The Proctor's Guide

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Introduction

Proctors serve an important role as additional monitors who help the test administrator ensure testing occurs fairly and uniformly.

The Proctor's Guide is a useful resource that contains valuable information to assist the proctor. *The Proctor's Guide* outlines the responsibilities of proctors and what they are permitted to do during a test administration.

This publication is available to proctors and may be kept in the schools. Additional copies may also be downloaded from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's (NCDPI) website at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/policies/generalinfo.

The Selection of Proctors

A trained proctor should be assigned and present for each test administration regardless of the number of students tested. The principal assigns trained proctors for the test administrations. The proctor assigned can be either (1) a one-on-one, full-time proctor (i.e., one proctor assisting one test administrator in a single testing room) or (2) a roving proctor (e.g., one proctor assisting up to three test administrators in three testing rooms). The principal selects trained proctors who are responsible adult community volunteers (i.e., age 18 or older and not enrolled as a student in the K–12 public school system), school staff, or school system staff. A proctor should not be assigned to proctor in a room where his or her relative or ward is to be tested. Relatives and wards include children, stepchildren, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, siblings, in-laws, and persons under the proctor's guardianship. Additionally, a proctor should not be assigned to proctor with a test administrator who is a personal family member or a close acquaintance.

The Proctor's Responsibilities

Proctors must attend a test administration training session before each test administration and understand and agree to carry out the duties described. Proctors must do their part to help the test administrator ensure the test scores of the students in the room where they serve as proctors are the result of an ethical and fair test administration. Specifically, the responsibilities of the proctor include the following:

1. Read the North Carolina *Testing Code of Ethics*

Before the test administration, proctors must read and review thoroughly the North Carolina *Testing Code of Ethics* and its sanctions, paying careful attention to section (k)—the unethical testing practices cited in the *Code*—and section (l)—the sanctions for violations of the *Code.* This document has the effect of law in North Carolina. Following the *Testing Code of Ethics* helps ensure testing is conducted in a fair and ethical manner in every classroom across the state.

2. Maintain Test Security at All Times

Except for students being tested, test books and/or online test items are not to be read or reviewed by anyone—not the test administrator, proctor, principal, assistant principal, or others, at any time. An exception to this rule would be when students with documented special needs require an accommodation, such as *Test Administrator Reads Test Aloud (in English),* or when there is express permission from the NCDPI. Items and associated materials on a secure test are not to be made available to the public. Access to the tests is limited to school personnel who have a legitimate need. School personnel and proctors must neither disclose the contents of secure tests nor discuss with each other or with students any specific test items or information contained within the tests or write about them on the Internet or social media sites. Discussing information related to the content of specific test items or test forms is prohibited and a direct violation of the North Carolina *Testing Code of Ethics.*

Other security measures include:

- Test books that are <u>not</u> being used during the test administration (e.g., those of students who are absent) must remain closed.

- North Carolina assessments are secure. No person may copy, reproduce, or paraphrase the test materials in any manner for any reason. Reproduction by any means without express authorization by the NCDPI is a violation of federal copyright laws, the North Carolina Administrative Code, State Board of Education policy, and the North Carolina *Testing Code of Ethics.*

- Students cannot take test books or answer sheets from the test room for any reason.

- Proctors are not to be provided with copies of the *Assessment Guide*.

- At no time are proctors to be alone with secure test materials, including computers with loaded active assessments. Even if asked by the test administrator, proctors must not pick up test materials from or return test materials to the school test coordinator at the beginning or the end of testing unless accompanied by the appropriate school personnel. Every effort must be made to minimize public access to secure state assessments before and after each test administration.

- At no time are proctors to assist the test administrator in coding information either on student answer sheets or in the online testing system or to help the test administrator with reviewing student answer sheets or header sheets.

- Proctors must not assist students in choosing responses to test questions and shall not, at any time, modify, change, alter, erase, or tamper with student responses to test questions.

3. Help Ensure the Physical Conditions in the Room Are Appropriate for Testing

Personal cell phones/electronic devices must not be used during the test administration, including breaks. Before testing begins, proctors must turn off their personal cell phones/electronic devices and ensure these devices are not visible during testing, including breaks.

Proctors are expected to work with the test administrator to ensure distractions and interruptions during the test administration are minimized and order is maintained. All rooms designated for testing must be quiet, orderly, and comfortable with adequate seating, lighting, heating, and cooling. If information regarding content being measured or test-taking strategies is displayed in the room in any manner or form during a test administration, it is considered a violation of the *Testing Code of Ethics* and may result in a misadministration. Such displays must be covered or removed.

Each student should have enough space in which to work. Seating should be arranged to discourage students from sharing responses. Students' personal belongings must be placed under their seats, and students must not be permitted to access them at any time during testing, including breaks.

Students are not allowed to use or have in their possession cell phones or any other electronic devices at any time during testing, including breaks. If any student is found or observed with a cell phone/electronic device during testing time, the school test coordinator must be contacted and the student dismissed from testing. If the test administrator or proctor believes a cell phone/ electronic device was used during the test administration to store or exchange information or to make an image of the test, the device must be collected from the student and the school test coordinator contacted immediately.

4. Make Sure Materials Are Appropriately Distributed

Proctors must not distribute to or collect from students any test materials at the beginning of, during, or at the conclusion of testing. The test administrator will supply students with all the test materials they will need for the test administration. Test administrators are not to place test materials on students' desks before the beginning of the test administration (except for approved supplemental materials such as highlighters or color acetate overlays). This is a violation of the procedures outlined in the *Testing Code of Ethics.* Students are not to have any of the following during the test administration:

- reference books
- bookmarks
- multiplication tables
- textbooks
- thesauruses
- cell phones
- mp3 players
- cameras
- smartpens
- personal learning devices
- personal computers (unless administering an online assessment)
- removable storage devices
- smartwatches
- wearable activity trackers
- music
- e-book readers

Exceptions:

- Students may place color acetate overlays over the test book during the paper-and-pencil administration of state tests. This does not give an unfair advantage to students; it simply helps some students see the print more clearly.

- Students may use highlighters in the test books, but they must <u>not</u> use highlighters on answer sheets.

- Students requiring the *Student Marks Answers in Test Book* accommodation do not use an answer sheet during testing. Therefore, in order to provide them with equitable access to the demands of the constructed response or mathematics gridded response items, these students may receive a copy of the NCDPI-issued/approved samples of the constructed response space or mathematics grid during testing.

- Students who complete the test before the scheduled time is over must be provided the opportunity to read novels or other nontextbooks (e.g., magazines) while other students continue to work during the scheduled time.

5. Ensure Appropriate Test Administration Procedures Are Followed

While the test administrator is reading directions to students, proctors may assist the students in finding the correct place on the answer sheet, in the test book, or on the computer screen (for online administrations). Proctors are not to be provided with copies of the *Assessment Guide,* and at no time shall proctors be responsible for reading directions or test items or for providing information about the test administration to students.

During the test, proctors should walk frequently and quietly throughout the room and help the test administrator monitor the test administration. For paper-and-pencil administrations, proctors can check to ensure each student is working in the appropriate section of the test and is recording his or her responses in the appropriate section of the answer sheet. Test administrators will assist students in the event misalignment occurs during the paper-and-pencil administration, if necessary.

For online administrations, proctors should notify the test administrator if a student has a computer problem such as a network malfunction or an item that fails to load properly. Only test administrators are to assist students with computer problems and may answer any student's procedural questions (e.g., those concerning the web browser, app, toolbar, navigation buttons, review screen), but they cannot provide any specific assistance with answering test questions.

What a proctor says and how he/she behaves can affect how students respond to test questions during the test administration. Those serving as proctors should be cautious about their verbal and nonverbal interactions with students. They must not assist students in choosing responses to test questions and must not, at any time, modify, change, alter, erase, or tamper with student responses to test questions.

In the event proctors need to sit during the test administration, they should maintain an unobstructed view of and easy access to students. Proctors must remain attentive to their responsibilities throughout the entire administration. The following distracting behaviors are not allowed:

- holding extended conversations with the test administrator or any other school staff member
- reading newspapers, magazines, or novels
- carrying out other personal or professional duties
- talking or texting on cell phones
- using any other electronic devices
- engaging in any activity in the test room not directly related to the test administration

6. Assist Students with Emergencies and Restroom Breaks during Testing

If a student must leave the room during the test administration because of an emergency, proctors must assist the test administrator as appropriate to deal with the situation. The immediate priority is to create as little disturbance to other students as possible. If the proctor or the test administrator must leave the room, the school test coordinator must be notified.

7. Monitor Students

A primary responsibility of a proctor is to monitor the test administration. This entails walking frequently and quietly throughout the room. However, monitoring is an area where well-meaning proctors may create problems and cause a testing irregularity. For instance, proctors are not to read test questions from open student test books or from computer monitors used for online assessments, nor can they indicate answers to students. Other examples include, but are not limited to

- telling students to "look at that question again" or offering similar advice;

- making a facial expression, hand gesture, voice inflection, or utterance (e.g., coughing, clearing throat) to indicate approval or disapproval of the student's response; and

- standing beside the desk, reading a question, looking at the student's response, and then pointing to the correct answer or pointing to the question as if to indicate, "read that question again because you have the wrong answer."

Proctors **cannot** help students by

- explaining directions in their own words;

- explaining the meaning of any word in the directions, test questions, or answer choices;

- rephrasing test questions;

- translating a word or phrase into another language; or

- providing synonyms for unknown words.

It is imperative that each student complete his or her own work without assistance in order for the test scores to reflect the student's ability. All students in every classroom across the state should receive exactly the same directions and hear the same words as they are printed in the *Assessment Guide*. The test administrator can repeat only the directions.

The proctors' monitoring of the test administration will help ensure

- the color of the answer sheet and test book is the same for paper/pencil assessments;

- the form number is correctly coded on the answer sheet for paper/pencil assessments;

- students mark answers in the appropriate section on the answer sheet for paper/pencil assessments;

- students mark answers with a pencil and not a pen or felt marker for paper/pencil assessments;

- students who need assistance or have a problem (e.g., pencil lead breaks, calculator malfunctions, they become ill) can be assisted with minimal disturbance to other students;

- students taking mathematics assessments raise their hand at the end of the calculator inactive questions to receive a calculator from the test administrator (Students working on the calculator active part of the mathematics assessment must have a handheld calculator. Proctors should look for a small calculator printed on each page of the mathematics test book or a calculator icon in the upper right corner of the screen for online mathematics assessments. These icons indicate the student is working on an item in the calculator active part of the assessment.);

- students taking online assessments do not click "START" until told to do so by the test administrator;

- students taking online assessments do not take more than ten (10) minutes to complete the self-paced sample items (The test administrator must provide assistance to conclude the sample items for those students within the time limit.);

- students taking online assessments do not use other software installed on the computer or use other websites or other Internet resources during an online assessment;

- the test administrator is aware of any students having computer problems during an online assessment; and

- the online items on the screen display properly.

8. Follow Appropriate Procedures for Providing Accommodations

Before the test administration, proctors monitoring a test administration in which students with disabilities and/or students identified as English Learners (ELs) receive accommodations, should review with the test administrator any information needed regarding the students' accommodations. Information that should be discussed includes the following:

- the type of accommodation(s) the student(s) will receive

- how the test administration may differ from what is considered a normal administration

- the special procedures necessary to provide the accommodation(s)

9. Report All Testing Irregularities

A testing irregularity or alleged testing violation must be reported to the school test coordinator and/or principal on the day of the occurrence. In many cases, the school test coordinator can determine immediately if an irregularity has occurred. If an irregularity has occurred, depending on its nature, it may be corrected on that day with little or no additional inconvenience to the parties involved. If it is a major irregularity, the student may have to be retested. In such cases, it is critical that the report is made immediately so that, if necessary, a retest can be scheduled as soon as possible. Examples of testing irregularities include, but are not limited to, the following:

Eligibility Issues

- Eligible students were not tested
- Ineligible students were tested

Accommodation Issues

- Approved accommodation was not provided
- Approved accommodation was not provided appropriately
- Accommodation was provided but not approved/documented
- Accommodation *Test Administrator Reads Test Aloud* (*in English*), *Computer Reads Test Aloud—Student Controlled*, or *Interpreter/Translator Signs/Cues Test* provided during the administration of a test that measures reading comprehension (e.g., end-of-course English II or end-of-grade English language arts/reading test administration)

Security Issues

- Allowing others access to the tests, including school or district personnel who do not have a legitimate need
- Allowing students to review secure test materials before the test administration
- Missing test materials
- Secure test materials not properly returned
- Test materials not stored in a secure, locked facility
- Items from secure test(s) used for instruction
- Reproduction of secure test(s) in any manner or form
- Failure to cover or remove bulletin board materials, classroom displays, or reference materials (printed or attached) on students' desks that provide information regarding test-taking strategies or the content being measured by the test
- Discussing with others any of the test items or information contained in the tests or writing about them on the Internet or on social media sites
- Copies of a test were made available to others

Monitoring Issues

- Test administrator left the room unmonitored when students and/or secure materials were present or when secure online tests were open and visible
- Secure materials were left unattended or secure online tests were open and visible during a restroom break or lunch break
- Testing personnel did not monitor students during break
- Test administrator did not ensure students worked independently during testing (e.g., students were not prevented from gaining an unfair advantage through the use of cell phones, text messages, or other means)

- Student(s) were allowed to remove secure materials from the testing area
- Student(s) cheated by copying, using a cheat sheet, or asking for information

Procedural Issues

- Test administrator/proctor altered student responses
- Test administrator/proctor gave improper assistance or provided instruction related to the concepts measured by the test before the test administration or during the test administration session
- Reading or tampering with (e.g., altering, changing, modifying, erasing, or scoring) student responses to the test questions by school personnel
- Test administrator omitted, revised, interpreted, explained, or paraphrased the test directions or the test items to include answer choices
- Test was not administered on the test date or during the testing window
- Providing students with additional time beyond the designated maximum time specified in the assessment guide (except for students with documented special needs requiring accommodations, such as *Scheduled Extended Time)*
- Student(s) did not receive a calculator during the calculator active portion of the mathematics test
- Student(s) went back and worked in the calculator inactive portion of the mathematics test after beginning the calculator active portion

Technical Issues

- Online test connectivity/technical problems occurred
- Online test items did not display properly

10. Maintain Student Confidentiality

The primary role of a proctor is to serve as an additional monitor to help the test administrator conduct a fair test administration. Any information about individual students that a proctor may become aware of as a result of serving in this capacity is considered confidential information. Proctors must not disclose any personally identifiable information (PII) about students to anyone beyond what is required while attending to their proctoring responsibilities. Federal privacy laws protect students. Please be aware of students' rights.

Testing Code of Ethics

Introduction

In North Carolina, standardized testing is an integral part of the educational experience of all students. When properly administered and interpreted, test results provide an independent, uniform source of reliable and valid information, which enables:

- *students* to know the extent to which they have mastered expected knowledge and skills and how they compare to others;
- *parents* to know if their children are acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in a highly competitive job market;
- *teachers* to know if their students have mastered grade-/course-level knowledge and skills in the curriculum and, if not, what weaknesses need to be addressed;
- *community leaders and lawmakers* to know if students in North Carolina schools are improving their performance over time and how the students compare with students from other states or the nation; and
- *citizens* to assess the performance of the public schools.

Testing should be conducted in a fair and ethical manner, which includes:

Security
- assuring adequate security of the testing materials before, during, and after testing and during scoring
- assuring student confidentiality

Preparation
- teaching the tested curriculum and test-preparation skills
- training staff in appropriate testing practices and procedures
- providing an appropriate atmosphere

Administration
- developing a local policy for the implementation of fair and ethical testing practices and for resolving questions concerning those practices
- assuring all students who should be tested are tested
- utilizing tests which are developmentally appropriate
- utilizing tests only for the purposes for which they were designed

Scoring, Analysis, and Reporting
- interpreting test results to the appropriate audience
- providing adequate data analyses to guide curriculum implementation and improvement

Standardized test scores are only one of the many indicators of how well the student is achieving. Such information should be used in conjunction with all other available information known about a student to assist in improving student learning. The administration of tests required by applicable statutes and the use of student data for personnel/program decisions shall comply with the *Testing Code of Ethics* (State Board of Education policy TEST-010), which is printed on the following pages.

Testing Code of Ethics

(a)   This Rule sets out the administrative testing procedures and testing code of ethics and shall apply to all public school employees, including charter school and regional school employees, who are involved in the state testing program.

(b)   The superintendent/charter school director or superintendent's/charter school director's designee shall develop local policies and procedures to ensure maximum test security in coordination with the policies and procedures developed by the test publisher.

(c)   The superintendent/charter school director or superintendent's/charter school director's designee shall instruct personnel who are responsible for the testing program in testing administration procedures. This instruction shall include test administrations that require testing accommodations and shall emphasize the need to follow the directions outlined by the test publisher.

(d)   The superintendent/charter school director or superintendent's/charter school director's designee shall designate the personnel who are authorized to have access to secure test materials. "Access" to test materials by school personnel means handling the materials but does not include reviewing tests or analyzing test items.
  (1)   Persons who have access to secure test materials shall not use those materials for personal gain.
  (2)   No person may copy, reproduce, or paraphrase in any manner or for any reason the test materials without the express written consent of the test publisher.

(e)   The principal shall ensure test security within the school building.
  (1)   The principal shall store test materials in a secure, locked facility. The principal shall allow test materials to be distributed immediately before the test administration.

(f)   Any breach of security, loss of materials, failure to account for materials, or any other deviation from required security procedures shall be reported immediately to the principal, school test coordinator, school system (LEA) test coordinator, superintendent/charter school director, and regional accountability coordinator.

(g)   Preparation for testing.
  (1)   The superintendent/charter school director shall ensure that school system (LEA) test coordinators:
    (A)   secure necessary materials;
    (B)   plan and implement training for school test coordinators, test administrators, and proctors;
    (C)   ensure each school test coordinator and test administrator is trained before each test administration on the policies and procedures for conducting a proper test administration and for processing and returning test materials; and
    (D)   in conjunction with program administrators, ensure the need for test accommodations is documented and that accommodations are limited to the specific need.
  (2)   The principal or the principal's designee shall serve as school test coordinator.
  (3)   The principal shall ensure the school test coordinator:
    (A)   maintains test security and accountability of test materials;
      (1)   Before each test administration, the school test coordinator shall accurately count and distribute test materials.
      (2)   Immediately after each test administration, the school test coordinator shall collect, count, and return all test materials to the secure, locked storage facility.

(B)   establishes any needed school policies and procedures to assure all eligible students are tested fairly;

(C)   identifies and trains personnel, proctors, and backup personnel for test administrations; and

(D)   encourages a positive atmosphere for testing.

(4)   Test administrators shall be school personnel who have professional training in education and the state testing program.

(5)   Teachers shall provide instruction that meets or exceeds the state-adopted curriculum standards to meet the needs of the specific students in the class. Teachers may help students improve test-taking skills by:

(A)   helping students become familiar with test formats using curricular content;

(B)   teaching students test-taking strategies and providing practice sessions;

(C)   helping students learn ways of preparing to take tests; and

(D)   using resource materials such as test questions from test item banks and linking documents in instruction and test preparation.

(h)   Test administration.

(1)   The superintendent/charter school director or superintendent's/charter school director's designee shall:

(A)   assure each school establishes procedures to ensure all test administrators comply with test publisher guidelines;

(B)   inform the local board of education of any breach of this code of ethics; and

(C)   inform school system (LEA) test coordinators and principals of their responsibilities.

(2)   The school test coordinator shall:

(A)   assure school personnel know the content of state and local testing policies;

(B)   implement the school system and local testing policies and procedures to assure all eligible students are tested fairly;

(C)   ensure trained proctors are assigned to test administrations by the principal; and

(D)   ensure all testing irregularities are reported to the school system (LEA) test coordinator.

(3)   Test administrators shall:

(A)   administer tests according to the directions in the assessment guide and any subsequent updates developed by the test publisher;

(B)   administer tests to all eligible students;

(C)   report all testing irregularities to the school test coordinator; and

(D)   provide a positive test-taking environment.

(4)   Proctors shall serve as additional monitors to help the test administrator assure that testing occurs fairly.

(i)   Scoring. The school system test coordinator shall:

(1)   ensure each test is scored according to the procedures and guidelines defined for the test by the test publisher;

(2)   maintain quality control during the entire scoring process, which consists of handling and editing documents, scanning answer documents, and producing electronic files and reports. Quality control shall address at a minimum accuracy and scoring consistency.

(3)   maintain security of tests and data files at all times, including:

(A)   protecting the confidentiality of students at all times when publicizing test results; and

(B)   maintaining test security of answer keys and item-specific scoring rubrics.

(j)   Analysis and reporting. Educators shall use test scores appropriately. This means that the educator recognizes that a test score is only one piece of information and must be interpreted together with

other scores and indicators. Test data help educators understand educational patterns and practices. The superintendent shall ensure that school personnel analyze and report test data ethically and within the limitations described in this paragraph.

    (1)   Educators shall maintain the confidentiality of individual students. Publicizing test scores or any written material containing personally identifiable information from the student's educational records shall not be disseminated or otherwise made available to the public by any member of the State Board of Education, any employee of the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, any employee of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, any member of a local board of education, any employee of a local board of education, or any other person, except as permitted under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C.§1232g.

    (2)   Educators shall release test scores to students, parents, legal guardians, teachers, and the media with interpretive materials as needed.

    (3)   Staff development relating to testing must enable school personnel to respond knowledgeably to questions related to testing, including the tests, scores, scoring procedures, and other interpretive materials.

    (4)   Items and associated materials on a secure test shall not be in the public domain. Only items that are within the public domain may be used for item analysis.

    (5)   Data analysis of test scores for decision-making purposes shall be based upon:

        (A)   disaggregation of data based upon student demographics and other collected variables;

        (B)   examination of grading practices in relation to test scores; and

        (C)   examination of growth trends and goal summary reports for state-mandated tests.

(k) Unethical testing practices include, but are not limited to, the following practices:

    (1)   encouraging students to be absent the day of testing;

    (2)   encouraging students not to do their best;

    (3)   using secure test items or modified secure test items for instruction;

    (4)   changing student responses at any time;

    (5)   interpreting, explaining, or paraphrasing the test directions or the test items;

    (6)   reclassifying students solely for the purpose of avoiding state testing;

    (7)   not testing all eligible students;

    (8)   failing to provide required accommodations during testing;

    (9)   modifying scoring programs including answer keys, equating files, and lookup tables;

    (10) modifying student records solely for the purpose of raising test scores;

    (11) using a single test score to make individual decisions; and

    (12) misleading the public concerning the results and interpretations of test data.

(l)   In the event of a violation of this Rule, the State Board of Education may, in accordance with the contested case provisions of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, impose any one or more of the following sanctions:

    (1)   withhold any applicable monetary incentive awards;

    (2)   file a civil action against the person or persons responsible for the violation for copyright infringement or for any other available cause of action;

    (3)   seek criminal prosecution of the person or persons responsible for the violation; and

    (4)   in accordance with the provisions of 16 NCAC 6C .0312, suspend or revoke the professional license of the person or persons responsible for the violation.

History Note: Authority G.S. 115C-12(9)c.; 115C-81(b)(4);
                Eff. November 1, 1997;
                Amended Eff. August 1, 2000.