Annual Test Security Summary for Nevada Public Schools, 2017-2018

The Nevada Department of Education (hereafter referred to as "the Department") establishes test security and administration protocol for the purpose of upholding the integrity of state-mandated assessments, maintaining consistency in test administration, and the validity of scores by means of uniform procedures (NRS 390.105, NAC 389.054). Each year, approximately 300,000 students participate in multiple assessments administered in grades K through 12. Nearly 900,000 separate tests are administered in over 600 locations. Although the number of tests administered is significant, a total of 438 reported testing irregularities resulted during the 2017-2018 school year (0.05% of all tests administered).

Based on a review of reported testing irregularities, the following conclusions may be drawn:

- The 2017-2018 school year experienced a 20% increase in reported testing irregularities from last year, increasing from 369 incidents to 438.

- Nevada's Summative Assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics were administered to students in grades 3 through 8, and resulted in 255 incidents. Irregularities for Nevada's largest assessment accounted for more than half of all reported occurrences.

- Students in grades 5, 8, and high school participated in a state science assessment. There were 60 reported irregularities.

- Students with a home language other than English take the WIDA assessment to determine the need for supports in instruction and assessments. This year's administration resulted in 63 reported irregularities.

- The Nevada Alternate Assessment (NAA) is administered to less than 1% of all students in Nevada who meet the strict eligibility criteria for alternate achievement standards. The program experienced 28 testing irregularities.

- Students in grade 11 participated in Nevada's College and Career Readiness Assessment, the ACT. That assessment resulted in 32 testing irregularities.

- Incidents reported as testing irregularities covered a broad array of occurrences and varying degrees of severity (see table, page 3). The primary incident types were as follows:

  - Improper test administration accounted for approximately for 33% of all incidents—143 of 438 occurrences in 2017-2018, comparable to last year.

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- Interruptions in the testing process were responsible for 129 reported incidents (30%) in 2017-2018, a sharp increase from 32 incidents (7%) in 2016-2017.

- Student misconduct or cheating accounted for 107 of 438 incidents (24%) in 2017-2018, a decrease from 149 cases (40%) in 2016-2017.

Cause and Outcome

- Among the reported irregularities, 202 cases (46%, compared to 51% last year) resulted from improper procedures or teacher error or action. Mismanagement of student testing tickets, failure to select online accommodations or supports, returning test materials past the prescribed deadline, and student eligibility errors were the primary causes. Of those 202 cases, 137 resulted in no further action because potential compromise of scores did not occur, and schools or districts responded with appropriate corrective action plans.

- Events beyond the control of the testing environment accounted for the remaining 236 cases (54%). This category included 107 cases of student cheating or misconduct, and 129 cases of interrupted testing due to student illness, technological issues, or evacuations. All instances of student cheating resulted in invalid scores.

- **Note:** There were 7 incidents categorized as "Multiple Irregularities" resulting from a combination of various improper testing procedures and student cheating.

Additional Examinations

Pursuant to NRS 390.290, there were no additional examinations administered during the 2017-2018 school year.

Unresolved Cases for 2016-2017

At the conclusion of the 2016-2017 school year, two cases were unresolved, pending further information or review. All cases have been closed.

Unresolved Cases for 2017-2018

To date, two cases from 2017-2018 are unresolved, pending further review.

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Comparisons

The following table provides a comparison of testing programs to incident type, as described in the narrative on pages 1 and 2. See Attachments A and B for case-by-case descriptions. (Attachment "A" lists irregularities investigated and resolved by the Department; Attachment "B" lists irregularities investigated and resolved by ACT.)

Comparison of Assessment Program to Incident Type

Incident Type	Summative	Science	WIDA	NAA	ACT	Totals
Improper Test Administration	56	18	25	12	32	**143**
Testing Interrupted	95	23	3	8		**129**
Student Cheating or Misconduct	85	16	6			**107**
Late Return of Materials			11	6		**17**
Improper Storage or Distribution of Materials	7		5	1		**13**
Testing Ineligible Students	2		10			**12**
Multiple Irregularities	4	1	1	1		**7**
Unsupervised Students	2	2				**4**
Failure to Administer	1		2			**3**
Missing Test Materials	2					**2**
Unauthorized Disclosure of Content	1					**1**
Failure to Report						**0**
Totals	**255**	**60**	**63**	**28**	**32**	**438**

Recommendations

In order to decrease the number of testing irregularities and to foster a culture of testing integrity, the following policies and procedures are being implemented:

- Training for district- and school-level personnel will be expanded to emphasize procedures specific to online testing. The Department plans to produce separate training modules addressing a variety of related topics.

- Bi-weekly assessment webinars with district test directors will continue to address ongoing challenges during the testing windows.

- The Department, in conjunction with school districts, plans to actively monitor test administration, including unannounced on-site visits.

- To facilitate the reporting process, a secure web-based documentation system will be in place beginning in 2018-2019.

- Existing Department staff will provide assistance with internal test security procedures.

Summary and Considerations

The Department strives to uphold its mission statement: "To improve student achievement and educator effectiveness by ensuring opportunities, facilitating learning, and promoting excellence." Valid test scores are a critical component in meeting this goal. A culture of testing integrity, combined with uniform testing procedures, helps ensure that test scores will accurately reflect student achievement.

In 2017-2018, students participated in online assessments across multiple testing programs, and the number testing irregularities increased since 2016-2017. However, with student cheating and misconduct on the decline, it is evident that schools are vigilantly monitoring student activity, and emphasizing the importance of ethics and testing integrity.

In the future, the Department will continue to cultivate its relationship with districts by enhancing communication, and will provide additional support with more extensive training programs and on-site monitoring.

The Department is hopeful that the 2018-2019 school year will demonstrate a decrease in the number of testing irregularities than in the previous year.