Student Assessment in Georgia Schools

Standardized testing has become a basic component of accountability for students, teachers, administrators, schools and school systems in Georgia and other states. Communities rely on their schools' standardized test scores to determine the success of their schools and to compare them to other communities. New industries use test scores as a major factor in selecting locations for new facilities. As a result of national and state accountability ratings, standardized testing has become important to all states. When tests are properly administered, scored, and interpreted with a high degree of professionalism, all of the aforementioned stakeholders can be guided to make reliable and appropriate decisions. A good testing program provides the following benefits:

· Students, based on their individual test scores, will know the skills and knowledge they have mastered and how they compare to other students.

· Parents can evaluate whether their children are obtaining the skills and knowledge they need to be successful during and after their school experiences.

· Teachers can determine if students have mastered the skills and knowledge needed to advance to the next level and if not what skills and knowledge are weak and should be improved.

· Community members have a measuring stick to compare year to year improvement and to compare local student performance with performances of students in other locations.

Georgia relies on state-mandated assessments as a key component of the state accountability program as well as using the test results to fulfill national requirements for educational accountability. For reliable and valid reporting, tests must be administered fairly and ethically. In the pursuit of fair and ethical testing for all stakeholders of Georgia, the following areas shall be addressed before, during, and after testing.

· Test Security – Test materials shall be secured before, during, and after testing and scoring to ensure fair assessment of all students.

· Test Preparation – The test should reflect the curriculum being taught, and should be developmentally appropriate for the age and level of the test-taker. Teachers should be trained on proper administration procedures and testing practices.

· Test Administration – Policies and procedures should be developed to implement fair and ethical testing procedures and practices. All eligible students should be assessed.

· Test Data – Test scoring should be reliable and valid. Test data interpretation shall be appropriately given to stakeholders. Curriculum improvement should be guided by adequate data analyses.

Georgia Student Assessment Program Responsibilities

Standardized tests results are the basis for many reports and accountability measures. Because of the priority it plays in national and state expectations, the administration of tests shall be held to the Code of Ethics. An essential component is that all personnel perform their assigned responsibilities to maintain test integrity and for the process to be appropriately implemented.

Superintendent - The Superintendent has ultimate responsibility and accountability for all testing activities within the local school system.

· Develops local policies and procedures based on Georgia Department of Education guidelines and test publisher’s directions to maintain test security.

· Supervises and monitors Principals to ensure that they fulfill their specific roles and responsibilities for the administration of tests.

· Ensures that all personnel involved with testing receive training on appropriate test administration, policies, and procedures including accommodations for each assessment given.

· Informs the local Board of Education, state test coordinator and Professional Standards Committee of any breach of security by employees of the system.

Principal - The Principal has ultimate responsibility and accountability for all testing activities within the local school.

· Ensures test security within the school building.

· Ensures distribution of test materials occurs immediately prior to test administration.

· Supervises all testing activities.

· Ensures that all school personnel have been appropriately trained on test administration, procedures, and polices, including accommodations for each assessment given.

· Ensures that accommodations have been given to only those students who appropriately need accommodations and have documentation of such need.

· Implements system's testing policies and procedures and establishes needed local school policies and procedures to ensure all students are tested fairly and appropriately.

· Reports immediately any breach of security to the Superintendent.

Code of Ethics Guidelines for Student Assessment

The chart below provides guidance for sanctions of Ethics violations by educators. The sanctions (1, 2, 3, 4 & 5) listed below are intended to be progressive. Repeated violations have escalating consequences, which shall include additional sanctions at the local system level. Proposed sanctions are as follows:

1. System Reprimand. **2.** PSC Reprimand. **3**. PSC Suspension w/out pay. **4**. PSC Revocation. **5.** PSC sanction based on situation

		Sanctions
Before the Test Session – It is inappropriate and unethical to:		
1.	Reveal all or any part of copyrighted tests to students or others, in any manner, oral or written, prior to test administration unless directed by the DOE.	3 - 4
2.	Use of test items and prompts prior to administration for instructional purposes.	3
3.	Discourage students from putting forth optimal effort based on purpose of the test.	1 - 2 - 3
4.	Review or provide answers to test questions.	3 - 4
5.	Possess unauthorized copy(ies) of state tests.	3 - 4
6.	Reclassify students solely for the purpose of avoiding state testing.	3 - 4
During the Test Session – It is Inappropriate and Unethical to:		**Sanctions**
7.	Vary from the directions outlined in the administration manual (i.e. time, reading verbatim, etc.)	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
8.	Read any parts of the test to students except where indicated in the directions (unless indicated by an IEP, IAP, or TPC).	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
9.	Fail to provide state approved accommodations as prescribed in a student's IEP, IAP, or TPC plan **OR provide accommodations that are not included in the IEP, IAP, or TPC plan.**	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
During the Test Session – It is Inappropriate and Unethical to:		**Sanctions**
10.	Interpret, explain, or paraphrase the test items.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
11.	Define or pronounce words used in the test.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
12.	Coach (comments or gestures of any kind) students during the test, including remarks about quality or quantity of student work.	2 - 3 - 4
13.	Provide answers to test questions.	3 - 4
14.	Reveal all or any part of copyrighted tests to students or others, in any manner, oral or written, prior to test administration unless directed by the DOE.	3 - 4

15.	Use test items and prompts prior to administration for instructional purposes.	3
16.	Fail to provide an appropriate testing environment (e.g. instructional materials removed/covered).	1 - 2
After the Test Session– It is Inappropriate and Unethical to:		**Sanctions**
17.	Make inaccurate reports, unsubstantiated claims, inappropriate interpretations, or otherwise false and misleading statements about assessment.	5
18.	Discuss test items or answers.	1 - 2 - 3
19.	Erase or change student answers.	3 - 4
At Any Time During Test Administration, It is Inappropriate and Unethical to:		**Sanctions**
20.	Not account for all secure test materials as provided by the school test coordinator at any time during test administration.	3 - 4
21.	Compromise the integrity of the assessment.	5
22.	Fail to report possible ethical violations by any professional.	5