



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mr. Brandon Brown, Director of Charter Schools  
Indianapolis Mayor's Office

**FROM:** Dr. Michele Walker, Director  
Office of Student Assessment

**SUBJECT:** Flanner House Spring 2013 and Spring 2014 ISTEP+ Test Security  
Investigation Follow-up

**DATE:** August 18, 2014

The Office of Student Assessment has reviewed the documentation submitted following the Mayor's Office investigation into Spring 2013 and Spring 2014 ISTEP+ test security concerns at Flanner House Elementary Charter School (Flanner House). Based upon this review, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) has the following information to share with you.

### Spring 2013

In terms of test security violations during the Spring 2013 ISTEP+ test administration, the IDOE identified specific areas of concern with Flanner House's Spring 2013 ISTEP+ test administration; namely,

- 1) Nearly half of the Flanner House teacher groups were flagged in an erasure analysis study as having students with an unusually high number of changes from wrong answers to right answers on the Multiple-Choice portion of the Spring 2013 ISTEP+ assessment. Specific details are delineated below:
  - The number of students per identified teacher group varied from 1 to 16.
  - The number of students with wrong-to-right answer changes included all or nearly all of the students in each teacher group.
  - The number of wrong-to-right answer changes ranged from a minimum of 27 to a maximum of 100 per teacher group.
  - The flagging criteria represented 4 standard deviations from the mean.
- 2) Upon examination of actual student books from the Applied Skills and Multiple-Choice Assessments administered at Flanner House, several concerns were identified across all grade levels and content areas, including the following: variations in handwriting within individual students' responses on the Applied Skills items (adult, as well as student writing); corrections—in content, as well as spelling and grammar—made by an adult throughout open-ended responses; incorrect responses erased and changed to correct responses on both the Applied Skills and the Multiple-Choice test sessions;

and circles bubbled in perfectly, with no variation typical of student responses on the Multiple-Choice items.

- 3) The signed Indiana Testing Security and Integrity Agreement forms submitted by Flanner House for the 2012-13 school year were actually the IDOE 2013-14 version of the form.
- 4) Flanner House failed to abide by the IDOE requirement that all secure test materials, including, but not limited to, blank answer booklets, be returned at the conclusion of testing.
  - Flanner House's Corporation Test Coordinator (CTC) indicated in an email to the Mayor's Office that blank student answer booklets were not returned to the testing vendor. The email stated these materials were still onsite at Flanner House.

Finally, Flanner House staff members were unable to articulate the specific reasons and instructional practices that led to a dramatic increase in scores. The analyses described in #1 and #2 on page 1, combined with an unexplainable extraordinary increase in the scores of Flanner House students on the Spring 2013 ISTEP+ assessment (please refer to Attachment 1 for ISTEP+ longitudinal data), substantiates test security violations occurred and requires the invalidation of all Spring 2013 ISTEP+ test results.

In addition, although Flanner House received a Four Star School Award based on Spring 2013 ISTEP+ performance, due to the invalidation of Spring 2013 ISTEP+ assessment scores at Flanner House, the IDOE is revoking Flanner House's 2012-2013 Four Star School Award.

### **Spring 2014**

With regard to the Spring 2014 test administration, the IDOE has determined that Flanner House violated several test security and test administration policies/procedures during the Spring 2014 ISTEP+ test administration. Specifically, staff and student interviews and documents related to Flanner House's Spring 2014 ISTEP+ test administration indicate the following violations occurred:

- 1) The CTC used test items that were part of the Spring 2014 Applied Skills portion of the ISTEP+ assessment to prepare students (in multiple grade levels) prior to the students completing the assessment. In addition, the CTC requested and allowed another Flanner House employee to work with students on a writing prompt that was an actual prompt from the Spring 2014 Applied Skills portion of the ISTEP+ assessment before the test was administered to students. Both of these actions constituted a breach of test integrity (See #3(d)(5) and (d)(7) and #3(h) in the 2013-14 Code of Ethical Practices and Procedures and #2 and #10 in the 2013-14 Indiana Testing Security and Integrity Agreement);
- 2) Flanner House did not have a locally developed written Test Security Policy that meets the requirements described in Chapter 10 of the Indiana Assessment Program Manual in place for the 2013-2014 school year (See "Policy Requirement" section of Chapter 10 of the 2013-14 Indiana Assessment Program Manual and #9 in the 2013-14 Indiana Testing Security and Integrity Agreement);
- 3) Flanner House did not have signed Indiana Testing Security and Integrity Agreement forms on file for any staff members for the 2013-2014 school year (see #3(j) in the 2013-14 Code of Ethical Practices and Procedures).

The breaches in test integrity due to Spring 2014 Applied Skills test items being used to prepare students in multiple grade levels (as described in #1 above) necessitates the invalidation of all

Spring 2014 ISTEP+ tests for Flanner House students (see 2013-14 Indiana Testing Security and Integrity Agreement #2 and #10).

## **Actions Needed**

### ***Part One – Mayor’s Office***

The IDOE requests that the Mayor’s Office provide the IDOE with a Communications Timeline document that shares when the Mayor’s Office will notify key stakeholders regarding the invalidations of Flanner House’s Spring 2013 and Spring 2014 ISTEP+ assessments, as well as IDOE’s revocation of the 2012-2013 Four Star School Award for Flanner House. Please submit this timeline document to the IDOE by the close of business on **August 21, 2014**.

The IDOE also requests that the Mayor’s Office submit a signed Action Plan, describing how it will ensure Flanner House implements each component of the Corrective Action Plan requested in number 1 of Part Two of the Actions Needed section of this memorandum. Please submit this plan by the close of business on **September 5, 2014**.

### ***Part Two – Flanner House***

The IDOE requests that the Mayor’s Office, in conjunction with Flanner House, submit the following information to the IDOE in order to address the violations discovered regarding the Spring 2013 and Spring 2014 ISTEP+ test administrations:

- 1) A signed corrective action plan from Flanner House describing how Flanner House will:
  - (a) Ensure all appropriate Flanner House staff members receive training on test administration procedures and test security protocol. This training shall ensure that staff members have a clear understanding of their responsibilities related to assessment implementation. Flanner House shall keep on file all training materials and verification that Flanner House staff members have completed required training (i.e., sign-in/attendance sheets, PowerPoint presentations, copies of training materials, etc.). In addition to other topics, the training must include a discussion and review of the following:
    - i. The IDOE Fall 2014 Test Security Training Video and PowerPoint, which will be sent to Corporation Test Coordinators this fall;
    - ii. The 2014-2015 Indiana Assessment Program Manual (once this document has been released);
    - iii. The 2014-15 Code of Ethical Practices and Procedures (once this document has been released);
    - iv. The 2014-15 Indiana Testing Security and Integrity Agreement (once this document has been released);
    - v. Flanner House’s revised Test Security Policy (see 1(e) on page 4 of this memorandum); and
    - vi. A review of the following test administration policies:
      - 1) The reproduction and/or discussion of testing materials by corporation/school personnel and/or students is prohibited;
      - 2) Students shall not be exposed to test items prior to the administration of a test;
      - 3) Test materials shall not be reviewed or discussed in any manner unless and until such materials have been released by the IDOE; and
      - 4) School staff may not use test items, test booklets/answer sheets, or any

of the information contained in an assessment to review/prepare students for a test unless and until such items have been released (See #3(d)(5), d(7), and #3(h) in the 2013-14 Code of Ethical Practices and Procedures and #2 and #3 in the 2013-14 Indiana Testing Security and Integrity Agreement).

- (b) Ensure through monitoring and other means that test materials are returned to a locked and secured area immediately upon completion of each daily testing session during testing *and* are stored in a locked and secured area before the test administration window begins, as well as after test administration window ends;
  - (c) Ensure ethical test administration procedures are implemented by Flanner House staff during future testing (including, but not limited to, the 2014-2015 school year and beyond);
  - (d) Ensure that any test preparation materials provided to teachers and/or used with students during the 2014-15 school year have been approved by the IDOE prior to being used with teachers and/or students (see the "Policy Requirement" section of Chapter 10 of the 2013-14 Indiana Assessment Program Manual (1)(i) and (j) or item #3 on the 2013-14 Indiana Testing Security and Integrity Agreement);
  - (e) Ensure Flanner House staff review and sign the Indiana Testing Security and Integrity Agreement annually by the end of September. *(NOTE: For new staff hired after September, the training should be provided and the signed Agreement form should be collected and appropriately filed as soon as possible or no later than two (2) weeks prior to the next testing window.)*
  - (f) Ensure Flanner House develops a written Test Security Policy that includes all of the elements described in the "Policy Requirement" section of Chapter 10 of the 2014-15 Indiana Assessment Program Manual.
    - A revised version of Flanner House's Test Security Policies must be submitted to the IDOE.
    - Flanner House must complete the attached Test Security Policy chart indicating the location of each required element in the revised Flanner House Test Security Policy. The Test Security Policy chart must be submitted to the IDOE.
- 2) A draft of the Parent Letter Flanner House intends to send to parents sharing 1) the IDOE has invalidated Flanner House Spring 2013 and Spring 2014 ISTEP+ assessment scores; 2) the reason for the IDOE invalidation of ISTEP+ assessment scores at Flanner House; and 3) the IDOE has revoked Flanner House's 2012-2013 Four Star School Award. The draft Parent Letter must be submitted to the IDOE by the close of business on **August 21, 2014**. Flanner House is prohibited from sending the letter to parents/guardians *before* the school receives written approval of the letter from the IDOE.
- The IDOE will review Flanner House's Parent Letter and will provide notification once the letter has been approved.
  - Flanner House must send the letter to parents/guardians within 48 hours of IDOE's approval of the letter.
  - Flanner House must submit a signed Assurance Statement confirming it has provided a copy of the Parent Letter to all parents/guardians by **September 5, 2014**. Evidence that Flanner House has provided the letter to all parents/guardians must be locally kept on file.

3) A signed Assurance Statement from Flanner House confirming it has returned all test materials from prior test administrations to the testing vendor.

- Flanner House must search its site location(s) for any test materials from prior ISTEP+ test administrations. Any test materials from prior ISTEP+ test administrations must be returned to the testing vendor immediately, but no later than **September 5, 2014**. Evidence Flanner House has returned the materials to the testing vendor must be locally kept on file.

We look forward to receiving the following documentation by the close of business on the deadlines listed:

<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Documentation</b>
August 21, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communications Timeline document from the Mayor's Office</li><li>• Draft Parent Letter from Flanner House</li></ul>
September 5, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All other requested documents and information</li></ul>

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Cc: Kristin Hines