

# Case Study – Policies to Address Educator Cheating

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Published reports of educator cheating on high-stakes achievement tests suggest a significant, if not growing, problem. From 2005-2006, more than 30 incidents of educator cheating were reported, including:

- **11/06/2006**

**Staten Island Advance**

Seventeen Staten Island teachers inform the United Federation of Teachers of tampering with the Regents exam. The vice principal at Wagner High School allegedly re-scored student tests at home while teachers added points to student test scores. The teachers claim they were told to change test answers in their classrooms. The informants also claim the principal said he would make them pay for coming forward. Other Staten Island teachers suggest this behavior is a system-wide practice. According to

Frank DeSantis, a teacher in St. George High School, “A lot of teachers get that feeling that all [schools] are looking for is statistics, and [they’re] lying and cheating to get them.”

(Gonen, 2006)

- **10/22/2006**

**The Columbus Dispatch**

Of the 28 Ohio school districts analyzed by The Columbus Dispatch, 15 had instances of educators cheating on standardized tests. Barbara Oaks, a teacher in the Coventry district, looked through the test and wrote out a geometry problem she thought her students would have trouble with. Winifred Shima, a teacher from the Parma district, used a copy of the test to create a study guide for students that included 45 of the 46 actual test questions. Brian Wirick (East Knox) and

Heather Buchanan (Wapakoneta) both used the test to create study guides for students. Judy Wray, a veteran teacher in Marietta, made copies of the actual state test to help students prepare. Wray is reported to have said that teachers cheat more than administrators know.

(Richards, 2006)

- **06/25/2006**

**Philadelphia Inquirer**

Edison Schools fires Jayne Gibbs, principal at Parry Middle School in Chester, Pennsylvania for allegedly changing student test answers

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in 2005. Eighth graders at the school said the principal had given them the answers to questions on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment. Gibbs is also accused of exempting special-education students from testing, violating state and federal rules. Edison Schools also asks the state and district to investigate exemplary test results at Showalter Middle School, where Gibbs served as principal from 2003-04. (Patrick, 2006)

• **05/04/2005**

**WHO TV:**

Gene Zwiefel, seventh-grade teacher in the Adel district, resigns after allegations were made that he quizzed students on materials found in the actual Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. According to David Frisbie, director of the Iowa Testing Programs, similar incidences have occurred at four other Iowa Schools. (WHO TV, 2005)

Keeping in mind that these reports (summarized in Appendix A) represent only a *sample* of incidents over a 2-year period in which *American elementary and secondary* educators *clearly cheated* and *were caught*, these reports demonstrate that the problem of educator cheating on tests is real. Educator cheating artificially inflates student achievement and invalidates scores from entire classrooms. It also penalizes students who, with their inflated scores, will not receive resources intended to increase achievement. This cheating behavior also makes it impossible to get an accurate snapshot of the effectiveness of educational policies, teaching strategies, and cur-

riculum changes. Furthermore, educators who cheat, including those who may not realize they *are* cheating, fail as role models to students and cast doubt on all educators and the educational process. School districts bear responsibility for developing and implementing clear policies to detect and prevent educator cheating on high-stakes tests, including penalties for educators who are found to have cheated.

Research in cheating on tests has primarily focused on student cheating. In his book, *Cheating on Tests: How to Do it, Detect it, and Prevent it*, Gregory Cizek documents 62 unique cheating methods and summarizes 17 studies into the prevalence of student cheating (Cizek, 1999). Additionally, at least 13 statistical indices and two software applications have been developed to detect student cheating on exams (Angoff, 1974; Belleza, 1989; Cizek, 1999; Frary, 1977; Hanson & Brennan, 1987; Holland, 1976; Sotaridona, 2001; van der Linden, 2002; Wollack, 1997).

Decidedly less research has been conducted on the detection and prevention of educator cheating. Cizek discovered this as well, stating, "Preventing cheating by those who give tests is a particularly under researched topic" (Cizek, 1999, p. 183). Those who have conducted some research into this topic have invariably found evidence of educator cheating. A 1990 survey found 31.5% of educators either observed cheating in their schools or engaged in cheating themselves (Gay, 1990). A 1991 survey found that between 6 – 30% of teachers believed specific cheating behaviors occurred at their schools (Shepard & Dougherty, 1991). A 1992 survey by *Educational Measurement*

reported that 44% of educators said that colleagues cheated on tests for their students and 55% were aware of fellow teachers cheating on tests. In 2004, Nichols & Berliner searched for newspaper articles on cheating on high-stakes tests, finding only 26 published stories of student cheating and 83 stories of educator cheating (Nichols & Berliner, 2004).

Based on a review of published news reports and surveys, educators appear to have four methods to cheat on high-stakes: manipulating answer sheets, manipulating the test administration process, manipulating the score reporting process, and manipulating the teaching process/philosophy. This taxonomy, specific examples of cheating behaviors, and research-based estimates of the prevalence of each cheating method are displayed in Table 1.

In an attempt to detect educator cheating and more accurately estimate its prevalence, Jacob & Levitt created a statistical index to identify educators who manipulate answer sheets (possibly the most blatant and least common type of cheating, according to previous research). The indices detect unexpected test score fluctuations (classrooms that report large test score gains one year followed by small gains the following year) and unexpected patterns in student answers (students answering items similarly within a classroom) (Jacob & Levitt, 2003). After developing their composite index, the researchers analyzed results from a 2002 administration of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills in Chicago public schools. Based on their analysis, Jacob & Levitt conclude, "Empirically we detect cheating in approximately 4 to 5 percent of the classes in our sample."

Table 1: Taxonomy and Prevalence of Educator Cheating

	Shepard & Dougherty (1991)	Gay (1990)	Nichols & Berliner (2004)
<b>Manipulating Answer sheets</b>			
* Altering a student's answer sheet	6.1%	1.5%	16 stories
* Giving students answers	8.3%		8 stories
* Pointing out mismarked items		10%	11 stories
<b>Manipulating Administration Process</b>			
* Giving students hints on test items	22.7%	10%	7 stories
* Rephrasing test items for students	18.0%		
* Providing students extra time	19.6%	15%	3 stories
* Reading items that are supposed to be read by students	14.1%		
* Excluding students from testing	7.4% - 13.3%		41 stories
* Answering questions about test content	11.7%		
* Instructing students to fill-in a specific answer for unanswered items			
* Providing accommodations or inappropriate special ed. placement			1 story
<b>Manipulating Reporting Process</b>			
* Removing student test scores from the official records			1 story
* Providing students with false ID numbers so their scores won't count			1 story
* Misrepresenting data			8 stories
* Changing the criteria for proficiency			21 stories
* Conflicting accountability ratings			15 stories
<b>Manipulating Teaching Process or Philosophy</b>			
* Teaching students specific test items or teaching during test	30.2%	5%	4 stories
* Practicing with actual test items	11.3%		17 stories
* Teaching to the test			15 stories
* Narrowing the curriculum			13 stories
Values represent the percentage of teachers who believe a specific cheating behavior occurs "often" or "frequently" at their schools. The numbers in the last column represent the number of published news articles found by the researcher that describe each type of cheating behavior (83 stories total)			

(Jacob & Levitt, 2003, p .846).

These results, along with a similar analysis conducted by this author (Thiessen, 2006), support the survey results of Gay (1990) and Shepard & Dougherty (1991): approximately between 1-8% of educators cheat on standardized tests by manipulating their students' answer sheets or by directly giving them answers (two of the most blatant forms of cheating). If we include other types of cheating (manipulating the reporting process or teaching process), a reasonable guess is that more than 25% of educators cheat on high-stakes tests.

### Deterring Educator Cheating

If some educators do cheat on high-stakes tests and if this behavior is unacceptable, what can be done to stop this behavior? One way to diminish educator cheating is by punishing educators who have been found to cheat. This would require the development and implementation of methods used to detect cheating educators, such as statistical analyses of student answer sheets or surveys of students after test administration. A 2006 poll conducted by the Philadelphia Inquirer found that fewer than half of all states attempt to detect cheating on their high-stakes

tests. California, Illinois, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas have taken this approach (Patrick & Eichel, 2006). A survey conducted by test security firm Caveon confirmed that nearly 50% of states do not analyze answer sheets for cheating and 25% have no plans to do so in the future (Sorensen, 2006). Even if states did detect cheating and penalize cheaters, this "after-the-fact" approach to deter educator cheating would be rather labor-intensive and, if used as the only deterrent to cheating, would most likely be ineffective. A 1992 study on student cheating

found both the expectation and severity of punishment had no effect on reducing cheating behaviors in students (Bunn et al, 1992).

Another way to decrease the prevalence of educator cheating would be by modifying the tests used to make high-stakes decisions. If test developers create constructed-response tests with clear administration instructions and write new items every time the test is administered, cheating would be much more difficult (Cizek, 1999). Unfortunately, this approach is also labor-intensive, inefficient, and costly.

A third way to reduce the number of educators who engage in cheating behaviors would be by developing, implementing, and disseminating policies and standards that both discourage cheating and encourage honesty and integrity. In a study on student cheating, McCabe and Trevino (1993) found that a student was less likely to cheat if the school had severe penalties coupled with a policy on student cheating. This approach may also work with educators. Some national organizations have already developed standards for educators who administer tests. The National Education Association's *Standards for Teacher Competence in Educational Assessment of Students* (1990) requires teachers to recognize unethical, illegal, and inappropriate methods of assessment. Additionally, the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (1999), developed jointly by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Edu-

cation, requires educators to maintain the integrity of test results by eliminating practices that artificially raise scores. Unfortunately, educators cheat in spite of standards developed by these professional organizations.

Cizek (1999, 2001) recommended that states and school districts bear responsibility for developing policies to address educator cheating. Many states have developed specific policies and regulations to address educator cheating. Most states, however, have left this task up to the individual school districts (Cizek, 1999 and Mehrens et al, 1993). According to Cizek, "Only one study has been conducted to investigate the existence of policies at the elementary and secondary school level" (Cizek, 1999, p. 171). Cizek goes on to state that "Unfortunately, no research has actually examined the content of cheating policies" (p. 174) and that it is not known if schools or school districts have any policies addressing educator cheating (p. 171).

This paper attempts to fill a gap in what we know about policies regarding educator cheating on high-stakes tests. It has two purposes: (1) to inventory and evaluate policies that exist in public school districts, and (2) to provide recommendations for the development and implementation of policies to deter educator cheating. Once the policies have been examined, the recommendations for developing and implementing an effective policy will be refined.

### **Recommendations for Policy Content & Dissemination**

Since there is little research in this area, expert recommendations for the content of policies to deter educator cheating are minimal. Mehrens et al (1993) provided some general guidelines in their survey of state test security policies, and Cizek (1991, 2001) listed some recommendations in his discussion of academic integrity policies and articles on student cheating. The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (American Education Research Association, et. al, 1999) and the *Standards for Teacher Competence in Educational Assessment of Students* (National Education Association, 1990) also provide some guidance. These recommendations, along with others developed by this author in his tenure as Assessment Coordinator for a public school district, are displayed in Table 2.

The recommendations address both the development and implementation of policies to deter educator cheating. Effective policies must address all four types of educator cheating (manipulating answer sheets, test administration, score reports, or teaching process) and specify appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. Effective policies must also assign responsibilities for policy implementation and documentation. Finally, effective policies must specify the process used to detect and investigate possible cheating, along with procedures for due process and sanctions faced by cheaters. This analysis is premised on the assumption that districts adopting and implementing policies on educator cheating will decrease the likelihood of cheating on achievement tests



## **Educator Cheating Policies in Iowa Public School Districts**

To learn about the prevalence and quality of district-developed policies to address educator cheating, the state of Iowa was chosen as a case study. Iowa was chosen because of the state's recent interest in test security following a reported incident in educator cheating. Like most states (Patrick & Eichel, 2006), Iowa has no statewide policy to address educator cheating -- individual school districts are left to develop and implement their own policies. Unfortunately, the state has conducted no research to determine the quality of district-developed policies or the number of Iowa public school districts that have actually adopted policies that address educator cheating.

Prior to 2005, the only statewide document that would have assisted districts in developing policies was the *Licensure Rules* document provided by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners. Section 25.3(3) of chapter 25, *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics*, states it is "unprofessional and unethical" if educators engage in:

Falsifying or deliberately misrepresenting or omitting material information regarding the evaluation of students or personnel, including improper administration of any standardized tests, including, but not limited to, changing test answers, providing test answers, copying or teaching identified test items, or using inappropriate accommodations or modifications for such tests. (Iowa Board of

Educational Examiners, 2004)

This statement appears to have been the only official acknowledgement that educator cheating on standardized tests is inappropriate.

In May of 2005, a reported cheating incident caused the state to more formally address educator cheating. Gene Zweifel, a seventh-grade teacher in the Adel district, resigned after allegedly cheating on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), the test used to measure progress towards the requirements of *No Child Left Behind*. The teacher allegedly quizzed students on materials found in the actual ITBS (WHO TV, 2005). Three months following the teacher's resignation, the Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa Testing Programs (developers of the ITBS and Iowa Tests of Educational Development) issued a letter to school districts encouraging them to:

adopt policies regarding their testing program so that it is clear to the school community which assessment procedures the district deems acceptable. It is particularly important that teachers and other district staff that are involved in the district's assessment program understand the school board's expectations regarding acceptable practices and the consequences of using inappropriate activities. (Jeffrey & Frisbie, 2005, p. 1)

School districts also received two documents attached to this letter. The first document, enti-

tled *Guidance for Developing District Policy and Rules on Test Use, Test Preparation, and Test Security for Iowa Tests (Guidance)*, was developed by the Iowa Testing Programs (ITP, 2005) to guide school districts in developing their own policies to address educator cheating. This document outlined key components for the content of a district-developed policy along with examples of inappropriate behaviors in test preparation and administration. The second document, a sample policy (*Sample*) developed by the Iowa Department of Education (IDE, 2005), was intended to assist districts in the development, adoption, and implementation of policies to address educator cheating.

## **Quality of the Guidance and Sample Policy Sent to Iowa Districts**

In terms of substantive policy development, the quality of policies developed by districts may depend on the quality of the *Guidance* and *Sample* policy documents provided by the state. The checklist in Table 2 provides a mechanism for evaluating the quality of the documents by matching the content of the documents to the recommendations for effective policies. Column 2 (ITP) displays the quality of the *Guidance* document, while column 3 (IDE) evaluates the *Sample* policy developed by the Iowa Department of Education.

The ITP *Guidance* and the IDE *Sample* documents were developed at the state level without input from all teachers and administrators in Iowa. They cannot reflect the recommendation that policies be

adapted to fit within the environment and culture of individual school districts. Districts choosing to adopt the sample policy without significant input from stakeholders may find that teachers, staff members, and administrators will not support the policy design or implementation (they may view it as threatening or insulting). Using stakeholder input to modify the sample policy may help to ensure a better fit between policy implementation and district culture, and may encourage teacher and administrator support.

The documents also fall short of meeting the *Implementation* recommendations. In order to ensure ongoing support for its implementation, an effective policy must align with, and be supported by, other district activities, such as teacher professional development activities and new teacher mentoring programs. An effective policy must also leave a paper trail to document implementation. While the ITP *Guidance* document finds it “appropriate” for districts to “obtain assurances from staff members that they have read the policy and rules and agree to abide by them,” (ITP, 2005, p. 1) it does not require districts to document any aspect of test administration. The sample policy documents also fail to recommend that districts evaluate and update their policies regularly. The lack of (1) alignment with other district activities, (2) documentation requirements, and (3) regular evaluation means that districts that simply adopt the sample policy may find it difficult to generate and maintain support for implementation over time.

The *Guidance* and *Sample* policy documents do require dis-

tricts to centralize authority by identifying an individual to serve as the District Test Coordinator. According to the *Sample* policy, this individual is responsible for “storing materials from the Iowa Testing Programs in a secure area with restricted access both prior to and after the testing period” (IDE, 2005, p. 1). The *Guidance* document provides additional roles for the District Test Coordinator, including serving as the “authoritative source of information about assessment policy and procedures for staff members who use tests” (ITP, 2005, p. 2). While a district may want to further specify the responsibilities of its District Test Coordinator, the sample policy documents adequately define who will be responsible for various aspects of test administration.

The *Guidance* and *Sample* documents also meet the *Definitions and Purpose* recommendations. While neither document defines the term *cheating*, both provide specific examples of inappropriate behaviors. Furthermore, both documents provide a rationale for the policy by explaining why cheating is inappropriate and why ethical behavior is important.

The documents do not provide adequate recommendations for ensuring test security. In addressing the security of test materials, the *Guidance* document states, “Test booklets should be provided to individual staff members only when they have a professional need to use the materials” (ITP, 2005, p. 2) and each district will need to develop specific policies to keep materials secure. The *Sample* policy only mentions that test materials should be stored with “restricted access” (IDE, 2005, p. 1). Dis-

tricts have to develop more specific guidelines (including the storage and handling of score reports) to keep test materials secure.

The documents do attempt to outline specific activities to prevent educator cheating in test administration and test preparation activities. While the *Sample* policy lists 4 inappropriate test administration behaviors (inappropriate assistance to students, giving answers to students, changing student answers, providing inaccurate data on student answer sheets), neither document recommends districts use independent monitors to oversee test administration. Nor do they recommend training test proctors prior to each testing period. The *Guidance* document does provide standards to which the appropriateness of test preparation activities can be judged, stating that an appropriate activity must either: (1) “promote the learning and retention of important knowledge and content skills that students are expected to learn” or (2) “decrease the chance that students will score lower on the test than they should due to inadequate test-taking skills or limited familiarity with the item formats used on the test” (ITP, 2005, p. 4). In order to deter educator cheating, districts must train test proctors, provide independent monitoring of test administration, and develop a list of appropriate and inappropriate test preparation activities. The *Guidance* document admits this by stating, “All inappropriate practices should be delineated in the policy, to the extent possible, to communicate specific actions that are deemed in violation...” (ITP, 2005, p. 4).

The documents are particularly weak when it comes to outlining

specific activities to detect and deal with educators who cheat on tests. Neither document outlines the process whereby inappropriate behaviors can be reported or recommends that districts run any analyses in an attempt to detect possible cheating. The documents also fail to provide adequate instruction on what district personnel should do if cheating is alleged. The sample policy does state that any reports of educator cheating should be made to the building principal for investigation and disciplinary action. The *Sample* policy also specifies that the district Superintendent is responsible for determining if the policy has been violated and/or an educator has violated the Code of Ethics of the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners. If the Superintendent determines cheating has occurred or that the cheating behavior has invalidated test scores, the sample policy states that the Board of Educational Examiners must be notified. The sample policy fails to specify methods to investigate cheating allegations, the rights of accused cheaters, or protections for whistleblowers who report cheating. This omission is in contrast to the recommendation made by the *Guidance* document that “Ideally, procedures for investigating reported violations of policy should be included... “ (ITP, 2005, p. 2). The lack of a standard set of due process procedures in the sample policy may create variability among district-developed policies. This variability may encourage legal challenges to the actions taken by districts in response to cheating.

While the sample policy documents issued to date are a beginning, they are problematic

as policy guidance to districts. Districts wanting to effectively prevent inappropriate behavior must gather stakeholder input to make modifications to the sample policy. These modified policies must include proctor training, independent test administration monitoring, statistical detection, specific examples of inappropriate test preparation activities, an explanation of due process, and a list of sanctions to be faced by cheaters. Finally, districts must adopt policies that will provide a paper trail to evaluate policy implementation and effectiveness.

#### **Existence and Quality of Policies in Iowa School Districts**

An examination of the websites of the ten largest Iowa school districts identified no published policies to address educator cheating. As a consequence, a short survey was administered to all district Superintendents to determine the existence, content, and quality of policies developed by Iowa school districts. Tables 3 and 4 summarize the information obtained from 154 respondents (representing 42% of all Iowa public school districts). While most districts chose to respond anonymously, the sample did include both large and small districts in Iowa.

Table 3 shows that almost two-thirds of Iowa public school districts have no plans to adopt a policy to address educator cheating in the near future. This might be due to the fact that educator cheating is perceived to be only a small problem. In fact, about one in ten respondents believe educator cheating is not a problem at all. Surprisingly, districts without policies are just as likely to believe educator

cheating is a significant problem as districts with adopted policies.

The relatively large percentage of districts with no plans to adopt policies might also be for a perceived lack of guidance. While 80% of districts were aware of the sample policy provided by the Iowa Department of Education, 28 of the 31 districts unaware of the sample policy had no plans on adopting a policy in the near future. Almost three out of every four districts which had adopted policies simply adopted the sample policy with no or few modifications. Only about 20% of districts developed policies independently of the sample policy.

Table 4 shows some of the indicators of the quality of test administration practices and policies adopted by districts. While 9 of every 10 districts have identified someone to serve as a Test Coordinator, nearly 95% of districts do not regularly examine student answer sheets to determine if educators have cheated. Furthermore, while over half of all districts have teachers administer the tests to their own students without independent monitoring, more than 20% of districts do not provide test administration training to their teachers. The lack of independent monitoring, training, and analysis of answer sheets are warning signs for school districts. In spite of these warning signs, more than one-third of school districts in Iowa believe their district's level of test security is above average.

Table 3: Results of the Survey of Iowa Public School Districts

*Has your school district adopted a policy to address educator cheating?*

- 27% have adopted a policy to address educator cheating
- 8% have no policy, but plan on adopting a policy within one year
- 65% have not adopted a policy and have no plans to adopt a policy in the near future

*Why do such a large percentage of school districts have no plans to adopt such a policy?*

- 12% of all school districts believe educator cheating is not a problem at all
- 82% believe educator cheating is only a small problem
- 6% believe educator cheating is a significant problem
- 0% believe educator cheating is a major problem

Note: Of the districts that have no plans on developing a policy, 10% thought educator cheating was not a problem and 10% thought educator cheating was a significant problem.

*Looking only at districts with policies in place, when were the policies adopted?*

- 6% adopted their policy in 2004
- 70% adopted their policy in 2005
- 24% adopted their policy in 2006

*Were school districts aware of the guidance documents provided by the Iowa Dept. of Education?*

- 20% were not aware of these documents
- 80% were aware of the documents

Note: 92% of districts unaware of the guidance documents have not yet adopted a policy

*Did school districts use the sample policy to develop their district policies?*

- 72% of districts with adopted policies adopted the sample policy with no/few modifications
- 9% of districts with adopted policies made major changes to the sample policy
- 19% of districts with adopted policies developed their policy without use of the guidance documents

Table 4: More Results of the Survey of Iowa Public School Districts

*Has your district identified a Test Coordinator responsible for answering questions about test administration?*

- 90% have identified a district Test Coordinator
- 10% have not identified a district Test Coordinator

*Who administers the ITBS/ITED to students in your district?*

- 54% have teachers administer the tests to their own students without independent monitoring
- 31% have teachers administer the tests to their own students with independent monitoring
- 7% have teachers or staff members administer the tests but not to their own students
- 7% administer the ITBS/ITED in another way

*Does your district examine student answer sheets to determine if educators have cheated on tests?*

- 73% of districts do not do this
- 21% of districts have done this in the past one or more times
- 6% of districts do this regularly

*Does your district train individuals before they administer the ITBS/ITED to students?*

- 78% train individuals who administer the ITBS/ITED
- 22% do not train individuals who administer the ITBS/ITED

*Overall, how would you rate your district's overall level of test security?*

- 28% below average
- 37% average
- 35% above average

Note: Margin of error is less than ±5% (90% confidence intervals using finite population correction)

Grade	Criteria	% of Respondents
F	The district has not adopted a policy and has no plan to adopt a policy in the near future.	65%
D	The district has not adopted a policy but plans to do so in the near future. The district may have identified a Test Coordinator, but the district does not train its test proctors.	8%
C	The district adopted the Iowa Department of Education's sample policy with few or no changes. The district has identified a Test Coordinator. The district trains its test proctors.	22%
B	The district has adopted a policy to address educator cheating (its own policy or a modified version of the sample policy). The district has identified a Test Coordinator. The district trains its test proctors and test administration is independently monitored.	2%
A	The district's adopted policy is of higher quality than the sample policy. The district has identified a Test Coordinator. The district trains its test proctors. The district provides for independent test monitoring and examination of student answer sheets.	3%

### Comparing District Policies to Policy Recommendations

In order to rate the policies adopted by Iowa school districts to address educator cheating, the rubric in Table 5 was developed.

Applying the rubric, almost two-thirds of Iowa Public School Districts receive a failing grade simply because they have not adopted a policy to address educator cheating and have no plans on adopting such a policy in the near future. Another 8% receive a grade of D, because their policies do not require test proctors to be trained regularly. A policy cannot be expected to reduce inappropriate test administration behaviors if it does not require test proctors to be trained prior to testing. Just over 20% of school districts earn a grade of C for simply adopting the sample policy developed by the Iowa Department of Education. As explained earlier, the sample policy lacks important safeguards related to its lack of provisions for inde-

pendent test monitoring, proctor training, and answer sheet analysis. In order to have a high-quality policy to address educator cheating, school districts must modify the sample policy to provide for these safeguards.

### Quality of District-Developed Policies

Of the 154 school districts that responded to the survey, only 8 (5% of all Iowa public school districts) have adopted policies that differ significantly from the Iowa Department of Education's sample policy. To determine if the district-developed policies were of higher quality than the sample policy documents, administrators from District A (a large district in eastern Iowa) and District B (a small district in west-central Iowa), agreed to be interviewed and to have their district policies evaluated. The evaluations, which are summarized in Table 2, were completed by once

again comparing their content to the list of recommendations discussed earlier.

Even though the districts differed in size (large districts have significantly more resources and personnel to develop and implement a policy than smaller districts), the policies from both districts represent significant improvements over the *Guidance* and *Sample* policy documents provided by the Iowa Testing Programs and Iowa Department of Education. Both districts gathered input from teachers and administrators prior to adoption and both outline specific methods (responsibilities and timelines) to ensure the security of test materials.

District A requires documentation of all aspects of its implementation must be documented. This includes a requirement that all test proctors, school building test coordinators, and principals sign a *Test Procedures Agreement* before each testing period. By

signing these agreement forms, individuals acknowledge they have read the district policy, understand potential sanctions, and agree to independent monitoring of test administration. Principals sign a similar form agreeing to follow specific procedures in obtaining, securing, and returning test materials. They also agree to provide some level of test security training to all personnel involved in testing and to monitor test administration in their schools. The principals must also sign a statement that says they will not manipulate test administration, demographic information, or student answers. The District Test Coordinator must sign yet another paper indicating that all assessments will be secure, all procedures will be followed, testing at schools will be independently monitored, and personnel will be trained in test security. The documentation requirements outlined in this district's policy represent a significant improvement over the sample policy. These requirements can be used to evaluate the implementation of the policy and to reassure the public that test security procedures are being followed.

District A also improves upon the sample policy by outlining methods to be used to detect cheaters. The policy explains how allegations of cheating can (and must) be reported to the District Test Coordinator and how all investigations will be handled. The policy requires both the alleged cheater and the individual who made the report (if known) to be interviewed by an investigation team. The team then reports the findings and makes recommendations to the district Superintendent. The Superintendent then, in turn, makes recommenda-

tions to the school board for possible sanctions. The policy also requires the investigation team to complete its investigation within five school days and to protect the rights of both the accuser and accused. By specifying due process for the accused and protections for the accusers, the policy from District A is more likely to deter educators from cheating.

The policy from District B, while not having documentation requirements like the policy District A, significantly improves upon the sample policy in two areas. First, District A attempts to define the term *cheating*. Cheating is defined as *any activity designed to increase test scores without a corresponding increase in student achievement*. The policy from District B then provides 20 specific examples of inappropriate behavior. These examples, developed by district teachers and administrators, make the policy easier to understand and eliminate interpretation error. If that weren't enough, the policy clearly identifies a process by which educators can get approval for test administration or preparation activities that do not appear in the policy. The definition of cheating, examples of inappropriate behavior, and approval procedures help ensure all educators will understand exactly what behaviors and activities are inappropriate in testing.

While the policies from both District A and District B represent improvements over the sample policy, they are not perfect. The policy from District A does not define the term *cheating* and does not provide procedures for obtaining approval for test preparation activities. In discussing the issue with administrators from District A, they admitted that they were unsure as to which test

preparation activities are appropriate or inappropriate. The policy from District B is weak in that it does not require documentation of its implementation and it does not specify due process for alleged cheaters. Neither policy provides for statistical analyses or any other methods (other than reporting from peers) to detect potential cheaters. Furthermore, the policies do not adequately address the handling of score reports and student data. An effective policy must state under what conditions it is appropriate to modify or remove student test scores from score reports (scoring errors, incorrect demographic data, etc.). Finally, the policies do not address specific issues such as make-up testing, excusing students from testing, and verifying the accuracy of score reports.

### **Final Recommendations**

Although more than one-third of Iowa public school districts rate their district's overall level of test security "above average," only about 5% of districts have adopted test security policies that can be rated above average. Past research has shown that a significant percentage of educators are engaging in inappropriate test administration and preparation behaviors. In order to truly establish and maintain an above average level of test security, school districts must develop, adopt, and implement policies to deter educator cheating. These policies must be developed with input from all stakeholders and be supported by professional development and training programs. The policies must identify who is responsible for clarifying the policy and require documentation that can be used to evaluate its implementation. The policy must address the four types of educator

cheating by specifying how test materials will remain secure, how test administration will be monitored, how score reports will be handled, and how the appropriateness of test preparation activities can be assessed. If inappropriate behaviors are suspected, the policies must specify the process used to detect and investigate possible cheating, along with the sanctions faced by educators found to have cheated.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of districts have not been able to develop and implement such high quality policies. With only one published cheating scandal in the past two years, many districts may not have the motivation to develop such a policy. Also, most districts, especially smaller rural districts, may not have the resources or expertise to develop effective policies. These districts need the Iowa Department of Education to disseminate a high quality sample policy they can use as a model in crafting policies to fit within their district cultures. This model policy would both improve the quality of, and reduce the variability among, district-developed policies.

The current state-developed sample policy could be refined to serve as this model policy. First, the sample policy could be modified to require independent test proctors or independent monitoring of test administration. Second, the sample policy could be modified to require documentation of test security and policy implementation. Third, the sample policy could require a statistical analysis of all answer sheets to detect possible cheating. Finally, the sample policy could be refined to require annual training of all test proctors.

The refined model policy would not burden school districts. To

meet the independent test proctor requirement, the state could recommend districts simply have teachers switch classrooms to administer tests. The state could also develop standard forms (checklists requiring a signature) for districts to document test security and policy implementation. Because most districts do not have the ability or resources to analyze student answer sheets, the state could require the Iowa Testing Programs (possibly for a fee) to run simple statistical analyses to detect unexpected test score fluctuations and/or unusual student answer patterns. The state could then require Iowa Testing Programs to report all potential cheaters identified by these analyses to IDE officials. This would improve upon the current requirement that only districts report their own violations to state officials. Finally, the state could remind districts that the Iowa Teaching Standards require teachers to demonstrate "... ethical conduct as defined by state law and district policy," (Iowa Department of Education, 2002). The state could recommend annual training in test security and administration procedures as a way in which teachers could demonstrate progress towards this standard.

The problem of educator cheating on achievement tests is real and most Iowa public school districts have not adopted policies to address the problem. With limited resources and expertise, school districts need the state to provide a high quality model policy. The original sample policy, developed following a reported incident of educator cheating in the state, does not meet this need. The Iowa Department of Education can choose to refine its sample policy now or it can choose to

wait until the next reported cheating scandal forces the issue.

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- their classrooms. The informants also claim the principal said he would make them pay for coming forward. Other Staten Island teachers suggest this behavior is a system-wide practice. According to Frank DeSantis, a teacher in St. George High School, "A lot of teachers get that feeling that all [schools] are looking for is statistics, and [they're] lying and cheating to get them."  
 (Gonen, 2006)
- **10/22/2006**  
**The Columbus Dispatch:**  
 Of the 28 Ohio school districts analyzed by The Columbus Dispatch, 15 had instances of educators cheating on standardized tests. Barbara Oaks, a teacher in the Coventry district, looked through the test and wrote out a geometry problem she thought her students would have trouble with. Winifred Shima, a teacher from the Parma district, used a copy of the test to create a study guide for students that included 45 of the 46 actual test questions. Brian Wirick (East Knox) and Heather Buchanan (Wapakoneta) both used the test to create study guides for students. Judy Wray, a veteran teacher in Marietta, made copies of the actual state test to help students prepare. Wray is reported to have said that teachers cheat more than administrators know.  
 (Richards, 2006)
  - **10/11/2006**  
**The Indianapolis Star:**  
 Two Corpus Christi Catholic School teachers in South Bend, Indiana are found to have cheated on statewide ex-
- Appendix A: News reports about educator cheating**
- **11/20/2006**  
**New York Daily News:**  
 City officials are investigating teachers from Millennium Art Academy in Castle Hill for allegedly coaching 35 students during testing and inflating student scores.  
 (Einhorn & Melago, 2006)
  - **11/06/2006**  
**Staten Island Advance**  
 Seventeen Staten Island teachers inform the United Federation of Teachers of tampering with the Regents exam. The vice principal at Wagner High School allegedly re-scored student tests at home while teachers added points to student test scores. The teachers claim they were told to change test answers in

ams. Beth Troyer and Sandra Ernst were suspended for one week without pay for allegedly sending questions and answers (from an older version of the test) home with the students. State officials have received about a dozen reports of testing violations this year, but only half are suspected cheating incidents. (Hupp, 2006)

- **10/01/2006**

**The Dallas Morning News:**

5 months after being found guilty for cheating on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), at least 10 of the 22 Wilmer-Hutchins teachers are now working in other North Texas Public Schools. More than two years after the cheating took place, none of the teachers ever faced official sanction. Several of the school districts that now employ these teachers were unaware that these teachers have cheated in the past. (Benton, 2006)

- **09/25/2006**

**The Indy Channel.com:**

A fifth-grade teacher from Wayne Township, Indiana receives a one-week suspension without pay for allegedly giving four students extra time to complete the math portion of the Indiana State Test of Educational Progress. Tom Langdoc, the district's Director of School Community Services, believes the teacher was aware that she was cheating. (The Indy Channel, 2006)

- **08/20/2006**

**The Boston Globe:**

The Massachusetts Department of Education documents 15 cases of inappropriate educator behaviors on the 2006 administration of the MCAS (compared to 3 allegations in 2005). A sixth-grade teacher from Andover West Middle School is reprimanded for reviewing a student's test and returning it to the student for revision. A fifth-grade test booklet at Pentucket Lake Elementary School was stolen and mailed to a local newspaper. Teachers in New Bedford and Peabody allowed students to use dictionaries during the test. (Jan, 2006)

- **07/30/2006**

**Houston Chronicle:**

Two Houston fifth-grade teachers resign after being accused of giving test answers to their students. Sheryle Douglas and Shawn Manning, the teachers once praised by President Bush and Oprah Winfrey, admit to giving students answers to an old version of the Stanford 10 Achievement Test as practice for this year's test. Scores from this test are used to award pay bonuses to teachers. The teachers worked at Wesley Elementary, which was also under investigation in 2003 when a former teacher accused school administrators of pressuring teachers to give test answers to students. (Tresague & Viren, 2006)

- **07/28/2006**

**Dallas Star-Telegram:**

The Texas Education Agency announces it will investigate testing irregularities at 609

schools from the 2005 administration of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. Four types of irregularities were reported in Texas: patterns of similar responses, multiple marks on answer sheets, large score gains compared to previous years, and unusual response patterns. State-appointed monitors will oversee future test administrations. (Brock, 2006)

- **07/04/2006**

**Baltimore Examiner:**

Officials revoke the certificates of two fourth-grade teachers in Carroll County after they were accused of cheating on the Maryland School Assessments. One of the teachers admitted to copying questions from a previous test in order to create a practice worksheet for students. (Johnson, 2006)

- **06/25/2006**

**Philadelphia Inquirer:**

Edison Schools fires Jayne Gibbs, principal at Parry Middle School in Chester, Pennsylvania for allegedly changing student test answers in 2005. Eighth graders at the school said the principal had given them the answers to questions on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment. Gibbs is also accused of exempting special-education students from testing, violating state and federal rules. Edison Schools also asks the state and district to investigate exemplary test results at Showalter Middle School, where Gibbs served as principal from 2003-04. (Patrick, 2006)

- **06/09/2006**

**Abilene Reporter-News:**

An elementary school in the Big Spring district in Texas is flagged for testing irregularities. Third-graders at Marcy Elementary were found to have too many erasure marks on the reading test in the 2005 Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. (Levesque, 2006)

- **05/23/2006**

**Dallas Morning News:**

According to Caveon, a test security firm hired by the Texas Education Agency, almost 9% of schools had unusual scores on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. Using statistical analyses, the firm found suspicious scores from 702 classrooms in 609 Texas schools in 2005. In one elementary school, 45 of the 262 students had identical answer sheets. An additional 29 students had perfect scores on the test. The chances of this happening naturally would be less than 1 in 1 trillion trillion trillion trillion (a 1 followed by 27 zeros). (Benton, 2006)

- **04/11/2006**

**The Columbus Dispatch:**

The Ohio Department of Education is investigating possible security breaches on the 2006 state tests. According to the department, 11 districts are investigating security breaches. The allegations include opening sealed boxes of test booklets early and teachers helping students cheat on the exams. Lora DeCarlo, a teacher at Franklin Middle School, was suspended without pay for 10

days. According to the teacher, she reviewed some student answer sheets and returned their tests to them with pages open to the items they needed to review. Other Ohio teachers accused of helping students cheat on tests in 2006 have resigned. Two years ago, a Hilliard teacher and a Reynoldsburg administrator resigned after acknowledging they broke test rules. (Richards, 2006)

- **03/08/2006 – 06/16/2006**

**Philadelphia Inquirer:**

Joseph Carruth, principal of Charles Brimm Medical Arts High in Camden, New Jersey, is fired after accusing Assistant Superintendent Luis Pagan of pressuring him to alter student answers on the 2005 High School Proficiency Exams. Carruth was allegedly told to create his own answer key and change answer sheets after the test was administered. The test scores from the high school significantly dropped the following year. The state also investigated two elementary schools for alleged cheating. Michael Mimms, principal of Sumner Elementary, is put on administrative leave after it is discovered that he possessed opened copies of the 2006 TerraNova exam and distributed it to teachers. (Kummers & Burney, 2006)

- **02/07/2006**

**Memphis Eyewitness News:**

Teachers in Memphis schools are being investigated for test irregularities. According to the Tennessee Department of Education, an unusually high number of erasure marks were found on student exams.

In many cases, incorrect answers were changed to correct answers. (Memphis Eyewitness News, 2006)

- **01/12/2006**

**New York Daily News:**

Fifth-grade students in Brooklyn were allegedly given actual copies of an exam to use as practice. Some students at Public School 58 in Cobble Hill reported that they recognized passages and questions from the test. Joyce Plus-Saly, the school principal, allegedly gave the materials to teachers to share with students, not knowing the questions would be used on the actual test. (Lucadamo, 2006)

- **12/23/2005**

**WCBS-TV New York:**

Ross Rosenfeld, a teacher at Junior High School 14 in Sheepshead Bay, was fired from his job after secretly recording conversations with the school principal. According to Rosenfeld, the recordings show that administrators ignored cheating on a state social studies exam. Rosenfeld was allegedly told to ignore a student who was found to have a cheat sheet during an exam. (Lyon, 2005)

- **09/29/2005**

**Pittsburgh Post-Gazette:**

Beth Boysza, a fourth-grade teacher in Pittsburgh, is suspended after allegedly helping students on a math test in 2003. Boysza allegedly wrote special test instructions on Post-It® and stuck them in test booklets. She also is alleged to have re-read test

questions to students. Boysza argues that she was simply providing accommodations to students, following directions provided by the district and test developer. (Ove, 2005)

- **09/19/2005**

**The Courier-Journal in Louisville, Kentucky:**

Following two cheating scandals, the Indiana Professional Standards Board increased the consequences for teachers who are caught helping their students cheat on tests. A teacher in Muncie, IN allegedly tapped her students on the shoulder to notify them of incorrect answers. A principal at Shakamak Elementary School in Jacksonville was found to have modified test questions and give them to students before the test administration. Both educators were caught after parents or state education officials noticed unusually large increases in school test scores. (Hupp, 2005)

- **08/29/2005**

**Union-Tribune in San Diego, CA:**

A teacher in Vista, CA was transferred to another school after allegations that she cheated on the California Standards Test. The teacher had allegedly put helpful materials on the classroom walls. Nearly half the students in the classroom reported that they had been told correct answers. The teacher was caught after a student reported the unusual behavior to her parents. (Jenkins, 2005)

- **05/16/2005**

**Seattle Post Intelligence:**

Lisa Poitras alleges that her daughter's teachers at Lake Dolloff Elementary have cheated on exams for two consecutive years. The teachers allegedly check student answers, give assistance, and urge students to make corrections on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning. Poitras is reported to have said "her daughter was made to erase and rewrite her answer to a question so many times that she wore a hole through the booklet page and had to reinforce it with scotch tape." (Blanchard, 2005)

- **05/09/2005**

**Honolulu Advertiser:**

The Hawaii Department of Education is investigating reports of cheating on the Hawaii State Assessment. Eighth-grade students were allegedly given test questions and answers to prepare for the test administration. An anonymous school employee notified the newspaper that teachers were given review sheets with actual test items on them. (Shapiro, 2005)

- **05/04/2005**

**WHO TV in Des Moines, Iowa:**

Gene Zwiefel, a seventh-grade teacher in the Adel district, resigns after allegations were made that he quizzed students on materials found in the actual Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. According to David Frisbie, director of the Iowa Testing Programs, similar incidences have occurred at four other Iowa Schools. (WHO TV, 2005)

- **05/03/2005**

**Atlanta Journal-Constitution:**

Following an investigation of cheating in Texas, Georgia begins an investigation of its own test results. While no high-profile cheating case emerged in Georgia, 159 educators were sanctioned for test administration problems in the past five years. (Ghezzi, 2005)

- **05/03/2005**

**Star-Telegram in Texas:**

Two teachers at A.M. Pate Elementary School are no longer working after allegedly giving students answers to the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. One of the teachers, Georgia Johnson (a 25-year veteran), had 18 of the 19 students in her class pass the test. Six of her students had perfect scores. The other teacher, Mildred Lawrence-Medearis (17 years experience), had all 29 of her students pass the reading and math exams. (Garza, 2005)

- **04/13/2005**

**Rockford Register Star:**

The Illinois Department of Education is investigating Tiffany Parker, principal of Lewis Lemon Elementary School in Rockford, for allegedly altering student answers in 2003. (Watters, 2005)

- **04/13/2005**

**NBC 6 in Miami, Florida:**

The Florida Department of Education has reassigned Nicholas Emmanuel, principal of West View Middle School, after he allegedly helped students cheat on the

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test.  
(NBC 6, 2005)

their licenses revoked and a third case is in litigation.  
(Carlson, 2005)

- **03/24/2005**

**Philadelphia Inquirer:**

Shirley Neeley, Pennsylvania State Education Commissioner, moves to dissolve the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District board after 22 educators were found to have cheated on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. The teachers allegedly ordered students who finished the test early to fix answers on other students' answer sheets.

(Mezzacappa & Langland, 2005)

- **02/18/2005**

**The Ithaca Journal in Ithaca, New York:**

Robert Blair, a fourth grade teacher with 19 years experience at Palmer Elementary School, resigns after administrators discover altered answer sheets on his students' state English Language Arts tests. Based on an analysis of erasures, 17 or 18 of the 22 students in his class had their answer sheets altered. The report states that there were 14 proven cases of teacher cheating in 2003-04 in New York.

(Associated Press, 2005)

- **01/31/2005**

**WRAL Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina:**

Following rumors of test misconduct at Sallie B. Howard School for the Arts and Education, North Carolina administrators report there have been at least 10 investigations into testing irregularities. In that time, two teachers had