



# **Standard Test Administration and Testing Ethics Policy** for Utah Educators

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## Purpose of Testing

When administered properly, standardized assessments allow students to demonstrate their abilities, knowledge, aptitude, or skills (See Board Rule R277-473-9).

Valid and reliable results from uniform assessments provide information used by:

- **Students**, to see how well they have mastered the skills and curriculum they are expected to know
- **Parents**, to know if their student is gaining the skills and competencies needed to be competitive and successful
- **Teachers**, to gauge their student's understanding and identify areas of improvement in their teaching
- **Schools and districts**, to evaluate programs and provide additional support
- **The Public**, to evaluate schools and districts

As educators, we are obligated to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding fairly and accurately.

Educators involved with the state-wide assessment of students must conduct testing in a fair and ethical manner. (See Utah Code 53A-1-608; Board Rule R277-473-9)

The best test preparation a teacher can provide is good instruction throughout the year that covers the entire curriculum for a course, using varied instructional and assessment activities tailored to individual students.



## Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ's may be viewed on the Utah State Office of Education's Assessment and Accountability website

<http://schools.utah.gov/eval/>

## Additional Resources

Utah State Law – Chapter 53A

<http://le.utah.gov/~code/TITLE53A/53A01.htm>

Utah State Office of Education

<http://schools.utah.gov>

Utah State Board of Education – Rules

<http://www.rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r277/r277.htm>

Utah Professional Practices Advisory Commission  
(UPPAC)

<http://www.schools.utah.gov/uppac/>

Assessment and Accountability

Utah State Office of Education

<http://schools.utah.gov/eval>

Utah State Core Curriculum

<http://www.schools.utah.gov/curr/core>

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>



school regarding a student's potential crisis situation.

- D. The USOE shall provide the school an districts 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 not 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.



## Teaching Practices

**Ethical testing begins with ethical teaching.**

### **Educators should:**

- Ensure that students are enrolled in appropriate courses so that they receive appropriate instruction.
- Provide instruction on the entire curriculum for a course.
- Provide accommodations during instruction to eligible students as identified by an ELL, IEP, or 504 team.
- Introduce students to various test-taking strategies throughout the year.
- Use the reference sheets provided for specific assessments throughout the year as instructional tools.
- Reduce classroom interruptions to maximize student learning.

### **Educators may also:**

- Provide practice tests throughout the year using high-quality, non-secure test questions.



# Testing Practices

## Educators must ensure that:

- An appropriate environment is set for testing to limit distractions.
- The importance of the test or test participation or the good faith efforts of all students is not undermined.
- Personnel who administered tests are trained and are accountable for ethically administering tests.
- All information in the Test Administration Manual (TAM) for each test they administer is reviewed and strictly followed (see 53A-1-605; R277-473-9).
- Accommodations are provided for eligible students, as identified by an ELL, IEP, or 504 team.
- Test materials are secure before, during, and after testing – when not in use, all materials must be locked where students, parents or the public cannot gain access.
- All students who are eligible for testing as tested.
- Appropriate test proctoring occurs – this includes verifying that students are marking answer documents appropriately (e.g, the response in bubbled on the question the student thinks he/she is answering).



either paper or electronic form beyond the time period allowed for test administration.

- E. Individual schools within a school district shall secure or return paper test materials within three working days of the completion of testing.
- F. The USOE shall ensure that all test materials sent to a district are returned as required by USOE, and may periodically audit school districts to confirm that test materials are properly accounted for and secured.
- G. School district employees and school personnel may not copy or in any way reproduce protected test materials without the express permission of the specific test publisher, including the USOE.

## **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 they students is at risk of harm from others, or may reveal other indicators that they 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 it 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



(6) knowingly and intentionally do anything that would inappropriately affect the security, validity, or reliability of standardized test scores of any individual student, class, or school;

F. Violation of any of these rules may subject licensed educators to possible disciplinary action under Rules of Professional Practices and Conduct for Utah Educators, R686-103-6(I).

#### **R277-473-4: Security of Testing Materials**

A. All test questions and answer for all standardized tests required under Sections 53A-1-601 through 53A-1-611, shall be designated protected, consistent with Section 63-2-304(5), until released by the USOE. A Student's individual answer sheet shall be available to parents under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 USC, Sec. 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99).

B. The USOE shall maintain a record of all the protected test materials sent to the school districts.

C. Each school district shall maintain a record of all of the protected test materials sent to the school districts.

D. Each school district shall ensure that all test materials are secured in an area where only authorized personnel have access, or are returned to USOE following testing as required by the USOE. Individual educators shall not retain test materials, in

## **After Testing Is Finished**

**In order to maintain quality control of answer documents, teacher must work in groups to:**

- Ensure that students erasures are complete
- Verify that markings in special codes boxes are correct.
- Account for all answer documents.

**Educators may not change student answers in any way, for any reason.**

Answer documents should be in educator hands as little as possible. This helps to protect the educator from the appearance of impropriety.

## **Test Results**

**Test results should be:**

- Provided to students and parents.
- Made available to educators for use in improving their instruction.
- Maintained in students files.
- Kept confidential.

Remember that test materials must be kept secure.

## Use of Data from Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRTs)

Educators may use the results from CRTs in considering a student's course grade. However, teachers need to understand what the results mean, and what information they provide.

Raw score results (the percent correct) for paper/pencil tests are available to districts four days after student answer documents are submitted to the USOE for scoring, and unofficial raw score results for computer-based tests are available within 48 hours of the test's electronic submission.

Proficiency levels on assessments are determined after all student answer documents have been scored and the results statistically analyzed. Thus, a raw score from one test may not be equivalent to the same raw score from another test.

Educators must be cautious when using raw score results in their grading system. Due to the purpose of CRTs, a student who is proficient on the curriculum for a course may receive an apparently low score. Percent correct is used differently with CRTs than it is used in most classroom grading systems.

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

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



## R277-473-9: Standardized Testing Rules and Professional Development Requirements (Continued)

E. Teachers, administrators, and school personnel shall not:

- (1) provide students directly or indirectly with specific questions, answer, or the subject matter of any specific item in any standardized test prior to test administration;
- (2) copy, print, or make any facsimile of protected testing material prior to test administration without express permission of the specific test publisher, including USOE, and school district administration;
- (3) change, alter, or amend any student answer sheet or any other standardized test materials at any time in such a way as to alter the student's intended response;
- (4) use any prior form of any standardized test (including pilot test materials) in test preparation without express permission of the specific test publisher, including USOE, and school district administration;
- (5) violate any specific test administration procedure or guideline specified in the test administration manual, or violate any state or school district standardized testing policy or procedure;



## Utah State Board Rule

### **R277-473-9: Standardized Testing Rules and Professional Development Requirement**

- A. It is the responsibility of all educators to take all reasonable steps to ensure that standardized tests reflect the ability, knowledge, aptitude, or basic skills of each individual student taking standardized tests.
- B. School districts shall develop policies and procedures consistent with the law and Board rule for standardized test administration, make them available and provide training to all teachers and administrators.
- C. At least twice each school year, school districts shall provide professional development for all teachers, administrators, and standardized tests administrators concerning guidelines and procedures for standardized test administration, including teacher responsibility for test security and proper professional practices, R686-103-6(I).
- D. All teachers and test administrators shall conduct rest preparation, test administration and the return of all protected test materials in strict accordance with the procedures and guidelines specified in test administration manuals, school district rules and policies, Board rules, and state application of federal requirements for funding.



## Unethical Practices

It is unethical for educators to jeopardize the integrity of an assessment or the validity of students responses.

### **In addition to specific practices identified in State Law and State Board Rule, unethical practices include:**

- Providing students with questions from the test to review before taking the test.
- Viewing a test, then changing instruction or reviewing specific concepts because those concepts appear on the test.
- Rewording or clarifying questions, or using inflection or gestures to help students answer.
- Allowing students to use unauthorized resources to find answer, including having materials on walls which provide answers to specific test questions.
- Reclassifying students to alter subgroup reports.
- Allowing parent volunteers to assist with the proctoring of a test their child is taking, or using students to supervise other students taking a test.
- Returning a student's answer document and instructing the student to, or suggesting that they student should, rethink his/her answers.
- Allowing students to take answer documents or test booklets from the rest site (e.g., from room to room, to their home, or to recess).



# Accountability for Practices

Educators are accountable to their district and the Utah State Board of Education for ethical practices. Districts are required to make sure all school testing coordinators, administrators, and teachers administering tests are aware of their role in state-wide assessments, and may include testing ethical practices in educator evaluations. (Note: Test results should not be used in educator evaluation.)

## Ethics Violations

Ethical violations are to be reported to the supervisor of the person who may be investigated, the school administrator, the district testing director, or the state assessment director.

### Protocol

- District policies and procedures will be followed.
- In most cases, an initial investigation will be conducted at the school level.
- The district testing director will review the initial investigation and determine findings.
- If the violation is of sufficient concern, the incident may also be forwarded to the Utah Professional Practices Advisory Commission (UPPAC) for review.
- If inappropriate practices are found, teachers may receive further training or a reprimand, be subject to disciplinary action, be terminated, and/or lose their Utah teaching license (see 53A-1-608; R277-473-9).

For more information about the processes in place concerning the investigation of ethical violations, contact your local school or district testing director.



# Utah State Law

## 53A-1-608

School district employees may not carry on any specific instruction or preparation of students which would be a breach of testing ethics, such as the teaching of specific test question.

- (2) School district employees who administer the test shall follow the standardization procedures in the publisher's test administration manual and any additional specific instruction developed by the State Board of Education.
- (3) The State Board of Education may revoke the certification of an individual who violates this section.

