

# Standardized Test Administration and Testing Ethics Policy Frequently Asked Questions

<http://www.schools.utah.gov/ARC/TestingEthicsFAQ.doc>

## **Q: Can teachers look at the tests prior to administering them to students?**

Test Booklets: Teachers are permitted to read individual test items **only** in the process of test administration.

TAM (Test Administration Manual): It would be preferable for a group of teachers to sit together with the site coordinator to review the TAM prior to administration of the test. This time may be used to address any questions.

## **Q: What can be posted on classroom walls during test administration?**

Teaching materials (e.g., posters and banners) that are generic in nature, have been used for general instruction throughout the year, and do not provide answers to test questions may be left in place. Teaching materials that provide information that is directly linked to the content of the tests should be covered or removed.

## **Q: Can a LEA or educator ask for a “small group administration,” “extended time,” “change in location,” or other accommodation, for a general education child given extreme circumstances?**

Small group administration of the CRT testing is considered an accommodation and is only for students as determined by the IEP, 504, or ELL Team. However, students may be tested in the same manner in which they receive instruction for all parts of the core. For example, if a class of 25 students splits into smaller groups for instructional activities on all standards and objectives of the ELA core (i.e., reading, writing, spelling, listening) as a regular part of their day for the entire school year, these students may be administered the ELA CRT in the smaller group as they received instruction.

## **Q: What should be done if a student reveals a crisis situation on their answer document, either that they intend to do harm to themselves or others, or that they are in danger themselves?**

State Board Rule [R277-473-8](#) explains how this will be handled:

[R277-473-8. USOE and School Responsibilities for Crisis Indicators in State Assessments.](#)

A. Students participating in state assessments may reveal intentions to harm themselves or others, that the student is at risk of harm from others, or may reveal other indicators that the student is in a crisis situation.

B. The USOE shall notify the school principal, counselor or other school or district personnel who the USOE determines have legitimate educational interests, whenever the USOE determines, in its sole discretion, that a student answer indicates the student may be in a crisis situation.

C. As soon as practicable, the district superintendent, or designee shall be given the name of the individual contacted at the school regarding a student's potential crisis situation.

D. The USOE shall provide the school and district with a copy of the relevant written text.

E. Using their best professional judgment, school personnel contacted by USOE shall notify the student's parent, guardian or law enforcement of the student's expressed intentions as soon as practical under the circumstances.

F. The text provided by USOE shall not be part of the student's record and the school shall destroy any copies of the text once the school or district personnel involved in resolution of the matter determine the text is no longer necessary. The school principal shall provide notice to the USOE of the date the text is destroyed.

G. School personnel who contact a parent, guardian or law enforcement agency in response to the USOE's notification of potential harm shall provide the USOE with the name of the person contacted and the date of the contact within three business days from the date of contact.

**Q: Who is responsible for appropriate testing practices (paraprofessionals, computer lab aids, etc)?**

Any educator involved in the administration of an assessment is responsible for appropriate testing practices. A paraprofessional, who has received the ethics and test administration training, under the direction and supervision of a licensed teacher, may administer the CRT.

**Q: Can teachers have students double-bubble answer documents on Criterion-Referenced tests (CRTs)?**

Raw score reports are provided to districts four days after the district submits student answer documents to the USOE. When districts distribute the raw scores to teachers in a timely manner, it is not necessary to “double-bubble” answer documents. State Board Rule R277-473-7 states that “Consistent with Utah law, raw test results from all CRTs shall be returned to the school before the end of the school year.”

For specific information on the timeline used in your district to return raw scores, or for questions concerning this information, please contact your district assessment director.

**Q: How can test scores be used by teachers?**

Teachers may use test scores as a part of their classroom grading system.

However, a raw score can be misinterpreted. A raw score simply identifies how many questions a student answered correctly on the standards, ILOs or objectives assessed. For example, a 65% on a Criterion-Referenced test (CRT) may be a very good score, even though a 65% may usually represent “D” work in a classroom grading system.

Test scores are a “snapshot”, **not** a thorough diagnostic evaluation. Proficiency levels are determined from year to year as individual test results are scaled, and tests are equated to tests from previous years. Teachers should be cautious and not compare raw scores from one year to the next. A raw score should not be used in direct comparison to any other percentage score.

It is recommended that educators work in groups to decide how CRT data should be appropriately incorporated into grading systems locally.

The process of using data from CRTs in considering a student’s grade should be transparent and equitable.

**Q: What is a scaled score?**

Scaling is simply placing scores on a numerical scale intended to reflect a continuum of achievement or ability (Peterson, Kolen, & Hoover, 1989). Scores are scaled for the majority of standardized tests developed for the State of Utah, including all CRTs (ELA, Math, and Science) and the UBSCT, in a range from 100 – 200 and with the proficiency cut set at 160. Scaled scores offer the advantage of simplifying the reporting of results.

**Q: If there is a discrepancy between CRT scores and other related test scores, is this a sign of cheating?**

Not necessarily. Many factors contribute to student learning and thus high CRT scores for a student who scores significantly lower on other assessment, does not guarantee that the student cheated.

Appropriate test proctoring and creating an environment where students do not feel threatened by test scores are the best ways to prevent student cheating.

**Q: What if a student has a cell phone during testing?**

Students are not allowed to have a cell phone in their possession during testing. Cell phones create both the potential for added distractions due to noise, and the possibility of cheating. Some students may enter test information into

their cell phones, or send test information to others via text messaging from a concealed phone.

Proctors should take reasonable steps to ensure that students do not have cell phones during testing. If a proctor discovers a cell phone, it should be taken from the student during testing and returned to the student either after testing, or through the school/district's regular protocol.

**Q: When can reference sheets be used?**

Reference sheets which are provided for some math and science courses should be used as instructional tools throughout the school year. When students become accustomed to using the reference sheets regularly as an aide in their studies, students are more comfortable using them during a CRT. Students should not however, use reference sheets during testing which have additional information added. For instance, a student can not use a reference sheet which has extra formulas or examples of problems during a CRT.

**Q: What does good test proctoring look like?**

Good test proctoring allows students to be assessed in an appropriate environment. This includes ensuring that information in the test administration manual (TAM) is followed exactly, actively walking around the room, and being aware of student behaviors during testing.

It is appropriate for proctors to be aware of where students are in their test (section and page), and to verify that a student records their response on the answer document line that matches the question's number.

Proctors are an important part of the student's testing experience. During testing, proctors can assist in ensuring that the importance of the test or the good faith efforts of all students is not undermined.

**Q: What information should be given to parents to prepare students for tests?**

Parents are encouraged to help prepare students for testing. This preparation begins with encouraging students to be engaged in learning throughout the school year, and working to help the student master concepts they do not understand.

Immediate preparations for testing should include ensuring students are aware of the testing, are in attendance to complete testing, and that the student receives adequate rest and nutrition prior to testing.