

June 18, 2009

[REDACTED]

To [REDACTED]:

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) holds the statewide assessment program to be of the utmost importance to the measurement and reporting of the achievement of all students and schools in the District of Columbia. Pursuant to the District of Columbia Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007 (DC Official Code §38-2601 *et seq.*), the OSSE is responsible for overseeing test security and accountability functions for the District of Columbia as the jurisdiction's State Education Agency. The OSSE treats this oversight role with the utmost seriousness, and is prepared to respond vigorously to any and all security breaches so that an equitable assessment program remains operational in the District of Columbia.

The OSSE commends the leadership of [REDACTED] for promptly responding to the allegations of a test security breach during this year's administration of the DC-CAS. The OSSE further commends [REDACTED] leadership for conducting a thorough investigation of the allegations and producing a detailed report documenting the specific activities and actions which transpired in the course of this unfortunate event. Finally, I wish to express my support for the swift and decisive actions imposed by terminating the parties found guilty of test security violations.

Unfortunately, these sanctions are not sufficient to ensure that the affected test results are valid and reliable or to account for the monetary costs that the State must now incur as a result of losing two previously secure assessment forms used in the statewide accountability program. It is unacceptable for teachers to copy and share the assessment forms with students before the testing window has begun. The security of these forms is essential to the validity and reliability of the District's accountability system as a whole and to the objectivity of the assessment as a measure of academic achievement. As such, the State will, consistent with the OSSE's test security guidelines and 34 CFR §80.43(a)(3), impose the following sanctions in addition to the actions already taken by your Board:

1. The scores for the [REDACTED] students who were provided with the practice test materials and/or who participated in instructional activities using these materials have been invalidated. This means that these students will be counted as performing Below Basic in the computation of the Adequate Yearly Progress for [REDACTED], the Local Education Agency, as well as the District of Columbia.

2. The State will terminate \$10,000 of [REDACTED] Title I, Part A allocation for the grant period beginning July 1, 2009. This amount represents part of the cost the State must incur to develop replacement test items given that the District can no longer use the secure operational and field tested items which were on the [REDACTED] grade forms of the test disseminated as a part of this breach in security. These funds will be specifically withheld from the Title 1, Part A allocations earmarked for your school.

Were the teacher in question to hold a teaching certificate or license, his egregious and deliberate actions to violate the OSSE's test security guidelines, despite notice and a written commitment to uphold the guidelines, would result in the District of Columbia taking action to rescind that certificate or license.

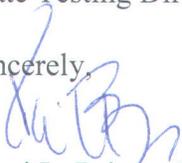
Please note that it is your responsibility to notify the parents of the children impacted by this security breach, as well as the actions imposed by your Board and the OSSE. Parents should be specifically informed that individual children will not be penalized by any of these actions.

The next round of revised Title I, Part A allocations will reflect a \$10,000 deduction from the total amount eligible. [REDACTED] is entitled to request a hearing to appeal the OSSE's decision to reduce the LEA's Title I, A grant. Any request for a hearing must be delivered in writing to Acting Title I Director Emily Butler, Office of the State Superintendent of Education, 441 4th St., NW, Washington, DC, within 30 days of the receipt of this letter. A hearing will be held within 30 days of any request with a written decision delivered within 10 days of the hearing.

Thank you for your diligence and support of the State's efforts to provide all children in the District of Columbia with a high quality education.

If you or your staff has additional questions, please contact Mr. Alex Harris, Assistant Superintendent for Assessment and Accountability at (202) 741-0258 or Dr. Leroy J. Tompkins, State Testing Director at (202) 741-5539.

Sincerely,



Kerri L. Briggs, PhD
Acting State Superintendent
Office of the State Superintendent of Education

c: Alex Harris
Leroy Tompkins
Emily Butler