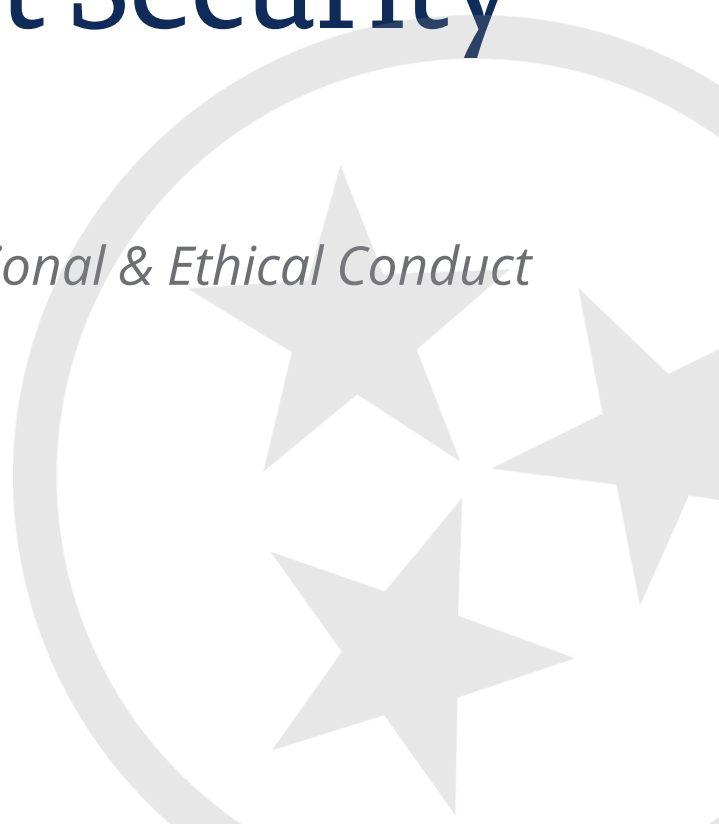# Tennessee Test Security Manual

Tennessee Standards for Professional & Ethical Conduct in Test Administration

Tennessee Department of Education | 2024-25

TN Department of **Education**

This document outlines the expected professional and ethical conduct of all assessment programs administered by the Tennessee Department of Education. This includes all Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) assessments, the alternate assessments (for all content areas), ACT/SAT, and the ELPA21 assessment. Changes to the document from the 2023-24 version are highlighted in red in the text.

If you have questions or wish to report suspected test administration irregularities on any statewide educational assessments in Tennessee, contact:

Tennessee Department of Education
Assessment Logistics Team
Office of Preparation & Performance, Assessment Division
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243
Test Security email: mark.jackson@tn.gov

Test Security Tip Line: https://bit.ly/3OWu9ws

Copies of this guide may be obtained on the Assessment Logistics LiveBinders website (keyword: *Security Manual*).

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Copies of the Test Security forms are found following the Glossary.

Introduction

The Ultimate Question

The Test Security Manual focuses on three main areas of test security:

- **Prevention** – policies and best practices for the administration of paper-based and computer-based TCAP assessments. Proactive actions will prevent irregularities and test security breaches.
- **Detection** – guidelines for assessment monitoring, reporting, and working with the Assessment Logistics team when irregularities or test security breaches are found.
- **Follow-Up Investigations** – guidelines for the state and local educational agency working together to investigate test security breaches.

All test administration practices are subject to this ultimate question: *Will the test administration lead to student results that accurately reflect a valid and reliable measure of what each student knows and is able to do compared to Tennessee state standards?* Following these guidelines will ensure that all students have equal opportunities to show their knowledge, skills, and abilities and are actively involved in demonstrating those opportunities through their engagement with the test.

> *Will the test administration lead to student results that accurately reflect a valid and reliable measure of what each student knows and is able to do compared to Tennessee state standards?*

Importance of Test Security

The primary goal of test security is to protect the integrity of the assessment and to assure the results are accurate and meaningful. State assessments are an important and required tool used to monitor the state, district, school, and student achievement results. For assessments to yield fair, accurate, and valid results, they must be administered under the same **standardized** conditions to all students.

Appropriate testing practices are not always universally understood, leading to test irregularities. Good testing practices are sometimes violated because the individual involved is not informed about what is appropriate for a standardized assessment administration. To help school staff securely administer state assessments and have a common understanding of what practices are appropriate, the Tennessee Department of Education (the department) has prepared these guidelines.

This document includes guidelines about the expected professional conduct of educators who administer state assessments. It must be used by districts and schools in the fair and appropriate administration of state assessments.

Assessment Security Goals for the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP)

to provide secure assessments that result in **valid** and **reliable** scores	to adhere to high **professional** test administration and security standards
to maintain **consistency** across all testing occasions and sites (i.e., students and schools)	to **protect** the investments of resources, time, and energy

Common Assessment Security Breaches

In 2013, the federal Office of Inspector General (OIG) released an audit report entitled *The U.S. Department of Education's and Five State Educational Agencies' Systems of Internal Control Over Statewide Test Results*. The report detailed specifics around assessment security policies and practices for states.

The OIG audit focused on allegations of cheating on statewide tests that have been reported in multiple states and the District of Columbia. The analysis of media reports on cheating that occurred during the previous ten years indicated that the five most prevalent methods of cheating included the following:

- using actual test questions to prepare students for the tests
- erasing students' wrong answers and filling in the correct answers
- indicating the correct answers to students during testing
- allowing students to change answers after giving them the correct answers
- allowing students to discuss answers with each other

In addition, the analysis listed several other alleged methods of cheating, which included:

- completing incomplete test booklets or answer documents
- altering attendance records
- failing to cover testing materials during the assessments
- arranging the classroom to facilitate cheating
- reading questions aloud to students who were not eligible for that accommodation
- not testing all eligible students
- obtaining testing materials when not authorized to do so

Table 1 outlines the specific types of security breaches that can occur for paper- based testing (PBT) and computer-based testing (CBT). Diamonds show the potential risk to state test administrations or results. Please note that the overall level of security risk depends on numerous factors, such as test design, item types, item exposure, quality of proctoring, the testing environment, conflicts of interest, methods for transmission and storage, encryption levels, quality of training, and more.

Table 1: Common Assessment Security Breaches		
Before, During, and After Testing	**Paper**	**Computer**
Lost or stolen booklets	♦	
Obtaining unauthorized access to secure assessment materials	♦	♦
Educators logging into tests to view questions, change responses, or complete student tests		♦
Hacking into computers		♦
Before Testing	**Paper**	**Computer**
Educators or students engaging others to take a test on a student's behalf	♦	♦
During Testing	**Paper**	**Computer**
Students giving or receiving unauthorized assistance from other students during a test administration	♦	♦
Teachers providing answers or providing assistance to students during testing	♦	♦
Students accessing non-allowable resources (notes, textbooks, the internet)	♦	♦
Taking photos of test items and sharing them on the internet or social media	♦	♦
Taking test items or passages, in any form (photo, notes, etc.)	♦	♦
Use of actual test questions or answers during the test	♦	♦
Accommodations being used inappropriately to cheat	♦	♦
Keystroke logging		♦
After Testing	**Paper**	**Computer**
Altering test scores	♦	♦
Erasing wrong answers	♦	
Changing responses on the computer		♦
Reconstructing assessment materials through memorization	♦	♦
Memorized test items or answers being posted online	♦	♦
Printing, emailing, or storing test information in a computer outside the test delivery system		♦
Accessing or altering assessment materials or scores during the transfer of data	♦	♦

Prevention of Testing Irregularities

Requirements

This section addresses standards for assessment integrity and security aspects of the design, development, operation, and administration of paper-based and computer-based state assessments that prevent irregularities from occurring. The department requires district and building testing coordinators involved in test administration to complete the following activities:

- adhere to the testing administration windows and testing schedules
- provide security training to all staff, both upon hire and then annually to be sure they are current on security policies and procedures
- provide training to **all** test administrators and proctors (including volunteers) prior to the test administration window, ensuring that all applicable personnel have signed test security and ethics agreements
- accept explicit responsibility for assessment security and monitor the effectiveness of each school's efforts
- work with the department when necessary to prevent irregularities
- adhere to all test administration rules and policies

Testing Windows

Each component of the TCAP assessment program (i.e., Achievement, End-of-Course, alternate assessments, ELPA21 for ELLs, ACT/SAT) has its own testing window. The testing windows provide ample opportunity to complete testing while keeping test items secure. For additional information on these windows, refer to the assessment calendar posted on LiveBinders (keyword: *calendar*).

For all TCAP assessments, districts must complete test administration by the end of the testing window, while adhering to the following expectations:

- districts may use the entire window to complete testing
- districts do not have to use the entire testing window and may complete administration over fewer days
- districts do not have to test on consecutive days
- districts can establish a district-wide schedule or can allow schools to set their own testing schedules
- all schedules must be consistent with rules established by the department

Eligible Students

Tennessee relies on state-mandated assessments as a key component of the state accountability program; the state also uses the test results to fulfill national requirements for educational accountability. For reliable and valid reporting, tests must be administered fairly and ethically to all students. Test administrators must administer state assessments to all eligible students. This includes standard test administration, test administration with accommodations, alternate assessment, alternate assessment with accommodations, English language proficiency assessment, or English language proficiency assessment with accommodations. Eligible students include all students, including students with disabilities or who are English Learners (EL), who are educated at public expense.

> All students have the right to meaningful access and opportunities for participation in instruction. The strategies, accessibility, and accommodations used during instruction need to also be available to the greatest extent possible for assessments. Federal and state law require all public school students in Tennessee, regardless of background, to be included in annual summative assessments.
>
> Students with disabilities and/or English Learners who need accommodations to access the assessments should receive them in accordance with applicable laws and policies. For more information, please see the Tennessee Comprehensive Accessibility and Accommodations Manual.
>
> **Schools and districts must make every effort possible to ensure all students participate in annual summative assessments.**

Training

All district testing coordinators (DTC), building testing coordinators (BTC), test administrators (TA), proctors, and other staff who participate in a state assessment or handle secure assessment materials **must**:

- be fully trained in the administration policies and procedures for the assessment being administered (specific requirements about training can be found in each assessment-specific Test Administration Manual)
- sign the Test Administration and Security Agreement
- sign the appropriate Testing Code of Ethics and Security Procedures for their particular role in testing

The district testing coordinator must:

- be well prepared
- be responsible for providing clear and comprehensive annual training on test administration, test security, and proper testing procedures
- comply with state assessment requirements

At a minimum, training should incorporate a thorough review of the following:

- this Test Security Manual
- the appropriate documents for their role
    - the BTC Guide for building testing coordinators
    - specific instructions as communicated in newsletters or direct communications from the Assessment Logistics team
    - the Test Administration Manual (TAM) and Test Administrator Proctor Scripts (TAPS) for test administrators and proctors
        - this includes test administrators for alternate assessments and ELPA21

Optionally, training should also incorporate the online learning courses for test administrators and building testing coordinators. Information about the online learning courses is available on LiveBinders (keyword: *online training*).

For ELPA21 assessments there is a **required** online training course available on test administration and test security at https://training.elpa21.org. Successful completion of the course results in the receipt of a certificate, which should be kept on file at the district level. These certificates must be updated annually with a renewal training course.

The department also posts a webinar on test security for English learner and alternate assessments each year.

Each district and school should document all training and test administration processes and keep copies of all assessment training materials (including presentations, handouts, and sign-in sheets, etc.) for at least 12 months. If a school experiences an irregularity, the state may ask for these materials to ensure that the training was appropriate and adequate.

Identification of Testing Personnel

The director of schools has the ultimate responsibility for testing within the schools. The director of schools must identify an individual to act as each assessment's district testing coordinator (DTC). It is recommended that a back-up district testing coordinator also be assigned to handle responsibilities if the assigned DTC becomes unavailable.

For districts with buildings participating in computerized testing, a district technology director must be assigned to oversee the setup and installation of online testing software. The district technology director must coordinate with the DTC to ensure that computer workstations are operating properly and are prepared for testing.

The school's principal, under the direction of the director of schools, has the responsibility to ensure the security and integrity of each test administration within his/her building. The principal will identify a building testing coordinator (BTC) and a back-up building testing coordinator. The BTC is responsible for identifying test administrators and proctors.

Test administrators (TAs) should be selected from the following list:

Best	Good	Acceptable
licensed teachers	paraprofessionals	licensed substitute teachers
licensed educational administrators	non-licensed administrative personnel	retired teachers with a valid Tennessee teacher license
employed by the school district	employed by the school district	
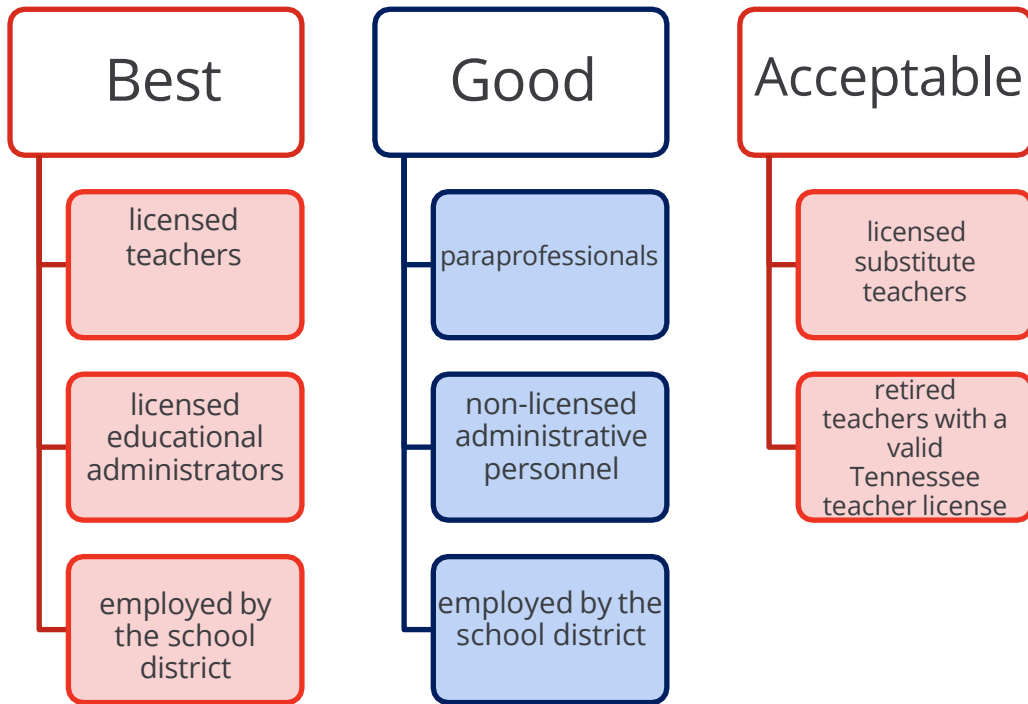
District policies may be more stringent for test administrator selection.

Proctors

Trained proctors may be assigned to assist TAs in administering the tests. A proctor is typically a teacher's aide, a paraprofessional, or another paid district or school staff member. Proctors may also be volunteers who **must** receive the same training as proctors employed by the school or district.

Proctors must be supervised directly by a TA and may not administer a test independently. A TA must be in charge of the test administration at all times. Proctors should not handle secure test materials.

Proctors should	assist in active monitoring
	escort students to restroom
	facilitate communication with BTC if needed
Proctors cannot	handle secure test materials
	supervise a room without a test administrator (TA)

Conflict of Interest

TAs and proctors must not have a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest. TAs and proctors cannot serve as testing staff in rooms in which their children or students who reside in their household are testing.

Testing Personnel Roles & Responsibilities

District and school professional staff members play a key role in the fair and equitable administration of successful state assessments. A district may adjust the roles and responsibilities to its size and organizational structure. Roles may be split among several individuals. No function or responsibility should be ignored. All standardized procedures must be explicitly followed.

The district testing coordinator must be well prepared and is responsible for providing clear and comprehensive annual training on test administration security and procedures. All DTCs, BTCs, TAs, proctors, and other staff who participate in a state assessment or handle secure assessment materials must be trained and must sign a department Test Administration and Security Agreement. All staff are required to receive training on assessment security and test administration procedures and are responsible for complying with state assessment requirements.

District and school professional staff members play a key role in the fair and equitable administration of successful state assessments.

By signing a department Test Administration and Security Agreement, district and school staff affirm that they:

- understand that all test items are considered secure and may not be copied, photographed, or communicated in any way
- have access to a printed or electronic copy of this Test Security Manual
- have read the sections applicable to assessment security, test preparation, and test administration

Each district or school must keep a copy of all department Test Administration and Security Agreements, Code of Ethics and Security Agreements, testing schedules, and assessment training materials (including presentations, handouts, and sign-in sheets) for 12 months after the end of the test window. These materials may be archived digitally. If a school experiences a potential security breach or irregularity, the state may ask for these materials.

Assessment Supports for Students

Making Decisions on an Individual Student Basis

The conceptual model for understanding Tennessee assessment supports and accommodations is broken down into three levels:

- **universal tools:** available for all students
- **designated supports:** available when indicated by school team
- **accommodations:** available when need is documented in an Individualized Education Program (IEP), section 504 plan, or English Learner Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

The selection of accommodations used on the assessment must be done based on the accommodations listed on a student's IEP, 504 plan, and/or ILP that are regularly used in the classroom. The tools, designated supports, and accommodations used on the assessments should be ones the student is already familiar with and uses during regular instruction. A mismatch in the types of supports offered in the classroom and for assessments can cause significant difficulties for students at the time of testing and could negatively impact students' test scores. Students who are given supports and accommodations who do not require them can also be given an unfair advantage over other students and may result in invalidation of student test results.

It is the responsibility of the building and district testing coordinators to ensure that students receive the appropriate designated supports and accommodations. All individuals providing support and accommodations to students need to know and understand the requirements of the state assessments, including the appropriate use of designated supports and accommodations. Staff providing supports and accommodations are required to be fully trained and must sign a department Test Administration and Security Agreement and Code of Ethics and Security Procedures agreement. The Tennessee Comprehensive Accessibility and Accommodations Manual is a vital resource for accommodation questions and training.

> *It is the responsibility of the building and district testing coordinators to ensure that students receive the appropriate designated supports and accommodations.*

DTCs, BTCs, and test administrators should know which specific designated supports and accommodations must be provided to individual students, as well as how the supports and accommodations are administered. For example, staff administering a particular support or accommodation such as read-aloud or scribing/transcribing of student responses must know and adhere to specific guidelines pertaining to that support, to ensure that student scores are valid. BTCs must create and communicate a testing schedule that includes all circumstances, such as small groups, individual administration of the assessment, provision of headphones, etc. Accommodations that are provided to students, including those that are used by students on the test, should be documented.

Prohibited Student Test Preparation Practices

In order to ensure assessment security, the discussion of information related to the content of specific test items or test forms is prohibited. Incidents of this nature are thoroughly investigated and may result in test score invalidation, follow-up monitoring, and teacher licensure actions. By abiding with this guideline, educators ensure that the integrity of the assessment is maintained, which helps minimize costs when assessment security has been compromised.

School personnel who engage in prohibited test preparation practices include those who:	
use secure test questions or questions that are similar to or altered versions of secure test questions.	reveal, copy, or reproduce any secure state assessment questions, materials, or student responses to secure questions.

Focusing instruction on secure test items is considered a misadministration and is cheating. The district and the Tennessee Department of Education will investigate such an allegation, and if it is found to be true, will invalidate student scores.

Personnel issues resulting from intentional misadministration or academic fraud will be handled by the local educational entity and the State Board of Education.

Test Administration

Testing Schedule

It is the building testing coordinator's responsibility to develop test administration schedules based on the school's resources (i.e., staffing, available computers, testing rooms, etc.) and needs, ensuring the overall integrity of the assessment process. Testing schedules must follow the test administration windows as established by the department. These windows help reduce the overall footprint that testing has in schools while providing schools with flexibility to successfully administer the tests. Districts may designate a schedule within the state window. All makeup testing must be completed during the student's designated test window (based on his/her grade and test mode). All subparts must be done in order (subpart 1, then 2, then 3, etc.) For make-up testing **ONLY**, students may be administered subparts out of order.

Alternate test scheduling should take into consideration the unique needs of the students. These tests are designed for administration in one-on-one settings with multiple administrators. Since the testing environment for these students may be unpredictable, the department has allowed broad flexibility to schools in determining their own schedules within the extended window to complete all the content areas of testing.

Documentation of testing schedules for Achievement, End of Course, alternate tests, and ELPA21 for ELLs must minimally include the following information:

- district name
- building name
- building coordinator's name
- date of assessment administration
- location of testing session(s) (i.e., room number, classroom, etc.)
- starting and ending time of testing session
- assessment/grade/content being administered for each testing session
- test administrator(s) and proctor(s) for each testing session

Testing schedules must be retained by the district or school for 12 months from the end of the assessment window. The department may request a copy of a building's testing schedule for monitoring and security breach investigation purposes.

Off-Site Testing

Any time students test in a non-school location other than where they receive their instruction, an Off-Site Test Administration Request must be submitted to the district testing coordinator. You can find the Off-Site Test Administration Request Form on LiveBinders (keyword: *off-site testing*). The district and school must ensure the security of the assessment during all phases of testing. The test tickets, test booklets, answer documents, and scratch paper should be securely transported to and from the remote location. Secure materials must never be left overnight in a vehicle or off-site facility. Any exceptions to these restrictions must be approved by the Assessment Logistics team two weeks prior to testing.

Seating Charts

Seating charts are required for the Achievement, End of Course, and ELPA21 assessments, regardless of whether they are paper-based or computer-based. Sample seating charts are available in the Test Administration Manual and on LiveBinders (keyword: *seating chart*). If data forensics were to identify an issue with one or more students' test scores, seating charts can be used as part of the documentation package to assist in protecting student scores as necessary. Having the documentation is important for ensuring that students receive every chance to earn a fair and valid test score.

Testing Environment

All rooms used for test administrations must be conducive to a proper test environment. For example, the room should be quiet, orderly, comfortable, and have adequate lighting and ventilation.

Table 2 on the following pages describes the minimum testing environment requirements.

Video Surveillance Cameras

Video cameras in the testing environment can create a security issue, but in the interest of student and staff safety, the use of video surveillance cameras in the testing environment during testing is allowed. Cameras should be directed in a way that does not compromise any test item. Any videos recorded during testing must be deleted as soon as possible. The video of any test session cannot be archived except as documentation for a potential breach with permission of the Assessment Logistics team.

Classroom Screen Monitoring Software

All screen monitoring software **must** be disabled prior to and during computer-based testing.

Use of Electronic Devices

As noted on Table 2, ANY electronic device that can be used to capture images, store information, or communicate with someone outside the testing environment is not allowed. For test administrators and proctors, this includes any time when test information is accessible, even if no students are actively testing.

Any electronic device that can be used to capture images, store information, or communicate with someone outside the testing environment is not allowed.

There are four exceptions to this:

1. If a student, test administrator, or proctor needs a smartphone for medical reasons, the smartphone should be placed face-down on a separate desk away from students; connectivity, such as cellular or Wi-Fi functions, should be turned off if it will not interfere with the medical function of the device.
2. If there are no other communications means available, a test administrator may have a cell phone in the testing area for emergency communication ONLY. It must be turned off and used only for communication with school administration.
3. If district policy and procedure uses cell phones for emergency communication, the phone should be placed face-down on the test administrator's desk and ONLY used for this purpose.
4. The test administrator may use a computer ONLY to monitor computer-based testing through the vendor website. All other uses will be treated as a potential breach of testing security.

Table 2 Components of Appropriate Testing Environment	
Requirement	**Description**
Diistractjion-1free testing ,envirnnment	The schooll s.ha11des.ignate an area for the test adm inistJration that prnvides an environment that minimi1Zes distractions.and disruptJions for students (e.g., classrnom, rnmputer llab, m library).
Instructional materi1als.removed or covernd	All information regarding the content being measured ortest-takin,g strategies display,e,d in the testing room, in any manner or form. must be removed or covered[, or it will result in a misadmini,str.artion. Exam piles.indude, but are not limited to: - "tips.for taking testsn - rnntelllt displlays - word lists - wrirting formul!as. - definitions. - mathematical formul!a5/theorems. - mulltiplirntion tables - charts or maps.
Actlive monirtoring of students	Test adm·nistratms and prnctms are required to frequentliy and unobtJrusiiv,ely move through the room and monitor tlhe students' work area during testing. lo perform this.function succes.siliully, and to maintain test s,ernriity, the test administrator and proctor should grant their **full** attention to t,estJing at all times. A test administrator must be pres,ent during tih,e entire test admini,s.tJration. The test admiinistrators allld prnctors should avoid distJractiing behaviors such as: - holding extended conversations witlh one another - reading news.papers or books. - eatJing - working on a computer, using a cell]phone, iPad, etc. - tending to unrelated duties
P.ermitted mom attendance	In general, only staff involved in administening the test and the students takiing tlhe tes.t calll be in the testing room. Some excepti:ons are s.ecurirtymonitors, repres.entatives.from the administration vendor. and technology coordinators.

No access to electronic devices	Students, test administrators, and proctors are not permitted to access any electronic devices used for communication, for capturing images of the test or testing room, or for data storage (e.g., smartphones, smartwatches, cell phones, book readers, electronic tablets, cameras, non-approved calculators, music players, voice recorders, etc.). This could disrupt the testing environment or can be used to compromise the validity, security, and confidentiality of the test. At a minimum, these devices must be powered off and stored away from the students' work area at all times during a test session. The prohibited devices cannot be used as a substitute for a calculator. Specific calculator policies are covered in the Test Administration Manual. If a student accesses any of these devices during testing, this will constitute a prohibited behavior and the student's test results in that content area may be invalidated.
Secure test materials	All secure test materials must be kept secure at all times.

Retention of Test Administration Documentation

Either the district or the school is required to retain signed Security Agreements, testing schedules, and assessment training materials for 12 months following a test administration. These materials may be archived digitally. Inventory and shipping records for paper-based assessment materials must also be maintained in the event that a discrepancy arises or the receipt of secure materials cannot be confirmed. Seating charts and test rosters should be retained until after test scores are released in case of a test irregularity during or after scoring.

The DTC or BTC must:

- verify that schools collect all signed department Test Administration and Security Agreements for all personnel who participated in testing prior to having contact with the test
- gather all assessment training materials (e.g., sign-in sheets, presentation materials)
- collect testing schedules, seating charts, and test administration rosters
- confirm that schools have properly completed and collected all inventory and shipping records (including school packing lists and documents used to track the transfer of secure materials within the schools)

Assessment Security & Test Administration Practices

The purpose of state assessments is to measure student achievement in a standardized environment. In order to preserve unbiased measures of student performance, the students should have **no** prior exposure to the test items. A breach of the security of these tests could result in invalid district, school, classroom, or student scores. Breaches have the potential to invalidate an entire state test administration and potentially cost the state hundreds of thousands of dollars. It is critical that all staff who handle student assessment materials protect the test from exposure at all times.

Professional Assessment Security Practices

Whether a paper-based or computer-based test administration is employed, sound planning plays a key role in ensuring the security and validity of assessments. This includes proper handling of test materials and successful return of all materials. District testing coordinators are encouraged to confirm that all schools are meeting security requirements. The importance of maintaining assessment security at all times must be stressed. Ethical practices ensure validity of the assessment results.

The following are professional assessment security practices that all school personnel must follow:

- All assessment materials must be kept in a locked storage area that is only accessible to the building testing coordinator and designee(s). This includes immediately before and after testing. Supervise materials closely. Secure materials include, but are not limited to, the following items:
    - test booklets
    - test tickets
    - accommodated materials
    - used answer documents
    - used scratch/graph paper
    - secure Test Administration/Proctor Scripts (TAPS) and Directions for Test Administration (DTA)
    - answer cards for TCAP-Alt
- Inform all personnel involved in test administration of the importance of maintaining strict assessment security and of the potential implications of assessment security breaches.
- Determine and document which staffers are responsible for maintaining a chain of custody over assessment materials and limit access to those directly involved with each of the assessments.
- Distribute and collect secure test materials to/from students individually.
- Account for all assessment materials, including test tickets, before, during, and after each test session.
- Ensure that students testing online do not access unauthorized computer applications, including the use of the internet, during or following the test.
- Disallow student access to online tests at prohibited times (e.g., weekends, holidays, hours outside of the instructional day, etc.).
- Refrain from examining or discussing actual test items or test responses with anyone.
- Ensure that students who are required to use supports and accommodations on the tests are receiving them.
- Ensure the security of materials used to provide accommodations as prescribed for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), Section 504 plans, or who are English learners with an Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

- Return answer documents, test booklets, and other secure assessment materials to the secure storage location within the designated timelines.
- Maintain packing lists, shipping records, and documents used to track the delivery and custody of materials for at least a year, in the event that a discrepancy arises, or the receipt of the materials cannot be confirmed.
- Destroy all test tickets and scratch paper following guidelines and instructions in the BTC guide.
- Immediately contact the responsible individual regarding suspected test security breaches:
  - TAs and proctors: contact the building testing coordinator
  - BTCs: contact the district testing coordinator
  - DTCs: contact Mark Jackson (Mark.Jackson@tn.gov)

Transcription Information

With adult transcription, the adult acts as a scribe and marks the selected response items on the paper-based answer document or in the computer testing program based on student answers provided orally or using gestures. Alternately, two adults can transfer student responses produced using assistive technology onto the paper-based answer document or into the computer testing program.

All student responses must be transcribed verbatim. While one adult may transcribe for a student while the student is taking the test, two adults must be present during a transcription after testing. The test administrator who is transcribing must be a licensed employee of the school district.

> *All student responses must be transcribed verbatim.*

With live adult transcription, a student reads each item from the screen or test booklet and dictates the response to an adult. Dictation can be given orally, on paper, or with assistive technology. The adult then marks the student's answer directly on the test. The adult may assume appropriate spelling for written responses, but the student must indicate correct capitalization, grammar, and punctuation.

Students should be given the opportunity to review and edit any responses entered by an adult scribe. Once the transcription is complete, any copies or notes must be shredded or deleted.

Further information on transcription is available in the TCAP Accommodations and Accessibility Guide, available on LiveBinders (keyword: *accommodations guide*).

Adult Transcription

- Scribe (*during testing*)
  - one adult with a TLN and employed by the district
- Transcribe (*post-testing*)
  - two adults
  - one of them with a TLN and employed by the district

Prohibited Assessment Security Practices

Every effort should be made to ensure the integrity of test scores by eliminating opportunities for test takers to attain scores by fraudulent or deceptive means. The following are inappropriate and restricted practices that testing personnel should not participate in:

- giving students access to test content or secure test questions, except during the actual test administration (note: access to practice tests and released items is not prohibited)
- reviewing actual test items before, during, or after the test administration, unless required due to an accommodation or as indicated by the Test Administrator/Proctor Script (TAPS)
- copying, reproducing, or using all or any portion of secure assessment material in any manner inconsistent with assessment security measures
- allowing media representatives to interview or photograph students or staff during or after the testing windows or allowing access to any assessment material other than released items
    - students and school staff may be interviewed after results are released, but media staff and students should be cautioned to not discuss any assessment materials, problems, or test questions
- failing to follow the directions for the distribution and return of secure material or failing to account for any secure materials before, during, and after test administrations
- leaving secure assessment materials, including test tickets, unattended at any time unless they are located in a secure locked location
- leaving a testing room unsupervised at any time
- permitting the use of any supplemental or reference materials during test administrations that are not specifically allowed
- making test answers available to students
- assisting a student by any direct or indirect means (e.g., gestures, pointing, prompting, etc.) in identifying or providing correct or incorrect answers on any test
- using, handling, or viewing online tests, test booklets, or answer documents for any purpose other than proper test administration procedures
- reading student responses during or after testing, or in the case of paper-and-pencil testing, with the exception of adult transcription as required due to an accommodation
- attempting to hand-score student responses to any test
    - a building testing coordinator may examine a student response only as an emergency procedure – i.e., if a student is suspected of endangering him or herself or others and it is believed that a student's response may contain some important information
- participating in, directing, aiding, counseling, assisting, encouraging, ignoring, or failing to report prohibited acts
- failing to follow test administration directions for the test precisely as directed in the Test Administration Manual (TAM) or Test Administrator/Proctor Script (TAPS)
- disclosing or discussing the contents of tests with students, parents, teachers, other educators, or community members before, during, or after testing, except to report potential problems to the building assessment coordinator

> *Every effort should be made to ensure the integrity of test scores by eliminating opportunities for test takers to attain scores by fraudulent or deceptive means.*

- changing student answers in any way, whether testing online or on paper
- logging in as a student to the online testing system unless as a part of the test administration process
- administering assessments outside of their designated testing window
- providing accommodations that are not indicated on a student's IEP, section 504 plan, or ILP
- posting test items or materials on the Internet
- administering assessments via a video conferencing site or application (no remote administration of TCAP assessments is permissible)

Professional Test Administration Practices

All state assessments require a standardized administration process in order for test results to yield fair and accurate results. The following are professional test administration practices that school personnel must follow.

- provide training to testing personnel in appropriate assessment security, test preparation, test administration procedures, and accommodations
- become familiar with the responsibilities found in the TAM, TAPS, and the Test Security Manual for each designated role prior to testing
- begin all standardized test administration procedures explicitly according to the test administrator manual and Test Administrator/Proctor Script (TAPS)
- read oral instructions exactly as they are written to the students as required by the appropriate TAPS
- monitor student behavior closely for adherence to proper test-taking practices. Ensure that there are no distractions during the test administration period (i.e., talking, noises, other distractions among students, viewing of another student's computer screen or answer document)
- follow directions for handling secure materials
- refer to specific Accessibility and Accommodations instructions described in the test administrator manual and accommodations manual
- ensure students take each state assessment only one time in an administration window

Additional Professional Test Administration Practices for Paper-Based Testing

- return all test booklets and answer documents according to test administrator manuals
- return the answer document or submit student responses for each student who took the test regardless of the student's perceived efforts. Follow the directions provided by each state assessment for handling unused test booklets and answer documents

Additional Professional Test Administration Practices for Computer-Based Testing

- make sure that all staff in administration or monitoring roles have been trained in the testing system and are able to deal with disruptions and irregularities
- follow proper procedures for logging into the assessment
- make sure that students remain at their assigned location with their designated testing devices
- ensure the use of only supported testing devices (each vendor user guide provides specific requirements for testing devices)
- follow directions for restarting any CBT sessions that have lost connection to the system
- pay special attention to the possible use of cell phone cameras or other devices to take screen images

Prohibited Test Administration Practices

School personnel must monitor test administration procedures. Prohibited test administration practices that school personnel should not participate in are as follows:

- allowing media representatives to have access to test items, test booklets, online tests, student answer documents, or test activities; students should not be interviewed concerning the test the weeks before, during, or after the testing windows
- coaching students during the test, editing their work, or responding to their questions regarding content or answers, or any behavior that would contribute to an inauthentic improvement of scores during the test.
  - This includes such behaviors as making statements to students regarding the correctness/incorrectness or completeness of their responses; defining words; giving students hints, clues, or altering/editing their responses
- excluding any eligible students from taking the test
- failing to follow TAM or TAPS instructions for session administration
- allowing the use of any district, school, parent, student, teacher, or publisher graphic organizers, outlines, word lists, or any other material that is not expressly permitted by the TAM and TAPS during the testing period
- allowing the use of any prohibited electronic communication or storage devices
- allowing students a break without supervision
- allowing students access to resources during a break and then returning to secure test content
- allowing students to leave the secure testing area and return to finish a subpart later in the day
- completing a subpart across multiple days

Additional Prohibited Test Administration Practices for Paper-Based Test Administration

- altering student responses in any manner (including erasure of one or more multiple responses a student has given to a multiple-choice question) or writing or rewriting student work
- transferring student answers to the individual student answer document unless prescribed in an IEP, section 504 plan, and/or ILP and in accordance with established state accommodation and test administration guidelines
- suggesting or engaging in a practice that allows a student to retrieve an answer document after completing a test or allowing a student to complete, revise, delete, correct, or alter a response to previously completed sections of a state assessment

Additional Prohibited Test Administration Practices for Computer-Based Test Administration

- letting students access information on the internet while taking the assessment
- allowing access to test item screen content by anyone other than the student
- allowing repeated test taking outside of test program guidelines

Student Security Breach

The Student Security Breach selection on a student's answer document or online test should be used to identify students who engage in prohibited behavior during the test. Students who make little or no attempt, appear to be unengaged, or seem to be marking answers randomly do **not** fall under this category. Prohibited behavior denotes actions that violate directions for proper student conduct during testing. These include:

- any attempt by a student to gain an unfair advantage in answering questions that will benefit that or another student
- interfering with other students taking the test
- removing secure content from the test area by electronic, paper, or any other means

Students should also be made aware of prohibited practices and consequences. Students whose tests are submitted under this category will not be counted in the final assessment total for the school.

Students who engage in inappropriate and prohibited behavior include those who:

- communicate or collaborate in any manner with another student; this includes written, electronic, verbal, or gestured forms of communication
- copy, request, or accept another student's answers or receive any form of help in answering questions
- use any material or equipment that is not expressly permitted by the directions found in the Test Administration Manual
- answer a test question or any part of a test for another person or assist another student before or during a test

- return to previously administered sections of the test when informed by the test administrator to stop work in that section
- use any unauthorized electronic devices (e.g., smartphones, smart watches, cell phones, book readers, electronic tablets, pagers, cameras, non-approved calculators, music players, voice recorders, etc.) or utilize their testing computer in an unauthorized manner (e.g., accessing other websites or programs during or after testing while in the secure enviroment)
- engage in any other practice that has the potential of erroneously affecting the student's score or the score of another student

All reasonable attempts should be made to create an atmosphere that will focus on preventing prohibited student behaviors.

Handling Prohibited Student Behavior

If the test administrator/proctor observes a student who appears to be engaged in prohibited behavior, the test administrator should address the situation by redirecting the student to return to proper behavior. If the student fails to comply, but is not disruptive to the other students, he or she may continue testing. However, online test or answer document will be marked as a Student Security Breach after the student has completed testing by the building testing coordinator. This will minimize any disturbance to other students taking the test and allow time for investigation of the questionable action.

If it is a significantly egregious behavior--such as intentionally disrupting others, possessing an answer key or "cheat sheet," or using a cell phone to take pictures of test items--the student should be immediately dismissed from testing. Test administrators/proctors should **not** document the student breach using an electronic device to capture the behavior, as that would violate the electronic device policy.

Immediately after the test session, the test administrator should notify the building testing coordinator of the suspected prohibited behavior. The BTC should also notify the school principal and the district testing coordinator. An immediate preliminary investigation should be conducted to determine if a prohibited behavior occurred. Once a determination of student prohibited behavior is made, the building testing coordinator will need to document the incident and submit all documentation to the DTC.

The principal should inform the student and his/her parent/guardian(s) of the prohibited behavior and provide them with a chance to discuss it.

Missing Materials

Secure materials must be returned in accordance with the procedures and timelines outlined in the BTC Guide and TAM. 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. A sign-in and sign-out sheet should be used by the BTC when TAs pick up and return secure test materials each day.

The department assessment team will monitor and audit the return of all secure material returns. Any booklets or other secure material that are not returned will be considered a potential breach of security. Test tickets used for online testing, although not returned to the test vendor, are considered secure materials and should be accounted for at all times. Unaccounted test tickets will also be considered a potential breach of security.

A majority of the situations that involve the loss or late return of secure materials result from failure to establish or implement basic inventory procedures (e.g., not using materials control documents, not following check-in and check-out procedures, not accounting for the items that were issued to test administrators at the end of each testing session).

The loss of secure state assessment materials is a potential breach of assessment security and must immediately be investigated and reported. To ensure that all responsible personnel are properly informed, the school personnel must report the missing materials to their building testing coordinator. The BTC will document the missing materials and then notify their district testing coordinator.

Detection of Irregularities

Introduction

The focus of this section is on procedures for monitoring and detecting testing irregularities and security breaches and maintaining the integrity of the state assessment. Two important considerations for districts and schools are:

- planning to monitor the integrity of the assessment before, during, and after all test administrations
- contacting the department immediately if a potential breach is suspected

Reporting Potential Security Breaches

Despite how well-prepared testing personnel may be, the possibility that mistakes will be made exists. When mistakes 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 has occurred, when, and to whom. Some irregularities can be remediated without significant consequences if caught and corrected in a timely fashion. Self-reporting also reduces the suspicion or appearance of academic fraud. If any TCAP, alternate test, or WIDA potential security breaches occur before, during, or after testing, the district testing coordinator must report them to the Assessment Logistics team as soon as possible.

When the district testing coordinator contacts the Assessment Logistics team for guidance in handling a potential breach, he or she should be prepared to help the department make a determination about the situation by answering the following questions:

- What happened and where did the irregularity take place?
- When did the irregularity happen?
- How many students were affected and were they being monitored while the situation is being investigated?
- Who was present in the test administration, who was in charge, and who was proctoring?
- What staff were witnesses?
- What grade and subject tests were affected?
- What test or test booklets were involved?
- How much of the test was completed? Are the students still testing or did they complete the test?

The full investigation procedure for potential security breaches is found in the Follow-Up Investigations section of this manual.

Allegations

The department has an online tip line that provides a way for unusual or suspected improper activities to be reported. Allegations from witnesses will be logged and reported to the appropriate DTC in order to complete an initial interview with the witnesses (also known as fact-finding) to determine the severity of the violation and collect any relevant details regarding the irregularity. Allegations from anonymous witnesses will go through the same steps for information collection; however, this is significantly more difficult, since the district will not be able to follow up to determine the credibility or severity of the irregularity. Some anonymous complaints may not contain enough information for action to proceed. If there is no actionable information, the irregularity will be logged, and no further action will be taken.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, the department is not allowed to maintain the confidentiality of a witness if they identify themselves. If an informant wishes to remain anonymous, they should not give the department any identifiable information at any time.

Case Review

To ensure that department investigations, remediation, and corrective actions are conducted in a fair, expeditious, and equitable manner, the Assessment Logistics team has implemented a standardized set of procedures for processing potential security violations. All incident reports and supporting documentation are assessed for completeness to make certain that the required information has been submitted for each possible breach. Reports are then given to the State Board of Education as well as to the General Counsel of the Tennessee Department of Education. More details on follow-up investigations are provided in Appendix A.

Monitoring

Districts should ensure that all tests are monitored for proper test administration. Districts that discover potential breaches of test security should immediately report them to the Assessment Logistics team by phone or email.

District & School Internal Assessment Monitoring

It is the responsibility of the district and the school to monitor testing practices and enforce the policies and guidelines in the Tennessee Test Security Manual to promote fair, approved, and standardized practices. Resolving irregularities is a good faith partnership between the schools and the department. The department prefers that a district monitor its own performance and take self-corrective actions to resolve any problems. During testing, district testing coordinators should be available to answer questions and resolve issues.

Monitoring schools during a test administration will help confirm that procedures are being followed and can minimize the risk of error. Principals and building testing coordinators play a critical role in this effort, ensuring that all test administrators are actively monitoring their rooms. All testing personnel must adhere to the proper procedures.

Building and District Testing Coordinator Responsibilities Before Test Administration

- ensure that all staff involved with assessments have read the appropriate test administrator manuals, the Tennessee Test Security Manual, and have signed a TCAP Test Administration and Security Agreement
- ensure all staff have security training prior to testing
- define and clearly communicate to appropriate staff how their implementation of test administration, assessment security standards, and procedures will be monitored by school administrators and possibly by state assessment monitors
- ensure that students requiring the use of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations as documented through an IEP, section 504 plan, or ILP will have these available to them at the time of testing
- establish a process for the monitoring the assessment administration to ensure that all aspects have been reviewed; a sample checklist has been provided in Appendix C: Sample Test Administration Observation Checklist
- provide information and training to ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills necessary to make ethical decisions related to preparing for and administering the test
- establish an access policy and a chain of custody for assessment materials, including used and unused test tickets, that allows only appropriate staff to have access to secure information prior to the test administration
- prohibit the reviewing of any secure test questions before, during, or after the test administration
- establish a process that ensures all secure testing materials (including test tickets) are returned to the locked storage area before and after each day of testing
- communicate the TCAP Test Security Tip Line information to teachers, test administrators, students, parents, and other community members to allow them to voice their concerns about testing practices they consider inappropriate
- establish procedures for investigating and documenting any complaint, allegation, or concern about inappropriate testing practices or prohibited behavior to ensure protection of both the rights of individuals and the integrity of the assessment

Building and District Testing Coordinator Responsibilities During Test Administration

- monitor testing to ensure staff is administering tests with fidelity in terms of testing protocols and procedures
- make unannounced monitoring visits to random testing rooms without disturbing the testing environment
- check to ensure that schools follow proper check-in and check-out procedures for secure assessment materials and are transporting materials to and from the testing areas properly
- follow the established procedures for monitoring test administrations
- verify that students are given designated supports; accommodations should also be provided as required through an IEP, section 504, or ILP

Building and District Testing Coordinator Responsibilities After Test Administration

- report all potential breaches of security to the Assessment Logistics team immediately by phone or email
- oversee the proper collection of and accounting for secure materials, including test tickets
- report any missing materials to the DTC and Assessment Logistics team immediately by phone or email
- return materials to the assessment contractor, following the material return instructions in the TAM
- destroy test tickets and scratch paper according to the instructions in the Test Administration Manual
- ensure that all test administration documents (i.e., chain of custody, security log, seating chart, administration record/test rosters, test security agreements, code of ethics agreements, missing test materials reports, inventory & shipping records, prohibited behavior documentation, offsite testing form, etc.) have been gathered

TDOE Assessment Monitoring

For the department, identifying and investigating potential test security breaches involves a variety of data sources. These include self-reports of breaches, allegations and complaints, results of analyses, and reports designed to identify irregularities. The department will monitor assessment activity at districts and in schools for evidence of test fraud, security breaches, and theft and distribution of test content, either directly or indirectly.

TDOE Monitoring

- The department staff or contracted observers may directly observe test administration activities (including before, during, or after testing) or monitor online test anomalies without advance notice.

TDOE Targeted and Random Assessment Monitoring

The department has internal and independent assessment monitors who conduct visits to schools during each testing window. The assessment monitors follow procedures developed to assure the security and confidentiality of state assessments and that all testing personnel are adhering to proper procedures. A school can be monitored during a test administration if they were selected either for Targeted Assessment Monitoring or for Random Assessment Monitoring.

Districts with schools selected for targeted or random assessment monitoring will receive an email from the department requesting a copy of their testing schedules. Testing schedules must be submitted as requested. Monitoring will occur via observation on an unannounced day and time of the department's choosing.

Targeted Assessment Monitoring

Schools that have had a previous irregularity or unusual results from previous state assessment data analyses may be placed on a list for monitoring from year-to-year or for a period of years. The department will assign assessment monitors to observe any or all facets of test coordination, test administration, and reporting. Results will be reported to the department for review.

Random Assessment Monitoring

For quality and integrity assurance purposes, a sample of schools is randomly selected for monitoring. These locations are chosen to ensure regional representation with randomly selected schools within each region.

TDOE Targeted and Random Assessment Monitoring Procedures

During any day of testing, an assessment monitor may present themselves to the front office of the school at the beginning of the school day. These assessment monitors will deliver a signed letter, on department letterhead (SAT and ACT will have their own letterhead), to the principal of the school. The introductory letter on department letterhead will provide information on how to verify the identity of the observer if additional verification is needed. The assessment monitor will then ask for the schedule of testing for the school and choose a room to monitor.

Once the monitor arrives in the testing room, they will introduce themselves to the test administrator and any proctors, then quietly sit at the back of the room and observe the test administration. The assessment monitor has a checklist of questions (see Appendix C) to indicate if they see any irregularities and if any best practices are observed during testing. Assessment monitors are unable to answer any questions about the test administration. All questions should be directed to the building or district testing coordinator. The assessment monitor will also take time to interview the building testing coordinator and observe secure materials storage, distribution, and intake.

After the monitoring session is complete, the assessment monitor will return all observations to the department, including both concerns and positive comments about exemplary and/or innovative test security practices. A summary letter of the observation will be sent to the district testing coordinator to provide overall information on the observation or to suggest possible process improvements. The DTC will be asked to respond to any problem areas observed.

TDOE Internet and Media Monitoring

The department may choose to monitor the internet during testing sessions. The goal of this monitoring is to combat secure test question breaches and disclosure of sensitive assessment materials. The internet is regularly monitored for such activity to the extent that resources allow, and the findings are reported to the department. Daily monitoring is scheduled during active assessment windows. These monitoring activities include:

- monitoring of the internet for test items captured and shared, either from testing computer screens or from paper test booklets
- monitoring of social media sites for posts discussing or exposing test material

Privacy concerns - The department will only monitor publicly accessible internet and media venues (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and other sources) for potential exposure, sharing, or sale of assessment content. Publicly expressed comments or opinions about the test(s) made by students or test administrators are disregarded and not treated as a focus of concern unless those opinions may be used to improve assessment conditions.

TDOE Supports and Accommodations Monitoring

The department monitors the student use of designated supports and accommodations on the state's assessments. Monitoring involves verifying that students had access to available universal tools, specific to each assessment type and content area. All students who legitimately require a support should be able to properly access it during the assessment as long as it is documented on their IEP, 504 plan, and/or ILP.

It is required that any student receiving an accommodation on an assessment have this accommodation documented in his/her IEP, section 504 plan, and/or ILP. If a student with an IEP, 504 plan, and/or ILP does not receive a support as documented in the plan, no matter the support category, this can result in test invalidation. Conversely, providing accommodations to students who do not have an IEP, section 504 plan, and/or ILP is considered over-accommodation of the student and is not allowable. Over-accommodating students will result in the invalidation of student test scores.

Statistical Analysis of Results and Data Forensics Methods

During and after paper-based and computer-based test administrations, the testing vendor will conduct multiple statistical analyses on student assessments. These analyses help the department to flag potential testing irregularities.
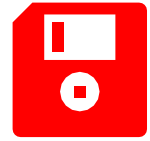
Online testing permits detailed analyses of the response times and other test performance behaviors of testing students to detect testing anomalies. Extreme response patterns will be monitored. For example, on occasion, students may proceed quickly through a test, answering all questions correctly and using much less time than would be normal or appropriate. In other situations, it may be detected that testing students are taking much longer than would be normal or appropriate. In such cases, the department may, through the analysis of test data, identify the anomalies for further inquiry.

In both paper-based and computer-based testing settings, very similar questions need to be asked, but the methods for answering the questions vary somewhat with the format. Here are the kinds of questions that data forensics methods help answer:

- Does it appear that two or more test takers colluded before or during a test?
- Does it appear that some students had advance knowledge of specific test questions?
- Is there evidence that the responses of two or more students in a class are far more similar than would have occurred if they were working independently?
- For online test administrations: does the timing of responses to questions vary considerably from the timing of responses from other students?
- Are there changes to individual or class test scores from one test administration to another that are much greater than one would expect for the test that was administered?
- Is there evidence that student answer choices have been erased (paper-based) or changed (computer-based) from an incorrect response to a correct response at a higher rate than is typical?

For more information on types of potential data forensics analysis, see the chart on the following page.

Types of Data Forensics Analysis Potentially Used for State Assessments

Unusual Score Gains and Losses

- This analysis can show extreme changes in performance-level changes, by group and by cohort, over assessment years by grade and content

Corrective Change Analysis

- Following a paper test administration, the department performs an erasure analysis for each administered assessment. An erasure analysis looks at changed responses on scanned student answer documents. Similar analyses are performed for online test administrations, where the department reviews changes made by a student after he or she first chooses a response to a particular question.
- For online test administrations, a comparison is made between the first responses chosen and subsequent choices. Testing systems can provide precise details of any changes made, which affords a higher degree of accuracy in determining actual student behaviors. CBT forensic analyses will examine the number, type, and frequency of changes in answer choices, as well as the timing for student responses.

Occurrence of Perfect Scores

- District- and building-level test results are analyzed for the occurrence of perfect scores. The proportion of the number of perfect scores on an assessment by district and building is compared to historical performance data.

Response Time Analysis

- For online test administrations, an analysis of response times to test questions sometimes exposes patterns of shorter response times than would be required for students to read a passage or analyze a data table.

Person-Fit Analysis

- Another method of data forensics analysis for state assessments is the person-fit analysis, which examines the consistency of student responses across all questions on a test. In general, students will perform better on those questions that most other students also answer correctly, not as well on questions of moderate difficulty, and least well on the most difficult questions on a test. If a student generally performs well in a particular area such as mathematics, the same student may correctly answer all questions of low and moderate difficulty and miss some of the most difficult questions. However, there are instances when the test responses of a student or a group of students do not adhere to this pattern, perhaps departing from it in very significant ways. In this case, a student/group of students does significantly better on the most difficult questions on a test than on the less difficult ones. A pattern such as this would prompt the application of the person-fit analysis to determine whether prohibited behavior has occurred.

At times, other data forensics methods may be employed. For example, a form of similarity analysis counts the longest string of identical answers between two testing students. This same approach is best suited for the analysis of CBT due to the variability of test items presented among groups of students.

Follow-Up Investigations

Internal Investigation

In order to safeguard student scores as well as the validity and integrity of the TCAP assessments, potential breaches of testing security must be immediately reported to the Assessment Logistics team by the district testing coordinator. School and district administrators must initiate an immediate and thorough investigation into the circumstances of the potential breach, using the Potential Breach of Security Instructions and Cover Sheet found on LiveBinders (keyword: *Breach*).

Districts must complete the steps outlined below when dealing with a potential breach of test security:

1. District testing coordinator (DTC) contacts the Assessment Logistics team via phone or email (Mark.Jackson@tn.gov) immediately upon receipt of information concerning a potential breach of test security.
   a. Assess what happened prior to and after the suspected security breach.
   b. Maintain clear and accurate documentation on the incident.
   c. Review the test security documentation, including the Potential Breach of Security Report Cover Sheet and Potential Breach Instructions posted on LiveBinders (keywords: *Breach Cover Sheet* and *Breach Security Instructions*), in addition to this manual, and ensure that all applicable information is included in the report.
2. DTC submits an email to Mark.Jackson@tn.gov to officially inform department of the potential breach. The subject should be "Potential Security Breach".
   a. The Assessment Logistics team will respond and indicate they have received by replying with a list of next steps.
3. DTC notifies the Director of Schools concerning potential breach investigation. DTC initiates a thorough investigation. Use this Test Security Manual to guide the investigation.
4. DTC provides department with a detailed investigation report in TNShare District-Level Testing Coordinator folder that includes the following:
   a. investigation cover sheet (posted on LiveBinders)
      i. include names and contact information of BTC, DTC, and school administrators
   b. written statements from all parties involved, including students if necessary

T.C.A. 49-1-607

Noncompliance with security guidelines for TCAP or successor test. Any person found to have not followed security guidelines for administration of the Tennessee comprehensive assessment program (TCAP) test, or a successor test, including making or distributing unauthorized copies of the test, altering a grade or answer sheet, providing copies of answers or test questions, or otherwise compromising the integrity of the testing process shall be placed on immediate suspension, and such actions will be grounds for dismissal, including dismissal of tenured employees. Such actions shall be grounds for revocation of State license.

c. clearly explain what happened, when it happened, and how it occurred
    i. outline the sequence of events
ci. interview notes with involved parties (see note on recording interviews below)
cii. evidence that substantiates the claim of a breach in security
ciii. description of current security measures in school
civ. plan for improved test security measures at district and school level
cv. information about any district action taken (letter of reprimand, suspension, administrative leave, etc.)
cvi. recommendation from district testing coordinator and/or Director of Schools about licensure action and
cvii. to protect privacy, these investigation document containing personnel or student PII should not be sent by email

Determining whether to record the interview: A determination on whether to record interviews should be based on local board policy and advice from the local school board attorney. If a determination is made to record an interview, steps should be taken to obtain permission from all persons being interviewed. Use caution when using audio recordings only, as they do not denote demeanor and facial expressions. Additionally, be cautious of the questioning/investigative techniques used, as the recording could be used as evidence in a legal proceeding. An alternate to recording is to ask witnesses, the complainant, and the accused to provide written statements or use video recording.

STATE BOARD POLICY 0520-02-03-.09

DENIAL, FORMAL REPRIMAND, SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION.

(1) Definitions and Examples:(i) Noncompliance with security guidelines for TCAP or successor test – Any person found to have not followed security guidelines for administration of the TCAP or a successor test, including but not limited to, making or distributing unauthorized photos or copies of the test, altering a grade or answer sheet of student responses or answers, providing copies or photos of answers or test questions to students or others, and providing unauthorized assistance to students during administration of testing and otherwise compromising the integrity of the testing process.

Independent Investigation

Following a reported incident or complaint, the department may determine that an investigation of widespread testing anomalies, or of one that is highly suggestive of inappropriate behavior by educators, students, or others, is warranted. The department may bring in experts from outside the school district and independent of the department. Background checks, credentials, and relevant experience of the independent investigators are validated by the department.

- An assigned investigator or a team of investigators will be tasked with conducting a fact-finding investigation to gather evidence documenting the conditions of the alleged complaint or irregularity. The investigator(s) may arrive in the district without prior notification and will inform the director of schools of the purpose of the fact-finding and of the procedures to be followed.
- The department asks that the district and school give full cooperation to the investigator(s) during their investigation, they may request copies of email correspondence, memos, flyers, or other communications relevant to the test administration. They may also request to interview some of the school staff and/or students.
- The investigator's role is strictly to identify any relevant facts and to send a report to the department assessment team.

Expertise of Investigators

When the state must investigate assessment security incidents, it may use a number of different types of relevant expertise to carry out the investigation. For example, the department may include investigators on its team who are experts in:
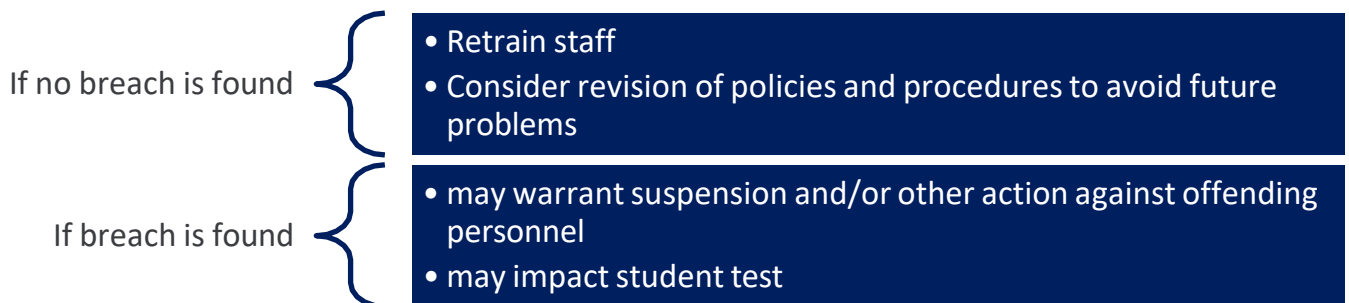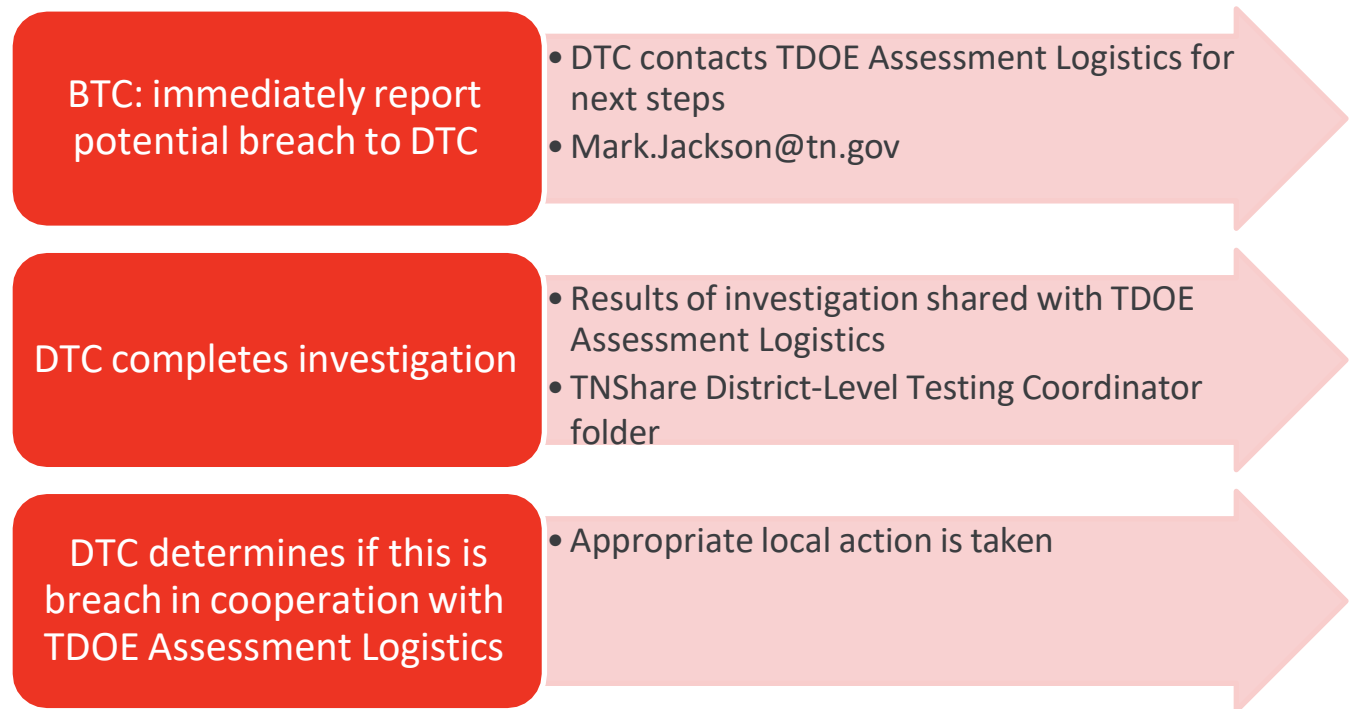
- educational measurement and psychometrics
- legal domains such as intellectual property, criminal law, contracts, etc.
- forensic data analysis
- investigative and interviewing skills

The department will also have experts in a variety of areas to provide input on an investigation and to be involved in planning, conducting the work, and reviewing the findings.

Appendixes

Appendix A: Potential Breach Flowchart

The Potential Breach Flowchart shows the progression from the discovery of a potential test administration security breaches to its resolution. The process is designed to ensure the integrity and validity of student scores while protecting the due process rights of districts and schools.

BTC: immediately report potential breach to DTC
- DTC contacts TDOE Assessment Logistics for next steps
- Mark.Jackson@tn.gov

DTC completes investigation
- Results of investigation shared with TDOE Assessment Logistics
- TNShare District-Level Testing Coordinator folder

DTC determines if this is breach in cooperation with TDOE Assessment Logistics
- Appropriate local action is taken

If no breach is found
- Retrain staff
- Consider revision of policies and procedures to avoid future problems

If breach is found
- may warrant suspension and/or other action against offending personnel
- may impact student test

Appendix B: Sample Testing Schedule

Testing schedules must include the following information and be retained by the district or school for one year.

- district name
- building name
- building coordinator's name
- location of testing session(s) (i.e., room number, classroom, etc.)
- assessment/grade/content/form being administered for each testing session
- test administrator (and proctors) for each testing session

2024-25 Testing Schedule

School Name: _____

District Name: _____

BTC Name: _____

Date	Grade Level	Teacher Name	Test Admin	Proctor	Testing Location	Content

Appendix C: Sample Testing Administration Observation Checklist

The Sample Observation Checklist below was used by department site monitors for the spring 2024 TCAP administration.

Interview with BTC

Ask to see the following test security/training materials

- ☐ BTC/Test Administrator training materials
- ☐ Test Administration and Security agreements
- ☐ Testing Code of Ethics agreements
- ☐ Seating charts / computer assignments
- ☐ Chain of Custody form (if they are doing any paper testing)
- ☐ Security logs
- ☐ Communications plan / protocol
- ☐ Documentation for ensuring accommodations are administered properly

Ask to see the secure location for test material storage

- ☐ Are there check-in/check-out sheets?
- ☐ Are materials (test tickets/seal codes or test books/answer documents) signed out by teachers?
- ☐ Are the doors marked? (Secure Materials)
- ☐ Materials signed in by BTC?

Ask the BTC to discuss the process for documenting RIs, mis-administrations, unexpected situations and potential security breaches.

Ask the BTC to discuss the process for communicating accommodations to test administrators.

Any other comments or thoughts from the interview with the BTC? Any suggestions from the BTC for TDOE?

Classroom Visit

The Room

- ☐ Are students spaced around the testing room appropriately?
- ☐ If space is limited, is monitoring more active and/or a proctor present?
- ☐ Are visual aids and resource materials that may affect the content area being tested covered or stored?
- ☐ Do the students have access to the TestNav Quick Tips (CBT), scratch paper, and appropriate reference materials for their content area?
- ☐ Are cell phones and other electronic devices properly stored and not in use by TA, proctors and/or students?
- ☐ Are desks & tables cleared of all materials except what is allowed in the TAM?
- ☐ Is there signage on the door of the testing room?

Test Administrators and Proctors

- ☐ Is the testing room supervised by one school/district employee at all times?
- ☐ Is the TA actively monitoring the room and students?
- ☐ Is the proctor (if present) actively monitoring the room & students and assisting the TA as necessary?
- ☐ Is the TA or proctor involved in activities unrelated to testing?
- ☐ Are test books, answer documents and/or login tickets distributed to students individually by the TA?
- ☐ Were directions read from the TAPS and not improvised?
- ☐ Were student questions answered before testing began?
- ☐ Were any secure testing materials left unattended?
- ☐ Was correct timing of the subpart used?

End of Testing Session

- ☐ Were student testing items (books, ADs, tickets) collected appropriately at the end of the session?
- ☐ Was scrap paper collected and delivered to the BTC?
- ☐ Were test materials returned and count back to the secure storage area

Hall Observation

- ☐ Was there signage on testing room doors? (i.e. "Do Not Disturb")
- ☐ Did you see any unattended test materials?
- ☐ Did you observe any students transporting secure test materials?
- ☐ Did you observe any unsupervised testing rooms?
- ☐ Did you observe any kind of hall monitoring?

Final Thoughts

If the school you visited was not testing on the day you visited, please provide an explanation.

Any other reactions or observations that were not recorded previously in this survey?

Appendix D: Overview of Test Security Violations
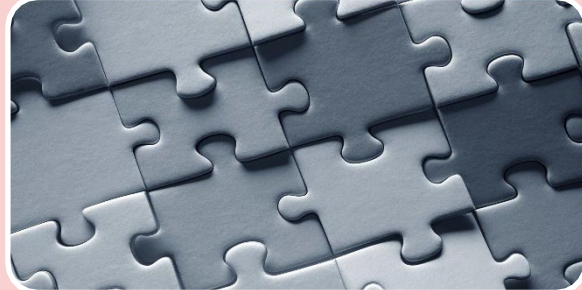
Security Violations

- Assisting students with answering test questions
- Viewing test content before, during, or after an administration unless allowed by test accommodation manual
- Discussing or disclosing test content or student responses
- Providing any assistance to students during or after testing unless specifically allowed by Test Administration Manual
- Failing to report a potential breach in test security procedures
- Compromising the integrity of student test score results

Procedural Violations

- Giving accommodations not allowed by the Test Administration Manual or a student's IEP, ILP, and/or 504 plan
- Not providing an allowable accommodation to a student during testing
- Mistiming of one or more subsections of a test
- Misplacing secure testing materials or failing to return secure materials to the testing vendor as required in the Test Administration Manual

Avoiding Security Violations

- Ensure all test administrators and proctors are thoroughly trained on security procedures and statutes
- Ensure that all building testing coordinators, test administrators, and proctors understand who is allowed accommodations during testing
- Clearly document all accommodations that are allowed for each student
- Train all test administrators on how to properly administer oral presentation accommodations
- Always carefully monitor students during testing, including during breaks between subparts

Avoiding Procedural Violations

- Maintain clear records of all secure materials and ensure all materials are signed in and out each day from the building testing coordinator
- Utilize the Test Book Security Form to account for all materials on a daily basis
- Ensure that test rosters are accurate and reflect the correct number of secure testbooks signed in and out each day
- Ensure that all building testing coordinators, test administrators, and proctors understand who is allowed accommodations during testing
- Document the start and stop time for each subpart to ensure the appropriate amount of time is given
- Always carefully monitor students during testing, including during breaks between subparts

Glossary

Academic Fraud – any intentional behavior that contributes to creating false estimates of student academic ability; the behavior is perpetrated to gain an unfair or dishonest advantage for the person or institution by falsifying a student's or a group of student's real ability measures

Administrative Procedural Error – during the process of preparing for testing, administering a test, or handling and shipping answer documents, a person or organization failed to follow the directions supplied by the department

Assessment Security Breach – occurs when any person examines copies or distributes test items; has unauthorized access to secure tests or test items; any test administrator who fails to return test booklets, test tickets, or other secure materials after the testing window has also committed a breach in security

Breach – (1) an event, intentional or not, that results in the inappropriate exposure of test items or answers that could potentially impact the accuracy of the test results, OR (2) an action by others, before, during, or after a test administration, to impact student test scores (e.g., educators changing student answer sheets)

Building Testing Coordinator (BTC) – a person who serves as the contact to the district testing coordinator, who trains and coordinates test administrators and proctors in their assigned building or program; the administration of each school building that is involved in administering assessments (including alternative education programs) should appoint a building testing coordinator

Chain of Custody – the chronological documentation or paper trail that shows the custody, control, and transfer of assessment materials

Cheating – general term that can include educator or student misconduct or improprieties, including intentional misbehavior or unethical practices; note that this term is not used in every state

Compromise – disclosure of test items or forms; can be intentional or unintentional; may also refer to changing the interpretation of a test score or changing the test score itself Computer-Based Testing (CBT) – a test taken by a student on a computer and scored by a computer.

Conflict of Interest – applied to any person who handles assessment materials or student data who could be perceived as having a special interest in a particular student or group of students, such as a parent, scoutmaster, etc.

Copyright© – exclusive legal right retained by the state of Tennessee to print or publish information or tests for the purpose of assessment and instruction; the state retains the right to protect secure items from copying or distribution; the state may also grant release of this protection after the testing cycle for some specific test items

Data Forensics – the use of analytic methods to identify or detect possible cheating; procedures can include evaluation of score gains, aberrance or person-fit, erasures, latency analysis, similarity analysis, and examination of changes in student responses (wrong-to- right, right-to-wrong, wrong-to-wrong)

District Testing Coordinator (DTC) – the district testing coordinator sets the tone of high integrity for the entire district and oversees the entire assessment process for a school district or academy

Erasure Analysis – computer-based or hand-scored methods for detecting unusual patterns of erased answers that were not expected from a typical student's or group of students' patterns of answers

Field test – test items that are in the final stages of development and are being monitored for quality by being administered to a sample group of students

Formative assessment – a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2006)

Impropriety – inappropriate misconduct, a more serious offense than an irregularity; the difference between impropriety and irregularity is usually defined in perception of the degree, intent, and/or effect of the misconduct

Internal Investigation – a document (e.g., email (preferred), letter, memorandum, etc.) by which a school reports its own findings about an alleged administrative irregularity to the department; the internal-investigation should include a thorough analysis of the problem with sufficient detail and should also include the corrective actions the district is or will be taking to correct the problem

Irregularity – includes many different activities - not necessarily cheating, but anything unusual that happened during testing (e.g., the fire alarms going off or a power outage) Live Items – items used by the department in field tests and on actual assessments; these are considered secure items

Misadministration – a situation where the test administrator fails to follow the directions supplied for administering the test which could result in the invalidation of the test score Paper-Based Test (PBT) – a test wherein the problems are penned, printed, or drawn and the answers are also penned

Potential Breach of Security Cover Sheet – document used to guide the DTC submission of investigation paperwork to the department

Proctor – a person assigned to work under the direction of the test administrator to assist in test administration

Protected Items – same as secure items (see below)

Released Items – formerly secure items that have been used on a test or field test and are being released for public use; schools are allowed to copy and use released items as part of an assessment program when used for diagnostic purposes, or so that students can understand how the test item is presented and scored; regular use of released items for continuous drill is a strongly discouraged practice

Secure Items – items on field tests, tests, or in a secure database that are awaiting potential use on a department test; these items must be kept secure to prevent copying of any kind

Secure Location – a storage location for tests under lock and key that prevents unauthorized access

Secure Materials – any materials (such as text, graphics, stories, scoring rubrics, or some assessment instructions) used for field test or live items

Secure Assessment/Test – an assessment instrument, test, or collection of test items that must be kept in a secure location, cannot be seen by anyone until the appropriate test administration time and place provided in the department instructions, and should never be copied; test administrators may not examine test items at any time

Security Investigation – follow-up activities regarding possible cheating or piracy of test materials; typically involves the collection of evidence, review of available information, interviews of suspected staff, and summary of findings from the investigation

Summative Assessment – an assessment of learning-specific content expectations that summarizes the development of a student (or students) at a particular time

Test Administration – the process of registering students for assessments, as well as scheduling, providing physical security measures, presenting the test content, gathering the test results, and communicating results and other information

Test Administrator (TA) – an employee of the district who ensures that the test administration is adhered to and administers the tests to students

Test Administration Window – the designated assessment window when department tests are administered and reported

Test Irregularity – any deviation from standardized practice outlined in this guide and/or test administrator manuals

Test Piracy – stealing of test forms, items, prompts, or other secure testing materials, often for the purpose of selling the materials to others

Trademark – the symbol ® or the word "Trademark" that legally represents department products and services