

Caveon™ Education Solutions



Standardized tests that yield valid results are critical to education. Some of the important functions performed by tests in education are:

- Helping to select individuals for programs and institutions
- Assessing the effectiveness of educational programs and schools
- Evaluating the competencies of teachers and other educational professionals as part of certification and licensure

Unless test scores reflect the actual skills and competencies of those tested the tests cannot properly perform their vital educational functions. Those who cheat on tests undermine the validity of the results and cast doubt upon their meaning and significance. Additionally, those who cheat gain an unfair advantage over others and thus severely compromise the fairness of the testing process.

Cheating on educational tests comes in many forms. To cite some examples:

- Prior knowledge of questions – Some test takers, including whole classes of students, obtain and study the actual exam questions before taking the test.
- Extending testing time – Some groups or individuals are allowed more time than others in settings where time limits have an impact on test scores and where no accommodation has been authorized.
- Answer changing – After a test has been administered, but before scoring, student responses are altered to obtain higher test scores.
- Answer coaching – During test administration hints and clues are provided to help the test taker respond correctly.
- “Bulletin board” assistance – Teachers “forget”

to clean up the walls and bulletin boards in testing rooms, thus providing students with opportunities to get answers from these sources.

- Technology – Students use cell phones, PDA's and other electronic devices to obtain answers to questions.

These and other forms of cheating corrupt the purpose of administering tests and decrease their validity. It is important for managers of testing programs to prevent cheating to the greatest extent possible, to detect cheating when it does occur, and to take forceful and effective corrective actions to deter future cheating. When cheating does occur, moving promptly to detect and correct the conditions that permitted the cheating to take place is critical to the reputation and value of a testing program.

How Can Caveon Test Security Help?

Caveon's services are directly focused on assisting you to detect, correct, and deter the efforts of cheaters.

Detection

Caveon applies proprietary cheating-detection software to analyze district, school, and classroom test results. We work with your existing test data so no new testing is required. We will incorporate into our analyses data from multiple years and data from other tests, if available.

We sift the data looking for response patterns that indicate inappropriate behavior, such as exposing test items to students before or during testing or changing answers after an exam is completed. The proprietary software also helps detect if students are copying answers from each other or using other means to produce exactly the same answers (e.g., such as using cell phones to share answers).

Remediation

We can help further by identifying approaches to discourage repetition of any problems that are located. Ways of packaging items, monitoring test day behavior, establishing rules of administration, etc. can all help deter future cheating.

Caveon staff can also help with the detailed analysis of instances of possible cheating by reviewing existing evidence, collecting more background, helping to formulate and follow through on actions, and acting as both a source of ideas and a sounding board for proposed remedial actions.

Prevention

Caveon's Security Audit provides a comprehensive review of your security-related policies, procedures, roles, training arrangements, agreements used to protect confidentiality, etc. A team of experienced measurement professionals follows the model of an independent financial auditor to evaluate security strengths and weaknesses. Unlike the classic financial auditor, however, Caveon security auditors provide advice and suggestions at every step of the audit process. In the audit report the auditors will identify security strengths and then make specific recommendations for security enhancements. Needed changes are prioritized, schedules and strategies for improvement are provided, and the auditors can help implement desired enhancements.

A critical aspect of prevention is training. Each state's security training needs are similar, but different. Caveon will help focus and provide relevant security training for test administrators and assessment program staff. With targeted training materials, Caveon staff will help you train your state's assessment personnel in four key areas:

- Local assessment coordinators are trained so that they understand their responsibilities regarding receiving, distributing, and returning test materials, and what actions are appropriate in the event of a security breach.
- Teachers and others in schools who administer tests are trained in the ethics of testing, what

constitutes cheating, procedures to minimize cheating by students (e.g., how to detect the use of technology to get answers), and what to do when cheating is suspected.

- State assessment office personnel are trained to develop security breach plans and how to use Caveon's cheating detection reports.
- "Train the trainer" workshops ensure that consistent testing and security procedures using best known methods are implemented uniformly.

Caveon Test Security helps you strengthen your security through planning and training. Appropriate messages and procedures for test takers, teachers and other school personnel are formulated to help you achieve the goal: "Cheaters never prosper." Achieving that goal means using the best known methods to provide an equal playing field for all test takers. Specific recommendations address issues such as the following:

- Appropriate use of test-related materials
- Commitments asked of test takers and test administrators
- Publicity given to sanctions for violation of rules
- Procedures for recording and investigating irregularities in testing
- Notices regarding the use of "tip lines"
- Strategies for publicizing the results of investigations

Publicity

A total security approach utilizes publicity to deter cheating and establish credibility with the public. Caveon can help you develop materials for use in letting the public know your program's security emphasis.

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