



Memo

To: Dr. Michele Walker, Director of Student Assessment
From: Brandon Brown, Director of Charter Schools
Date: April 11, 2014
Re: Flanner House Elementary Investigation Details

Purpose

The Office of Education Innovation (OEI) is providing the following information in response to the March 19, 2014 memo received from Dr. Walker and the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE).

I. Facts of the Case/Chronology of Events

During the week of February 10, Flanner House Elementary School (School ID 5872) received the ISTEP+ Applied Skills materials. [REDACTED], the Testing Coordinator and Title I Teacher, received the packages. Within that week, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], the Special Education Teacher, opened and counted the materials. The materials were then delivered to the office of the principal, [REDACTED], where they were locked in a cabinet. Sometime between the dates of February 18 and February 28, [REDACTED] keys were misplaced and missing for up to two weeks. They were recovered prior to March 10, when the materials were sorted to prepare for the first day of ISTEP+ testing, March 11.

[REDACTED] worked with lower-performing students in grades K-5 all year, however, from February 10 until March 10, [REDACTED] pulled out students who performed in the bottom 50% of grades 3-5 for more intensive 30 minute small group practice in English-Language Arts and Mathematics. From February 24 through March 10, she began working with all students in grades 3-5, including the top 50%. This small group work was primarily done independently, with no other teachers or personnel present.

During the week of February 24, [REDACTED] approached the fourth grade teachers, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], and asked if their students had seen the movie, *The Jungle Book*. They responded that they were not sure and [REDACTED] told them they should watch that movie in class during "Fun Friday" on February 28. Both classes watched the movie. Additionally, both classes watched movies relating to gods and/or superheroes during the month of February. Although they could not remember all of the specific movies, *Thor*, *The Avengers*, *Fantastic Four*, and *Spiderman*, were mentioned by the teachers and students.

On Monday, March 3, [REDACTED] gave a folder to the Guided Reading Specialist for grades K-4, [REDACTED]. Inside were essays from every student in the third grade. [REDACTED] asked [REDACTED] to work with students to revise the essays. After receiving approval from [REDACTED], [REDACTED] spent the week of March 3 through March 7 on this task. The topic of the essays was "the students' favorite things."

On Tuesday, March 11, 2014, Flanner House began ISTEP+ testing with the mathematics portion of the assessment (Session 1). Within five minutes of opening the testing materials, several students expressed to the classroom teacher, [REDACTED], and proctor, [REDACTED], that they had already seen and worked on all of the math problems with [REDACTED]. One student said, "That was so easy!"



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We went over those same problems with [REDACTED]!" The instructors told the students to continue working. While walking around, [REDACTED] noticed all of the students answered a perimeter question incorrectly, but they all had the same incorrect answer. This led her to believe the students saw the same problem, but the numbers had been changed. When the students began Session 2 of the ISTEP+ assessment, the essay, many students expressed the same reaction, that they had already seen the writing prompt and had previously written an essay on the prompt topic. One student asked, "Should we just write the same thing we already wrote?" At this time, [REDACTED] recognized the prompt was a word-for-word replica of the one [REDACTED] had given to her the previous week. Both the teacher and proctor emphasized the students should continue working and do their best.

Immediately following the testing session [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] informed [REDACTED] of their concerns. [REDACTED] notified her administrative team, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], and asked both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to review their concerns and observations with the other administrators. They then brought [REDACTED] in to ask for her account. When asked about the similarities between the student practice and the ISTEP+ tests, [REDACTED] responded that the teachers should not have looked at the ISTEP+ testing books. She then said all of her practice was "just general stuff, nothing too off the wall." When asked for copies of her materials, she claimed she did not have any and that she would often "handwrite materials because the copier is down." She continued to say, "Everything I did was for the kids" throughout the brief meeting.

Throughout the afternoon of March 11, the administrative team interviewed every teacher in grades 3-6 to ascertain their thoughts as to whether or not students had been previously exposed to ISTEP+ material. They were also asked if they had any prior knowledge of test content. No additional concerns were expressed by teachers at that time.

[REDACTED] sent a Testing Irregularity Report to the IDOE and contacted the Mayor's Office of Education Innovation (OEI) to inform them of the testing security concerns. This report can be found in Appendix A. She also contacted the school board president, [REDACTED], and together they decided to suspend [REDACTED], pending an investigation by the IDOE.

On Wednesday, March 12, students continued testing with Session 3 of ISTEP+, the reading portion. After opening the test book, a student in [REDACTED] third grade class found an extra piece of computer paper with writing on it. [REDACTED] collected the paper and saw it was a handwritten copy of the extended response writing prompt. Additionally, the students again expressed that they had already seen all of the questions on this test. After the testing session, [REDACTED] immediately gave the paper to the administration (found in Appendix B).

Also during the testing session on March 12, a few students in [REDACTED] fourth grade class expressed that they had seen the writing prompt before. When she responded that they had not worked on that prompt in class, the students said it was an assignment from a substitute the previous week. It was confirmed that [REDACTED] provided the substitute with a weekly writing prompt that was used in class. After the testing session, [REDACTED] expressed her concerns to [REDACTED].

After lunch, [REDACTED] entered her office and noticed that the folder of student essays [REDACTED] had given her the previous week had disappeared off of her desk. She searched her entire office, but it was never recovered.

After school hours on March 12, [REDACTED] responded to an alarm coming from [REDACTED]'s classroom. When she arrived, she saw [REDACTED] leaving the room. When she asked why she was in the room, [REDACTED] responded that she was leaving a note for [REDACTED]. The next morning, [REDACTED]



█████ did not find any note from █████. She believes that █████ may have been removing materials from a table station that she kept in the back of █████ classroom.

On Thursday, March 13, OEI received a memo from IDOE requesting more information regarding the testing concern. A copy of this memo can be found in Appendix A.

On Friday, March 14, █████ sent an email to █████ and █████, resigning from her position at Flanner House Elementary. A copy of this email can be found in Appendix A.

On Monday, March 19, OEI requested a myriad of documentation from Flanner House Elementary in a written memo (found in Appendix A). By the March 26 deadline, all requested documentation available had been submitted to OEI. █████ was unable to locate 2013-2014 Test Security Agreements. All submitted documentation is organized in the various appendices.

On Monday, April 7, the Director of Charter Schools and Governance and Operations Analyst from OEI visited Flanner House Elementary school from 8:30am – 2:30pm and interviewed faculty/staff members named in Section II as well as focus groups of 3-4 students from each class. A schedule from the site visit as well as notes and summaries from these interviews can be found in Appendix C.

II. Contact Information of the Individuals with Information regarding the Breach

The following individuals contributed to the compilation of the information included in this memo and its appendices.

Name	SY13-14 Position	Contact Information
Brandon Brown	Director of Charter Schools	Brandon.brown@indy.gov 317.327.3621
Jackie Gantzer	Governance Analyst	Jacquelyn.gantzer@indy.gov 317.327.5563
Kristin Hines	Academic Performance Analyst	Kristin.hines@indy.gov 317.327.3111
█████	School Principal	█████
█████	Business Manager	█████
█████	Guided Reading Specialist K-4	█████
█████	4 th Grade Teacher	█████
█████	5 th Grade Teacher	█████
█████	6 th Grade Teacher	█████
█████	3 rd Grade Teacher	█████
█████	Special Education Teacher	█████
█████	4 th Grade Teacher	█████

III. Summary of the Statements of Individuals with Knowledge of the Breach

Below is a very brief summary of the general ideas from each interview during the site visit. Please see full interview notes provided in Appendix C.

Grade	Person(s) Interviewed	Summarizing Statement
3	Classroom Teacher (█████)	█████ was unaware of any previous exposure, but due to student responses to ISTEP+ and the reaction of █████, is confident that her students were unfairly prepared for each session on ISTEP+.
	Guided Reading Specialist/Proctor (█████)	█████ is confident that █████ provided her with student work on an exact copy of the essay writing prompt. Due to student responses to ISTEP+ and the reaction of █████



		█████, she is confident that students were unfairly prepared for each session on ISTEP+.
	3 rd Grade Students	All students indicated that they had seen all of the questions and prompts on each section of ISTEP+. They all claim █████ gave them the practice items and █████ helped them with the essay.
4	Classroom Teacher (█████)	█████ believes █████ may have provided a substitute with a similar or exact copy of a writing prompt from ISTEP+. She is confident █████ recommended watching <i>The Jungle Book</i> in class and she may have influenced watching movies relating to super powers (<i>Fantastic Four</i> and <i>Spiderman</i> , etc.).
	4 th Grade Students (█████)	Students indicated they were prepared for the writing prompts because of movies they watched the month before ISTEP+. Additionally, they mentioned seeing many of the math problems before, although it was unclear whether or not they were similar problems or exactly the same.
	Classroom Teacher (█████)	█████ had no concerns about testing security in her classroom. No students raised any concerns to her during or after testing. She mentioned watching several super hero-type movies the month before ISTEP+ as part of a Greek Mythology unit, and she is confident █████ suggested watching <i>The Jungle Book</i> in class.
	4 th Grade Students (█████)	Students indicated that they had seen all of the math problems on ISTEP+ and reviewed them with █████. They also indicated they were prepared for the writing prompts because of movies they watched the month before ISTEP+.
5	Classroom Teacher (█████)	█████ does not believe any of his students received any unfair ISTEP+ preparation. In response to students claiming they had practiced with a similar essay prompt, he immediately cited his source regarding the prompt in question (copy found in Appendix B).
	5 th Grade Students	Students indicated that they had worked on a similar writing prompt with █████ in class. They also said █████ helped them prepare in the weeks leading up to ISTEP+. When asked about specific items, they said that some of the questions were the same, but others were different.
6	Classroom Teacher (█████)	█████ is confident that none of his students received any unfair ISTEP+ preparation. █████ does not work with any of his students and he handles skills practice on his own.
	6 th Grade Students	Students confirmed █████'s statements that they did not work with █████ and that all of their practice came from the classroom. They were confident they had not seen any of the specific items on ISTEP+ before, but they had practiced a lot of the skills in class (flash cards, games, writing journals, etc.).
All	Special Education Teacher (█████)	█████ could not think of any scenario in which █████ could have unfairly prepared students for the ISTEP+. He was with her when testing materials were counted and sorted and she did nothing suspicious during that time.
	School Leader (█████)	█████ has been attempting to refrain from making



		assumptions and has been working with OEI and the IDOE to ensure all of the artifacts and evidence has been collected and that the investigation is run with fidelity.
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IV. Identify and Provide Relevant Documents

The following table provides a list of appendices and a list of documentation include in each appendix.

Appendix	Contents	Source
A	Memos and Communication	
1	IDOE Memorandum to OEI	IDOE
2	Testing Irregularity Report	IDOE
3	OEI Memo to Flanner House requesting Documentation	OEI
4	Email between OEI and School Leader Re: Documentation	OEI
5	Email from School Leader to OEI Re: Hood Suspension	OEI
6	Email from School Leader to OEI Re: Hood Resignation	OEI
7	Email from Business Manager to OEI Re: Hood Resignation	OEI
B	Investigation Report Materials	
1	School Leader Chronology of Events	School
2	Teacher Daily Schedules	School
3	Extra Paper Found in 3 rd Grade ISTEP+ Test Book	School
4	5 th Grade Writing Prompt Sample and Source	OEI
C	Notes and Summaries of Interviews	
1	Site Visit Agenda	OEI
2	Interview notes and summaries	OEI
D	Documentation of Testing Procedures/Security	
1	Written Test Security Policy	School
2	Sign-in/Sign-out sheets for testing materials	School
3	ISTEP+ training materials and sign-in sheets	School
E	Test Integrity Agreement(s)	
1	Explanation from School Leader	School

V. Analysis of Breach

A. Summary of the specific rules and regulations that were not followed as it relates to:

1. *IDOE’s Guidelines/Manuals/Training Materials/Policies*

From the documentation gathered (and subsequently provided with this report), it appears the school violated Chapter 10 of the Indiana Assessment Program Manual. In the “Secure Materials” section, it clearly states that “Duplication of assessment materials constitutes a serious breach of test security.” The handwritten copy of a writing prompt (found in Appendix B) demonstrates this policy was not followed. Additionally, in the “Preparation” section, school staff engaged in “extensive use of test practice materials.” Further, multiple pieces of evidence insinuate that students were “given practice on items or tasks known to



be part of the assessment.” Last, although the school offers agendas and materials for test security training, no signed Test Integrity Agreements could be located.

It is clear that the school staff and principal reacted in an appropriate manner, consistent with guidelines in Chapter 10 of the Indiana Assessment Program Manual.

2. *The School’s Guidelines/Manuals/Training Materials/Policies*

The school’s written test security policy appears to have been followed with fidelity.

B. A Summary Describing How Pervasive/Extensive Was the Breach

According to all of the documentation and information collected through interviews, it is fairly evident that:

1. The testing coordinator accessed testing materials and copied down specific items on the ISTEP+ assessment.
2. The testing coordinator worked with students in third grade and fourth grade extensively and exposed them to exact items from the ISTEP+ assessment.
 - a. The breach appears to be more substantial in third grade, in which students confirmed they had seen items from each session of the assessment.
 - b. The breach in fourth grade appears to be limited to the math session, in which students claimed they had seen specific items, as well as writing, in which students watched movies and took notes on topics that prepared them for the writing prompts.
3. Students in fifth grade may or may not have been exposed to items on the math session on ISTEP+. They also may have received previous exposure to the essay writing session, although the practice can be traced back to a source unrelated to the ISTEP+.
4. Students in sixth grade were unaffected by the breach.

C. A Summary of the Ramifications of the Breach

According to IDOE Protocol for Reporting and Investigating Alleged Assessment Breaches of Irregularities, “If the Department determines that a violation occurred, the Department may take the following actions:

- a. Invalidate the test scores of student(s), school(s), corporation(s), and/or state; If the testing window has not closed, retesting of students with an equivalent form of the test will be considered. If an equivalent form is used, the school shall assume the cost of both purchasing and scoring of the equivalent form.
- b. Reaggregate the test data for valid test results for students, school(s), and/or the state;



- c. Retrain administrator(s) and/or other school personnel at the school's cost;
- d. Prohibit administrator(s) and/or other personnel from handling Indiana Assessment System secure materials;
- e. Revoke any license issued or granted by the Department to any school personnel who has committed a breach;
- f. Report any suspected criminal offense to the proper authorities;
- g. Take other corrective action."

D. A Summary of the Actions taken by the Mayor's Office or School

1. Actions by School

- a. Immediately upon learning of a testing security concern, the school leader followed protocol for contacting the IDOE and OEI. The school conducted an internal investigation the same day.

2. Actions by OEI

- a. After receiving a memorandum from the IDOE, OEI began an investigation of the school. It began by collecting relevant documentation and finished by conducting several interviews with relevant school staff and students.
- b. Upon conclusion of the interviews, OEI made the following recommendation to the school leader:
 - i. Meet with all staff members to discuss the events of the test concern and review proper procedures with testing security.
 - ii. Review and revise your Test Security Policy to allow for more school leader control and supervision.
 - iii. Eliminate test preparation during open testing windows.

E. Costs

There were no costs incurred beyond the expense of OEI and school staff's time.