

Assessment News for Families

Washoe County School District 2011-2012

Washoe County students participate on a number of state and district assessments:

Summative, Accountability Assessments:

- Nevada Criterion Referenced Tests (CRTs) in math and reading for all students in grades 3 – 8
- Nevada Criterion Referenced Tests in science for all students in grades 5 And 8
- Nevada Writing Assessments for all students in grades 5 and 8
- Nevada High School proficiency exams (HSPE) for all students in reading, math, and science beginning in grade 10 and writing beginning in grade 11
- Nevada Alternate Assessment (NAA) for eligible students in grades 3 – 8 and grade 11
- English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) for eligible students in grades 1 - 11
- WCSD Common Finals in Algebra 1, Geometry, Formal Geometry, and Algebra 2
- WCSD Credit by Exam assessments in selected World Languages for eligible students in grade 8

Local Assessments used to monitor student progress:

- WCSD Interim Assessments ([MAP Tests](#)) in math for students in grades 1 – 9 (three times a year)
- WCSD Interim Assessments ([MAP Tests](#)) in reading for students in grades 3 – 9 (three times a year)
- The Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) in grades 1 & 2 (two times a year)
- The Kindergarten Portfolio of Assessments in literacy (including DRA) and numeracy (three times a year)
- Curriculum Based Measures (CBMs) for eligible students, grades 1 – 12, as determined by a school's Intervention Assistance Team (IAT)
- School site common assessments
- Classroom assessments, including formative processes

These assessments directly support the four building blocks of the district's [Strategic Plan](#) (Alignment, Accountability, Access and Achievement), the **Pathway to College and Highly-Skilled Career Readiness** and at least three of the four district strategic goals. They help make up a balanced assessment system that provides information for teachers, students and parents that can help inform decisions about students' learning throughout the school year. Local assessments are generally more informal and the information from them is used only at the classroom or school level. State and district summative, accountability assessments are much more formal and can be used at the district and state levels, as well as at the school level, to make high stakes decisions about schools and students.

Parents/guardians play a very crucial part in ensuring that students have the best testing conditions available to them by supporting their children's efforts to study and to participate fully in classroom learning activities and by encouraging them to prepare well for upcoming assessments. There are four other ways that parents/guardians can do to help shape a successful testing experience on summative, accountability assessments:

1. Parents/guardians play a significant role in the assessment process by ensuring their child is at school on days when testing occurs. If the child absolutely cannot attend school on the day of testing, it is imperative that the parent inform the principal of the school no later than the morning testing is to occur. Schools are penalized for not testing students even if they are absent from school the day of the test. Make up opportunities exist for most state-mandated tests.
2. Another important item to note: the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program strictly prohibits the presence of electronic devices in any testing room. On test days, please remind your students to secure their personal electronics in a safe place prior to taking a seat in a testing room.
3. High school students must have valid photo identification with them when they take the High School Proficiency Exam. This is to verify that the student taking the test is actually taking the test.

4. Finally, it is also very important that parents/guardians report any suspected testing irregularities to their child's principal. The following will provide you with an overview of the District plan which includes the steps you may use to report such suspected testing irregularities.

<p style="text-align: center;">A Primer for Testing: Policies and Professional Expectations (Reporting Suspected Testing Breaches or Irregularities)</p>

Each year the Washoe County School District (WCSD) develops an assessment security and training plan to comply with Nevada statutory mandates. This plan is then presented to the Board of Trustees, school site personnel, parents, and students in compliance with Nevada Revised Statutes 389.600-389.648 inclusive and 391.600-391.648 inclusive.

The Board of Trustees delegates the responsibility for implementation of the assessment plan and reporting test irregularities to the Superintendent and the department of Public Policy, Accountability & Assessment. In the event that test administration irregularities or alleged breaches are reported to the Nevada Department of Education, summaries of reports are provided to the Superintendent and the Board of Trustees.

Washoe County School District revises its training manual, *A Primer for Testing: Policies and Professional Expectations* (the *Primer*) annually to reflect current legislative and Nevada Department of Education mandates regarding test administration and security. The *Primer* includes the important definitions set forth in statute. The *Primer* also includes the protocols for reporting and investigating irregularities in testing administration and test security. The *Primer* is reviewed annually at school sites with all personnel connected in any way with test administration.

The *Primer* includes information regarding the following topics:

1. Statement of Responsibility:
 - This section defines who is responsible for test administration and security and who must review the *Primer*.
2. Purposes of the Assessment Program:
 - to encourage analysis of results and to assist in planning for instructional improvement as established by the *Envision WCSD 2015* Strategic Plan, school improvement plans, and best practices for Tier 1 of Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²);
 - to gather and report data that are accurate, meaningful, and professionally sound;
 - to fulfill accountability requirements as established by the Nevada Legislature and NCLB;
 - to track statistical data longitudinally in order to view trends or patterns of performance or deficiency and to set meaningful school and student performance targets;
 - to establish comparisons among students in the district, in the state, and in the nation; and
 - to identify individual student needs based upon the skills and concepts tested to inform school and classroom decisions on differentiated instruction and intervention.
3. Parent/Guardian Notification:
 - You will be notified in advance of the testing schedule for district and state mandated tests.
 - Not more than **15 working days** after each school receives the results of the examinations, test results are mailed to the last known address of the parent or legal guardian as listed in the district's student information system.
4. Test and/or Examination Collection and Scoring:
 - Because Adequate Yearly Progress is based on assessment results, each school's clerical staff must ensure that all records are up-to-date and accurate at all times. It is important that the school have each student's accurate demographic information.
 - Reporting the test and/or examination scores of individual students to anyone other than authorized school personnel, the student's parent/guardian, or the student is a violation of the privacy rights of the individual.
5. Reporting Suspected Breaches or Irregularities: **In the event of any alleged or suspected breach of test and/or examination security or unauthorized disclosure of test and/or**

examination content (for both state- and district-mandated assessments), this sequence must be followed:

- **The situation must be reported to the school test coordinator AND school principal within 24 hours.**
- The test coordinator or principal must, in turn, report the breach of test security to the Director of Assessment or his designee, within 24 hours of the time the alleged or suspected breach has been brought to his/her attention.
- The Director of Assessment or his designee, will communicate with appropriate WCSD administrators about the suspected breach or unauthorized disclosure.
- For all state-mandated assessments, within 24 hours, the Director of Assessment or his designee, must report any breach of test security or suspected irregularity in test administration to the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program.
- Within five days, the school principal must provide a completed Report of Test Irregularity in the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program for both state, and district, mandated tests.
- For all alleged breaches of test security or irregularities in test administration for state-mandated assessments, WCSD must submit the completed Report of Test Irregularity to the NDE within 14 days of the discovery of the event.
- Summaries of reports will be provided to the Superintendent and the Board of Trustees.
- For all alleged breaches of test security or irregularities in test administration for state-mandated assessments, District administrators will investigate and determine appropriate consequences.

The complete *Primer*, including more detailed information on reporting suspected testing security breaches, is posted on the school district's website. It can be accessed on the district's [Assessment Page](#).

Thank you for the support you provide your child, the school, and the District in measuring your child's achievement.

Any questions about appropriate test administration or alleged breaches of test security should be directed to the school principal and/or to Paul Richter, Director of Assessment, Washoe County School District at (775) 348-0323.