



Decatur County Schools

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CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS – STANDARD 11: TESTING

The Professional Standards Commission adopted an updated Code of Ethics for Educators effective 2009. The Code of Ethics for Educators defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as the guide to ethical conduct.

While the entire Code of Ethics for Educators is critical, the following standard 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.***

Reporting: Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators to the Professional Standards Commission.

Testing Irregularities

It is the responsibility of all personnel in the local school system to follow protocol as they become aware of testing irregularities. Examples of testing irregularities include, but are not limited to, missing test booklets; copying of (by machine or in handwriting) or verbal communication about test content; failure to create an appropriate test environment (e.g., relevant teaching aids visible by students during the test session); test administrators/proctors assisting students with answers during the test session; actual or cloned test items presented to students before, during, or after the test session (except released test items or items in the OAS); testing session disruption for any reason; student cheating (i.e. sharing answers, using electronic devices to copy, send, share answers or test information).

Any signs of any testing irregularity must be dealt with immediately. The Examiner should contact the School Test Coordinator if any cheating or security violations are suspected. The School Test Coordinator, in turn, will notify the System Test Coordinator. The System Test Coordinator will then contact the GaDOE Assessment Administration Division Assessment Specialist to determine 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 Assessment Administration Division staff will assist system personnel with re-scheduling and/or re-testing, if appropriate. The Assessment Administration Division of the GaDOE will review all reports of irregularities and may advise the local system as to whether a report of possible unethical conduct should be made to the Professional Standards Commission.

Code of Ethics Guidelines for Student Assessment

The chart below provides guidance for Assessment Ethics violations by educators. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited, to the items listed on the chart below.

Before the Test Session – It is Inappropriate and Unethical to:
Reveal all or any part of copyrighted tests (i.e. test questions and prompts) to students or others, in any manner, oral or written, prior to test administration unless directed by the DOE.
Use test items and prompts prior to test administration for instructional purposes.
Fail to provide or attend required training prior to test administration.
Fail to ensure that students are given the correct form and grade level of the assessment.
Discourage students from putting forth optimal effort based on purpose of the test.
Review or provide answers to test questions.
Possess unauthorized copy(ies) of state tests.
Reclassify students solely for the purpose of avoiding state testing.
Encourage student absenteeism in order to avoid testing.
During the Test Session – It is Inappropriate and Unethical to:
Vary from the directions outlined in the administration manual (i.e. time, reading verbatim, etc.)
Fail to follow the order and schedule of testing sections as directed in the manual.
Read any parts of the test to students except where indicated in the directions (unless specified in an IEP, IAP, or ELL/TPC).
Fail to provide state approved accommodations as prescribed in a student’s IEP, IAP, or ELL/TPC plan OR provide accommodations that are not included in the IEP, IAP, or ELL/TPC plan.
Interpret, explain, or paraphrase the test items.
Define or pronounce words used in the test.
Coach (comments or gestures of any kind) students during the test, including remarks about quality or quantity of student work.
Provide answers to test questions.
Reveal all or any part of copyrighted tests to students or others, in any manner, oral or written, during test administration.
Use test items and prompts during test administration for instructional purposes.
Fail to provide an appropriate testing environment (e.g. instructional materials not removed/covered).
Fail to provide or ensure that proper tools are used during testing (i.e. #2 pencils, scratch paper, type of calculators (if written in IEP, IAP, ELL/ TPC), etc.
After the Test Session– It is Inappropriate and Unethical to:
Erase/change student answers, mark answers, or alter responses on answer documents.
Make inaccurate reports, unsubstantiated claims, inappropriate interpretations, or otherwise false and misleading statements about assessment.
Discuss test items/answers or question students about test content after the test administration. .
At Any Time During Test Administration, It is Inappropriate and Unethical to:
Not account for all secure test materials as provided by the School Test Coordinator at any time before, during, or after test administration. NOTE: Lost test booklets constitute a breach of test security and will result in an automatic referral to PSC.
Read or review test questions before, during (unless specified in IEP, IAP, or ELL/TPC) or after testing.
Use or handle secure test materials for any purpose other than test administration (i.e. test examiner/proctor reads a test booklet during testing (only if allowed in IEP, IAP,ELL/TPC) or after school, teacher/administrator takes a test home to review, etc.).
Compromise the integrity of the assessment.
Fail to accurately complete student information and/or necessary coding on test answer documents.
Participate in, direct, aid, counsel, assist, encourage, or fail to report any of these prohibited acts.

** “Test session” means any time during the test administration process. This could include training sessions, test sessions over multiple days of the same test, or the time following test administration when materials are still in the school buildings/systems. In the event of a violation of the Code of Ethics for Testing, the PSC may, in accordance with its rules, impose any one or more of the following: Reprimand, Suspension, or Revocation of Certificate.

TEST SECURITY INFORMATION FOR PRINCIPALS/TEST COORDINATORS/TEST ADMINISTRATORS/PROCTORS

This section on security includes information that applies to everyone involved in test administration. This information is intended to help teachers understand the procedures that test coordinators use to inform them of their responsibilities. The need to be very careful regarding test security is critical. Principals and test coordinators should be certain that they are aware of their responsibilities and have made everyone who assists them with test administration aware of his/her responsibilities. Staff members who are not involved in testing should also be aware of the school's responsibility for test security. Paraprofessionals, custodial staff, and others in the school who may be in classes during testing or may be in the area where tests are stored, even though they do not have direct access to tests, should be aware of security rules.

Situations may arise which call for unplanned reactions. New questions may arise about what can and what cannot be done in relationship to testing issues. Therefore, test coordinators may have to make decisions on what actions should result. Attempting to analyze each situation by asking the following questions may help to decide the proper action to take:

- Could this possibly give one student an improper or unfair advantage over others?
- Could this possibly give one teacher's class an improper or unfair advantage over others?
- Could this possibly give a student or teacher advance knowledge of the test?
- Could this possibly be considered as teaching a child a small amount of information that is known to be on the test, or is very likely to be on the test, rather than teaching skills and the entire curriculum for the subject area to be tested?
- Could this possibly be considered unethical or a violation of board rule, professional teaching practices, the provisions in the GaDOE *Student Assessment Handbook*, or the instructions in the Examiner's Manual?

If the answer to any of the above was yes, then the action would be improper and should not be taken. This does not mean that teachers should not prepare students for standardized tests. They could have a daily review of skills or concepts that are to be tested. They should also be taught appropriate test-taking skills. Teachers should contact the School Test Coordinator for any questions about testing issues. If an answer is not readily available; one will be obtained from the GaDOE by the System Test Coordinator.

Following is a list for consideration prior to testing. The list should not be considered all-inclusive.

Must Do:

- Contact the School Test Coordinator if any question arises about tests or test security. The school principal must also be made aware of any issues involving testing or test security.
- Keep all testing materials stored in a secure place accessible only by the principal and the test coordinator. The GaDOE recommends that tests be stored in a locked cabinet in a locked room. If an adequate number of locked cabinets are not available then test materials are to be stored in a locked room to which only the principal and test coordinator have access. Restricted access should be confirmed prior to receipt of test materials.
- Be certain that everyone involved in the testing process has been properly trained and informed of responsibilities in the area of test security. Provide sign-in sheets and rosters as well as training agendas. Attendance at training must be mandatory and well-documented. Untrained examiners must not be allowed to test.
- Be certain that all materials issued to persons administering tests are counted carefully when given out and when returned. Keep a daily log of checkout times and return times.
- Distribute testing materials as close to the actual testing time as possible.
- Be certain that materials are issued only to persons who have been carefully advised of their responsibilities for test security.
- Follow instructions in the test manual exactly. Not doing so can invalidate test scores.
- Be certain that the test coordinator, principal, or principal's designee is present when demographic data (name, student number, etc.) is entered on test booklets if this is done in advance. This should be done in a central and well supervised location.
- Take down or cover any content materials displayed in the classroom if the item could provide assistance to students during the test.
- Teachers should collect and turn in to the School Test Coordinator any scratch paper used. The School Test Coordinator will then turn in the scratch paper to the System Test Coordinator. Scratch paper may only be used for a test if the test directions allow it.
- Teachers should notify the School Test Coordinator of any problems that occur during testing. School Test Coordinators should immediately notify the principal in writing of any problems and then notify the System Test Coordinator. If necessary, the System Test Coordinator will notify the GaDOE.
- Make certain that everyone involved in testing in any manner is aware of professional practices and the consequences of violations.

Must Not Do:

- Allow anyone to see test forms for any state-mandated test before they are administered.
- Copy tests/test materials or make notes about test content (during or after test administration) or allow anyone else to do so.
- Keep tests or testing materials at the end of the testing session or the assessment window.
- Give students the answer, or any clues to the answer, to any test item.
- Use any information about actual test items, regardless of how it is obtained, to help students prepare for the test. Such information may not be shared with anyone for any purpose. This does not include appropriate sample test items or practice materials.
- During instruction, teach a particular problem or bit of information because it is known to be on the test. (This does not mean that skills and concepts, which are listed in the objectives or on test profiles, should not be emphasized—they should be.)
- Add anything to, or delete anything from, the directions in the test manual. This violates standardized test conditions and may invalidate scores. Directions may be clarified.
- Discuss test items or actual test content with anyone at any time. This does not prohibit discussions about test objectives, test profiles, test results, or test preparation.
- Select/distribute test materials/writing prompts, etc. in a manner designed to provide a student/group of students with an advantage over others.
- Alter or interfere with a student's responses.
- Remove secure test materials from their secure storage location for reasons other than preparation of materials for testing, actual test administration or completion of tasks prescribed by test administration manuals and/or the *Student Assessment Handbook*.

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I have received a copy of the three-page testing document which includes the following:

- Code of Ethics for Educators – Standard 11: Testing*
- Code of Ethics Guidelines for Student Assessment*
- Test Security Information for Principals/Test Coordinators/Test Administrators /Proctors*

I understand that I am required to read and adhere to its contents.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____
Printed Name

Signature: _____ **School:** _____