

## APPENDIX B: REPORTING TESTING IMPROPRIETIES, IRREGULARITIES, AND BREACHES

Test security incidents are behaviors prohibited during test administration, either because they give a student an unfair advantage or because they compromise the secure administration of the assessment. Whether intentional or by accident, failure to comply with security rules, either by staff or students, constitutes a testing incident. Improperities, irregularities, and breaches need to be reported in accordance with the instructions in this section for each severity level.

Four portions of the manual refer to documentation and reporting of incidents involving test security.

1. **The Test Security Required Action Steps** (page 59) depicts the required actions from the Test Security Chart in a process flow diagram format.
2. **The Test Security Chart** (page 63) shows the test security incident levels and examples of types of issues.
3. **The Test Security Incident Log** (page 61) is the document of record for the district to record all test security incidents. More serious incidents will be reported either immediately (breach) or at the end of the day (irregularities).
4. **The Online Administration System for Reporting Test Security Incidents** (page 61) provides instructions on how to submit your request to invalidate a test, reset a test, report a problem with an item, reopen a test, restore a test that has been reset. This request goes to the state education agency for resolution.

All of these references should be used as needed during test administration to report incidents and inform staff of test security measures.

### Impact and Definitions:

**Improperity:** Misconduct or Anomaly: Any unusual circumstance that has a low impact on the individual or group of students who are testing and has a low risk of potentially affecting student performance on the test, test security, or test validity. These circumstances can be corrected and contained at the local level. Any reporting of an improperity, beyond the local level, is at the discretion of the state. (Specific examples of improperities are provided on page 63.)

**Irregularity:** Any unusual circumstance that impacts an individual or group of students who are testing and may potentially affect student performance on the test, test security, or test validity. The circumstances causing the irregularity can be corrected at the local level, but the irregularity is submitted in the online system for resolution of the Appeal for testing impact.

**Breach:** Any event that poses a threat to the validity of the test. Examples may include such situations as a release of secure materials or a repeatable security/system risk. These circumstances have external implications for the Consortium and may result in a Consortium decision to remove the test item(s) from the available secure bank. A breach incident must be reported immediately to the state level.

At times it will be up to the Test Administrator (TA) and/or District Coordinator (DC) to distinguish among improperities, irregularities, and breaches in accordance with the minimum guidelines included in this manual and in keeping with state policy.

It is important to be vigilant before, during, and after testing for any situations that could lead to or be an impropriety, irregularity, or breach.

- Actively supervise students throughout the test session to ensure that students do not access unauthorized electronic devices, such as cell phones, or other unauthorized resources or tools at any time during testing.
- Make sure students clear their desks of and put away all books, backpacks, purses, cell phones, electronic devices of any kind, as well as other materials not explicitly permitted for the test.
- Make sure the physical conditions in the testing room meet the criteria for a secure test environment. Students should be seated so there is enough space between them to minimize opportunities to look at each other's work or be provided with table-top partitions.
- Students who are not being tested and unauthorized staff must not be in the room where a test is being administered. Determine where to send these students during testing and prepare appropriate assignments for them as needed.
- Make sure no instructional materials directly related to the content of the tests are visible to students, including posters or wall charts.
- States should ensure that specific guidance is provided for districts that have minimal personnel and may experience potential conflicts of interest in the identification, investigation, and/or reporting of test security incidents.

## Reporting timelines and activities

**A Test Security Breach requires immediate notification/escalation** by telephone to the state level by the DC followed by documentation in the Test Security Incident Log and escalation via the online Appeals system (if appropriate\*).

**Irregularities** must be escalated **by the end of the day of the incident** to the state level via the Test Security Incident Log or via the online Appeals system in TIDE (if appropriate\*).

**Improprieties** are escalated in accordance with state policy, protocol, and/or guidelines **within 24 hours of the incident** by individual districts via the Test Security Log and via TIDE (if appropriate\*).

(\* The only incidents that can be reported in the online TIDE Appeals system are those that involve a student and test, and that require an action for the test. TIDE does not serve as a log for all incidents.)

Recommended reporting timelines are provided in Table 13.

**Table 13: Test Security Incident Types**

Incident Type	Smarter Balanced–Recommended Reporting Timeline
<b>Breach</b>	Report to state immediately
<b>Irregularity</b>	Report to state by the end of the day discovered
<b>Impropriety</b>	Escalate to District Test Coordinator within 24 hours of the incident**

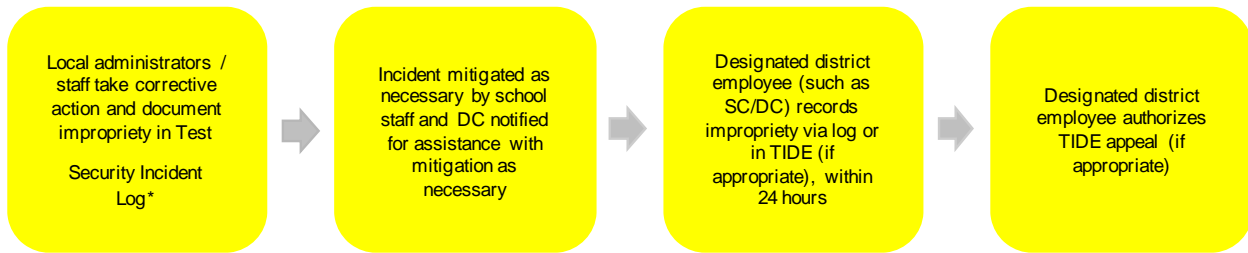
\*\* Your state may have more stringent reporting timelines for escalating improprieties

For examples of test incidents,  
please see **The Test Security Chart** on page 63

## Test Security Required Action Steps

### Impropriety

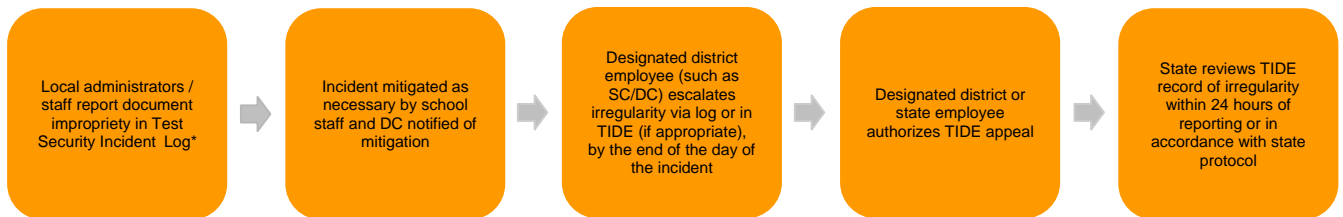
*Unusual circumstances that have a low impact on the individual or group of students who are testing and have a low risk of potentially affecting student performance on the test, test security, or test validity.*



\* log can be downloaded at (<http://sbac.portal.airast.org/>)

### Irregularity

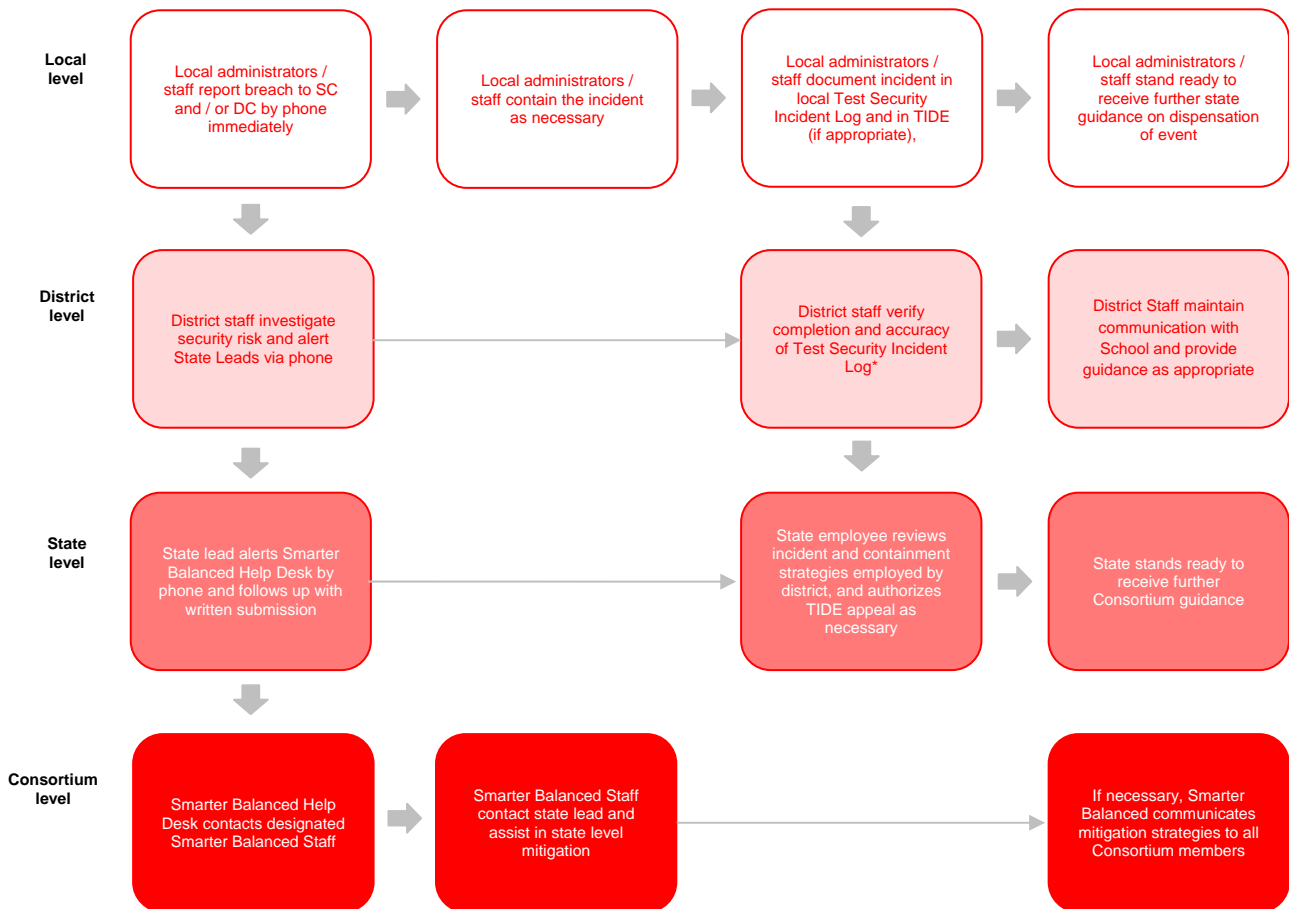
*Unusual circumstances that impact an individual or group of students who are testing and may potentially affect student performance on the test, test security, or test validity. These circumstances can be contained at the local level.*



\* log can be downloaded at (<http://sbac.portal.airast.org/>)

### Breach

*A test administration event that poses a threat to the validity of the test. Examples may include such situations as exposure of secure materials or a repeatable security/system risk. These circumstances have external implications.*



\* log can be downloaded at (<http://sbac.portal.airast.org/>)

**IMPORTANT Information regarding Security Breaches:** For severe incidents requiring immediate attention (such as a release of secure materials or a repeatable security/system risk), please immediately escalate the incident report log to your state education agency, Smarter Balanced State Lead, and, for the Field Test, contact the Smarter Balanced Help Desk at 1-855-833-1969 or [smarterbalancedhelpdesk@ets.org](mailto:smarterbalancedhelpdesk@ets.org).

### Documentation of Improprieties, Irregularities, and Breaches

The **Test Security Incident Log** is located on the Smarter Balanced Portal (<http://sbac.portal.airast.org/>). TAs must download the template and log incidents immediately upon identification and submit via email (or alternate agreed-upon process) to their SCs and DCs. The columns described in Table 14 must be completed. Districts can decide how frequently these logs should be submitted and communicate this preference to schools.

#	Severity level "Impropriety" "Irregularity" "Breach"	Date Occurred/ Reported	District Name	State District ID	School Name	State School ID	Grade of Enrollment	Content Area "Math PT" "ELA" "ELA-PT"	Adult or Student Initiated?	Description of Incident (see Test Security Chart) *100 character max	State SSID	How was the issue addressed locally?	Local recommendation regarding dispensation of test entered onto the online system "Invalidate" "Reset" "Reopen" "Restore" "Invalidate the Test"
1	Irregularity	1/16/2013	District A	456889	School A	34576	4	ELA	Student	Student cheating	XY-12345	Student removed from testing	Invalidate the Test

**Table 14: Test Security Incident Log Headings**

Column Header	Description
#	The entry number for that incident.
Severity Level	Enter the incident severity level. Options: Impropriety, Irregularity, or Breach
Date Occurred/Reported	Enter the date the incident occurred if an Impropriety, or occurred and reported if Irregularity or Breach.
District Name	Enter the name of the district in which the incident occurred.
State District ID	Enter the ID of the district in which the incident occurred.
School Name	Enter the name of the school in which the incident occurred.
State School ID	Enter the ID of the school in which the incident occurred.
Grade of Enrollment	Enter the grade in which the incident occurred.
Content Area	Enter the content area that was being tested when the incident occurred. Options: ELA, ELA-PT, Math, Math-PT
Adult or Student Initiated?	Did the incident begin with an adult or student behavior/action?
Description of Incident	Provide a description of the incident (see examples in the Test Security Chart).
State-SSID	If the incident was student-based, list the state initials and the student SSID.
How was the issue addressed locally?	Describe how the issue was addressed, mitigated, or contained.
Local recommendation regarding dispensation of test entered onto the online system	What do the local administrators and coordinators recommend happen with the test. Options: Invalidate a test, Reset a test, Re-open a test, or Restore a test that has been reset

## Reporting Incidents in the Online Administration System

Starting with the Field Test administered in 2014, improprieties, irregularities, and breaches that result in a need to invalidate, reset, re-open, or restore individual student assessments (see Table 15) will now be reported in the online administration system (TIDE). The result must be approved by the state.

For specific steps on reporting incidents in the Online Administration System, please see the *TIDE User Guide* ([http://sbac.portal.airast.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Smarter\\_TIDE\\_UserGuide\\_Spring2014.pdf](http://sbac.portal.airast.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Smarter_TIDE_UserGuide_Spring2014.pdf)). The online reporting system is only appropriate for reporting an action related to a student incident that impacts a test. All other incidents (involving adults or not involving tests) should be escalated via the Test Security Log process described previously. Types of security incidents in the online administration system—Appeals—are described in Table 15.

**Table 15: Online System Appeals Types**

Appeal Type	Description
<b>Invalidate a Test</b>	Invalidating a student's test eliminates the test. The student loses that test and does not receive a score. Invalidations are often requested due to test security incidents; e.g., a TA sees two students discussing answers to questions during a test session.
<b>Reset a Test</b>	<p>Resetting a student's test removes that test from the system and enables the student to start a new test. Scores associated with this test are removed from the system.</p> <p>A test reset is often requested due to an accommodation not being set properly for test (e.g., a student realizes that the required Text-To-Speech accommodation was not set).</p> <p>Only the most recent test may be reset.</p>
<b>Re-open a Test</b>	<p>Re-open is for a test that has already been submitted or has expired.</p> <p>The system will prevent an unsubmitted test from being re-opened if the student has already started a reset test for that content area.</p>
<b>Restore a test that has been reset</b>	<p>Return a test from the Reset status to its prior status. This action can only be performed on tests that have been reset.</p> <p>A test can be restored if it was reset in error.</p>

**Note:** The Appeals system can also be used to address incidents that are not security related such as re-opening an assessment for a student who becomes ill and is unable to resume testing until after testing has expired.