

ALVAREZ & MARSAL  
 2014 District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS)  
 Test Security Investigation  
 School Summary Report

**CONTAINS CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

**TREE OF LIFE COMMUNITY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL**  
 Case Ref. 0147\_0183\_001\_2014

**I. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION**

<b>School Name</b>	Tree of Life Community Public Charter School
<b>School Address</b>	2315 18 <sup>th</sup> Place NE Washington, DC 20018
<b>Field Team</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Date Interviews Conducted</b>	December 12 and 15, 2014; January 14 and 15, 2015; February 6, 2015

**II. TESTING GROUP FLAG INFORMATION**

Flag	Significant Score Drop (2014)		Extraordinary Growth (2013)		WTR Erasure (2014)		Person Fit		Question Type Comparison (QTC)	
	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math	Read
Test Administrator 1	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Based on the data analysis performed, one testing group at Tree of Life Community Public Charter School (“Tree of Life”) was flagged for an extraordinary growth in Reading scores for the 2013 DC CAS and a significant drop in Reading scores for the 2014 DC CAS. The students in the flagged testing group were in [REDACTED] grade for the 2013 DC CAS and in [REDACTED] grade for the 2014 DC CAS.

The testing group was comprised of [REDACTED] students. According to OSSE-provided information, this testing group was a General Education group.

For the 2014 DC CAS, OSSE developed a flagging methodology consisting of five methods. Testing Groups will be investigated if they trigger two or more test security flags or consecutive years of erasures in the same subject.

OSSE sets the policy and calculates Person Fit, Extraordinary Growth, Significant Score Drop and Question Type Comparison flags while the testing vendor computes the Wrong-to-Right flagging data based upon policy guidance from OSSE regarding standard deviations.

The methods consist of the following as described in the 2014 Test Integrity Flagging Methodology:<sup>1</sup>

- 1) Wrong to Right (WTR) Erasures - Erasures occur for at least three reasons: rethinking, misalignment or irregularities. Therefore, high numbers of WTR erasures by themselves do not indicate testing irregularities, but may warrant further investigation. Testing Groups are flagged when there is a large number of WTR erasures as compared to the state average.
- 2) Achievement Metrics – This method is divided into four sub-methods. Each sub-method is independent of the other; therefore it only takes one of the sub-methods to flag a testing group.
  - a. Test Score Growth - SGPs, or student growth percentiles, are produced by a model that measures academic growth by comparing groups of students with similar test score history. These are produced at the student-subject level. SGPs range from 0 to 11, and higher values indicate more growth relative to similarly performing students. Testing Groups with growth from 2013 to 2014 that is greater or equal to 4 standard deviations above the state growth from 2013 to 2014 are flagged.
  - b. Test Score Drop - Similar to test score growth described above, the test score drop looks at extraordinary declines in student scores from 2013 to 2014. Testing with a test score drop from 2013 to 2014 that is greater or equal to 4 standard deviations below the state mean drop are flagged.
  - c. Question Type Comparison (QTC) - QTC measures differences in performance between multiple choice questions and constructive response items. Significant differences in QTC performance will trigger a testing group flag.
  - d. Person-Fit Analysis - This model measures the likelihood of an examinee’s response pattern given their estimated ability level. Testing Groups with unusual response patterns greater than or equal to 4 standard deviations above the state mean are flagged.

OSSE also selected certain schools for investigation if test materials, either question booklets, answer booklets, or instruction CDs were identified to be missing. In addition, due to the requirements of the Testing Integrity Act of 2013, OSSE selected certain testing groups for investigation based on a random selection.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 2014 Test Integrity Flagging Methodology.

<sup>2</sup> Testing Integrity Act of 2013, Title II, Sec. 201(c).

This testing group was flagged for an extraordinary growth in Reading scores in 2013 (when in █ grade), and a significant drop in Reading scores in 2014 (when the same students were in █ grade).

**III. INTERVIEWS SCHEDULED AND CONDUCTED**

Name of Interviewee	Name Reference	Current Position	2014 Testing Role/Position	Interview Location	Date Interview Conducted
█	Admin 1	█	█	School	12/12/2014
█	Admin 2	█	█	School	12/15/2014
█	Test Administrator 1	█	█	School	12/15/2014
█	Test Administrator 2	█	█	Phone Interview	12/15/2014
█	Student 1A	█	█	School	12/12/2014 and 1/14/2015
█	Student 1B	█	█	School	12/12/2014 and 1/15/2015
█	Student 1C	█	█	School	12/12/2014 and 1/15/2015
█	Student 1D	█	█	School	12/12/2014 and 1/15/2015
█	Student 1E	█	█	School	1/14/2015
█	Student 1F	█	█	School	1/15/2015
█	Student 1G	█	█	School	2/6/2015

**IV. SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION**

Given the Extraordinary Growth in Reading for Test Administrator 1’s Testing Group in 2013 and the Significant Score Drop in Reading for the same students in 2014 when they tested with another Test Administrator (Test Administrator 2), our investigation focused on the possibility that Test Administrator 1 engaged in behavior before, during or after the 2013 test administration

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that violated the security of the Test. In addition, students interviewed indicated that Test Administrator 2 may have used a cell phone during the administration of the 2014 Test; therefore, our investigation also focused on the ascertaining whether there was a testing violation by Test Administrator 2.

We interviewed 11 individuals: 4 current staff and 7 students. The interviewers discussed both the 2013 DC CAS and the 2014 DC CS with Students 1A, 1B, 1C, and 1D. These students were present in Test Administrator 1's 2013 testing group (i.e. the flagged testing group) and were present in Test Administrator 2's testing group during the 2014 DC CAS. The Team also interviewed three students, Students 1E, 1F, and 1G, who were present in Test Administrator 1's testing group during the administration of the 2014 DC CAS. Only four students in Test Administrator 1's 2014 DC CAS testing group currently attend Tree of Life and of those students, only 3 were present during our visits to the school.

Our investigation revealed one possible testing violation related to Admin 1 and Admin 2 not having signed copies of the State Security and Non-Disclosure Agreement in the Test Security file.

Our investigation also revealed two allegations for which we were unable to obtain corroboration:

- 1) Student 1A reported seeing Test Administrator 2 use ■■■ cell phone during 2014 DC CAS testing. Neither Student 1B nor Student 1C clearly corroborated this incident. Student 1B initially said Test Administrator 2 was not on ■■■ phone during testing, just that ■■■ sat at ■■■ desk and stared at them while they were testing. ■■■ later said ■■■ wasn't sure, and that ■■■ "might have had it out." Student 1D said that Test Administrator may have used ■■■ cell phone "maybe once" just to check the time. Test Administrator 2 stated that ■■■ left ■■■ cell phone at ■■■ desk (outside the testing room) during testing. ■■■ was "not sure" if ■■■ left the cell phone at ■■■ desk all days of testing, but noted that ■■■ did not take any calls or use ■■■ phone at any time during testing
- 2) Student 1F mentioned that Test Administrator 1 assisted a student during the 2014 DC CAS by asking them "how much was this?" when helping a student work a Math question having to do with counting money. Student 1F became confused after additional questioning; ■■■ later stated several times that Test Administrator 1 did not help or provide answers to students during the 2014 DC CAS. This allegation was also not corroborated by our interviews with Student 1E, Student 1G or by Test Administrator 1. Student 1E said that Test Administrator 1 did not talk to students, point at anyone's test, or otherwise provide any unauthorized assistance during this time. Student 1G did not recall Test Administrator 1 helping or answering students' questions during the exam. Test Administrator 1 said ■■■ did not help students in any way during the exams.

Admin 1 believed that the students' score drop in Reading from 2013 to 2014 could have been partially attributed to teacher quality and turnover in the 2013-2014 school year as two English teachers left the school during the school year; one taught ■■■ and ■■■ grade English. Test Administrator 2 also mentioned this, indicating that the students didn't have a proper English teacher during parts of the year because their teacher quit in the middle of the year. Test

Administrator 1 described many of the students as being very smart and capable, but very inconsistent on testing days - some days students would surprise you with high scores, and the next test students could do the opposite. Test Administrator 1 also stated that generally the students at Tree of Life are better at Math and Science and that many of them struggle with Reading or just don't like it. ■■■ stated that ■■■ did not help students in any way during the exams.

## V. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF POSSIBLE TESTING VIOLATIONS

### A. Missing State Test Security and Non-Disclosure Agreement

Upon review of the Test Security file, the Team could not locate the signed *State Security and Non-Disclosure Agreements* (NDAs) for Admin 1 and Admin 2. During the interview, Admin 1 reported that ■■■ signed the NDA during training, which was led by Admin 2. Nevertheless, the NDA was not in the Test Security file and ■■■ could not explain why it was not there. Admin 2 said that ■■■ had signed the NDA at the OSSE training for Test Monitors/Test Chairpersons (not held at Tree of Life), so ■■■ didn't expect it to be in Tree of Life's Test Security file; however, based on our follow-up with OSSE, the state education agency noted that, though it does conduct training for Test Chairpersons and requires participants to sign in, it does not distribute or request for NDAs to be signed at the OSSE training. Obtaining signed NDA's from all individuals involved in testing (including the Admin 1 and Admin 2) is the responsibility of the school and the signed NDA's should be maintained in the school's Test Security file.

The *Testing Integrity Act of 2013*, Section 103(a)(1), indicates, in relevant part, that before the administration of a Districtwide assessment, Authorized personnel must:

- (B) Sign a testing integrity and security agreement, as developed and distributed by OSSE

The *2014 DC State Test Security Guidelines* (page 8) provide that, before testing, the ■■■ must:

- 3. Ensure that all individuals involved in the state testing system in any way; read, sign, and return to the LEA Assessment Coordinator/Test Integrity Coordinator the State Test Security and Non-Disclosure Agreement

At page 9, the *2014 DC State Test Security Guidelines* provide that, before testing, the ■■■ must:

- 2. Read, sign, and return to the principal the State Test Security and Non-Disclosure Agreement

The signed NDAs should be maintained by the school in its Test Security file as they are necessary to validate the school's compliance with the *Testing Integrity Act of 2013* and the *2014 DC CAS Test Security Guidelines*. Though Admin 1 and Admin 2 have both indicated that they signed the 2014 NDA, we are unable to corroborate their statements based on a review of the available 2014 DC CAS documentation.

**VI. DOCUMENTS REVIEWED**

Document	Notes
School Test Plan	Yes; no issues noted
Incident Reports	Yes; reviewed
Training Sign-In Sheet	Yes; no issues noted
DC CAS 2014 General Observation Report(s)	Yes; reviewed
DC CAS 2014 Test Security Affidavit	Signed by everyone at training except the Admin 1 (note: OSSE only required Test Chairperson to sign)
State Test Security and Non-Disclosure Agreements <sup>4</sup>	NDA's not found on file for either Admin 1 or Admin 2; noted NDAs for all other personnel interviewed.
School Security Checklist	Yes; no issues noted.
Other Documents Reviewed	N/A

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<sup>4</sup> Referred to in Testing Integrity Act Sec. 103(a)(1)(B) as Testing Integrity and Security Agreements.