![Minnesota Department of Education logo] DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

2021–22 Test Security Checklist

MDE requires any staff involved in any aspect of testing—even if they just have keys to where test materials are kept—to review this information so they have a basic understanding of test security in order to avoid unintentional security violations.

Read each point from both the *Test Security Training* and the *Assurance of Test Security and Non-Disclosure*. Once completed, sign and return this checklist to your District or School Assessment Coordinator.

TEST SECURITY TRAINING

What Is Test Security?

- In everyday terms, test security involves the actions you take to ensure that test content and student responses are protected so that test scores are valid. When we talk about "valid test scores" or "maintaining the integrity of test results," this means that the results are accurate and meaningful.

What Is Considered Secure?

- All test content, test materials, and student responses are considered secure.

  Test content includes all parts of a test item, reading passages, and science scenarios. Test content and student responses appear in both online tests and on paper test materials, and they may also be written on other student materials, like scratch paper and student testing tickets.

Why Is Test Security Important?

Providing Equal Opportunity

- Test security must be maintained to give an equal opportunity for all students to demonstrate what they have learned and to ensure that their test scores are valid.

Ensuring Accurate Results

- Students, families, and educators use valid test scores as one data point to evaluate how well students are mastering standards. District and school staff use these results as part of their evaluation of the effectiveness of school curriculum and instruction in the standards.

Protecting the Investment

- Also, it takes a lot of work by a lot of people over a long period of time, up to three years, to develop a standardized test. Education professionals, including many teachers, work together to develop test questions. If there is a security violation where test content is exposed, that test content may no longer be used on any test, and in some cases, may affect whether test scores are valid.

Consequences for Violating Test Security

- If statewide tests are not administered securely, one student or many students may be affected. If required policies and procedures are not followed and a security violation occurs, student tests may be invalidated and staff may require further training or other disciplinary actions at the discretion of the district.

Why Is Training on Test Security Important?

- Test security violations can happen anywhere, at any time. Understanding test security and knowing what a security violation is can help prevent security violations from occurring.

  This awareness happens through training, including this training checklist, and any other trainings required for your role in testing.

Assurance of Test Security and Non-Disclosure

- In addition to training, you are also required to complete the *Assurance of Test Security and Non-Disclosure* every year.

  It's important to understand what you are agreeing to by completing this assurance. Next, we will review the information in the assurance and your responsibilities for maintaining test security. You will complete the assurance for this year after this checklist.

Following Educational Data Privacy Laws

- Depending on your role, you may see student information on testing tickets or test results. All student data is strictly governed by federal and state privacy laws. Whatever your role in testing, you must follow your district's policies for the use of student data and test results in a confidential and secure manner.

Discouraging Participation in Testing

- While students or parents can decide that students will not participate in testing, know that actively discouraging students or their parents from participating may have negative consequences for the school or district.

Following Test Security Policies and Procedures

- You are required to follow all state, district, and school testing policies and procedures. In addition, you must not persuade or encourage others to violate any policies or procedures or take any actions that jeopardize test security.

Maintaining Security of Test Content

Limiting Access

- Make sure you are not accessing or viewing secure test content or materials, or allowing others to, when not required for a role in testing. "Having access" may be as simple as having keys to rooms or cabinets used to store secure materials or having electronic access to testing information.

Tracking Materials

- If you will be handling any secure test materials, ensure that you know the plan for keeping track of the materials and the secure, locked location where they will be stored when not used for testing.

Preparing for Testing

- You cannot use an actual student's test to prepare for testing. Use the resources provided by MDE to prepare technology for test administration.

Providing Information

- You cannot capture, copy, share, or distribute test content in any manner before, during, or after testing. Even in situations where information needs to be communicated (such as during a technology issue), the actual test content cannot be described or captured in a picture. Only the item number and student information should be provided.

Never Keeping Materials

- After testing, make sure that you do not keep any materials with secure test content, including student scratch paper.

Talking With Students

- Even after testing is complete, the test content must remain secure. Students are not allowed to tell you about or discuss test content after testing is over. You cannot ask students about specific test questions or other test content.

Talking With Staff

- In addition, you are not allowed to discuss secure test content or items with other staff members or in team meetings. By completing the assurance, you agree to maintain the confidentiality of any test content you may be aware of.

Maintaining Integrity of Test Results

The following points from the *Assurance* are most applicable to staff who are involved in the administration of a test.

Never Providing an Unfair Advantage

- No matter your role in test administration, you must ensure that students are provided the opportunity to independently demonstrate what they know. If you are in the room while students are testing, make sure you understand what is allowed in terms of providing assistance or answering questions so that student tests do not need to be invalidated.

Always Using Official Results

- Reviewing and scoring student responses yourself is not allowed, unless items are designed to be scored by the Test Administrator using a rubric or script. After testing, information on student performance is available to districts and schools through reports provided by the service provider or MDE after testing.

Never Changing Student Responses

- Changing student responses is a security violation and will result in the invalidation of the student's test and possible disciplinary action.

Reporting Misadministrations or Security Breaches

- Your District Assessment Coordinator will let you know how to report any issues that arise during testing. If you observe or become aware of student or staff actions that may violate test security, it is your responsibility to talk with your District or School Assessment Coordinator or another administrator. Even if a security violation seems unintentional, it is important that the situation is reported so that procedures and policies can be clarified and updated so that everyone understands how to maintain test security.

    While we recommend that you work within your district to report any possible issues, there may be circumstances where you need to report something directly to MDE. The MDE website has a tip line where test security concerns can be reported anonymously.

Cooperating with MDE

- Finally, MDE has the responsibility to oversee all statewide testing. As a part of your role in testing, you may participate in a site monitoring visit or audit, or be asked to provide information related to a security violation, and you are agreeing to cooperate when you sign the assurance. If MDE makes a site visit to your school, you will follow your regular procedures for testing.

Summary

- Contact your District or School Assessment Coordinator if you have questions about statewide testing.

![Minnesota Department of Education logo] **ASSURANCE OF TEST SECURITY AND NON-DISCLOSURE**

Effective for school year 2021–22

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is required by state statute to implement statewide testing programs. Test security must be maintained to provide equal opportunity for all students to demonstrate their academic achievement, and to ensure the validity of test scores and the integrity of state assessments. Failure to maintain test security jeopardizes district and state accountability requirements and the accuracy of student, school, district, and state data. Test scores are included in important decisions about students' future success; it is essential that they accurately reflect what students know and are able to do. **This assurance, as part of the *Test Security Training*, must be completed prior to involvement in any aspect of test administration**.

All test content, secure test materials, and student responses, whether in draft or final form, are considered secure, and only authorized district or school staff/personnel are permitted to have access to them. Authorized district or school staff/personnel:

- Are district and school administrators, teachers, building staff, or other persons designated by the district who have a role in storing, distributing, coordinating, or administering tests and/or have keys to storage locations of secure test materials.
- Have completed appropriate training annually to fulfill their assigned roles.

Responsibilities of authorized district and school staff/personnel who may potentially interact with secure test content, student responses, and data are outlined in the *Procedures Manual for Minnesota Statewide Assessments* (hereafter *Procedures Manual)*. By completing this assurance, you agree to the following:

- As required for my role in the administration of the statewide testing program, I am responsible for understanding relevant information contained in the current year's *Procedures Manual* and directions for test administration. I will abide by policies and procedures detailed in the resources for statewide test administration.
- As required for my role, I am or will be trained in the administration policies and procedures for statewide tests before participating in any part of statewide test administration.
- As required for my role, I will instruct staff on state and district procedures for maintaining test security and will not allow unauthorized persons to distribute, coordinate or administer tests, or have access to secure test content and materials.
- As required for my role, I will follow the procedures in the *Procedures Manual* to investigate and notify the appropriate school and district staff or the Minnesota Department of Education immediately upon learning of potential misconduct or irregularities, whether intentional or unintentional.
- I understand that MDE has the responsibility to oversee the administration of the statewide tests. I will cooperate fully with MDE representatives, and school officials when applicable, in all aspects of test security compliance including, but not limited to, monitoring visits, desk audits, and investigations.
- I understand that test data and documents that contain student-level information are considered confidential and secure, both throughout test administration and after preliminary and final test results are available. When working with student-identifying information and student tests and results, both during and after test administration, I will follow all applicable federal and state data privacy laws related to student educational data. This includes data within reports and data accessible in electronic systems provided by MDE or its service provider(s).
- I acknowledge that actively promoting the discouragement of student(s) and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) from test participation could result in negative consequences for my school or district.

- I understand my responsibility to enforce proper testing procedures and to ensure the security and confidential integrity of the test(s). I will apply and follow procedures designed to keep test content secure and to ensure the validity of test results. This includes, but is not limited to:
    - Recognizing the rights of students and families to accurate test results that reflect students' individual, unassisted achievement.
    - Protecting the confidentiality of statewide assessments and ensuring the validity of students' results by safeguarding test content, keeping test materials secure, and adhering to chain of custody requirements.
    - Never retaining secure test materials in my custody beyond the allowed times to process, distribute, coordinate, administer, and return them, as appropriate for my role.
    - Ensuring that no part of the paper or online tests are outlined, summarized, paraphrased, discussed, released, distributed to unauthorized personnel, printed, copied, photographed, recorded, or retained in original or duplicated format, without the explicit permission of MDE or as authorized in the *Procedures Manual*.
    - Never permitting or engaging in the unauthorized use of student information to log in to the online testing system or access an online test.
    - Never engaging in, or allowing others to engage in, unauthorized viewing, discussion, or analysis of test content before, during, or after testing.
    - Actively monitoring students during test administration for prohibited behavior.
    - Never leaving students unattended during test administration or under the supervision of untrained staff or volunteers.
    - Never influencing test results by providing students with answers to secure test items, suggesting how to respond to secure test items, or influencing student responses to secure test items. Prohibited actions include, but are not limited to: providing clues or hints; providing reminders of content or testing strategies; prompting students to correct or check/recheck specific responses; permitting access to curricular materials (e.g., textbooks, notes, review materials, bulletin boards, posters, charts, maps, timelines, etc.); or using voice inflection, facial gestures, pointing, gesturing, tapping, or other actions to indicate a response or accuracy of a student's response.
    - Never formally or informally scoring secure tests or individual test items except as required by the test-specific manuals and directions. Prohibited actions include but are not limited to: creating an answer key; reviewing or scoring a student's item response or responses unless items are designed to be scored by the test administrator using a rubric or script; retaining, reviewing, or scoring student scratch paper or paper test materials; or tracking student performance on test items.
    - Never altering or engaging in other prohibited involvement with student responses.
    - Never inducing or encouraging others to violate the procedures outlined above or to engage in any conduct that jeopardizes test security or the validity of test scores.

By accepting the terms of the *Test Security Training* and this assurance, you name yourself as an employee of the district or as an authorized person selected by the district. You also affirm that you are authorized by the district during the current academic school year to have access to secure test materials or student data related to statewide test administrations, including student identifying information and student tests and results, and hereby agree to be bound by the terms of this assurance. Consequences for failure to abide by these terms include, but are not limited to, further training requirements, the invalidation of student tests, and actions at the discretion of the school district.

_____   _____
  Signature   Date

_____   _____
  Name (printed)   District/School