

Standard Test Administration and Testing Ethics Policy For Utah Educators



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Purpose of Testing

When administered properly, standardized assessments allow students to demonstrate what they know and can do. Valid and reliable results from standardized assessments provide information used by:

Students, to determine how well they have mastered the skills and knowledge defined by the Utah Core Standards.

Parents, to know whether their student is gaining the skills and competencies needed to be successful at the next level.

Teachers, to gauge their students' understanding and provide the students with support and advanced opportunities in their learning.

Local Education Agencies (school districts and charter schools), to evaluate programs and provide additional support.

The public, to evaluate schools and districts.

Educators are obligated to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills fairly and accurately. Educators involved with state assessments must conduct testing in a fair and ethical manner.

Assessments

State assessments require that educators adhere to all ethical practices and procedures as outlined in this policy. Information about these assessments can be found at the [Assessment and Accountability](http://www.schools.utah.gov/assessment) webpage, (<http://www.schools.utah.gov/assessment>)

State assessments are defined as assessments that are federally mandated, state mandated, and/or require the use of a state assessment system or software that is provided or paid for by the state.

Before Testing: Teaching Practices

Licensed Utah educators are expected to:

- Provide instruction aligned to Utah Core standards using appropriate, locally adopted curriculum
- Provide accommodations throughout instruction to eligible students as identified by an ELL, IEP, or 504 team
- Use a variety of assessment methods, including the formative assessment process, throughout the year to assess student competency and inform instructional practices
- Provide students with a variety of assessment experiences throughout the year
- Use the reference sheets provided for specific assessments as instructional tools throughout the year
- Use the practice and/or training tests to familiarize students with the testing tools and question types

During Testing

Utah LEAs (school districts or charter schools) shall ensure that:

- Students are enrolled in appropriate courses
- Curriculum and instruction in all courses are aligned with the Utah Core Standards
- Parents are provided with clarifications and procedures regarding student participation in state testing
- All tests are administered under the supervision of a licensed Utah educator
- Educators and school employees who administer and/or proctor tests, participate in annual testing ethics training provided by the LEA
- Educators review preparation guidelines and test administration manuals for the assessment
- Hardware, software and network specifications can successfully support test administration
- All school testing coordinators, administrators, and teachers administering tests are aware of their role in the assessment administration

Licensed Utah educators shall ensure that:

- An appropriate environment is set for testing to limit distractions
- All students who are eligible to test are tested or recorded as to why they didn't participate
- A student is not discouraged from participating in testing
- State assessments are administered in-person
- Students aren't penalized who have been opted-out of a state assessment
- Students aren't rewarded for participating in or performing well on a state assessment
 - Some examples of inappropriate practices include, but are not limited to:
 - Excluding from Honors course consideration students who have a SAGE Parental Exclusion (opt out)
 - Parties, gift cards, prizes, special assemblies for only students who took SAGE and/or for only students who demonstrate improvement on SAGE assessments
 - Giving candy bars to students who received a 3 or 4 on SAGE, while students with parental exclusions or those who scored a 1 or 2 receive nothing
 - Students with parental exclusions watch movies while the other students test
- Students are provided an educational activity if they are opted-out of a state assessment
 - Some examples are:
 - LEA, school, or teacher created assessment on course standards

- A short essay (grade appropriate expectations) related to a Utah Core standard which could be student selected or assigned
- An active proctor is present and active proctoring takes place throughout the entire testing session
- No person is left alone with student tests left onscreen or open
- The importance of the test, test participation, and the good faith efforts of all students are not undermined
- The test administrators and proctors review and follow the Test Administration Manual (TAM) for each assessment
- Accommodations are provided to eligible students, as identified by the EL, IEP, and/or 504 teams, and are consistent with those provided during instruction
- Any electronic devices shall be inaccessible by students, if they can be used to
 - access non-test content
 - distribute test content and materials
- Make-up and test completion sessions are provided for students according to the policies and procedures of the assessment

After Testing

Utah LEAs (school districts or charter schools) shall ensure that the test results are:

- Provided to students and parents within three weeks of the LEA receiving them with information on how to appropriately interpret scores and reports
- Made available to educators for use in improving their instruction
- Maintained according to LEA policies and procedures

Licensed Utah educators shall ensure that:

- All by-products (e.g. scratch paper, notes, student test tickets) of student testing are collected, secured, and destroyed as appropriate
- All test materials are returned to the test coordinator, as appropriate

Utah LEAs (school districts and charter schools) and Licensed Utah educators may NOT:

- Use a student's score on a state required assessment to determine the student's academic grade, or a portion of the student's academic grade, for the appropriate course; or whether the student may advance to the next grade level (R277-404-6. School Responsibilities).
- Prohibit a student from enrolling in an honors, advanced placement, or International Baccalaureate course based on a student's score on a state required assessment or because the student was exempted from taking the state required assessment (R277-404-6. School Responsibilities).

Unethical Testing Practices

Unethical practices include, but are not limited to:

- Providing students with questions from the test to review before taking the test
- Changing instruction to include specific test content
- Rewording or clarifying questions, or using inflection or gestures to help students answer test questions
- Allowing students to use unauthorized resources to find answers (e.g. dictionaries, thesauruses, mathematics tables, online references)
- Displaying materials on walls or other high visibility surfaces that provide answers to specific test items (e.g. posters, word walls, formula charts)

- 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
- Allowing the public to view secure test items or observe testing sessions
- Reviewing a student’s response and instructing the student to, or suggesting that the student should, rethink his/her answers
- Reproducing, or distributing, in whole or in part, secure test content (e.g., taking pictures, copying, writing, posting in a classroom, posting publicly, emailing)
- Explicitly or implicitly encouraging students to not answer questions, or to engage in dishonest testing behavior
- Administering assessment outside of the prescribed testing window for each assessment

If your actions will cause students to not receive a valid and reliable score that accurately reflects what they know and can do, don't do it!

Testing Ethics Violations

Testing ethics violations are to be reported to the supervisor of the person who may be investigated, the school administrator, the LEA assessment director, or the USBE Assessment department.

Protocol:

- Each LEA must determine local policies and procedures regarding ethics violations
- In most cases, an initial investigation should be conducted at the school level
- The LEA assessment 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 substantiated, educators or other staff may receive further training or a reprimand, be subject to disciplinary action, be terminated, and/or lose their Utah teaching license

For more information about the processes in place concerning the investigation of testing ethics violations contact your LEA assessment director.

Resources

[Utah State Board of Education](http://www.schools.utah.gov) (http://www.schools.utah.gov)

[Assessment, Utah State Board of Education](http://www.schools.utah.gov/assessment) (http://www.schools.utah.gov/assessment)

[Utah State Law – Chapter 53A](https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53A/53A.html) (https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53A/53A.html)

[Utah State Board of Education – Rules](https://rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r277/r277-404.htm) (https://rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r277/r277-404.htm)

[Utah Professional Practices Advisory Commission](https://schools.utah.gov/policy/uppac/) (https://schools.utah.gov/policy/uppac/)