

This is NOT a Test, I Repeat, This is NOT a Test!

You are responsible for carrying out the practices in your classroom. Not knowing or not understanding could cost you your job.

This information is presented to help you in understanding the complexity of the testing process. **FOLLOW ALL OPS GUIDELINES TO THE LETTER.** It is your professional responsibility to know and implement the OPS testing practices. Read these guidelines, talk to your colleagues and verify your practices with the administrative team in your building.

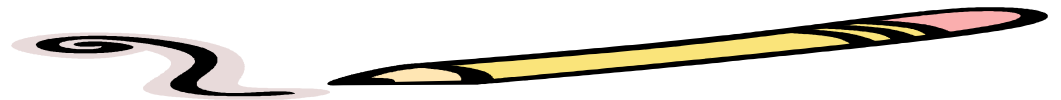
The principal must report any security breach to the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources. Faculty or staff involvement in a security breach will be investigated to determine if further action is necessary.

If you are asked to do anything in your classroom that you feel is in violation of either the letter or the spirit of the OPS Testing Practices and Procedures, talk to your principal, ask for written verification, or call the OEA (346-0400).

OPS TESTING PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES TO ENSURE VALID AND RELIABLE ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Staff members received the OPS Testing Practices and Procedures in September. If you cannot locate your copy contact your building administration or Carla Noerrlinger, Director of Research and Special Projects carla.noerrlinger@ops.org for a complete set of guidelines.

See page 4 for appropriate *Before, During, and After* test practices....



Putting Yourself in a Parent's shoes

In order to respond empathetically to a parent, it's helpful to understand what he or she may be feeling. Here are common emotions parents experience when a teacher phones home with bad news about a child's behavior. A parent may feel...

- **Guilty**—Because many parents believe that behavior is caused rather than chosen, they may blame themselves for not being good enough parents.
- **Powerless**—Parents may think that they are supposed to know how to make their children behave, both at home and at school. When parents realize that their discipline efforts aren't working, they may wind up feeling powerless.
- **Fearful**—When teachers describe today's problems, many parents are gnawed by fears about the future. "If my six-year-old is disturbing others and not paying attention in first grade, what will happen when he gets to middle school?"
- **Overwhelmed**—Many parents work outside the home during the day and attempt to fulfill all their parenting and housekeeping duties during evenings and weekends. When you tell already overwhelmed parents about their child's classroom problems, you could be adding the straw that breaks the camel's back.

For more on Working with Parents, see page 2...



Parents' and Teachers' Beliefs About Each Other's Role in Educating Students

These excerpts are from *Effort and Excellence in Urban Classrooms*. One of the authors, Belinda Williams, has worked with the Omaha Public Schools and is currently working with the NEA on the Priority Schools Program. Corbett, D., Wilson, B. & Williams, B. (2002). *Effort and Excellence in Urban Classrooms Expecting—and Getting—Success with All Students*. New York: Teachers College Press, pp. 29-42.

Nieto (1996) discovered a high involvement in the homes of poor families—but in ways that were not visible to educators. She found that parents constantly stressed the importance of going to school and going to college and that children looked at them as positive role models, **because of their strength and resilience in coping with difficult circumstances**. Poor families did not directly help with homework often, however they actively monitored it by asking about its content and encouraging its completion. These families promoted native-language use and adherence to cultural values as means of promoting academic success. **Thus, rather than being an impediment to students' education, these families felt they were reinforcing and enforcing high educational expectations for the children.**

Regardless of the accuracy of teachers' perceptions, a widespread belief in low-income parents' devaluing of education prevailed. At best, they felt, parents exerted a neutral influence on children and at worst a detrimental one. Teachers, therefore, portrayed themselves as being more committed to students' academic success than parents were. **Interestingly, the parents felt the same way -- only the roles were reversed.**

If parents perceived themselves to be so supportive of education, **why then did educators persist with their negative impressions of parental involvement?** One hypothesis was that teachers inferred parental attitudes from student behavior in school. If students acted like they did value education, then their parents must be acting in that way as well.

What parents said they did most frequently was what the school provided the least support for – parenting. What they said the schools did best (communicating) was an area in

which parents were only moderately engaged.

Moreover, somehow teachers and parents had both formed negative opinions about each other while claiming that they themselves served as major positive and compensating forces in children's educational lives. **The ironic point was that while they were complaining about one another, both ignored the power of forming an alliance, of building on this unrecognized but mutual commitment to enable students to succeed in school.**

Additional resource:

C.A.R.E.: Strategies for Closing the Achievement Gaps, The NEA Guide for Educators can be found at: <http://www.nea.org/teachexperience/careguide.html>

If interested in learning more, contact Dennis Gehringer, OEA Uniserv Director, 346-0400 or dennis.gehringer@nsea.org



Working With Parents

Teacher outreach efforts to parents most typically include writing a newsletter or inviting parents into the classroom. Calling parents with good news about a child's progress also strengthens the teacher-parent relationship. Home visits, done either before or after the school year starts, can also be extremely valuable. These visits can significantly improve the relationship between teachers and parents.

Teachers say parents may not make the first move but generally will respond when asked to help at home or play a role in the classroom. Some teachers involve parents in academic activities such as reading or tutoring, while other teachers turn to parents to relieve them of duties that otherwise would get in the way of teaching.

Successful first-year teachers say parental involvement in education — at home and in the classroom — is vital to effective learning and discipline. Keep in mind that not all parents can be persuaded to take an active role in supporting their children's education. When this happens, teachers must recognize that they are limited by factors outside their control.

For more tips go to www.ed.gov/pubs/survivalguide.



“The central struggle of parenthood is to let our hopes for our children outweigh our fears.”

Ellen Goodman

Summative Year-End Performance Review

If you are in agreement with their assessment of your abilities in a particular standard, move on. Focus your discussion on the areas where you need improvement.



Come prepared to participate in YOUR summative year-end performance review conference (p. 34, Q 1-6). Bring your copies of observations, notes, etc.

Nontenured teachers **MUST** conference with their building principal/supervisor prior to March 15th.



Use a highlighter to mark the level you think you have achieved for each of the criteria in the Teacher Appraisal Framework rubric (pp. 47-55).

Always bring "evidence" of student work or your work that they may not be aware of or simply did not observe while in your classroom.



Share the positive aspects of your performance. Be proud of what you have accomplished. You are in your classroom everyday, let them know how good you are.



Let your evaluator offer suggestions for improvement. Do not reject written suggestions or recommendations. Acknowledge the ideas, jot them down and move on.



If you do not agree with the content of the evaluation, it is important that you remain professional. Ask for clarification and specific examples, the goal is to improve your teaching skills.

You may submit a written response to your evaluation at **anytime**. Contact OEA for confidential advice or assistance if you are concerned about the summative review.

Your signature on any or all of the forms in the appraisal process indicate **only that you received and reviewed the form.**



At the conclusion of the conference sign and date the summative appraisal form (P. 41 - 44) and keep a copy for your records. If you disagree with the written evaluation, you may respond in writing .



If your principal/supervisor suggests a *Program of Assistance* or tells you that the decision for intervention is a decision yet to be made at HR, Call OEA immediately, 346-0400.



What If My Appraisal is not Favorable?

What if your principal calls you in and shows you the summative evaluation and it isn't very good? Now what?

First, don't panic. This is confidential and the only people who knows, besides your administrative team, is you.

Second, ask questions (and keep notes) until you completely understand all areas of concern.

Third, call the OEA for assistance and advice. It is ALWAYS acceptable to ask for OEA representation.

Possible Outcomes of the first Summative Review

You're doing a good job, keep it up!

- ◆ Pat yourself on the back.
- ◆ Continue to do what you do well - teach the children.
- ◆ Place a copy of the evaluation on your refrigerator so your mom can see it when she visits.
- ◆ Save it in your professional file.

Informal Intervention (p.37)

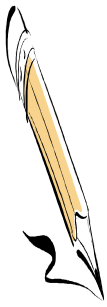
Your supervisor will schedule a meeting and share with you a WRITTEN (4-6 week) plan to help you improve in areas that may be less than satisfactory.

Contact OEA (346-0400) if placed on informal intervention.

Formal Intervention (p.37)

Human Resources will schedule a meeting and share with you a WRITTEN (4-6 week) plan to help you improve in areas that remain less than satisfactory.

ALWAYS contact OEA (346-0400) if you are called to HR.



Are they Serious about Testing Practices?

Conscientious administration of any assessment is your professional responsibility. *When the integrity of testing is compromised, the credibility of the district and its schools is called to question and students, our most valuable resource, are unjustly served.*

In the event that a security breach related to testing practices and procedures occurs, the school principal should be notified immediately. The principal must report the security breach to the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources. Faculty or staff involvement in a security breach will be investigated to determine if further action is necessary.



Acceptable and Not Acceptable practices for both norm-referenced tests such as CAT and PLAN and CRTs, the district's criterion-referenced assessments, are briefly reviewed below.

Before Test Administration

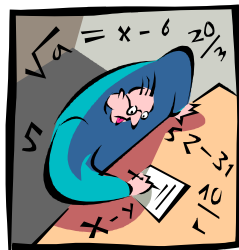
- ◆ Keep test materials in a secure, safe location away from students. Student tests NEVER leave school.
- ◆ Become familiar with test directions in the examiner's manual well in advance of the test, as well as the district-developed directions for administration.
- ◆ Do not plan yearly instruction that *only* includes concepts/objectives evaluated on the assessment.
- ◆ Do not teach or use actual assessment items or activities for practice prior to the assessment.
- ◆ Do not teach vocabulary words that are specifically evaluated for meaning on the assessment.

During Test Administration



- ◆ Read directions to the students verbatim from the test manual or examiner's manual.
- ◆ Monitor students during the testing period to ensure each one is responding in the correct space on the answer document and following proper procedures.
- ◆ Adhere to time limits as they are specified in the examiner's manual.
- ◆ Provide students with breaks between sub-tests as they are specified in the examiner's manual.
- ◆ Do not deviate from test instructions outlined in the examiner's manual. Do not paraphrase directions.
- ◆ Do not provide verbal or nonverbal clues, hints or in anyway influence a student's performance.
- ◆ Do not answer direct student questions about test content such as defining a word in a reading passage or interpreting a test question.
- ◆ Do not read passages, test items or performance tasks for students unless directly specified in the examiner's manual.
- ◆ Do not exhibit visual clues in the room that might provide answers to test questions such as maps, math formulas, multiplication charts or word lists.

We're on the Web!
<http://www.omahaoea.org/>



After Test Administration

- ◆ Check that all student answer sheets have been collected and given to the school's test coordinator.
- ◆ Ensure that all test materials are stored in a safe and secure location, which is accessible only to the principal/test coordinator.
- ◆ When assessment results are returned, celebrate successes.
- ◆ Do not leave student tests in the classroom or unsecured location.
- ◆ Do not edit or change students' responses, multiple choice or written constructed responses.
- ◆ Do not duplicate or retain original test questions, test manuals, or answer sheets.

The News is published four times a year by the

Omaha Education Association for OEA members new to the Omaha Public Schools.

OEA President Carol Krejci
Carol.krejci@nsea.org

OEA New Teacher Advisory Committee Meeghan Hartfield & Matt Binfield, Co-Chairs

Editor

Dennis Gehringer
dennis.gehringer@nsea.org

Chief Reporter Sue Perkins
Sue.perkins@nsea.org

Phone: 402-346-0400
4202 South 57th Street
Omaha, NE 68117