

Policy Code: 3411 Testing Code of Ethics and Test Security

PURPOSE

The Board of Education is committed to fair and equitable administration of standardized tests. The Board directs the superintendent or designee to administer all state-required tests according to state regulation. All testing personnel, teachers and school administrators are required to be familiar with and adhere to the state's Testing Code of Ethics for all tests. Failure to follow the Code will result in disciplinary sanctions, which may include termination or revocation of administrative and/or teaching licenses, or civil or criminal charges being brought.

STATE REQUIREMENTS

POLICY: [16 NCAC 6D.0306](#) POLICY ADOPTING A TESTING CODE OF ETHICS

This Rule shall apply to all public school employees who are involved in the state-testing program.

The superintendent or superintendent's designee shall develop local policies and procedures to ensure maximum test security in coordination with the policies and procedures developed by the test publisher. The principal shall ensure test security within the school building. The principal shall store test materials in a secure, locked area. The principal shall allow test materials to be distributed immediately prior to the test administration. Before each test administration, the building level test coordinator shall accurately count and distribute test materials. Immediately after each test administration, the building level test coordinator shall collect, count, and return all test materials to the secure, locked storage area.

"Access" to test materials by school personnel means handling the materials but does not include reviewing tests or analyzing test items. The superintendent or superintendent's designee shall designate the personnel who are authorized to have access to test materials.

Persons who have access to secure test materials shall not use those materials for personal gain. No person may copy, reproduce, or paraphrase in any manner or for any reason the test materials without the express written consent of the test publisher.

The superintendent or superintendent's designee shall instruct personnel who are responsible for the testing program in testing administration procedures. This instruction shall include test administrations that require procedural modifications and shall emphasize the need to follow the directions outlined by the test publisher.

Any person who learns of any breach of security, loss of materials, failure to account for materials, or any other deviation from required security procedures shall immediately report that information to the principal, building level test coordinator, school system test coordinator, and state level test coordinator.

PREPARATION FOR TESTING

The superintendent or designee shall ensure that school system test coordinators: secure necessary materials; plan and implement training for building level test coordinators, test administrators, and proctors; ensure that each building level test coordinator and test administrator is trained in the implementation of procedural modifications used during test administrations; and in conjunction with program administrators, ensure that the need for test modifications is documented and that modifications are limited to the specific need.

The principal shall ensure that the building level test coordinators: maintain test security and

accountability of test materials; identify and train personnel, proctors, and backup personnel for test administrations; and encourage a positive atmosphere for testing. Test administrators shall be school personnel who have professional training in education and the state-testing program.

Teachers shall provide instruction that meets or exceeds the standard course of study to meet the needs of the specific students in the class. Teachers may help students improve test-taking skills by: helping students become familiar with test formats using curricular content; teaching students test-taking strategies and providing practice sessions; helping students learn ways of preparing to take tests; and using resource materials such as test questions from test item banks, testlets, and linking documents in instruction and test preparation.

TEST ADMINISTRATION

The superintendent or superintendent's designee shall: assure that each school establishes procedures to ensure that all test administrators comply with test publisher guidelines; inform the local board of education of any breach of this code of ethics; and inform building level administrators of their responsibilities.

The principal shall: assure that school personnel know the content of state and local testing policies; implement the school system's testing policies and procedures and establish any needed school policies and procedures to assure that all eligible students are tested fairly; assign trained proctors to test administrations; and report all testing irregularities to the school system test coordinator.

Test administrators shall: administer tests according to the directions in the administration manual and any subsequent updates developed by the test publisher; administer tests to all eligible students; report all testing irregularities to the school system test coordinator; and provide a positive test-taking climate. Proctors shall serve as additional monitors to help the test administrator assure that testing occurs fairly.

SCORING

The school system test coordinator shall: ensure that each test is scored according to the procedures and guidelines defined for the test by the test publisher; maintain quality control during the entire scoring process, which consists of handling and editing documents, scanning answer documents, and producing electronic files and reports. Quality control shall address scoring accuracy and consistency, maintain security of tests and data files at all times, including: protecting the confidentiality of students at all times when publicizing test results; and maintaining test security of answer keys and item-specific scoring rubrics.

ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

Educators shall use test scores appropriately. This means that the educator recognizes that a test score is only one piece of information and must be interpreted together with other scores and indicators. Test data help educators understand educational patterns and practices. The superintendent shall ensure that school personnel analyze and report test data ethically and within the limitations described in this paragraph.

Educators shall release test scores to students, parents, legal guardians, teachers, and the media with interpretive materials as needed. Staff development relating to testing must enable personnel to respond knowledgeably to questions related to testing, including the tests, scores, scoring procedures, and other interpretive materials. Items and associated materials on a secure test shall not be in the public domain. Only items that are within the public domain may be used for item analysis.

Educators shall maintain the confidentiality of individual students. Publicizing test scores that contain the names of individual students is unethical and illegal.

Data analysis of test scores for decision-making purposes shall be based upon: disaggregation of data based upon student demographics and other collected variables; examination of grading practices in relation to test scores; and examination of growth trends and goal summary reports for state-mandated tests.

Unethical testing practices include, but are not limited to, the following practices:

- (1) encouraging students to be absent the day of testing;
- (2) encouraging students not to do their best because of the purposes of the test;
- (3) using secure test items or modified secure test items for instruction;
- (4) changing student responses at any time;
- (5) providing unauthorized assistance to individual or groups of students
- (6) Interpreting, explaining, or paraphrasing the test directions or the test items;
- (7) reclassifying students solely for the purpose of avoiding state testing;
- (8) not testing all eligible students;
- (9) knowingly failing to provide needed modifications during testing, if available;
- (10) modifying scoring programs including answer keys, equating files, and lookup tables;
- (10) modifying student records solely for the purpose of raising test scores;
- (11) using a single test score to make individual decisions; and
- (12) misleading the public concerning the results and interpretations of test data.

In the event of a violation of this rule, the SBE may, in accordance with the contested case provisions of [Chapter 150B of the General Statutes](#), impose any one or more of the following sanctions: withhold ABCs incentive awards from individuals or from all eligible staff in a school; file a civil action against the person or persons responsible for the violation for copyright infringement or for any other available cause of action; seek criminal prosecution of the person or persons responsible for the violation; and in accordance with the provisions of [16 NCAC 6C .0312](#), suspend or revoke the professional license of the person or persons responsible for the violation.

LOCAL REQUIREMENTS

Schools and the district must have written testing security plans that are on file in the district testing office. Staff in schools and at the district office are required to follow the written plans.

The local Board of Education may take disciplinary action against a staff member responsible for a violation including, but not limited to, oral and/or written reprimands, suspension with or without pay, or termination.

Adopted: August 7, 2003