

ALVAREZ & MARSAL
2011 Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)
Test Security Investigation
School Summary Report

SCHOOL C

I. BACKGROUND

Denver Public Schools (DPS) flagged one grade level (the Grade) at School C because of a high level of Wrong-to-Right (WTR) Erasures across the Grade. School C is an elementary school.

In addition to the WTR analysis, DPS used additional methodologies to analyze the school's results, including an assessment of unusual answer patterns on the 2011 CSAP and an assessment of correlation between Constructed Response (CR) and Multiple Choice (MC) scores; however, these methodologies did not yield additional flags for the school.

There were two classes in the subject Grade at School C, taught by Teachers F and G. In 2011, all students in the subject Grade, with the exception of those requiring accommodations, took the test with Teacher F.

II. THE INVESTIGATION

To determine the source and cause of the anomalies related to the test results of students in the subject Grade, DPS asked CDE and its legal advisor, the Colorado Attorney General's Office, to investigate. The Attorney General's Office engaged Alvarez & Marsal (A&M) to conduct an on-site investigation at School C.

School C presented a high volume of WTRs at the subject Grade level for both 2010 and 2011. Given that 61 percent of the school's WTRs were at the subject Grade level in 2011, and 59 percent of the WTRs were also at the same Grade level in 2010, we focused our investigation on the possibilities that: 1) Test Administrators at the classroom level were engaged in manipulating answers to improve test scores, or 2) Students engaged in cheating during the test.

A. Interviews Conducted

With DPS providing scheduling and personnel assistance, we conducted interviews at School C and other locations over several days, beginning on May 21, 2012. We interviewed 11 individuals: 8 current and former School C staff and 3 former subject Grade level students from 2010 and 2011. In some cases, described in the interview summaries below, we interviewed individuals on more than one occasion.

B. Interview Process

Four A&M personnel (in two teams) conducted interviews at School C and other locations. The interviewers utilized five interview protocols at each school, with approximately 60 questions

each. We designed each protocol to elicit information related to the interviewee's role in the 2011 CSAP testing process. Our protocols focused generally on:

1. Background. These questions related to the individual's history at the school and familiarity with the administration of the 2011 CSAP.
2. Process. We used process questions to elicit the individual's understanding of:
 - a. The 2011 CSAP testing guidance issued by CDE and DPS,
 - b. the required CSAP test administration and ethics training, and
 - c. security procedures for test materials before, during, and after test administration.
3. Culture. We designed these questions to elicit information on the environment at the school, in particular whether the school culture is one in which faculty, staff, and students can report concerns over potential violations of testing standards without fear of retaliation.
4. Behavior. We used behavioral questions to obtain information on the individual's awareness of specific activities in the school that might constitute test violations. We specifically asked each individual whether he or she had cheated on the 2011 CSAP and whether he or she was aware of others who may have cheated. This section included questions on types of test violations most often reported, including:
 - a. Assisting students by identifying incorrect answers on test sheets
 - b. Reading correct answers aloud during testing
 - c. Erasing students' incorrect answers and replacing them with correct answers
 - d. Obtaining test materials in advance of the test
 - e. Arranging seating to allow weaker students to copy stronger students' answers

The protocols were prepared for:

1. Principals,
2. Site Assessment Leaders (SAL),
3. Test Administrators,
4. Proctors, Monitors, and School Staff, and
5. Students.

We conducted all interviews with two A&M personnel present - a lead interviewer and a scribe. Except in cases where a school staff member requested the presence of a Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA) representative, we conducted all staff interviews with no one else

present. DPS obtained parental permission in advance of all student interviews, and provided an observer for these interviews.

III. FINDINGS

Our investigation revealed no evidence that students engaged in widespread cheating during the test. While one student indicated that teachers could provide hints on other tests, there was no evidence of teachers or Paraprofessionals providing any unauthorized assistance during the CSAP. Similarly, neither Teacher F nor his/her Student Teacher reported anything unusual in their classroom during the 2011 CSAP.

Our investigation revealed some evidence of a lack of active monitoring during the test. We believe it is possible that Test Administrators had sufficient time with the test materials after testing was complete for the day to review and change answers, although we did not obtain evidence that such behavior occurred. Multiple staff interviewees admitted that they looked through the test materials after testing finished to see how their students were doing. All insisted that they did not change any answers.

Additionally, we determined that Teacher F might have violated certain school protocols. Reports indicate that s/he did not complete CSAP training, signing the training sign-in sheet and then leaving the training room. S/he also reportedly insisted on administering a standardized test to a group of his/her students, instead of allowing the usual Test Administrator to proctor this test. An Administrative Staff member (not the Principal) reported that Teacher F's 2011 interim tests had an unusually high number of erasures and answer bubbles that appeared to be "neatly filled in." Teacher F did not admit to changing student answers, but admitted to thinking that the interim tests were "not really official."

Detailed descriptions of our findings appear below:

A. Test Materials Inadequately Secured

Two sources confirmed that after the test materials were boxed and sealed, they were brought to the School's main office and left with the Secretary until the boxes were picked up. The boxes may have remained in the office for multiple days. Interviewers were unable to confirm whether the boxes were locked in the Principal's office until pickup, or if they were simply left out in the main office, where all faculty had easy access.

The *2010-2011 CSAP Testing Protocols* (Page 1), provided to us by DPS, indicate, in relevant part, that:

All SALs must keep their CSAP materials locked up in a secure location unless they are being used for testing. Access to the secure room must be limited to the SAL, a Facility Manager, and the Principal. Other staff members should never have access to the CSAP materials unless under the direct supervision of the SAL.

The School's failure to secure the test materials may be a violation of this protocol.

B. Test Materials Held in Classrooms after Testing was Complete

Multiple sources described various procedures for returning the test materials each day. One interviewee reported that tests could be locked up in an office rather than returned to the Site Assessment Leader (SAL) after testing was complete. We could not firmly establish the timeline for the pickup of the test materials. Given that no students, teachers, or Paraprofessionals reported any incidents of cheating in the classrooms during the test, and the fact that the high WTRs are limited to one classroom level, we believe it is possible that Test Administrators had unsupervised time with the test materials before turning in the tests.

C. Monitoring During the CSAP

One student reported that Teacher F graded papers at his/her desk during the CSAP. Teacher F initially asserted that s/he always actively proctored the test, but changed his/her response during the second interview from “I was always walking” to “someone was always walking.” Other students interviewed did not recall details about the Test Administrators monitoring during the test.

Another student said Teacher F received a cell phone call during the test and left the classroom, leaving the students with the Student Teacher. Teacher F denied this allegation, stating that s/he believed that teachers were not allowed to have cell phones in the classrooms, and that if s/he did not have to turn it in, then s/he would have turned the phone off. No other students reported this incident.

The 2010-2011 Colorado Student Assessment System 2010-2011 Procedures Manual (Page 40), provided to us by DPS, indicate, in relevant part, that:

Active proctoring is essential during the administration of the assessment. Proctors must remain attentive and remain in the room during the entire testing session. They should circulate through the room during the test. *(Reading, grading papers or other work must not be performed.)*

The multiple reports of inconsistent monitoring in Teacher F’s classroom may indicate a lack of active proctoring during testing.

IV. CONCLUSION

Our investigation revealed concerns regarding the security of test materials and certain of the actions of Teacher F. The report of unusual erasures on Teacher F’s interim assessments, coupled with statistical WTR evidence from the CSAP, provide some evidence that test violations occurred in the classroom.