensure that each test administrator is actively monitoring and that all testing personnel are adhering to the proper assessment procedures. The following are some things the district coordinator should consider:

☑ **Verify that campuses are properly monitoring test sessions.**

_____ Are test administration personnel checking to see if test administrators have all necessary materials – e.g., test administrator manuals, test booklets and answer documents, math charts, etc.?

_____ Are campus principals and coordinators verifying that test administrators are actively monitoring examinees?

_____ Have testing personnel verified that all testing areas are free from instructional displays? (In situations where the campus must relocate examinees, the area to which the students will be moved should also be checked.)

_____ Are students who have not completed testing being monitored properly during breaks?

_____ Have testing personnel ensured that students are being administered the appropriate tests and have been issued the correct corresponding answer documents?

_____ Are all test administrators ensuring that students have marked their responses on their answer documents or in their scorable test booklets before they leave the testing room?

_____ Have you set up a line of communication so that campuses can contact you or district testing staff?

_____ Have you arranged for continual coverage for answering calls throughout the testing week?

☑ **Verify that campuses are following procedures for secure materials handling.**

🔒 _____ Have you checked to ensure that campuses are following proper check-in/check-out procedures? Are campuses using materials control documents?

🔒 _____ Have you checked to make sure campuses are documenting security numbers for overage materials and booklets transferred to other districts or alternative education facilities?

🔒 _____ Are campuses ensuring that test materials are being properly transported to and from the testing areas?

🔒 _____ Are campus coordinators and test administrators ensuring that test booklets are properly secured or monitored while students are taking breaks?

🔒 _____ Have you checked to see if campus coordinators are verifying that all booklets are being returned and accounted for each day?

🔒 _____ Are campuses locking and restricting access to the secure storage area?

Things to Consider **AFTER** an Administration

Accounting for All Secure Materials

In 2007, TEA enhanced its procedures for accounting for secure materials, and additional measures were taken to notify districts that did not return all secure test materials by the established deadlines. Feedback from testing coordinators regarding these changes prompted the Student Assessment Division to alter resolution efforts in 2008 so that the timing of the communications with the districts will more effectively assist in the prompt return of outstanding secure materials. A description of the updated resolution process can be found in Appendix E of this supplement.

The district's secure materials must be returned in accordance with the procedures and timelines outlined in the *2009 District and Campus Coordinator Manual*. Maintaining adequate oversight and reinforcing the use of proper handling and packing guidelines will help ensure the accurate and complete return of all secure items. Below are some steps that district coordinators should consider while accounting for all materials.

☑ **Monitor campuses and oversee the proper collection of and accounting for secure materials.**

    ____ Have you checked to make sure campuses are accounting for every answer document for each enrolled student and are checking to ensure proper marking of score codes?

    ____ Are coordinators accounting for out-of-district and out-of-school examinees (when applicable) and enrolled students at alternative campuses?

    ____ Are you verifying that the campuses are counting all test booklets, including overage materials that have been issued, and reconciling these materials with the original packing list and materials control documents?

    ____ Are the campuses following the proper packing procedures and labeling boxes correctly?

    ____ Have the campuses rechecked their secure storage areas for overage and unused secure materials?

    ____ Were all boxes checked to ensure that no voided answer documents or scorable booklets were returned with nonscorable materials?

☑ **Receive and inventory materials from the campuses.**

    ____ Have you verified receipt of the shipment from each campus?

    ____ Have you verified each sequence of numbers handwritten on the campus boxes?

    ____ If you use a centralized campus check-in approach, do you verify that all materials are accounted for before campus personnel leave the check-in area?

    ____ Are materials for different administrations being kept separate?

    ____ Do you keep a list of the contents of each box of scorable and nonscorable materials returned to the state's testing contractor?

☑ **Return materials to the testing contractor.**

____ Have you verified that all boxes have the proper colored label (scorable vs. nonscorable) for the correct administration and are numbered in sequential order – e.g., Box 5 of 10?

____ Have you verified that the contents of each box match the return shipping label? Have you checked to make sure that no bar codes are taped over or covered with other labels?

____ Have you ensured that all extraneous items – e.g., rulers, charts, nonsecure manuals, etc. – are either disposed of locally or returned separately with nonscorable materials?

____ Have you ensured that all secure materials remain monitored by certified personnel or in locked storage until the boxes are picked up by the shipper?

____ Have you detached and retained the shipping label receipt(s) for all the box(es) returned?

Retention of Test Administration Documentation

Districts are required to retain certain documentation in the event that a discrepancy arises or the receipt of materials cannot be confirmed. Districts must maintain inventory and shipping records, signed security oaths, and seating charts for five years following a test administration.

☑ **Monitor the retention of test administration documentation.**

____ Has the district determined where test administration documentation for each campus will be stored? Is this location secure?

____ In what format will test administration documentation be kept – e.g., electronic files, hard copies, etc.?

____ Have you verified that campuses have collected signed security oaths for all testing personnel?

____ Have campuses collected seating charts for each test session? Are the charts complete and accurate, and did coordinators verify that they contained the required information?

____ Have you confirmed that this documentation is being retained and stored in the selected location?

Common Testing Irregularities – How to Avoid and Address Them

The situations described below represent several of the more common mistakes that occur before, during, and after testing. Examples of some of these irregularities are provided, along with ways to avoid making such mistakes and to address them if they do occur.

✖ Eligibility Errors

Examples:

► A campus coordinator placed an examinee in the wrong test session, and the student was administered TAKS (Accommodated) instead of TAKS.

► An English language learner (ELL) student whose parents had waived district ESL services was not administered the TELPAS assessment.

► A student eligible for a retest administration was not directed to the proper location and was not assessed.

How to avoid:

____ Have you identified and accounted for all eligible testers? Did you check with the appropriate campus personnel to make sure there are no newly enrolled students?

____ Have you verified the testing status of all newly enrolled students?

____ Have you confirmed with the appropriate campus personnel (or by referring to students' paperwork – e.g., LPAC documentation) that you are using the most up-to-date information regarding students' testing eligibility?

____ Have you verified your roster(s) to confirm where students are supposed to be testing?

____ Do you have procedures for ensuring that all students are present in or directed to the correct testing room?

____ Do you have a process in place to confirm after testing that all students were administered the correct assessments?

⚠ Many eligibility errors, when identified in a timely manner, can be resolved with minimal impact to students. Testing personnel should be instructed to immediately notify their campus or district coordinator if they suspect a student is being or has been tested incorrectly so TEA can be contacted for guidance in addressing the issue.

Examples of how to address certain eligibility errors:

► *A TAKS tester who was not receiving special education services was issued and completed a TAKS (Accommodated) assessment.*

Students administered TAKS (Accommodated) instead of TAKS <u>CANNOT</u> be retested with TAKS because the test items are identical. This is also the case if TAKS is administered to students scheduled to take TAKS (Accommodated). If the mistake occurs during a primary administration and is detected before scorable materials are returned to the state's contractor, the student's answer document should be coded for the test that was administered, <u>NOT</u> the

test that the student should have taken. The district should notify the student's parents/guardians of the error and inform them that the Confidential Student Report (CSR) will reflect that TAKS (Accommodated) was administered. For retest administrations, districts can code the TEST TAKEN information as TAKS so the student's CSR will reflect the test that should have been administered.

► *A TAKS tester was issued and completed a TAKS–M assessment.*

If this error is discovered before the end of the administration, districts can contact TEA for permission to give the correct assessment. Consent to reassess the student should also be requested from the parents/guardians. Regardless of whether permission is obtained, the TAKS–M test should be voided. If the parent declines, a TAKS answer document or scorable test booklet marked with a score code of "O" should be submitted to account for the student.

► *An exit level retester was not administered one of the subject-area assessments.*

If this irregularity is detected within the testing week, districts should immediately contact the Student Assessment Division. Depending on the circumstances, TEA may grant permission to test the student on a different day.

✖ Individualized Education Program (IEP) Implementation Issues

Examples:

► A student was administered TAKS when he or she should have taken TAKS (Accommodated).

► A student was provided an unapproved accommodation or did not receive an accommodation that was documented in his or her IEP.

> For more information about testing accommodations, please refer to the *2008-2009 Accommodations Manual* located on the Student Assessment Division website at:
>
> http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/admin/AccommManual_2008_09.pdf

How to avoid:

____ Have you verified with the appropriate campus personnel that you are using the most up-to-date information regarding the testing requirements and accommodations for students receiving special education and Section 504 services? Is this information also correct for any newly enrolled students?

____ Have you verified with coordinators and test administrators the accommodations and resources to be provided to each student?

____ Are campus coordinators cognizant of recent changes in testing requirements for students receiving special education services?

____ Are there procedures for communicating to the appropriate campus personnel invalid admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee testing decisions?

____ Have you accounted for appropriate test materials – booklets and answer documents – for each examinee with an IEP?

Examples of how to address certain IEP errors:

► *A TAKS (Accommodated) tester was issued and completed a TAKS assessment.*

Students administered TAKS instead of TAKS (Accommodated) <u>CANNOT</u> be retested with TAKS (Accommodated). If the mistake is discovered before scorable materials are shipped, the district should consult with the student's parents/guardians to determine whether the assessment should be invalidated or submitted to be scored. If the decision is made to submit the test to be scored and it is a primary administration, the TEST TAKEN field on the student's answer document should be coded to indicate TAKS. For retest administrations, districts can code the TEST TAKEN information as TAKS (Accommodated) so the student's CSR will reflect the test that should have been administered.

► *A TAKS (Accommodated) tester was issued and completed a TAKS–M assessment.*

In the event this error is detected before the end of the administration, districts can contact TEA for permission to give the correct assessment. Consent to reassess the student must be requested from the parents/guardians. Regardless of whether permission is obtained, the TAKS–M test should be voided. If the parent declines, a TAKS (Accommodated) answer document or scorable test booklet marked with a score code of "O" should be submitted to account for the student.

► *A student was not provided a documented accommodation.*

If this kind of mistake is discovered while the student is testing, districts can, in most cases, still provide the accommodation. If the error is not detected until after the assessment is complete, the district must consult with the parents/guardians to determine if the assessment should be invalidated or submitted to be scored.

✖ Improper Accounting for Secure Materials

Examples:

► A student's completed answer document was lost or misplaced.

► Testing personnel lost or misplaced one or more test booklets or other secure materials.

► A test administrator did not return testing materials following each day's administration.

► A campus coordinator or district testing coordinator failed to return secure material by the published dates.

How to avoid:

____ Have you verified that all test booklets and answer documents are accounted for?

____ Have you checked all test booklets to make sure that no answer documents were left inside accidentally?

____ Have you bundled test materials from the same test administration and not mixed them with any other test administration?

____ Have you properly labeled boxes – e.g., 1 of 5, 2 of 5, etc. – and identified and tracked for your records which boxes contain which materials in case boxes are lost in transit or questions arise regarding the return of these materials?

⚠️ A majority of the incidents reported to TEA that involve the loss or late return of secure materials result from not having or implementing basic inventory procedures – e.g., not using materials control documents, not following check-in/check-out procedures, and/or not accounting for, at the end of each day, the items that were issued to test administrators.

If testing personnel locate any secure materials that were not returned following an administration, contact TEA immediately. District coordinators should always question how these materials were discovered in order to determine whether the items were kept secure or if there was a breach in confidentiality.

✖ **Monitoring Errors**

Examples:

► A test administrator left a room unmonitored while students were testing.

► A test administrator left secure materials unattended or secure online assessments open and visible.

► A test administrator accepted a blank answer document from an examinee.

► Students who had not finished testing were not properly monitored during a break.

► A test administrator did not actively monitor students and did not detect the improper use of a highlighter, dictionary, or calculator.

► A test administrator failed to properly monitor a test session and did not ensure that students worked independently and/or did not notice that an examinee placed or received a cell phone call or text message during a test administration.

Note: Students are **NOT** permitted to have cell phones turned on during testing. Districts are required to have procedures in place to prevent the use of cell phones during test administrations.

How to avoid:

____ Have you emphasized that test administrators are not allowed to leave examinees or materials unattended?

____ Have you instructed test administrators to immediately notify the appropriate testing personnel when improper student behavior has been detected?

____ Have you clarified with your test administrators which supplemental materials – such as highlighters, charts, rulers, and/or dictionaries – are allowed or required for each subject?

____ Have you clearly established which test administrators will be relieved during breaks and by whom?

____ Have you verified that all forms of visual aids have been covered or removed from the testing rooms?

____ Are you periodically checking test sessions to ensure that test administrators are actively monitoring?

⚠ Monitoring-related errors continue to be the most common types of incidents reported to TEA. Regardless of whether these mistakes directly or indirectly contribute to testing irregularities, they remain one of the more problematic assessment issues that districts should address. Such errors can also be detrimental to students. Accepting a blank answer document, for example, may result in a student not receiving credit for a test that he or she took. Other monitoring-related errors might lead to breaches in confidentiality that could place students' test scores in question.

For ALL incidents where examinees were left unmonitored, secure materials were left unattended, or students were issued or had access to nonallowable manipulatives or instructional aids, districts are required to provide a determination of whether confidentiality was breached or if the irregularity compromised the validity of a student's assessment.

Examples of how to address certain monitoring errors:

► *While packing scorable materials, the campus coordinator discovered that a test administrator had accepted a blank answer document.*

In this situation, the campus coordinator should first notify the district coordinator, who can then contact TEA and request permission to confirm whether the student has marked answers in the test booklet and, if so, to transcribe those responses onto the answer document. Campus testing personnel should be reminded in training and during testing that they are NOT permitted to view or transcribe the contents of a student's test booklet without PRIOR authorization from TEA.

► *A test administrator left examinees unmonitored and/or secure materials unattended.*

Any time students are left unmonitored or secure materials are unattended during testing, the campus or district coordinator must assess the situation to determine whether a breach in confidentiality has occurred. If the district concludes that there was no breach, students may be allowed to resume testing. If cheating occurred or secure content was compromised, the district must decide whether the tests of the affected students should be invalidated or submitted for scoring. Remember that breaches in confidentiality can occur even during a brief lapse in monitoring.

► *A test administrator was not actively monitoring and did not detect that a student had broken the seal to and completed a portion of the next subject-area test.*

If this type of error is detected before the examinee leaves the testing area, immediately contact TEA for guidance. If the student has been dismissed from a monitored environment, he or she will not be permitted to complete the test on the regularly scheduled day, and the district will need to determine whether the subject-area section should be invalidated or submitted to be scored.

⚠ Although it can be difficult at times for districts to make a determination about whether or not a test administrator was actively monitoring when an incident took place, the Student Assessment Security Task Force relies on coordinators to address this issue in their incident report documentation. Districts should consider the circumstances under which the error occurred as well as other factors such as the timespan. For example, while it may be reasonable to think that a test administrator would not notice that a student had completed a few items in the wrong subject-area assessment, districts could conclude that a test administrator should have noticed a student who had moved on to complete another subject-area test in its entirety.

✖ Procedural Errors

Examples:

► An unauthorized individual – e.g., a student or untrained personnel – was permitted to transport secure test material.

► A test administrator did not issue the correct materials – i.e., charts, rulers, #2 pencils, dictionaries, calculators – or students were incorrectly permitted to use nonallowable materials.

► A student was administered a test on the wrong day.

► An examinee was not provided the dyslexia bundled accommodations over the required two-day period.

► A student was not issued the correct Form 1 test booklet for an oral or dyslexia bundled accommodations administration.

► Testing personnel did not use the test administration directions or failed to read the test administration script verbatim as outlined in the test administration directions.

► Personnel were permitted to administer tests, monitor test sessions, or handle secure materials even though they had not been properly trained.

► A TELPAS writing collection was not submitted in accordance with required assembly criteria.

► A test administrator failed to remove or cover all instructional displays.

► Completed answer documents or scorable test booklets were returned with nonscorable materials.

How to avoid:

____ Have you notified coordinators and test administrators which personnel are authorized and delegated to transport secure test materials or to monitor or relieve test administrators?

____ Have coordinators verified with test administrators which supplemental materials are allowed or required for each subject and for each test?

____ Have a sufficient number of staff been properly trained in test administration procedures?

____ Have coordinators verified that all test administrators have the appropriate manual(s) and directions on the days of testing?

____ Were testing personnel issued the correct manuals in advance of training so they could read them thoroughly?

____ Have you verified that the contents of each box match the return shipping label and are not mixed between administrations?

____ Were all boxes checked to make sure that no voided answer documents or scorable booklets were returned with nonscorable materials?

Examples of how to address certain procedural errors:

► *A campus coordinator did not issue the required Form 1 test booklet for a student receiving an oral administration of the mathematics assessment.*

This type of error is most often detected during an assessment and can easily be avoided by having test administrators verify that all the test booklets they have been issued for oral administrations are Form 1. If a test administrator encounters a discrepancy while reading test questions or answer choices, he or she should immediately notify the campus coordinator so a Form 1 booklet can be provided. In the event a Form 1 booklet is not available, the campus coordinator can issue the test administrator a booklet with a form number that matches the student's. This second option is less preferable, as the use of Form 1 booklets is intended to limit unnecessary access to secure field-test items while still meeting the needs of students who qualify for this type of accommodation.

► *A student who was scheduled to be administered a reading test with dyslexia bundled accommodations was not issued the proper Form 1 test booklet for the mathematics assessment.*

Due to the multiple approaches for resolving this situation, districts should contact TEA for guidance when this type of incident occurs. Callers should be prepared to provide the grade level involved and at what point in the administration the error was discovered.

✖ Incidents that can Result in a Referral to Educator Certification and Standards

Examples:

► Testing personnel viewed a test before, during, or after an assessment without authorization.

► Testing personnel discussed or revealed secure test content or student responses.

► Testing personnel made a copy of secure materials without permission from TEA.

► Testing personnel scored student tests.

► Testing personnel directly or indirectly assisted students with responses to test questions.

► Testing personnel tampered with student responses.

How to avoid:

____ Have you stressed that test content should not be viewed or discussed even AFTER the test administration has been completed – e.g., in the classroom with students or in a faculty or team meeting? This applies to discussions regarding the **specific content** of tests. It is acceptable for teachers to talk with their students about their testing experience or the test in general.

____ Did you reinforce to all testing personnel the proper procedures for conducting an oral administration?

____ Have you discussed with test administrators the proper way in which examinees should be prompted to bubble in answer documents? Have all campus personnel been reminded that erasing stray marks or darkening response ovals is strictly prohibited?

____ Did you verify that campuses have designated a sufficient number of testing personnel to adequately monitor the test administration?

Incidents involving alleged irregularities that may result in a referral to the Educator Certification and Standards Division should be reported to the Student Assessment Division Security Task Force as soon as the district coordinator is made aware of the situation.

Incident Reporting

Reporting Testing Irregularities

Despite how well prepared testing personnel may be, the possibility still exists that a mistake will be made. When incidents occur, it is important to have procedures in place to help ensure that all the necessary information is gathered so the district can make a determination about what occurred. **All incidents must be reported to the TEA Student Assessment Division.** Incidents involving alleged irregularities that may result in a referral to the Educator Certification and Standards Division should be reported to the Student Assessment Division Security Task Force as soon as the district coordinator is made aware of the situation. Please ensure that all testing personnel are aware of their obligation to report testing irregularities and can easily access your local reporting procedures.

Please DON'T ASSUME!!!

Student Assessment staff are experienced in assisting districts with handling and reporting testing irregularities and are available to provide guidance for district personnel. Do not hesitate to contact staff at 512-463-9536 if you have questions about an incident that occurred in your district and/or the correct way to report it.

To aid district coordinators, a flowchart depicting the incident reporting process has been provided in *figure 2* on the following page.

Figure 2: Incident Reporting Process

Test
Administrator

Test
Monitor

Report
Incident

Campus Testing
Coordinator

Report
Incident

District Testing
Coordinator

Maintain
documentation
locally

No

Has a testing irregularity
occurred?

Unsure

Contact TEA for
assistance

Yes

Contact the TEA
Security Task
Force immediately
for further
instructions

Yes

Is the
category of the irregularity a
Potential Referral*?

No

Have you
gathered the required
documentation, including
statements from the
individuals
involved?

No

Collect the
required
documentation

Yes

Reporting
requirements
complete

Documentation
was attached

Complete the
online incident
reporting process
and attach
supporting
documentation.

Documentation
was not
attached

Fax or e-mail
supporting documentation
to TEA within 10 working
days

* Potential referral to the Educator Certification and Standards Division

Investigating and Documenting Testing Irregularities

District testing coordinators or their designees are responsible for investigating potential testing violations. Statements and reports collected during these investigations should clearly outline the sequence of events, explain exactly what happened, and include a district determination in the matter. All incidents that result in a deviation from documented testing procedures require an incident report and statements from individuals involved to be submitted to TEA (preferably via the Online Incident Reporting Process). Documentation for irregularities that involve the loss of secure materials or that could result in a referral to the Educator Certification and Standards Division **must** include a Corrective Action Plan. For **any** incident, TEA may request additional information such as a Corrective Action Plan or require certain documentation to be maintained at the district level.

All required documentation, including statements from individuals involved, should be submitted within 10 working days of the district testing coordinator being made aware of the incident. If more time is needed, contact TEA at 512-463-9536.

Statements from the individual(s) involved in an irregularity should be typed, signed, and submitted on district/campus letterhead, stationery, or plain paper. Do not use the Student Assessment Incident Report Form document for this purpose. Assistance from the district in submitting typed information is greatly appreciated.

Below are some other guidelines to help assess an incident and ensure proper reporting.

☑ **Do you have a clear determination of what occurred?**

____ Have you determined whether state-mandated testing procedures were violated?

____ Have you interviewed all individuals who were involved in or may have information about the incident?

____ Have you determined exactly what happened and why?

____ Did you prepare a timeline, if necessary, to establish when events occurred?

____ Have you addressed all discrepancies (if any) in the statements submitted by the individuals involved?

☑ **Have you properly documented the incident?**

____ At what campus did the incident occur and during which administration (month, assessment – e.g., TAKS, TAAS, etc., grade level, subject area, etc.)

____ Have you obtained typed, signed, and dated statements from all individuals who were involved in or may have information about the incident?

____ Do the statements include the name and role (title) of all individuals and how they were involved? Do the statements include a description of the incident from each individual's perspective?

____ If TEA was contacted for guidance, did you document when the contact was made and with whom you spoke? Was the district granted permission to take a certain action or instructed to remedy an error?

___ Does the incident documentation include the district's determination of what happened and how the error was resolved (if applicable)?

___ If the irregularity involved any examinees potentially gaining an unfair advantage on an assessment, does the documentation include information regarding whether the district decided to invalidate the assessment or submit the test(s) to be scored?

___ If an examinee who receives special education or Section 504 services was given the wrong assessment, were the student's parents informed and was permission obtained to administer the correct test (if possible)?

___ If local action was taken against educator(s) or student(s), was it documented?

☑ **Is a corrective action plan required or has a plan been requested?**

___ Does the plan include a brief summary of the incident?

___ Does the plan include a description of how and why the incident occurred?

___ Does the plan include a description of the specific procedure(s) that will be implemented to prevent future occurrences of this type of violation?

___ Does the plan include the name and role (title) of the person(s) responsible?

___ Does the plan include any local actions taken against educator(s) as a result of the district's investigations?

___ Has the corrective action plan been signed by the superintendent or chief administrative officer?

Submitting Incident Documentation to TEA

To complete the process of submitting an incident report online, district testing coordinators or their designees must provide all the required information requested. Submitters will receive confirmation that their report has been accepted, and an incident identification number will be issued for tracking purposes. District coordinators will be notified via a return e-mail when an incident has been submitted for their district provided that a valid e-mail address is on file in the Texas Education Directory (AskTED). For more information about this directory, refer to the following link:

http://mansfield.tea.state.tx.us/tea.askted.web/Forms/Home.aspx.

Currently, the online submission tool does not permit users to correct or update report information once it has been submitted and an incident identification number has been issued. Submitters are strongly encouraged to have all information available regarding the incident **BEFORE** starting the reporting process. Should districts need to update or change information once a report has been submitted, they may contact the Security Task Force at 512-463-9536 and reference the incident identification number they received when the report was originally submitted.

A Special Note Regarding Supporting Documentation

The online submission tool allows submitters to upload electronic files. Users can attach supporting documentation so that all submission requirements can be fulfilled in one simple step. Because statements from individuals involved require a signature, the physical documentation will need to be converted into an electronic format. Districts able to scan and save these signed statements and supporting documentation into an electronic file – e.g., a portable document file (PDF) – are strongly encouraged to use this option. Scanned files can be easily attached during the submission process and then stored locally to meet retention requirements.

If the district chooses not to use this feature, all supporting documentation must be submitted by e-mail to testsecurity@tea.state.tx.us or by fax to 512-463-9302 within 10 working days of the incident. If more time is needed, districts should notify TEA at 512-463-9536.

For any documentation submitted via e-mail (preferred) or fax, please make sure to reference the incident identification number that is provided after the final step in the online submission process.

Instructions for Completing the Online Incident Reporting Process

Below are step-by-step instructions for using the online submission process to submit an incident report and supporting documentation.

How to Submit an Incident Report

1. Access the Online Incident Reporting Process page located on the TEA Student Assessment Division website at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/admin/incidents/online/.

2. Review the procedures for reporting an irregularity online and then click the link entitled "Click here to submit an online incident report."

3. Select your district and campus from the pull-down menus, select the "yes" or "no" button to identify whether you are the district coordinator, and complete the required information in the report form.

4. Attach electronic file(s) containing supporting documentation and complete the submission process. If you do not choose to use the online system's attachment feature, all supporting documentation must be submitted by e-mail to testsecurity@tea.state.tx.us (preferred) or by fax to 512-463-9302 within 10 working days of the incident. Be sure to include the incident identification number provided upon completion of the online submission with each set of documentation.

What to Expect Following the Submission of an Incident Report

Following every test administration, all incident reports and supporting information received by the Security Task Force are assessed for completeness to ensure that the required documentation has been submitted for each irregularity. Reports are then carefully reviewed, and a determination is made by the Security Task Force regarding the disposition of each incident. Correspondence is then generated to notify the superintendent and district testing coordinator of the findings.

This process involves several steps to ensure a complete and accurate review of each case. Incidents are grouped by districts for reporting purposes in an effort to reduce the amount of correspondence that is mailed. In cases involving more severe irregularities, individual letters are generally sent.

Depending on the size of the test administration, it can take up to several months to process all the incident reports submitted. This process can be delayed longer if districts do not submit the required documentation within the 10-day timeframe and/or provide sufficient information upon which to base a final determination.

Summary of Appendices

Appendix A

Sample Language to Parents Regarding Honor Statements

Appendix B

Seating Chart Examples

Appendix C
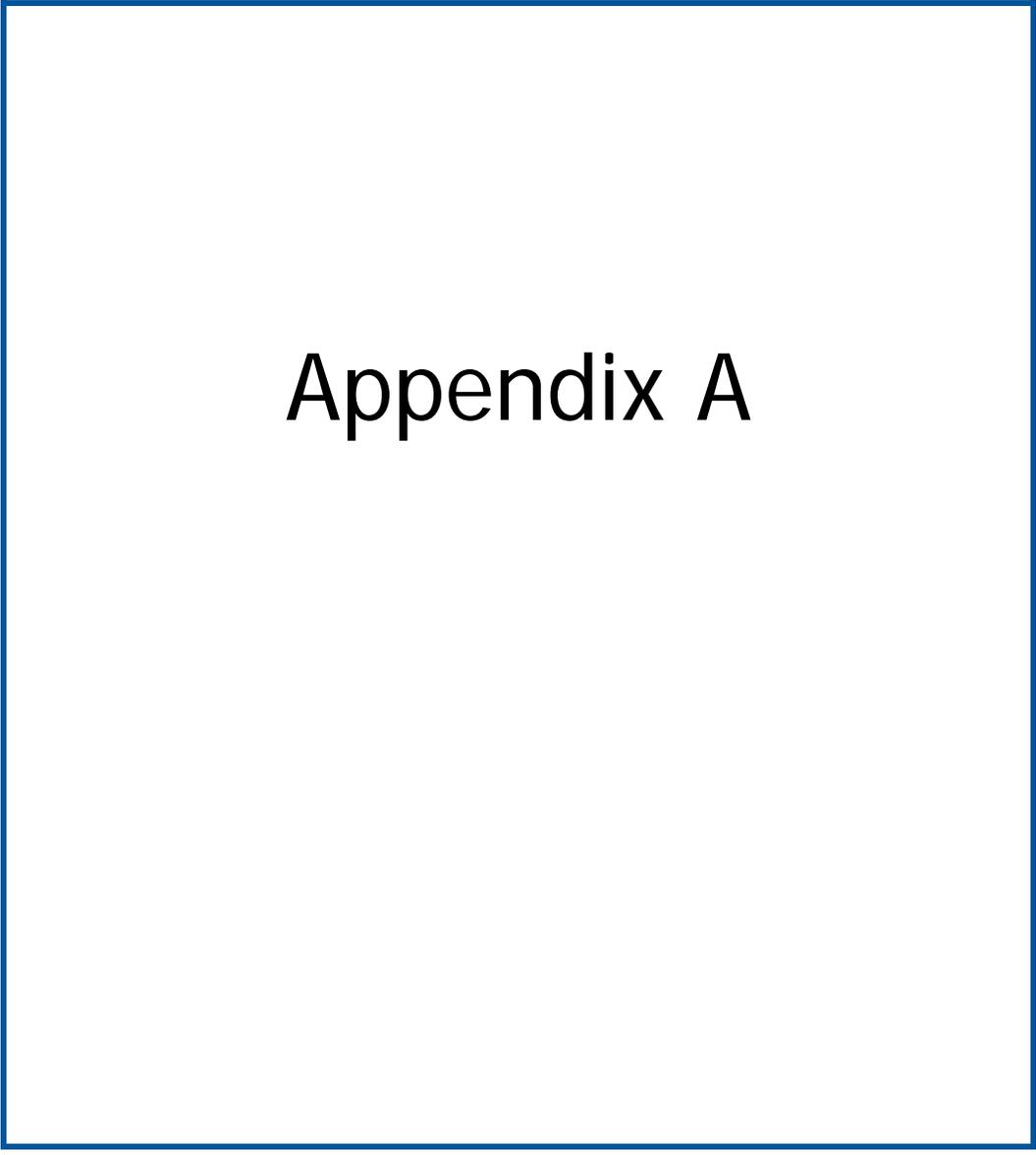
Best Practices and Tips from the Field for Handling Secure Materials

Appendix D

Secure and Nonsecure Test Materials

Appendix E

Secure Materials Resolution Process

Appendix A

Appendix A: Sample Language to Parents Regarding Honor Statements

The following sample language can be used or adapted by districts to inform parents in advance of the honor statement students were asked to sign beginning with the spring 2008 test administrations and extended in spring 2009 to students in grades 9–11 taking TAKS–M assessments.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This letter is to let you know of a change that the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has made in testing procedures for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). Beginning in spring 2008, students in grades 9, 10, and exit level were asked to sign an honor statement before taking TAKS tests. In spring 2009 this measure is being extended to students taking TAKS–Modified (TAKS–M) tests. The honor statement is shown below. This statement will be printed on each student's answer sheet, and students will be asked to sign it before the test begins.

> By signing my name, I agree that I will not give or receive unauthorized assistance during the test. I understand that giving or receiving unauthorized assistance during the test is cheating and may result in the invalidation of my test results.

"Invalidation" of test results means that the student's test would not be scored and the student would not receive test results.

The TAKS tests are required by both state and federal law. The test results are used to monitor and improve public education for all Texas students. The addition of an honor statement is one of several steps the state of Texas is taking to ensure that each student's test results are an accurate indicator of his or her academic performance. Other state testing programs and college entrance exams include similar honor statements.

I hope that I can count on your support of this new procedure.

Sincerely,

(school principal or superintendent)

Estimado padre de familia o tutor:

Esta carta tiene la finalidad de informarle de un cambio que la Agencia de Educación de Texas (TEA) ha hecho en cuanto a los procedimientos de evaluación de la prueba TAKS. A partir de la primavera del 2008, a los estudiantes en los grados 9, 10 y nivel de salida se les pidió que firmaran un juramento de honor antes de tomar la prueba TAKS. En la primavera del 2009, esta medida se ha extendido a estudiantes que toman la prueba TAKS–M (TAKS–Modified). Este juramento aparecerá en inglés en cada uno de los documentos de respuesta de la prueba TAKS con el propósito de que los estudiantes lo firmen antes de que empiece la prueba. El juramento al que se hace mención viene enseguida en español.

> Al firmar aquí, estoy de acuerdo en que no daré ni recibiré ningún tipo de ayuda que no esté autorizada durante la prueba. Comprendo que dar o recibir ayuda no autorizada durante la prueba es hacer trampa y podría ocasionar la invalidación de los resultados de mi prueba.

La "invalidación" de los resultados de la prueba significa que la prueba del estudiante no será calificada y, en consecuencia, el estudiante no recibirá ningún resultado.

La prueba TAKS es obligatoria de acuerdo con leyes estatales y federales. Los resultados de la prueba se utilizan para evaluar y mejorar el sistema de educación pública de los estudiantes de Texas. El juramento de honor es una de las medidas que el estado de Texas está tomando para asegurarse de que los resultados de la prueba de cada estudiante sea un indicador preciso de su desempeño académico. Existen otros programas de evaluación a nivel estatal, así como pruebas de admisión de algunas universidades, que incluyen juramentos de honor semejantes.

Le agradecemos con anticipación su apoyo para este nuevo procedimiento.

Atentamente,

(Director de la escuela o Superintendente del distrito escolar)
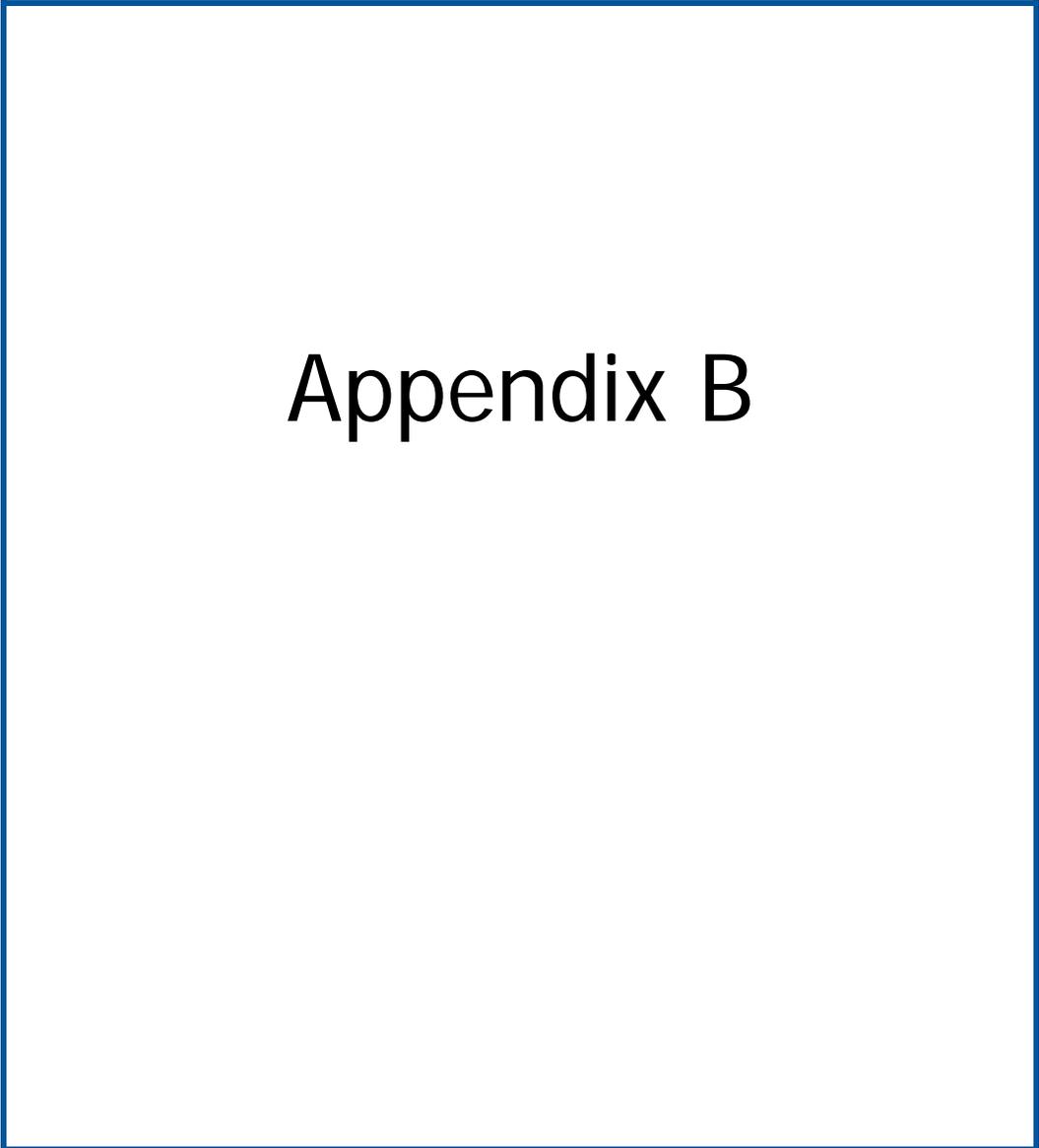
Appendix B

Appendix B: Seating Chart Examples

The following pages in this appendix provide different examples of possible seating charts. Since testing session layouts can vary from one area to another, districts are encouraged to develop seating charts that fulfill the information collection requirements and that best meet their individual needs. Most of the examples provided are based on the 30-to-1 student/test administrator ratio.

Example 1: One-page seating chart with corresponding student roster [required information only] (page 40)

Example 2: One-page seating chart with corresponding student roster (page 41)

Example 3: Two-page seating chart with corresponding student roster (pages 42–43)

Example 4: One-page seating chart with student location and information combined (page 44)

Example 5: Two-page seating chart with student roster and a blank grid for drawing the test session layout (pages 45–46)

Districts may access the Student Assessment Division website at the following address and download electronic copies of these templates:

http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/admin/security/index.html

Test Administration Seating Chart

District: _____ Campus: _____ Room #: _____

Test Administered: _____ Subject: _____ Grade Level:_____ Date: _____

Test Administrator(s): _____

Instructions for completing the seating chart below:
1. Write the name of each student on the testing roster **(B)** that corresponds to the student's location on the seating grid **(A)**.
2. Mark the location of the front of the testing area.

A. Seating Grid

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30

B. Testing Roster

Seat #	Student First Name	Student Last Name	Seat #	Student First Name	Student Last Name
1			16		
2			17		
3			18		
4			19		
5			20		
6			21		
7			22		
8			23		
9			24		
10			25		
11			26		
12			27		
13			28		
14			29		
15			30		

Test Administration Seating Chart

District: _____ Campus: _____ Room #: _____

Test Administered: _____ Subject: _____ Grade Level:_____ Date: _____

Test Administrator(s): _____

Instructions for completing the seating chart below:
1. Mark the location of the test administrator(s) by placing an "X" in the margin surrounding the numbered grid.
2. Mark the seat number that corresponds to each student on the list of examinees.
3. Mark the location of any entrances into the testing area.

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30

Seat #	Student First Name	Student Last Name	Student ID#	Test Booklet #	Form #
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					
22					
23					
24					
25					
26					
27					
28					
29					
30					

Test Administration Seating Chart

District: _____ Campus: _____ Room #: _____

Test Administered: _____ Subject: _____ Grade Level: _____ Date: _____

Test Administrator(s): _____

Instructions for the grid below:
1. Mark the location of the test administrator(s) by placing an "X" in the margin surrounding the grid.
2. Mark the seat number on the grid that corresponds to each student on the list of examinees.
3. Mark the location of any entrances into the testing area.

Examinee Roster

Seat #	Student First Name	Student Last Name	Student ID#	Test Booklet #	Form #
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					
22					
23					
24					
25					
26					
27					
28					
29					
30					

Test Administration Seating Chart

District: _____ Campus: _____ Room #: _____

Test Administered: _____ Subject: _____ Grade Level:_____ Date: _____

Test Administrator(s): _____

Instructions for completing the seating chart below:
1. Mark the location of the test administrator(s) by placing an "X" in the margin surrounding the grid.
2. Complete the information that corresponds to the placement of each student in the testing session.
3. Mark the location of any entrances into the testing area.

Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5
Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:

Student 6	Student 7	Student 8	Student 9	Student 10
Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:

Student 11	Student 12	Student 13	Student 14	Student 15
Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:

Student 16	Student 17	Student 18	Student 19	Student 20
Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:

Student 21	Student 22	Student 23	Student 24	Student 25
Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:

Student 26	Student 27	Student 28	Student 29	Student 30
Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:	Name: ID#: Book#: Form#:

Test Administration Seating Chart

District: _____ Campus: _____ Room #: _____

Test Administered: _____ Subject: _____ Grade Level:_____ Date: _____

Test Administrator(s): _____

Instructions for the grid below:
1. Mark the location of the test administrator(s) by placing an "X" in the margin surrounding the grid.
2. Draw the location of and indicate the corresponding seat number for each student on the list of examinees.
3. Mark the location of any entrances into the testing area.

List of Examinees

Seat #	Student First Name	Student Last Name	Student ID#	Test Booklet #	Form #
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					
22					
23					
24					
25					
26					
27					
28					
29					
30					

Appendix C

Appendix C: Best Practices and Tips from the Field for Handling Secure Materials

Districts from all over Texas have employed innovative tools and techniques for accurately tracking and successfully returning all secure materials. Below are some helpful hints gathered from the field that illustrate effective practices you can consider for use in your district.

Successful Practices Used in Districts BEFORE a Test Administration Begins

- Campus coordinators are provided with detailed checklists of all duties and reminders of tasks to be performed before testing. Principals verify that the checklists are used.

- Only the officially designated campus coordinator is allowed to sign for and receive boxes of testing materials.

- Boxes of testing materials are signed for and placed directly in secure storage.

- When campuses receive boxes, two individuals count and verify the contents of all boxes. These individuals provide their signatures to indicate that they have followed all appropriate procedures and that all materials have been accounted for.

- Some districts have indicated that they have purchased or are interested in purchasing hand-held scanners that enable them to inventory and track all secure materials electronically.

- The contents of boxes are verified against the packing list.

- All campus and district storage areas for testing materials have a sufficient number of shelves, rolling carts, and tables for materials to be sorted and tracked. Any hiding places that would allow secure materials to be misplaced or left behind are identified.

- Principals are asked to designate in writing all individuals who will have access to the secure storage area.

- Districts provide appropriate training for non-certified personnel who will have access to secure test materials (e.g., drivers, warehouse staff). Some districts require these individual to sign locally-developed security oaths.

- Certified professionals sign a form acknowledging their supervisory role when assigned a paraprofessional who will be serving as a test administrator.

- Districts establish a policy regarding an ending time for testing. This avoids issues of one campus allowing more or less time for students to finish testing than other campuses.

- Districts/campuses reduce the amount of storage space required for maintaining documentation for five years by scanning documents and storing them electronically.

Successful Practices Used in Districts <u>DURING</u> a Test Administration

Campus personnel verify that they have used their detailed checklists of duties and responsibilities during testing.

Requests for extra materials are made in writing, and it is recorded in writing that the materials are picked up by the campus coordinator in person. Signatures and detailed paperwork are always used when materials from district overage are distributed to campus coordinators.

Successful Practices Used in Districts <u>AFTER</u> a Test Administration

Campus personnel verify that they are using their detailed checklists when assembling materials for return.

At district check-in, personnel inspect, physically count, and verify the contents of all campus boxes before the boxes are sealed for shipping. (Some districts require all boxes to be counted and verified by at least two persons, whose signatures indicate the shipment is complete.)

The materials returned are always verified against the packing list.

A detailed list of the contents of each box is generated before the box is returned to the contractor. Personnel keep these lists on file in case questions arise or discrepancies are reported.

Only campus coordinators return testing materials to the district coordinator.

Some districts complete a secure storage area cleaning checklist to ensure no secure materials have been left in the storage area.

Appendix D

Appendix D: Secure and Nonsecure Test Materials

SECURE	NONSECURE
Items That MUST Be Returned in <u>SCORABLE</u> Shipment	**Items That MUST Be Returned in <u>SCORABLE</u> Shipment**
• Used or voided scorable test booklets for TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), and TAKS–M grade 3 and TELPAS reading grades 2 and 3	• Used and voided answer documents† • Voided precoded answer documents† • Answer Document Packing List • Optional Reports Order Form
Items That MUST Be Returned in <u>NONSCORABLE</u> Shipment	**Items That MUST Be Returned in <u>NONSCORABLE</u> Shipment**
• Used and unused nonscorable TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), TAKS–M, LAT, TELPAS reading, and TAAS test booklets, grouped by grade for grades 4-10 and 11/exit level • Used and unused nonscorable field-test booklets • <u>Unused</u> scorable test booklets for TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), and TAKS–M grade 3 and TELPAS reading grades 2 and 3 • LAT linguistic simplification guides • Braille and large-print materials	• Dyslexia proper-nouns lists† • Unused or voided precoded labels† • Typed or tape-recorded materials† • Unused or voided ID sheets • Unused answer documents
	Items That DO NOT Need To Be Returned
	• Unused paper bands • Science rulers • Mathematics or science charts (Remember that charts that have been written upon should be destroyed.) • Coordinator manuals • Coordinator packets • Test administrator manuals • Packing lists or packing cover sheets • Locally developed LAT bilingual glossaries

†Items that do not have a security bar code, but may contain confidential student or testing information
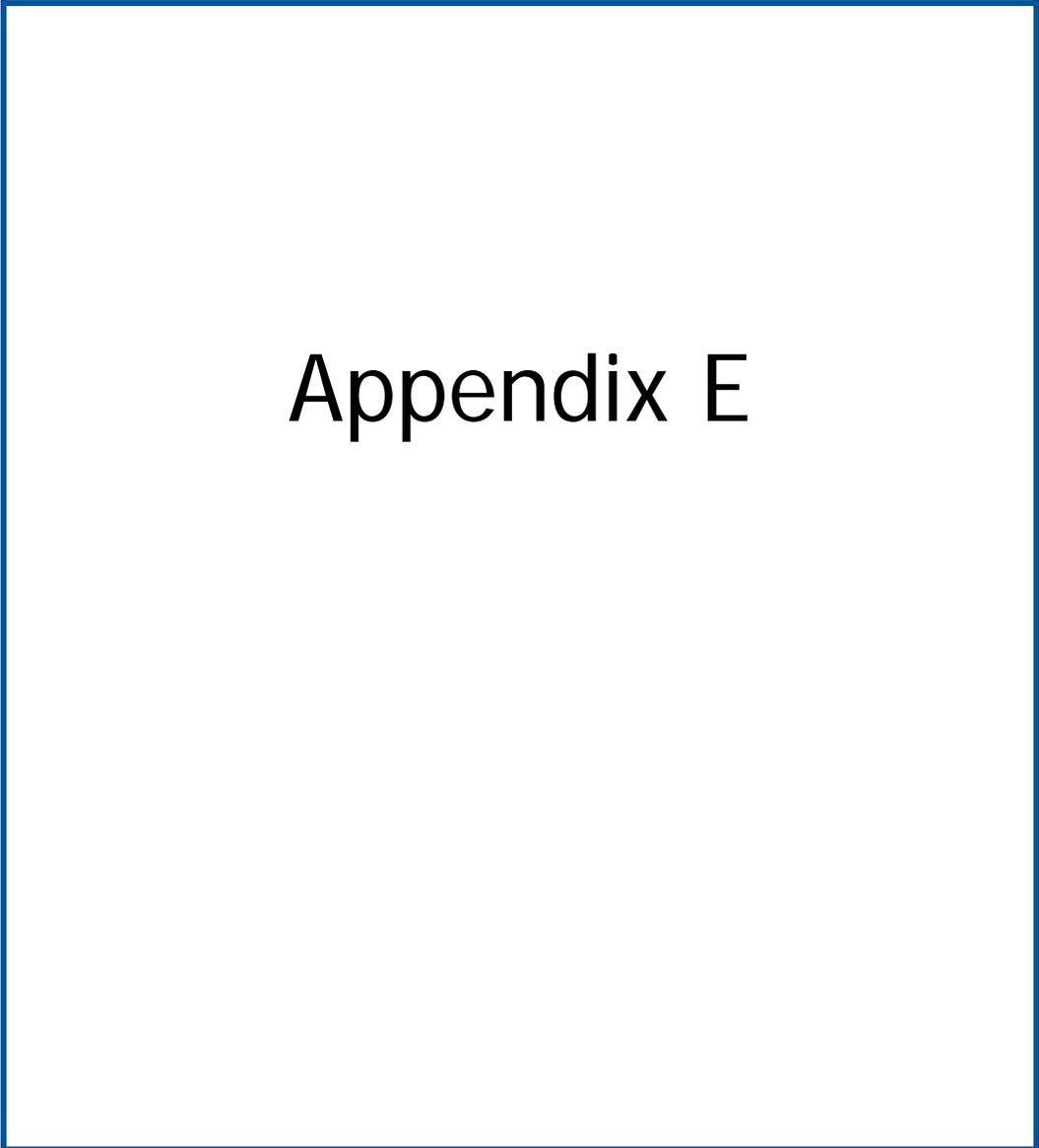
Appendix E

Appendix E: Secure Materials Resolution Process

TEA and the state's testing contractor, Pearson, have implemented procedures to assist in the resolution and location of outstanding (missing) secure materials. The secure materials resolution process has been refined over the past year based on feedback from districts. District testing coordinators should carefully note the administration(s) referenced in any correspondence they receive because communications will likely overlap – i.e., a district may receive a notification for outstanding January and February materials and another notification shortly thereafter regarding April materials. If it becomes necessary for the district testing coordinator to contact Pearson or TEA, he or she should reference the identification number in the bottom left corner of the correspondence. An explanation of the process, including what to expect at each stage, is summarized below.

Step 1

When Pearson receives nonscorable shipments following a test administration, boxes are sorted and grouped by district. This allows Pearson to identify any districts from which it has not received any shipment.

Notification Sent – No Shipment Received

If Pearson does not receive any boxes/materials from a district, the district testing coordinator is contacted and asked if the material has been shipped; if so, the coordinator is asked to provide tracking numbers. This notification generally takes place 3–5 days after the deadline for submitting nonscorable materials. Pearson will attempt to call or e-mail the district testing coordinator regarding missing shipments. Labeling boxes incorrectly can also trigger this notification.

Step 2

Following the receipt of districts' shipments, Pearson next begins the process of scanning the unique security number printed on every test booklet and LAT linguistic simplification guide. Each box from a district is opened, the contents are scanned, and the materials are carefully placed back into the original box(es). After all the returned materials have been scanned in, Pearson compares these items to those that were shipped. A list is then generated for each district of all the secure items that were not scanned in for that administration.

Pearson then performs a cross-reference check between this outstanding materials list and any shipping issues reported to Pearson by the districts. Additionally, Pearson will reference any letters or e-mails sent regarding the lending of booklets, damaged materials, or lost/stolen secure materials and attempt to locate those items.

Notification Sent – Scanning Complete and Shipping Issues Resolved

Following security scanning and the resolution of shipping issues, Pearson will notify the district testing coordinator for districts with more than 100 books or 15% of their original shipment still outstanding. The district is required to respond to Pearson by a designated date so collaborative efforts can begin to locate the outstanding materials. Testing coordinators will be asked to check their records in case the materials referenced were inadvertently left out of the district's shipment. If coordinators believe the materials were returned, they will be asked to contact Pearson with any information that might help narrow the

search – e.g., box numbers in which the materials were packed. This notification generally takes place 6–8 weeks after the deadline for submitting nonscorable materials. If possible, Pearson will attempt to call or e-mail the district testing coordinator before sending correspondence via regular mail.

Step 3

When efforts to reconcile materials not located during scanning are unsuccessful, Pearson undertakes a focused, physical search of all of the boxes returned by a district. After a district's shipment is examined, it can be reasonably assumed that any items that remain unaccounted for are not likely to have been included with the materials that were returned for that administration. Because some administrations overlap – i.e., one administration's materials are received when another administration's materials are still present in the district – the potential still exists for items to be returned in the wrong shipment.

Notification Sent – Physical Search Complete

If all materials are not accounted for during the physical search, Pearson will provide a list of the missing items to the district testing coordinator. When possible, this correspondence will be sent after all potentially overlapping administrations are physically examined as well. This typically occurs in mid to late September, and coordinators will again be asked to check their tracking records and return any materials found or to contact Pearson for further assistance.

> It is **very important** to the joint resolution effort that district coordinators respond to the prior notifications. Failure to take action can result in delays that may increase the risk of secure test content being compromised.

Step 4

If a district coordinator does not respond to any of the previously referenced notifications – i.e., does not return the materials listed as outstanding **OR** contact Pearson to provide additional information – the next step is to notify the district superintendent that some or all of the district's secure testing materials cannot be accounted for by Pearson and there has been no communication or cooperation received from the district testing coordinator.

Notification Sent – Non-Response Notification to the Superintendent

This letter, which is sent by certified mail, explains that a response from the district test coordinator has not been received for the indicated administration, and it requires the district to ensure that the missing test materials are located and returned to Pearson **OR** to submit documentation to TEA indicating that the materials cannot be located.

Step 5

Districts are required to submit an incident report and the proper supporting documentation for the late return or loss of secure materials. The last stage of the process involves sending a notification to districts that have not submitted the required documentation necessary to close out the secure materials resolution effort.

Notification Sent – Request for Documentation

If the required documentation is not received, this correspondence is sent to the district superintendent and the district testing coordinator.

Districts indicating that all identified outstanding materials have been returned to the testing contractor are also required to submit an incident report and documentation describing the actions taken by the district to search for the outstanding item(s) and the district's procedures for ensuring that all secure materials were returned to the testing contractor.