

TEST SECURITY PROCEDURES 2021-2022



***JHONE M. EBERT
SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION***

OFFICE OF ASSESSMENT, DATA AND ACCOUNTABILITY MANAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

This manual, in accordance with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 390.250 through 390.430, inclusive, is designed for district test directors, school principals, and school test coordinators. Test security procedures must be understood and adhered to by all district and school personnel involved in test administration or the handling of materials related to state assessments. Unless otherwise stated, test security procedures apply to all state-mandated test administrations, including actual (live) as well as field and pilot tests.

Strict adherence to procedures protects the integrity of the State assessment program, and ensures consistency in test administration, security of test materials, and the validity of scores. Failure to adhere to the procedures outlined herein may result in state-administered corrective action, including, but not limited to, invalid scores and/or licensure sanctions.

All inquiries regarding test security must be directed to the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) test security coordinator **through the district test director**.

ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS

Student Participation

Nevada's system for assessing students consists of different tests administered to students enrolled in public schools, including charter schools, in specific grades and programs. All students enrolled in public schools, including charter schools, at a grade level where a mandated test is administered statewide, are expected to participate. For information regarding testing special-needs students, district test directors may download and distribute the 2021-2022 Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guide (UAAG—available to district test directors at Bighorn > Assessment Resources).

District Test Security Plans

The board of trustees of each school district shall adopt and enforce a plan setting forth procedures to ensure the security of all state- and district-mandated tests (NRS 390.275). This plan must apply to all public schools in the district, including district-sponsored charter schools. By September 1 of each year, districts must submit plans to the State Board of Education and the Legislative Committee on Education.

The district plan must be consistent with the procedures outlined in this document and must include the following criteria:

- Procedures by which students and other individuals may report irregularities in test security and administration

- The manner in which the school officials will contact the school district board of trustees regarding reports of testing irregularities and how the board will, in turn, notify the NDE (includes the board identifying the district test director or other district official to act as its designee for reporting purposes)
- Procedures necessary to ensure security of test materials and consistency of test administration
- Procedures that each school will use to verify the identity and eligibility of students testing
- Procedures for online test administration
- Procedures that set forth actions that must be taken in response to a reported irregularity in test administration or test security, including actions that must be taken during an investigation of the irregularity and identifying the individuals responsible for the actions in each category

On or before September 30 of each year, the board of trustees of each school district and the governing body of each charter school shall provide a written notice regarding the examinations to the following individuals (NRS 390.275):

- All teachers and education personnel employed by the school district or governing body
- All employed personnel who are involved in test administration
- Students who are required to take the examinations
- The parents or legal guardians of these students

The written notice must be prepared in a format that is easily understood and must include a description of the following procedures:

- The district test security plan
- Potential consequences for violations of the plan or for other testing irregularities

School Test Security Plans

Each school participating in state assessments will produce a school test security plan that will be kept on file at the school site and the district office for three consecutive school years. The school plan must be consistent with the procedures outlined in the state and district plans and must include, but is not limited to, the following provisions:

- The manner in which test materials will be stored, distributed, collected, and returned
- The names and titles of the individuals responsible for carrying out the procedures
- Procedures to ensure compliance with testing accommodation plans

- Procedures for online test administration
- Procedures regarding students who require additional time for testing, students who become ill during testing, responding to technology malfunctions, and evacuation protocol.

District and/or NDE assessment personnel may conduct unannounced on-site observations or audits to verify implementation of school test security plans.

Testing Locations and Prescribed Dates

The NDE prescribes the specific date or range of dates on or during which examinations will be administered (calendar available to district test directors at Bighorn > Assessment Resources). Each test must be given in a public facility approved by the board of trustees or the governing body. Charter schools using on-line coursework as the primary mode of instruction must provide a centralized location for students to appear in person to take the scheduled state-mandated examinations.

Assurances from Principals

The school principal must be familiar with the prescribed procedures for the physical security of all test materials and proper test administration. Although the principal may assign test scheduling and training responsibilities to a school test coordinator, the principal is ultimately responsible for all testing activities, and must agree in writing to comply with test security and administration procedures; investigations conducted by the state and/or district; and the requirement to provide annual test security training and refresher training.

The **district test director** will obtain the principals' written assurances and submit them collectively to the NDE as follows:

- Download a form entitled Authorization to Administer Tests (template available to district test directors at Bighorn > Assessment Resources) and distribute the form to principals.
- Collect the completed forms.
- Submit **electronic** copies to the NDE Assessment Administrative Assistant on or before September 15 (NAC 389.054). If a new principal joins the school after the original submission, the school **must submit a replacement form** with an updated signature.

Training Requirements

The NDE provides a required annual program of education and training (NRS 390.300) to district test directors and school test coordinators. **District test directors must certify that all school test coordinators and appropriate district personnel**

have participated in the NDE's program of training. The NDE may request proof of training as part of an investigative process.

The board of trustees of a school district or the governing body of a charter school may establish an expanded program of education and training if the expanded program complies with the program established by the NDE.

The principal of each school is responsible for providing complete training **annually** in test security and test administration for **all** school personnel who will be involved with the testing process.

Primary responsibility for test administration must only be given to **licensed Nevada educators**. (EXCEPTION: Provided it is not a violation of the **district** test security plan, qualified paraprofessionals who have certified on the WIDA website for the appropriate assessments may administer the Speaking (all grades) and Kindergarten portions of WIDA. Administration must occur under the direct supervision of assigned, licensed personnel who are trained in 2021-2022 test security and administration procedures.)

Only individuals who have received test security and administration training for the current school year are permitted to administer or proctor an examination. Training must address the following practices:

- Instructions in proper handling of test materials, including test tickets
- Instructions in proper test administration
- Security procedures as outlined in this document
- Additional security procedures as outlined in the district test security plan
- Information regarding protection of school district personnel regarding the disclosure of testing irregularities (See Protection of School District Personnel in the Appendix.)
- The potential consequences for failure to comply with the state and district test security plans

Each individual participating in the administration of state examinations will acknowledge in writing or electronically that they have participated in the annual and/or refresher training (see BEFORE TESTING) and that they have been informed of and understands procedures, and the potential consequences for nonadherence. A list of definitions and responsibilities for school personnel involved in test administration is included in the Appendix.

Training records/acknowledgements containing dates and signatures of all participants must be retained for three consecutive school years.

SECURITY OF TEST MATERIALS

- Any materials containing student-identifying information, responses, or test content must be stored securely and must not be accessible to anyone other than the principal or school test coordinator (or other designated individuals who require access). Under no circumstances may student-identifying information printed on the tickets be distributed via email or any other non-secure method.
- The secure storage may not be used for other materials to which unauthorized individuals have access. A sign-in/sign-out sheet including dates and times must be kept to track the movement and custody of materials.
- Secure testing materials, including test tickets, must remain in secure storage until the prescribed date for test administration, and must be handled securely during and after testing (i.e., under the supervision of or in the custody of a licensed Nevada educator).
- For paper/pencil test materials:
 - School test coordinators must follow the directions in the Test Coordinator's Manual regarding the receipt and return of materials and the reporting of discrepancies.

BEFORE TESTING

- The school principal must ensure that all personnel who will be participating in assessment-related activities receive a refresher training prior to the beginning of the school's testing window.
- School test coordinators are responsible for scheduling test sessions, assigning test administrators and proctors, and creating student seating charts. At least one test administrator and a sufficient number of proctors must be provided for each testing room to supervise testing adequately. A ratio of one test administrator to not more than 30 students is strongly recommended.
- Embedded testing accommodations and designated supports must be selected for the appropriate students in the online testing system prior to test administration. Non-embedded accommodation and designated support information must also be provided to test administrators.
- Instructional materials or any other materials that provide specific factual information or that might assist students in responding to test questions must be removed or covered with blank, opaque material.

- “TESTING—DO NOT DISTURB” signs should be placed on testing room doors and in halls and entrances, rerouting hallway traffic in order to promote optimum testing conditions.

DURING AND AFTER TESTING

Testing Environment

- The testing environment must be quiet and free of distractions.
- The test administrator’s computer must be secured and monitored throughout the testing session.
- All individuals present in the testing room—including students, licensed and unlicensed personnel, and any unauthorized individuals who may have entered the room—must be documented.
- Students who are not participating in a specific test must not be allowed in the testing room while tests are being administered.
- Parents or guardians of students who are testing must not be allowed in the testing room (EXCEPTION: see Testing Homebound Students regarding medical caregivers).
- Student desk/table tops must be cleared of any material not specified in the Test Administrator’s Manual. Students may not access additional materials unless documented as testing accommodations or designated supports. Unauthorized possession of non-permissible materials may result in invalid scores.
- Material that is affixed to desk tops must be covered with blank, opaque material.
- Cell phones and smart watches are collected and stored prior to distributing test materials (EXCEPTION: students with a continuous glucose monitor app). Test administrators and proctors should avoid cell phone and smart watch use unless it is the only means of contacting administration regarding testing issues.
- Photographing, recording, or transmitting any part of a test or testing session is PROHIBITED unless the activity is required for test administration as indicated in the Test Administrator’s Manual, or when the school test coordinator, principal, or district test director is collecting evidence related to a **test security** investigation.
- Food and beverages are **only** permitted during a supervised break. Procedures for breaks are included in the Test Administrator’s Manual and must be followed explicitly.

Test Materials

- All testing materials, including test tickets, must be distributed or accessed prior to the beginning of the testing session, and must remain secure at all times. See the Test Administrator’s Manual for permissible materials.
- Test tickets must be distributed to the appropriate students—the identity and eligibility of all students who are testing must be verified accordingly. See the Test Administrator’s Manual for instructions regarding the distribution and collection of test tickets.
- Scratch paper may only be plain unlined or lined paper, grid-only graph paper, or patty paper. No other pre-printed material is permitted on the front or back except for student-identifying information. See the Test Administrator’s Manual for specific instructions regarding scratch paper.
- Test administrators must read and follow the script provided in the Test Administrator’s Manual.

Monitoring Students

- Students must be supervised by **licensed personnel** while having access to test materials.
- Test administrators and proctors must monitor students to ensure they are working independently and adhering to procedures. It is **not** appropriate to engage in other activity (e.g., grading assignments, checking emails) during test administration. Particular attention must be paid to the following security threats to online test administration:
 - Cheating threats:
 - Colluding with others
 - Using cheating aids
 - Using a proxy test taker
 - Copying responses from other students
 - Stealing threats
 - Capturing content by digital photography devices
 - Transcribing questions verbally (on paper or recording device)
- Students may not communicate with, interact with, or provide assistance of any kind to other students.

- Test administrators, proctors, or other adults may not provide assistance of any kind (including gestures, signals, rewards, or any other form of communication) beyond what is described in the Test Administrator’s Manual.
- Electronic devices are strictly PROHIBITED unless a student has an accommodation plan or designated support that allows a specific **permissible** device, or the device is required for test administration as indicated in the Test Administrator’s Manual. Unauthorized possession of electronic devices may result in invalid scores.
- The district test director or designee is responsible for **invalidating** tests for students who were cheating, communicating with other students, receiving inappropriate assistance, or accessing unauthorized materials or devices. All incidents involving student cheating or misconduct must be responded to in accordance with district and/or school disciplinary procedures.

English Learners

- Assessments are administered in English. See the 2021-2022 Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guide (UAAG—available to district test directors at Bighorn > Assessment Resources) for information regarding designated supports for English Learners.
- The test administrator or proctor of the WIDA Speaking Test (all grades) and Kindergarten Test must have native English fluency.

Unlocking Tests

Online Performance Tasks (PTs) and Science Assessments lock each night, or after 20 minutes of inactivity, or when a student submits a test for scoring. Unlocking a test allows a student to access a test that has locked or has already been submitted. Tests lock for security reasons, and should not be unlocked except in rare cases of unforeseen and unavoidable errors during testing. ***Please see additional unlocking guidance to be released in fall 2021.***

Testing Homebound Students

School test coordinators must obtain written permission from their **district test director** for homebound test administration, and must adhere to the following procedures:

- Tests must be administered in accordance with NDE test security procedures.
- A licensed Nevada educator who has received training in test security and administration for the current school year must administer the tests.

- Materials must be transported securely to and from the student's home.
- The test administrator is responsible for all assessment-related activities in the testing environment.
- If the student's IEP or 504 testing accommodations require the test administrator or ASL interpreter to read or sign test content, or transcribe responses, that individual must sign a Confidentiality Agreement prior to testing (template available to district test directors at Bighorn > Assessment Resources).
- All individuals present in the testing environment must be documented.
- Individuals who are not participating in test administration or providing medical care are **NOT** permitted in the testing environment.
- Medical caregivers required to be present must sign a Confidentiality Agreement prior to testing, and are **NOT** permitted to assist with test administration.

Disclosure of Test Content

Knowledge or review of actual test content is not necessary for valid test administration and is strictly prohibited.

- The material contained in state-mandated examinations is the property of the Nevada Department of Education, and is confidential. Disclosure is unlawful except under the following circumstances:
 - To the extent necessary for administering and evaluating the examinations
 - When it is necessary for the performance of the duties of a
 - State officer who is a member of the executive or legislative branch
 - Superintendent of a school district
 - Director of curriculum of a school district
 - Director of testing of a school district
 - Specific content may be disclosed if the Superintendent of Public Instruction determines that the content is not being used in a current examination and making the content available to the public poses no threat to the security of the current examination process.
 - NDE staff and/or the Office of the Nevada Attorney General are charged with determining whether gaining access to state-mandated examinations is necessary and permitted by law.
- Test administrators, proctors, school administrators, teachers, substitute teachers, aides, any other school personnel, or other individuals required to be present during test administration (e.g., medical caregivers) are not permitted to review test content.

- EXCEPTION: When a test administrator, proctor, or ASL interpreter is authorized to view test content in order to provide specific accommodations or designated supports (i.e., read aloud, signing, scribing); or as needed for administration of the Nevada Alternate Assessment or WIDA. A Confidentiality Agreement (template available to district test directors at Bighorn > Assessment Resources) must be signed prior to test administration and retained with the school's test security documentation for three consecutive school years.
- Test material, whether online or paper/pencil, must not be copied or reproduced by any means without the prior written authorization of the test publisher and the NDE, nor is any individual permitted to review, analyze, discuss, or notate test content.
- All materials containing student identifying information and/or responses are the confidential property of the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), and not public record. Disclosure is strictly prohibited without written permission from the NDE.

Reporting and Investigating Testing Irregularities

- If the NDE has reason to believe a violation in test security or administration has occurred, the NDE has an obligation to investigate the incident as it deems appropriate. Districts and schools are required to comply with the NDE's requests for documentation and information relevant to the investigation.
- If the district test director has reason to believe a violation of the state or district test security plan has occurred, they must do the following:
 - Immediately notify the NDE test security coordinator either orally or in writing.
 - Ensure that a Report of Testing Irregularity is submitted within 14 school days after the incident occurred.
 - Begin an investigation of the incident.
 - If a potential breach in test security has occurred, and the school has video surveillance equipment capable of downloading and saving a digital clip of the alleged occurrence, that clip must be retained as evidence for three consecutive school years.
 - All other evidence related to test security investigations must be retained for three consecutive school years.
 - **The district test director or designee must submit all investigative findings to the NDE test security coordinator during the course of the investigation.**

- A school official who has reason to believe that a violation of the state or district test security plan has occurred must immediately notify the school test coordinator, principal, district test director, or their designee.
- All evidence and documentation related to test security investigations is confidential.
- The NDE may choose to conduct an investigation separately or in conjunction with the school district.
- The majority of the communication regarding the incident will occur between the district test director and the NDE test security coordinator.
- Upon receipt of a Report of Testing Irregularity, the NDE test security coordinator will review the report and determine how to proceed, including whether further evidence or investigation is required.
- Depending on the severity of the incident and the potential impact to the state assessment program, the NDE’s determination may include, but is not limited to:
 - No further action
 - Invalidation of student scores
 - A requirement, including the NDE’s recommendations, for the district or school to complete a corrective action plan (NRS 390.295) if investigative findings indicate the irregularity resulted from inadequate test security or administration procedures
 - A requirement for the district or school to conduct an additional administration of the examination (NRS 390.290)
 - Licensure sanctions administered by the State Board of Education (NRS 391.330)

AFTER TESTING

- Students who finish before the end of the scheduled testing period may be excused according to school test security procedures. If students are not to be excused, they may read quietly (paper versions only—no electronic devices). Materials must not be on student desk or table tops while they are testing, but may be stored under desks or in a designated area in the room. Drawing and writing are **not** permitted.
- All testing materials, including test tickets, scratch paper, and test booklets must be returned to the test administrator and accounted for before a student is allowed to leave the testing area for any reason. (See the Test Coordinator’s Manual for instructions regarding the return of materials to the testing vendor.)

- Printed test items/passages, including embossed Braille printouts, and scratch paper must be collected and inventoried, then immediately destroyed upon a student's completion of the test.
- Test items, stimuli, reading passages, or writing prompts must not be used for instruction.

APPENDIX

Protection of School District Personnel

Terms and Definitions

Protection of School District Personnel Regarding the Disclosure of Testing Irregularities

2021-2022 School Year

Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 390.350 through 390.430 provide for specific rights and responsibilities of school district personnel with regard to the disclosure of irregularities in testing administration and testing security relative to all state and district-mandated examinations. NRS 390.425 also requires the Nevada Department of Education to annually submit a written summary of these rights and responsibilities to the board of trustees of each school district and to the governing body of each charter school.

Definitions

- “Examination” means achievement and proficiency examinations that are administered to pupils pursuant to 390.105, 390.600, and 390.610, and includes the following:
 - English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics in grades 3 – 8
 - Science assessments in grades 5, 8, and High School
 - End-of-Course Examinations
 - College and Career Readiness Assessment
 - NWEA Reading Assessment in grades K – 3
 - Any other examinations that measure achievement and proficiency of pupils and which are administered to pupils on a district-wide basis
- “Irregularity in testing administration” means the failure to administer an examination in the manner intended by the person or entity that created the examination.
- “Irregularity in testing security” means an act or omission that tends to corrupt or impair the security of an examination, including, without limitation:
 - The failure to comply with the department or district security procedures.
 - The disclosure of questions or answers to questions on an examination in a manner not otherwise approved by law.
 - Other breaches in the security or confidentiality of the questions or answers to questions on an examination.
- “Reprisal or retaliatory action” is action that is taken because the school official disclosed information concerning testing irregularities and includes, without limitation:
 - Frequent or undesirable changes in the location of an office;
 - Frequent or undesirable transfers or reassignments;
 - The issuance of letters of reprimand, letters of admonition or evaluations of poor performance;
 - A demotion;
 - A reduction in pay;
 - The denial of a promotion;

- A suspension;
- A dismissal;
- A transfer; or
- Frequent changes in working hours or workdays.

“School official” means:

- A member of a board of trustees of a school district;
- A member of a governing body of a charter school; or
- A licensed or unlicensed person employed by the board of trustees of a school district or the governing body of a charter school.

Rights and Responsibilities

- School officials are encouraged to disclose testing irregularities, and it is the intent of the legislature to protect the rights of a school official who makes such a disclosure.
- A school official shall not directly or indirectly use or attempt to use his official authority or influence to intimidate, threaten, coerce, command, or influence another school official in an effort to interfere with or prevent the disclosure of information concerning testing irregularities. “Official authority or influence” includes taking, directing others to take, recommending, processing, or approving any personnel action such as an appointment, promotion, transfer, assignment, reassignment, reinstatement, restoration, reemployment, evaluation, or other disciplinary action.
- If reprisal or retaliatory action is taken against a school official who discloses information concerning testing irregularities within 2 years after the information is disclosed, the school official may file a written appeal with the state board for a hearing on the matter and determination of whether the action taken was a reprisal or retaliatory action. The written appeal must be accompanied by a statement that specifies:
 - The facts and circumstances leading to the disclosure of information concerning testing irregularities; and
 - The reprisal or retaliatory action that is alleged to have been taken against the school official.
- The state board may issue a subpoena to compel the attendance or testimony of any witness or the production of any materials needed as part of the appeal investigation.
- If the state board determines that the action taken was a reprisal or retaliatory action, it may issue an order directing the proper person to desist and refrain from engaging in such action.
- The state board may not rule against the school official based on the identity of the person or persons to whom the information concerning testing irregularities was disclosed.
- No school official may use the provisions outlined in this summary to harass another school official.

- A person who willfully discloses untruthful information concerning testing irregularities:
 - Is guilty of a misdemeanor; and
 - Is subject to appropriate disciplinary action.
- These provisions do not apply to offenses committed before July 1, 2001.
- Upon receipt of this summary, the board of trustees or governing body shall provide a copy of the written summary to all school officials within the school district or charter school.

Terms and Definitions

The following terms and definitions will be used when referring to the Nevada Department of Education assessment program:

- “Examination” means achievement and proficiency examinations that are administered to pupils pursuant to 390.105, 390.600, and 390.610, and includes the following:
 - English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics in grades 3 – 8
 - Science assessments in grades 5, 8, and High School
 - End-of-Course Examinations
 - College and Career Readiness Assessment
 - NWEA Reading Assessment in grades K – 3
 - Any other examinations that measure achievement and proficiency of pupils and which are administered to pupils on a district-wide basis
- “**Irregularity in testing administration**” means the failure to administer an examination in the manner intended by the person or entity that created the examination.
- “**Irregularity in testing security**” means an act or omission that tends to corrupt or impair the security of an examination, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Failure to comply with state or district security procedures
 - Disclosure of questions or answers to questions on an examination in a manner not otherwise approved by law
 - Other breaches in the security or confidentiality of the questions or answers to questions on an examination
- “**School official**” means the following:
 - A member of a board of trustees of a school district
 - A member of a governing body of a charter school
 - A licensed or unlicensed person employed by the board of trustees of a school district or the governing body of a charter school

- **“District Test Director”** is appointed by the school district superintendent and refers to the individual who represents an individual school district on all matters of testing, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Serving as a liaison between the local school district and the Nevada Department of Education
 - Assisting the local board of trustees in the development of a district test security plan
 - Organizing the district testing calendar
 - Ensuring that school principals and school test coordinators are adequately trained and informed of all relevant test administration guidelines and procedures
 - Disseminating and collecting testing materials

“School Test Coordinator” or **“Test Coordinator”** is the school principal or a licensed individual appointed by the school principal and refers to the person who represents the school on all matters of testing that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Assisting the school principal by serving as a liaison between the school and the district test director
- Assisting the school principal in the development of school test administration procedures
- Assisting the school principal in providing annual training for school officials involved in test administration
- Assisting the school principal in organizing the test schedule
- Assisting the school principal in the dissemination and collection of test materials
- Assisting the school principal in assigning school officials to administer or proctor the assessments

Although school principals may delegate testing responsibilities to a school test coordinator, the school principal assumes final responsibility for the proper training and administration of all state-mandated testing.

- **“Classroom Test Administrator”** or **“Test Administrator”** is assigned by the school principal or school test coordinator and refers to a school official whose responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Administering the assessment to an assigned group of students in accordance with all test security and test administration procedures
 - Assuming primary responsibility for the verification of the identity and eligibility of each student participating in the assessment (in accordance with procedures outlined in the district test security plan)
 - Assuming primary responsibility for the dissemination and collection of each student’s test materials
 - Assuming primary responsibility for the supervision of students during their participation in the assessment

- Ensuring that students are taking the assessment in accordance with test security and test administration procedures
- Following up on unusual behavior or activity on the part of the students
- Assuming primary responsibility for ensuring that applicable time limits are being adhered to
- **“Classroom Proctor”** or **“Proctor”** is assigned by the school principal or school test coordinator and refers to a school official whose responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Assisting the classroom test administrator in supervising students during their participation in the assessment
 - Ensuring that students are taking the assessment in the manner in which they were instructed by the classroom test administrator
 - Immediately notifying the classroom test administrator of any unusual behavior or activity on the part of students
 - Assisting the classroom test administrator in the dissemination and/or collection of test materials
 - Assisting the classroom test administrator in ensuring that applicable time limits are being adhered to