



Maine Educational Assessments Security Training for District and School Assessment Coordinators: Video Transcript

Welcome to the Maine Educational Assessments Security Training for District and School Assessment Coordinators.

Assessment administrators and proctors are required to watch the two assessment security webisodes available on the Maine Department of Education's Assessment Security website in lieu of this video.

The assessment security webisodes, assessment-specific proctor training videos, and the Assessment Security Handbook are all found on the Maine DOE's Assessment Security webpage.

Assessing student learning is an essential aspect of education, as it provides data that can lead to improved outcomes for students. Results from statewide assessments contribute to educational decisions made at the federal, state, and local levels in the planning and allocation of resources and programming for students. It is critical that assessment results are accurate, fair, and comparable.

The Maine DOE has established policies and defined procedures to ensure the integrity of the state assessment system. Adherence to Maine's assessment security requirements ensures that the assessments will yield high-quality data that can be trusted to support valid and fair conclusions related to academic achievement.

An assessment irregularity is any event, act, or omission which can compromise the integrity of Maine state assessments or the results data. State and local assessment personnel can work together in several ways to avoid irregularities.

The SAU Superintendent has ultimate responsibility for assessments within the SAU. The Superintendent designates a staff member to act as the District Assessment Coordinator, or DAC. The DAC is the key point of contact for communication with the Maine DOE Assessment Team. At the school level, the building administrator has the responsibility to ensure the security and integrity of each assessment administration within their building.

Assessment administrators or proctors are the personnel administering the assessments to students. Generally, assessment administrators should be selected in the following order: first, certified teachers or administrators employed by the school district; second, paraprofessionals or non-licensed administrative personnel; and third, substitute teachers or contracted employees.

In the instance of a student with an Individualized Education Program, 504 Plan, or Individual Language Acquisition Plan, the assessment administrator should have familiarity with the student's assigned and regularly used accommodations.

All SAU and school staff involved in implementation of any state assessment must participate in required training. The DAC is responsible for ensuring that clear and comprehensive annual training has been provided on assessment administration and security procedures for all applicable staff.

After staff are fully trained, they are required to sign the *Security and Student Data Privacy Agreement*. These agreements must be maintained by the SAU for the current academic year. In the case of an irregularity, the Maine DOE may need to review the signed agreements during technical assistance.

School personnel should avoid discussing, retaining, or reproducing any secure state assessment questions, materials, or student responses to questions, for example by taking a photo.

The school shall designate an area for assessment administration that minimizes distractions and disruptions for students, and a "Do Not Disturb" sign should be placed on the door.

Instructional materials regarding the content being measured must be removed or covered. Students should not have access to unauthorized notes, textbooks, or other instructional materials. Examples include, but are not limited to, posters, word lists, definitions, charts, or desk tags.

Students must be seated so there is enough space between them to minimize opportunities to review each other's work.

Students are not permitted access to any prohibited electronic devices used for communication, for capturing images of the assessment itself or the room, or for data storage that can be used to compromise the validity or security of the assessment. Prohibited devices include smart phones, smart watches, cell phones, book readers, electronic tablets, pagers, cameras, non-approved calculators, music players, and voice recorders.

The District Assessment Coordinator should work with School Assessment Coordinators to ensure proper and secure handling of materials before, during and following the assessment administration.

Printed secure assessment materials must be kept in a locked storage area. Secure items include, but are not limited to, assessment booklets such as a braille or paper forms, assessment tickets, answer documents, scratch paper, and ancillary materials specific to the assessment such as the Listening & Speaking CD for ACCESS for ELLs. At the

conclusion of the assessment, all student test tickets and scratch paper should be securely destroyed. Packing lists and shipping records used to track the delivery and custody of secure assessment materials must be maintained for one year following the administration. These will be helpful if a discrepancy arises, or if the receipt of materials cannot be confirmed.

Assessment administrators should distribute and collect secure assessment materials, including test tickets, to and from students individually at the beginning and end of the test session.

If the security of assessment questions or forms is compromised, the appropriate State Assessment Coordinator must be immediately contacted.

At all times during the assessment administration, an assessment administrator must be present. Assessment administrators must be actively monitoring student behavior closely, moving frequently and unobtrusively throughout a room. They should refrain from distractions such as holding extended conversations with each other; reading newspapers or books; eating; using a computer, cell phone, or other device unless directly required for the assessment; and grading papers.

Any suspected irregularity related to assessment security must be reported as soon as possible. If the event involves inappropriate exposure of secure assessment material, the most critical action is that the exposure be immediately contained. Many irregularities can be remediated without significant consequences if caught and reported in a timely fashion.

In most cases, the staff directly involved in the assessment administration are in the best position to notice an irregularity. The Assessment Administrators must report irregularities to the school assessment coordinator. This is especially important for any irregularities that involve a breach of assessment item security, lead to assessment invalidation, involve student misbehavior, or involve educator misbehavior.

The school assessment coordinator must contact the appropriate Maine DOE assessment coordinator to report irregularities.

Occasionally, there will be others with concerns about a particular assessment practice. Students might discuss concerns with their parents. Other educators might observe questionable practices. To capture information from all available sources about potential irregularities, the Maine DOE has created an Anonymous MEA Tip Link. This link is posted on the MECAS Assessment Security webpage and should be communicated to educators and parents along with other assessment information.

To the extent practical, the Maine DOE, in collaboration with SAUs and assessment contractors, is responsible for monitoring the internet and social media for any disclosure of secure assessment questions or materials. SAU or school staff that encounter secure

materials on the internet or hear about students posting such information must immediately report the incident to the appropriate Maine DOE assessment coordinator.

In investigating irregularities, there are three overarching questions:

- Did the irregularity lead to a breach of assessment item security?
- Did a misadministration affect the validity of any student performance and resulting scores?
- Was the irregularity deliberate; is there evidence of academic fraud?

For more complex irregularities, the Maine DOE assessment coordinator may determine that further investigation is necessary to ensure an appropriate resolution. The Maine DOE assessment coordinator will communicate with the DAC and any other appropriate administrators throughout the investigative process.

The Maine DOE protocol for investigating assessment irregularities includes completion of the Assessment Irregularity Reporting Form by the School or District Assessment Coordinator. The irregularity reporting form asks for information including, but not limited to the Student State IDs, for all involved students, names and roles of involved educators, assessment affected, and scope of any secure assessment material exposure. Schools may also be required to provide copies of the signed Security and Student Data Privacy Agreements or other documentation.

The Maine DOE Assessment Team will review the documentation within one week of receipt and determine the appropriate follow-up actions, for example the gathering of additional information; a delay in reporting student, school, or SAU results; the invalidation of student, school, or SAU results; or additional review by the Maine DOE for possible certification action. Students whose assessment results are invalidated are identified as non-participants in the state accountability system.

The Maine DOE Assessment Team will communicate with the SAU following the completion of the review. The response will outline the Maine DOE process, documentation, determinations, and any appropriate actions. The Maine DOE Assessment Team will support the SAU as needed to ensure that all appropriate actions are implemented.

For more information regarding Maine's Educational Assessments, please visit our website.