

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

KATHLEEN SHANAHAN, Chair
ROBERTO MARTÍNEZ, Vice Chair

Members

GARY CHARTRAND
DR. AKSHAY DESAI
MARK KAPLAN
JOHN R. PADGET

Dr. Eric J. Smith
Commissioner of Education



MEMORANDUM

To: District Assessment Coordinators

From: Victoria Ash, Chief
Bureau of K-12 Assessment

Date: May 27, 2011

Subject: Spring 2011 FCAT/FCAT 2.0/EOC Student Invalidations and Appeals Process

As detailed in the memorandum sent to Superintendents on March 14, 2011, the Department is conducting statistical analyses of test data during the Spring 2011 FCAT/FCAT 2.0/EOC assessments administration to help ensure fair and valid results statewide. Through Pearson, our primary assessment contractor, the Department has contracted with Caveon Test Security to provide its Caveon Data Forensics™ for all statewide assessments. Caveon will analyze data to identify highly unusual test results for two primary groups: 1) students with extremely similar test responses; and 2) schools with improbable levels of similarity, gains, and/or erasures. Based on these analyses, the Department is invalidating the test scores of students whose results were so similar that they exceeded the threshold of one chance in a trillion when tests are taken normally. For FCAT Retakes, both passing and non-passing scores were invalidated if the threshold was met.

If there are affected students and schools in your district, this information, including each student's passing status and the similarity index detected, will be listed on a spreadsheet and faxed to your office during results release. In an effort to protect confidential student information, our office will contact you prior to faxing this information to ensure you are available to receive it immediately.

If you have reason to believe that a student was incorrectly flagged for invalidation, you may appeal the decision to invalidate results. The appeals process will require an investigation and supporting documentation (e.g., seating charts, test group codes, administrator statements) that must be submitted for Department review, with a completed appeal form, no later than September 1, 2011. **Please do not enter appeals for these students into the online Score**

SHARON KOON, PH.D.
ASSISTANT DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
ACCOUNTABILITY, RESEARCH, AND MEASUREMENT
OFFICE OF ASSESSMENT

Inquiry System. If inquiries for these students are entered into the system, they will not be processed.

The appeals process is outlined below.

- 1) The school must submit a written request for appeal to the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC). The request for appeal must detail the circumstances surrounding the student's testing experience and include supporting or related evidence, such as:

Testing Conditions and Test Security Protocol at the Testing Site: This part of the investigation is intended to provide the FDOE with an understanding of the security of test materials while they were at a school site. The documentation should address who had access to test documents, the physical arrangements used to secure the test materials, the distribution methods used to deliver tests to test administrators and students, and the return of these tests to a secured area. Further, the documentation should clearly describe the testing circumstances, such as classroom or auditorium setting, method for assigned seating, and protocol for breaks or lunch for students whose tests have been invalidated. If possible, an estimated timeline for the above activities should be included (e.g., how long before completed tests were placed in locked storage, length of student breaks).

Testing Location of Students: Documentation of the seating arrangement of all students in question, as well as the test group code, should be provided to FDOE. If a seating chart is available, it should be included. At a minimum, the documentation should provide a list of students who tested at the same location as the students whose tests have been invalidated. In cases where only a list of students and test group code are available, supporting documentation should be provided describing where the specific investigated students were located.

FCAT Testing History of Students: The investigation should provide FDOE, in a simple, concise, and readable format, a chart showing the previous FCAT testing history for the students in question. Other information (GPA, school grades, or other standardized tests scores) should be submitted as well.

Student Statements: Hand-written (not typed) statements by each student describing the circumstances that transpired when the student was administered the test should be provided to FDOE. District or school personnel should interview each student individually (with at least two adults present), and finalized statements must contain the student's signature.

Test Administrator/Proctor Statements: Written statements by the test administrator and/or proctor(s) tasked with administering the invalidated tests should be provided to FDOE and should contain signatures. Such statements should be clearly written or typed and provide a detailed review of how the test was administered. These statements should describe the general circumstances under which the test was given, any disruptions during testing, any attempt by students to share answers, and/or any other detail that could assist FDOE in understanding the conditions under which the test was administered. Statements should clearly document what the administrator/proctor was doing during the test such as reading the script, walking around the room, sitting at a desk, and any

communication with students. If certified, the administrator/proctor should include his or her teacher certification number when submitting the statement. If not certified, this should be clearly stated on the report.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): The Department requires the attention and cooperation of Florida's school districts in order to collect meaningful information. At the same time, the Department encourages all districts to be mindful of the FERPA requirements as they relate to including student-level information in documents or reports. **Do not send student information via email.**

- 2) The District Assessment Coordinator should acknowledge receipt of the request for appeal, and then weigh the request and related evidence against the statistical detail provided by the Department. It is the district's responsibility to determine whether the request for appeal is supported by enough evidence to submit to the Department. **Should a district choose to submit an appeal for a student, an appeal form must be requested from Jeremy Billington at Jeremy.Billington@fldoe.org.** The form must contain signatures from both the District Assessment Coordinator and the Superintendent and should be faxed to the Department with all supporting documentation submitted by the school.
- 3) Each appeal that is submitted to the Department will be reviewed and responded to in one of the following ways:
 - a. Determine that the evidence presented in the appeal warrants release of the score in question, or
 - b. Determine that a satisfactory explanation for the flagged test result is not evidenced and the score invalidation for the student in question is upheld.
- 4) All appeal decisions are final.

For a school with multiple student invalidations, even if no appeals are requested, we recommend that you investigate the circumstances surrounding the irregularities at that school to ensure all test administration and security policies and procedures are being followed to help prevent future anomalies. You do not need to submit any of these investigation findings to the Department unless a security breach beyond the scope of the student invalidation is discovered.

For more information about the Caveon analysis, you may access the memorandum from Kris Ellington at <http://www.fldoe.org/asp/k12memo/pdf/idfpsfv.pdf>, as well as the Caveon Webinar and PowerPoint presentation from March 2011 at www.pearsonaccess.com/fl under the Spring R/M/S tab under *Support*.

Thank you for your continued support in ensuring that our statewide assessments provide valid and reliable test results for each and every student. If you have any questions about this information, please feel free to contact Jeremy Billington at Jeremy.Billington@fldoe.org, or Lisa Carlisle at Lisa.Carlisle@fldoe.org.