

South Dakota Testing Security Checklist:

Maintaining the security and integrity of the South Dakota student assessment program plays a crucial role in the effort to ensure valid test scores and to promote fairness at all levels. As the stakes associated with student performance rise and the complexity of the assessment program increases, test administration personnel face a more difficult challenge in managing the testing program.

Test security is important to:

- make valid inferences on student and school performances as required by state and federal law;
- maintain the integrity:
 - 1) of the assessment results;
 - 2) of the testing environment;
 - 3) of the assessment instrument;
- give accurate measures of students' knowledge and skills;
- protect the significant financial investment necessary to develop the South Dakota Student Assessment System; and
- maintain the opportunity for fairness among all districts.

The information herein is organized from the perspective of issues a coordinator might encounter before, during, and after a test administration and is meant to provide guidance. **This document is not intended to replace any procedures or instructions contained in the TCH.** It is provided to testing personnel in hopes of encouraging successful and incident-free test administrations.

Things to Consider BEFORE a Test Administration:

Planning plays a key role in ensuring a successful testing program. Listed below are some of the things coordinators should consider when planning for a test administration. Sound planning plays a key role in ensuring the proper handling and complete return of all secure materials. Because testing materials are stored in a secure site for much of the time they are in the district, it is essential that a building coordinator(s) also plans accordingly. It will be important for district testing coordinators to verify that the buildings have sufficient measures in place and are implementing these procedures for tracking secure materials.

Plan Ahead:

Storing test materials:

All secure test materials must be kept in a **secure storage** location when not in use.

___ Have you identified the authorized personnel who will have access to the secure storage?

___ Do you have a procedure establishing for checking secure materials in and out to test administrators each day?

___ Do you have enough room to sort all the materials you will receive for each administration?

___ Do you have a plan in place for keeping each administration organized and separate? (Do not mix administrations when you return materials. Materials returned in boxes labeled incorrectly take longer to process.)

___ Are your buildings prepared to receive their materials? Do they have adequate secure storage space and room to inventory and sort materials?

___ Have arrangements been made to ensure that secure materials will not be accidentally discarded by custodial personnel?

Transporting secure materials to and from buildings

The ultimate responsibility of accounting for test materials falls upon the district testing coordinator; however, the building coordinator(s) plays an integral role in supporting this task. Using some type of tracking process or procedures can greatly assist in your ability to locate all secure materials in your possession throughout the testing window.

- Have you established a secure method for transferring materials to the individual buildings?
- Are the individuals transporting the materials authorized to handle secure materials?
- Have you established sign-off procedures to identify who is responsible for materials when they are not in your possession?
- Have you established sign-off procedures to identify who is responsible for materials when they are not in your possession?
- Have arrangements been made to ensure that secure materials will not be accidentally discarded by custodial personnel?
- Does the building coordinator(s) have procedure in place to ensure the proper packing and return of materials to the district coordinator?
- Does a building coordinator(s) have procedures for verifying that all answer documents are properly submitted for processing after testing?
- Do you have a process for ensuring that overage is accounted for after the administration?

Ensuring that building coordinator(s) have procedures in place to track secure materials in their building(s).

Because a building coordinator(s) plays such a crucial role in the handling of secure materials, it is important that they have similar procedures in place for tracking secure materials.

- Do all buildings have procedures established for checking secure materials in and out to test administrators each day?
- Does a building coordinator(s) know that they should verify and account for all test booklets each day?
- Does a building coordinator (s) have procedures for properly packing and returning material to the district coordinator after testing is completed?
- Do you have a process for ensuring that overage is accounted for after the administration?

Training:

Training is one of the most effective and crucial activities in which a district testing coordinator can invest time and resources. Make certain that adequate time is allocated for these sessions so that all major topics are addressed. Preparing for and conducting as many training sessions as possible will be one of the district coordinator's best ways to avoid problems.

Develop a training plan

District coordinator's should schedule as many training sessions as needed and train as many individuals as required.

- Have you attended state coordinator training?
- Have you signed your security agreement/affidavit?
- Have you reviewed the training guidelines and familiarized yourself with the current **TCH**?
- Have you reviewed the calendar of events early enough to allow enough time to adequately train your building coordinator(s)?
- Have you given your building coordinator(s) ample notice of training dates?
- Have you made facility arrangements to hold training sessions?

___ Have you put together any training materials or guidelines that your building coordinator(s) will use for their test administrator training?

□ Ensure that all pertinent topics are covered during your building coordinator(s) training.

As previously stated, training is a key component of a successful testing program. It is necessary to ensure that adequate time is allocated for training sessions to ensure that all major topics are addressed. Important reminders to provide your building coordinator(s) about what to do

BEFORE each test administration include the following:

___ Read and be familiar with the Testing Coordinators Handbook (TCH) and Directions for Administering (DFA).

___ Be knowledgeable of the secure materials topics that pertain to the proper procedures for storing, distributing, and tracking secure items.

___ Make arrangements to properly store secure test materials.

___ Sign a security agreement/affidavit.

___ Verify immediately that all materials have been received when shipments arrives and ensure that your building has sufficient quantities of materials. (i.e., count the materials).

___ Notify the district coordinator IMMEDIATELY of any shortages.

___ Review SSID sheets and appropriate answer documents.

___ Make sure you designate test administrators and monitors.

___ Schedule training sessions with your teachers, verify attendance. Remind test administrators/teachers that they must administer the tests with the appropriate manual and **READ THE TESTING SCRIPT VERBATIM.**

___ The following topics should be reviewed during your teacher training sessions:

*responsibilities of teacher/examiners;

*test security, including the Test Security Affidavit for teachers/examiners;

*testing schedule;

*preparation of appropriate assessment location;

*informing and preparing students for the assessment;

*providing accommodations for students;

*make sure coding on demographic information for students answer documents is correct or that pre-ID labels are correct;

*monitoring students during the administration of test;

*use of classroom proctor/interpreters (if necessary);

*preparing and returning assessment materials each day;

___ Confirm that you have updated information regarding the testing requirements and accommodations for students receiving special education and Section 504 services.

___ Arrange for make-up testing, if pertinent.

___ Arrange testing rooms and organize test sessions.

___ Walk through each testing room prior to testing and verify that no visible aids are present and that the environment is conducive for testing.

___ Supervise the verification of pre-coded materials and answer documents.

___ Supervise the hand-gridding of scorable test booklets and/or blank answer documents.

___ Confirm that all eligible students have been accounted for and have been assigned the correct test.

Important reminders to provide your building coordinator(s) about what to do **DURING** every test administration include the following:

___ Verify and account for all materials before and after testing each day.

- ___ Actively monitor testing (i.e., visit each testing area)
- ___ Be aware of any appearance of impropriety (i.e., make sure coordinators and test administrators know how to avoid situations that might lead to questions or accusations of viewing, discussing, or scoring test materials).
- ___ Ensure that students are being administered the appropriate tests and have the corresponding answer documents.
- ___ Ensure that students have marked their responses on their answer documents before they leave the testing room.

Important reminders to provide your building coordinator(s) about what to do **AFTER** every test administration include the following:

- ___ Direct the collection of materials from the test administrators (i.e. teachers).
- ___ Account for every answer document for every student that is tested.
- ___ Account for every test booklet and secure manual (this includes any overage or transferred materials).
- ___ Verify that the correct code is marked on each answer document.
- ___ Verify that all hand-gridding and transcribing has been done appropriately.
- ___ Double check the secure storage area for materials (especially overage or unused materials).
- ___ Follow procedures for properly boxing and labeling materials for return to district testing coordinator.

Accounting for Secure Materials

The ultimate responsibility of accounting for test materials falls upon the district testing coordinator; however, your building coordinator(s) plays an integral role in supporting this task. Using some type of tracking process can greatly assist in your ability to locate all secure materials in your possession throughout a test administration. Proper and thorough training of all authorized personnel in the receipt, handling, tracking, and return of test materials is likely to be the best defense against the loss or late return of these items.

A 10% test material overage is assigned to the district. Any additional materials that are required at a building must be tracked to that building.

Below are some tips that can help district coordinator's account for all materials:

- Prepare for the receipt of testing materials.**
 - ___ Verify the contents of the *Dakota STEP* assessment materials shipment against the quantities indicated on the packing slip, and determine if there are sufficient assessment materials for each test administrator and student. (If additional materials are needed, it is important to compile a list for all of your building and submit a single order prior to test administration.)
 - ___ Have you prepared an area to store secure and non-secure materials? (It is very important that you do not mix administrations when you return materials, so it is advised that you have a plan for keeping administrations organized in the area(s) you have identified for storage.)
 - ___ Have you identified all personnel who will be authorized to have access to materials?
- For most administrations, you will receive secure and non-secure materials.
 - ___ Have you verified the shipment of test materials? (For all shipments, be sure to check that all boxes are accounted for by verifying the testing program and the sequence of numbers displayed on the boxes, e.g., Box 35 of 55.)
 - ___ Have you verified the contents of the non-secure test materials?

- ___ Have you verified the contents of the secure test materials?
- ___ Have you forwarded building materials to the appropriate buildings? **DO NOT DELAY** in forwarding them to the buildings.
- ___ Have you verified that all buildings have inventoried their shipments?
- ___ Have you verified that the overage material will cover the shortages?
- ___ Have you verified the tracking of overages and transferred test booklets by documenting the security numbers and the destination of the materials?

Monitoring and Oversight

- Verify that the buildings are following procedures for secure materials handling.**
 - ___ Have you checked to see if your building coordinator(s) is verifying that all booklets are being returned and are accounted for each day?
- Make yourself available to answer questions and resolve issues.**
 - ___ Have you set up a line of communication for buildings to contact you or district testing staff?
 - ___ Have you given building coordinator(s) instructions on how to contact you?
 - ___ Have you arranged for continual coverage for answering calls throughout the testing window?

Accounting for Secure Materials

District testing coordinators are responsible for the accounting and returning all the district’s secure materials. These materials must be returned in accordance with the procedures and timelines outlined in the **TCH**. Reinforcing the use of proper procedures and guidelines to all personnel in the handling, tracking, and return of test materials is likely to be the best defense against the loss or late return of these items.

Below are some tips that can help district coordinator’s in managing the effort of accounting for all materials:

- Monitor buildings and oversee the proper accounting for secure materials.**
 - ___ Are you verifying that the building are counting all test booklets?
 - ___ Are buildings reconciling all secure materials to the original packing list?
 - ___ Have the buildings checked their secure storage areas for overage and unused secure materials?
 - ___ Have buildings verified that all personnel have signed security oaths?
 - ___ Are the buildings using the correct packing procedures?
 - ___ Have you verified the shipment from each building?
 - ___ Have you verified each sequence of numbers on the building’s boxes?



Handling Testing Disruptions

Disruptions in testing generally involve serious situations that can usually be resolved when properly handled. Having a plan in place to address unforeseen events can contribute to a successful resolution and can help to ensure that there is minimal impact

on students. The district testing coordinator should contact the SDDOE's Assessment Director as soon as possible to discuss the situation when something unforeseen occurs. To prepare for any unexpected disruptions, the district should consider the following questions:

- ___ Are all buildings aware of what to do if a disruption takes place during testing?
- ___ Have testing personnel been instructed as to whom they should contact if a problem arises?
- ___ Does each district have a plan in place for securing test materials and maintaining confidentiality in the event of a disruption during testing? (Remember that the safety of students and staff is the first consideration.)

When you phone the SDDOE's Assessment Director for guidance in handling a disruption, you may be asked some of the following questions to help assess the situation:



What happened? What was the nature of the disruption?



Did testing resume that same day?



If testing did not resume the same day, what efforts were made to maintain test security and integrity?

Common Testing Irregularities and How to Avoid Them

The situations described below represent some of the more common mistakes that occur before, during, and after testing. Examples of each type of irregularity along with ways to avoid making such mistakes are provided.

Procedural Errors

Examples:



An unauthorized individual (e.g., a student) was permitted to handle secure test material.



A test administrator failed to issue the correct manipulative (i.e., rulers, #2 pencils, calculators), or students were incorrectly allowed to use manipulative.



A student was administered a test outside the testing window.



Testing personnel failed to use the Directions for Administering.



Testing personnel administered tests or handled secure materials even though they had not been properly trained.

-  A test administrator failed to read test administration scripts verbatim as outlined in the Directions for Administering.
-  Photocopying or keeping a personal copy of the test
-  Providing test **accommodations** for students with disabilities that is not included in the student's IEP.
-  Allowing students to go back to previous sections in the test booklet to check their work

How to avoid:

-  Have you notified your building coordinator(s) and test administrators which personnel are authorized and delegated to transport secure test materials?
-  Have you verified with test administrators which supplemental materials are allowed for each subject and for each test?
-  Have you properly trained sufficient staff in test administration procedures?
-  Have you verified that all test administrators have the appropriate manuals?

Monitoring Errors

Examples:

-  A test administrator left a room unmonitored when secure materials or testers were present.
-  Students or secure material were left unmonitored during a break.
-  A student was allowed to use a prohibited calculator.
-  A student placed or received a cell phone call or text message during a test administration.

Special Note:

Students are NOT permitted to have cell phones turned on during testing. Districts are required to develop and implement procedures preventing the use of cell phones during test administrations.

How to avoid:

-  Have you clarified that test administrators are not to leave students or materials unattended?

___  Have you clarified with your test administrators which supplemental materials are allowed for each subject such as calculators, rulers, etc?

___  Have you verified that all forms of visual aids have been removed from the testing rooms?

Improper Accounting for Secure Materials

Examples:

 A student's completed answer document was lost or misplaced.

 A test administrator, building coordinator(s), or district testing coordinator lost secure materials.

 A test administrator, building coordinator(s), or district testing coordinator failed to return secure material in the designated timeframe.

How to avoid:

___  Have you verified that all test booklets and answer documents are accounted for?

___  Have you checked all test booklets to make sure no answer sheets were left there accidentally?

___  Have you bundled test materials from the same test administration and not mixed them with any other test?

___  Have you properly labeled, identified, and tracked for your records which boxes contain what materials should any boxes be lost in transit?

Incidents Resulting in a Referral to SDDOE

Examples:

 Testing personnel made a copy of secure materials.

 Testing personnel directly or indirectly assisted students with responses to test questions.

 Testing personnel tampered with student responses.

 Failing to administer the test during the testing window.

 Leaving students unsupervised with access to secure test materials.

 Providing accommodations to students who are not eligible to receive them.

How to avoid:

___  Have you stressed that test content should not be copied?

___  Have you stressed that test administrators cannot assist students with responses to test questions?

___  Have you stressed that test administrators cannot leave students or test unsupervised.