

*DECATUR COUNTY
SCHOOL SYSTEM*



ASSESSMENT PLAN

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PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

The Decatur County School System’s goal is to provide a comprehensive testing program that will produce the following benefits:

- Students, based on their individual test scores, will know which skills and knowledge they have mastered and how they compare to other students.
- Parents can evaluate whether their children are obtaining the skills and knowledge they need to be successful during and after their school experiences.
- Teachers can determine if students have mastered the skills and knowledge needed to advance to the next level and if not which skills and knowledge are in need of improvement.
- Community members can compare local student performance with performances of students in other locations and determine if schools are making improvements from year to year.

The Decatur County School System will follow all state guidelines, the “Georgia Student Assessment Program Student Assessment Handbook” and all coordinators/examiners manuals developed by the testing publishers as they relate to state-mandated assessments. The tests will be administered fairly and ethically. Test materials shall be secured before, during, and after testing and scoring. Test preparation, test administration, and use of test data shall also be addressed. The system-level “Certificate of Adherence to Test Administration”, “Code of Ethics – Test Security Document”, and all other local and state required test certification documents will be signed by the appropriate school personnel.

CODE OF ETHICS – TESTING

Annually, school system employees will receive a review of the Code of Ethics for Educators during pre-planning. The Code of Ethics for Educators defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as the guide to ethical conduct. Those involved in test administration shall also sign a Code of Ethics form specifically related to Standard 11, prior to any administration of local, state or national assessment.

While the entire Code of Ethics for Educators is critical, the following standard is stressed as it addresses testing specifically:

Standard 11: Testing - An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically.

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

- 1. Committing any act that breaches Test Security; and*
- 2. Compromising the integrity of the assessment.*

The following portion of the Code of Ethics for Educators addresses reporting requirements and disciplinary actions that may apply to the assessment and accountability process for the testing program:

Reporting: Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of legal requirements and local policies and procedures for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the Professional Standards Commission must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, personnel director, superintendent, etc.). The Commission notifies local and state officials of all disciplinary actions. In addition, suspensions and revocations are reported to national officials, including the NASDTEC Clearinghouse.

Disciplinary Action: The Professional Standards Commission is authorized to suspend, revoke, or deny certificates, to issue a reprimand or warning, or to monitor the educator's conduct and performance after an investigation is held and notice and opportunity for a hearing are provided to the certificate holder. Unethical conduct as outlined in the Code of Ethics, Standards 1-11 shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the holder of a certificate:

The Code of Ethics for Educators effective 2015 can be found by pasting the following link into your browser: <http://www.gapsc.com/Rules/Current/Ethics/505-6-.01.pdf>

Annually, each school during scheduled Title I Meetings, provide parents with the procedures they should follow to report suspected unethical testing practices or breaches in security of assessments.

STATE AND NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS COVERED BY THIS PLAN

- ACCESS 2.0 for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs in grades K-12
Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking
- Georgia Milestones Assessment System
 - End of Grade Assessments – Grades 3, 4, 6, 7
English Language Arts, Mathematics
 - End of Grade Assessments – Grades 5, 8
English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies
 - End of Course Tests – Grades 9-12
Algebra, Geometry, Coordinate Algebra, Analytic Geometry, Ninth Grade Literature and Composition, American Literature and Composition, Economics/Business/Free Enterprise, U.S. History, Biology, and Physical Science
- Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA)
 - English/Language Arts and Mathematics in K – 2
 - English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies in grades 3 – 8 and high school
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) – *by selection*
 - Reading and mathematics in grades 4, 8, and 12/Pilots and Special Studies
- PSAT, SAT, ACT, End of Pathways, and AP Exams – grade 9-12

LOCAL ASSESSMENTS COVERED BY THIS PLAN

- Formative Assessments – Grades K-12
 - ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies, Enrichment Courses

TEST SECURITY – SECURITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Security Breaches:

Any action that compromises test security or leads to the invalidation of an individual student’s or a group of students’ test scores will be viewed as inappropriate use or handling of tests and will be treated as such. Any concern regarding test security will be reported immediately to the GADOE Assessment Division.

It is a breach of test security if anyone performs any of the following:

coaches examinees during testing, or alters or interferes with examinees’ responses in any way; gives examinees access to test questions or prompts prior to testing; copies, reproduces, or uses in any manner inconsistent with test security regulations all or any portion of secure test booklets/online testing forms; makes answers available to examinees; reads or reviews test questions before, during (unless specified in the IEP, IAP, or EL/TPC), or after testing; questions students about test content after the test administration; fails to follow security regulations for distribution and return of secure test materials as directed, or fails to account for all secure test materials before, during, and after testing (NOTE: lost test booklets constitute a breach of test security and will result in a referral to PSC); uses or handles secure test booklets and answer documents for any purpose other than examination; fails to follow administration directions for the test; fails to properly secure and safeguard pass codes and usernames necessary for online test administration; participates in, directs, aids, counsels, assists, encourages, or fails to report any of these prohibited acts; erases, marks answers, or alters responses on an answer document.

Failure to safeguard test materials or to comply with test administration procedures could adversely affect an individual’s certification status. This type incident will be immediately reported to the GADOE Assessment Division by the Decatur County System Test Coordinator and may be referred to the Educators Ethics Division of the Professional Standards Commission as failure to adhere to established policies and procedures.

Under no circumstances may any tests be reproduced or duplicated for individual or group use unless authorized by GaDOE. Failure to comply with the U.S. Copyright Laws protecting these materials could result in legal action. Any instance of violation of copyright laws will be reported immediately to the GaDOE.

Security Accountability:

Prior to testing, the Test Security Document titled “Code of Ethics for Educators – Standard 11 Testing” is given to all persons that will have any responsibilities involving state assessments. This includes principals, other administrators, school test coordinators, test administrators and test proctors. Each

individual is to retain the 3-page document for review. The last page with the signature of the person is to be torn off and returned to the Principal/School's Test Coordinator. This page proves receipt of document and also includes the statement "I understand that I am required to read and adhere to its contents".

After state testing is complete, each test administrator is to complete and sign the "Examiner's Certification of Adherence to Prescribed Test Administration Procedures" and each proctor is to complete and sign the "Proctor's Certification of Adherence to Prescribed Test Administration Procedures". Each person involved in testing shall also sign a "No Electronic Device" form, and it will be kept on record with the system/ school test coordinator. Principals will sign the "Principal's Certification" which is kept on file for each testing session.

Prior to state assessments, the System Test Coordinator will train/provide School Test Coordinators with all needed information concerning test security, accountability guidelines and procedures to be followed for each specific assessment. Then the school test coordinators provide training sessions to persons that will serve as test examiners and proctors. This session also stresses test security.

TESTING IRREGULARITIES

All personnel in the Decatur County School System involved with testing will be made aware of the protocol to follow if they become aware of testing irregularities. Security breaches and testing irregularities can have long-reaching impact on students, schools, and school systems, as well as upon any personnel who might be responsible for causing or contributing to any circumstance leading to a testing irregularity. Any signs of any testing irregularity will be dealt with immediately.

Steps for Reporting a Testing Irregularity:

Test Examiner/Proctor/Monitor/Others involved in Testing:

- Notifies the School Test Coordinator immediately if any cheating/security violations/irregularities are suspected.

School Test Coordinator:

- Notify the Principal and System Test Coordinator about a possible testing irregularity.
- System Test Coordinator will provide guidance in investigating the possible testing irregularity.
- Written narrative must be provided by all parties involved in the irregularity.
- The School Test Coordinator will send all documentation to the System Test Coordinator.

System Test Coordinator:

- Immediately contact the GaDOE Assessment Division to determine if the incident should be considered an irregularity and if the test session can/should continue or if student scores must be invalidated (incidences of cheating will result in invalid student scores). If the decision is

made to discontinue the testing process, the System Test Coordinator will follow the guidance of the GA DOE Division with re-scheduling and/or re-testing, if appropriate.

- If the irregularity is revealed following the scheduled testing window, contact the GADOE Assessment Division staff to determine if the scores on the affected tests are valid.
- Collect Testing Irregularity Forms and documentation from School Test Coordinators as soon as possible irregularities are reported.
- Compile documentation for each incident reported.
- Include appropriate information and documentation and submit to the GADOE via portal entry.
- The System Test Coordinator will follow the determination and advice made by the GADOE Assessment Division after their review of reports of irregularities and report any possible unethical conduct to the PSC. (Only the GADOE may invalidate assessments.)
- All irregularities and invalidations will be properly coded on the student answer documents.

Irregularities in Security Procedures Include, But Are Not Limited to, The Following:

- Examinee was given access to test questions or prompts prior to testing.
- Test Examiner or other personnel copied (by machine or in handwriting) or distributed secure test materials.
- Test Examiner or other personnel coached examinee(s) during testing.
- Test Examiner or other personnel altered or interfered with examinee's responses in some way.
- Test Examiner or other personnel made responses available to the examinee.
- Test Examiner or other personnel failed to follow regulations and/or procedures for test security.
- Test Examiner or other personnel used or handled the test materials for a purpose other than test administration (i.e. teacher takes a test home to review; teacher/administrator reads a test booklet after school, etc.)
- Actual or cloned test items were presented to students before, during, or after the test session (except released test items or items in the GOFAR).

Irregularities in Test Administration Include, But Are Not Limited to, The Following:

- Test Examiner or other personnel failed to follow administration directions for the test.
- Test booklets, answer sheets, or portfolio entries (for GAA) became lost.
- The Test Examiner failed to create an appropriate test environment. Teaching aids are displayed in the testing environment (i.e. a bulletin board containing relevant instructional materials) during testing.
- Test Examiner fails to provide an examinee with a documented accommodation or provides examinee with an accommodation that is not documented and therefore is not appropriate.
- Testing session is disrupted for any reason.
- Student is caught cheating (i.e. sharing answers, using electronic devices to copy, send, share answers or test information).

ASSESSMENT PROGRAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The successful implementation of the statewide student assessment program and local secure tests requires a concerted effort by many individuals within the Decatur County School System. The general responsibilities for each individual are described below. More detailed responsibilities for some individuals may be listed on the following pages.

NOTE: The failure of any personnel to assume the responsibilities described herein may result in testing irregularities and/or invalidation of scores which will be reported to the Georgia Department of Education Testing Division. Additionally, failure to assume responsibilities will be reported to the Professional Practices Commission and may affect professional certification status.

SUPERINTENDENT

The Superintendent has ultimate responsibility and accountability for all testing activities within the local school system:

- Develops local policies and procedures based on Georgia Department of Education guidelines and test publisher's directions to maintain test security.
- Appoints the System Test Coordinator.
- Supervises and monitors Principals and System Test Coordinator to ensure that they fulfill their specific roles and responsibilities for the administration of tests.
- Maintains contact with System Test Coordinator to become thoroughly informed of all testing activities.
- Works with the System Test Coordinator as she/he conducts investigations of reported testing irregularities (e.g., student cheating, unethical professional conduct). Reports unethical professional conduct to the Educator Ethics Division of the Professional Standards Commission.
- Monitors testing activities in the Decatur County School System to guarantee compliance with regulations established by the State Board of Education and current legislation.
- Informs Decatur County Board Members, parents, and other citizens about requirements pertaining to statewide testing.
- Ensures that appropriate local personnel attend GaDOE workshops/webinars concerning state assessment programs.
- Reviews and returns certification/verification forms to the Office of Assessment and Accountability at the GaDOE by the due dates. Completes the Superintendent's Certification Form no later than January 31 and July 31 of each year.
- Ensures that Principal's Certification Forms are completed after each test administration and retained as required.
- Approves all special administrations.
- Informs citizens residing within the Decatur County School System's area concerning the collective achievement of enrolled students by school and system.
- Ensures that all personnel involved with testing receive training on appropriate test administration, policies, and procedures including accommodations for each assessment given.

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- Informs the local Board of Education, GaDOE, and Professional Standards Committee of any breach of security by employees of the system.
- Ensures that Decatur County School System Calendars are planned so that all tests are administered according to the state-published testing calendar.

SYSTEM TEST COORDINATOR

The System Test Coordinator has ultimate responsibility and accountability for coordinating all test administration activities within the school system.

- Serves as liaison between the system and the GaDOE for all test administration activities.
- Assumes responsibility for carrying out the approved plan for administration of all tests.
- Furnishes all information and submits all forms required by the GaDOE by specified dates.
- Ensures principals complete the Principal's Certification Form for each administration and maintains these forms for five years.
- Orders special format tests (Braille, large print, advanced reading aids).
- Receives test materials from GaDOE at a designated time and place and maintains them in a secure location.
- Reviews and follows all procedures in all administration manuals and is familiar with administrators' roles and proctors' roles.
- Adheres to test dates, time schedules, and specified instructions set by the GADOE.
- Works with School Test Coordinators to ensure that each test setting (room) is suitable, has an assigned examiner, and has the appropriate number of proctors.
- Accounts for all test materials delivered to the Decatur County School System and for the disposition of specific materials.
- Attends statewide testing program meetings/webinars.
- Arranges schedule for staff to monitor schools during testing sessions.
- Trains all System Administrators and School Coordinators involved in test administration.
- Ensures that principals and School Test Coordinators are aware of and follow the protocols/procedures prescribed in the Student Assessment Handbook, testing manuals, and other ancillary materials.
- Answers questions of all School Test Coordinators and Principals and makes decisions regarding testing, when appropriate.
- Ensures that School Test Coordinators account for all students in terms of testing requirements.
- Ensures strict test security and reports to the Superintendent concerning testing irregularities (e.g., student cheating, unethical professional conduct).
- Communicates to the Assessment Administration Division when testing irregularities occur.
- Distributes test results to the Superintendent and to the schools in a timely manner and ensures that students are informed of the expected date for the return of the test results.
- Interprets test results to school personnel, public and appropriate others.
- Ensures that local calendars are planned so that all tests are administered according to the state-published testing calendar that provides testing dates for the current and future academic years.

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- Ensures that students, parents, and the general public have access to information concerning all test administrations and utilization of test results.
- Works with system personnel to communicate to parents of students with IEPs, IAPs, and ELL/TPC plans pertinent information regarding all statewide tests.

SYSTEM TECHNOLOGY COORDINATOR

- Acquires and maintains current information on the statewide testing program, including technology requirements for testing programs, training manuals, and testing schedules.
- Coordinates with the System Test Coordinator for the appropriate implementation of computer based test administrations.
- Attends or views GaDOE assessment technology trainings and webinars.
- Works with the System Test Coordinator to ensure that all schools have technology ready for online testing.
- Performs readiness checks for the system and local testing devices.
- Coordinates with schools so local software is installed and ready for use with each testing administration.
- Coordinates with schools so that test content is available on servers and student responses can properly send to the testing vendor.
- Verifies that district network security including firewalls and content filters are configured to work with the testing vendor to allow for test content and student responses to pass through the district network.
- Verifies that wired and wireless bandwidth is appropriate for testing as defined in the system requirements documentation and training sessions.
- Monitors district resources during test administrations for quality assurance.
- Troubleshoots technology issues as they arise prior to and during test administrations.
- Completes all post-testing tasks as stated in technology manuals, handbooks, and guides.

SYSTEM SPECIAL EDUCATION COORDINATOR

The System Special Education Coordinator shares in the responsibility and accountability for overseeing the state-wide testing program for Students with Disabilities.

- Acquires and maintains current information on the statewide testing program, including the section for Students with Disabilities, which is found in the Assessing Special Populations section of the Student Assessment Handbook and the Accommodations Manual.
- Acquires and maintains current information of IDEA, state rules, and waiver process for students with disabilities.
- Ensures that all due process rights pertaining to the testing programs are provided for students with disabilities.
- Ensures that IEP teams understand the appropriate selection of approved accommodations and the selection of the Georgia Alternate Assessment for state-mandated tests.
- Ensures that appropriate documentation is maintained for all students with disabilities.
- Informs System Test Coordinator of the number of special format tests (i.e., Braille, Kurzweil, or large print) needed to test students with disabilities for all test administrations.

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- Informs the System Test Coordinator of the number of students who must receive each accommodation allowed by state regulations.
- Makes special education personnel aware of the following activities that should be completed in preparation for all state-mandated assessments. a) Discusses the state-required tests with the students and parents/guardians. b) Informs IEP students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) of pertinent test information and the role of the IEP team in identifying test accommodations, if any, which the student may require in order to participate. c) Discusses with the student and parents/guardians the consequences of the student not passing a state-mandated assessment. Such a discussion should include the state rule and relevant local policy. *Special Education Personnel should note occurrence of this discussion.*
- Acquires and maintains current information about the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA), along with the system test coordinator.
- Ensures that all GAA requirements are met, trains appropriate personnel for GAA administration, along with the system test coordinator. Reports any irregularities to the System Testing Coordinator.
- Ensures that the following activities are completed by special education personnel for those students who participate in the GAA: a) Discusses the GAA with students and parents/guardians. b) Informs parents and students of participation in the GAA and the requirements for graduation and diploma eligibility.
- Ensures the transfer of GAA portfolios when students withdraw from or enrolls in the school system.
- Collaborates with Title III/ESOL / System Test Coordinator to train the appropriate teachers to administer the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.

SYSTEM TITLE III/ESOL COORDINATOR

- Ensures that all assessments and, in certain cases, conferences relating to a student's ESOL eligibility (Rule 160-4-5-.02) are documented prior to assigning EL or EL-M status.
- Acquires and maintains current information on the statewide testing program, including the section on accommodations for EL or EL-M students which is found in the Accommodations section of the Student Assessment Handbook.
- Acquires and maintains current information of state rules and the deferment/ accommodation process for EL or EL-M students.
- Provides technical assistance to teachers on test administration.
- Ensures that appropriate documentation is maintained for all EL or EL-M students.
- Ensures that EL or EL-M students have appropriate test-taking experience or have been taught test-taking skills prior to taking the tests. EL-M students should not be administered the ACCESS.
- Informs the System Test Coordinator of the number of students who must receive each accommodation allowed by state regulations.
- Ensures that the following activities are completed by EL/ESOL personnel in preparation for all state-mandated assessments: a) Discusses the state-required tests with the students and parents/guardians. b) Informs EL or EL-M students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) of pertinent test information and the role of the EL/TPC in identifying test accommodations, if any, which the student

may require in order to participate. c) Discusses with the student and parents/guardians the consequences of the student not passing a state-mandated assessment. Such a discussion should include the state rule and relevant local policy. *ESOL teachers should document the occurrence of this discussion.*

- Informs System Test Coordinator of the names of EL students receiving deferments. This list should specify which tests or subtests are subject to deferment.
- Trains Title III/ESOL teachers to administer ACCESS for ELLs and collaborates with special education colleagues to train the appropriate teachers to administer the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.

SYSTEM 504 COORDINATOR

- Acquires and maintains current information on the statewide testing program, including the section for Students with 504s, which is found in the Assessing Special Populations section of the Student Assessment Handbook and the Accommodations Manual.
- Acquires and maintains current information of state rules and waiver process for students with a 504 and/or EEOP.
- Ensures that all due process rights pertaining to the testing programs are provided for students with 504/EEOP.
- Ensures that 504 teams understand the appropriate selection of approved accommodations for state-mandated tests.
- Ensures that appropriate documentation is maintained for all students with 504/EEOP.
- Informs the System Test Coordinator of the number of students who must receive each accommodation allowed by state regulations.
- Informs System Test Coordinator of the number of special format tests (i.e., Braille, Kurzweil, or large print) needed to test students with 504/EEOP for all test administrations.
- Makes 504 contacts/teachers aware of the following activities that should be completed in preparation for all state-mandated assessments. a) Discusses the state-required tests with the students and parents/guardians. b) Informs 504 students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) of pertinent test information and the role of the 504 team in identifying test accommodations, if any, which the student may require in order to participate. c) Discusses with the student and parents/guardians the consequences of the student not passing a state-mandated assessment. Such a discussion should include the state rule and relevant local policy. *504/EEOP team should note occurrence of this discussion.*

PRINCIPAL

The Principal has ultimate responsibility and accountability for all testing activities within the local school.

- Ensures test security within the school building.
- Ensures distribution of test materials occurs immediately prior to test administration.
- Supervises all testing activities.
- Ensures that all school personnel have been appropriately trained on test administration, procedures, and policies, including accommodations for each assessment given.

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- Ensures that accommodations have been given to only those students who appropriately need accommodations and have documentation of such need.
- Implements system's testing policies and procedures and establishes needed local school policies and procedures to ensure all students are tested fairly and appropriately.
- Reports immediately any breach of security to the Superintendent and System Test Coordinator.
- Completes the Principal's Certification Form following each test administration.
- Ensures proper environment for test administration.
- Ensures that all testing sites are appropriately prepared: adequate student workspace, proper lighting, good ventilation, sufficient number of desks in good repair, instructional materials (e.g., posters, word walls, etc.) removed or covered, etc.
- Ensures that the test accommodations identified in all student IEPs, IAPs, and EL/TPC plans are provided for each student as specified.
- Ensures that testing sites are free of interruptions during test administration (e.g., intercom messages, visitors, wandering students).
- Designates a School Test Coordinator to coordinate the testing program. The School Test Coordinator must hold a PSC-issued certificate.
- Assist in the assignment of personnel to serve as Examiners and Proctors.
- Arranges appropriate schedules for teachers who will be Proctors and Examiners and for those who will be teaching other students not involved in testing.
- Informs students and parents/guardians about the purpose of testing, dates and times for testing, and expected dates for return of test results (see Test Preparation section).
- Creates an atmosphere in which all staff members know that their cooperation is needed and expected for successful test administration.
- Advises School Test Coordinator, Examiners, and Proctors if emergency situations arise.
- Monitors the administration of tests.
- Supervises all testing activities to ensure strict test security.
- Maintains test materials in a secure location, with restricted access.
- Ensures that only staff members who have been trained on the proper management of secure test materials handle such materials.
- Works with the School Test Coordinator in the notification to the System Test Coordinator of testing irregularities and assists in providing an explanation of circumstances.
- Ensures that the school calendar is planned so that all tests are administered according to the system's testing calendar.
- Monitors test preparation activities to ensure that secure testing materials are not misused.
- Verifies all special education teachers have been trained to administer the GAA.
- Verifies all ESOL teachers have been trained to administer the ACCESS.
- Verifies all kindergarten teachers have been trained to administer the GKIDS.
- Validates the content and procedures of students' portfolios by signing the GAA validation form.
- Reviews, completes and returns the Principal's Certification Form to the System Test Coordinator after each administration.

SCHOOL TEST COORDINATOR

- Receives test materials from System Test Coordinator and verifies numbers received.
- Determines the number of test materials to be assigned to each testing site and accounts for material distribution and return.
- Determines and helps in the preparation of all testing sites.
- Assists Principal in assigning Examiner(s).
- Assigns Proctors appropriately in accordance with state guidelines.
- Accounts for the security of all test materials during the time the materials are in the building. Ensures all materials are stored in a secure, locked location with restricted access and confirms access is restricted by accounting for keys.
- Ensures that only staff members who have been trained on the proper management of secure test materials handle such materials.
- Conducts orientation and training sessions for all Examiners and Proctors.
- Adheres to system testing schedule.
- Distributes test materials to and collects from each Examiner on the testing days. Counts materials returned from Examiners each day and accounts for all materials distributed each day of testing.
- Ensures Examiners sign out materials each testing day shortly before testing begins each day.
- Ensures Examiners return (sign and date) materials immediately after testing each day.
- Maintains records of test materials with security codes that are assigned to each student.
- Ensures that a minimum of one certified administrator is present and witnesses the transcription of student responses when/where necessary (e.g. such as when a student has the accommodation of marking answers in the test booklet). Documentation of this process must be retained.
- Provides each Examiner with a list of student FTE and GTID numbers when appropriate.
- Accounts for all students in terms of testing requirements.
- Notifies Principal and System Test Coordinator of any emergency situation and helps to decide what action needs to be taken.
- Conducts, coordinates, and supervises inspection of all completed answer documents and online testing materials before delivering them to the System Test Coordinator for the following purposes only: to ensure that student demographic/identification information is accurate, that necessary coding/labeling is complete, and that documents are in good condition for scanning.
- Packages and returns materials to System Test Coordinator according to directions and time line.
- Notifies Principal and System Test Coordinator of any testing irregularities, investigates the incident and provides written documents/explanations of occurrence.
- Ensures that students have only one opportunity to test during each window.
- Ensures that for any students not currently enrolled in their local school, the following protocol is applied: a) contacts students' schools for verification of test eligibility, b) requires photo ID and maintains photocopy record, c) The decision to test out-of-system students is a local one and circumstances will be considered in making the decision. The burden of identification, establishment of eligibility, and record-keeping ensuring score reports are returned to the appropriate school must be borne by the administering school/system.

EXAMINER (TEST ADMINISTRATOR)

- Participates in training.
- Reviews and follows all procedures in handling all administration materials.
- Counts materials prior to testing and after testing to verify accuracy.
- Ensures the security of test materials while they are in the testing site before, during, and after testing.
- Follows procedures for testing as given in the Examiner's Manual, including reading all directions to students.
- Maintains control of testing situation and keeps students on task. Examiners should actively circulate and monitor students throughout the testing session(s).
- Confirms that all assigned students have entered and bubbled in the test form number correctly if one is required.
- Allows no student to leave the test room unless there is an emergency.
- Counts and verifies all testing materials each day prior to dismissing students.
- With direct administrator supervision, at the conclusion of testing, inspects answer documents for the following purposes only: to ensure that student demographic/identification information is accurate, that necessary coding/labeling is complete, and that documents are in good condition for scanning.
- Returns all test materials to School Test Coordinators immediately after testing each day, including special format tests, such as Braille or large print.
- Documents the daily receipt (date, number received) of test materials and the daily return of test materials.
- Ensures that no content-related instructional materials are displayed in the testing site. Charts, diagrams, and posters should not be visible. Chalkboards should be free of any writing except for test procedure information.
- Does not allow electronic devices in the testing site.

Certified educators (teachers, counselors, administrators) will administer all assessments. Educators without Georgia certification from the Professional Standards Commission may not administer state assessments.

PROCTOR

- Participates in training.
- Assumes responsibility for assigned students.
- Monitors a specific area if a large testing site is used.
- With Examiner supervision, assists in preparing test materials for distribution to students in a classroom on days of testing.
- Ensures that work spaces are clear of everything except test materials.
- With examiner supervision, assists in distributing and collecting classroom test materials.
- With examiner supervision, answers questions regarding test procedures but does not explain items or answer any questions regarding the content of the test.

- Remains in testing site during entire testing time.
- With Examiner supervision, observes students during test to monitor that they are: (a) marking answers completely and correctly; (b) choosing only one answer per item; (c) marking answers which have the same number as the corresponding item number in the booklet; (d) using only specified test materials; (e) not using calculators unless permitted on specific subtests; and (f) using appropriate materials such as correct test forms and answer documents.
- Reports inappropriate student actions to examiner immediately (e.g., suspicion of cheating).
- Reports any unusual circumstances to Examiner immediately.
- Circulates among students during testing to discourage misconduct and to be available to answer student questions.
- Avoids standing by a student's work space too long or touching a student, as this may be distracting.
- Monitors students with disabilities, 504 students, or EL students who may require closer observation than other students or who need special assistance.
- With examiner supervision, assists in accounting for all classroom test materials. (Test materials should be returned to the School Test Coordinator by the Examiner).
- Assists the Examiner in maintaining strict test security.

TEST STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION

Upon the arrival of any test booklets, answer documents, online testing materials, Examiner's Manuals, School Test Coordinator's Manuals, and System Test Coordinator's Manuals, the System Test Coordinator will store all testing materials in a secure central location. The school system will implement an accounting system for each test administration. The Superintendent and System Test Coordinator are responsible for test security.

The School Test Coordinator and School Principal, in cooperation with the System Test Coordinator, are responsible for test material storage and security once the tests materials are distributed to schools. Test materials will be distributed to schools by grade and for the number of students. The System Test Coordinator will distribute test materials to the School Test Coordinator as close to the beginning of each testing window as possible but still allowing an appropriate amount of time for test organization at the school level before testing is to begin. During this period, examiner and proctor orientations and workshops will be conducted at the school level by the School Test Coordinator. Whenever tests or administration materials are not in use, they will be stored in a secure locked location with restricted access. No student, teacher, or other school personnel will have access to test materials or questions prior to testing. Test materials will be returned to the System Test Coordinator as soon as possible, but no later than three days after the end of the testing window. The System Test Coordinator will implement an accounting system between the central location and the school, and then back to the central location. The System Test Coordinator will ensure that only appropriate personnel will have access to testing materials. The procedures/guidelines outlined in each assessment's System Test Coordinator's Manual will be followed for disposing of and securing materials specific to each program.

TESTING MATERIALS ACCOUNTABILITY

Specific information related to the collection of tests is found in system-level and school-level administration materials that are distributed along with the testing materials. For security purposes, all Examiner's Manuals, test booklets, answer documents, online test tickets, and scratch paper (if allowed) must be returned to the School Test Coordinator, then to the System Test Coordinator immediately after tests have been administered. The Examiner, School Test Coordinator and System Test Coordinator must account for all materials.

- The School Test Coordinator must count all materials before disseminating to examiners.
- Examiners must verify the count upon receipt of testing material and sign school test security check-out form.
- At the end of each testing session each day, the examiner must account for all materials before dismissing students.
- The School Test Coordinator must count all materials as teachers check in the materials at the end of testing session each day of testing.
- Schools must maintain lists that indicate the name of the Examiner who tested each student and/or class of students. Similar lists should be maintained that identifies Proctors.
- The System Test Coordinator will maintain a list of all secured test booklets and other testing materials distributed to each School Test Coordinator. This will be done on the Security Checklists and packing list provided by the GaDOE or testing publisher. If no security checklists are provided, the lists will be kept on locally developed forms.
- Each School Test Coordinator will maintain a list of all secured test booklets and other testing materials distributed to each test examiner and each student. This will be done on the Security Checklists and packing list provided by the GaDOE or testing publisher. If no security checklists are provided, the lists will be kept on locally developed forms. The School Test Coordinator will provide a copy of these lists to the System Test Coordinator.

SCHEDULING OF TESTS

All state mandated tests will be scheduled and shipped for scoring in accordance with published GaDOE testing dates. The following procedures will be followed:

- All schools will adhere to the testing times prescribed in the Coordinator's/Examiner's Manuals.
- Breaks may be taken if allowed in the Coordinator's/Examiner's Manuals. Students will be monitored during all allowed/scheduled breaks.
- Testing schedules will be developed based on the optimum time for the students involved.

PREPARATION FOR TESTING

- The System Test Coordinator will train/provide School Test Coordinators with all needed information concerning test security, accountability guidelines and procedures to be followed for each specific assessment.

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- Prior to the beginning of testing, the School Test Coordinator will train all personnel involved in the test administration (examiners and proctors) in test security, accountability guidelines and procedures to be followed. This training will include all staff members who are involved in the handling of secure test materials.
- The School Test Coordinator will only assign Georgia certified educators (this includes teachers, counselors, administrators, and media specialists) as Test Examiners.
- Paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, and volunteers may serve as proctors only after being trained in the specific test administration, but should not handle test materials or manage testing logistics.
- Parents, other relatives, and guardians who may be paraprofessionals or community volunteers should not proctor the class or grade level in which their child or a relative is a member.
- A sufficient number of proctors will be assigned to assist with test administration and monitor test security. All testing sites will be required to have a minimum of one proctor except under special circumstances (one-to-one/small group make-up testing or when accessing students with IEP's, TPC's or 504 Plans). NOTE: The GaDOE requires that a proctor must be assigned to each examiner testing more than 30 students but locally it is required that a proctor must be assigned to each testing location except for the exceptions listed previously.
- The School Test Coordinator and Principal will determine all testing sites. Seating arrangements will ensure that each student has adequate workspace with sufficient space between students to discourage copying and to permit them to handle materials comfortably. For online assessments, measures will be taken so that students may not see adjacent computer screens to avoid incidences of cheating. Testing sites must be free from interruption (intercoms, maintenance repairs, etc.) Testing rooms should not be located near noisy areas, such as band rooms or play areas.
- The School Test Coordinator, with the assistance of the Examiners, should check necessary supplies and materials that must be available for testing. These include a sufficient number of test booklets, answer documents, practice materials (if provided), instructions, pencils, pens for writing assessments, scratch paper (if appropriate), a clock or stopwatch for each examiner for all timed tests, and extra calculators (as needed and allowed) for each testing site.
- Prior to testing, School Test Coordinators should make a plan to provide activities for students who complete their testing early (read library books, etc.).
- A "Testing – Please Be Quiet" sign or one similar should be posted outside of each testing site.
- A "No Electronic Device" sign or one similar should be posted inside each of testing site.
- Examiners should take care of the restroom needs of their students prior to beginning testing.
- Examiners should write starting and ending times of testing sections on the bulletin board/white board to assist students in pacing themselves during testing. Examiners should also write any necessary identifying information on the chalkboard/white board prior to beginning the testing session.
- Examiners should train students in how to manage the test booklets and answer documents and/or online testing platforms efficiently.
- Students should be directed not to use the answer document as scratch paper or for doodling.

- Examiners should organize and monitor available test-taking time. Students should try to pace themselves during testing by working quickly while maintaining accuracy. They should be aware of the time allocated for the test, as well as the number of items on the test, but should avoid clock watching. Examiners should encourage students to review and check answers, if time allows.
- Examiners should encourage students to read all questions and answer choices. Examiners should instruct students to be certain they have read all choices before selecting an answer.

MONITORING OF TESTING SITES

- Designated Central Office staff (including the System Test Coordinator), the Principal, Assistant Principal(s) and School Test Coordinator will monitor all testing sessions.
- School principals and school test coordinators are instructed to monitor the testing environment in their school before, during and after the test following the PSC guidelines and procedures set forth in the system, school, and state assessment handbook/plans.
- During Georgia Milestones EOG testing window, the system test coordinator and other Central Office staff visit every school to monitor the test administration and to check for adherence to system guidelines concerning the testing protocol. The System Test Coordinator develops a schedule that assigns one of these system-level persons to each school each day of testing.
- During Georgia Milestones EOC testing window, the system test coordinator works closely with Bainbridge High School, NBLC and PLC building test coordinators to monitor test administration.
- All testing security and monitoring procedures are followed during local formative checkpoints and Student Learning Objective administration windows.
- School principals are repeatedly reminded of their ultimate responsibility and accountability for all testing activities within their school.

CHECKING OF ANSWER DOCUMENTS/ONLINE TESTING MATERIALS

Immediately after testing has been completed, appropriate personnel should perform the following tasks under the supervision of the local school/system test coordinator:

- Check to make certain there are no answer documents left in the test booklets or that all online test tickets are returned.
- Check all coding of identifying information and form numbers, where applicable.
- Make certain that all information on the answer documents is correct and recorded in the proper manner. All errors in bubbling student identification information must be corrected.
- Make certain that nothing has been written on the answer documents except in areas designated for recording information.
- The School Test Coordinator should then verify that all test booklets, answer documents, and/or online student profiles are coded correctly, including the special administration section and accommodations used. It is also the School Test Coordinators responsibility to complete all required school forms including numbers of students tested and package the materials for return to the System Test Coordinator.

- The System Test Coordinator will then check for coding errors and numbers and return all testing answer sheets/documents according to the statewide testing calendar and following the Testing Publishers guidelines for packing and shipping. The System Test Coordinator will also be responsible for ensuring that testing materials that must be destroyed are shredded properly.

DEALING WITH EMERGENCY/UNEXPECTED SITUATIONS

In any unexpected situation, educators must first act to assure the safety of all children and adults, and to protect property from damage. Beyond that, and to the greatest extent practicable, the integrity of the test being administered is to be maintained. In order to report reliable and valid test scores, the testing situation must remain as secure as possible. Below are some examples of situations where unexpected interruptions of the testing session could occur. If handled appropriately, testing can be resumed without compromising the integrity of the test.

Unplanned fire drill/bomb threats – Student safety is the priority. Tests should be kept secure (lock door when students have evacuated the room). Students should not take the test outside and should not be permitted to talk during the drill. Examiners should note the time of the evacuation so that the correct amount of remaining testing time allowed can be given to the students.

Student becomes ill during the test – Each situation must be considered independently. Remove the student from the testing environment as quickly as possible so that the other students are not disrupted. If cleaning up in the room is necessary, please relocate other students, allowing them the remaining time to complete the test. If relocation is not possible, remove students from the room, securing all testing materials and writing down the time. Students should be kept in a location where they cannot discuss the test until the room has been restored. Testing should be resumed as soon as it is feasible, allowing students the remaining time allowed for testing. NOTE: If a student does not complete a section due to illness, that section may not be finished the following day or during makeup.

CELL PHONE/ELECTRONIC DEVICE USE DURING GEORGIA STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS

Students are not permitted to use or bring into the testing environment any electronic device that could allow students access to information (e.g., cell phone, PDA, electronic recording or playback device, etc.). **An announcement must be made prior to testing that such devices are not allowed in the testing environment and that possession or improper use of such devices during testing may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the system's student code of conduct.** Devices such as those mentioned above that are brought into the testing environment must not remain in the student's possession during testing. Each school must have a plan to collect and secure such devices so that they are not accessible during testing that is included in the school testing plan. In the event a student brings such a device into the testing environment but does not have the device out during testing, the examiner and/or proctor must collect the device if they become aware of its presence and should allow the student to continue testing. Such items brought into the testing environment will be collected and

secured by the examiners prior to testing and returned only after students have turned in all testing materials.

In the event an examiner **confirms** during testing that student is using a device to access, retain, or share information, the examiner must with minimal disruption: collect the device, stop testing that student, remove the student from the testing session, and notify the School Test Coordinator immediately.

In the event such actions are **suspected**, but not yet confirmed, the examiner must with minimal disruption: collect the device, allow the student to complete testing, notify the School Test Coordinator immediately, and as soon as it is appropriate attempt to confirm whether or not the device has been used in violation of the guidelines above.

Simple possession of a device (including the ringing of a phone during test administration) may be addressed in keeping with the system's code of conduct and does not require an irregularity report to the GADOE.

If it is confirmed that the student did use, or intended to use, the device to access information and/or to photograph, post, retain, share, or transmit information/images from any portion of a secure test booklet, answer document, and/or online image, the test for that student will be invalidated. The School Test Coordinator must notify the System Test Coordinator and an irregularity report must be made to GADOE.

Each electronic device incident will vary and will be handled on an individual basis. For additional guidance on electronic devices, refer to the GADOE Student Assessment Handbook. Examiners and proctors must refrain from having phone conversations, sending emails, sending texts, posting to social media, etc. during test administrations to students during the time they possess secure materials. This does not apply to a need that a staff member may have to use such a device in the event of an emergency/urgent situation.

Staff members are required to sign a "No Cell Phone or Electronic Device" form prior to the administration of a specific test administration.

ASSESSING SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Federal and state laws require that all students participate in the state-mandated assessment program, including students with disabilities and English Learners (EL). The Decatur County School System will follow all guidelines set forth in the "Georgia Student Assessment Program Student Assessment Handbook" and additional guidance outlined in each tests' administration manuals in the inclusion and assessment of students with disabilities (including Section 504) and EL students.

All IEPs, EEOPs and TPCs for these students will include a statement of participation and accommodations needed for the administration of state and local assessments. This will include

students who are eligible to participate in the alternate assessment (GAA) designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in a regular assessment even when accommodations are provided.

The decisions concerning the impact on Graduation Requirements will be discussed with the students and parents/guardians. The IEP should document a discussion with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and student about the requirements for the various diploma types and the recommendation of the type of diploma toward which the student will be working. The parent(s)/guardian(s), and the student, if appropriate, should also be informed that the decision regarding participation in statewide assessments will be reviewed during subsequent IEP team meetings.

Local School System Responsibilities for Local Assessments

When the Decatur County School System requires the administration of assessments that are not part of the state assessment program, local procedures will be developed and the assessment will also include students with disabilities including appropriate accommodations or provide an alternate assessment. Students with disabilities will not be excluded if an assessment is administered to all students in a particular grade, class, or school.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

The Decatur County School System will follow all guidelines in the use of accommodations for students with disabilities (including Section 504) and English Learners as set forth in the “Georgia Student Assessment Program Student Assessment Handbook” and tests administration manuals. The tables and information provided in the State Student Assessment Handbook will be used as guidelines and procedures for determining allowable accommodations and to ensure accurate coding of answer documents and/or online student profiles.

The Decatur County School System also follows the additional information and guidance on the appropriate use of accommodations for students with disabilities that is provided in the publication entitled, “Accommodation Manual: A Guide to Selecting, Administering, and Evaluating the Use of Test Administration Accommodations for Students with Disabilities”, posted on the GADOE website.

Accommodations are usually broken down into the following categories:

Setting Accommodations: adjust the place in which the testing normally occurs

Scheduling Accommodations: adjust the time allowance or scheduling of a test

Presentation Accommodations: adjust the presentation of test material and/or test directions

Response Accommodations: adjust the manner in which students respond to or answer test questions

MAKE-UP TESTING

All make-up testing for each State Assessment will be scheduled according to the dates set by the GADOE and appropriate Testing Publishers. Make-up tests are intended for students who are

unavoidably and unexpectedly absent on the regularly scheduled testing day. Make-up tests are not intended to accommodate students whose activities conflict with regular state testing dates. School-sponsored activities that would require students to be away from school (e.g., field trips) must be scheduled so that they do not occur within the state-mandated testing windows.

If a student is absent through the entire scheduled testing dates (both regular and make-up), he/she must wait until the next scheduled administration. If an administration is required for graduation or promotion, and if there are extenuating circumstances, a special administration may be requested through the Assessment Administration Division of the GaDOE by the System Test Coordinator.

HOMEBOUND/HOSPITALIZED STUDENTS

The goal of the Decatur County School System is to provide homebound students requiring state assessments an administration of the test that, as closely as possible, approximates the administration that is being conducted at the student's home school.

If the student will be tested at home or in the hospital, the examiner should administer the test at the same time (if possible) and must use the same administration procedures being used in the school. The examiner must be a certified teacher who has been trained to administer the test.

For test security, examiners must check out assessment materials from the School/System Test Coordinators, administer the test on the designated date, and return materials to the School/System Coordinator at the conclusion of testing each day. Test materials cannot be checked out overnight. To do so, is considered a breach of test security. Test administration manuals and all related materials must be returned to the School/System Test Coordinator immediately following the assessment.

OPTING OUT OF STATE ASSESSMENTS

Parents will be informed of state and local policies surrounding testing as well as the general uses of assessment data to inform instructional practice as well as the potential unintended consequences of their decision. Ultimately, should a parent decide that the student should not test; the school is not obligated to provide an alternate assessment, and does not have the authority to waive the student assessment requirement.

Per SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.11, the following sections apply when students do not test in a *state-designated* promotion/retention grade:

(3)(c) 6. 'A student's failure to take the state-adopted assessment in grades 3, 5, and 8 in reading and/or mathematics on any of the designated testing date(s) or an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided for by the State Board of Education and the local board of education shall result in the student being

retained. The option of the parent or guardian or teacher(s) to appeal the decision to retain the student shall follow the procedure set forth in this rule.'

(3)(c) 8. 'The decision of the placement committee may be appealed only as provided for by the local board of education.'

Per SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.13, the following sections apply to courses associated with the End of Course (EOC) measures:

(2)(d). 'The Georgia Milestones EOC shall be used as the final exam in the courses assessed by a Georgia Milestones EOC. Georgia Milestones EOC reports shall provide students, parents, and educators with individual scores on each EOC taken; student scores must be recorded on, in, or with the individual student report card.

(2)(e). 'For students who entered ninth grade for the first time before July 1, 2011, the numeric score on the Georgia Milestones EOC shall count for 15% of the student's final numeric grade in the course assessed by the Georgia Milestones EOC.

(2)(f). 'For students who entered ninth grade for the first time after July 1, 2011, the numeric score on the Georgia Milestones EOC shall count for 20% of the student's final numeric grade in the course assessed by the Georgia Milestones EOC.

Failure to complete the EOC assessment will result in the grade of zero being entered in the final exam score and could also result in non-awarding of credit for dual enrollment classes where the EOC is required.

STUDENTS IN HOME STUDY

Students served in home schools are governed by the provisions of Georgia law: O.C.G.A. 20-2-690. Georgia State law does not require public school systems to provide testing services for home schools. The Decatur County School System does not administer state assessments to students in home study.

RECORDING/TRANSFERRING STUDENT TEST SCORES

It is the responsibility of the Decatur County School System to ensure that test scores become a part of students' records as soon as possible after testing, and that such records follow students as they move to new schools.

TRANSFERRING RECORDS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, 504 STUDENTS AND EL STUDENTS

If a student's record including his/her IEP, EEOP, or EL/TPC Plan is unavailable, the System Test Coordinator, the System Special Education Director, or ESOL Coordinator in the student's previous

school system, or the Principal of the former school must be contacted to verify placement, testing accommodations, and requirements specified in the IEP, EEOP, or EL/TPC Plan prior to testing any student with special needs.

DISSEMINATION OF TEST SCORES

The Decatur County School System will annually inform the citizens residing within its area about the achievement of all enrolled students by school and system. The information/data will be given to the local newspaper for publication and shared at district and school level parent/community meetings. The system test scores will be posted annually on the System's Balanced Scorecard located on the system website. Each school's test scores will be posted on the school's Balanced Scorecard located on each schools' website. The Balanced Scorecard will also be shared at district and individual school stakeholder meetings.

RETENTION OF THE FILES OF TEST RESULTS

The document Retention Schedule for Local Government Records defines test files and specifies the retention schedule for school test score reports and will be followed by the Decatur County School System. To access the link, please copy and paste it into your Internet browser address line:

http://sos.georgia.gov/archives/pdf/state_spec_reports/LGScheduleNov2009.pdf

This information implies that any criterion-referenced reports containing summary data for schools or systems are retained ten years. Reports such as class lists, achievement rosters, diagnostic summaries, etc., fall into the four-year category. Reports that extend beyond the retention dates should be destroyed. Individual student reports may be destroyed if there are records of scores in the student's permanent record (e.g., labels).

STUDENT REMEDIATION FILES

These documents relate to assistance, instruction, and remediation provided to students who fail to pass state required assessments. All test records will be retained by the schools within the Decatur County School System for as long as the data may be needed to support the student's educational program (such as GaDOE's Waiver & Variance Policy), or as required elsewhere in Georgia Board of Education rules or state law.

TEST PREPARATION OF STUDENTS

Preparation of Students - Practicing Test-Taking Skills vs. Teaching the Test-

Practice on questions or problems, which are developed from curriculum standards, are acceptable and desirable; provided such activities are a part of a varied program of instructional strategies. Teacher-made test items and items from the Georgia Online Formative Assessment System that have structural similarity to statewide test items can also be used to assess the results of classroom instruction.

However, when the majority of the instruction consists of repeated administrations of multiple forms of items similar to those on statewide tests, then instruction becomes coaching, and such coaching obscures students' needs and achievement. Overuse of such items is improper and damaging to students' best interests.

The statewide tests do not measure all skills and objectives across the curriculum. Therefore, teaching only to the tests limits the kind of instruction that is desirable and necessary for an adequate instructional program. Classroom instruction should go well beyond the skills measured on a particular test.

Inappropriate Use of Test Materials

The activities listed below reflect unethical professional conduct and may result in official action taken against the offending staff person. The local Superintendent, the local board of education, and/or the Educator Ethics Division of the Professional Standards Commission may take such action.

Unacceptable activities that violate appropriate test preparation include the following:

- Secure test items or prompts must not be taught to students.
- This restriction includes any manner of teaching test items during the school day and/or through homework assignments. Unauthorized access to specific test items ranges from teachers remembering a single test item to school personnel manually or mechanically copying actual test items.
- A test item from any form of the statewide tests in which only a word, phrase, or distracter has been changed must not be used with (or given to) students. The use of any form or item, which is similar to actual test items on the statewide tests, is a violation of appropriate test preparation procedure.
- Tests must not be copied or distributed. All statewide mandated tests given in Georgia are secure. Test items, student responses, and/or answer documents that are copied (by hand or by photocopying) or distributed violate test security and render the results of the test invalid.
- Test forms from the statewide testing program that have not been released must not be used as practice materials or to gain insight into characteristics and content of the tests. At no time, should any individual be in possession of such materials.

Recommended Test Preparation

Although specific test items must not be taught, students should be acquainted with the format of standardized tests so they will feel comfortable when taking them. Teachers should use activities throughout the school year to prepare students for testing and to establish a relaxed atmosphere. These activities should be a part of the instruction and may include the following:

Practice test-taking strategies:

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- Incorporate timed activities and wise use of time. Throughout the school year, teachers will want to require students to finish certain assignments and tests within a specified period of time.
- Design practice classroom tests to parallel standardized test formats.
- Teachers will want to expose students to multiple-choice tests and also familiarize them with a variety of writing assignments.
- Practice online assessment skills including practicing with tools that are utilized during the online testing administration.
- Teachers should use items from GOFAR to create practice tests.
- Use answer documents format. Marking answer documents appropriately is an important test-taking skill.
- Practice following directions. One of the causes of low-test scores is the failure to follow directions. For this reason, students need to practice following directions. When taking a test, students should read the directions and/or listen as the test administrator reads the directions. Teachers should emphasize to students that if they hear directions that are unclear, they should ask for clarification immediately.

COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Students and parent(s)/guardian(s) should be notified of test dates and times well in advance. Students and parent(s)/guardian(s) should also know the purpose of the test, how the results will be used, and how the tests are relevant to them personally. Students should not feel undue anxiety about taking a standardized test but they should be aware of the need to perform to the best of their ability. Students should understand that it is important for teachers to know how much their students know and how well they can use what they have learned in school.

Students and parents are encouraged to visit the Assessment and Student Growth tab on the Decatur County School System website for additional information and resources. They may also contact Chip Davis, Director of System Assessment at 229-240-2039.