

31st Annual Texas Assessment Conference – February 2017

Test Security Policies and Procedures

**Student Assessment Division
Texas Education Agency**



Texas Education Code (TEC)

Sec. 39.0301. SECURITY IN ADMINISTRATION OF ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS.

“The commissioner shall establish procedures... designed to ensure the security of the assessment instruments...”

Texas Administrative Code (TAC)

19 TAC §101.3031. Required Test Administration Procedures and Training Activities to Ensure Validity, Reliability, and Security of Assessments.

19 TAC §101.3031(b)(2). *Test Security Supplement*

(Anticipated effective date for the *2017 Test Security Supplement* – March 2017. The *2016 Test Security Supplement* will remain in effect until replaced.)

2017 Test Security Supplement Highlights



Test Administration

- References to STAAR L and STAAR A removed
- References to the names of certain shipping documents updated
- Examples added to help clarify the requirement to remove or cover instructional displays

Drafted Language:

“Prior to the administration, walk through each testing location to verify that the environment is appropriate for testing and no instructional displays are visible (e.g., process and cycle diagrams, definitions or examples of literary terms, test-taking strategies, how to write an essay, anchor charts, maps, word walls, timelines, posters identifying historical figures, etc.).”

2017 Test Security Supplement Highlights



Important Highlights Implemented in 2016

- Students who are in attendance on the day of testing and choose not to participate or refuse to mark their answers on the answer document or in the online form and who are in grades 3-8 or are taking an EOC for the first time, will have their tests submitted for scoring as is.
- Districts must verify that procedures are in place for the collection and destruction of any state-supplied reference materials, recordings, graph paper, or scratch paper that students have written on during a test.
- The calculator requirement for state assessments now allows districts to provide either a handheld calculator or a calculator application. For calculator applications, all Internet capabilities must be disabled, and the calculator application being used must be locked down (in kiosk mode).

2017 Test Security Supplement Highlights

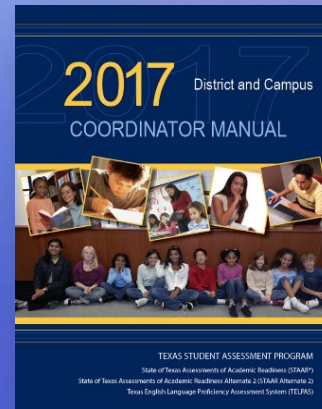


Important Highlights Implemented in 2016

- Trained STAAR Alternate 2 test administrators are permitted to keep test materials in their possession throughout the day as long as the secure materials are kept in locked storage when not in use. All materials must still be checked back in to the campus coordinator at the end of the day using the Materials Control Form. District and campus personnel are required to verify compliance with these procedures.
- TELPAS raters must complete the rating training calibration activities independently and in a monitored environment. All notes taken by raters during the session must be turned in to the proctor and destroyed.

Procedures for maintaining the security and confidentiality of assessments are specified in the:

- *Test Security Supplement*
- *District and Campus Coordinator Manual*
- Test administrator manuals



Conduct that departs from the test administration procedures as established in these resources is considered a testing irregularity and must be reported to the Student Assessment Division.

Testing Irregularities



Procedural Irregularities

- reflect minor errors or deviations in testing procedures;
- do not represent severe breaches in security or confidentiality;
- do not require a call to TEA unless guidance is needed by the district; and
- do not require the submission of supporting documentation

Examples

- administering the incorrect test
- failing to provide an accommodation
- failing to test an eligible student
- providing an unallowable accommodation
- failing to actively monitor
- failing to provide the full time allotment to complete a test

Testing Irregularities



Serious Irregularities

- constitute severe violations of test security or confidentiality;
- require a prompt investigation by the district;
- require a call to TEA test security as soon as the district coordinator is made aware of the incident; and
- can result in the individual(s) responsible being referred to the TEA Educator Certification and Standards Division for consideration of disciplinary action.

Examples

- changing or altering a student's response (tampering)
- providing, suggesting, or indicating to a student the answer to a test question
- assisting a student with an answer to a test question
- identifying incorrect responses
- solving test questions or scoring a student's test
- unauthorized viewing, recording, or duplication of a test
- disclosing secure test content
- fraudulently exempting or preventing a student from taking a required test

A person who engages in conduct prohibited by the *Test Security Supplement* and in other test administration materials may be subject to the following penalties:

- placement of restrictions on the issuance, renewal, or holding of a Texas teacher certificate;
- 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.

It is imperative that your investigation be expeditious, accurate, and thorough.

Addressing Testing Irregularities

Addressing Testing Irregularities



Assess available information about the incident and respond accordingly.

Investigate the events that led up to and followed the incident.

Determine what actually occurred during the incident.

Include a Plan of Action to prevent a reoccurrence of the incident.

Submit an Online Incident Report form within 10 days of the incident.

Evaluate the effectiveness of the Plan of Action.

Procedural

- do not require a call to TEA unless guidance is needed by the district
- do not require additional documentation

Serious

- require the district testing coordinator to contact TEA immediately
- almost always require additional documentation

Irregularity Processing Exercise

Sample Exercise



The following exercise was created to provide attendees an opportunity to practice the steps for addressing testing irregularities. The scenario selected involves a situation that a district coordinator might encounter during an administration of a statewide assessment. To complete the exercise you will be working in groups to collaboratively respond to each set of questions.

Sample Exercise



This exercise scenario begins with the receipt of the following report from one of your middle school campus coordinators:

Today, while I was checking score codes following the completion of the May STAAR grade 8 mathematics retest, I found that Student 1's answer document was blank. He had not marked any of his answers on his answer document. The test administrator, Mr. Jones, had marked the score code "S." I checked with Mr. Jones, who said that he was unsure why the answer document was blank. He said he did not notice the document was blank when he collected the students' materials at the end of the test session.

I've never had this happen at this campus. Is there anything else you need me to do?

Assess Available Information



Assess available information about the incident and respond accordingly.

Exercise Activity #1

Based on the information received from the middle school coordinator, confer with your group to develop a list of possible reasons why Student 1's responses were not recorded on his answer document.

Possible Reasons for a Blank Answer Document:

1. ???
2. ???
3. ???
4. ???

Assess Available Information



Assess available information about the incident and respond accordingly.

Activity #1 Response

Some possible reasons for the blank answer document:

1. The student ran out of time and failed to transfer his responses from the test booklet to the answer document.
2. The test administrator failed to properly monitor the test administration. Even though time remained, the test administrator failed to remind the student to mark his responses on the answer document, and the test administrator failed to check for completion.
3. The student was absent, and the test administrator incorrectly coded the answer document to be scored.
4. The student refused to take the test.

Assess Available Information



Assess available information about the incident and respond accordingly.

Exercise Activity #2

What resources would you ask the campus coordinator to check to better understand why the document was blank?

1. ???
2. ???
3. ???
4. ???

Assess Available Information



Assess available information about the incident and respond accordingly.

Activity #2 Response

Some possible resources to explain the blank answer document with a score code of “S”

1. Testing rosters and room assignments
2. Attendance records
3. Sign-in sheets at the principal's or the nurse's office
4. The student
5. The test administrator

What should you NOT do?

Open the student's test booklet and look for answers.

Sample Exercise



BUT WAIT! There's more to the story...

Later in the day you receive another message from the campus coordinator:

I checked all the records and confirmed that Student 1 was in attendance with Mr. Jones and took the test. When I spoke to Student 1 and asked him why he had not marked his answers on his answer document, Student 1 explained that he and another student, Student 2, were rushing to complete their test and had told Mr. Jones they were afraid they would run out of time to mark their answers on the answer document. Mr. Jones responded by telling them not to worry about marking their responses on the answer document and to just keep working in their test booklets. Mr. Jones then told the students that he would take care of transferring their responses to their answer documents. Mr. Jones did not mention this when I spoke to him about the situation. PLEASE ADVISE.

Investigating the Incident



Investigate the events that led up to and followed the incident.

Exercise Activity #3

Based on the follow-up information received from the middle school coordinator, confer with your group to develop a list of possible steps for investigating the incident.

Investigative steps:

1. ???
2. ???
3. ???
4. ???

Investigating the Incident



Investigate the events that led up to and followed the incident.

Activity #3 Response

Possible steps for investigating an issue of this nature:

1. Gather test administration information.
 - a) Assemble seating chart(s), roster(s), and Materials Control Forms.
 - b) Identify all of the involved and potentially involved individuals.
 - c) Identify whether any involved students had accommodations.
2. Prepare a timeline of events.
 - a) Identify who had materials and at what times throughout the day.
 - b) Determine when events transpired.

Investigating the Incident



Investigate the events that led up to and followed the incident.

Activity #3 Response

Possible steps for investigating an issue of this nature:

3. Conduct interviews.
 - a) Identify who will be interviewed and in what order.
 - b) Generate a list of questions for the interviews.
 - c) Document interviews (collect signed statements and transcribe interviews).
 - d) Review interview statements, reconcile disparities, and conduct follow-up interviews if necessary.
4. Assemble student performance data.
 - a) Collect historical performance data for students involved.
 - b) Compare performance data between comparable groups.

Sample Exercise



The campus coordinator collected information as directed and learned the following details:

1. Test administration information

- a) Seating charts and rosters for Mr. Jones's test session revealed that eight students, including Students 1 and 2, had been assigned to his testing group for the grade 8 mathematics retest.
- b) All eight students were in attendance the day of the test.
- c) None of the eight students had any testing accommodations noted on Mr. Jones's testing roster.
- d) Student 1 had a score code of "S" and no answers marked on his answer document.
- e) Student 2 had a score code of "S" and all of the items had answer choices marked on his answer document.
- f) Both Students 1 and 2 have Mr. Jones as their mathematics teacher.

Sample Exercise



2. Timeline of events

The Materials Control Form (MCF), the test-session seating chart, and video footage from the campus surveillance cameras helped the campus coordinator create a timeline of events.

- 8:05 a.m. – Mr. Jones entered the campus coordinator's office to check out his testing materials
- 8:30 a.m. – test administration began
- 11:15 a.m. – 30 minute lunch break began
- 1:00 p.m. – test session ended
- 1:10 p.m. – students released to go to their 5th period class
- 1:55 p.m. – Mr. Jones entering the campus coordinator's office to return his test materials

Sample Exercise



3. Interviews

a) Students 1 and 2

- Students 1 and 2 were interviewed separately and both stated that Mr. Jones told them to keep working in their test booklets and that he would transfer the responses they had marked in their test booklets onto their answer documents.
- Student 1 stated that he finished his test and marked all his answers in his test booklet.
- Student 2 stated that he did not finish his test. He still had about 10 questions left to answer in his test booklet.

b) Mr. Jones

- Mr. Jones acknowledged that Students 1 and 2 worked until the end of the time period but denied having told any students that he would transfer answers for them.
- Mr. Jones claimed that he periodically reminded students to mark their responses on their answer documents.

Sample Exercise



3. Interviews

- c) Worried that something serious had occurred, the campus and district testing coordinators interviewed the other six students in the classroom.
- The remaining six students all stated that they had completed their tests and marked all of their answers on their answer documents.
 - Students 3 and 4 stated that they overheard Mr. Jones talking to Students 1 and 2, telling them that “he would take care of it.”
 - No other students provided any information that anything “odd” had taken place during the administration of the test.

Sample Exercise



4. Student performance data

- a) Students 1 and 2 failed the STAAR grades 6 and 7 mathematics assessments as well as the primary administration of the grade 8 mathematics test.
- b) Students 1 and 2 have a history of struggling with their mathematics coursework.

5. Additional findings

Recall that Student 2 said he did not finish his test and did not have time to record his answers on his answer document, yet the district observed answer choices marked for every item on the answer document. The district reported this discrepancy to TEA and was granted permission to have the student's test materials available during a follow-up interview with Student 2.

Sample Exercise



5. Additional findings

- a) By referencing his materials, Student 2 was able to
- affirm that he had not marked the responses that were on his answer document;
 - point out all of his answers that he had marked in his test booklet;
 - affirm that the last 10 items in his test booklet had no answers marked; and
 - identify seven responses on his answer document that did not match the answers he had circled in his test booklet.
- b) When re-interviewed and questioned about the additional findings, Mr. Jones stated that
- he has no idea why responses on Student 2's answer document differ from what's recorded in the booklet; and
 - at no time did he tamper with any students' responses

Description of the Incident



Determine what actually occurred during the incident.

Exercise Activity #4

Based on the findings from the investigation, confer with your group and draft the incident description that would be entered into the online incident report for this scenario. The description should be brief, to the point, and include:

1. where and when the event(s) occurred;
2. who was involved;
3. what happened;
4. a district determination of how and why the incident occurred; and
5. how the incident was resolved.

Description of the Incident



Determine what actually occurred during the incident.

Activity #4 Response

Below is an example of an incident report description that could summarize the sample exercise findings:

Following the May grade 8 mathematics retest, the campus coordinator discovered an answer document on which a student had not recorded his responses. When questioned, the student indicated that he was running out of time and had been told by his test administrator, Mr. Jones, to just keep working in his test booklet. He further stated that Mr. Jones told him “not to worry” and that he (Mr. Jones) “would take care” of transferring the answers from the student’s test booklet onto the answer document.

Description of the Incident



Determine what actually occurred during the incident.

Activity #4 Response

The district interviewed Mr. Jones and the eight students who tested in his classroom. Testimony revealed that another student (Student 2) asserted that Mr. Jones had given him the same instructions as the original student (Student 1). Student 2 also indicated that he had not finished working the last ten items on the test.

After observing that a response had been marked for all of items on Student 2's answer document, the district notified TEA and obtained permission to give the student access to his test materials during a second interview. The student verified that he did not mark the responses that appeared on his answer document and that there were seven test items marked on the answer document that did not match the answers he selected in his test booklet.

Description of the Incident



Determine what actually occurred during the incident.

Activity #4 Response

Mr. Jones denied telling either student that he would take care of transferring their responses onto their answer documents. He also denied having tampered with any student's answer document.

Based on the evidence from the investigation, the district determined that Mr. Jones viewed secure content without authorization and tampered with a student's test responses. The district took no disciplinary action against Mr. Jones, as he resigned prior to the conclusion of the investigation. The district elected to invalidate the answer document for the student whose responses were altered. The district was also given permission to transcribe the test booklet responses for Student 1, as he had been misled with regards to recording his answers and there was no evidence to question the validity of the responses marked in his booklet.

Plan of Action



Include a Plan of Action to prevent a reoccurrence of the incident.

Exercise Activity #5

Based on the findings from the investigation, confer with your group to develop a Plan of Action relating to the sample irregularity.

The Plan of Action should

1. specifically address the irregularity type;
2. list the individual steps involved in the plan;
3. contain a timeline describing how and when the plan will be implemented;
4. describe how the district will collect feedback regarding the effectiveness of the plan; and
5. provide specific corrective actions for the district, campus, or individual(s) involved.

Plan of Action



Include a Plan of Action to prevent a reoccurrence of the incident.

Activity #5 Response

Below is an example of a Plan of Action that a district might submit for the sample exercise.

In order to prevent a reoccurrence of a test administrator tampering with a student's answer document, the district will

1. place two test administrators in every testing area;
2. ensure that test administrators return test materials immediately after completing the administration; and
3. train campus administrators to monitor testing areas at all times.

Plan of Action



Include a Plan of Action to prevent a reoccurrence of the incident.

Activity #5 Response

All personnel will be retrained on the maintenance of STAAR test security during the next fall in-service. Along with the new procedures above, the disallowance for any staff member to hinder students from completing their tests and transcribing answers without permission will be emphasized. All serious testing irregularities (especially tampering) and the potential penalties for participating in any of these activities will be defined and described. Participants will be asked to complete a small survey at the end of training that contains questions to check for understanding.

Plan of Action



Include a Plan of Action to prevent a reoccurrence of the incident.

Activity #5 Response

The district will review all reported testing irregularities from spring XXX testing and will evaluate whether the additions to the training made an impact in reducing the occurrence of this and other testing irregularities. The test administrator involved in this incident has resigned and a report of his activities have been provided to TEA for further action.

Test Security Policies and Procedures

Thank You!

**Student Assessment Division
Texas Education Agency**