



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PO Box 500
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

KIMBERLEY HARRINGTON
Acting Commissioner

December 12, 2016

Dr. Kevin West, Superintendent
East Orange School District
199 4th Avenue
East Orange, NJ 07017

Dear Dr. West:

SUBJECT: NJ ASK Erasure Analysis Security Review –East Orange School District
Whitney Houston Academy - OFAC Case #INV/SIU-005-015

The Office of Fiscal Accountability and Compliance (OFAC) completed an investigation of the testing procedures utilized at Whitney Houston Academy in the East Orange School District. The review was initiated in response to irregularities in student answer patterns during the administration of the 2013 New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK). The information obtained during the OFAC review of this matter is detailed in the attached report.

Utilizing the process outlined in the attached “Procedures for LEA/Agency Response, Corrective Action Plan and Appeal Process,” the board of education is required, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.6, to publicly review and discuss the findings in this report at a public board meeting no later than 30 days after receipt of the report. Within 30 days of the public meeting, the board must adopt a resolution certifying that the findings were discussed in a public meeting, and approving a corrective action plan which addresses the issues raised in the undisputed findings and/or an appeal of any findings in dispute. A copy of the resolution and the approved corrective action plan and/or appeal must be sent to this office within 10 days of adoption by the board. Please direct your response to my attention.

Also, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.6(c), the findings of the OFAC report and the board of education’s corrective action plan shall be posted on the District’s web site. Should you have any questions, please contact Teresita Munkacsy, Manager, Special Investigations Unit, at (609) 984-7096.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Cicchino, Director
Office of Fiscal Accountability and Compliance

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Attachment

c: Robert Bumpus Teresita Munkacsy
Michael Yaple Joseph Zarra
Jeffrey Hauger Stephen Eells

www.nj.gov/education

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPLIANCE
SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

EAST ORANGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
WHITNEY HOUSTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
NEW JERSEY ASSESSMENT OF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE
ERASURE ANALYSIS SECURITY REVIEW
OFAC CASE #SIU-005-15

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
DECEMBER 2016

**INVESTIGATIVE REPORT – DECEMBER 2016
EAST ORANGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
WHITNEY HOUSTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
2013 NJ ASK ERASURE ANALYSIS SECURITY REVIEW**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Subsequent to the release of the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) 2013 New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) Erasure Analysis Report (EA Report), the Office of Fiscal Accountability and Compliance (OFAC) was tasked with conducting an investigation into potential irregularities in student answer patterns during the administration of the 2013 NJ ASK.

The irregularities that launched the investigation were the wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure patterns detected on the tests by Measurement Incorporated (MI), the NJDOE state assessment contractor for the NJ ASK. The NJDOE Office of Assessments (OA) set the criteria by which further investigations would be warranted by OFAC based on one of two criteria; schools that were flagged for a WTR erasure rate four standard deviations (4 SD) above the statewide mean in the same grade and subject area for two consecutive testing years, or schools that were flagged for the WTR erasure rate 4 SD above the statewide mean in the same grade and subject area partnered with unusual gains in the same grade and subject area for the 2013 NJ ASK. The SD is an indication of how far the values in a data set deviate from the mean.

In December 2013, MI prepared the 2013 EA Report for the OA. The OA reviewed the 2013 EA Report at the grade level by subject area to pinpoint a specific area of concern. After reviewing the grade level by subject area mean WTR erasure rates per student for two consecutive years, the OA determined Whitney Houston Elementary School (Houston), in the East Orange School District (District), emerged as a school wherein an investigation would be conducted. Houston's fourth grade Mathematics (MATH) was flagged for a WTR erasure rate 4SD above the statewide mean for two consecutive years, in 2012 and 2013.

In May 2015, the OFAC sent a letter directing the District to provide all documentation associated with the 2012 and 2013 NJ ASK in the custody or control of the District, District personnel, or any other school personnel. In order to determine the underlying causes of the excessive WTR erasures on the 2013 NJ ASK, the OFAC investigators (investigators) examined the following: the 2013 test administration documents and the test data provided by MI. The investigators also conducted interviews of 11 students and five staff members.

The OFAC investigation concluded the School Test Coordinator (STC) breached the security of the 2013 NJ ASK 4, prior to, during, and subsequent to the administration of the assessment when

she failed in her responsibilities as the STC to provide proper training to the staff; ensure accommodations were provided to classified students; maintain accurate student rosters; ensure accurate chain of custody of student's test booklets on the security checklists; ensure examiners accurately provided their Staff Membership Identification (SMID) on the students' test booklets, and ensure accurate administration of make-up tests. In addition, according to students' statements, the STC interfered with students' responses during the administration of the MATH portion of the exam. The investigators also concluded two fourth grade teachers breached the security of the 2013 NJ ASK 4 subsequent to the administration of the assessment when they failed to provide accurate SMID information on the students' test booklets.

The remainder of this report consists of a background, the investigative procedures, an investigative summary, a conclusion, a recommendation, and a referral to the State Board of Examiners for its determination.

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPLIANCE
CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN**

SCHOOL DISTRICT NAME: East Orange School District

COUNTY: Essex

TYPE OF EXAMINATION: NJASK Erasure Analysis Security Review

DATE OF BOARD MEETING: January 17, 2017

OFAC Case #SIU-005-15

CONTACT PERSON: Dr. Kevin West, Superintendent of Schools/Chief School Administrator

TELEPHONE NUMBER 973-266-5760

FAX NUMBER 973-678-4865

RECOMMENDATION NUMBER	CORRECTIVE ACTION	METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION	INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	COMPLETION DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION
1.	District Test Coordinator (DTC) will share a summary of the finding at the mandatory turn-key School Test Coordinator training sessions.	Turn-key Training	District Test Coordinator	March 15, 2017
2.	DTC will stress the importance of proper turn-key training at the schools and the importance of providing accommodation to classified students per their IEP.	Turn-key Training	District Test Coordinator	March 15, 2017
3.	Before the 2017 PARCC, the School Test Coordinator (STC) at Houston School will document a meeting with Child Study Team member to discuss accommodation for classified students	Documented Meeting	Assistant Principal School Test Coordinator Child Study Team	February 24, 2017
4.	DTC will stress the importance providing Examiner SMIDs for the PARCC assessment during the mandatory STC turn-key training.	Turn-key Training	District Test Coordinator	March 15, 2017
5.	Central Office staff will provide a list of SMIDs to school staff before 2017 PARCC.	Staff Roster Distribution	Assistant Superintendent for Operations	February 24, 2017

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPLIANCE
CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN**

RECOMMENDATION NUMBER	CORRECTIVE ACTION	METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION	INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	COMPLETION DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION
6.	DTC will stress the importance of maintaining accurate student rosters for the PARCC assessment during the mandatory STC turn-key training.	Turn-key Training	District Test Coordinator	March 15, 2017
7.	DTC will stress the importance of documenting chain-of-custody and completing Post-Test Certification forms for the PARCC assessment during the mandatory STC turn-key training.	Turn-key Training	District Test Coordinator	March 15, 2017
8.	DTC will stress the importance of independent student work on the PARCC during the mandatory STC turn-key training. Staff will be reminded that security breaches could result in financial consequences for the district and professional consequences for staff.	Turn-key Training	District Test Coordinator	March 15, 2017
9.	DTC will stress the importance of reading, understanding and signing the PARCC Test Security Agreement during the mandatory STC turn-key training.	Turn-key Training	District Test Coordinator	March 15, 2017

Chief School Administrator

Date

Board Secretary/Business Administrator

Date