



Delaware System of Student Assessments (DeSSA) Test Security Manual

August 2023

NOTE: Important updates to last year's manual are highlighted, found on pages noted below.

Page 3	Adds Through Year Social Studies to list of DeSSA assessments
Page 8	Sets date for completion of Test Security training
Page 8	Sets date for submission of LEA (local education agencies) Test Security Plans
Page 15	Sets Testing Schedule policy within a school or LEA
Page 17	Clarifies Print-on-Demand accessibility support

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Table of Contents

Vendor and Help Desk Information.....	2
Introduction.....	3
Overview and Purpose.....	4
Test Security and Consequences of Violations	5
User Roles and Responsibilities.....	7
Test Security Plans.....	8
Responding to Test Security Violations	9
DeSSA Test Actions and Appeals	10
Training and Administration.....	12
Accessibility Supports.....	13
Testing Time.....	14
Testing Environment	18
Appendix A: State Assessment System Security and Violations	20
Appendix B: Unethical Practices	23
Appendix C: Universal Test Security and Non-Disclosure Agreements	25
Appendix D: Policy on Electronic Devices	27
Appendix E: What to Do When Guide	29
Appendix F: What to Do After Testing for Students	32

DeSSA Vendor and Department of Education Help Desks

For questions regarding the *DeSSA Test Security Manual* or security practices and requirements, please contact the Office of Assessment at (302) 857-3391 or [Dusty Shockley](#), Education Associate for Test Security at the Department of Education.

For questions or additional assistance with use of the online testing system, please contact the vendor Helpdesk for each specific assessment.

TEST and VENDOR	PHONE & EMAIL
DeSSA ELA & Math Cambium Assessment	877-560-8331 EMAIL LINK
DeSSA Science & Social Studies Pearson Assessment	888-827-1089 EMAIL LINK
DeSSA ALT ELA, Math, and Science Dynamic Learning Maps	855-277-9751 EMAIL LINK
DeSSA ACCESS 20.0 for MLLs Data Recognition Corporation	855-787-9615 EMAIL LINK
School Day SAT and PSAT College Board	855-373-6387 EMAIL LINK

When contacting a Helpdesk, provide as much detail as possible about any issues encountered.

Delaware System of Student Assessments (DeSSA)

Introduction

The Delaware System of Student Assessments (DeSSA) is a combination of national, state, and district level administered assessments. The measured outcomes of each assessment and the state standards assessed vary with each test. The assessments are utilized for a variety of purposes, including determining the strengths and needs of students as well as the instructional program.

This Test Security Manual has been approved by the Director of the Office of Assessment and Accountability and will be reviewed and revised, as needed, on an annual basis. All District Test Coordinators (DTCs), School Test Coordinators (STCs), Test Administrators (TAs), and support staff involved in the testing administration are required to review and adhere to this security manual, coordinated security training, and [Delaware State Code and Regulations](#).

The Office of Assessment and Accountability delivers the following assessments to Delaware students:

National-Level Assessment

- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) – Grades 4 and 8

State-Level Assessments

Test materials, security regulations, training, and administration procedures are provided by the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) for the following state-level assessments:

- ACCESS 2.0 for Multilingual Learners (MLLs) – grades K–12
- Alternate ACCESS 2.0 for MLLs – grades K–12
- DeSSA ALT – Reading and Mathematics, grades 3–8 and 11, and Science grades 5, 8, and 10
- DeSSA Science – grades 5, 8, and High School Biology
- DeSSA Social Studies Summative– grade 11
- DeSSA Social Studies Through-Year Assessments – grade 4, 6 and grade 8
- DeSSA Social Studies Through-Year Assessments – grades 5 and 7 (Field Tests)
- DTGSS Student Improvement Component – grades K–12
- PSAT – grade 10
- SAT School Day – grade 11
- DeSSA English Language Arts and Mathematics Summative – grades 3–8
- Smarter Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs) and Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) for English Language Arts and Mathematics – grades 3–8 (optional)

Test Security Overview

Purpose of Manual

This Test Security Manual sets forth test security policies, procedures, and responsibilities for the DeSSA assessments. The elements of this manual are intended to provide greater protection of DeSSA intellectual property, to reduce test fraud and theft, and to maintain high program standards and integrity. This publication contains policy and guidelines prepared by the DDOE to help build a common understanding of appropriate testing practices and to ensure district and school administrators, teachers, and other school personnel have the information required to uniformly administer DeSSA assessments in a secure manner. This manual may also be used to train staff and as a reference to structure security roles, responsibilities, and performance expectations.

All DeSSA items and test materials are secure and must be appropriately managed to protect the integrity, validity, and confidentiality of assessment instruments, items, prompts, and student information. Any deviation in test administration must be reported as a test security incident, as described in this manual, to ensure the continued validity of the assessment results. Failure to honor security severely jeopardizes district and state accountability requirements and the accuracy of student data.

Importance of Test Security

Maintaining the security and confidentiality of DeSSA assessments provides standard and equal testing opportunities for all students. Test security goals include:

- adhering to high professional standards;
- protecting the investment of resources, time, and energy;
- maintaining consistency across all testing occasions and sites;
- protecting student information and maintaining confidentiality;
- providing secure assessments that result in valid and reliable scores.

[Title 14 – Education, Subchapter IV, State Assessment Security and Violations](#), Delaware Code outlines the rules and regulations to ensure the security of the assessment administration, collection, and reporting of assessment data. Title 14, Subchapter IV, in its entirety, is in Appendix A of this Test Security Manual.

Test security incidents are behaviors prohibited during test administration (both online and paper-and-pencil) because they may affect the validity of the assessment, give a student an unfair advantage, or compromise the secure administration of the assessment. Whether intentional or accidental, failure to comply with security rules, either by staff or students, constitutes a test security incident.

Duty to Report

Employees of a Delaware public school or district who have witnessed, been informed of, or suspect the possibility of a test security incident that could potentially affect the integrity of the

tests are responsible for reporting these incidents to the School and/or District Test Coordinator. See Appendix A, [Title 14, Subchapter IV State Assessment System Security and Violations](#), in this manual for specific state law relating to this responsibility.

District/Charter and School Assessment Behavior Violations

These assessment behavior violations summarize the categories of violations found in this Test Security Manual and in the multiple DeSSA Test Administration Manuals:

- any practice that supports or assists others in conducting inappropriate test preparation activities, including during test administration or scoring of an assessment.
- any practice that corrects or alters any student's response to an assessment either during or following the administration of an assessment.
- any practice that excludes one or more students from an assessment because a student has not performed well or may not perform well on the assessment, or because the aggregate performance of a group may be affected by the student's performance on the assessment.
- any practice that provides a student or other persons unauthorized access to an assessment.
- any practice that results in a potential conflict of interest or exerts an undue influence on a person administering or scoring an assessment.
- any practice that either makes or appears to make an assessment process unfair.

Test Security

Conduct that violates the security and confidentiality of a test is defined as any departure from the test administration procedures established in this security manual and other test administration materials.

Consequences of Test Security Violations

Administrators, certified and non-certified school staff, and students must adhere to appropriate testing practices. The consequences of violations may include the invalidation of student test results, limitations placed on Delaware professional licensure, and liability for copyright infringement.

Disciplinary measures for educators and school staff may be determined at the employment level based on a school board's policy and the severity of the test security violations. Examples of such measures include a written reprimand, suspension, or termination of contract. The Delaware Department of Education may also pursue its own sanctions of department-licensed individuals for testing irregularities and breaches.

Any person who violates test security or confidentiality, assists in the violation of test security or confidentiality, or solicits another to violate or assist in the violation of test security or confidentiality, as well as any person who fails to report such a violation, is subject to the following penalties:

- Placement of restrictions on the issuance, renewal, or holding of a Delaware educator certificate, either indefinitely or for a set term;
- Issuance of an inscribed or non-inscribed reprimand;
- Suspension of a Delaware educator certificate for a set term; or
- Revocation or cancellation of a Delaware educator certificate without opportunity for reapplication either for a set term or permanently.

In addition, any irregularities in test security or confidentiality may result in the invalidation of students' assessments.

User Roles and Responsibilities

Every individual who interacts with the assessments, communicates test results, and/or receives testing information is responsible for test security. This includes, but is not limited to:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ● Delaware Department of Education Staff | ● School Test Coordinators |
| ● District Administrators and Heads of Charter Schools | ● Test Administrators |
| ● District Test Coordinators | ● Certified and Non-certified Public School Staff |
| | ● Students and the Community |

DDOE Office of Assessment and Accountability will be responsible for:

- developing the DeSSA Test Security Manual and providing coordinated security training;
- reviewing and resolving test security incidents submitted by District Test Coordinators;
- reviewing appeals for resets, reopens, grace period extensions, invalidations, and exemptions;
- monitoring test administration, test security, and participation for eligible students for all public schools.

Overall Assessment Security

DTCs and STCs are responsible for the following overall assessment security activities:

- Cooperate with DDOE in investigating any alleged inappropriate assessment practice.
- Report any observed test security violation to the Office of Assessment, including missing materials, testing misadministration, copyright infringement, and other deviations from acceptable security requirements by completing the documentation in the DOE Helpdesk.
- Uphold the integrity and accuracy of the testing by preventing any dishonest or fraudulent behavior and promoting a fair and equitable testing environment.
- Ensure no one compromises test security or the accuracy of the test data score results by manipulating the test administration, demographic data, or the students' answers or data.
- Ensure student test scores and test performance are not disclosed to any unauthorized person.

- Prohibit the transfer of any student’s Personally Identifiable Information (PII) by email, in any electronic device, or in any other documents, either internally or to outside agencies.
- Encourage the community to voice any concern about any practice they may consider inappropriate by contacting the Office of Assessment.
- Establish written procedures for investigating any complaint, allegation, or concern about an inappropriate practice. The procedures should ensure the protection of individuals’ rights, the integrity of an assessment, and the integrity of assessment results.
- Prohibit the use of any assessment for purposes other than that for which it was intended.
- Remove or cover all displays related to instructional content (including for content areas not being assessed) prior to the administration of a state test.
- Prohibit possession of any electronic devices, including cell phones and smart watches, by students while taking a state test.
- Prohibit test administration procedures which result in excessive testing time.
- Refer to *Appendix G: What to Do After Testing* for requirements of after-testing policy.

Responsibilities of District and School Personnel in DeSSA

Action/Responsibility	District Test Coordinator (DTC)	School Test Coordinator (STC)	Test Administrators (TAs)
General oversight of secure DeSSA administration, including monitoring all test sessions within a school and ensuring participation of eligible students	X	X	
Provide physical or digital copies of the Test Security Manual to all school personnel	X		
Establish written procedures for investigating any test security incident	X		
Submit appeals to reset, invalidate, and exempt student tests	X		
Submit appeal for grace period extensions	X		
Monitor all test sessions within a school	X	X	
Create or approve testing schedules and procedures for the school (consistent with state policy) for all relevant assessments and content areas	X	X	
Verify student information prior to testing to ensure that the correct student receives the proper test with the appropriate supports	X	X	X

Ensure that technology and test platforms are updated for online testing	X		
Complete required security training by November 1st of each calendar year	X	X	X
Complete required test administration training		X	X
Verify completion of required test security and test administration training	X	X	
Report all test security incidents to STC			X
Report all test security incidents to DTC		X	
Report all test security incidents to DOE	X		
Verify student viewing of the Test Security video	X	X	X
Make students aware of the policy for electronic devices and the school/district consequences for violating the policy	X	X	X
Prohibit the transfer of any student's Personally Identifiable Information (PII) by email, in any electronic device, or in any other documents, either internally or to outside agencies	X	X	X

Test Security Plans

Each district and charter school shall adopt and enforce a plan setting forth procedures to ensure the security of all state assessments. This plan must encompass all public schools in the district, including district-sponsored charter schools. By **October 11, 2023**, the plan must be submitted to the DDOE test security coordinator, Dusty Shockley, through the DOE Helpdesk.

Please do not email test security plans; use the DDOE Helpdesk.

The plan must be maintained by the DTC and published digitally or physically for all staff.

To protect the security of the state assessments, each district and charter school must establish the plan to be consistent with the procedures outlined in this document, and it must address the following criteria:

- Identification and training of personnel authorized to have access to or administer the DeSSA;
- Procedures for test administrators to follow when monitoring students during test sessions, **such as walkthrough checklists**;
- Procedures for monitoring test materials before, during, and after testing;
- Procedures to verify the identity and eligibility of students taking an assessment;
- Procedures to report any alleged violation in test administration or test security, **including a [test security incident reporting form](#)**;
- Procedures that set forth [actions taken in response to a reported violation](#);

- Procedures for communication of test security procedures.

Responding to Test Security Violations

The DOE Helpdesk is required for documentation of test security incidents and shall be used by all districts and charter schools. Each District Test Coordinator shall have access to this application. The DTC is responsible for immediately investigating all confirmed or alleged testing violations to gather all necessary information. A DTC shall ensure all testing personnel are aware of their obligation to report testing violations and can easily access local reporting procedures.

Reporting requirements differ based on the severity of the confirmed or alleged violation. The contents of all reports submitted to the Office of Assessment must clearly lay out the sequence of events and include the District's determination in the matter. [Supporting documentation is required for all reported violations.](#)

Test Security Severity

A test security incident is classified by its level of severity.

Impropriety

An impropriety is an unusual circumstance that has a low impact on the individual or group of students who are testing and has a low risk of potentially affecting student performance on the test, test security, or test validity. An impropriety should be reported to the DTC and STC immediately and in the DOE Helpdesk within 24 hours of the discovery of the incident.

Irregularity

An irregularity is an unusual circumstance that impacts an individual or group of students who are testing and may potentially affect student performance on the test, test security, or test validity. An irregularity should be reported to the DTC and STC immediately and in the DOE Helpdesk within 24 hours of the discovery of the incident.

Breach

A breach is a test administration event that poses a threat to the validity of the test. Breaches require immediate attention and escalation to the state level. Examples may include such situations as exposure of secure materials or a repeatable security/system risk. These circumstances have external implications. A breach requires immediate notification/escalation by telephone and email to the Office of Assessment and Accountability by the DTC, followed by documentation in the DOE Helpdesk.

[Click here for a chart that shows test security incident levels and examples of incidents.](#)

Examples of incidents marked with an asterisk (*) may be referred by the Office of Assessment and Accountability to DDOE investigators for action related to licensure.

Reporting Requirements

Districts must submit the required information to the DOE HelpDesk as soon as possible after discovery of a potential test security incident. Depending on the nature and severity of the

incident, the OOA (Office of Assessment) may request the District take certain actions, such as interviewing students, limiting a Test Administrator's access to platforms during an investigation, or interpreting test results, to ensure a thorough and complete investigation.

The following items must be completed and submitted by the District to [fulfill OOA requirements for reporting test violations](#):

1. Identify the level and specific type of security incident.
2. Gather statements or interview all individuals who were involved in or may have information about the incident and document, in writing, and must be signed and dated. Include role and title of each party submitting a statement.
3. Complete a summary of events and timeline including who was involved, why the incident occurred, and how the irregularity was discovered. Statements should provide details about how the individual was involved with the reported irregularity. Individuals implicated in an irregularity report should respond to all allegations.
4. Address and resolve all discrepancies (if any) in the information provided by the individuals involved.
5. Note at what school the incident occurred and during which administration, including information such as date, assessment, grade level, and subject area.
6. If the OOA was contacted for guidance, document when the contact was made. If the district was granted permission to take a certain action or instructed on how to remedy an error, include that information in the report.
7. If the irregularity involved any examinees potentially gaining an unfair advantage on an assessment, include information regarding whether the district wants to invalidate the assessment or submit the test(s) to be scored.
8. Document the steps the district will take to ensure the irregularity does not reoccur, including whether the district has taken or will take disciplinary action.

DeSSA Test Actions and Appeals

The Office of Assessment and Accountability may reset, invalidate, reopen, restore, or exempt individual student assessments. These actions result from test security incidents or participation requirements which are reported by District Test Coordinators through the DOE Helpdesk to the Office of Assessment and Accountability. An appeal may be submitted by District Test Coordinators through the DOE Helpdesk to address incidents that are not security related, such as reopening an assessment for a student who becomes ill and is unable to resume testing until after testing has expired.

Reset

Resetting a student's test removes that test from the system and enables the student to start a new test. The goal of the Reset Policy is for the correct student to receive the proper test with the appropriate accessibility supports.

Reset requests are most commonly triggered when a student has been misidentified, provided accessibility supports for which he or she is not eligible, or has not been provided documented accessibility supports. These are serious security incidents that expose unique secure tests to unauthorized persons and affect the validity and reliability of test results.

The DTC shall follow [reporting requirements](#) when requesting a reset of a student test.

- Explain the circumstances that led to the reset request, including the persons responsible for ensuring that the correct student receives the proper test with the appropriate accessibility supports.
- The reporting of the incident should identify actions taken by the DTC/STC to ensure such incidents are mitigated.

After reviewing the circumstances of an incident, the Office of Assessment and Accountability may elect only to document the testing irregularity rather than to reset the test. This decision would be made to reduce the testing time of a student and/or reduce multiple exposures to a secure test. If a reset is not granted, the student score will be reported.

Invalidation

Invalidating a student's test eliminates the test results, and the student does not receive a valid score for accountability purposes, and the student is not counted as a participant in the assessment. The Office of Assessment and Accountability may invalidate any test under the following conditions:

- a test security breach;
- improper administration resulting in invalid or unreliable scores;
- student misconduct resulting in invalid or unreliable scores.

After reviewing the circumstances of an incident, the Office of Assessment and Accountability may elect only to document the above conditions as testing irregularities rather than to invalidate the test.

Reopen

Reopening a test allows a student to access a test that has already been submitted or has expired. The Office of Assessment and Accountability may reopen any test under the following conditions:

- if a student is unable to complete a test due to a technological difficulty that results in the expiration of the test;
- if a student is unable to complete the test before it expires due to an unanticipated excused absence (e.g., illness documented by a medical professional) or unanticipated school closure;

- if a student starts a test unintentionally — for example, selects a Mathematics PT (Performance Task) instead of an ELA (English Language Arts) PT—and the student is unable to complete the test before it expires;
- if a student unintentionally submits a test before he or she has completed it — for example, a student submits the ELA PT before completing Part 2.

A test that is reopened following expiration will remain open for 10 calendar days from the date it was reopened. If an *expired* test is reopened, the test will reopen at the location at which the student stopped the assessment. The student will be able to review items within the current segment of the test but cannot return to previous segments. If a *submitted* test is reopened, the test will reopen at the last page of the assessment. The student can review items in the current segment but cannot return to previous segments.

Restore

Restoring a test returns a test from the reset status to its prior status. This uncommon action can only be performed on tests that have been reset. The Office of Assessment and Accountability may only restore a test if it was inadvertently or inappropriately reset.

Grace Period Extension

A Grace Period Extension may be awarded after a student has exceeded the pause rule to allow the student to review any item completed prior to the pause in the current test segment. This may occur due to an emergency, a sudden illness, an unexpected technical event, or other occurrence not the fault of the student as approved by the Office of Assessment and Accountability.

Training and Administration

The following is a compilation of appropriate assessment practices related to the training of school personnel and DeSSA administration. These practices should be used to determine whether a specific action related to the assessment is consistent with the principles of performing professional duties with integrity, honesty, and fairness to all. Adhering to these practices will help ensure the integrity of the assessment process and the reliability and validity of assessments and interpretation of results.

DTCs and STCs shall ensure all staff members have training and knowledge of these appropriate assessment practices and shall monitor the practices of all staff to ensure compliance.

Training

- All personnel in a school environment shall complete the required test security training and complete Appendix C, Test Security and Non-disclosure Agreement. Completed forms will be maintained by District or School Test Coordinators.
- Provide any other information and training necessary to ensure all appropriate staff have the knowledge and skills necessary to make knowledge-based decisions in

preparing students for an assessment, to administer an assessment, and to interpret or use results of the assessment.

- Periodically review materials and practices related to preparing students for an assessment, administering an assessment, and interpreting or using assessment results to ensure the materials and practices are up to date.
- Verify that all training includes the Office of Assessment and Accountability and District policies regarding security incidents and possible outcomes or consequences for staff of failure to follow DeSSA policies.
- Prohibit any person without sufficient and appropriate knowledge, skills, or training from administering an assessment, accessing an assessment, or testing environment.
- Ensure that all non-certified personnel (such as substitutes and student teachers), to be in the testing environment in a supportive role, shall take security training, complete the appropriate security and non-disclosure forms, and be supervised by a trained Test Administrator. Such non-certified individuals shall not be considered or trained as Test Administrators.

Administration

- Students and Test Administrators are required to follow the testing guidelines in the Test Administration Manual (TAM) for each specific assessment. Provide students with only the references or tools specifically designated in the test.
- Administer online tests only during the school day, in a school or district building, during testing windows established by the Office of Assessment and Accountability, while students are supervised by a trained Test Administrator(s). No remote or home administration of any DeSSA online assessment is permitted.
- Actively monitor students during test administration to ensure appropriate test-taking procedures and test security measures are followed. Ensure all Test Administrators create a positive testing environment. Always supervise students during testing sessions.
- Provide accommodations, as appropriate, for students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs), Section 504 Plans, or Multilingual Learners (MLLs).

Accessibility Supports

It is a test security irregularity when a student(s) takes all or part of a secure DeSSA assessment under the following circumstances:

- the student is provided with ineligible accessibility supports;
- the student is not provided with documented accessibility supports;
- the student is misidentified and takes a test meant for another student with a different ID.

In such circumstances, the student test may be reset, depending on the number of items taken before the incident is recovered and the severity of the error by the Test Administrator(s) and Coordinator(s). These circumstances are evidence of school personnel failing to properly monitor assessment administration and/or failing to confirm proper identification of students

being administered the assessment. Such actions by school personnel violate [14 Del. C. §172](#) (Appendix A in the DeSSA Test Security Manual).

Communication

DTCs and STCs shall clearly define and communicate to all staff administering DeSSA assessments in writing (e.g., by email or through a Schoology group) multiple times during the school year:

- all security procedures established for a secure assessment in the local test security plan and in this Manual;
- unethical and inappropriate practices in preparing, administering, and scoring assessments (Appendix B);
- how the unethical and inappropriate practices will be monitored, what sanctions will apply for any violations of the practices, and under what circumstances such sanctions will apply to all staff (Appendix A).

Reporting Preliminary DeSSA Scores

Schools and districts shall not report publicly preliminary student results, whether individual or aggregated. Preliminary data may be shared with staff for internal purposes, such as a check of school/grade level targets or discussion about student placement. No data shall be shared with the public until released by the Office of Assessment and Accountability and approved by the State Board of Education.

Excessive Testing Time

School and testing procedures which set the conditions for excessive testing time and thereby direct and guide a student response are violations of Delaware [Title 14, Subchapter IV, §172 State Assessment System Security and Violations](#) and the requirements of the DeSSA Test Security Manual. The administration of state assessments should follow the testing guidelines in the Test Administration Manuals (TAMs).

Setting procedures which result in excessive testing time is an unethical and prohibited practice. Administration procedures which result in excessive time added to a test session – even for an untimed test – are not allowable supports. Such procedures undermine the validity and reliability of the assessment. Such procedures serve as preparation for the assessment that focuses primarily on the assessment instrument, including its format, rather than on the objectives being assessed.

Excessive time to test – well beyond the estimated time in the DeSSA Test Administration Manuals – is a form of coaching prohibited by state code. It is a violation of testing policy and practice for a Test Administrator or Coordinator to coach or provide any type of assistance to students that may affect their responses. This includes both verbal cues (e.g., interpreting, explaining, or paraphrasing the test items or prompts) and nonverbal cues (e.g., voice inflection, pointing, or nodding head) to the correct answer. This also includes leading students

through instructional strategies, asking students to point to the correct answer or otherwise identify the source of their answer, requiring students to show their work, or prompting students to take more time or work harder to complete an item or test. Examples of such coaching and testing procedures that lead to excessive testing time include:

- directing student completion of a constructed response item or performance task by requiring every student to prepare a rough draft before typing in a final version (students are allowed to prepare a rough draft if they choose, but cannot be told or required to do so);
- requiring students who are finished a section or set number of items to wait for other students to finish rather than move forward to complete items;
- requiring any student to use a specific strategy, or a subset of students to use the same strategy, to complete a task or prompt;
- requiring all students to work at the same pace or pause at the same item number;
- requiring that no student continue past a prescribed number of items before pausing the test for the entire group.

Providing or setting conditions that encourage excessive testing time – even on an untimed test – is not an allowable support.

Excessive testing time in a grade or school is defined as 40% or more of students in a specific grade taking more than 3 hours for any single administration of a DeSSA content-area assessment. A content area includes, when applicable, a CAT and PT combined. For example, a Math CAT and PT should not take more than 3 hours for a student when the testing time is combined.

Uniform and stable administration is required to ensure a valid, reliable, and fair assessment system. Continued excessive testing times will result in action from the Office of Assessment and Accountability.

- The school(s) will be placed on a one (1) year probationary period.
- The school(s) shall provide the testing procedures for all grades deemed to have excessive testing time in writing to the Director of Assessment and Accountability, submitted through the DOE HelpDesk by the District Test Coordinator.
- The school(s) will be subject to annual site visits by Office of Assessment and Accountability staff to verify valid, uniform testing conditions and a suitable testing environment for all staff and students.

Testing Schedule Requirements - One Test, One Day Policy

The planned administration of DeSSA assessments shall follow the testing requirements set forth below.

- Schools shall plan for and provide a testing session of sufficient duration for students to complete the test in one sitting. This duration is at least the state average from the spring 2022 DeSSA ELA and Math Administration.
- Any time needed to start computers, load the secure browser, and log in students is additional time that should be added on to the planned session.

STCs and DTCs are responsible for ensuring that testing session duration and schedules meet these requirements. The Office of Assessment and Accountability recommends that a school follow the established 2-hour delay schedule on each testing day. This provides a 2 hour block to administer a test.

The purpose and intent of this policy is to maintain and promote uniform testing conditions across the state and to provide students with the time needed to complete a content area test (e.g. ELA CAT or ELA PT) within one session; to not create an undue testing burden on students or schools by extending testing beyond one day; to minimize disruption to instructional time over multiple days.

Electronic Security

DTCs and STCs are responsible for the following electronic security activities:

- Ensure each authorized user accesses the electronic testing environment using a unique username and password. Staff is prohibited from sharing usernames and passwords for use in accessing the electronic testing environment.
- Ensure administration of online assessments is permitted only through the student interface via a secure browser in a controlled setting.
- Unless needed as print-on-demand or Braille accommodation, no copies of the test items, stimuli, reading passages, writing prompts, or any test materials may be made or otherwise retained.
- Develop an electronic policy to include prohibiting usage of cell phones and other electronic devices in the testing area.

Student names with IDs cannot be sent in the body of emails because IDs are considered Personally Identifiable Information (PII) protected by FERPA law. Email is not secure because it is subject to records requests that could compromise student PII. Student IDs are a particular concern for Test Security as they are part of student test logins.

Physical Security (applies to all DeSSA tests, including those used locally for teacher accountability)

The DTC is responsible for any test booklets created or received by the school district. The DTC should maintain a record of the booklets sent to each school in accordance with the TAM.

Before each test administration, materials must be stored and distributed according to instructions provided with the test. Tests must be always secured during test administration, including all breaks in the testing sequence. All test booklets and answer sheets, if applicable, must be counted, reconciled, and returned to a centrally located, locked, and secured area immediately upon the completion of each daily testing session.

Secure all state test materials prior to, during, and following each test administration and always prohibit unauthorized access to secure test questions. Test materials should be stored in a locked and secured central location by the DTC or STC — not limited to, and including, scratch paper.

Return all secured test materials to the publishing company following the procedures outlined in the TAM. Maintain a record of the shipment to verify submission. Establish and implement procedures to ensure maximum test security and limit access of secure materials to authorized personnel only.

Secure Management of Printed Materials is required for paper-pencil tests and print on request materials approved for student use as an accommodation.

Print-on-demand requests must be processed by a Test Administrator during test administration. The decision to allow students to use print-on-demand must be made on an individual student basis and is available only for students with an IEP (Individual Education Programs) or Section 504 Plan. A student that is approved to test with this accommodation may not test in a group, only individually.

Before the Test Administrator approves the student's request to print a test item, the Test Administrator must ensure that the printer is on and is monitored by staff that have completed Test Administrator and Test Security training.

The printer must be in the same secure room as the student taking the assessment. This request needs to be individually made for each item by the student. The printed test materials must be immediately shredded by the School Test Coordinator upon completion of the assessment by the student.

Students qualifying for and receiving homebound instruction for medical purposes as an accommodation shall be provided testing in a paper/pencil format and not with an online assessment. These students shall take eligible DeSSA assessments under direct (in the physical proximity) supervision of a trained Test Administrator.

Destruction of Printed Materials and Scratch Paper

All test materials must always remain secure. Printed test items/passages, including embossed braille printouts and scratch paper, must be collected and inventoried at the end of each test session and then immediately shredded. DO NOT keep printed test items/passages or scratch paper for future test sessions except as noted below for performance tasks.

Exception: Use of Scratch Paper on Performance Tasks (PTs)

The only exception to the requirement governing the prompt destruction of printed materials and scratch paper is when notes are used during the ELA and Math Performance Tasks (PTs) and an individual student administration extends beyond the expected testing time. To ensure students using scratch paper for notes have the same allowance as students using the online notes, TAs should collect students' scratch paper at the completion of Part 1 of the PT and securely store it for students' use during Part 2 of the PT. Prior to collecting scratch paper for use in a

subsequent session, TAs should ensure students have written their names (or some appropriate identifying information) on the notes so they can be redistributed securely.

Testing Environment

This table shows security requirements of the testing environment. The testing environment includes what a student can see, hear, or access (including access via technology).

Requirement	Description
<i>Before Testing</i>	
Instructional materials removed or covered	<p>All instructional materials must be removed or covered, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any content information displayed on bulletin boards, chalkboards, or dry-erase boards, including student work; any charts or graphics that contain literary definitions, maps, mathematical formulas, etc.; any material that might assist students in answering questions.
Student seating	Students are seated with space between them to minimize opportunities to view each other’s work or provided with tabletop partitions. A distance of 4 feet is generally considered reasonable.
Signage	Place a “Testing—Do Not Disturb” sign on the door and post signs in halls and entrances rerouting and/or quieting hallway traffic. Prominently display signage warning against use or possession of electronic devices.
<i>During Testing</i>	
Quiet environment	Provide a quiet environment without distractions that might interfere with a student’s ability to concentrate or might compromise the testing situation.
Students supervised	Students are actively supervised during the entire administration process.
Student interface secure	<p>Administration of any online DeSSA Assessment is permitted only through the Student Interface via a secure browser or application.</p> <p>Ensure that all test sessions are locked between each administration (specifically applies to DeSSA Science and Social Studies).</p>
Access to electronic devices and allowable resources	<p>Students only have access to, and use of, allowable resources identified in the testing directions and/or Test Administration Manual that are permitted for each specific assessment (or portion of an assessment).</p> <p>Students shall not access unauthorized electronic devices that allow availability of outside information, communication among students, or photographing or copying test content. This includes, but is not limited to, cell phones and smart watches.</p>
Access to assessments	Only students who are testing can observe assessment items. Students who are not being tested or unauthorized staff must not be in the room when a

	test is being administered. Trained TAs may also have limited exposure to assessment items in the course of properly administering the assessment; however, even TAs and other staff may not actively review or analyze any assessment items. TAs and other staff may not open a student’s paused or exited test to review it for completion or any other reason without the student present for the purpose of completing the test.
<i>During and After Testing</i>	
No access to test materials	<p>TAs are not permitted to review or record student responses in the testing interface or students’ notes on scratch paper.</p> <p>Unless needed as an approved accommodation, no copies of the test items, stimuli, reading passages, or writing prompts may be made or otherwise retained.</p> <p>Descriptions of test items, stimuli, printed reading passages, or writing prompts may not be retained, discussed, or released to anyone.</p> <p>Staff and TAs may not review, discuss, or analyze test items, stimuli, reading passages, or writing prompts at any time, including before, during, or after testing. No answer key may be developed for a test or test items.</p>
<i>After Testing</i>	
No test materials used for instruction	Test items, stimuli, reading passages, or writing prompts shall not be used for instruction.

Appendix A

Title 14, Subchapter IV State Assessment System Security and Violations

§ 170 Definitions.

For purposes of this subchapter only, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

- (1) "Assessment administration" means the range of activities from the initial procurement of secure assessment materials including those delivered via the computer through testing and the return of secure assessment materials to the Department or its agents;
 - (2) "Assessment site" means the physical location of the assessment administration, including a computer lab, classroom, or other room;
 - (3) "Department" means the Delaware Department of Education;
 - (4) "Individual" means a student, teacher, administrator, local or state school board member, or other employee, agent or contractor employed by the Delaware public school system whether local or at the state level, and including an employee, agent or contractor of a charter school;
 - (5) "Log-in" means the process of accessing the assessment website;
 - (6) "School district" means any school district, special school or charter school created pursuant to the provisions of this title;
 - (7) "Secure browser" means the computer browser that prevents the student from accessing functions of the computer that are not allowed during assessment;
 - (8) "State Assessment System" means the assessment program established pursuant to subchapter III of this chapter, including the assessments administered pursuant thereto; and
 - (9) "Student identification number" means the unique identification number assigned to each student in the State under which his or her student records are maintained.
- (73 Del. Laws, c. 81, § 1; 70 Del. Laws, c. 186, § 1; 78 Del. Laws, c. 53, §§ 23-25.)

§ 171 Security and data procedures.

(a) The Department shall promulgate rules and regulations to ensure the security of the assessment administration, training of personnel and collection and reporting of assessment data.

(b) The Department's rules and regulations shall provide for:

- (1) The security of the printed materials during assessment administration and the storage under lock and key of all secure assessment materials, including answer documents, before and after assessment administration;
- (2) Procedures to safeguard computer access information and use of the secure browser, including the printing of assessment content;
- (3) The proper administration of assessments and the monitoring of assessment administrations by school district personnel; and
- (4) Procedures for the accurate and timely collection, storage and retrieval of state assessment system materials and data.

(73 Del. Laws, c. 81, § 1; 78 Del. Laws, c. 53, §§ 26-30.)

§ 172 Assessment behavior violations.

It is an assessment security violation for an individual to fail to follow state assessment system administration procedures promulgated by the Department, and no individual shall:

- (1) Give any examinee access to secure assessment items or materials except in the regular course of an authorized administration of the state assessment;
- (2) Give unauthorized individuals or other persons access to secure assessment items or materials;
- (3) Copy, reproduce, use, or otherwise disclose in any manner inconsistent with assessment security regulations and procedures any portion of the secure assessment materials;
- (4) Provide answers during the assessment administration either orally, in writing, or by any other means to an examinee;
- (5) Coach any examinee during assessment administration by giving the examinee answers to secure assessment questions or otherwise directing or guiding a response or by altering or interfering with the examinee's response in any way;
- (6) Fail to follow security regulations and procedures for the storage, distribution, collection and return of secure assessment materials or fail to account for all secure assessment materials before, during and after assessment administration;
- (7) Fail to properly monitor assessment administration, including permitting inappropriate collaboration between or among individuals; fail to remove or cover non-allowable resources from the assessment site during the assessment administration; or fail to destroy scratch paper used by students during the assessment administration;
- (8) Fail to prohibit students from accessing or using electronic equipment (e.g., cellular phones, personal digital assistant devices, iPods, electronic translators), other than those authorized for use by the Department for the assessment administration;
- (9) Fail to confirm proper identification of students being administered the assessment or intentionally give a student the wrong student identification number during the log-in, causing any student to log in and take the assessment under another student's records;
- (10) Fail to collect and destroy any materials bearing student identification number(s) and student name(s) used to provide student(s) with this information during the assessment administration;
- (11) Produce unauthorized copies of assessment content from the computer website; fail to properly destroy authorized copies; or allow copies to be taken outside the assessment site;
- (12) Allow assessment administration by unauthorized personnel or personnel who have not received assessment administration certification;
- (13) Administer secure assessments on dates other than those authorized by the Department;
- (14) Participate in, direct, aid, counsel, assist, encourage or fail to report any of the acts prohibited in this subchapter; or
- (15) Refuse to disclose to the Department information regarding assessment security violations; or

(16) Refuse to cooperate in the investigation of a suspected breach of assessment security, whether such investigation is conducted by a school district or the Department. The investigation shall include a review of mitigating circumstances, if applicable.

(73 Del. Laws, c. 81, § 1; 78 Del. Laws, c. 53, §§ 31-41.)

§ 173 Data reporting violations.

School districts and individuals shall not:

(1) Fail to report assessment scores, numbers of students administered the assessments, any other data element required to be reported to the Department;

(2) Report incorrect or otherwise inaccurate assessment scores, numbers of students administered the assessments, or any other data element required to be reported to the Department;

(3) Exclude a student from participation in the state assessment except in accordance with the regulations of the Department;

(4) Refuse to disclose to the Department information concerning a violation of the foregoing data reporting requirements; or

(5) Refuse to cooperate in the investigation of a suspected data reporting violation, whether such investigation is conducted by a school district or the Department. The investigation shall include a review of mitigating circumstances, if applicable.

(73 Del. Laws, c. 81, § 1; 78 Del. Laws, c. 53, §§ 42, 43.)

§ 174 Civil sanctions for violations

(a) A student who violates any of the provisions of § 172 of this title shall be subject to the following:

(1) At the discretion of the Department, the assessment score of such student may be invalidated and the student may be declared ineligible to retake the assessment until the next official testing opportunity; and

(2) Such disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the student's school district.

(b) An individual other than a student who knowingly violates any of the provisions of this subchapter shall be subject to the following:

(1) Such personnel sanctions as might otherwise be imposed by the individual's employer for an act of misconduct;

(2) A hearing conducted by the Professional Standards Board to determine revocation of any license issued to such individual pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 12 of this title; and

(3) Payment of any costs incurred by the State or Department as a result of the violation.

(73 Del. Laws, c. 81, § 1; 78 Del. Laws, c. 53, § 44.)

Appendix B

Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) Educator Unethical Practices

Unethical Practices in Preparing Students for Assessments

When preparing students for assessments, staff members shall not engage in any:

- Preparation activity that undermines the reliability and/or validity of inference drawn from the assessment results;
- Practice that results solely in increasing participation rates, scale scores, or performance levels on a specific assessment instrument, without simultaneously increasing the student's achievement level as measured by other tasks and/or instruments designed to assess the same content domain;
- Practice involving the reproduction of actual assessment materials, through any medium, for use in preparing students for an assessment;
- Preparation activity that includes questions, tasks, graphs, charts, passages or other materials included in the assessment instrument or in a parallel form of the instrument, and/or materials that are paraphrases or highly similar in content to those in actual use;
- Preparation for the assessment that focuses primarily on the assessment instrument or a parallel form of the instrument, including its format, rather than on the objectives being assessed;
- Practice that supports or assists others in conducting unethical preparation activities.

Unethical Practices in Administering and Scoring Assessments

When administering and/or scoring assessments, staff members shall not:

- Use an assessment instrument for purposes other than that for which such instrument has been validated;
- Engage in a practice that results in a potential conflict of interest or exerts undue influence on those administering or scoring the assessment, which would make the assessment process unfair to some students;
- Modify the procedures for administering and/or scoring the assessment resulting in non-standard conditions for one or more students;
- Engage in a practice that allows people without sufficient and appropriate knowledge and skills to administer and/or score the assessment;
- Engage in an administration or scoring practice which produces results contaminated by factors not relevant to the purposes of the assessment;
- Exclude one or more students from an assessment solely because the student has not performed well, or may not perform well, on the assessment and/or because the aggregate performance of the group may be affected;
- Coach or guide a student's responses during an assessment through any type of gesture, facial expression, use of body language, comment, or any other action;
- Provide students with any definitions of words or terms contained in the actual assessment instrument either immediately preceding or during the administration of an assessment;

- Correct or alter student responses to an assessment task during or following the administration of an assessment; and
- Support or assist others in unethical practices during the administration and/or scoring of assessments.

**Appendix C: DeSSA Test Security Manual
Office of Assessment and Accountability
Universal Test Security and Non-disclosure Agreement**



**Security Certification – Complete Prior to Test Administration
FOR USE WITH ALL DeSSA ASSESSMENTS**

I do hereby certify that I have received, understand, and agree to abide by the DeSSA Test Security Manual governing the Assessment System, supported by Subchapter IV, Chapter 1, Title 14 of the Delaware Code, which enumerates possible violations of test security and provides the sanctions for such violations.

I do hereby certify, warrant, and affirm that I will faithfully and fully comply with all requirements and practices concerning DeSSA test security and confidentiality, including:

SECURITY REQUIREMENTS AND PRACTICES

- That no person has in any way copied or reproduced any part of a secure test, including any part of a student response, without expressed written permission from the Delaware Department of Education or as explicitly specified in the instructions for the assessment.
- That I will not disclose, describe, or discuss specific test/assessment questions verbally, in writing, or by any other means, including dissemination through social media, to any other person.
- That no person has corrected, altered, or guided student responses to a secure test.
- That no unauthorized person has access to or inspected or viewed any part of a secure test.
- That I will take actions to prevent students from accessing electronic devices during the administration of a required state assessment.
- That I will report any suspected violations of test security or confidentiality to the District Test Coordinator, School Test Coordinator, or school administrator.

SECURITY ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- That I understand my obligations concerning the security and confidentiality of all DeSSA assessments.
- That I understand student information is confidential and I am obligated to maintain and preserve the confidentiality of this information.
- That I am aware of the range of penalties that may result from a departure from the documented test administration procedures for the state assessments, and I am aware of the range of penalties that may result from a violation of test security and confidentiality.

- That, when proctoring any DeSSA assessment, I will ensure all students for which I am responsible have viewed the DeSSA Test Security Video for Students, found at the links below:
 DOE Test Security for Students Grades 3-5 <https://youtu.be/UmMgazwnd7U>
 DOE Test Security for Students Elementary SPANISH <https://youtu.be/P-B-KCtiXvw>
 DOE Test Security for Students Grades 6-11 <https://youtu.be/eoICnxYII2k>

By signing my name to this document, I am assuring the Delaware Department of Education, the local education agency (district and/or school), and its contractor(s) that I will abide by the above conditions and all such found in the DeSSA Test Security Manual and Subchapter IV, Chapter 1, Title 14 of the Delaware Code.

I hold the following roles within DeSSA administration (check all that apply):

- Department of Education staff
- District Administrator
- District Test Coordinator
- School Test Coordinator
- Principal / Assistant Principal
- Test Administrator
- Special Education Coordinator
- Support Staff
- Other _____

PRINT NAME	
DISTRICT/CHARTER	
SCHOOL	
SIGNATURE	
DATE	

This form shall be retained at the district or school level by an authorized administrator.

Appendix D

Policy on Electronic Devices

Under direction of the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE), schools must enforce a strict electronic device policy during standardized testing to maintain test security. This policy applies to all national, state, and district-level DeSSA administered assessments that are identified in this document.

The term *electronic device* includes any personal, non-educational device with an on-off switch, *except for medical equipment*, most commonly cell phones and smart watches, tablets, laptops, or other computers. **A student may not retain possession of an electronic device (e.g. iPad, laptop or desktop computer) on which he or she took a DeSSA assessment after testing is completed, while in the testing environment, and while other students remain testing.**

No electronic device should disturb the testing environment, whether it belongs to students or staff. Test Administrators may keep any personal devices powered on but in silent mode, for use only in the event of an emergency. A Test Administrator shall not interrupt the testing environment through texting, speaking, or other personal electronic device use, except in the event of an emergency.

Schools must take actions to inform students that using or bringing an electronic device into the testing area violates school and state policy. Such actions to inform students include:

- posting signage;
- viewing the Student Test Security Video;
- reading the standard script in test administration manuals;
- gathering electronic devices from students prior to testing.

Taking these actions should be a general practice and noted in reports from schools to the DTC.

Violation of this policy is grounds for confiscation and a search of the device.

The following procedures for students must be implemented when test materials are distributed or utilized:

1. Electronic devices must be turned completely off. They may not be on “silent” or “vibrate” modes.
2. Electronic devices may not be in a student’s possession, including in pockets or otherwise stored in clothing, or in the immediate proximity, such as underneath the desk.
3. Electronic devices must be stored in a secure location away from students.

If an electronic device is found on a student during or after testing, testing administrators and schools must adhere to the following procedures:

1. Confiscate the electronic device. Contact the STC and the DTC.

2. If the circumstances provide a reasonable basis to search it, the device will be checked for pictures, texts, transmissions by social media applications, and any other recent use related to security of the test.
3. Upon completion of the testing session, interview the student regarding use of the device.
4. Enforce school/district disciplinary action.
5. The DTC shall report the test security incident in the DOE Helpdesk following the reporting requirements of this Manual.

**Appendix E
What to Do When Guide**

MEDICAL

ISSUE	ACTION
A student becomes sick during testing.	Pause the student test and allow the student to return during make-up session(s) to finish. DTC reports the incident in the DOE Helpdesk as an impropriety.
<p>A student is being treated as an in-patient in a non-DSCYF mental health facility during the testing window.</p> <p>A student has a medical note from a doctor that believes the student should not test.</p> <p>A student is hospitalized or homebound with a serious or terminal illness.</p>	Submit a request for an exemption through the DOE Helpdesk. Keep medical documentation on file at the district office.
A student who wears glasses or takes medication daily is without them on testing day.	Postpone testing for the student and have the student take the test later in the testing window.
There is a death in the family before or during the testing window.	Determine whether the student can be tested at the end of the testing window — if that will not be feasible, submit a request for an exemption through the DOE Helpdesk.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR / STUDENT CONDUCT / STUDENT REFUSAL

ISSUE	ACTION
<p>A student is chronically truant.</p> <p>A student is present at school but refuses to take the test at any time during the testing window.</p>	Do not submit an incident report. No exemption will be granted.
<p>A student is removed from test session due to student misbehavior:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A testing behavior violation occurs. ● A student is cheating. 	<p>Pause student test and report incident to the DTC.</p> <p>Enforce district policies for student misconduct.</p>

ROSTERING / ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS

ISSUE	ACTION
A student does not show correct accommodations in DeSSA platforms, prior to the test being started by the student.	Review settings in DeSSA testing platforms for accuracy. If the settings are correct, submit a DOE Helpdesk ticket.
<p>A student starts a test with accommodation(s) for which he or she is not eligible.</p> <p>A student starts a test without his/her accommodation(s) available on the test.</p> <p>A student who has test accommodation(s) has not been provided one or more of these accommodations during a test session.</p>	<p>DTC reports the incident in the DOE Helpdesk as an irregularity.</p> <p>Ensure all accommodations are correct on the DeSSA platform for specific students.</p> <p>The student test may be reset or scored and reported after investigation. See the Reset Policy.</p>
A student qualifies for English as a Second Language services, but the student’s parent / guardian / caregiver has withdrawn him or her from such services.	If a student meets the criteria to be identified as an MLL, a student may receive accommodations even if withdrawn from services. Review the Accessibility Guidelines to determine whether a student can be excluded from the ELA/literacy assessment.
A student moves out of the school before all test sessions are completed.	Student can complete testing in a new district if moving within the state — no action is necessary.
A student does not show up at the school in which currently enrolled.	Review attendance and student record applications. If the student is correct in these applications, submit a DOE Helpdesk ticket.
A student moves into the school in the middle of the testing window. He or she has completed part of the test in a previous school.	Identify which test (content) sessions the student has or has not completed by reviewing the DeSSA platform participation reports. Test the student in make-up test sessions.
A student registers in school from out of state during the testing window.	The student should be administered all tests that he or she can complete before the testing window has ended. Provide the student with any required accommodations.

STUDENTS IN ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT

ISSUE	ACTION
<p>These students count towards participation rates for the home districts and are required to have access and the opportunity to participate in state testing.</p> <p>Click here for guidance.</p>	<p>Submit a request for an exemption through the DOE Helpdesk. Keep letter from facility on file in district office. If the student does return, he or she must be given the opportunity to test.</p>

Appendix F
What to Do After Testing for Students

When administering an untimed test, students will finish at different times. This table provides guidance on activities for students when they complete a test. If you have questions about the appropriateness of an activity, contact [Dusty Shockley](#) in the Office of Assessment and Accountability.

Activity	Status	Rationale
Students leave the testing room and report to pre-designated, monitored holding area, with or without a scheduled activity	Recommended	Students are engaged
Students sit quietly in their seats	Allowed	This will be conducive to a quiet testing environment for others but may be difficult for some students
Students read a preapproved book or preassigned material	Allowed	Quiet, not a major security risk
Students write or draw in a journal, diary, or on any paper	Prohibited	Security risk that students may transmit item content
Students complete school assignments, even for content not related to the tested subject	Prohibited	Security risk with other students still testing
Students use an electronic device for any reason during testing. See Appendix D.	Prohibited	Electronic devices are not allowed in the testing room Security risk that students may transmit item content
Students talk or signal to other students	Prohibited	Distracting to other students and security risk
Students move about the testing room	Prohibited	Distracting to other students