

# **Miami-Dade County Public Schools: Standards, Guidelines, and Procedures for Test Administration and Test Security**



**Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis  
Division of Student Assessment and Educational Testing**

## INTRODUCTION

The following standards and guidelines have been established to ensure the integrity of the testing process and the accuracy and validity of all test scores. These general standards apply to all personnel involved with any aspect of the testing process, and are in effect for district, state, and national assessment programs. Comprehensive test administration procedures that are specific to each program are provided in test administration manuals and/or program guides. If discrepancies exist between the general standards contained herein and the specific test procedures provided for the program, the specific program's standards will apply.

Test administrators, proctors, and any other school or district staff involved in assessment programs are required to abide by state policies established in statute and rule, specifically, the Florida Test Security Statute, section 1008.24, and the Florida Board of Education Administrative Rule, 6A-10.042, as well as in district policy, specifically The School Board of Miami-Dade County Bylaws & Policies, 2605 regarding test security. Violations of test security provisions shall be subject to the established penalties and/or to administrative actions.

This document is organized into the following sections, which provide standards to be followed with regard to each component of an assessment program:

- Roles and Responsibilities for Implementing Test Programs at School Sites
- Security of Test Content
- Designation of District Assessments
- Training of School Personnel
- Preparing Students for Testing
- Handling and Management of Test Materials
- Testing Exemptions and Accommodations
- Maintaining Standardization and Test Security during Test Administration
- Supervision and Monitoring of Testing
- Invalidating Test Results
- Reporting Testing Irregularities and Security Violations
- Test Auditing Procedures
- Reporting and Communication of Test Results

## **STANDARD: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING TESTING PROGRAMS AT SCHOOL SITES**

School administrators, teachers, and other school staff shall all be made aware of their professional obligations with regard to testing programs. The roles and responsibilities of the principal, school assessment coordinator, technology coordinator, test administrator, and proctor in the implementation of assessment programs are described below.

### **Principal**

The principal is responsible for ensuring that tests are administered in accordance with professional test administration procedures, as outlined in the administration manuals, program guides, and training materials provided by the test publishers, the state, and/or the district, and for ensuring that any violations of test administration and/or security procedures are reported appropriately and in a timely manner. The principal designates a school assessment coordinator and ensures that the school assessment coordinator attends all mandatory district training sessions and follows established procedures. Although the principal may delegate the coordination of specific testing programs to the school assessment coordinator or another designee, the ultimate responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the test administration rests with the principal. The principal must submit a School Procedural Checklist (FM-6927) at the conclusion of each testing program, to certify that the test administration was conducted in accordance with the district's established guidelines and procedures.

### **School Assessment Coordinator (Test Chairperson)**

The school assessment coordinator, or test chairperson, is responsible for organizing and monitoring testing programs at the school level in accordance with the procedures outlined for each program. Primary responsibilities include: attending district training sessions; planning and implementing test administrations; training test administrators and proctors; arranging for testing locations; verifying receipt of test materials; verifying and managing student information; scheduling students into test sessions and classes; organizing, and distributing materials to the test administrators; printing Student Authorization Tickets and Session Rosters; maintaining the security of test materials in the schools; supervising test administration; starting and stopping test sessions, resuming students, scheduling make-up sessions, invalidating tests, and recording accommodations used by the students; maintaining all required records and documentation; returning test materials for scoring; and maintaining the confidentiality of student test records. Only certificated administrative or instructional employees (e.g., assistant principals, teachers, counselors, media specialists) who have received appropriate training for a particular test may serve as school assessment coordinators.

### **Technology Coordinator**

The technology coordinator is responsible for assisting the school assessment coordinator in the implementation of the computer-based test administration. Primary responsibilities include: ensuring that all computers meet the minimum system requirements; downloading and installing

test content on a proctor cache computer(s); assisting test administration staff during the administration with any technical difficulties that may develop; monitoring system usage during the administration; and purging test content from the proctor caching computer(s).

### **Test Administrator**

The test administrator is responsible for directing and conducting student testing sessions, as specified in the administration manuals or program guides. Only certificated administrative and instructional employees (e.g., teachers, counselors, media specialists) who have received appropriate training for a particular test may serve as test administrators. Primary responsibilities include: attending required training sessions; establishing appropriate conditions in the testing room; distributing and returning student test materials; accounting for all assigned materials; strictly adhering to test scripts and directions; actively monitoring students during the testing session; and following security procedures to ensure a standard administration. Only certificated administrative and instructional employees (e.g., teachers, counselors, media specialists) who have received appropriate training for a particular test may serve as test administrators.

### **Proctor**

The proctor is responsible for actively monitoring the testing session and for assisting the test administrator in managing the session and maintaining test security. Administrative, instructional, non-instructional, and paraprofessional employees who have received appropriate training for a particular test may serve as proctors. However, non-certificated employees may only assist in distributing and collecting student test materials under the direct supervision of a certificated test administrator, and may not administer the test, read test scripts, or have sole responsibility for the test materials. In addition, parents or other community volunteers who are trained in proctoring and test security may serve as test proctors, but proctors who are not employees may not handle any test materials or be left alone with students or test materials at any time.

Note that proctors may not be assigned to proctor in a family member's classroom or at the same grade level as the family member.

### **Relief Staff**

Relief staff who may serve in classrooms in the temporary absence of the regular test administrator or proctor must meet all of the requirements specified for the applicable role, and must have received appropriate training related to test administration and test security procedures.

## **STANDARD: SECURITY OF TEST CONTENT**

The content of tests and any other specified testing materials must remain secure to ensure the integrity of the testing process and the accuracy and validity of the test scores. All testing activities, including test preparation, test distribution and return, supervision and monitoring of testing, and the use of test results must be conducted in a manner that ensures the security of test content.

The following rules must be followed to maintain the security of test content and individual test items.

1. Secure test materials must be stored in a locked location with strictly limited access. The secure storage location must not be accessible through a master key (or any other key that opens other rooms in the school). Strict accounting of the keys to the secure location must be maintained.
2. Under no circumstances shall any school staff, district employee, or volunteer intentionally examine or review the contents of any secure test materials or divulge test content, other than that specifically required in the directions for test administration. This restriction applies to (1) any passage, prompt, or individual item/question in a test or answer booklet, or in any other secure test materials, and (2) any time period before, during, or after test administration.
3. Parents, volunteers, or other community members shall not be provided access to test content or any secure test materials at any time.
4. Secure test materials shall not be copied, photographed, or reproduced in any manner.
5. Students shall only be allowed access to secure test materials or test content during the actual testing session, and only to their own assigned materials.

## **Standard: Designation of District Assessments**

The District may designate assessments to be administered in compliance with state and federal mandates, or in support of the District's own initiatives and instructional programs. Beginning with the 2014-15 school year, Florida Statute (1008.22(4)) requires that student progress be assessed in all courses offered in Florida public schools. Statewide assessment programs, such as the FCAT2.0, FSA, and EOC assessments measure student progress in some, but not all state-approved courses. Options open to districts include other statewide assessments, nationally recognized standardized assessments, industry certification exams, District-developed or District-selected end-of-course assessments, and/or teacher/principal-selected assessments.

If assessments are available to meet the needs of the program, they may be purchased through the District's established procurement process. If assessments are not available, the District may choose to develop them in-house or to contract with assessment developers to develop custom assessments. All selected assessments should be valid for the intended purpose. Assessments under consideration for purchase must undergo a formal review process, and demonstrate appropriate content coverage (content validity) and psychometric properties. Vendors under consideration for development of custom assessments must demonstrate experience in developing similar assessments, and provide evidence of successful project completion.

### **District-Developed End-of-Course Assessments**

If no appropriate existing assessments are available, the District may develop them locally. To ensure the validity of District-developed assessments, best practices must be followed, as specified in the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, NCME, 2014) and *Best Practices for Test Development: A Guide for Districts and Schools* (FLDOE, 2014 draft in review). General considerations for test development include: specification of the purpose of the test; alignment to course content at the necessary level of rigor, as defined by state standards; creation of item specifications and test blueprints; item development by content area specialists; expert review of items for content, form, and accuracy; appropriate mode of delivery; and specification of scoring procedures, generation of item and test statistics, psychometric scaling; and prompt reporting.

Given the timelines available for administering District-developed end-of-course assessments (DDEOC), it is expected that they will be computer-based tests (CBT). If computer-based administration is not feasible, schools may choose to print test booklets and use scannable answer sheets, as long as storing and administration adhere to strict security protocols. Similarly, to facilitate immediate reporting of results, all DDEOC assessments will comprise only objective item types, such as multiple-choice items, with the inclusion of alternate item types as technological resources allow.

During any baseline administration, students' scores on a DDEOC will not be applied toward their final course grade.

### **Teacher/Principal Selected Assessments**

In compliance with F.S. 1008.22(6)(b)5, teacher-selected or principal-selected measures may be used in courses without any other type of measure. Teacher/principal selected assessments must measure student mastery of course content at the necessary level of rigor, but may include a variety of assessment formats, such as paper, computer, or project-based assessments; adjudicated performances; and practical application assignments.

### **Security Considerations**

DDEOC administration will follow the security procedures outlined in other sections of the *M-DCPS Standards, Guidelines, and Procedures for Test Administration and Test Security*. As per these procedures, all employees are held to professional standards with regard to the security of test content, handling of secure test materials, administration of assessments, and appropriate use of test results. F.S. 1008.24 and State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.042, FAC, govern assessment security and establish penalties for violation of test security rules.

Local development of test items and assessments requires additional precautions to establish and ensure that test content remains secure. Among other considerations, all participants in test development activities are required to sign non-disclosure agreements, and attest to the maintenance of any materials identified as proprietary or confidential by the M-DCPS, in accordance with state and District policies.

## **STANDARD: TRAINING OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

Training for school personnel has two major components: training school assessment coordinators in the coordination of the testing program, and training school staff in proper test administration. School assessment coordinators, teachers, and others who administer or proctor standardized tests must be provided with training to ensure that: (1) all testing procedures are clearly understood and applied to the testing process; (2) all personnel involved in the testing process are aware of the importance of following standardized testing procedures; (3) all personnel involved in the testing process have knowledge of test security, auditing measures being implemented, and the implications of willful violations of test security; and (4) all personnel involved in the testing process have knowledge of appropriate procedures for communicating test results.

### **School Assessment Coordinator Training**

Staff from Student Assessment and Educational Testing, or other appropriate district or contractor staff, are responsible for conducting the training of the school assessment coordinators. If the primary responsibility for different test programs is assigned to different employees, the principal must ensure that each designee completes the appropriate training session(s) for his/her assigned program(s).

### **Test Administrator and Proctor Training**

School assessment coordinators, in turn, are responsible for training all school site test administrators and proctors, including any itinerant or part-time staff or volunteers. Training materials, as well as topics to be covered, will be provided by the district to school assessment coordinators to assist them in conducting their own training. The principal is responsible for ensuring that appropriate training sessions are carried out.

Documentation regarding the school-site training, including agendas, copies of training materials, records of attendance, and any training verification and/or compliance forms specific to each test program must be maintained at the school site for one calendar year and must be readily available for review.



## **STANDARD: PREPARING STUDENTS FOR TESTING**

Students should be provided with instruction on test-taking strategies, formats, and procedures to help them perform optimally on standardized tests. The following guidelines identify appropriate and inappropriate practices that must be adhered to in the preparation of students for testing.

1. All students, including students classified as limited English proficient (LEP) (also referred to as English Language Learners, or ELL) and Exceptional Student Education (ESE) students who may be exempt from participation in the actual assessment, should be included in general test preparation activities that are offered to standard curriculum students as part of the instructional program. However, students who are exempt from a testing program must not take a practice test that is integrated into the test administration.
2. All students eligible to take Computer-based tests (CBT) must participate in any CBT practice tests that are required for that administration.
3. Individual schools and district staff shall not purchase directly from the publisher any test booklets, answer keys, or other test materials that are part of a district, state, or national testing program, including parallel forms, other editions, or other levels of a test.
4. Under no circumstances shall questions or items on the tests be “reviewed” or examined in order to construct a practice test or preparatory material.
5. Under no circumstances shall actual test items, or paraphrased or modified items based on actual test items, be provided to students in any format.
6. No person should provide students with answer keys or correct responses to the actual test.
7. Unless otherwise stated, all test materials are copyrighted and are not to be duplicated. This includes practice tests, test booklets, answer sheets, test manuals, and other supporting materials.
8. Parallel forms, other editions, or other levels of a test that are used as part of a district, state, or national testing program may not be reviewed, examined, administered to students, or used in any way to construct practice tests or instructional and/or preparatory materials, with the exception of materials explicitly released for that purpose.
9. Individuals involved in any aspect of the test administration and/or test security process must exercise caution to ensure that secure test content is not divulged to their own students, children, or the children of family members or friends.

## **STANDARD: HANDLING AND MANAGEMENT OF PAPER-BASED AND COMPUTER-BASED TESTS**

Each principal is responsible for supervising the precise accounting of all testing materials at the school site. The school assessment coordinator, or the principal's designee, is responsible for verifying receipt of test materials and ensuring secure storage of materials; verifying and managing student information; scheduling students into test sessions and classes; preparing, distributing and collecting materials for the testing sessions; scheduling make-up sessions, invalidating tests, and recording accommodations used by the students; maintaining all required records and documentation; and returning the testing materials for scoring following administration. Specific instructions for the handling and management of paper-based and computer-based testing materials are found in the administration manual and/or program guide for each testing program.

Adherence to these procedures for the handling and management of test materials before, during, and after testing will ensure that:

- Students do not have access to any materials prior to or following the actual exam time;
- Professional staff have access to the test booklets, test folders, questions, and/or reading passages only at the time necessary for administration purposes; and
- Nothing has occurred in the school to allow unauthorized access to any test materials at any time.

The following test preparation procedures must be carried out in the handling of secure test materials, before, during, and after test administration.

1. When materials are received at the school, the principal or school assessment coordinator must document receipt of the materials and confirm the accuracy of the shipment by completing and signing the packing list.
  - a. If any discrepancies are noted, Student Assessment and Educational Testing must be notified immediately and documentation provided as directed.
  - b. Any secure materials missing from shipments that are not reported within five (5) days of receipt will be considered "unaccounted for" and subject to being reported as a security violation.
2. Only person(s) designated by the principal may prepare test materials (e.g., placement of labels, organizing class sets, etc.) for student use or for return, with all such preparation carried out under the direct supervision of the principal or school assessment coordinator.
  - a. Non-designated persons may not be present in the room when secure test materials are being processed.
  - b. Students, regardless of grade level, may not be present in the room where secure test materials are being processed, nor may preparation of test materials be carried out in a location that is accessible to students.

3. Secure test materials, including test booklets, must be stored in a locked, limited access location, and may not be distributed to the test administrator until immediately prior to the scheduled testing session on the day of the test and must be returned immediately at the end of each testing session.
  - a) Written documentation of the quantities of test booklets and range of security numbers (if applicable) that are assigned to each test administrator must be maintained.
  - b) The test administrator and school assessment coordinator must sign for materials distributed and returned for each testing session.
  - c) Any missing materials must be reported immediately as specified in procedures for Reporting Testing Irregularities and Security Violations.
4. If an extended break occurs during the testing session (e.g., lunch), secure test materials must be collected and returned to secure locked storage.
5. Test booklets must be handed to each student individually by the test administrator or proctor, not handed out in groups and passed along from student to student.
  - a) Written documentation of the security numbers (if applicable) assigned to each student must be maintained.
6. Any secure test materials present in a testing session that are not actively being used by a student (for example, test booklets intended for absentees, or a booklet for a student in the restroom) must be secured out of reach of any student.
7. At the conclusion of each testing session, the test administrator and/or proctor(s) must collect secure materials individually from each student. No student shall be permitted to leave the testing room until it has been verified and documented that his/her test materials have been returned to the test administrator.
8. Any materials found to be damaged or containing defects upon receipt, or any materials damaged at the school site must be reported immediately to Student Assessment and Educational Testing, with documentation provided as directed.
9. Under no circumstances may test materials or student answer documents be taken outside the school; return of secure materials from the school to the Test Distribution Center must be direct; and materials may not be held outside of the school overnight.

## **STANDARD: TESTING EXEMPTIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

It is the responsibility of the principal (or designee) to ensure that all students who are eligible to be tested are indeed tested, and that students eligible for accommodations receive the appropriate accommodations (i.e., limited English proficient students, students with disabilities, or students otherwise eligible for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973). Specific guidelines regarding eligibility for accommodations are provided in the administration manual or program guide for each testing program, and take precedence over the general guidelines stated below.

1. All eligible students must be administered the test during the designated testing date(s) or period(s).
2. Students who are absent on the day of the test or miss a section/subtest of a test battery must participate in scheduled make-up test session(s).
3. All students, including eligible retained students, will be assessed at the grade level to which they are assigned on the district's Integrated Student Information System (ISIS) during the testing period. Students' grade level classification may not be changed solely for purposes of exclusion from assessments.
4. Accommodations are changes in how the test is given; changes in what is tested are not allowed.
  - a. Examples of special testing accommodations and conditions include: flexible setting, flexible scheduling, assistance in marking or recording responses, revised test formats (e.g., Braille), and revised test presentation (e.g., sign language or translation into native language).
  - b. The exact combination of accommodations to be offered to any particular student must be individually determined, considering the needs of the student.
5. Determination of a student's eligibility for exemption or accommodations during testing must be made on an individual basis and must be supported by appropriate documentation.
  - a. An Exceptional Student Education (ESE) student exempted from participation or allowed accommodations during testing must be officially classified as an ESE student, and have exemption or the specific allowable accommodation(s) documented in a current Individual Educational Plan (IEP).
  - b. A limited English proficient student (LEP, or English Language Learner, ELL) exempted from participation or allowed accommodations during testing must be officially classified as such, and have exemption or specific allowable accommodation(s) documented through a majority decision by the student's LEP committee.
  - c. A student classified as handicapped under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 exempted from participation or allowed accommodations during testing must have a current Section 504 Accommodation Plan documenting the exemption or allowable accommodation(s).

6. Test administrators must be provided opportunities to become familiar with allowable accommodations and to participate in planning the test administration processes for students who require special test conditions.
7. Students who require special test conditions should receive instruction in testing procedures and have multiple opportunities to practice test-taking strategies. Additionally, prior to test administration, these students should have the opportunity to practice using their accommodations in instructional and testing situations, so they will be comfortable with them.
8. Students eligible for CBT accommodations must participate in accommodated practice test sessions, as available.
9. Coding of exceptions and accommodations must be completed as specified in the test program's administration manual or program guide.
10. A record of exemptions and accommodations must be maintained at the school site for one calendar year from the date of the test administration.

## **STANDARD: MAINTAINING STANDARDIZATION AND TEST SECURITY DURING TEST ADMINISTRATION**

All standardized tests shall be administered in accordance with established test administration and test security procedures, as outlined in state and district rules and statutes, and in the test administration manuals or program guides for each testing program. The principal must advise all personnel involved in any aspect of the preparation, administration, or handling of test materials, of the rules relating to test security, and of the importance of complete adherence to those rules. School procedures must incorporate the following general guidelines.

1. Students are to be closely supervised at all times during testing. A certified trained test administrator must be present at all times when students are being tested or when test materials are in the room.
2. The student-to-adult ratio specified for each testing program must be followed. When not specifically stated, it is strongly suggested that a trained proctor be present during each testing session for grades K-3 in addition to the test administrator. At grades 4-12, it is recommended that proctors assist the test administrator in classrooms with 30 students or more. Note for computer-based tests (CBT) the ratio of student per adult is smaller (i.e. 25 students / 1 test administrator).
3. Each test administrator must have a student roster listing the students who have been assigned to his/her testing room.
  - a. Absences must be recorded on the student roster for each scheduled testing session.
  - b. No student is to be admitted to any testing room unless his/her name is on the student roster for that room.
  - c. The test administrator or proctor must verify students' identification (e.g., school identification card, driver's license) prior to testing and again any time a student enters or exits a testing room, unless the test is being administered by a teacher to his/her intact class.
  - d. Verification of student identification is not required for elementary school students who are being tested in the school in which they are enrolled.
4. All classroom materials that might provide visual or auditory clues to students (e.g., maps, math formulas, multiplication charts, word lists) must be removed from the testing room or covered prior to testing.
5. Seating should be adequately arranged and spaced to discourage cheating. The use of seating charts to plan and record student seat assignments **may be required** for state assessment programs.
6. Computer labs must be set up to ensure that students cannot view the monitors of other students' workstations. Visual barriers may be used to prevent incidental viewing.
7. Procedures must be implemented to contact the school assessment coordinator and/or technology coordinator during a computer-based session in case a student is disconnected from the computer-based session.

8. The test booklets and/or answer documents must not be opened or the seal broken (if a seal is present) until students are instructed to do so.
9. Test administrators must adhere strictly to the directions provided for test administration.
  - a. Scripts and directions must be read verbatim, exactly as written.
  - b. Guidelines for providing students with instructions regarding guessing must be followed.
  - c. For timed tests, test administrators must strictly adhere to the specified time limit for each subtest.
10. Students shall not be assisted in answering test questions by any means or by any person, including individuals administering or proctoring the test.
  - a. Students shall not be coached or provided with any feedback regarding test items or their answers at any time.
  - b. Under no circumstances shall any person change, alter, or otherwise interfere with students' answers to test questions.
11. Students must be closely supervised during any breaks in a testing session (e.g., restroom break; snack/lunch breaks; or accidental disruption to the testing process, such as a fire alarm) to ensure that the security of the test is not compromised.
  - a. All answer books and test documents must be collected by the test administrator or proctor, held and/or stored securely, and returned individually to the student(s) for completion at the end of the break.
  - b. Supervision during breaks must be sufficient to ensure that students have no opportunity to discuss test content with anyone or to gain access to reference materials or to any other outside information.
12. Test administrators and proctors must actively monitor students to discourage talking or cheating, and to ensure that students are working independently and on the appropriate section.
  - a. Test administrators and proctors must remain attentive throughout the entire testing period, moving about the room as needed to ensure coverage in all areas of the room.
  - b. Test administrators and proctors must refrain from any activities that would distract them from their duties, including, but not limited to, reading, grading papers, engaging in conversations, using cell phones or working on a computer.
13. The test administrator must record any test administration irregularity or breach of test security and notify the school assessment coordinator and principal immediately.
14. Parents, volunteers, or community members, other than those serving as test proctors, are not permitted in the classroom during testing.
15. Students must be advised that the possession or use of notes, scratch paper, reference materials, or electronic/technological devices, other than those specifically allowed within the guidelines for that test, will result in dismissal from the test administration and invalidation of their test results.
  - a. Electronic devices, such as pagers, telephones, electronic games, and MP3 players/audio devices (except as listed as an accommodation in a current IEP) are specifically prohibited.

- b. For any test administration in which students are permitted to use calculators, students are to use only those calculators specified in the program guide or administration manual, or those specifically provided by the state or district for that test program. Use of calculators other than those specified for the test program will be grounds for invalidation.
- 16. Violations of test security provisions shall be subject to penalties as provided in statute and state board rules.



## **STANDARD: SUPERVISION AND MONITORING OF TESTING**

Test administrations shall be supervised at the school level and monitored by the district to ensure that tests are administered in accordance with the specified procedures and to prevent potential test administration irregularities. Adherence to this standard ensures that all students are provided with a fair and equal opportunity to perform optimally on a given test.

1. At the school level, the principal must oversee procedures and the testing schedule to ensure that established procedures are being followed.
  - a. The principal, school assessment coordinator, and/or designee should visit selected testing rooms prior to and during administration to ensure that proper testing conditions are maintained.
  - b. Test administrators and proctors must keep their attention on the students at all times, maintaining active and continuous supervision.
2. District monitoring of the testing process shall be conducted at randomly selected schools.
  - a. Three major components of the testing process must be monitored:
    - i. Maintenance of test security before testing;
    - ii. Test administration procedures; and
    - iii. Maintenance of test security after testing.
  - b. District test monitors shall be trained by Student Assessment and Educational Testing to ensure a standardized monitoring process and may perform one or more of the monitoring activities.
  - c. Schools must be prepared to receive a district test monitor, unannounced, at any time prior to, during, or immediately following the scheduled test dates.
  - d. Monitors are not to discuss their observations, or “debrief” with school staff or administrators.

## **STANDARD: INVALIDATING TEST RESULTS**

Test results may be invalidated for an individual or for a group of students if the results are not believed to be a valid representation of what students know. Invalidations are commonly due to irregularities in the test administration process or to violations of test security procedures. If an individual student becomes ill during testing, or must be removed from the test setting for some reason, the student's test booklet, answer document, and materials must be collected by the test administrator. The individual student's results may be invalidated for that test or portion of the test being administered during that testing session.

Test results may also be invalidated for a group of students for administration irregularities, such as the test administrator's failure to observe time limits or to adhere to the test script/directions; or due to a disturbance or disruption during the testing session that could compromise the standardized testing conditions and affect students' scores. The principal and school assessment coordinator must be notified immediately; if any question arises as to whether a particular situation should result in invalidation, consult the administration manuals or program guides and seek guidance from Student Assessment and Educational Testing staff.

Test results for one or more students may also be invalidated because of student cheating, for such reasons as talking during the test, looking at another person's booklet or answer sheet, use of electronic devices or unapproved calculators, or possession of scratch paper or notes containing test questions and/or answers, even if they were not used. The student(s) answer document(s) should be invalidated for the test or portion of the test being administered during that testing session.

In the event of invalidations, the student(s) answer document(s) must be coded appropriately and specific procedures must be followed for reporting invalidations and handling/packing test materials, as delineated in the administration manuals and/or program guides for the specific testing program. In addition, invalidations stemming from irregularities in the administration process and/or security violations must be reported as described in the Procedures for Reporting Testing Irregularities and Security Violations section of this document.

## **STANDARD: REPORTING TESTING IRREGULARITIES AND SECURITY VIOLATIONS**

A testing irregularity is any event or circumstance occurring before, during, or after the actual testing session that could impact the security of the test content or the validity of student results. Irregularities may regard materials (e.g., missing or damaged materials, improper handling of secure materials), test administration (e.g., an error in timing, fire alarm during administration, coaching/providing feedback to students), or student incidents (e.g., talking during administration, possession of unauthorized electronic devices or cheat sheet). Irregularities that involve breaches in test security or potentially jeopardize students' opportunities to receive valid scores must be reported immediately via telephone to Student Assessment and Educational Testing (SAET) to safeguard students' test results. For all state testing programs, a written report describing the incident and its resolution must be submitted by the school principal to SAET within five (5) working days, with copies to the appropriate Regional or District administrative office (i.e., Regional Center, Charter School Operations, or Alternative Education). This report will be forwarded, as required, to the Florida Department of Education. Serious irregularities also must be reported for investigation in accordance with the district's Personnel Investigative Model (PIM)<sup>1</sup>, as outlined below. See Table 1 for reporting guidelines for typical types of testing irregularities.

The PIM calls for all criminal and all serious non-criminal incidents to be reported directly to the Miami-Dade School Police (M-DSP)<sup>2</sup>. The principal must report all such incidents to M-DSP by completing an Allegation Reporting Form (FM-7039) and emailing it to [pimreporting@dadeschools.net](mailto:pimreporting@dadeschools.net). M-DSP will review all reports, conduct all criminal investigations, and forward other reports to the Allegation Review Team for referral to the appropriate investigative unit. Serious incidents that involve potential criminal interference with state assessment programs may be reported directly to the school police to expedite the investigation, if necessary

The principal (or designee) must be prepared to provide the following preliminary information to the office of Student Assessment with regard to testing irregularities:

1. School name and location number
2. Date and time of occurrence
3. Name of testing program and subtest
4. Type of irregularity or security incident (i.e., problem with materials, administration irregularity, student incident, or other irregularity)
5. Students impacted, if applicable
  - a. Number of students
  - b. Grade level
  - c. Class, room number, and/or test group code
6. Number and role of school staff involved, if applicable
7. Brief description of the nature of the incident

<sup>1</sup> For additional information about procedures required under the Personnel Investigative Model, refer to the PIM User's Guide at [http://ciu.dadeschools.net/PIM\\_06.pdf](http://ciu.dadeschools.net/PIM_06.pdf). Allegation Reporting Forms may be accessed at <http://forms.dadeschools.net/webpdf/7039.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Note that Charter Schools must report criminal incidents to the local police authority, rather than the M-DSP.

Schools should contact their Region or District administrative office (i.e., Regional Center, Charter School Operations, or Alternative Education) for assistance in determining whether minor incidents are clearly administrative and non-criminal in nature, and may be resolved at the school site, or if they must be reported to the M-DSP as per the PIM.

Requests for investigations may also be generated as a result of scoring irregularities identified during the scoring and auditing process by the state. The school principal is responsible for submitting additional reports and/or documentation as part of such investigations, as requested.

School personnel must be prepared to provide additional documentation and information in support of subsequent investigations of a testing incident by the M-DSP and/or FLDOE. Requested information may include, but is not limited to:

- Written documentation of the school's test security protocol and procedures;
- Testing location of students, including a list of students tested in the same room, seating assignment, and testing group code;
- Academic history of students;
- Written statements from students, test administrator, and proctor(s);
- Documentation of test administrator training;
- Follow-up actions or resolution of the incident;
- Recommendations regarding validity of students' work sample produced during the test session in question, and
- Steps implemented to avoid future incidents.

**Table 1**  
**Reporting Guidelines for Sample Testing Irregularities**

Type of Incident	Reporting Response	Documentation	
<b>Materials</b>	Materials missing from shipment on receipt at school	Inform SAET within five (5) days of receipt	Provide list of materials not in shipment
	Loss of secure materials during administration	Inform SAET, PIM reporting	PIM FM-7039, report to SAET, other as requested
	Materials listed in state/vendor Missing Materials Report	Conduct thorough search	Return materials and/or provide documentation, as directed
	Test materials soiled/damaged	Inform SAET if materials are unusable	Documentation of secure disposal, if necessary
	Unauthorized access to test content	Inform SAET; PIM reporting	PIM FM-7039, report to SAET, other as requested
	Tampering with student answer documents after test administration	Inform SAET; PIM reporting	PIM FM-7039, report to SAET, other as requested
<b>Test Administration</b>	Mis- administration, e.g., mis-timing of subtest(s) or provision of inappropriate accommodations	Call SAET immediately for guidance, confer with Region/District regarding PIM	Report to SAET, other as requested
	Coaching or interfering with student responses	Inform SAET; PIM reporting	PIM FM-7039, report to SAET, other as requested
	Accidental disruption during the testing process, e.g., fire alarm, power outage	Call SAET immediately for guidance; implement plan to salvage session	As required
<b>Student Incident</b>	Communication between students during test	Confer with Region/District regarding PIM <sup>1</sup> , inform SAET if reported	Invalidate student answer document(s), include on list of invalidations; report to SAET, other as required
	Possession of prohibited materials, e.g., answer key, notes, electronic device	Inform SAET if more than one student is implicated	Invalidate student answer document(s), include on list of invalidations, report to SAET if N>1
	Looking on another student's answer document	Inform SAET if more than one student is implicated	Invalidate student answer document(s), include on list of invalidations, report to SAET if N>1
	Removal of a test document from the testing room	Inform SAET, report student incident to M-DSP, confer with Region/District regarding PIM <sup>1</sup>	As required
<b>Audit Report</b>	Anomaly identified during scanning/scoring by district, state, or vendor	PIM reporting (on notification)	As required

<sup>1</sup> A student incident may require Personnel Investigative Model (PIM) reporting if the incident resulted from improper administration procedures or inadequate monitoring during testing.

Note. These represent typical types of irregularities; call Student Assessment and Educational Testing (SAET) for questions regarding reporting other incidents.

## **STANDARD: TEST AUDITING PROCEDURES**

An auditing system is in place for state and district assessment programs to improve the validity of the testing process and of the resulting test scores. The following procedures are used to determine whether irregularities may have occurred during the testing period or scoring process:

1. Procedures for verifying the accuracy of scoring, such as identifying excessive omits, blanks, and other irregular patterns on the actual answer documents.
2. Examination of longitudinal patterns of test performance for possible aberrations in results as compared to expectations (i.e., unusual gains or losses).
3. Verification of the proper use of special test codes and appropriate determination of exemptions.
4. Verification of appropriate participation rates by examination of the number of students tested as compared to the total number of eligible students.
5. Verification of irregular or invalidated tests or test scores by review of proper supporting documentation provided by the test administrator/school.
6. Analysis of test completion rates for a randomly selected sample of schools.

The state's contractor analyzes data to identify highly unusual test results from the statewide assessment programs for two primary groups:

- Students with extremely similar test responses; and
- Schools with improbable levels of similarity, gains and/or erasures.

Consequently, test scores for individual students are flagged and invalidated based on anomalies identified after testing, during the scoring and auditing process by the state. The school or parent can request an appeal on behalf of the student. However, there must be compelling evidence to request the appeal and supporting documentation must be submitted with the appeal. The state will conduct a formal review based on the supporting documentation and make a final decision whether to release individual test results or uphold the invalidation. The Superintendent's signature is required in all appeals submitted.

School level analyses are also conducted during the scoring and auditing process by the state to identify schools with improbable results on the statewide assessment programs. Consequently, flagged schools will initially be given an "I" (Incomplete) for its accountability outcome pending an internal investigation completed by the District. The state reserves the right to carry out additional investigations, subsequent to submission of the District's report. School principals are responsible for providing information or documentation in support of such investigations so that a determination can be made regarding the validity of the test results in question, as outlined in the Reporting Testing Irregularities and Security Violations section of this document

## **STANDARD: REPORTING AND COMMUNICATION OF TEST RESULTS**

Guidelines delineating the general principles of appropriate communication about test results and their dissemination have been established. Adherence to appropriate communication and reporting procedures serves to maintain the confidentiality of individual test results and student records while providing for timely and appropriate dissemination of district and school results and relevant public information.

1. Individual test results are confidential information; guidelines for maintaining and safeguarding the privacy of student records must be followed. Individual student results may not be released to, accessed by, or discussed with any unauthorized person. Student results may not be sent via email, unless precautions are taken to ensure confidentiality (ex., password protected attachments).
2. Student test results provide valuable information about the student's educational progress. These results are part of the student's educational record and are not to be removed, deleted, altered, or expunged without due process.
3. Reports of individual student results are to be distributed to parents/legal guardians and students on a timely basis and in an appropriate language and format. They may be hand-delivered via students or sent home by mail. This information may not be withheld from the appropriate recipients.
4. Classroom educators and other qualified school staff are to assist parents/legal guardians in making appropriate use of test information in understanding the implications for their children's educational progress and for making informed educational decisions. Educators are to assist parents/legal guardians in making valid inferences from test scores and in understanding the limitations of the information provided.
5. It is the responsibility of the school administration to verify the receipt and accuracy of score reports for all students who have been tested. Missing reports and inaccurate or missing scores must be reported immediately, in conformance with the policies and procedures established for the particular assessment program.
6. School and district test results are public information.
7. School and district level results are to be made readily available to interested members of the public in an understandable format and timely manner.
8. Relevant supporting information regarding interpretation of score reports, clarification of possible misinterpretations, and understanding the implications of the results must be provided for student, school and district reports.
9. Data for a school or other subgroup will not be reported if, because of the small number of students in that population, it would be possible to identify the test scores of an individual student.

### **POLICY REGARDING THE APPROPRIATE USE OF STUDENT TEST RESULTS**

The professional responsibility of those who interpret, use, and communicate assessment results includes the obligation to understand the limitations of a given assessment and the potential consequences of the use of the information, including proper interpretations and likely misinterpretations. While test results may be used as one criterion in providing students access to the most appropriate programs, test scores should not be used in isolation from other relevant information in making educational decisions, particularly if those decisions would limit student access to challenging educational opportunities and/or courses of study.

-Adapted from the Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement (1995), published by the National Council on Measurement in Education.