



Standard Test Administration and Testing Ethics Policy

For Utah Educators

Martell Menlove, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4200



Purpose of Testing

When administered properly, standardized assessments allow students to demonstrate their abilities, knowledge, aptitude, or skills (see [Board Rule R277-473-9](#)).

Valid and reliable results from uniform assessments provide information used by:

- **Students**, to determine how well they have learned the skills and curriculum they are expected to know.
- **Parents**, to know whether their student is gaining the skills and competencies needed to be competitive and successful.
- **Teachers**, to gauge their students' understanding and identify potential areas of improvement in their teaching.
- **LEAs (districts or charter schools)**, to evaluate programs and provide additional support.
- **The public**, to evaluate schools and districts.

As educators, we are obligated to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills fairly and accurately.

Educators involved with the state-wide assessment of students must conduct testing in a fair and ethical manner (see [Utah Code 53A-1-608](#); [Board Rule R277-473-9](#)).

The best test preparation a teacher can provide is good instruction throughout the year that covers the breadth and depth of the curriculum for a course, using varied instructional and assessment activities tailored to individual students.

Required Assessments

Educators must administer the following required assessments and submit accurate data to the USOE on these assessments (see Board Rule [R277-404-3](#); [R277-473-5](#)):

- [Student Assessment of Growth and Excellence](#) (SAGE) Summative Computer Adaptive Tests for English language arts grades 3-11; mathematics grades 3-8 and Secondary I, II, and III; science grades 4-8, earth science, biology, physics and chemistry
- [Direct Writing Assessment](#) (DWA) for grades 5 and 8
- [DIBELS Next](#) composite benchmark reading assessment for grades 1-3
- [ACT](#) test for grade 11
- [Utah Alternate Assessment](#) (UAA)
- [WIDA ACCESS for ELLs](#)
- [National Assessment of Educational Progress](#) (NAEP)

Information about these tests can be found on the Assessment pages of the Utah State Office of Education website:

<http://www.schools.utah.gov/assessment/default.aspx>

Before Testing: Teaching Practices

Ethical testing begins with ethical teaching. Educators should:

- Ensure students are enrolled in appropriate courses and receive appropriate instruction.
- Provide instruction to the intended depth and breadth of the course curriculum.
- Provide accommodations throughout instruction to eligible students as identified by an ELL, IEP, or 504 team.
- Use a variety of assessment methods to inform instructional practices.
- Introduce students to various test-taking strategies throughout the year.
- Use the math and science reference sheets provided for specific assessments as instructional tools throughout the year.
- Reduce classroom interruptions to maximize student learning.

Educators may also:

- Use formative assessments throughout the year using high-quality, non-secure test questions (e.g., SAGE Formative).
- Provide interim tests during the year that are predictive of summative testing performance (e.g., SAGE Interim)

Preparation guidelines for specific assessments can be found on the Test Administration Manuals (TAMs) page:

[http://www.schools.utah.gov/assessment/Testing-Director-Resources/Test-Administration-Manuals-\(TAMs\).aspx](http://www.schools.utah.gov/assessment/Testing-Director-Resources/Test-Administration-Manuals-(TAMs).aspx)

During Testing: Assessment Practices

Educators must ensure that:

- An appropriate environment is set for testing to limit distractions.
- All students who are eligible for testing are tested.
- Active test proctoring occurs, which includes walking around the room to make sure that each student is logged into the correct test and is at the correct workstation.
- No person is left alone in a computer lab with student tests that are open.
- The importance of the test, test participation, and the good faith efforts of all students are not undermined.
- Personnel who administer tests are trained and are accountable for ethically administering tests.
- All information in the Test Administration Manual (TAM) for each test administered is reviewed and strictly followed (see [53A-1-608](#); [R277-473-9](#)).
- Accommodations are provided for eligible students, as identified by an ELL, IEP, or 504 team. These accommodations should be in line with and not beyond those provided throughout the instructional year.
- Test materials are secure before, during, and after testing. When not in use, all materials must be locked where students, parents or the public cannot gain access. Electronic security of tests and student information should not be compromised.

Educators may not enter a student’s computer-based test to examine or change answers on either the computer or a paper answer document for any reason.

Administration guidelines for specific assessments can be found on the Test Administration Manuals (TAMs) page:

[http://www.schools.utah.gov/assessment/Testing-Director-Resources/Test-Administration-Manuals-\(TAMs\).aspx](http://www.schools.utah.gov/assessment/Testing-Director-Resources/Test-Administration-Manuals-(TAMs).aspx)

After Testing Is Finished

- Follow on-screen instructions for closing out the testing session (with the Lab/Session Manager).
- Arrange make-up and test completion sessions for students who miss all or part of the test.
- Actively proctor make-up and test completion sessions.
- Organize and return all test materials to the School Testing Coordinator.
- Collect and securely destroy all by-products of student testing, including notes, outlines, graphic organizers, drafts, etc.

Educators may not change student answers in any way, for any reason.

Guidelines for concluding specific assessments can be found on the Test Administration Manuals (TAMs) page:

[http://www.schools.utah.gov/assessment/Testing-Director-Resources/Test-Administration-Manuals-\(TAMs\).aspx](http://www.schools.utah.gov/assessment/Testing-Director-Resources/Test-Administration-Manuals-(TAMs).aspx)

Test Results

Test results should be:

- Provided to students and parents.
- Made available to educators for use in improving their instruction.
- Maintained in student files.
- Kept confidential.

It is recommended that educators work in groups to decide how test data will be used.

For more information on effective use of testing data, see the Testing Director Resources page:

<http://www.schools.utah.gov/assessment/Testing-Director-Resources.aspx>

Unethical Practices

It is unethical for educators to jeopardize the integrity of an assessment or the validity of student responses.

Unethical practices include:

- Providing students with questions from the test to review before taking the test.
- Viewing a test, then changing instruction or reviewing specific concepts because those concepts appear on the test.
- Rewording or clarifying questions, or using inflection or gestures to help students answer.
- Allowing students to use unauthorized resources to find answers, including dictionaries, thesauruses, mathematics tables, online references, etc.
- Displaying materials on walls or other high visibility surfaces that provide answers to specific test items (e.g. posters, word walls, formula charts, etc.) to inflate student scores.
- Reclassifying students to alter subgroup reports.
- Allowing parent volunteers to assist with the proctoring of a test their child is taking or using students to supervise other students taking a test.
- Reviewing a student's answers and instructing the student to, or suggesting that the student should, rethink his/her answers.
- Copying, in whole or in part, specific items appearing on a test.
- Explicitly or implicitly encouraging students to engage in dishonest testing behavior (seating, etc.).

For more information see the Frequently Asked Questions section of the Testing Directors Resources page:

http://www.schools.utah.gov/assessment/Testing-Director-Resources/TD_Ethics_Policy_FAQ-pdf.aspx

Accountability for Practices

Educators are accountable to their LEA (district or charter school) and the Utah State Board of Education for ethical practices. LEAs are required to ensure all school testing coordinators, administrators, and teachers administering tests are aware of their role in state-wide assessments, and may include ethical testing practices in educator evaluations.

Ethics Violations

Ethical violations are to be reported to the supervisor of the person who may be investigated, the school administrator, the district testing director, or the [state assessment director](#).

Protocol

- LEA policies and procedures will be followed.
- In most cases, an initial investigation will be conducted at the school level.
- The LEA testing director will review the initial investigation and determine findings.
- If the violation is of sufficient concern, the incident may also be forwarded to the [Utah Professional Practices Advisory Commission](#) (UPPAC) for review.
- If inappropriate practices are found, teachers may receive further training or a reprimand, be subject to disciplinary action, be terminated, and/or lose their Utah teaching license (see [53A-1-608](#); [R277-473-9](#)).

For more information about the processes in place concerning the investigation of ethical violations, contact your local LEA testing director.

Utah State Law

53A-1-608

- (1) School district employees may not provide any specific instruction or preparation of students which would be a breach of testing ethics, such as the teaching of specific test questions.
- (2) School district employees who administer the test shall follow the standardization procedures in the published test administration manual and any additional specific instruction developed by the State Board of Education.
- (3) The State Board of Education may revoke the certification of an individual who violates this section.



Utah State Board Rule

R277-473-9: Standardized Testing Rules and Professional Development Requirement

- A. It is the responsibility of all educators to take all reasonable steps to ensure that standardized tests reflect the ability, knowledge, aptitude, or basic skills of each individual student taking standardized tests.
- B. School districts/charter schools shall develop policies and procedures consistent with the law and Board rules for standardized test administration, make them available and provide training to all teachers and administrators.
- C. At least once each school year, school districts/charter schools shall provide professional development for all teachers, administrators, and standardized test administrators concerning guidelines and procedures for standardized test administration, including teacher responsibility for test security and proper professional practices.
- D. School district/charter school assessment staff shall use the Testing Ethics PowerPoint presentation and the Testing Ethics booklet developed by the USOE, available on the USOE Assessment homepage in providing training for all test administrators/proctors.
- E. Each and every test administrator/proctor shall individually sign a Testing Ethics signature page also available on the USOE Assessment homepage.
- F. All teachers and test administrators shall conduct test preparation, test administration, and the return of all protected test materials in strict accordance with the procedures and guidelines specified in test administration manuals, school district/charter school rules and policies, Board rules, and state application of federal requirements for funding.
- G. Teachers, administrators, and school personnel shall not:
 - (1) provide students directly or indirectly with specific questions, answers, or the subject matter of any specific item in any standardized test prior to test administration;
 - (2) copy, print, or make any facsimile of protected testing material prior to test administration without express permission of the specific test publisher, including USOE, and school district/charter school administration;

- (3) change, alter, or amend any student answer or any other standardized test materials at any time in such a way as to alter the student's intended response;
- (4) use any prior form of any standardized test (including pilot test materials) that has not been released by the USOE in test preparation without express permission of the specific test publisher, including USOE, and school district/charter school administration;
- (5) violate any specific test administration procedure or guideline specified in the test administration manual, or violate any state or school district/charter school standardized testing policy or procedure;
- (6) knowingly and intentionally do anything that would inappropriately affect the security, validity, or reliability of standardized test scores of any individual student, class, or school;

H. Violation of any of these rules may subject licensed educators to possible disciplinary action under R277-515, Utah Educator Standards.

R277-473-4: Security of Testing Materials

- A. All test questions and answers for all standardized tests required under Sections [53A-1-601](#) through [53A-1-611](#), shall be designated protected, consistent with Section [63G-2-305\(5\)](#), until released by the USOE. A student's individual answer records shall be available to parents under the federal [Family Educational Right and Privacy Act \(FERPA\), 20 USC, Sec. 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99](#).
- B. The USOE shall maintain a record of all protected test materials sent to the school districts/charter schools.
- C. Each school district/charter school shall maintain a record of the number of booklets of all protected test materials sent to each school in the district and charter school, and shall submit the record to the USOE upon request.
- D. Each school district/charter school shall ensure that all test materials are secured in an area where only authorized personnel have access, or are returned to USOE following testing as required by the USOE. Individual educators shall not retain test materials, in either paper or electronic form beyond the time period allowed for test administration.

- E. Individual schools within a school district and charter schools shall secure or return paper test materials within three working days of the completion of testing. Electronic testing materials shall be secured between administrations of the test, and shall be removed from teacher and student access immediately following the final administration of the test.
- F. The USOE shall ensure that all test materials sent to a school district/charter school are returned as required by USOE, and may periodically audit school districts/charter schools to confirm that test materials are properly accounted for and secured.
- G. School district/charter school employees and school personnel may not copy or in any way reproduce protected test materials without the express permission of the specific test publisher, including the USOE.

Frequently Asked Questions

FAQs may be viewed on the Utah State Office of Education's Assessment website:

<http://www.schools.utah.gov/assessment/Testing-Director-Resources.aspx>

Additional Resources

Utah State Law – Chapter 53A

<http://le.utah.gov/~code/TITLE53A/53A01a.htm>

Utah State Office of Education

<http://www.schools.utah.gov>

Utah State Board of Education – Rules

<http://www.rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r277/r277.htm>

Utah Professional Practices Advisory Commission (UPPAC)

<http://www.schools.utah.gov/uppac/>

Assessment Section, Utah State Office of Education

<http://www.schools.utah.gov/assessment>

Utah State Core Curriculum

<http://www.schools.utah.gov/curr/core>

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>