## Dalton Public Schools - Assessment Security Plan

Dalton Public Schools (DPS) is responsible for ensuring and maximizing

the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of its assessment program. The Director of Assessment and Accountability and Coordinator of Assessment are responsible for monitoring and improving the ongoing quality of the data generated by its assessment program.

Dalton Public Schools addresses assessment security through local board procedures and through the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators. It is the responsibility of the System Test Coordinator to provide annual training to School Test Coordinators and Assistant Test Coordinators regarding security and ethical guidelines. Testing policies and procedures are reviewed annually by the coordinator of assessment and School Test Coordinators and Assistant Test Coordinators are responsible for sharing this information with the applicable local school personnel. Training session sign-in sheets and agendas are on file for documentation.

**District Testing Policy and Regulations**

**Policies Related to Student Assessment**

The district’s testing information is posted on the district’s website under Accountability and Assessment. The applicable information includes Testing Programs, Test Administration, and Use and Dissemination of Test Results.

**Testing Programs**

Dalton Public Schools shall establish, maintain, and implement a system-wide testing program for the purpose of determining scholastic aptitude and the levels of achievement of pupils attending schools.

The purposes of the standardized measures of aptitude and achievement are to

1. Establish the needs to be met by the instructional program.
2. Determine the effectiveness of the instructional program.
3. Assist teachers in individualizing instruction by providing diagnostic information about pupils.

The purpose of the system-wide testing program is to encourage the design of improved instructional activities for each pupil. The tests shall be administered according to established testing procedures. Interpretation of test results shall be made available to parents and students. Test results will be analyzed and used with other data in program planning.

**Test Administration**

Georgia Student Assessment Program Requirements provide comprehensive review of students’ educational achievement from kindergarten through high school. State school law code O.C.G.A. §20-2-281 requires both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced testing at designated grade levels. Dalton Public Schools shall test with the designated state assessments at the state mandated grade levels.

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that ALL students be included in state and district-wide assessments. It also mandates that the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Accommodation Plans (IAP) for any student with a disability include a statement of participation and accommodations needed in the administration of state or district-wide assessments. A student with an IEP may be excluded from specified state or district-wide assessments only if a Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) has been developed and approved by the student’s IEP committee. Only students who cannot meaningfully participate in state or district-wide assessments will qualify for a GAA, and they will be participating in an alternate, functional curriculum. Testing accommodations for English Learners, if needed, are to be made by the LEP Testing Participation Committee and shall be made only when appropriate documentation is on file.

The Board of Education directs the Superintendent or designee to coordinate the administration of the Georgia Student Assessment Program Requirements, to maintain and supervise test security and storage, and to distribute testing materials to schools. The superintendent shall provide for secure storage of test materials and only authorized personnel shall have access to the materials. System and individual school score reports will be made available to the public.

Testing procedures for state mandated assessments will follow the instructions established in the Georgia Student Assessment Handbook and directives received from the Georgia Department of Education. District-wide assessments will follow the assessment’s directions for administration and the procedures published by the system and/or program being evaluated.

**Use and Dissemination of Test Results**

All parents and students over the age of 18 have full access to all records or data relating to the student. Student records will not be released to a third party without prior written consent of the student’s parents or the student if over the age of 18, with exceptions made for other appropriate school officials, government education agencies, and vendors operating as an agent of Dalton Public Schools in accordance with the district’s confidentiality requirements.

Test results and other similar information are public records since they are compiled and maintained by public officials and are paid for with tax dollars. The state Open Records Act provides that any citizen has the right to inspect all state, county, and municipal records. However, this right of inspection does not apply to records that are specifically required by the federal government or state law to be kept confidential or to medical records and similar files, the disclosure of which would be an invasion of personal privacy. Individual aptitude and achievement test results are generally thought of as confidential and releasing them would constitute an invasion of personal privacy and a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

System and individual school score reports will be made available to the public.

**Training and Monitoring Assessment Administration Across the District**

Dalton Public Schools’ Assessment and Accountability Department has developed procedures for test administration and test security. The procedures are consistent with state and federal requirements. All tests shall be administered according to established testing procedures.

**Plans and Procedures**

Dalton Public Schools ensures test security by following consistent procedures in each school. These procedures are designed to be cohesive and consistent with the guidance provided from the Georgia Department of Education *Student Assessment Handbook* and strict adherence to the *Code of Ethics for Educators* established by the *Georgia Professional Standards Commission*.

**Training Model**

Dalton Public Schools implements a train-the-trainer model regarding disseminating information regarding student assessment. Special attention is consistently paid to issues related to test security, test guidelines, and test procedures as it pertains to all testing programs administered by Dalton Public Schools. The System Test Coordinator participates in annual training who then provides training to School Test Coordinators, who in turn, provide training to Test Examiners and Proctors. Test security, guidelines, procedures, and the *Code of Ethics for Educators* established by the Professional Standards Commission is always a part of the annual training. The Code includes discussion pertaining to several standards of professional practice and their alignment to student assessment. They include the following:

* Standard 4: *Misrepresentation or Falsification* - An educator should exemplify honesty and integrity during professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to (3) falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting or erroneously reporting information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel;
* Standard 7: *Confidential Information* - An educator should comply with state and federal laws and local school board/governing board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material and other information. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to (3) violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items, etc.;
* Standard 9: *Failure to Make a Required Report* - An educator should file reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5), or any other required report. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to (2) failure to make a required report of a violation of one or more standards of the Code of Ethics for educators of which they have personal knowledge 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.
* 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 System Test Coordinator reviews these standards of ethical conduct regarding student assessment, specific examples of practices that are consistent with these standards, and specific examples of violations of ethical behavior are reviewed during training. The consequences of violation of these ethical standards that may include putting into jeopardy the professional certification status of violators is reviewed during each state assessment training session.

**Training Procedures**

1. The System Test Coordinator participates in trainings conducted by the Assessment Division of the Georgia Department of Education for each of the assessment programs administered by the state.

2. The System Test Coordinator provides trainings for the School Test Coordinators and Assistant Test Coordinators prior to each assessment administration. Documentation of all trainings is filed at the district level.

* The overarching goal of these training activities is to provide information so that student testing is conducted with integrity and in a manner that establishes confidence that the results are valid and can be used to accurately gauge student achievement and improve instruction.
* The content of these trainings includes applicable information shared in the GADOE training sessions with System Test Coordinators, special information regarding providing special accommodations, instructions to complete necessary coding of answer documents, specific procedures related to the administration of each assessment that are included in Examiner and System/School Test Coordinators’ manuals, information regarding the training of Examiners and Proctors, and other pertinent information.
* Also, included in each of these test specific training opportunities is information regarding test security and professional practice. Topics covered include the secure storage and handling of test materials, instructions for maintaining assessment integrity (i.e. prohibition of electronic devices and other materials during testing, removing or covering instructional materials that may be displayed in classrooms, maintaining a classroom environment conducive to testing, etc.), a review of possible testing irregularities/invalidations, guidelines to avoid testing irregularities, procedures to report testing irregularities, and a review of professional ethics as it relates to student assessment.

3. School Test Coordinators provide training at their local school for Test Examiners and Proctors that includes information pertaining to specific test security, guidelines, and procedures for the state assessment. Documentation of all trainings are filed and housed at the local level.

As the training is conducted at each level, sign-in sheets are retained for all trainings. Testing materials are counted each time they are checked in and out maintaining accurate inventory. Materials are stored in a secure location.

**Testing Plan for all State Mandated Assessments**

**Student Assessment in Georgia Schools**

Standardized testing has become a basic component of accountability for students, teachers, administrators, schools and school systems in Georgia and other states.  Communities rely on their schools' standardized test scores to determine the success of their schools and to compare them to other communities. New industries use test scores as a major factor in selecting locations for new facilities.  As a result of, national and state accountability ratings, standardized testing has become important to all states. When tests are properly administered, scored, and interpreted with a high degree of professionalism, all the stakeholders can be guided to make reliable and appropriate decisions.  A good testing program provides the following benefits:

* Students, based on their individual test scores, will know the skills and knowledge they have mastered and how they compare to other students.
* Parents can evaluate whether their children are obtaining the skills and knowledge they need to be successful during and after their school experiences.
* Teachers can determine if students have mastered the skills and knowledge needed to advance to the next level and if not what skills and knowledge are weak and should be improved.
* Community members have a measuring stick to compare year to year improvement and to compare local student performance with performances of students in other locations.

Georgia relies on state-mandated assessments as a key component of the state accountability program as well as using the test results to fulfill national requirements for educational accountability.  For reliable and valid reporting, tests must be administered fairly and ethically. In the pursuit of fair and ethical testing for all stakeholders of Georgia, the following areas shall be addressed before, during, and after testing.

* *Test Security* – Test materials shall be secured before, during, and after testing and scoring to ensure fair assessment of all students.
* *Test Preparation* – The test should reflect the curriculum being taught and should be developmentally appropriate for the age and level of the test-taker. Teachers should be trained on proper administration procedures and testing practices.
* *Test Administration* – Policies and procedures should be developed to implement fair and ethical testing procedures and practices.  All eligible students should be assessed.
* *Test Data* – Test scoring should be reliable and valid.  Test data interpretation shall be appropriately given to stakeholders.  Curriculum improvement should be guided by adequate data analyses.

**Monitoring**

Monitoring of assessment activities is a joint responsibility between the System Test Coordinator and the School Test Coordinator. Daily reports can be generated and shared from the System Test Coordinator to the School Test Coordinator for all online testing platforms (Georgia Milestones, ACCESS). Monitoring is organized at each individual school in coordination with the test security, guidelines, and procedures that have been outlined during test administration training. The Principal and School Test Coordinator must confirm that assessment procedures have been adhered to upon the completion of each administration through the signing of the Principal’s Certification form. Once all the Principal Certification forms have been processed, the Superintendent and System Test Coordinator also submit a Certification Form each July and January to the Department of Education also confirming that assessment procedures have been adhered to with the district.

**Georgia Student Assessment Program Responsibilities**

Standardized tests results are the basis for many reports and accountability measures.  Because of the priority, it plays in national and state expectations, the administration of tests shall be held to the Code of Ethics. An essential component is that all personnel perform their assigned responsibilities to maintain test integrity and for the process to be appropriately implemented. Below is a summary of the main responsibilities of the main individuals charged with operating the district’s assessment program. A detailed list of each position’s responsibilities related to assessment can be found in GADOE’s *Student Assessment Handbook*.

**Superintendent -** The Superintendent has ultimate responsibility and accountability for all testing activities within the local school system.

* Develops local policies and procedures based on Georgia Department of Education guidelines and test publisher’s directions to maintain test security.
* Supervises and monitors Principals to ensure that they fulfill their specific roles and responsibilities for the administration of tests.
* Ensures that all personnel involved with testing receive training on appropriate test administration, policies, and procedures including accommodations for each assessment given.
* Informs the local Board of Education, state test coordinator and Professional Standards Committee of any breach of security by employees of the system.

**System Test Coordinator –** The System Test Coordinator serves as the liaison between the district and GADOE for all test administration activities.

* Assumes responsibility for carrying out the approved district assessment plan for administration of all tests.
* Conducts local system trainings of School Coordinators.
* Coordinates all administration activity.
* Knows and enforces responsibilities of all other roles.
* Adheres to the state testing calendar and local calendars/schedules.
* Implements plans for ordering and receipt of materials; distribution of materials; test security; administration; collection and return shipments; and receipt and dissemination of assessment reports and data.
* Communicates to the GADOE’s Assessment Division in a timely manner when testing irregularities occur.

**Principal -** The Principal has ultimate responsibility and accountability for all testing activities within the local school.

* Ensures test security within the school building.
* Ensures distribution of test materials occurs immediately prior to test administration.
* Supervises all testing activities.
* Ensures that all school personnel have been appropriately trained on test administration, procedures, and polices, including accommodations for each assessment given.
* Ensures that accommodations have been given to only those students who appropriately need accommodations and have documentation of such need.
* Implements system’s testing policies and procedures and establishes needed local school policies and procedures to ensure all students are tested fairly and appropriately.
* Reports immediately any breach of security to the Superintendent.

**School Test Coordinator –** The School Test Coordinator serves as the principal’s designee for supervising and monitoring all test administration activities at the local school or testing site.

* Attends applicable district testing trainings and redelivers that training to the appropriate personnel at the local school or testing site.
* Counts and secures all test materials utilized at the testing site.
* Organizes and supervises all test material distribution/return, including the signing out and signing in of all test materials.
* Plans for all aspects of the school’s test administration, then monitors the test administration environment.
* Receives and verifies all test material counts after testing each day
* Collaborates effectively with local system colleagues who have a role in the success of the district’s testing program.

**Examiner –** Examiners are the district employees who are trained to administer state assessments to the students being assessed.

* Must hold a Georgia PSC-issued certificate (teachers, counselors, administrators).
* Protects the security of all testing materials and student responses.
* Verifies the correct count of all test materials at the beginning and end of each session.
* Assumes control of the testing environment and engages in active monitoring throughout the testing session.
* Ensures the accuracy of demographic/student information on answer documents.
* Provides the correct delivery of assigned student testing accommodations.
* Follows procedures for testing as given in Examiner’s Manuals, including reading all directions/scripts to students
* Follows all proper procedures for using testing materials, as test materials are not to be used for any purpose other than test administration.

**Proctor -** If a testing room includes 30 or more students, GADOE requires that the Examiner be assisted by a Proctor to help in the supervision of the students and the test environment.

* Must be trained in test security, the specific test being administered, and their duties in the testing location.
* With Examiner supervision, ensures that students are managing test materials appropriately.
* In the presence of a trained Examiner, provides active monitoring of the testing location for the duration of the testing session.

In addition to these roles, other individuals, such as the System Technology Director, System Special Education Director, and English Learner Specialist, also play a role in the effective operation of the district’s assessment program. Along with the positions described above, a detailed list of these individuals’ responsibilities can be found in GADOE’s *Student Assessment Handbook.*

**Plan for Responding to Reports of Irregularities and/or Security Breaches**

The System Test Coordinator responds to testing irregularities and security breaches reported to them from the School Test Coordinator in a timely manner and in a way that establishes the validity of assessments and ensures accountability.

**Reporting of Irregularities**

Training of School Test Coordinators, Examiners, and Proctors includes defining what constitutes an irregularity and/or security breach, citing examples of each, discussing the responsibility of certified personnel to report any such observations, and reviewing the procedure to follow in making reports.  Irregularity forms are made available for all assessments via the Canvas Assessment Course.

Examiners and Proctors are instructed to immediately report possible irregularities and security breaches to the School Test Coordinator who, in turn, must report to the System Test Coordinator. The System Test Coordinator will provide guidance for investigating of the incident which may include obtaining written narratives from all parties involved. Materials collected related to the investigation are gathered by the System Test Coordinator.

Irregularities and security breaches must be reported by the System Testing Coordinator to the appropriate GA DOE Assessment Administration Division Assessment Specialist through the state’s MyGADOE portal.  The System Testing Coordinator will follow the instructions of the GADOE Assessment Specialist who will provide guidance in the investigation, suggest a course of action to respond to the irregularity and/or security breach, give instructions for recording the incident on the MyGADOE secure portal, provide the appropriate codes if the incident is deemed to be an irregularity and/or requires the invalidation of an assessment, and make a recommendation for a report to the Professional Standards Commission, if appropriate.

**Code of Ethics Guidelines for Student Assessment**

The chart below provides guidance for sanctions of ethics violations by educators. The sanctions (1, 2, 3, 4 & 5) listed below are intended to be progressive.  Repeated violations have escalating consequences, which shall include additional sanctions at the local system level. Proposed sanctions are as follows:

**1.** System Reprimand. **2.** PSC Reprimand. **3**. PSC Suspension w/out pay. **4**. PSC Revocation. **5.** PSC sanction based on situation

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Before the Test Session – It is inappropriate and unethical to:** | | **Sanctions** |
| 1. | Reveal all or any part of copyrighted tests to students or others, in any manner, oral or written, prior to test administration unless directed by the DOE. | 3 - 4 |
| 2. | Use of test items and prompts prior to administration for instructional purposes. | 3 |
| 3. | Discourage students from putting forth optimal effort based on purpose of the test. | 1 - 2 - 3 |
| 4. | Review or provide answers to test questions. | 3 - 4 |
| 5. | Possess unauthorized copy(ies) of state tests. | 3 - 4 |
| 6. | Reclassify students solely for the purpose of avoiding state testing. | 3 - 4 |
| **During the Test Session – It is Inappropriate and Unethical to:** | | **Sanctions** |
| 7. | Vary from the directions outlined in the administration manual (i.e. time, reading verbatim, etc.) | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 |
| 8. | Read any parts of the test to students except where indicated in the directions (unless indicated by an IEP, IAP, or TPC). | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 |
| 9. | Fail to provide state approved accommodations as prescribed in a student’s IEP, IAP, or TPC plan | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 |
| **OR** provide accommodations that are not included in the IEP, IAP, or TPC plan. |
| **During the Test Session – It is Inappropriate and Unethical to:** | | **Sanctions** |
| 10. | Interpret, explain, or paraphrase the test items. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 |
| 11. | Define or pronounce words used in the test. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 |
| 12. | Coach (comments or gestures of any kind) students during the test, including remarks about quality or quantity of student work. | 2 - 3 - 4 |
| 13. | Provide answers to test questions. | 3 - 4 |
| 14. | Reveal all or any part of copyrighted tests to students or others, in any manner, oral or written, prior to test administration unless directed by the DOE. | 3 - 4 |
| 15. | Use test items and prompts prior to administration for instructional purposes. | 3 |
| 16. | Fail to provide an appropriate testing environment (e.g. instructional materials removed/covered). | 1 - 2 |
| **After the Test Session– It is Inappropriate and Unethical to:** | | **Sanctions** |
| 17. | Make inaccurate reports, unsubstantiated claims, inappropriate interpretations, or otherwise false and misleading statements about assessment. | 5 |
| 18. | Discuss test items or answers. | 1 - 2 - 3 |
| 19. | Erase or change student answers. | 3 - 4 |
| **At Any Time During Test Administration, It is Inappropriate and Unethical to:** | | **Sanctions** |
| 20. | Not account for all secure test materials as provided by the school test coordinator at any time during test administration. | 3 - 4 |
| 21. | Compromise the integrity of the assessment. | 5 |
| 22. | Fail to report possible ethical violations by any professional. | 5 |

*\*\*” Test session” means any time during the test administration process.  This could include training sessions, test sessions over multiple days of the same test, or the time following test administration when materials are still in the school buildings/systems.*

**Consequences for Failure to Follow Prescribed Procedures/Violations of Professional Ethics**

All School Test Coordinators are trained on Test Security and Prescribed Procedures and/or Violations of Professional Ethics each year and are required to provide the same training to all applicable faculty members before any state testing at the school. Documentation of the school trainings is filed at the school level for five years.

All school system personnel are expected to follow prescribed procedures and to operate within ethical guidelines in regard student assessment. Failure to do so can result in the full variety of disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employment. Violations of Professional Ethics will be reported to the Professional Standards Commission who may implement a variety of sanctions that can include revocation of the professional credentials of offending educators.

In the event of a violation of the Code of Ethics for Testing, the PSC may, in accordance with its rules, impose any one or more of the following:  Reprimand, Suspension, or Revocation.