



TESTING AND ASSESSMENT PROGRAM AND TESTING CODE OF ETHICS

Policy Code: 3410

The Board believes that an effective testing and assessment program evaluates the progress of individual students and helps to ensure that educational goals and objectives are being met for every child. A testing program also assists in the continued refinement of the instructional program.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the testing program contributes to the learning process rather than detracts from it. Efforts also will be made to ensure culture-free or culture-fair tests in order to ensure that measurements are reasonably accurate.

The Board directs the Superintendent or designee to administer all state-required tests.

The instructional staff will be responsible for the administration of the testing program. All testing personnel, teachers, and school administrators are required to be familiar with and adhere to the *Testing Code of Ethics for North Carolina Testing Personnel, Teachers, and School Administrators* for state tests and individual school tests. Failure to follow the Code of Ethics may result in disciplinary sanctions including termination or revocation of administrative and/or teaching licenses.

TEST SECURITY

The Superintendent (or designee) shall develop appropriate procedures to ensure maximum test security in coordination with the policies and procedures developed by the test publisher. The principal is responsible for ensuring test security within the school building.

1. Test materials shall be stored in a secure, locked area and distributed immediately prior to the test administration. Before each test administration, materials shall be carefully counted and distributed in an orderly manner. After each test administration, all testing materials shall be collected and counted immediately by the building level test coordinator. Materials shall be returned to a secure, locked area immediately following the test administration.
2. Only authorized personnel who have a valid educational reason should have access to test materials. "Access" does not mean school personnel have the right to review tests or analyze test items. "Access" is limited to the actual handling of materials. An example of a valid educational reason to have access to test materials is for specific test modifications such as "signing the test" for deaf students.
3. Individuals who have access to secure test materials may not use that privilege for personal gain.
4. Test materials (both print and electronic versions, e.g., audio, video, and computer) shall not be copied, reproduced, or paraphrased in any way for any reason without the express written permission of the test publisher.
5. Personnel responsible for the testing program shall be properly instructed in test administration procedures, including administrations requiring procedural modifications. It is critical to follow all

directions, as outlined by the test publisher.

6. Any breach of security, loss of materials, failure to account for materials, or any other deviation from acceptable security procedures shall be reported immediately to the principal, building level test coordinator, school district test coordinator, and the state level test coordinator. The severity of the breach may result in disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, a letter of reprimand, suspension with pay, suspension without pay, or license revocation.

PREPARATION FOR TESTING

The Superintendent is responsible for ensuring that the following activities occur throughout the school district.

Central Office

1. The school district test coordinator must secure necessary materials.
2. The school district test coordinator must plan and implement training for building level test coordinators, test administrators, and proctors.
3. The school district test coordinator must ensure that each building level test coordinator and test administrator is trained in the implementation of procedural modifications used during test administrations.
4. The school district test coordinator must, in conjunction with the appropriate program administrators, ensure that only appropriate test modifications are used and that proper documentation of the need is present.

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Building Level

Principals are responsible for ensuring that the following activities occur within the school buildings.

1. Building level test coordinators must maintain test material security and accountability.
2. Building level test coordinators will identify and train personnel, proctors, and "backup" personnel for test administrations.
3. Building level test coordinators and building administrators should encourage a positive atmosphere for testing.
4. Parents and students are notified in writing of the state-mandated testing schedule at least two weeks prior to the test administration.

Test Administrators

Test administrators must be school personnel who have professional training in education and are knowledgeable concerning the state testing program. Generally, teachers administer tests to their students.

1. All state tests are developed to assess the Standard Course of Study. A specific curriculum is typically broader than the Standard Course of Study. Instruction should go beyond the Standard Course of Study to meet the needs of the specific students in the class.
2. Teachers and other staff must be trained for each test they will administer.
3. Teachers should provide a positive atmosphere for testing by:
 - encouraging students to do their best;
 - providing a room that is quiet, comfortable, and has adequate lighting; and

- promoting a supportive atmosphere.
4. Teachers should help students to become test-wise by:
 - helping students become familiar with test formats using appropriate curricular content;
 - teaching students test-taking strategies and providing appropriate practice sessions; and
 - helping students learn ways of preparing themselves to take tests.
 5. It is appropriate to use approved resource materials such as test questions from test item banks, testlets and linking documents, etc. in instruction and test preparation.
 6. Students and parents should be informed of upcoming tests, told what to expect, and made aware of any consequences of testing (e.g., passing the Competency Test is a graduation requirement). Students with disabilities or students who are limited English proficient should be aware of their rights regarding procedural modifications for testing and the consequences for exemption from testing.

Individuals shall be prepared to administer and take tests ethically. Examples of unethical behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- encouraging students to be absent on the day of testing;
- encouraging students not to do their best because of the purpose of the test;
- using secure test items (or modified secure test items) for instruction; and
- changing student responses at any time.

ADMINISTRATION

The Board has established this policy and procedures to ensure proper test administration for all eligible students. Examples of unethical behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- discouraging student attendance during testing;
- interpreting, explaining, or paraphrasing the test directions and/or the test items;
- reclassifying students solely for the purpose of avoiding state testing;
- not testing all eligible students; and
- failing to provide appropriate modifications during testing.

Central Office

The Superintendent or designee is responsible for the proper administration of each test, including, but not limited to, the following:

- assuring that each school establishes an appropriate set of procedures which ensures that all test administrations comply with test publisher guidelines;
- informing the Board of any breach of ethics; and
- informing building level administrators of their responsibilities.

School Building Level

The principal is responsible for the proper administration of each test within the school, including the following:

- assuring that all school personnel know the content of state and local testing policies;
- implementing the school district testing policy and procedures and establishing any necessary school policies and procedures which assure that all eligible students are tested fairly;

- assigning trained proctors appropriately to test administrators; and
- reporting all testing irregularities to the school district test coordinator.

Test Administrators and Proctors

Test administrators and proctors are responsible for the following:

- administering tests according to the directions in the administration manual developed by the test publisher and taking special care when test modifications are provided;
- administering tests to all eligible students;
- reporting all testing irregularities to the school building test coordinator (both test administrator and proctor);
- providing an appropriate test-taking climate (both test administrator and proctor); and
- assisting teachers in ensuring that testing occurs fairly by serving as an additional monitor (proctor).

SCORING

The school district test coordinator is responsible for ensuring that each test is scored according to specified procedures and parameters defined for the test by the test publisher in terms of the purpose and format of the test. Examples of unethical behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- modifying scoring programs, including answer keys, equating files, and lookup tables; and
 - modifying student records solely for the purpose of raising test scores.
1. Quality control must be maintained during the entire scoring process (handling and editing of documents, scanning answer documents, and producing files). Factors to be addressed include, but are not limited to, accuracy, personal bias, and scoring consistency.
 2. Security of tests and data-files must be maintained at all times and should include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - protecting the confidentiality of students and teachers at all times (i.e., data transfer, research studies, electronic files, printed materials); and
 - maintaining appropriate levels of test security regarding answer keys and item-specific scoring rubrics.

ANALYSIS AND REPORTING OF RESULTS

A test score is one piece of information and should be interpreted in light of other scores and indicators. Test data can help to understand better patterns and practices in education. The Superintendent is responsible for ensuring that test data are analyzed and reported appropriately and ethically. Examples of unethical behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- using a single test score to make individual decisions; and
- misleading the public concerning the results and interpretations of test data.

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1. Test scores should be released to students, parents, legal guardians, teachers, and the media with appropriate interpretative materials as needed.
2. Staff development shall be provided that is appropriate and informative in order for personnel to feel competent to respond to questions related to testing, including the tests, scores, scoring procedures, and other interpretative materials.
3. Items and associated materials on a secure test are not public domain. Item analysis must be limited to items that are within the public domain.
4. Confidentiality of individual students and teachers should be maintained at all times. The reporting of individual names is not ethical. All research studies should be carefully reviewed for design and consequences.
5. A greater understanding of test scores used for decision-making may be achieved by appropriate data analysis such as:
 - disaggregation of data based upon student demographics or school homework policy;
 - examination of grading practices in relation to test scores; and
 - examination of growth trends and goal summary reports for state-mandated tests.

USE OF RELEASED TEST

The leadership of the school district will determine how and the extent to which the tests will be used within the school system, and will abide by published guidelines and ethics associated with professional practices in the field of educational measurements.

Principals or central office personnel checking out released test booklets must sign the Released Test Form.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47, -81, -276, -288, -307; 115C art. 10A; 16 NCAC 6D .0301 - .0302

Cross References: Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Professional Development and Assistance (policy 1610/7800)

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