Appendix 8 - NSCAS Security Procedures

Introduction

The security of state-administered assessments is of the utmost importance to the Nebraska Department of Education. This document outlines the state's expectations and procedures on test booklet and online security, test administration security, and the identification and reporting of test security violations. Breaches in test security must be quickly identified and reported to the Nebraska Department of Education. This document explains to participants at the school, district, and state levels how to identify breaches in test security and what actions should be taken in response to those breaches.

Test Security

District Assessment Contacts, School Assessment Coordinators, and Test Proctors share the responsibility for ensuring that all test materials and student responses are handled securely and confidentially in accordance with security procedures. The NSCAS assessments are to be administered by professional staff members who have been oriented in the proper test administration procedures for NSCAS.

The NSCAS assessments are confidential and proprietary and are owned by the Nebraska Department of Education. The test content is not to be viewed by anyone prior to the test administration. Only students being tested are allowed access to the test at the time of testing. Once a test is started during test administration, only the student taking the test is allowed to view that student's booklet or screen. No testing materials are to be reproduced. No test materials are to be accessed outside the school building except under conditions approved by the Nebraska Department of Education.

The NSCAS assessments rely on the measurement of individual achievement. Any deviation from testing procedures meant to ensure validity and security (group work, teacher coaching, pre-teaching or pre-release of the test items, etc.) would be a violation of test security. District and school personnel with access to the test materials must not discuss, disseminate, or otherwise reveal the contents of the tests to anyone. Teachers, Proctors, or other district or school personnel may not read test items aloud, silently, to themselves, or to another individual or student group. Parents/guardians may not read test items under any circumstances.

While some of the guidelines below apply mainly to Test Proctors, it is important for all personnel involved in testing to be aware of these procedures.

The Do's and Don'ts of Security

Do's	Dont's
Do control access to all cell phones and personal electronic devices.	Do not discuss, disseminate, or otherwise reveal the contents of the test to anyone.
Do attend any district or school training for the administration of the test in order to be properly informed of the procedures to follow, including securing test materials.	Do not keep, copy, reproduce, or use any reading, mathematics, or science test, test item, any specific test content.
Do move around the testing site to ensure students are adhering to the instructions given.	Do not examine responses to any item or any section of a secured test in any manner inconsistent with the instructions provided by and through the Nebraska Department of Education.
Do collect scratch paper and return it to the School Assessment Coordinator.	Do not leave students unattended with testing materials.
Do follow appropriate accommodation procedures as found in the NSCAS *Accessibility Manual.*	Do not leave secure test materials alone or in an unsupervised location with students. Secure material should be kept in a locked storage container or in a locked room when not in use. See manuals for additional details for each assessment.
Do make students feel comfortable and relaxed.	Do not allow students to leave the testing site with test materials for any reason.
Do escort all students and carry all secure testing materials to alternate sites for extended time, etc.	Do not allow students to look ahead to other content areas before being instructed to do so.
Do have test booklets or test tickets/online set-up ready for students ahead of time.	Do not coach or provide feedback in any way, which includes answering any questions relating to the contents.
Do remove from the wall all curriculum materials that relate to the tested content.	Do not alter, influence, or interfere with a test response in any way or instruct the student to do so. Students who move to alternate testing sites for extended time should be escorted, and school personnel should carry all secure testing materials to the new testing location.
Do maintain standardized testing procedures.	Do not complete any unanswered item or provide actual answers to students.
Do read the NSCAS *Security Manual* and all applicable test administration manuals before testing.	Do not return any test booklet or answer sheet to any student after it has been turned in to the Proctor, except in the case of students going to another testing site for extended time. (Note: If after the student returns the test booklet and answer sheet it is noticed that not all of the test items were answered, the test booklet and answer sheet cannot be returned to the student to complete.)
	Do not place students in situations in which they can discuss test items or answers, such as during breaks.

Test Security Agreement

The Building Principal Security Agreement and District Assessment Contact Confidentiality of Information Agreement was sent by email. Every principal and DAC must have signed a security agreement to participate in NSCAS testing.

Breaches in Test Security

The Test Security Procedure for the NSCAS assessments establishes guidelines for dealing with breaches in test security. Breaches may include student impropriety, test violations, educator misconduct, or the mishandling of test materials. In order to maintain the integrity of the test, there must be strict adherence to the rules and procedures for administering the test.

Reporting and Investigating Test Security Violations

Any identification or suspected violation of defined testing procedures must be reported immediately. If a student suspects a breach in test security, the student should report the alleged incident to a teacher or administrator. If a teacher, parent, assessment administrator, or school administrator suspects a breach in test security, he or she should report the alleged incident in writing to the district's superintendent or the Nebraska Statewide Assessment Office.

In the case of a test contractor suspecting a breach in test security, the suspected tests should be "flagged." The contractor's scoring director and project manager will then review the flagged tests and determine whether a test security breach has occurred. The test contractor should immediately notify the Nebraska Statewide Assessment Office of any test security breach and send them a summary file of the flagged student work.

As soon as a suspected test security breach has been verified, either by the test contractor or the Nebraska Department of Education, a district superintendent or designee of the investigation will have 45 days to complete a report. The report will be sent to the Nebraska Statewide Assessment Office indicating the following:

- The details of the investigation
- The findings
- The action taken by the school, administrators, and/or district, if any

Upon completion of the report, the district should return any student answer sheets involved in the incident to the contractor along with the other student answer sheets.

Consequences of Test Security Violations

School districts are responsible for conducting the investigation and taking appropriate actions in response to breaches in test security. NOE may, at the discretion of the Statewide Assessment Director, initiate a formal educator misconduct investigation that may result in disciplinary action. In addition, NOE may invalidate any or all test scores involved in the investigation.