

Actions to Avoid for Testing

Following is a list of activities that could cause the results of a state or district assessment to be invalidated because the results would not be reliable in showing a student's true ability. These activities could also result in an investigation by the Assessment and Accountability and Professional Standards Departments.

Pre-Testing

- Fail to store test materials securely
- Encourage teachers to view upcoming test forms before they are administered
- Use the test to teach and ignoring subjects not on exam
- Drill students on actual test items
- Share test items on the internet before administration
- Practice on copies of previously administered "secure" tests
- Administer "practice" version(s) of the real test to prepare selected students
- Exclude likely low-scorers from enrolling in school
- Hold-back low scorers from tested grade
- "Leap-frog" (promote some students over tested grade)
- Transfer likely low-scoring students to charter schools with no required tests
- Push likely low scorers out of school or enroll them in GED programs
- Falsify student numbers so low scorers are not assigned to the correct demographic group
- Urge low-scoring students to be absent on test day
- Leave test materials out so students can see them before the exam
- Set up classroom desks and chairs to facilitate answer copying

During Testing

- Let high-scorers take tests for others
- Overlook "cheat sheets" students bring into classroom
- Post hints (e.g., formulas, lists, etc.) on class or lab walls or whiteboard
- Write answers on black/white board, then erase before the supervisor arrives
- Allow students to look up information on the web with electronic devices
- Overlook calculator use where prohibited
- Encourage reliance on special calculator programs that can answer questions
- Ignore test-takers copying or sharing answers with each other

- Permit students to go to rest rooms in groups
- Shout-out correct answers
- Use thumbs-up/thumbs down signals to indicate right and wrong responses
- Tell students to “double check” erroneous responses
- Pass out notes with correct answers
- Read questions aloud to students not allowed this accommodation
- Urge students who have completed sections to work on others
- Allow class extra time to complete test
- Reclassify native English speakers as English Language Learners to give them additional time
- Leave the classroom unattended during test
- Refuse to allow test security personnel access to testing rooms
- Cover doors and windows of testing rooms to prevent monitoring
- Give unnecessary accommodations to students without disabilities

Post-Testing

- Allow students to “make up” portions of the exam they failed to complete on test day
- Invite staff to “clean up” answer sheets before transmittal to the scoring company
- Fill in answers on items left blank
- Rescore borderline exams to “find points” on constructed response items
- Erase erroneous responses and insert correct ones
- Provide false demographic information for testers to assign them to incorrect reporting categories
- Fail to store completed answer sheets securely
- Destroy answer sheets from low-scoring students
- Report low-scorers as having been absent on testing day
- Fraudulently withdraw likely low-scorers from school
- Share content with educators/students who have not yet taken the test via electronic and social media
- Refuse to interview personnel with potential knowledge of improper practices
- Threaten discipline against testing impropriety whistleblowers
- Fabricate test security documentation for state education department investigators
- Lie to law enforcement personnel

Schaefer, B. (2014). Excerpted from “Cheating: 50 Ways Schools Manipulate Test Scores”
<http://fairtest.org/sites/default/files/Cheating-50WaysSchoolsManipulateTestScores.pdf>

