Test Security Supplement

2013

STAAR®
State of Texas
Assessments of
Academic Readiness

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Purpose of Supplement

Maintaining the security and confidentiality of the Texas student assessment program is critical 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 multifaceted nature of the assessment program, test administration personnel face challenges in managing the program's requirements at the local level. The Texas Education Agency's (TEA's) Student Assessment Division developed the *Test Security Supplement* to help districts implement the requirements for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), and the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) and to promote a secure testing program.

This document is not intended to replace any procedures or instructions contained in the *2013 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.

Penalties for Violation of Security and Confidentiality of Assessments

Violation of security or confidentiality of any test required by the Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 39, Subchapter B, shall be prohibited. A person who engages in conduct prohibited by the *Test Security Supplement* may be subject to sanction of credentials. Charter school test administrators are not required to be certified; however, any irregularity in the administration of any test required by the TEC, Chapter 39, Subchapter B, would cause the charter itself to come under review by the commissioner of education for possible sanctions or revocation, as provided under the TEC, §12.115(a)(4).

Procedures for maintaining the security and confidentiality of state assessments are specified in the *Test Security Supplement* and in the appropriate test administration materials. Conduct that violates the security and confidentiality of a test is defined as any departure from the test administration procedures established in this supplement and other test administration materials. Conduct of this nature may include the following acts and omissions:

- ► viewing a test before, during, or after an assessment unless specifically authorized to do so;
- ► duplicating secure examination materials;
- ► disclosing the contents of any portion of a secure test;
- ► providing, suggesting, or indicating to an examinee a response or answer to a secure test item or prompt;
- ► changing or altering a response or answer of an examinee to a secure test item or prompt;
- ► aiding or assisting an examinee with a response or answer to a secure test item or prompt;
- ► encouraging or assisting an individual to engage in the conduct described in the items listed above; or
- ► failing to report to an appropriate authority that an individual has engaged in conduct outlined in the items listed above.

Any person who violates, assists in the violation of, or solicits another to violate or assist in the violation of test security or confidentiality, as well as any person who fails to report such a violation is subject to the following penalties:

- ► placement of restrictions on the issuance, renewal, or holding of a Texas teacher certificate, either indefinitely or for a set term;

- ► issuance of an inscribed or non-inscribed reprimand;

- ► suspension of a Texas teacher certificate for a set term; or

- ► revocation or cancellation of a Texas teacher certificate without opportunity for reapplication either for a set term or permanently.

Release or disclosure of confidential test content could result in criminal prosecution under TEC §39.0303, Section 552.352 of the Texas Government Code, and Section 37.10 of the Texas Penal Code. Further, 19 TAC §249.15 stipulates that the State Board for Educator Certification may take any of the above actions based on satisfactory evidence that an educator has failed to cooperate with TEA in an investigation.

In addition, any irregularities in test security or confidentiality may also result in the invalidation of student results.

The superintendent and campus principal of each school district and chief administrative officer of each charter school and any private school administering the tests as allowed under the TEC, §39.033, must develop procedures to ensure the security and confidentiality of the tests specified in the TEC, Chapter 39, Subchapter B. These administrators will be responsible for notifying TEA in writing of conduct that violates the security or confidentiality of a test administered under the TEC, Chapter 39, Subchapter B. Failure to report can subject the person responsible to the applicable penalties.

Policy and Procedure Highlights

Much of the content in this supplement was derived from TEA's ongoing efforts to improve the security of the assessment program and information collected from districts. Several of the policies referenced throughout the document were originally implemented in response to a comprehensive 14-point plan designed to assure parents, students, and the public that test results are meaningful and valid. The supplement has been organized to address tasks and issues testing personnel may encounter during a typical test administration – before, during, and after students are assessed. It focuses on the steps district testing coordinators (DTCs) and campus testing coordinators (CTCs) can take to ensure that the required procedures are implemented as directed. Below are some key policy and procedure highlights for administrations of state assessments in the 2013 calendar year. More information about the recommendations for implementation of the 14-point Test Security Plan can be found in Appendix B.

Training Requirements

Districts must ensure that the only individuals permitted to have access to secure materials and confidential student information are district personnel who meet the requirements to participate in the Texas student assessment program, have been trained, and have signed the appropriate oath. Testing personnel are required to receive annual training in test security and administration procedures and are responsible for complying with state assessment requirements. By signing the *Oath of Test Security and Confidentiality*, participants are affirming that they have been trained, understand their obligation to properly implement the program, and are aware of the range of penalties that may result from a violation of test security and confidentiality.

Districts electing to use noncertified paraprofessionals (e.g., teacher aides) during the administration of a statewide assessment, including any personnel who have access to secure test materials, must identify a certified staff member who will be responsible for supervising these individuals. If a violation of test security or confidentiality occurs under this circumstance, the supervising certified professional is subject to the penalties above.

Overview of Materials Security

All secure test materials must be handled in strict accordance with the instructions contained in this supplement, the *District and Campus Coordinator Manual,* and the test administrator manuals. Districts must ensure that the only individuals permitted to have access to these materials and information are district personnel who meet the requirements to participate in the Texas student assessment program and who have been trained and have signed the appropriate oath. Furthermore, districts are required to implement the controls necessary to ensure the proper storage and accurate tracking of secure materials throughout each stage of an administration. Documents used to account for secure materials, such as Materials Control Forms, should be accurately completed and carefully maintained in a location that would prevent them from being compromised. Other steps districts must take to maintain proper security include, but are not limited to:

► verifying, upon receipt from the state's testing contractor, that all materials boxes have been accounted for and match the proof of delivery on the shipper's bill of lading and the district packing list contained in Box 1 (white box) of the shipment;

► ensuring that all campuses immediately inventory all materials received from the district testing coordinator;

► immediately notifying the state's testing contractor of any discrepancies identified between the materials received and the district and campus packing lists included in Box 1 of the district and campus shipments;

► placing test booklets and answer documents in secure, limited-access, locked storage when not in use;

► collecting and destroying immediately after each test administration any state-supplied reference materials, graph paper, or scratch paper that students have written on during a test;

► ensuring when testing has concluded that all secure materials assigned to individual campuses have been inventoried and packaged in accordance with the procedures detailed in the manuals; and

► maintaining inventory and shipping records (bills of lading, pallet detail reports, district and campus packing lists, documents used to track the delivery of materials to and between campuses) for at least five years in the event that a discrepancy arises or the receipt of the district's materials cannot be confirmed.

> District testing coordinators are ultimately responsible for ensuring that all secure items have been accounted for prior to shipping the materials back to the testing contractor.

Secure Storage Areas

Finding a suitable location to store secure assessment materials can present certain logistical issues; however, it is required that these items be kept in locked storage when not in use. Districts and campuses must also ensure that access to secure storage is limited to one person or very few individuals and that it can be verified that these individuals possess the only key(s) to the identified locked area(s). District coordinators are encouraged to affirm that all campuses are meeting the intent of these storage requirements.

STAAR Test Session Time Limits

Students are to be provided four hours in which to complete the STAAR, STAAR Spanish, STAAR L, or STAAR Modified assessments. Campuses should use a clock or a timer to monitor test time. The four-hour time period starts after the test administrator has read and answered any questions regarding the test directions and tells students to begin working on their tests. Once the test has begun, the test administrator must communicate (orally or in writing) the amount of time left to test in one-hour intervals and, if desired, in shorter intervals during the last hour. Students who do not complete their tests within the four-hour time limit must submit what they have completed. Students will be informed in the test administrator directions that materials will be collected at the end of the four-hour time period and that they must record all responses before this period ends. No students will be allowed to record responses onto their answer documents or into TestNav after the four-hour time period has concluded.

Tests must be completed within the same school day. Campuses may offer multiple test sessions per day as long as the four-hour time limit is maintained for each session. Sessions can start before the regularly scheduled school day and can extend beyond the regularly scheduled school day. Start and stop times for each session must be recorded on the seating chart. If a student or group of students takes an allowable break that requires the time clock to be stopped, the stop and restart times for that individual or group of students must be recorded on the seating chart. For more information, please refer to the STAAR Time Limits Policies and Procedures document located in the *District and Campus Coordinator Manual*, the corresponding test administrator manuals, and on the Coordinator Manual Resources webpage.

Test Administration Windows, Flexible Scheduling, and Make-up Testing

In an effort to accommodate local needs, districts have been provided the latitude to adjust test dates for certain STAAR assessments as necessary within the scheduled administration windows. This flexibility applies to all STAAR grades 3-8 and end-of-course (EOC) assessments with the exception of the STAAR grades 4 and 7 writing tests and the STAAR English I, II, and III reading and writing assessments.

Districts will not be required to notify TEA of any local decisions to adjust test dates within the assessment windows. A district or campus that chooses to modify the recommended STAAR grades 3-8 schedule or administer any of the same assessments over multiple days must consider the potential risk that students or adults could disseminate confidential test content and jeopardize the validity of assessments administered to students later within the assessment window. Districts and campuses must consider, and mitigate if necessary, this potential risk and take steps to ensure the confidentiality of the assessments. TEA is exploring measures to track student performance throughout each testing window and will use these data to help evaluate the continued use of flexible scheduling within assessment windows.

The STAAR program allows districts to offer make-up testing opportunities for all grades and subjects to students who are absent on regularly scheduled assessment days. Make-up testing is optional, at the discretion of the district, and must be completed by the end of the testing window as specified on the calendar of events. Districts and campuses should be aware that make-up testing also presents a risk that students or adults could disseminate confidential test content later within the assessment window and jeopardize the validity of assessments administered to students. Districts and campuses must consider, and mitigate if necessary, this potential risk and take steps to ensure the confidentiality of the assessments.

Reference Materials, Scratch Paper, Graph Paper, and Charts

Reference materials (e.g., formula charts) for STAAR mathematics and science assessments and graph paper for STAAR mathematics assessments will be included in the test booklets issued to students. These materials will be printed on perforated pages so that students can remove them for use during the test administration. Scratch paper can also be provided. **Districts must ensure that any reference materials and graph paper that have been written upon AND removed from the test booklet and any scratch paper used and written upon are destroyed immediately after the test session is complete.** All charts written on by students during TAKS administrations must be collected and destroyed after testing.

All personnel who handle these materials should be aware that they may contain secure test content and that any viewing or recording of this confidential information is strictly prohibited.

Student Cheating on State Assessments

The monitoring procedures outlined in this supplement, the *District and Campus Coordinator Manual*, and the corresponding test administrator manuals require districts and campuses to implement any necessary measures to prevent cheating. **If a district determines that a student has been involved in an attempt to cheat on a state assessment – either by providing or receiving assistance – the district is required to invalidate the student's test by marking the score code "O" for "Other" on the student answer document for the corresponding test.** The test invalidation and any additional disciplinary actions taken by the district must be reported to TEA via the online Locally Determined Disciplinary Actions form which can be found on the Test Security page of the TEA website at:

<div align="center">http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/security</div>

Submission of a separate online incident report form will be necessary ONLY IF the district determines that adult testing personnel contributed to, caused, or did not detect the cheating due to inadequate monitoring.

Investigating and Reporting Testing Irregularities

Incidents resulting in a deviation from documented testing procedures are defined as testing irregularities and are viewed by TEA as falling into one of two categories – serious and procedural. Serious irregularities constitute severe violations of test security or confidentiality and can result in the individual(s) responsible being referred to the TEA Educator Standards and Certification Legal Division for consideration of disciplinary action (including suspension or revocation of educator certification credentials). Procedural irregularities are less severe, more common, and are typically the result of minor deviations from testing procedures.

Districts are required to investigate all potential testing violations. The district testing coordinator is directly responsible for reporting to TEA all violations that occur within his or her district. Furthermore, any incidents involving alleged or suspected violations that fall under the category of a serious irregularity must be reported to the Student Assessment Division **as soon as the district coordinator is made aware of the situation.** The superintendent and campus principals in each school district, the chief administrative officer of each charter school, and any private school administering tests as allowed under TEC §39.033, **must ensure** that TEA is notified of any conduct that violates the security or confidential integrity of a test. Failure to cooperate with TEA in an investigation or to properly report that an individual has engaged in conduct that violates the security and/or confidentiality of a test is itself a violation and could result in sanctions.

Both serious and procedural testing irregularities must be reported through the submission of a Student Assessment Division online incident report. Testing personnel should contact TEA if they are unsure about whether an irregularity has occurred or if they are unclear regarding what constitutes a serious violation. The nature of serious allegations requires a swift investigation by the district in order to gather all necessary evidence while the involved individuals are still available and able to recall details. Therefore, districts must submit the required information for serious irregularities within ten working days of becoming aware of the violation, or contact the TEA Student Assessment security team. In the event that district coordinators do not submit the required information within ten working days or fail to respond to requests for information, the district's superintendent will be contacted for assistance. More information about the specific reporting requirements associated with serious and procedural irregularities can be found in the Incident Reporting section of this supplement.

Making Your Program 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. District testing coordinators must verify that the campuses have sufficient measures in place and are implementing these measures for tracking secure materials. Listed below are steps coordinators should take into account when planning for an administration.

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

► Identify how you will store, distribute, and track materials (including any additional materials ordered) after they are received.

► Identify all personnel who will be authorized to have access to materials and provide test security training to them.

► Ensure that campus coordinators identify all individuals who will have access to campus secure storage areas and that they are limiting the number of personnel who have a key to this area or who have knowledge of or access to where keys are kept.

► 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 will be available online approximately one month before each test administration.

► Using the materials list, verify that each campus will have sufficient quantities of test materials.

► Confirm that your district's secure area is large enough to store all materials that you will receive from the contractor, including shipments for administrations that overlap. It will be helpful to have room to sort the materials for each administration to ensure that they will remain organized and separate. Do not mix materials from different administrations when returning them to the testing contractor.

► Make certain that campuses are prepared to receive their shipment and have adequate secure storage space and room to inventory and sort materials. Notify all essential personnel of delivery dates and times and provide directions for them to contact the district or campus test coordinator when the shipment arrives.

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

► Establish procedures for distributing and tracking overage materials. Use a tracking document or some other means to record the security numbers and destination of all secure overage materials.

► Establish a secure method for transferring materials to campuses and ensure that the individuals transporting them have been trained and are aware of their security and confidentiality requirements.

► Establish sign-off procedures to identify who is responsible for materials when they are not in your possession.

► Verify that each campus has check-in/check-out procedures established and documented.

► Make sure that campus coordinators are aware that they are required to verify and account for all booklets each day.

► Ensure that all campuses have procedures in place for the proper packing and return of materials to the district coordinator.

► Require that campus coordinators have procedures for verifying that all answer documents are accounted for and correctly submitted for processing after testing.

► Establish a process for ensuring that overage is accounted for after the administration.

Receiving and Distributing Test Materials

Secure and nonsecure materials for each administration are combined into one shipment, which will arrive in the district approximately two to three weeks before testing. Shipments will include a WHITE district coordinator box (Box 1), district overage box(es), and campus box(es). In some cases for smaller districts, overage materials may be combined in Box 1. 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 district testing coordinator has the ultimate responsibility of accounting for test materials; however, campus coordinators play an integral role in supporting this task. Using some type of tracking process can greatly assist in your ability to locate all secure materials in your possession throughout a test administration.

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

► Verify the receipt of each shipment of test materials. Review the label on each box to confirm that boxes from each testing program are grouped together. Organize all boxes in sequential order according to the number assigned to each box. Account for all boxes by checking the box numbers and the amounts against the shipper's bill of lading and the contractor's pallet detail located in Box 1.

► Verify the materials that are to be distributed to each campus using the pallet detail report. Campus materials will be packaged in separate boxes with brightly colored labels.

► Immediately notify the state's testing contractor of any discrepancies identified between the materials received and the information contained in the shipper's bill of lading or the pallet detail.

► Place all secure materials in locked storage when not in use. Keep materials for different administrations separate.

☑ **Distribute test materials to campuses.**

► Forward materials to the campuses as soon as possible. Document the distribution of materials to each campus.

► Verify that all campuses have received their shipments and have physically inventoried the shipment contents. Ensure that each campus uses the campus packing list included in the first box of the campus shipment to verify the receipt of all materials.

► Instruct each campus to notify you immediately of any discrepancies identified between the materials received and the information contained in the campus packing list. NOTE: the contractor must be notified of all missing materials prior to the assessment dates so that campuses and districts will not be held accountable for these materials.

► Ensure that all campuses provide 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. Be aware of the deadlines for district coordinators to order additional materials as listed on the Calendar of Events.

► Retain all shipping records and materials tracking documentation (e.g., shipper's bill of lading, pallet detail reports, district and campus packing lists, documents used to track the delivery of materials).

Planning for Possible Testing Disruptions

Disruptions in testing generally involve unplanned 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 seek guidance in handling any significant disruptions. To prepare for any unexpected disruptions, the district should consider the following:

► Ensure that all campuses are aware of what to do and who to contact if a disruption takes place during testing.

► Make certain that each campus has a plan in place for securing test materials and maintaining confidentiality in the event of a disruption during testing. (Remember that the safety of students and staff is the first consideration.)

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

► What happened and where did the disruption take place? What is 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 confidentiality?

Training

The district testing coordinator must be well prepared and is responsible for providing clear and complete annual training on general test security and procedures to campus testing coordinators by the deadlines specified in the Calendar of Events located in the *District and Campus Coordinator Manual.*

☑ **District testing coordinator preparation.**

► Attend district coordinator training.

► Review the training guidelines and read the current *District and Campus Coordinator Manual.*

► Sign your security oath.

► As appropriate, access and read the online resources on the *District and Campus Coordinator Manual.*

► Schedule a sufficient number of training sessions (including make-up sessions) and allow enough time to adequately train campus coordinators.

► Give coordinators ample notice of the scheduled training dates.

► Make facility arrangements for holding training sessions.

► Develop training materials for the sessions.

► Assemble training materials or guidelines that campus coordinators should use for their test administrator training.

Refer to the Student Assessment Division website to access the annual Education Service Center training resources for material that can be used in your local training sessions.

☑ **Train campus coordinators to do the following BEFORE each test administration.**

► Read the current *District and Campus Coordinator Manual* and test administrator manuals.

► Attend training for campus coordinators.

► Sign a security oath after training.

► As needed, access and read the online resources on the *District and Campus Coordinator Manual.*

► 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 materials needed for special administrations (oral administrations, large-print, braille, 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 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 personnel participating in testing.

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

► Design a method by which test administrators may contact the campus coordinator or principal if they need assistance during testing.

► Conduct training sessions for campus personnel, 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.

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

► Ensure that procedures are in place for transferring examinees and testing materials from one area to another and that testing personnel are aware of monitoring requirements when doing so. (Remind coordinators that examinees are not permitted to transport testing materials outside the testing environment.)

► Ensure that test administrators have all the necessary materials to administer a test: test administrator manuals; seating charts; test session rosters (online and paper); accommodations lists and materials; student attendance sheets; pencils and erasers; and when required, calculators and dictionaries.

► Ensure that campus personnel are familiar with the policies and procedures associated with test session time limits and that each test administrator has a clock or stopwatch to monitor testing time.

► 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 (including the test session start and stop times and the test administrator's name) and are appropriate for the layout of each room.

► For each day of testing, confirm that you have received the correct information regarding committee decisions about testing requirements and accommodations for students receiving special education and Section 504 services and that all testing requirements and accommodations are in place.

► Supervise the verification of precoded materials and answer documents.

► Supervise the hand-gridding of blank answer documents.

> Many district and campus staff elect to write students' names or place labels on students' test booklets in an effort to reduce or eliminate distribution errors. TEA does not discourage districts from implementing local policies to help ensure that materials are issued correctly; however, such practices must not conflict with stipulated testing procedures. Procedures for administering state assessments are clearly outlined in the test administration manuals where scripted instructions specifically direct test administrators to tell students to write their names on their booklets and their booklet numbers on their answer documents. **Assessment staff, therefore, should <u>not</u> write or place labels on areas of the test booklet or answer document that are reserved for student use**. Staff **may** write or place labels in the upper right portion on the front cover of students' test booklets as long as these actions do not result in test administrators deviating from scripted directions. If space permits, staff **may** also write test booklet numbers in the upper right portion on the front of students' answer documents. No other label besides the precoded label should ever be placed on an answer document.

► 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 students identified as eligible testers that are attending alternative campuses.

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

► 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.)

☑ **Train campus coordinators to do the following <u>DURING</u> each test administration.**

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

► Properly complete Materials Control Forms 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 or assign staff to visit each testing area to ensure test administrators are actively monitoring and as directed in the test administrator manuals, periodically reminding students to record their responses on the answer document).

► Confirm that a seating chart has been completed for each test session. Remind test administrators to record test session start and stop times. Make sure seating charts are also completed for test sessions involving students who have been moved or transferred as well as seating information for any late-arriving students.

► 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. 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 STAAR answer documents before the end of the four-hour time period.

► Be accessible in case problems arise.

☑ **Train campus coordinators to do the following <u>AFTER</u> each test administration.**

► Direct the collection of materials from the test administrators. Ensure that the return of materials is verified and noted on the Materials Control Form.

► Account for every answer document.

► Account for every test booklet (this includes any overage or transferred materials).

► Verify that the correct score code, test taken information, and accommodations have 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.)

► 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 for further directions.**

► Follow procedures for properly boxing and labeling materials for return to the district testing coordinator. 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 critical role in this effort, ensuring that each test administrator is actively monitoring and that all testing personnel are adhering to the proper assessment procedures.

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

► Test administration personnel must check to see if test administrators have all necessary materials (e.g., test administrator manuals, test booklets, and answer documents).

► Campus principals and coordinators must verify that test administrators are actively monitoring students.

► Testing personnel should verify 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.)

► Students should be monitored properly during breaks.

► Campus principals and coordinators must verify that test administrators are properly completing a seating chart for each test session. Make sure seating charts include any students who moved, transferred, or arrived late to a test session.

► Test administrators must monitor the testing time and be announcing the time-left-to-test in one hour intervals (more during the last hour if desired).

► For breaks that require the time clock to be stopped, ensure that test administrators are recording the stop and restart times on the seating chart.

► Testing personnel must ensure that students are being administered the appropriate tests and have been issued the correct corresponding answer documents.

► All test administrators are required to ensure that students have marked their responses on their answer documents before the end of the four-hour time period.

► The campus principal and test coordinator are available to support test administrators as needed.

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

► Ensure that campus coordinators correctly use Materials Control Forms when distributing test materials to test administrators each day. Require the use of a tracking document to record overage, additional materials received, or booklets transferred between campuses.

► Check to ensure that campuses follow proper check-in/check-out procedures and are using materials control documents.

► Check to verify that campuses document security numbers for overage materials and booklets transferred to other districts or alternative education facilities.

► Ensure that campuses properly transport test materials to and from the testing areas.

► Confirm that campus coordinators and test administrators are ensuring that test booklets are properly secured or monitored while students are taking breaks.

► Confirm that campus coordinators verify that all booklets are being returned and accounted for each day.

► Ensure that campuses lock and restrict access to the secure storage area.

Things to Consider AFTER an Administration

Accounting for All Secure Materials

The district's secure materials must be returned in accordance with the procedures and timelines outlined in the *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 steps that district coordinators should use to account for all materials.

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

► Once test sessions have been completed, ensure that campuses destroy immediately any formula charts or graph paper that have been written upon AND have been removed from the test booklet. In addition, ensure that campuses destroy any used scratch paper.

► Confirm that campuses are accounting for every answer document for each enrolled, eligible student and are checking to ensure proper marking of the SCORE CODE, TEST TAKEN, and ACCOMMODATIONS fields.

► Ensure that coordinators account for out-of-district and out-of-school examinees (when applicable) and enrolled students at alternative campuses.

► Verify 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.

► Ensure that campuses are following the proper packing procedures and labeling boxes correctly.

► Confirm that campuses have rechecked their secure storage areas for overage and unused secure materials.

► Verify that all boxes have been checked to ensure that no voided answer documents were returned with nonscorable materials.

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

► Verify receipt of the shipment from each campus. If applicable, check the box numbers handwritten on the boxes to ensure that all have been returned to the district office.

► If your district uses a centralized campus check-in process, verify that all materials are accounted for before campus personnel leave the check-in area.

► Make certain that materials for different administrations are kept separate.

► 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.**

► Verify 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).

► Verify that the contents of each box match the return shipping label, and check to make sure that no bar codes are taped over or covered with other labels.

► Ensure that all extraneous items (e.g., rulers, charts, nonsecure manuals, etc.) are either disposed of locally or returned separately with nonscorable materials.

► Ensure that all secure materials remain monitored by certified personnel or in locked storage until the boxes are picked up by the carrier.

► Make sure that you detach and retain the shipping label receipt(s) for all the boxes returned.

Retention of Test Administration Documentation

Districts are required to retain signed security oaths and seating charts for **five years** following a test administration. Inventory and shipping records must also be maintained in the event that a discrepancy arises or the receipt of materials cannot be confirmed.

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

► Verify that campuses have collected signed security oaths for all personnel who participated in testing.

► Confirm that campuses have collected seating charts for each test session. Make certain that the charts have been accurately completed and that coordinators have verified that the charts contain the required information, including the tests administrator(s) names and test session start and stop times.

► Confirm that campuses have properly completed and collected all inventory and shipping records (including Materials Control Forms, campus packing lists, and documents used to track the transfer of secure materials within and outside the district).

► Ensure that the designated test administration documentation storage location is secure and that the documentation cannot be subsequently altered.

Testing Irregularities

This section describes the different types of irregularities that can occur before, during, and after testing, along with steps coordinators can take to avoid such mistakes. Testing violations are categorized as serious or procedural. The following pages include examples of both types of irregularities and how to address them if they arise.

Serious Violations

Examples:

► Directly OR indirectly assisting students with responses to test questions

► Tampering with student responses

► Falsifying TELPAS holistic ratings or STAAR Alternate student performance data

► Viewing secure test content before, during, or after an administration or viewing STAAR Alternate performance data during or after an assessment (unless specifically authorized to do so by the procedures outlined in the test administration materials)

► Discussing secure test content, student responses, or student performance

► Duplicating, recording, or capturing electronically secure test content without permission from TEA

► Scoring student tests, either formally or informally

How to avoid:

► Ensure that test administrators understand how to address students who might request assistance or drift off task during an assessment. Make sure that testing personnel have a reliable means to request assistance if they encounter an issue they are uncertain how to handle.

► Stress 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 not considered inappropriate for teachers to talk with their students about their testing experience or the test in general as long as the conversation does not become specific.

► Reinforce to all testing personnel the proper procedures for conducting an oral administration – particularly those that prohibit test administrators from solving test items or discussing secure content or student performance.

► Discuss with test administrators the proper way in which students should be prompted to bubble in answer documents. Remind all campus personnel that erasing stray marks or darkening response ovals is strictly prohibited.

► Verify that all formula charts or graph paper that have been written upon and removed from the test booklet and any scratch paper used and written upon are destroyed immediately after test sessions are completed.

► Verify that campuses have designated and are using a sufficient number of testing personnel to adequately monitor the test administration.

> Any incidents involving alleged or suspected violations that fall under the category of a serious irregularity must be reported to the TEA Student Assessment Division **as soon as the district coordinator is made aware of the situation**. Testing personnel should contact TEA if they are unsure whether an irregularity has occurred or if they are unclear regarding what constitutes a serious violation.

Procedural Violations

Eligibility Errors

Example:

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

► A grade 9 student who is eligible to participate in an EOC assessment was not administered the correct test.

How to avoid:

► Ensure that you have identified and accounted for all eligible testers, including newly enrolled students or students whose assessment requirements might have changed just prior to an administration.

► Verify the grade level and testing status of all newly enrolled students.

► Confirm with the appropriate campus personnel (or by referring to students' paperwork such as LPAC documentation) that you are using the most up-to-date information regarding students' testing eligibility.

► Verify your roster(s) to confirm where students are supposed to be testing.

► Establish procedures for ensuring that all students are present in or directed to the correct testing location.

► Consider putting 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. Contact TEA if guidance is needed.

Examples of how to address:

► *A student enrolled in Algebra I was administered the STAAR Algebra II EOC.*

If this error is discovered before materials have been shipped to the testing contractor, the Algebra II assessment **must be voided**. If time remains in the testing window, districts must notify the individual's parents/guardians and determine whether it would be appropriate to administer the correct assessment. If the student is not retested on the correct assessment, the answer document for the correct assessment must have the score code bubbled "O" for "other" and be submitted for scoring.

► *A grade 4 student was administered a grade 5 mathematics assessment.*

If this error is discovered before materials have been shipped to the testing contractor, the grade 5 assessment **must be voided**. If time remains in the testing window, districts must notify the individual's parents/guardians and determine whether it would be appropriate to administer the correct assessment. If the student is not retested on the correct assessment, the answer document for the correct assessment must have the score code bubbled "O" for "other" and be submitted for scoring.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) Implementation Issues

Examples:

► A student was administered a STAAR assessment when he or she should have taken STAAR Modified.

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

How to avoid:

► Periodically before the test administration, verify 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. Confirm that this information is also correct for any newly enrolled students.

► Verify with coordinators and test administrators the accommodations and resources to be provided to each student.

► Ensure that campus coordinators are cognizant of recent changes in testing requirements for students receiving special education services.

► Establish procedures for communicating to the appropriate admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee and Section 504 committee campus personnel those testing decisions that are in conflict with state assessment requirements or procedures.

► Account for appropriate test materials – booklets and answer documents – for each student with an IEP.

Examples of how to address:

► *A student assigned to take the STAAR Modified test was issued and completed a STAAR assessment (or vice versa).*

If this error is discovered before materials have been shipped to the testing contractor, the incorrect assessment **must be voided**. If time remains in the testing window, districts must notify the individual's parents/guardians and determine whether it would be appropriate to administer the correct assessment. If the student is not retested, the correct answer document must be submitted with a score code of "O" 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 for scoring.

Improper Accounting for Secure Materials

Examples:

► Testing personnel lost or misplaced completed answer document(s), test booklet(s), or other secure materials.

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

► Secure materials were not returned to the testing contractor by the published dates.

How to avoid:

► Verify that all test booklets and answer documents are accounted for.

► Ensure that no answer documents were left inside test booklets accidentally.

► Keep test materials from the same test administration together – do not mix them with any other test administration.

► Properly label boxes (e.g., 1 of 5, 2 of 5, etc.) and identify and track 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 situations that involve the loss or late return of secure materials result from not establishing or implementing basic inventory procedures (e.g., not using materials control documents, not following check-in/check-out procedures, not accounting for the items that were issued to test administrators at the end of each day).
>
> 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 when students or secure materials were present or when secure online assessments were open and visible.

► A test administrator left secure materials unattended or secure online assessments open and visible during a lunch break.

► A test administrator did not verify that a student recorded his or her responses and accepted a blank answer document from the 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 dictionary or calculator.

► A test administrator did not ensure that students worked independently during testing (for example, students were not prevented from gaining an unfair advantage through the use of cell phones, text messages, or other means).

> Students are **NOT** permitted to have cell phones or personal electronic devices that allow Internet access turned on during testing as the devices can disrupt the testing environment and be used to compromise the security and confidentiality of the test. These devices cannot be used to fulfill the requirements of the STAAR Dictionary Policy or the STAAR Calculator Policy. Districts are required to have procedures in place to prevent the use of these devices during test administrations.

How to avoid:

► Emphasize that test administrators are not allowed to leave examinees or materials unattended.

► Instruct test administrators to immediately notify the appropriate testing personnel when improper student behavior has been detected.

► Clearly establish which test administrators will be relieved during breaks and by whom.

► Periodically check test sessions to ensure that test administrators are actively monitoring.

> Monitoring-related errors are some of the most common types of incidents. Regardless of whether these mistakes directly or indirectly contribute to testing irregularities, they are one of the more problematic assessment issues that districts must address. Such errors can also be detrimental to students. Accepting a blank answer document, for example, will 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 or had access to nonallowable manipulatives, instructional aids, or unattended secure materials, **districts are required to provide a determination** on the online incident form of whether confidentiality was breached or if the irregularity compromised the validity of a student's assessment.

Examples of how to address:

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

The campus coordinator should first notify the district coordinator. The district coordinator should inform TEA. **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 students unmonitored 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 resume testing. If cheating occurred or secure content was compromised, the district must invalidate the test. 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 another subject-area test.*

If this type of error is detected before the student 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.

> Coordinators should always evaluate incidents involving improper student behavior and make a determination regarding whether testing personnel were or were not actively monitoring. If a monitoring error occurred, this determination should be clearly communicated to TEA in the online incident report.

Other 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., #2 pencils, dictionaries, calculators) or students were incorrectly permitted to use nonallowable materials.

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

► A student was permitted to test beyond the required four-hour time limit or was not provided the full four-hour time allotment to complete an assessment.

► 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.

► Scorable materials were returned with nonscorable materials.

How to avoid:

► Notify coordinators and test administrators which personnel are authorized and delegated to transport secure test materials or to monitor or relieve test administrators.

► Make sure that coordinators verify with test administrators which supplemental materials are allowed or required for each subject and for each test.

► Confirm that a sufficient number of staff have been properly trained in test administration procedures.

► Make certain that coordinators have verified that all test administrators are in possession of the appropriate manual(s) and directions on the days of testing.

► Verify that testing personnel were issued the correct manuals in advance of training so they could read them thoroughly.

► Monitor test session start times to anticipate when they should be concluding. Coordinators might consider checking on test administrators during the final hour of testing to remind them that limited time remains so they can remind students to record all of their responses on their answer documents.

► Confirm that the contents of each box match the return shipping label and are not mixed between administrations.

► Check all boxes to make sure that no voided answer documents or scorable booklets are returned with nonscorable materials.

Example of how to address:

► *A student was permitted to test beyond the required four-hour time limit.*

   If students do not have an accommodation of extended time and are permitted to test longer than the maximum four-hour time limit, **districts must contact TEA for guidance**.

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 clear determination about what occurred. **All confirmed testing irregularities must be reported to the TEA Student Assessment Division via the online incident report form. District coordinators must immediately notify TEA as soon as they are made aware of any alleged or suspected violations that fall under the category of a serious irregularity.** The nature of serious allegations requires a swift investigation by the district in order to gather all necessary evidence while the involved individuals are still available and able to recall details. Districts must ensure that all testing personnel are aware of their obligation to report testing irregularities and can easily access local reporting procedures.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Regarding the District's Obligation to Investigate and Report Testing Violations

The superintendent in each school district, the chief administrative officer of each charter school, and any private school administering tests as allowed under TEC, §39.033, must ensure that TEA is notified of any conduct that violates the security or confidential integrity of a test.

Failure to cooperate with TEA in an investigation or to properly report that an individual has engaged in conduct that violates the security and/or confidentiality of a test is itself a violation of 19 TAC §249.15(b)(6) and (b)(8) and could result in sanctions.

Reporting requirements differ based on the severity of the confirmed or alleged violation; therefore, district coordinators must determine whether the incident is a serious or procedural irregularity. However, the contents of all reports submitted to TEA must clearly lay out the sequence of events and include the district's determination in the matter.

Reporting Requirements for Serious Irregularities

Due to the nature and complexity of investigating more egregious types of violations, serious irregularities require, at a minimum, the submission of an online incident report, statements from the parties involved, and a district determination in the matter. The district's reporting obligation is fulfilled once this information has been submitted. Depending on the severity of the issue, TEA may request that the district take certain actions, such as interviewing students to ensure a thorough and complete investigation. TEA may also require additional information, such as a Corrective Action Plan, or require certain documentation to be maintained at the district level. Districts must submit the required information for serious irregularities within ten working days of becoming aware of the violation, or contact the TEA Student Assessment security team to request an extension of the deadline. Additional information regarding the investigation, documentation, and reporting of serious testing irregularities is described below.

☑ **Assess what occurred.**

- ► Determine whether state-mandated testing procedures were violated.
- ► Ensure that all individuals who were involved in or may have information about the incident have been interviewed.
- ► Determine exactly what happened and why it happened.

► Determine who is responsible and how the error was discovered.

► Prepare a timeline, if necessary, to establish when events occurred.

► Address and resolve all discrepancies (if any) in the information provided by the individuals involved.

☑ **Properly document the incident.**

► Note at what campus the incident occurred and during which administration (month, assessment – e.g., STAAR, STAAR Modified, etc., grade level, subject area, etc.).

► Obtain separate typed, signed, and dated statements from all individuals who were involved in or may have information about the incident.

► Verify that all statements include the name and role (title) of all individuals and how they were involved. Make sure the statements include a description of the incident from each individual's perspective.

► If TEA was contacted for guidance, document when the contact was made and with whom you spoke. If the district was granted permission to take a certain action or instructed on how to remedy an error, include that information in your report.

► Make certain that the incident documentation includes the district's determination of what happened, why it happened, and how the incident was addressed, remedied, or resolved.

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

► Always document whether local action was taken against educator(s) or student(s).

☑ **Provide a corrective action plan (if requested).**

► Ensure that the plan includes a brief summary of the incident.

► Include a description of how the incident occurred.

► Include a description of the specific procedure(s) that will be implemented to prevent future occurrences of this type of violation.

► Include the name and role (title) of the person(s) responsible.

► Include any local actions taken against educator(s) as a result of the district's investigation.

► Make certain that the corrective action plan has been signed by the superintendent or chief administrative officer.

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, its severity, or the correct way to report it.

Additional resources, including information regarding how to conduct thorough investigations, can be found on the Student Assessment Division's test security webpage located at:

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

Reporting Requirements for Procedural Irregularities

Because <u>procedural irregularities</u> are often the result of minor errors that do not generally represent severe breaches in test security or confidentiality, they require only the submission of an online incident report. For these types of irregularities, the district's reporting obligation is fulfilled once the online submission has been completed. If more information is needed, TEA will notify the district coordinator. Reports for procedural errors must be submitted within ten working days of the district coordinator being made aware of the incident. If more time is needed, coordinators can contact the Student Assessment Division's security team by phone at 512-463-9536 or via e-mail at <u>testsecurity@tea.state.tx.us</u>.

For procedural irregularities, follow the instructions on the online incident report form. You will need to:

- ► clearly outline the sequence of events;

- ► explain what happened and how it occurred;

- ► include information about how the problem was resolved or remedied;

- ► include the name of the individual who assisted you if TEA was contacted; and

- ► include a district determination in the matter.

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

☑ **Properly describe the incident.**

- ► Note at what campus the incident occurred and during which administration (month, assessment – e.g., STAAR, STAAR Modified, etc., grade level, subject area, etc.).

- ► If TEA was contacted for guidance, document when the contact was made and with whom you spoke. If the district was granted permission to take a certain action or instructed on how to remedy an error, include that information in your report.

- ► Make certain that the incident documentation includes the district's determination of what happened and how the error was addressed, remedied, or resolved.

- ► If the irregularity involved any students potentially gaining an unfair advantage on an assessment, include information regarding whether the district decided to invalidate the assessment(s) or submit the test(s) to be scored.

- ► If a student who receives special education or Section 504 services was given the wrong assessment, include information about whether the student's parents were informed and whether permission was obtained to administer the correct test (if possible).

- ► Always note whether local action was taken against educator(s) or student(s).

Student Cheating on State Assessments

Cheating during the administration of a state assessment requires action by the campus or the district testing coordinator. If the district determines that a student has been involved in cheating on a state assessment, the district is required to invalidate the student's test and complete the following steps:

- ► invalidate the student's test by marking the score code "O" for "Other" on the student answer document for the corresponding test;

- ► submit a separate online incident report form IF the district determines that an irregularity occurred because adult testing personnel caused, contributed to, or did not detect the cheating due to inadequate monitoring; and

- ► complete the Locally Determined Disciplinary Action (LDAA) form to report any action taken against students (See Appendix B for more information).

Incidents that Do Not Constitute Testing Irregularities

The following events are not considered irregularities and do not need to be reported on the online incident report form.

- ► Broken seals (accidental)
- ► Student moving into another test section
- ► Unexpected disruptions in testing
- ► Use of cell phone or other electronic devices

> NOTE: if students take pictures or transmit any test information using electronic devices, contact TEA immediately. A district may be asked to submit an online incident report.

Coordinators should evaluate the circumstances when notified of these occurrences and determine whether any adult testing personnel bears responsibility for what happened. If the district determines that no error was committed by an adult, the district may wish to keep local documentation of what occurred.

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 a confirmation that their report has been accepted, and an incident identification number will be issued for tracking purposes. District coordinators will be notified via e-mail when an incident has been submitted for their district provided that a valid email 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.

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. If districts need to update or change information once a report has been submitted, they can contact the Student Assessment Division's security team by phone at 512-463-9536 or via email at testsecurity@tea.state.tx.us and reference the incident identification number they received when the report was originally submitted.

In an effort to minimize the burden on districts, supporting documentation is only required for serious violations. When necessary, users can upload supporting documentation so that all submission requirements can be fulfilled in one 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 or 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. Although the system accepts up to three attachments, it is preferred that the documentation be combined into just one scanned file. If the district chooses not to use the system's attachment feature, all supporting documentation can be scanned and submitted by email to testsecurity@tea.state.tx.us. If your district does not have scanning capability, please contact the TEA Student Assessment Division at 512-463-9536 for assistance.

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.

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/security/incidents/.

2. Review the procedures for reporting an irregularity online and then click the link at the bottom of the page titled "Click here to submit an online incident report."

3. Select your district and campus from the drop-down menus; choose "Yes" or "No" to identify you as the district coordinator and to identify if the report you are making is identified as a serious irregularity. Complete the required information in the report form.

4. If you are submitting the documentation required for a serious violation, use the form's attachment feature to attach the electronic supporting documentation.

5. If you choose not to use the online attachment option, all supporting documentation can be submitted by email to testsecurity@tea.state.tx.us. With each set of documentation attached to an e-mail, be sure to include in the subject line the incident identification number provided to you upon completion of the online submission.

> If you encounter difficulty using the online incident reporting system, please contact a member of TEA's Student Assessment Division security team at 512-463-9536 for assistance.

What to Expect Following the Submission of an Incident Report

To ensure that state investigations, sanctions, and corrective actions are conducted in a fair, expeditious, and equitable manner, the TEA's Student Assessment Division's security team has implemented a standardized set of procedures for processing testing violations. All incident reports and supporting documentation are assessed for completeness to make certain that the required information has been submitted for each irregularity. Reports are then carefully reviewed, and a determination is made regarding the disposition of each incident. Correspondence is subsequently generated to notify the superintendent and district testing coordinator of the Student Assessment Division's findings.

List of Appendices

Appendix A

Best Practices and Tips from the Field

Appendix B

Information Relating to the Implementation of the 14-Point Test Security Plan

Appendix A

Appendix A: Best Practices and Tips from the Field

Districts from across Texas have employed innovative tools and techniques to help ensure error-free test administrations and 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 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/campuses reduce the amount of storage space required for maintaining documentation for five years by scanning documents and storing them electronically.

► For any district office personnel who will be assigned to campuses to monitor testing, provide the same level of training that was given to the individuals they will be monitoring. Monitors should know testing procedures well enough to be able to recognize possible irregularities.

Successful Practices Used in Districts DURING 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.

► The campus coordinator makes a "first hour" check of all test sessions to ensure that all students are in the correct location and have been issued the correct assessments.

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.

- ► If a testing irregularity has occurred, all involved individuals write a statement on the day the incident was detected or as soon as possible thereafter.

Appendix B

Appendix B: Information Relating to the Implementation of the 14-Point Test Security Plan

In response to recommendations made by TEA's Task Force on Test Integrity and to further ongoing efforts to improve security measures in the state's assessment program, TEA introduced in June 2007 a comprehensive 14-point plan designed to assure parents, students, and the public that test results are meaningful and valid. The Student Assessment Division began introducing portions of the plan starting in spring 2008.

Beginning with the 2008 administrations, TEA introduced the following 14-point plan measures in accordance to the recommendations made by the Task Force on Test Integrity:

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 or consolidation of students, original testing areas becoming unsuitable, etc.). Electronic copies of seating chart examples can be accessed on the Student Assessment Division website at the following address:

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

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.

> **Beginning in 2012 and to support the implementation of time limits for testing, districts are required to indicate the start and stop times for each test session on all seating charts.**

Honor Statements

Beginning 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 a statewide assessment. The following language is what appears on their answer documents:

> 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.

This measure has been extended to include all students taking STAAR EOC assessments. Test administrators for STAAR and STAAR Modified are provided instructions for prompting students to complete the honor statement but are not required to verify that examinees have signed the statement.

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

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 statewide assessment, such as invalidation of the student's test or suspension. An online form, *Locally Determined Disciplinary Actions Form*, was developed for collecting this information and can be accessed and completed via the Student Assessment Division website at: http://www.txetests.com/DAF/index.asp

Document Retention

At a minimum, districts are required to maintain the following four types of 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
   ► Carrier's 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)

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, 2009, and 2010 testing years. The Student Assessment Division will continue to coordinate with other TEA divisions to identify campuses where testing could be monitored and where visits could occur.

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 Texas student 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. 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.

Optional Web-based Test Administrator Training Modules

In response to recommendation 14, TEA developed and deployed in 2010 new web-based training modules for test administrators to help ensure that test results are meaningful and valid. The modules were provided to supplement the mandatory training required of all personnel involved in testing. This online training is optional but recommended and is designed to be conducted in either a group or individual setting.

The modules address the following topics:

- ► Active Monitoring: Module 1 explains the expectations for active monitoring and demonstrates how to correctly implement this requirement.

- ► Distribution of Test Materials: Module 2 familiarizes personnel with common errors made when materials are distributed and offers strategies for preventing these mistakes.

- ► Proper Handling of Secure Materials: Module 3 addresses the expectations for protecting the contents of secure test materials and presents examples of the risks and consequences of common errors that could result in breaches of security and confidentiality.