



# Integrity Insights

Office of Professional Responsibility

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## A Note from Don Smith

The Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) is authorized by Texas Education Code Sections 21.351-21.356 and further codified in the Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part II, Chapter 150, Subchapters AA and BB. The controlling Dallas ISD Policies are DNA (Legal) and DNA (Local). With few exceptions, teachers are to be appraised annually.

The principal of the school is responsible to see that the required observations of teachers are conducted timely, properly documented and shared with the teacher. Also, summative conferences must be conducted timely. All signatures of the teacher and appraiser must be original and dated the day of the signature. No post or predated is acceptable.

Adherence to the statutes and policies relating to PDAS is mandatory. Any non-compliance is not only a violation of district policy, but may also be a violation of law.

Section 37.10(a) of the Texas Penal Code states a person commits an offense if he knowingly makes a false entry in or alteration of a government record, knows that it is false and intends that it be taken as a genuine record. Further the offense may be a third degree felony if it involves a school record, report or assessment required by the Texas Education Code.

Donald R. Smith,  
Executive Director  
Office of Professional Responsibility

## Embodying Ethics

A Dallas ISD middle school teacher is serving as a test administrator during the administration of a Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test. The teacher is very excited about the test because she has spent a great deal of time preparing and teaching her students and is optimistic that they will do very well. She distributed testing materials, read the testing instructions, and the students began working diligently on the test.

An hour or so after the start of the test, another teacher in an adjoining testing room asks her to look in on his testing students while he takes a “quick break.” The teacher agrees, as she has a monitor in the room and her students appear to be focused

on the test and behaving well. The teacher proceeds to walk into the adjacent testing room to observe her fellow teacher’s students. Upon entering the room, she notices that many of the students are looking not at their test booklets, but rather, at the chalkboard in front of the classroom. When the teacher looks at the chalkboard, she sees a series of numbers with corresponding letters. Curious, the teacher quietly asks a nearby student about the material that he appears to be copying from the chalkboard. The student explains that the ten numbers and letters are some of the answers to problems on the TAKS test that his teacher did not “get a chance to cover.”

The teacher, somewhat shocked at what she has just witnessed, turns and leaves the room only to encounter the returning teacher in the hallway. She confronts the teacher about what she just witnessed in his classroom. The teacher readily acknowledges that he did look at the questions and answers in his student test booklets as he walked around the classroom. During his observations he discovered material that was “not supposed to be on the test,” and for which, he had, consequently, not prepared his students. The teacher stated that it was only fair that he give his students a break and provide them with the answers to those questions. The teacher returns to her classroom knowing, from her training and experience, that she has witnessed a testing irregularity. The teacher should:

- A. Keep what she saw and heard to herself.
- B. Grab a pencil and paper and copy the answers from the board and provide them to her students.
- C. Quickly look at her students test booklets to see if there is material that she did not teach her students, so that she can provide them with the correct answers.
- D. B & C
- E. Immediately report the testing irregularity following district and state procedures.

See the bottom of page 2 for the answer.

## Past and Present Ethical Thinking

Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

Attributed to Viktor Frankl  
Psychologist, concentration camp survivor and  
author of *Man’s Search for Meaning*

## Dallas ISD Policy You Need to Know

This month's column was submitted by a writer who represents Accounts Payable. The highlighted policy is DEE (Regulation),

According to Dallas ISD local board policy, any employee who receives a prepayment travel advance must reconcile the advance within 10 business days from the trip/event end date. The prepay travel advance is considered a loan for district travel and the accountability of the funds must be reconciled. If the employee did not attend the trip/event, he or she must return the advanced payment to the district immediately.

Employees who need to reconcile outstanding advances have generally been notified. Accounts Payable informs them by way of alert notifications, emails and calls in an attempt to remind them to address the outstanding issue.

If the prepayment is not reconciled or the funds have not been returned to the district, the prepayment amount will be automatically deducted from the employee's next payroll check or may be referred to the Office of Professional Responsibility.

Any employee who is unsure about how to reconcile an advance, should read the following example:

An employee submitted a repayment expense report for the Kindergarten Conference which was to be held on February 28, 2008. He received an advancement for \$1,000 in December to pay for required conference fees. He attended the conference as planned, but did not reconcile the advance when he came back. Over a month later, the advanced amount of \$1,000 has still not been reconciled. To comply with policy, the employee should create a new expense report in Oracle. Print the confirmation page, and submit both the confirmation page and the supporting documentation to Travel (Box 27/Room 216B) immediately.

Should you need training on how to enter an expense report even after reading the example, please contact Larry Goodman @ 972-925-5434.

Please contact Travel for any questions or concerns about any outstanding travel expense reports @ 972-925-3543 or 972-925-3548.

## A Look at Our Work

As of this month, OPR has closed 347 cases. Investigations of these cases has resulted in 91 cases in which the individual was cleared of the charges or for which no further action was required.

## Integrity in the Headlines

### Lakeland, FL

Video of a gang beating played over and over on network news while anchors warn how difficult it is to watch;

meanwhile, employees of "Dr. Phil" bail out one of the accused attackers in hopes of doing a show on the subject.

From The Institute for Global Ethics  
*Ethics Newsline*

## Making Ethical Decisions



People make ethical decisions every day. However, at times, a situation presents itself that poses a decision-making dilemma. This section will feature common ethical decision-making models that may prove useful to readers when trying to address an ethical dilemma.

When you must make a decision about an ethical dilemma, you might consider taking the following steps:

1. Gather the facts.
2. List the stakeholders involved.
3. Imagine alternatives that can be taken. Discard those that are clearly wrong.

Picture each remaining alternative in terms of relevant questions:

4. Does it comply with the law and the company code and policies?
5. Will it be beneficial to all stakeholders long and short term?
6. Will it fulfill the rights and duties to all stakeholders?
7. Is it fair to all?
8. Will it build good will and better relationships?
9. If my decision is made public, would I be embarrassed or proud?

## Report Fraud, Waste, or Abuse

To file a report in person, visit the Office of Professional Responsibility in Room 804 of the Buckner Building. You may also:

Call: (972) 925-8850 or 800-530-1608

Fax: (972) 794-3568

Email: [opr@dallasisd.org](mailto:opr@dallasisd.org)

Write us at P.O. Box 181509, Dallas, TX 75218-8509

Visit: <http://www.dallasisd.org/about/integrity>.

The correct answer is E. The teacher is obligated by TAKS testing procedures to immediately report the observed irregularity to the district test coordinator. As a test administrator, the teacher is required to sign an oath declaring that she has been properly trained and that she has read and understands the test administrator manual. The manual includes a section on "Departures From Test Administration Procedures" (Irregularities) and the obligation of testing personnel to immediately report suspected violations of test security or confidentiality. Failure to report the conduct could subject the teacher to penalties to include revocation or suspension of her Texas teacher certificate.



Dallas Independent School District