

**REQUIREMENTS OF THE MISSISSIPPI STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM STANDARD 16**

**I. PURPOSE**

It is the policy of the State Board of Education that all test procedures and results that are used in the Mississippi Statewide Assessment System and/or used in the Mississippi Statewide Accreditation System be valid and accurate for making related decisions. To protect the security and integrity of all tests administered through the Mississippi Statewide Assessment System, as well as to ensure reporting of accurate assessment results, the State Board of Education establishes the following requirements and the consequences applied when a school district or school is found in violation of any requirement. These requirements are established under the authority granted in {Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-16-1, 37-16-3, and 37-16-4}, as amended.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

The District Test Coordinator (DTC) serves as the point of contact between the Office of Student Assessment (OSA) and the district in all matters related to the Mississippi Assessment Programs. The DTC, trained by the OSA is responsible for training district personnel and school test coordinators in the administration of State Assessments, ensuring they are knowledgeable in all aspects of testing processes and test security procedures. DTCs shall possess a current and valid Mississippi educator's license that may include an administrative endorsement. The DTC shall be appointed by the Superintendent.

The School Test Coordinator (STC) serves as the point of contact for the district test coordinator and a specific school within their district. The STC is ultimately responsible for the training of personnel to ensure those involved in the administration of State Assessments are trained in all aspects of testing and test security procedures. School test coordinators shall possess a current and valid Mississippi educator's license.

The District Test Security Plan is a comprehensive collection of procedures and actions that serve as a guide to ensure test security and test integrity are protected at all levels within the district. The District Superintendent and the DTC are ultimately responsible for completing the plan, reviewing, updating, and verifying all information is correct each year.

The School Test Security Plan is a comprehensive collection of procedures and actions that serve as a guide to ensure test security and test integrity are protected at the school site administering State Assessments. Each individual school test security plan shall be made to fit each school, completed by the STC and Principal and attached as a part of the district's test security plan.

Secure test materials include, but are not limited to, student testing login tickets, all paper that contains access codes, scratch paper, reference charts, and writing rubrics.

A possible testing irregularity is any alleged incident(s) before, during or after the test administration that deviates from the statewide assessment requirements as established under SBE authority, representing a potential violation to test security and questions the validity of the assessment data.

A verified testing irregularity is a confirmed violation of one or more of the statewide assessment requirements as established by the SBE.

A prohibited electronic device is a device that maintains one or more of the following functionalities: cellular/internet connectivity, Bluetooth connectivity, unallowable calculator functions, and image or audio capture capabilities.

**III. REPORTING AND USE OF TEST DATA**

The school district will release test score information to parents, legal representatives, teachers, students, educators, the media, and the public in a timely manner and provide interpretive material as necessary. The school district

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will use test scores appropriately in making decisions regarding students. Additional retesting opportunities may be available for assessments that apply to the Literacy-Based Promotion Act and Graduation Requirements. Refer to appendix A-5 found in the current edition of *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards* for more information.

### IV. REQUIREMENTS

The following is not an exhaustive list of requirements.

#### Responsibilities of the District Test Coordinator (DTC)

1. The DTC shall be appointed by the District's Superintendent. The DTC shall hold a current and valid Mississippi educator's license that may include an administrative endorsement and possess knowledge and experience regarding assessment procedures. The Superintendent shall notify the Office of Student Assessment in writing (email is permissible) of DTC personnel changes.
2. The DTC shall attend all State Assessment training sessions sponsored by the Office of Student Assessment.
3. The DTC shall submit to the OSA the District and School Test Security Plan each year no later than the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday in January for the full calendar year. This is required, so a plan will be in place for the next school year's fall testing.
  - a. The District and School Test Security Plan shall contain all components as required by the Office of Student Assessment.
  - b. The district Superintendent and DTC are responsible for creating and completing the District Test Security plan, reviewing, updating, and verifying all information is correct each calendar year. Once approved by the district school board, the plan is signed by the district Superintendent, the DTC, and the chairman of the school board.
  - c. The School's Principal and STC are responsible for creating and completing the School Test Security plan, reviewing, updating, and verifying all information is correct each calendar year. Once approved by the DTC, the School Test Security Plan, which is a part of the District Test Security Plan, is signed by the school Principal, STC, and the DTC.
  - d. The District Test Security Plan shall identify all individuals who have access to the secure materials storage area at the district and school sites.

#### Test Materials

4. Testing tickets shall be printed from the appropriate vendor platform in advance of the scheduled assessment. Reproduction and/or the dissemination of test ticket information via an alternate method is prohibited. (i.e., Handwritten, reading ticket information aloud)
5. Except during actual test administration, secure test materials shall be kept in a locked storage room/area designated for this purpose. Access shall be limited to only those individuals identified in the test security plan(s) as responsible for their security.
  - a. All printed secure testing materials are inventoried and accounted for at the district and/or school level. Printed secure materials are inventoried and logged on a district-developed tracking sheet documenting the material's chain-of-custody during the entire testing window. This tracking documentation shall be available for review by an OSA auditor.
  - b. Deliverable secure testing materials are required to be inventoried by the DTC upon receipt from the vendor. The materials delivered shall match the vendor's ledger prior to distribution to the school site(s). After delivery to the school(s), the STC shall sign for, inventory, and maintain a log detailing the chain of custody of deliverable materials during the entire testing window. This tracking documentation shall be available for review by an OSA auditor.
  - c. While secure test materials are in the district or in a school, anyone listed as having access to the secure area shall be accompanied by a second test security trained person when entering the secure storage area.
  - d. Test Administrators and Proctors shall have access and handle secure test materials as described in the district and school test security plans and or as described in the vendor's test administration manual or test coordinator



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manual.

e. Reproducing or disclosing secure test material (including pilot material) and student responses before, during, or after test administration is prohibited. Reproduction or disclosure of secure test materials includes but is not limited to the following: reviewing, reading, or looking at secure test material in a manner that is inconsistent with test security regulations and/or procedures outlined in the Test Administrators Manual. Use of unreleased test items in any form (including rewording of such test items) is strictly prohibited.

f. All secure materials shall be returned according to the schedule published by test vendors and OSA. If a secure testing document has been contaminated by health-related hazards or severely damaged, the STC/DTC shall follow destruction procedures provided by the MDE. This procedure shall be included in the District Test Security Plan.

### Training and Testing Personnel

6. The OSA and the respective vendors are responsible for the initial training of the DTCs in advance of the test administration windows. The DTCs shall be responsible for training all district personnel and STCs who will be involved in state assessments.

7. Any person involved in any phase of the Mississippi Statewide Assessment System shall meet the outlined criteria and be trained by their district in appropriate assessment administration and test security procedures.

a. The district shall maintain complete records of all professional development on assessment training related to each assessment program. (i.e., ELPT, MAAP, MAAP-A, KRA)

b. All personnel involved in the administration of an assessment shall have a signed confidentiality and electronic device agreements on file prior to testing. These documents shall be kept at the district/school for five (5) years.

c. Test Administrators shall be licensed school personnel, hold a valid Mississippi Educator License, and be employed by the district.

d. Proctors are not required to be licensed school personnel unless they are fulfilling the role of Second Scorer for a MAAP-A administration or administering a state assessment to a homebound or an incarcerated student. These instances require the Proctor/Second Scorer to be a licensed teacher.

8. The district and/or school shall conduct professional development training on proper test administration utilizing accommodations and accessibility features on statewide assessments.

9. The District shall maintain for five (5) years, and provide upon request, documentation demonstrating training related to each assessment program was administered. Additionally, training shall include information on test security procedures, violations of test security, and the consequences for those violations.

10. Coaching students, altering responses, or interfering with responses in any way during or after the scheduled test administration is prohibited. Coaching students is defined as providing answers by staff or other students to students in any manner during the test, including cues, clues, hints, and/or actual answers in any form—written, printed, verbal or non-verbal (including, but not limited to, charts, bulletin boards, posters, computers, hand gestures), or allowing students to alter responses after the scheduled test administration.

11. Anyone with knowledge of, or information regarding, a possible testing irregularity or alleged security violations shall report the alleged irregularity/violation to an appropriate authority. {See Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-4(1)(f)}

### Policies for Mississippi Assessments

12. The Mississippi Statewide Assessment System ensures the inclusion of all students in the assessment programs {Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-3(2)}; Literacy-Based Promotion Act, {Miss. Code Ann. §37-177-11}; e-CFR 200.5 (a)(1)(2)(3); Mississippi English Learner Guidelines: Regulations, Funding Guidance, and Instructional Supports, 2018R.

a. Accurate student attendance data during testing windows shall be maintained by the district/school. For example, if a student is taking the English II assessment and misses their World History class, the student should

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not be counted absent.

- b. If a student is assigned to take a test and is absent, the student shall be counted absent. Districts/schools shall make sure attendance is maintained during testing windows as to who is present and who is not present.
- c. Students who drop a course for which an end-of-course Subject Area Test is required after the dates noted below shall still take the appropriate end-of-course Subject Area Test.

### Traditional Schedule

- Students enrolled in a course at the end of January (5<sup>th</sup> month) shall be tested.

### Fall Block

- Students enrolled in a course at the end of October (2<sup>nd</sup> month) shall be tested.

### Spring Block

- Students enrolled in a course at the end of March (7<sup>th</sup> month) shall be tested.

d. Students enrolled in and taking courses for the first time for which end-of-course Subject Area Tests is required shall take the appropriate Subject Area Tests. These students shall take the appropriate end-of-course Subject Area Test, as listed the *Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi* includes the words Accelerated, Enrichment, or Advanced Placement.

e. Each student enrolled in and re-taking courses for which end-of-course Subject Area Tests are required to take the appropriate Subject Area Test only if the student has not previously met the graduation requirement for the Subject Area Test.

f. Each student shall take the appropriate end-of-course Subject Area Test at the end of the course regardless of the grade level in which the course is offered.

g. Students enrolled in a Mississippi public school will be required to pass end-of-course Subject Area Test in a course for which the school accepts Carnegie units earned by the student through enrollment in summer school, virtual school, or any other non-standard school as defined by the Office of Accreditation. See State Board Policy Chapter 36, Rules 36.2, 36.4, and 36.5.

### Accommodations and Accessibility Features

13. All guidelines listed in the current edition of the *Mississippi Testing Accommodations Manual* shall be followed. Appropriate accommodations and/or accessibility features shall be provided for each individual student (except those noted as non-allowable for specific assessments) per the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Section 504 Plan, and/or Language Service Plan (LSP).

14. The medical monitoring policy shall be followed for any student or staff member that utilizes an electronic device in the testing environment due to monitoring a medically diagnosed condition. The school shall have the appropriate documentation on file, to include both a signed confidentiality and an electronic device form.

### Test Administration

15. A specific schedule for each school administering a Statewide assessment within the district shall be submitted to the Office of Student Assessment 30 calendar days prior to the start of any test window. A school shall test in accordance with the schedule provided, unless administering a make-up session or the change is a result from inclement weather conditions or technology issues that prevented the assessment administration occurring on the day originally scheduled.

- a. A school's testing schedule is developed by the DTC/STC in coordination with the school's Principal.
- b. It is the responsibility of the Principal to notify students and parents/ guardians of their school's testing schedule.
- c. A testing schedule shall be provided to the OSA for each 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading retest opportunity.
- d. Screeners/placement tests do not require a testing schedule. Schools must test within the time specified by the program.

16. Make-up testing shall be provided during the State administration window for the respective assessment



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for students who are absent during the district/school scheduled test administration, including all 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading test sessions.

17. Both a trained Test Administrator (TA) and a Proctor shall actively monitor students by frequently moving unobtrusively about the room.
  - a. At least two (2) trained people shall be present from the time testing materials are distributed to the Test Administrator until all test materials have been returned to the STC to return to the secure material storage area.
  - b. Tests shall be administered according to the standard procedures defined in the Test Administrator's Manual/Test Coordinator Manual, and or other assessment related documentation.
  - c. Test Administrators and Proctors shall maintain a written record/log of any testing irregularities which may occur within the testing room during statewide assessments.
  - d. A seating chart is required for each room/site used for any statewide assessment, including retest and make-up test sessions. Seating charts shall be legible, and reflective of the room's seating layout. Each chart shall maintain the following information: subject area tested, any accommodations provided (if applicable to the test session administered), the date of test administration, name of Proctor, name and Mississippi teachers license number of the TA. Each seating chart shall be signed by the STC and TA verifying the accuracy of the chart.
  - e. Tests are to be administered in an environment that provides an adequate test setting for students. Such an environment should provide adequate lighting, comfortable room temperature, reduced noise level, and adequate spacing to ensure that a secure and fair testing environment is in place for all students. Students should be seated in a manner to minimize opportunities to view the work of others. If adequate spacing cannot be achieved, then cardboard dividers shall be utilized.

### Electronic Devices

18. The MDE prohibits the possession and/or use of any prohibited electronic communication device during the administration of statewide assessments. A prohibited electronic device is any device that gives a student a possible unfair advantage due to the capabilities it possesses.
19. A school's Principal is responsible for the development of procedures and implementation of the policy prohibiting the possession of an electronic devices for students and staff within testing areas at their school site.
  - a. The Principal ensures the policy on the prohibition of electronic devices and the consequences for violations to this policy have been properly disseminated to staff, students, and parents/ guardians. Students and staff shall have a signed electronic device agreement on file.
  - b. The District Test Coordinator, designated technology support staff, and any other testing personnel, as outlined by OSA during DTC training, may have an electronic device in the testing environment to address emergency and/or technological related issues.

### Test Security Violations and Forensic Data

20. The District Superintendent shall investigate all district reports of alleged violations of test security and/or possible educator misconduct. The findings of all investigations shall be submitted to the OSA.
21. The Superintendent will be notified by MDE for investigation when data forensic analysis indicates:
  - statistically significant similar or identical patterns of responses;
  - anomalous erasures are noted in students' responses; and/or
  - statistically significant group or individual scores are inconsistent with established patterns of achievement are noted.

## **V. INVESTIGATION**

The Office of Student Assessment follows a systematic procedure to ensure that all evidence indicating possible testing irregularities is investigated. Corrective action will be taken when warranted.

### **A. PROCEDURE FOR INVESTIGATION**

Identifying and investigating possible testing irregularities involves a variety of data sources. These include formal testing audits, self-reports of testing irregularities, allegations/complaints related to possible testing irregularities, and results of analyses and reports designed to identify possible irregularities, including the percent of students tested, changes in enrollment, score exceptionalities, erasure report results, and missing documents reports during the entire testing window in the district, school, and/or classroom/room where the test was administered.

The procedure for handling testing irregularities is repeated for each test administration. The Office of Student Assessment will notify the school district in writing when a possible testing irregularity has been identified. Within fifteen (15) working days following a reported potential irregularity/violation and/or receipt of the written notification from the Office of Student Assessment, the district will submit a written report to the Office of Student Assessment. The Office of Student Assessment reserves the right to conduct an independent investigation.

The Office of Student Assessment will evaluate the district report to determine whether the possible testing irregularity has been resolved or the testing irregularity has been verified. If the possible testing irregularity has been resolved, the Office of Student Assessment will notify the district that no further action is required. If a testing irregularity has been verified, the Office of Student Assessment will notify the district superintendent.

In the case of any verified testing irregularity that jeopardized or may have jeopardized the security and integrity of the test(s) or the accuracy of the test results, the Office of Student Assessment will report the irregularity to the Office of Accreditation for appropriate action and follow-up. (See *CONSEQUENCES*.) In the case of improper student behavior supported by a data forensics company and not disproved in the district report, the Office of Student Assessment will respond to the district superintendent with a request on behalf of the State Superintendent of Education that the district superintendent ask for the invalidation of the suspect test scores and prepare for the students with the suspect test scores to participate in the next test administration. If the district refuses to invalidate the suspect scores, the State Superintendent will have the authority to invalidate the scores.

In case of an allegation of an irregularity that prompts a need for an investigation by the Mississippi Department of Education and the investigation provides substantial evidence that an irregularity has occurred, the State Superintendent will have the authority to invalidate suspect scores. The district superintendent will be notified of the invalidated suspect scores and of the need to prepare students with the suspect scores to participate in the next test administration.

### **B. PROCEDURES FOR PERSONNEL MISCONDUCT INVESTIGATION**

If an irregularity that represents misconduct or other breaches of test security on the part of district personnel within a school district is identified, the superintendent of the district will be notified of the irregularity. It is the responsibility of the district to investigate the allegation and report its findings to the Office of Student Assessment. If the Office of Student Assessment concludes that the irregularity was resolved, the district is notified that no further action is necessary.

If the Office of Student Assessment concludes that the irregularity was verified, the district superintendent is notified that the Office of Accreditation is being apprised of the finding.

In case of an allegation of an irregularity or in the case of statistical analyses that prompt a need for an investigation by the Mississippi Department of Education and the investigation provides substantial evidence that an irregularity has occurred, the State Superintendent will have the authority to invalidate suspect test scores. The district superintendent will be notified of the invalidated suspect scores and of the need to prepare students with the suspect scores to participate in the next test administration. The district superintendent will be notified that the Office of Accreditation is being apprised of the findings.

The district attorney may investigate allegations of violations of test security on his own initiative following receipt of allegations, at the request of a school district, or at the request of the Mississippi Department of Education.



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After a conviction, the personnel in question will be notified in writing that the evidence of conviction will be presented to the Commission on Educator Licensure and that the Commission is required to take action pursuant to the authority granted in Section 37-16-4, *Code of 1972*, as amended. In the case of improper student behavior supported by the data forensics company and not disproved in the district report, the district superintendent will be asked to request the invalidation of the suspect test scores and prepare for the students with the suspect test scores to participate in the next test administration.

### VI. CONSEQUENCES

#### A. LETTER OF WARNING

If a violation has been verified that did not result in a substantial probability that the security, accuracy, or validity of the test results has been jeopardized, then the Office of Student Assessment may issue a letter of warning to the school district superintendent to be placed in the district and/or school file.

Multiple and/or repeated minor violations that indicate the district and/or school has not corrected issues addressed in previous letters of warning or that the district and/or school has continued to be in noncompliance with the numbered issues listed in Requirements (Section IV) may result in a recommendation for a citation to be placed on the accreditation record. (See Section B below.) In the case of improper student behavior supported by the data forensics company and not disproved in the district reports, the district will be asked to request the invalidation of the suspect scores. If the improper student behavior is determined to be isolated to an individual student's or to individual students' behavior and not supported or condoned by the district, the district will not receive a letter of warning. The district will be asked in an official letter by the Office of Student Assessment to put measures in place to address and prevent the possibility of such improper behavior being repeated. However, multiple administrations resulting in suspect scores may result in further investigation by the Office of Student Assessment that may lead to further consequences. (See CONSEQUENCES.)

#### B. CITATION PLACED ON THE ACCREDITATION RECORD WITH NO IMMEDIATE ACTION TO DOWNGRADE THE ACCREDITATION STATUS

##### 1. Multiple Letters of Warning

Multiple and/or repeated violations as outlined in Section A above may result in a recommendation for a citation to be placed on the district's Accreditation Record Summary. The Office of Accreditation will note the citation of noncompliance on the district's accreditation record and notify the superintendent of this action. No immediate action to downgrade the district accreditation status will be recommended. This citation will remain on record until the district has **successfully** completed the next scheduled administration of the same test for which the irregularity was originally verified.

The Office of Student Assessment may recommend to the Commission on School Accreditation that the school's annual performance classification include the label School in Violation of Test Security.

##### 2. Substantial Probability That the Security, Accuracy, or Validity of the Test Results Has Been Jeopardized

If a verified violation has resulted in a substantial probability that the security, accuracy, or validity of the test results has been jeopardized, the Office of Student Assessment will issue written notification to the district superintendent. The Office of Student Assessment will note the violation on the school and/or district Assessment Record and notify the Office of Accreditation.

The Office of Accreditation will note the citation of noncompliance on the district's accreditation record and notify the superintendent of this action. No immediate action to downgrade the district accreditation status will be recommended. This citation will remain on record until the district has **successfully** completed the next scheduled administration of the **same test** for which the irregularity was originally verified. For example, if the citation is issued for the December online and or paper/pencil Subject Area Administration of the U.S. History Test, the next scheduled administration for the same test will be the December online or paper/pencil Subject Area administration the following year.

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The Office of Student Assessment may submit a recommendation to the Commission on School Accreditation that the school's annual performance classification include the label School in Violation of Test Security.

### **C. CITATION PLACED ON THE ACCREDITATION RECORD THAT MAY RESULT IN IMMEDIATE ACTION TO DOWNGRADE OF ACCREDITATION STATUS**

If it is determined that a violation of a testing requirement jeopardizes the security and integrity of the test(s) or the accuracy of test results, the Office of Student Assessment will issue written notification of the violation to the superintendent of the school district and to the Office of Accreditation.

The Office of Accreditation will note the citation of noncompliance on the district's Accreditation Record Summary and notify the superintendent of this action. The citation of noncompliance will be presented to the Commission on School Accreditation for appropriate action. This citation will remain on record until the district has **successfully** completed the next scheduled administration of the **same test** for which the irregularity was originally verified. For example, if the citation is issued for the December online and or paper/pencil Subject Area Administration of the U.S. History Test, the next scheduled administration for the same test will be the December online and or paper/pencil Subject Area administration the following year.

The Office of Student Assessment may recommend to the Commission on School Accreditation that the school's annual performance classification include the label of School in Violation of Test Security.

### **D. INVALIDATION OF SCORES**

#### **1. Student Retest and Score Invalidation Procedure**

In the case of findings that reveal misconduct at the district or school level, the State Superintendent of Education may order the local school district to have students retake the examination(s) at the district's expense for all areas in question. Should the local district choose not to have students re-examined to establish validity, the State Superintendent of Education will have the authority to have affected scores invalidated. At such time, the local district will be notified.

A school will not receive a school performance classification if the test data have been invalidated, and the school performance classification will be noted as Test Data Invalidated. (See Accreditation Policy 3.3.) In the case that the Office of Student Assessment has requested the district superintendent ask for the invalidation of a student's (or students') suspect scores based upon the analyses by the data forensics company and the district superintendent refuses to do so, the State Superintendent will have the authority to have suspect score(s) invalidated. At such time, the local district will be notified.

#### **2. Individual Irregularity Procedure**

If there is evidence that confirms one (1) or more individual testing irregularities on the Subject Area Tests or other tests that have high stakes consequences for individual student(s) resulting in the student or students not being able to graduate in the current school year, the individual(s) in question shall be notified in writing of the irregularity by the district superintendent and given an opportunity to provide an explanation and evidence that the questioned score(s) is/are consistent with other test scores or other academic performance. If retesting of individuals on the test is required and the retesting yields scores that would deny students a diploma or affect promotion/retention decisions after all retesting opportunities have been exhausted, affected individuals will be given an opportunity to appeal to the State Board of Education the decision to invalidate their original scores on the test. No hearing will be granted to any student who has not completed all other requirements for graduation or promotion and exhausted all retake opportunities.



**Procedure for Handling Possible Testing Irregularities** (The procedure for handling testing irregularities is repeated for each test administration.)

