

Towns County Schools

Test Security for State Assessments

ETHICAL TESTING PRACTICES

The Professional Standards Commission adopted an updated CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS effective 2018. 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 10: 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. Any of the following grounds shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the holder of a certificate:

- 1. unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-11;*
- 2. disciplinary action against a certificate in another state on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators;*
- 3. order from a court or a request from the Department of Human Resources that the certificate should be suspended or denied for non-payment of child support;*
- 4. notification from the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation that the educator is in default and not in satisfactory repayment status on a student loan;*
- 5. suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate;*
- 6. violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession; and*
- 7. any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.*

An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics. The superintendent and the superintendent's designee for certification shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent's designee must hold GaPSC certification.

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Security and Accountability

Test security involves maintaining the confidentiality of test items and answers and is critical in ensuring the integrity and validity of a test.

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 by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) as inappropriate use or handling of tests and will be treated as such. Towns County Schools follows the guidance of guidelines established by the GaDOE. The guidelines apply, where applicable, to both online and paper test administrations and environments. Please note that this list is not exhaustive and includes acts that could be committed by staff and/or students. Any concern regarding test security must be reported to the system test coordinator. The system test coordinator will report the concerns to GaDOE immediately by following the current GaDOE procedures for reporting.

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

- coaches the 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 (including social media sites, texting, and/or email) inconsistent with test security regulations all or any portion of secure online testing forms, test tickets, passwords, or test booklets;
- makes answers available to examinees;
- reads, reviews, notates, photographs, shares, transmits test items whether online or paper, 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 or other lost secure assessment materials in any assessment program constitute a breach of test security and will result in a referral to Georgia Professional Standards Commission [GaPSC]);
- uses or handles secure test booklets, answer documents, online testing log-ins/passwords/test forms for any purpose other than examination;
- fails to follow administration directions from the Examiner's Manual including an exact word-for word reading of the Examiner's script;
- fails to properly secure and safeguard pass codes/usernames found on test tickets necessary for

online test administration;

- erases, marks answers, or alters responses on an answer document or within an online test form; and/or
- participates in, directs, aids, counsels, assists, encourages, or fails to report any of these prohibited acts.

Failure to safeguard test materials or to comply with test administration procedures could adversely affect an individual's certification status. Such must be reported to the GaDOE and may be referred to the Educators Ethics Division of the GaPSC 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 must be reported immediately to the GaDOE.

Training Related to Test Security

At least annually, and more frequently where required, all staff participating in the administration of state assessments will complete all training related to test administration, test security, and ethical behavior. Training will be conducted at the school level.