m DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

2017–2018 Test Security Training Checklist and Assurance of Test Security and Non-Disclosure

Every year, any staff involved in testing are required to view information on test security. Most staff will view the online *Test Security Training*; staff who do not access the Training Management System will use this checklist.

Check off each topic after reading to confirm your review. Once the checklist is completed, read and sign the *Assurance of Test Security and Non-Disclosure*. Return both the checklist and assurance to your District or School Assessment Coordinator.

TEST SECURITY TRAINING CHECKLIST

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? – 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.

Why Is Test Security Important? – Accurate Results

☐ Students, families, and educators rely on valid test scores to help make decisions about whether or not students are on track for academic success. For example, if students achieve a score that indicates they "Meet the Standards," it is reasonable to conclude that students have mastered sufficient grade-level content and skills without any unfair advantages.

Why Is Test Security Important? – 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 breach 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 thousands of students may be affected. If required policies and procedures are not followed and a security breach occurs, student tests may be invalidated and staff may face disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, loss of license, or both.

Why Is Training on Test Security Important?

☐ Test security breaches can happen anywhere, at any time. Understanding test security and knowing what a security breach is can help prevent security breaches from occurring.

This awareness happens through training, including this training checklist, and any other trainings or resources 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.

Following Test Security Policies and Procedures

☐ You are required to follow all state and district 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 – Limited Access

☐ You have an important role in making sure that test content and test materials stay secure. Make sure that you are not accessing or viewing, or allowing others to access or view, secure test content or test materials 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 test materials or having electronic access to test content, student responses, or other testing data. As you carry out your role in testing, be aware of test security and make sure you are doing your part to maintain it.

Maintaining Security of Test Content – 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.

Maintaining Security of Test Content – Test Preparation

☐ You cannot use an actual test to prepare for testing. Use the resources provided by MDE to prepare technology for test administration. You will prepare students by ensuring that your curriculum and instruction are aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards.

Maintaining Security of Test Content – Providing Information

☐ During testing, there may be cases where information about the test needs to be shared with your district or school assessment staff, but you need to make sure that the test content is kept secure. For example, if a student points out a test item that appears to have an error, write down the student's name and the test item number to provide later rather than taking a picture of it, as test content could be seen in the background. Also, do not email specific test content; if you need to share information via email, only provide the basic student and test information you wrote down during testing.

Maintaining Security of Test Content – After Testing

☐ After testing, make sure that you do not keep any materials with secure test content, including student scratch paper, for curriculum planning, for use in creating classroom assessments, or as an instructional resource. Using test content in this manner is a breach of security and is not useful in preparing students for testing.

Maintaining Security of Test Content – 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.

Maintaining Security of Test Content – 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.

Monitoring Students

☐ In addition to safeguarding the security of test content, you must also actively monitor students who are testing. "Active monitoring" means carefully observing student behavior throughout testing to prevent security breaches. If applicable for your role in testing, you must actively monitor students throughout the entire test administration.

Never leave students unmonitored or unattended during testing. Ensure you know your district's procedures for making sure that students are monitored if an unexpected situation arises.

Maintaining Integrity of Test Results – Actions During Testing

☐ No matter your role in test administration, you must ensure that students are provided the opportunity to independently demonstrate what they know so their test results reflect their achievement.

While some actions are clearly not allowed, others may fall into gray areas. You cannot directly or indirectly provide an answer to a student or prompt a student to reconsider a specific answer. Similarly, you can't provide extra assistance to students by reminding them of strategies used in instruction or giving them access to other classroom materials. Make sure you understand what is allowed so that student tests do not need to be invalidated.

Maintaining Integrity of Test Results – Student Scores

☐ Reviewing and scoring student responses yourself is not allowed. Tests are scored by the test vendor, and information on student performance is available to districts and schools through reports provided by the service provider or MDE after testing.

Maintaining Integrity of Test Results – Respecting Student Effort

☐ Changing student responses is a security breach 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 misadministrations or security breaches. If you observe or become aware of student or staff actions that violate test security, it is your responsibility to talk with your District or School Assessment Coordinator or another administrator. Even if a security breach 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 part of your role in testing, you may be part of a site monitoring visit, audit, or be asked to provide information related to a test security breach 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

☐ In this checklist, we have reviewed:

- What test security is
- Why test security is important
- What you must do to maintain test security

Be sure to contact your District or School Assessment Coordinator if you have any questions about test security or the *Assurance of Test Security and Non-Disclosure*.

_____   _____
Name (printed)   Date

_____   _____
Signature   District and School Names

ASSURANCE OF TEST SECURITY AND NON-DISCLOSURE

Effective for school year 2017-2018

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is required by state statute to implement statewide testing programs. Test security must be maintained to provide an equal opportunity to 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 reflect the truth about what students know and can do. This form must be signed prior to being involved 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 persons are permitted to have access to them. Authorized persons:

- Are administrators, educators, staff, or other persons designated by the district who have a role in storing, distributing, coordinating, or administering tests.
- Have received appropriate training to fulfill their assigned roles.
- Have signed this agreement.

Responsibilities of authorized persons who may potentially interact with secure test content, student responses, and data are outlined in the *Procedures Manual of the Minnesota Assessments* (hereafter *Procedures Manual)*. By signing this form, you agree to the following assurances:

- 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. I will follow all applicable federal and state data privacy laws related to student educational data, including data within reports and data accessible in electronic systems provided by MDE or its service provider(s).
- 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, including but not limited to:
  - Recognizing the rights of students and families to accurate test results that reflect students' individual, unassisted achievement.

- o Protecting the confidentiality of statewide assessments and ensuring the validity of students' results by safeguarding secure test content, keeping test materials in a secure area, and adhering to chain of custody requirements.
- o 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.
- o Ensuring that no part of the paper or online tests are outlined, summarized, paraphrased, discussed, released, distributed to unauthorized personnel, printed, reproduced, copied, photographed, recorded, or retained in original or duplicated format, without the explicit permission of MDE or as authorized in the *Procedures Manual*.
- o Never permitting or engaging in the unauthorized use of a student's MARSS or Secure Student Identification Number (SSID) to log in to the online testing system or access an online test.
- o Never engaging in, or allowing others to engage in, unauthorized viewing, discussion, or analysis of test content before, during, or after testing.
- o Actively monitoring students during test administration for prohibited behavior.
- o Never leaving students unattended during test administration or under the supervision of unauthorized staff or volunteers.
- o Never influence 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.
- o 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 accommodated test materials; or tracking student performance on test items.
- o Never altering or engaging in other prohibited involvement with student responses.
- o 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 this agreement, you name yourself as an employee of the School District or as an authorized person selected by the District, and 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 and hereby agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement.

Failure to follow procedures can lead to the invalidation of students' tests. Consequences for violating the terms of this agreement may result in a complaint filed with the local School Board, the Board of Teaching, or the Board of School Administrators for evaluation and investigation. The findings of the appropriate Board may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination and/or loss of license.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

_____   _____
Name (printed)   Work telephone

_____   _____
District and School Names   Email Address