

**RICAS Test Security Requirements for CBT and PBT  
(excerpted from the spring 2021 TCM)**

# **Part I**



## **RICAS Test Security Requirements**

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The purpose of the Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS) is to elicit valid results showing what students know and can do in the tested subjects. The purpose of the RICAS Test Security Requirements is to protect the validity of RICAS results.

**Section A** describes responsibilities of principals and test coordinators.

**Section B** describes shared responsibilities of all individuals who have access to secure test materials.

**Section C** describes responsibilities of test administrators.

**Section D** provides instructions for reporting testing irregularities.

**Principals and school personnel authorized to have access to secure materials and test content must follow the requirements listed below and may not participate in, direct, assist in, encourage, or fail to report any testing irregularity or act of misconduct.**

**Principals are responsible for ensuring that all test administrators and school personnel authorized to have access to secure test materials are trained in and comply with the requirements and instructions contained in this part of the Test Coordinator’s Manual (TCM) and in the Test Administrator’s Manuals (TAMs).**

Please note the following definitions for the purposes of this section and this manual:

- **“Secure”** content and materials include the following:
  - > test questions not publicly released
  - > any onscreen test content (e.g., ELA passages)
  - > student responses to test questions
  - > student testing tickets
  - > proctor testing tickets (for test administrators administering certain accommodations)
  - > used scratch paper

The following secure testing materials must be tracked using internal tracking forms:

- > student testing tickets
- > proctor testing tickets
- > used scratch paper (scratch paper must be accounted for on tracking forms but individual sheets do not need to be counted)
- **“Access”** refers to handling secure testing materials, but does not include viewing test content, which is prohibited (except when administering certain accommodations; see the *Accommodations and Accessibility Features Manual* at [www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment-Accommodations](http://www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment-Accommodations)). Students may never transport secure testing materials, including from their initial testing room to a test completion room.
 

**Note:** Student testing devices are not considered secure unless they are actively signed into TestNav. Students may transport testing devices as long as they are not signed into TestNav.
- **“Locked storage area”** refers to the central locked area that must be used to store all secure RICAS testing materials when they are not in use. Principals must restrict access to the locked storage area to only those school personnel authorized by the principal to handle secure materials. For example, custodial or cleaning staff may not enter or access the locked area where the principal stores secure materials.

Each principal must complete the Principal’s Certification of Proper Test Administration (PCPA) to certify that the school has followed proper RICAS test security requirements and test administration protocols. See Appendix B for the certification statements to which the principal must attest.

## A Responsibilities of the Principal and Test Coordinator

1. **Authorize specific personnel to serve as test administrators, and train them to properly administer RICAS tests. Designate other school personnel as necessary to maintain a secure test administration (e.g., personnel permitted to access secure test materials, personnel to serve as hallway or restroom monitors, technology coordinators) and train them in RICAS security requirements.**
  - Before the training session, distribute
    - › a copy of the appropriate TAM to every test administrator, and
    - › a copy of the test security requirements to all other school personnel who have access to secure materials.
  - Document that all test administrators have received TAMs and that school personnel who have access to secure materials have received the test security requirements (see sample form in Appendix B).
  - Train test administrators prior to test administration. The TCM and TAMs describe the protocols necessary to conduct a proper RICAS test administration.
  - For test administrators who provide accommodations to students with disabilities, or English learner (EL) students, provide training in the implementation of accommodations in accordance with the *Accommodations and Accessibility Features Manual* (available at [www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment-Accommodations](http://www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment-Accommodations)).
2. **Instruct students in RICAS test security requirements (see Part III).**
3. **Develop local policies and procedures to ensure proper test security at all times.**
  - Schedule tests to avoid conflicts with recess or lunch (see Part III for more information about scheduling test sessions).
  - Ensure that tests are administered within the prescribed window and in the prescribed order.
  - Ensure that hallways are properly monitored during testing so that students are supervised at all times when they leave testing rooms (e.g., to use the restroom or transition to a test completion room).
  - Ensure that test administrators administer tests according to section B.
4. **Keep RICAS test materials in locked central storage when RICAS tests are not being administered.**
  - Account for all secure test materials at the end of each test session and keep them in the locked storage area when not in use.
  - Restrict access to the locked storage area to only those school personnel authorized to have access to secure materials.
5. **Monitor printing, distribution, and collection of materials.**
  - Student testing tickets must be printed, distributed, and collected after testing.
  - Used scratch paper must be accounted for and tracked during testing.
6. **Securely destroy the following materials after testing.**
  - Student testing tickets, proctor testing tickets, and used scratch paper (i.e., written on by students), must be securely destroyed (e.g., shredded) following testing.

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### **B Shared Responsibilities of Test Coordinators, Test Administrators, Technology Staff, and Other School Personnel Authorized to Have Access to Secure Materials**

#### **1. Receive training in test security requirements and test administration protocols.**

- Test coordinators are expected to participate in one of RIDE’s training sessions on RICAS test security and test administration protocols. Session information will be posted at [www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-training](http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-training).
- Test administrators, test coordinators, and other school personnel authorized to have access to secure test materials must attend the school training session. Appendix B contains a sample form that test coordinators may use to document participation.

#### **2. Document the location of secure materials at all times.**

- Track secure materials using the sample Test Materials Internal Tracking Form in Appendix B or a similar document (test coordinators keep these forms on file for three years). See Part III for more information about requirements for internal tracking forms.
- The test coordinator and each test administrator must independently count testing tickets before signing the tracking forms and transferring custody of the tickets.
- Do not leave testing tickets or other secure RICAS materials unattended at any time unless they are locked in the secure storage area.

#### **3. Ensure the security of the testing location.**

- Do not allow unauthorized persons to enter the testing room. This includes parents, researchers, reporters, students not scheduled to be testing at the time, and any school personnel not assigned to the room as test administrators or proctors.
- School administrators, district personnel, and RIDE observers may enter testing rooms to monitor and observe testing procedures.
- Technology staff may enter testing rooms to troubleshoot problems with computer-based testing, but like other school personnel, are not permitted to photograph or otherwise duplicate secure test content on-screen.

#### **4. Ensure the security of test questions, test booklets, and other secure materials.**

- Do not discuss or in any way reveal the contents of test questions or student responses to questions before, during, or after test administration, except as noted in this manual (see TAMs for exceptions). Because RICAS test questions are secure and confidential until released publicly, school personnel should not discuss or review test questions with students or adults even after testing has been completed.
- Do not duplicate any secure test content, including but not limited to audiotaping, videotaping, photographing, typing, or copying by hand.<sup>5</sup>
- Do not allow any portion of test booklets or answer booklets to be retained, discarded, recycled, removed, or destroyed.
- Do not remove testing materials from the school.
- Do not allow scratch paper to be retained, discarded, or otherwise removed by students.

<sup>5</sup> The only exceptions are for test administrators who must transcribe student responses into answer booklets for students with disabilities receiving certain accommodations or for students who did some or all of their work in damaged, defective, or void booklets.

- Be sure that testing tickets and used scratch paper have been destroyed after testing.
- Do not allow students access to secure test questions prior to testing.
- Do not read or view any student responses.
- Do not change any student responses.

## **C Responsibilities of Test Administrators**

### **1. Receive training from the test coordinator in administering test sessions properly and securely.**

- Review the TAM and all relevant test security requirements before administering test sessions.
- Attend the training session led by the test coordinator before test administration.  
A sample form that test coordinators may use to document participation in training and receipt of TAMs can be found in Appendix B.
- Understand and follow the protocols related to administering tests to students with disabilities, English learners, and English learners with disabilities, and protocols related to administering accessibility features. See the *Accommodations and Accessibility Features Manual* for more information.

### **2. Administer all tests according to appropriate protocols.**

- Administer tests during the prescribed testing window.
- Follow the directions and read the scripts in the TAMs (and in any subsequent updates provided by RIDE) verbatim to students.
- Remove or cover any classroom displays that provide information related to the content being assessed or to test-taking strategies (see page 25).
- Provide students with all required test materials as listed in the TAMs.
- Prevent the use of prohibited materials (see Part III, section B for lists of required/permitted and prohibited materials). Note that results may be invalidated for students who use cell phones or other prohibited electronic devices during a test session, including after they submit their test and turn in materials, during a break, and during the transition to a test completion area.

### **3. Focus full attention on the testing environment at all times.**

- Monitor the testing process by circulating around the room frequently. When not circulating around the room, test administrators should maintain a clear view of the students and keep their attention focused on them.
- Ensure that students are not left unsupervised during testing, including during breaks and during transitions to test completion locations.
- A test administrator may view students' tests on-screen only for the purpose of assisting a student who is having trouble with the computer interface, or in order to administer appropriate accommodations and accessibility features. See Part III for more information about assisting students with the computer interface.
- Students must work only on the session being administered, and test administrators may not unlock a test session in PearsonAccess<sup>next</sup> other than the one being administered. (A student cannot review a prior test session or go ahead to the next test session without the test session being unlocked by a test administrator.)

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### 4. Ensure that students provide answers that are strictly their own and do not participate in any form of cheating.

- Students must not
  - › copy answers from anyone else
  - › use notes, books, extra reference sheets, or any kind of class materials
  - › talk to or communicate with other students
  - › provide help or answers to any other student
  - › ask for or receive help from anyone else in answering the questions
  - › access cell phones or other electronic devices during testing (other than their testing device)
- Ensure that students do not access the Internet outside of the TestNav application (the student testing online platform) during testing.
  - › A student who tries to access certain applications may see an error message that reads, “TestNav has detected a blacklist process ‘<processname>’ running in the background that prevents you from taking this test. Please contact the administrator to stop the blacklisted process running in the background and resume testing.” Make sure that any student who receives this message is not trying to access other applications.

### 5. Do not give students any assistance or make suggestions for responding to any test question.

- Test administrators must not coach students during testing or alter or interfere with students’ responses in any way. Examples of coaching include, but are not limited to,
  - › providing answers to a student
  - › indicating that a student has answered a question incorrectly or left a question blank
  - › defining words or providing synonyms
  - › spelling words
  - › influencing a student’s responses by offering hints, clues, cues, gestures, facial expressions, nods, or changes in voice inflection or body language
  - › altering, explaining, simplifying, or paraphrasing any test question, reading passage, writing prompt, or multiple-choice answer option
  - › providing any manner of assistance that could impact a student’s answers, including testing strategies
  - › suggesting that a student write more on a question, check previous work, or review or reconsider a question
- At any time during a test session, a test administrator may repeat a portion of the TAM script if necessary for clarification.

### 6. Do not read, view, or change student responses.

### 7. Follow proper procedures for administering accommodations to students with disabilities, English learners, and English learners with disabilities.

- Ensure that students are only provided accommodations that are listed specifically for use during RICAS testing in an approved IEP or a 504 plan, or that were specifically chosen as accommodations for English learner (EL) students.
- Follow guidelines on proper provision of RICAS accommodations as prescribed in the *Accommodations and Accessibility Features Manual*.



## **D Testing Irregularities**

Testing irregularities are incidents that represent a deviation from prescribed testing procedures. Testing irregularities may include student impropriety, errors in providing accommodations, educator misconduct, or the mishandling of secure test materials.

### **1. School Observations**

In order to ensure the security and proper administration of the RICAS program, RIDE conducts announced monitoring visits to schools to observe the procedures followed during test administration. If selected for a visit, at least two regular classrooms should be visited by RIDE staff and at least one accommodation session, if possible. Additional information about school selection and visit procedures are available in the *2021 RI Test Coordinator Handbook* on the RIDE website at [www.ride.ri.gov/TC](http://www.ride.ri.gov/TC).

RIDE observers will confirm that all test security requirements in Part I are being met, including the following:

- Materials are stored properly.
- Staff have been trained.
- Test administrators are administering tests appropriately.
- The testing environment is secure.

### **2. Mandatory Reporting of Irregularities by All Personnel**

All test irregularities must be reported by the test administrator to the school test coordinator. The school test coordinator must collect any information and documentation and inform the Local Education Agency (LEA) or district test coordinator. The LEA or district test coordinator must contact RIDE to discuss the incident and provide any documentation, as necessary. RIDE will inform the local LEA/district if it is required to submit a formal investigation report of the irregularity. If any school or district employee with knowledge of a test irregularity has questions about his or her reporting obligations, RIDE can be consulted.

It is recommended that parents/guardians be informed when a student-specific irregularity is reported to RIDE.

Before reporting an irregularity to RIDE, gather the following information:

- a description of the alleged incident and the date it occurred (be sure to interview the students and test administrators involved)
- the name(s) of the individual(s) involved in the incident
- the specific test(s) and specific session(s) affected
- any accommodations used by the students
- in student-specific reports: the student's name, date of birth, grade, and State-Assigned Student Identifier (SASID)