

# Frequently Asked Questions on the *Standardized Test Administration and Testing Ethics Policy*

<http://schools.utah.gov/assessment/Directors/Resources.aspx>

Updated January, 2016

## **Q: Can teachers look at the tests prior to administering them to students?**

No. For computer-based testing or paper-based testing teachers are permitted to read individual test items **only** if instructed to do so in the TAM (Test Administration Manual). The site testing coordinator should review the TAM with teachers prior to administration of the test. This time may be used to address any questions.

See the [Standardized Test Administration and Testing Ethics Policy](#) (2016).

## **Q: What can be posted on classroom walls during test administration?**

Teaching materials (e.g., posters, banners) that are generic in nature, have been used for general instruction throughout the year, and do not provide answers to test questions may be left in place. Teaching materials that are meant to artificially inflate assessment scores (e.g., applicable to specific test questions) should not be visible to students.

See the [Standardized Test Administration and Testing Ethics Policy](#) (2016).

## **Q: Can an LEA or educator ask for a “small group administration,” “extended time,” “change in location,” or other accommodation for a general education student?**

In most cases, yes. These are all accessibility options allowed in the [Assessment Accessibility and Accommodations Policy](#) (2015). See the policy for guidelines on specific tests.

## **Q: What should be done if students reveal a crisis situation in their response to an assessment item -- either that they intend to do harm to themselves or others, or that they are in danger themselves?**

Students participating in state assessments may reveal intentions to harm themselves or others that the student is at risk of harm from others, or may reveal other indicators that the student is in a crisis situation.

The USOE shall notify the school principal, counselor or other school or school district personnel who the USOE determines have legitimate educational interests, whenever the USOE determines, in its sole discretion, that a student answer indicates the student may be in a crisis situation.

As soon as practicable, the school district superintendent/charter school director, or designee shall be given the name of the individual contacted at the school regarding a student's potential crisis situation.

The USOE shall provide the school and district with a copy of the relevant written text.

Using their best professional judgment, school personnel contacted by USOE shall notify the student's parent, guardian or law enforcement of the student's expressed intentions as soon as practical under the circumstances.

The text provided by USOE shall not be part of the student's record and the school shall destroy any copies of the text once the school or district personnel involved in resolution of the matter determine the text is no longer necessary. The school principal shall provide notice to the USOE of the date the text is destroyed.

School personnel who contact a parent, guardian or law enforcement agency in response to the USOE's notification of potential harm shall provide the USOE with the name of the person contacted and the date of the contact within three business days from the date of contact.

**Q: Who is responsible for appropriate testing practices (paraprofessionals, computer lab aides, etc.)?**

Any educator involved in the administration of an assessment is responsible for appropriate testing practices. A paraprofessional who has received the ethics and test administration training under the direction and supervision of a licensed teacher may administer SAGE assessments as an assistant proctor. See the [Testing Director Resources](#) page for more information.

**Q: How can test scores be used by teachers? Can SAGE results be used in a student's grade?**

Proficiency levels and scale scores on assessments are based on strong technical procedures. Raw scores should not be interpreted as having the same strength.

It is recommended that educators work in groups to decide how state testing data should be appropriately incorporated into feedback and instruction. Schools and educators are encouraged to review state assessment data in a timely manner to identify strengths and weaknesses in student abilities and instruction. An LEA, school, or educator 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.

For more information on the effective use of testing data, see the [Standardized Test Administration and Testing Ethics Policy](#) (2016) and the [Testing Director Resources](#) page.

**Q: What is a SAGE scaled score?**

Scaling is simply placing scores on a numerical scale intended to reflect a continuum of achievement or ability (Peterson, Kolen, & Hoover, 1989). Scores are scaled for the majority of standardized tests developed for the State of Utah, including SAGE (ELA, math, and

science). Scaled scores offer the advantage of simplifying the reporting of results and of allowing comparability from one academic year to the next.

**Q: If there is a discrepancy between SAGE scores and other related test scores, is this a sign of cheating?**

Not necessarily. Many factors contribute to student learning, and thus high SAGE scores for a student who scores significantly lower on another assessment does not guarantee that the student cheated.

Appropriate test proctoring and creating an environment where students do not feel threatened by test scores are the best ways to prevent student cheating.

**Q: What if a student has an electronic device during testing?**

Students are not allowed to have mobile phones or similar electronic devices in their possession during testing. Electronic devices create both the potential for added distractions due to noise and the possibility of cheating. Examples of cheating include students entering test information into their mobile phones, sending test information to others via text messaging, or taking pictures of the test from a concealed phone or other electronic device.

Proctors should take reasonable steps to ensure that students do not have these types of electronic devices during testing. If a proctor discovers an electronic device, it should be taken from the student during testing and returned to the student either after testing, or through the school/LEA regular protocol.

See the [Test Administrator Manuals](#) (TAMs) webpage for specific guidelines.

**Q: When can reference sheets be used?**

The reference sheets provided for some science courses should be used as instructional tools throughout the school year. When students become accustomed to using the reference sheets regularly as an aid to their studies, they will be more comfortable using them during a SAGE assessment. Students should not, however, use reference sheets during testing that have additional information added. For instance, a student cannot use a reference sheet that has extra formulas or examples of problems during a SAGE assessment.

See the [Test Administrator Manuals](#) (TAMs) webpage for specific guidelines.

**Q: What does good test proctoring look like?**

Active test proctoring includes walking around the room to ensure each student is logged into the correct test and is at the correct workstation. Do this by checking that the name on the computer screen matches the name of the student sitting at the workstation. Active proctoring also includes ensuring information in the test administration manual ([TAM](#)) is followed exactly, actively walking around the room, and being aware of student behaviors during testing.

Proctors are an important part of the student's testing experience. During testing, proctors can assist in ensuring that the importance of the test and the good faith efforts of all students are not undermined.

**Q: What information should be given to parents to prepare students for tests?**

Parents are encouraged to help prepare students for testing. This preparation begins with encouraging students to be engaged in learning throughout the school year, and working to help students master concepts they do not understand.

Immediate preparations for testing should include ensuring that students are aware of the testing, are in attendance to complete testing, and that students receive adequate rest and nutrition prior to testing.

Prior to participating in SAGE Summative and Interim testing, all students should complete a SAGE Training Test. See the [SAGE](#) and [Testing Director Resources](#) webpages for more information.

**Q: I have become aware of an unethical testing situation in my school or district. What are my next steps?**

Ethical violations should be reported immediately to at least one of the following:

- Supervisor
- School administrator
- District assessment director
- State assessment director

If inappropriate practices are found, teachers involved may receive further training or a reprimand, be subject to disciplinary action, be terminated, and/or lose their Utah teaching license (see Utah Code 53A-1-608; Board Rule R277- 473-9).

See the [Standardized Test Administration and Testing Ethics Policy](#) (2013) for more information.