

ACTION REQUIRED

October 11, 2006

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

Subject: Integrity of TAKS Test Administration

Each year more than 7700 campuses administer statewide assessments to about three million Texas schoolchildren in grades 3-11. The vast majority of these administrations occur without incident. For the occasions when this is not the case, the Texas Education Agency takes all accusations of cheating on the state test seriously and will be taking whatever actions are necessary to maintain the integrity of the testing program. I am soliciting your assistance and support by requesting that you redouble your efforts to ensure test security and confidential integrity during the October Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) retest administration that will occur next week.

We trust our teachers and administrators, the vast majority of whom are honest, conscientious people who work tirelessly to make a difference in the lives of our children. Every educator who handles a state test goes through training each year that includes test security issues. In addition, each person who handles a test signs a security oath. Every educator should know that the Texas Education Agency has zero tolerance for cheating.

In preparation for next week's TAKS retest administration, please take steps to ensure that your test administrators and campus testing coordinators review the test security procedures outlined in the *2006 District and Campus Coordinator Manual*, along with the *Test Security Supplement* developed by the Student Assessment Division in December 2005 (http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/conferences/tac/2005/security_supp.pdf). Both of these documents clearly outline the steps that must be taken by district staff to ensure that the integrity of the state assessment program is maintained.

This agency goes to great effort to ensure that the statewide assessments are fair, valid, reliable, and secure. We want educators and the public to be clear that we will not tolerate cheating. Anyone who has first-hand knowledge that cheating has occurred is urged to e-mail the agency's Inspector General at inspectorgeneral@tea.state.tx.us or the Student Assessment Division at testsecurity@tea.state.tx.us or send a written complaint to the agency.

I continue to be impressed by the tremendous effort you make on behalf of the children of Texas. Thank you for sharing this information with educators in your district.

Sincerely,

Shirley J. Neeley

cc: District Test Coordinator, ESC Executive Directors