

Test Security Supplement

2012

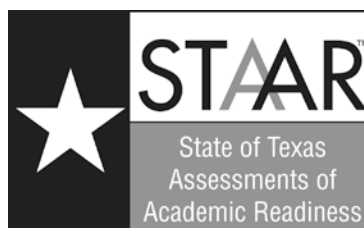


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Purpose of Supplement

Maintaining the security and confidentiality of the Texas state 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 complex nature of the assessment program, test administration personnel face new challenges in managing the program's requirements at the local level. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) Student Assessment Division developed the *Test Security Supplement* to help districts implement the requirements for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR™) 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 2012 *District and Campus Coordinator Manual* or test administrator manuals. It is provided to testing personnel as a supplement to further support incident-free test administrations.

General Information and 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 – and focuses on the steps district coordinators (DCs) and campus coordinators (CCs) can take to ensure that the required procedures are implemented as directed. Below are some key policy and procedure highlights for the spring 2012 STAAR administrations. More information about the recommendations for implementation of the 14-point Test Security Plan can be found in Appendix B.

Training Requirements and Penalties for Prohibited Conduct

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 state assessment program and who 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.

In accordance with 19 TAC §101.65, any person who violates, assists in the violation of, or solicits another to violate or assist in the violation of test security or confidentiality, and any person who fails to report such a violation, may be subject to the following penalties:

- ▶ placement of restrictions on the issuance, renewal, or holding of a Texas educator certificate, either indefinitely or for a set term;
- ▶ issuance of an inscribed or non-inscribed reprimand;
- ▶ suspension of a Texas educator certificate for a set term; or
- ▶ revocation or cancellation of a Texas educator certificate without opportunity for reapplication 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.

Student Cheating on State Assessments

The monitoring procedures outlined in the coordinator and test administration manuals require districts and campuses to implement any necessary measures to prevent student cheating. **If a district determines that an examinee has been involved in an attempt to cheat on a state assessment – either providing or receiving assistance – the district is required to invalidate the student’s test.** Additional disciplinary action may be taken at the local level in accordance with district policy. The test invalidation and any additional actions must be submitted to TEA via the online *Locally Determined Disciplinary Actions* form located at:

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

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.

Test Administration Windows and Make-up Testing

In an effort to accommodate local needs, districts have the latitude to change within the scheduled administration windows the test dates for certain subject-area assessments. This flexibility applies to all STAAR grades 3-8 and end-of-course (EOC) assessments with the exception of the grades 4 and 7 writing tests and the English I, II, and III EOC assessments. Districts will not be required to notify TEA of any locally-determined changes within the assessment windows; however, any district or campus that chooses to modify the recommended 3-8 schedule or administer any of the same assessments over multiple days must consider and mitigate, if needed, the potential risk that students and/or adults could disseminate confidential test content and jeopardize the validity of assessments administered to students on a later date. Make-up testing can present similar concerns. Therefore, districts and campuses should be aware of this issue and should take any necessary steps to prevent the disclosure of confidential test content. TEA will be implementing special measures to track student performance throughout each testing window and will use these data to help re-evaluate the continued use of assessment windows for the 2012–2013 STAAR administrations.

Test Session Time Limits

Students are to be provided four hours within which to complete the STAAR, STAAR M, or STAAR L assessments. **Tests must be completed within the same school day, and start and stop times for each session must be recorded on the seating chart.** In the event a student or group of examinees take a 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. At a minimum, test administrators must communicate to examinees each hour how much time remains to complete their tests. It is permitted for examinees to be reminded more frequently during the last hour. Test administrators should be made aware that materials must be collected at the end of the four-hour period and to take into account that students will likely need time to transfer to their answer documents any responses that they may have recorded in their test booklets. Students will not be allowed to transfer responses onto their answer documents after the four-hour time period has ended. For more information, please refer to the STAAR Time Limits Policies and Procedures document located in the *2012 Test Administrator Manuals* and on the TEA website.

Reporting of Testing Irregularities

As noted in the *District and Campus Coordinator Manual*, testing irregularities fall into one of two categories – serious and procedural. Serious irregularities constitute severe violations of test security and/or confidentiality and can result in the individual(s) responsible being referred to the TEA Educator Certification and Standards Division for consideration of disciplinary action (including suspension or revocation of educator certification credentials). Procedural irregularities are less severe and more common and are typically the result of minor deviations in testing requirements.

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 and/or district coordinator is made aware of the situation**. 19 TAC §101.65 requires 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, **to 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 or confidentiality of a test is itself a violation of 19 TAC §101.65 and §249.15 and could result in sanctions.

Reporting requirements differ based on the severity of the confirmed or alleged violation(s); however, **ALL** 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. More information about the specific reporting requirements associated with serious and procedural irregularities can be found in the Incident Reporting section of this supplement.

Reference Charts, Graph Paper, and Scratch Paper

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 examinees can remove them for use during the test administration. Scratch paper can also be provided. **Districts must ensure that any formula charts or graph paper that have been written upon AND removed from the test booklet and/or any scratch paper used and written upon are destroyed immediately after the test session is complete.** 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.

Overview of Materials Security

According to 19 TAC §101.61, all test materials must be handled in strict accordance with the instructions contained in the *District and Campus Coordinator Manual* and in 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 state assessment program and who have been trained and have signed the appropriate oath. Furthermore, districts are required to implement the controls necessary to ensure throughout each stage of an administration the proper storage and accurate tracking of secure materials. Documents used to account for materials, such as Materials Control Forms, should be completed accurately 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:

- ▶ maintaining an inventory of all materials upon receipt from the state's testing contractor;
- ▶ placing test booklets and answer documents in limited-access locked storage (for example, in a locked closet or cabinet to which only the testing coordinator has a key) when not in use;
- ▶ collecting and destroying immediately after each test administration any charts or reference materials students have written on and any scratch or graph paper used during an assessment;
- ▶ 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 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 assessment materials can present certain logistical issues; however, it is critical (and required) that these items be kept in locked storage when not in use. Districts and campuses must also ensure that access to secure storage be 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, in fact, meeting the intent of these storage requirements.

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 procedures 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.

- ▶ Carefully review the advance letter and materials list so you will know exactly which and how many materials will arrive from the testing contractor. These documents should be available online approximately one month before each test administration.
- ▶ 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 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.
- ▶ Identify how you will store, distribute, and track additional materials after they are received.
- ▶ Identify and train on test security all personnel who will be authorized to have access to materials.
- ▶ 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 and/or access to where keys are kept.
- ▶ 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 upon arrival.

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 booklets.
- ▶ 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

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

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

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

Receive, inventory, and store test materials.

- ▶ Verify the shipment of test materials. For all shipments, check that all boxes are accounted for by verifying the testing program noted on the box and label and the sequence of numbers displayed on the boxes – e.g., Box 35 of 55.
- ▶ Place all secure materials in locked storage when not in use. Keep materials for different administrations separate.

Distribute test materials to campuses.

- ▶ Document the distribution of materials to the campuses.
- ▶ Forward materials to the campuses as soon as possible. Campus materials will be packaged in separate boxes with brightly colored labels.
- ▶ Make certain that all campuses have physically inventoried their shipments and verified the completeness of all test booklet packets that have been received.
- ▶ 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.

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/or 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 assess 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 integrity?

Training

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

Prepare for training.

- ▶ Attend district coordinator training.
- ▶ Sign your security oath.
- ▶ Review the training guidelines and familiarize yourself with the current *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 and be familiar with the coordinator and test administrator manuals.
- ▶ Sign a security oath.
- ▶ Be knowledgeable of the secure materials topics that pertain to the proper procedures for storing, distributing, and tracking secure items.
- ▶ Know when shipments arrive and verify immediately that all materials have been received.
- ▶ Ensure that your campus has sufficient quantities of materials. Be sure to take into account 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.
- ▶ Conduct training sessions, verify attendance, and retain attendance sign-in sheets. Encourage coordinators to retain copies of training materials and agendas in case questions arise or testing irregularities occur.
- ▶ Ensure that procedures are in place for transferring examinees and testing materials from one area to another and that testing personnel are aware of monitoring requirements when doing so. (Remind coordinators that students should handle their materials only during the test session and are not permitted to transport these items outside the testing environment.)
- ▶ Arrange for testing rooms and organize test sessions. Be sure to take make-up testing into consideration when applicable.
- ▶ Ensure that campus personnel are familiar with the policies and procedures associated with test session time limits.
- ▶ 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 are appropriate for the layout of each room.
- ▶ Confirm for each day of testing that you have received and use correct information regarding the testing requirements and accommodations for students receiving special education and Section 504 services.
- ▶ Supervise the verification of precoded materials and answer documents.

Many district and campus staff elect to write students' names and/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 examinees to write their names on their booklets and their booklet numbers on their answer documents. **Assessment staff, therefore, should not 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.

- ▶ Supervise the hand-gridding of blank answer documents.
- ▶ Walk through each testing room prior to testing and verify that no visible instructional aids are present and that the environment is appropriate for testing. (Keep in mind that many errors involving a failure to conceal instructional aids result from transferring examinees to rooms that the campus did not originally intend to use as testing areas.)
- ▶ Confirm that all eligible examinees have been accounted for and have been assigned the correct test.
- ▶ Ensure that arrangements have been made to assess any homebound students who have been identified as eligible testers.

Train campus coordinators to do the following DURING 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 and or assign staff to visit each testing area to ensure test administrators are actively monitoring and periodically reminding students to record their responses on the answer document).
- ▶ Confirm that a seating chart has been completed for each test session. 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 examinees.
- ▶ Verify that all calculator memories have been cleared and that all testing areas have a sufficient number of allowable reference materials.
- ▶ Ensure that students are being issued the appropriate tests and have the correct corresponding answer document.
- ▶ Ensure that all test administrators are personally distributing test materials to examinees – do not allow students to pass materials to one another. To avoid switching answer documents, test administrators should be especially careful when issuing materials to students with the same or similar names.
- ▶ Be aware of any appearance of impropriety (i.e., make sure coordinators and test administrators know how to avoid situations that might lead to allegations of viewing, discussing, or scoring test materials).
- ▶ Ensure that test administrators are verifying that students have marked their responses on their answer documents before the end of the four-hour time period.
- ▶ Be accessible in case problems arise.

- Train campus coordinators to do the following AFTER each test administration.**
- ▶ Direct the collection of materials from the test administrators.
 - ▶ 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 utilized 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, for they are to ensure 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, mathematics charts, etc.).
- ▶ Campus principals and coordinators must verify that test administrators are actively monitoring examinees.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Set up a line of communication so that campuses can contact you or district testing staff.

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 are following proper check-in/check-out procedures and are using materials control documents.
- ▶ Check to verify that campuses are documenting security numbers for overage materials and booklets transferred to other districts or alternative education facilities.
- ▶ Ensure that campuses are properly transporting 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 are verifying that all booklets are being returned and accounted for each day.
- ▶ Remind campuses to ensure that they are locking and restricting 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.**
 - ▶ Confirm that campuses are accounting for every answer document for each enrolled, eligible examinee 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.
 - ▶ Verify each sequence of numbers handwritten on the campus boxes.
 - ▶ If your district uses a centralized campus check-in approach, verify that all materials are accounted for before campus personnel leave the check-in area.
 - ▶ Make certain that materials for different administrations are being 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.

- ▶ Determine where test administration documentation for each campus will be stored. Ensure that this location is secure and that the documentation cannot be subsequently altered.
- ▶ Determine in what format the test administration documentation will be kept (e.g., electronic files, hard copies, etc.).
- ▶ Verify that campuses have collected signed security oaths for all testing personnel.
- ▶ Confirm that campuses have collected seating charts for each test session. Make certain that the charts are complete and accurate, and ensure that coordinators verify that the charts contain the required information, including test session start and stop times.
- ▶ Confirm that campuses have properly completed and collected all inventory and shipping records (including Materials Control Forms and records documenting the transfer of secure materials within and outside the district).
- ▶ Confirm that all retained documentation is being stored in the designated location.

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 examinees 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 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 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

Examples:

- ▶ An English language learner (ELL) whose parents had waived district ESL services was not administered the TELPAS assessment.
- ▶ A TAKS student who was enrolled in a course with an associated EOC assessment and who was not part of the state-required sample was administered that 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, so TEA can be contacted for guidance in addressing the issue.

Examples of how to address:

- ▶ *A student who was enrolled in Algebra I was administered the Algebra II instead of Algebra I 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 can consult with the individual's parents/guardians to determine whether it would be appropriate to administer to the student the correct assessment. If the student is not retested, an Algebra I answer document marked with a score code of "O" should be submitted to account for the student.

- ▶ *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 can consult with the individual's parents/guardians to determine whether it would be appropriate to administer to the student the correct assessment. If the student is not retested, a grade 4 answer document marked with a score code of "O" for mathematics should be submitted to account for the student.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) Implementation Issues

Examples:

- ▶ A student was administered a STAAR assessment when he or she should have taken STAAR M.
- ▶ A student was provided an unapproved accommodation or did not receive an accommodation that was documented in his or her IEP.

How to avoid:

- ▶ 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 campus personnel admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee testing decisions that are in conflict with state assessment requirements or procedures.
- ▶ Account for appropriate test materials – booklets and answer documents – for each examinee with an IEP.

Examples of how to address:

- ▶ *A student assigned to take the STAAR M test was issued and completed a STAAR assessment.*
If this error is discovered before materials have been shipped to the testing contractor, the STAAR assessment **must be voided**. If time remains in the testing window, districts can consult with the individual's parents/guardians to determine whether it would be appropriate to administer to the student the correct assessment. If the student is not retested, a STAAR Modified answer document marked with a score code of "O" should be submitted to account for the student.
- ▶ *A student was not provided a documented accommodation.*
If this kind of mistake is discovered while the student is testing, districts can, in most cases, still provide the accommodation. If the error is not detected until after the assessment is complete, the district must consult with the parents/guardians to determine if the assessment should be invalidated or submitted to be scored.

Improper Accounting for Secure Materials

Examples:

- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Bundle test materials from the same test administration – 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, and/or not accounting for, at the end of each day, the items that were issued to test administrators).

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

Monitoring Errors

Examples:

- ▶ A test administrator left a room unmonitored 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, examinees 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 turned on during testing. Districts are required to have procedures in place to prevent the use of cell phones during test administrations.

How to avoid:

- ▶ 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, may result in a

student not receiving credit for a test that he or she took. Other monitoring-related errors might lead to breaches in confidentiality that could place students' test scores in question.

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

Examples of how to address:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Examples of how to address:

- ▶ *A student who does not receive special education services was issued and completed a STAAR Modified assessment.*

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

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

If students who do not have an accommodation of extended time 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. 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

19 TAC §101.65 requires 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, to 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 or confidentiality of a test is itself a violation of 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 249.15(b)(6) and (b)(8), 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 101.65(d)(7) and (g) and Tex. Educ. Code § 21.006(b)(4) and (c).

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. 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. 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 and how the error 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, and/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 procedural irregularities 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 (If more information is needed, TEA will notify the district coordinator.) Reports for procedural errors must be

submitted within 10 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 testsecurity@tea.state.tx.us.

For procedural irregularities, the online incident report form submitted must:

- ▶ clearly outline the sequence of events;
- ▶ explain exactly what happened and how it occurred;
- ▶ include information about how the problem was resolved or remedied; 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 examinees 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 an examinee 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).

Incidents that Do Not Constitute Testing Violations

Districts will likely encounter events that involve incidents that are not considered to be testing violations. Many of these situations are the result of inappropriate student behavior that was detected through **proper monitoring** by adult testing personnel. Some examples include:

- ▶ Broken seals (accidental)
- ▶ Student cheating or misbehavior
- ▶ Student moving into another test section
- ▶ Cell phones/other electronic devices
- ▶ Unexpected disruptions in testing

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. No online incident report will be required.

Submitting Incident Documentation to TEA

To complete the process of submitting an incident report online, district testing coordinators or their designees must provide all the required information requested. Submitters will receive confirmation that their report has

been accepted, and an incident identification number will be issued for tracking purposes. District coordinators will be notified via a return e-mail when an incident has been submitted for their district provided that a valid e-mail address is on file in the Texas Education Directory (AskTED). For more information about this directory, refer to the following link:

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

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 e-mail 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 (3) 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 e-mail 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/admin/incidents/online/>.
2. Review the procedures for reporting an irregularity online and then click the link titled "Click here to submit an online incident report." Select your district and campus from the drop-down menus, select the "Yes" or "No" button to identify whether you are the district coordinator, and complete the required information in the report form.
3. If you are submitting the documentation required for a serious violation, use the form's attachment feature to attach the electronic supporting documentation.
4. If you choose not to use the online attachment option, all supporting documentation can be submitted by e-mail 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 the TEA 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 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 AFTER 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 and/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/admin/security/index.html>

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

1. The location of the test session must be recorded, including the district and campus names and the room designation. Provide a brief description of the testing area (e.g., classroom, library, cafeteria).
2. The assessment that is being administered at this location must be indicated, including the specific test administered, the subject area (e.g., reading, writing), and the grade level.
3. The first and last name(s) of the test administrator(s)/monitor(s) conducting or involved in the test session must be recorded.
4. The first and last name of each student participating in the assessment must be indicated on the chart at the location where the student was seated for testing. Districts and campuses may include additional information if they choose to do so.

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

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 state assessment. The following language is what appeared on these examinees' 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 M 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 the following address: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/admin/security/index.html>

The second procedure put into place in accordance with the security plan required districts to report any disciplinary action taken against a student for cheating on a state assessment, such as invalidation of the student's test or suspension. An online form, *Locally Determined Disciplinary 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/choosedistrict.asp>

Document Retention

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

1. Testing irregularity and investigation documentation

Examples:

- ▶ Statements from individuals involved
- ▶ District investigative reports
- ▶ Verification of training
- ▶ Corrective Action Plans

2. Inventory and shipping records

Examples:

- ▶ Packing lists
- ▶ Carrier's tracking numbers/freight bill numbers
- ▶ Documentation of any materials loaned to other districts
- ▶ Records of contact with TEA and/or Pearson
- ▶ District inventory records

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/or 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 state assessment program. All individuals involved in the administrations of the state assessments are required to sign oaths indicating they understand test security and confidentiality requirements. By providing a model policy to local school boards for their review and consideration, there is an expectation that districts would be more cognizant of state test security requirements for district personnel.

District coordinators from across the state were contacted and asked to submit any locally-developed materials that had proven to be helpful in ensuring compliance with state-mandated test security and confidentiality requirements. A focus group consisting of district coordinators was then formed to review the materials submitted, assist in the development of a “best practices” implementation plan, and discuss possible content for the model policy. It was the opinion of the focus group that the *Test Security Supplement* already serves as a “best practices” document and should be used for the implementation of the model policy. 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.