

**Virginia Department of Education
Report to Richmond City Public Schools
on the Investigation of
Standards of Learning Testing Irregularities
At Oak Grove Elementary School**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this investigation was to inquire into alleged Standards of Learning (SOL) testing irregularities at Oak Grove Elementary School, to determine the extent to which state testing and security procedures were violated, and to determine whether any such irregularities or violations affected student performance.

BACKGROUND

In administering the spring 2005 SOL tests to students, each school was expected to observe the procedures contained in the spring 2005 *Examiner's Manual* and *School Test Coordinator's Manual* (hereinafter *Examiner's Manual and STC Manual*).¹ Under normal testing procedures, each student must read the questions in the test booklet and enter her/his answers in the separate answer document in the appropriate sections. Students may write on the SOL test booklets, but only responses marked in the answer document will be scored.² Students with disabilities and limited English proficient (LEP) students may record their answers in their test booklets if this accommodation is specified in their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), 504 management plans, or LEP Participation Forms. When this accommodation is provided, a school official transcribes the student's answers from the test booklet to the answer document with a second school official verifying the accuracy of the transcription. The School Test Coordinator (STC), in accordance with the *STC Manual*, provides training for test examiners and proctors so they can successfully administer the SOL tests in a manner that maintains the security of the tests.

On June 15, 2005, Richmond City Public Schools (RCPS) officials received a report that possible SOL testing irregularities had occurred at Oak Grove Elementary School. The division director of testing (DDOT) for RCPS in turn reported to the assistant superintendent for assessment and reporting at the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) the potential irregularities. RCPS reported to the department that staff at Oak Grove, when administering the SOL assessments, failed to follow normal testing procedures in the administration of the tests. Specifically, the alleged irregularity reported was that all students tested within the school were directed to mark their answers in the test booklet. Selected Oak Grove staff were designated as part of a "transcription team" that was to transcribe the answers from the test booklets to the students' answer documents.

¹ For purposes of this report, the *Examiner's Manual* for Grade 5 was used for quotations. Please note that the *Examiner's Manual* for Grade 3 contains the same quotations; however, the information may appear on different pages than those in the Grade 5 manual.

² *Examiner's Manual Spring 2005 section 5.2.2 "Test booklet and answer document."*

Use of a transcription team for all students' tests is contrary to the normal testing procedures. The procedures reportedly used by staff at Oak Grove in administering the tests to the entire tested population within the school were designed solely for special education students and LEP students as specified in their IEPs, 504 plans, or LEP participation plans, and were not intended for general use.

The *STC Manual* and *Examiner's Manual* includes the following guidance regarding the provision of this accommodation for students with disabilities and LEP students:

When this accommodation is chosen, student's responses must be transcribed to the regular answer document by a school official. The regular answer document and test booklet must be verified by a second school official to ensure that no errors in transcription occurred. The test booklet shall be retained on file in the office of the Division Director of Testing until the scores are received and verified.³

While the use of transcriptions for all students not eligible for this accommodation in itself constitutes a testing irregularity, the accuracy of the transcriptions was critical in determining whether the students' scores were impacted. Because of the large number of tests involved, VDOE decided to conduct its own investigation to determine the accuracy of the transcriptions.

METHODOLOGY

The DDOT at RCPS collected all test booklets and answer documents from Oak Grove and delivered them to VDOE personnel. VDOE staff placed all answer documents and test booklets in a secure location within the department. Personnel then compared test booklets and answer documents for all students tested at Oak Grove to determine if the answers in the test booklets matched the answers in the corresponding answer documents. This initial examination identified 524 discrepancies in the transcription of student answers from the test booklets to the answer documents. It was also determined that five answer documents did not have a corresponding test booklet for grade four history.

Subsequent to this determination, VDOE contracted with two consultants, who are retired division directors of testing, to meet with department staff to determine what further investigation was appropriate. It was determined that interviews needed to be conducted with all RCPS personnel who were directly involved in the administration of SOL tests at Oak Grove Elementary School, those who were chosen to transcribe answers from the test booklets to the answer documents, and the school administration. It was also determined that it was necessary to review selected student test booklets and answer documents to see if additional irregularities had occurred and to determine whether there were patterns of irregularities indicating possible inappropriate assistance to students in violation of testing procedures.

³ *Virginia Standards of Learning Assessments Spring 2005 School Test Coordinator's Manual* p. 67 and *Examiner's Manual* section p. 82.

Interviews:

Twenty-two RCPS staff members were scheduled for one-hour interviews with the VDOE consultants over a period of four days. Of the 22 staff scheduled for interviews, eighteen were physically present for the interview and three were interviewed via speakerphone. One staff member did not appear for a scheduled interview for reasons unknown by the consultants. RCPS personnel interviewed included teachers from grades two through five, a behavioral specialist, a volunteer, a teaching assistant, a member of the office clerical staff, the school principal, the assistant principal, and the RCPS director of testing.

The interviews were conducted to gather factual information from staff that would indicate what processes and procedures took place prior to, during and after testing. The information was used to determine if other irregularities occurred at Oak Grove Elementary School and to what extent testing and security procedures were violated.

Review of Answer Documents and Test Booklets:

As indicated earlier, VDOE staff reviewed all answer documents and test booklets of students who were tested in grades three, four, and five. The inspection of test booklets and answer documents was conducted to determine if discrepancies existed between answers recorded by students in the test booklets and the answers transcribed by the transcription team on the answer documents. The results of the examination revealed 524 transcription errors in 104 test booklets.

The VDOE consultants selected 52 sets of test booklets and corresponding answer documents for further examination. Those selected were chosen from the group of student tests identified as having the largest number of transcription errors in the initial review of tests by VDOE staff. The booklets and answer documents were examined to determine if specific patterns of discrepancies existed in the test booklets that afforded students an unfair advantage or negatively impacted student performance. For example, a pattern of discrepancies could take the form of the following:

- Student answers that were erased and changed from an incorrect answer to a correct answer or changed from a correct answer to an incorrect answer.
- Markings in the test booklets that appeared to have been made by someone other than the students.
- Answers marked on answer documents that differed from answers and computations made by students in the corresponding test booklets.
- Anything unusual that would indicate that the answer documents or test booklets had been altered in some way.

INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM INTERVIEWS

The following summary of interviews with RCPS personnel provides staff accounts of the spring 2005 SOL test administration at Oak Grove Elementary School.

Decision to Use Transcription:

- The school principal described the circumstances, which led to the decision to transcribe answers from the test booklets to the answer documents. Specifically, analysis of benchmark tests taken by students in late April or early May as part of the Edu Soft™ program indicated a high failure rate. Three faculty members analyzed third-grade data and came to the conclusion that transcription errors by students in marking answers accounted for the negative results. This was reported to the principal. The principal indicated that another faculty member had also stated that student responses on the SOL tests had been transcribed from the test booklets to the answer documents by school staff the previous year and was in favor of following the same procedures for the spring 2005 SOL tests. The assistant principal concurred that faculty had transcribed answers from the test booklets to the answer documents during the previous year. The language in the *Examiner's Manual* referencing transcription of student answers for certain students with disabilities and LEP students was also used as justification for this decision. The above-mentioned analysis of Edu Soft™ data, the claim that faculty had transcribed student answers during the previous administration, and the misinterpretation of the *Examiner's Manual* formed the basis for the school administration's directive at the June 2, 2005, examiner/proctor training to have students write the answers in the test booklets and have a team transcribe the answers to the answer documents.
- The principal and the assistant principal were the only staff members that stated during interviews that the same transcription procedure was performed the previous year. Other faculty members stated that they were surprised and confused when they discovered at the June 2, 2005, STC training meeting that a team would transcribe the answers. None stated that the same procedure was followed the previous year. The faculty member who was reported by the principal to have stated that student responses on the SOL tests had been transcribed by school staff the previous year denied this during the interview with the consultants. Faculty mentioned that they were following the directives of the school administration and believed they were within guidelines after being quoted the section in the *Examiner's Manual* pertaining to "marked directly in test booklet."

Training:

The *STC Manual* contains information on the roles of persons responsible for administering the SOL tests. Each school division has designated a DDOT. The DDOT serves as the point of contact between the school division and the VDOE. The DDOT has division-wide responsibility for implementation of SOL test procedures in accordance with VDOE guidelines. The STC is designated to serve as the point of contact between the DDOT and the school. In this role, the STC is responsible for ensuring that all procedures required for the SOL tests are implemented within the school and for maintaining the security of test materials. The Test

Examiner (Examiner) is responsible for administering the SOL *Multiple-Choice (Non-Writing)* test(s) according to the procedures contained in the *Examiner's Manuals* and for maintaining the security of test materials.⁴ Proctors are used to help monitor and supervise students during the administration of SOL tests. The *STC Manual* instructs the STC to “to provide in-depth training to Examiners and Proctors.”⁵

In selecting proctors, the *STC Manual* recommends having one proctor for every 25-30 additional students. Each proctor must also sign the *Examiner's/Proctor's Test Security Agreement*. The use of non-school personnel as proctors should be approached with caution. Proctors should receive the same training as examiners.⁶

RCPS personnel interviewed during the investigation provided the following information regarding training for examiners and proctors at Oak Grove Elementary School:

- An examiner/proctor training session was conducted by the STC on June 2, 2005. The STC is also the assistant principal for the school. At this training session, the faculty was first given notice that a transcription team would be used to transcribe student responses from the students' test booklets to the students' answer documents for the test administration beginning on June 6, 2005. The agenda distributed to examiners by the STC indicated the change in procedures (see Appendix A, bullet number eight). Although the agenda for the training session contained 11 items, only a few of those items touched on VDOE procedures for administering the tests. RCPS staff indicated that the training primarily consisted of instructing examiners and proctors to read their *Examiner's Manual*. *Examiner's Manuals* were not made available to examiners until after the training on June 2, 2005, and just prior to testing.
- During the June 2nd training session, one teacher questioned the STC regarding the decision to have faculty transcribe the answers. The STC quoted a section of the *Examiner's Manual* pertaining to testing accommodations as justification for the decision. The section of the manual referenced by the STC contains three bullets with the first two bullets referencing particular special education situations. The third bullet read "marked directly in the test booklet" and references an accommodation available to certain students with disabilities and LEP students.

A student's responses to the multiple-choice test must be transcribed to the regular answer document by a school official if the student's answers were:

- recorded on a Braille answer document, or an enlarged copy of the answer document (not provided by Harcourt Assessment, Inc.);
- dictated to a Teacher/Proctor and audiotaped; or,
- marked directly in the test booklet.

⁴ *STC Manual* p. 7-8.

⁵ *Id.* at p. 7.

⁶ *Id.* at p. 11

The transcription must be verified by a second school official to ensure that no errors occurred. The Braille answer document, enlarged copy of the answer document, audiotape of student responses, and/or the marked test booklet shall be retained on file in the office of the DDOT until the scores are received and verified.

Note: Transcription of students' answers to the regular SOL answer documents must be completed **as soon as possible** after the test has been administered. Remember that an answer document is considered to be secure once a student's answers have been recorded on it. Therefore, the answer documents must be kept in locked storage when not in use during an actual testing session.⁷

- The inadequacy of training was a common theme prevalent during the questioning of faculty. Ten of the fourteen examiners interviewed stated that the training provided by the STC at the June 2, 2005, examiner/proctor training was inadequate in preparing examiners to administer SOL tests. Inexperienced faculty members stated that training was insufficient and others who had previous experience with SOL testing felt confident about testing only because of their previous experience. All examiners stated they had read the *Examiner's Manual* or parts of it that pertained directly to their particular role. Test administration knowledge acquired came from faculty reading the *Examiner's Manual* and not directly from the training conducted by the STC.
- According to the four test proctors interviewed, not all proctors had the opportunity to receive training. One proctor stated that a list of written proctor responsibilities was provided just prior to testing but the remaining three did not receive written guidelines. Another proctor, who was a school volunteer, stated that she came to school early one morning because the principal had said that proctor training would occur that morning. According to this individual, when entering the principal's office, the principal said that she had forgotten about the training session. No further mention was made concerning training for proctors. This proctor also stated that she tested two students in an adjoining classroom after the examiner read directions to the entire class. In testing these students, the proctor served as proctor and examiner and could not provide assistance as a proctor for the class in which she was assigned. All of this was done, according to this proctor, without receiving training.

Test Security Agreements:

The *Examiner's Manual* states the following regarding examiners and proctors signing test security agreements:

Before you may administer any of the Spring 2005 SOL tests, you must read the *Test Security Guidelines* in appendix A of this manual and then read and sign the *Examiner's/Proctor's Test Security Agreement*, also in Appendix A. Note the Virginia General Assembly 2000 legislation regarding test security. If you administer the SOL Test to a student who is homebound, your STC should

⁷ *Examiner's Manual* p.20, section 5.2.6 "Transcription of students' answers."

explain the procedures for maintaining the security of all test materials. Sign-in and sign-out procedures and security forms must be used. Interpreters and all individuals involved in transcriptions of student responses must also read and sign the test security agreement. You may sign the original or a photocopy of it. When you sign this document, you are agreeing to exercise necessary precautions and to follow established procedures that will help ensure the security of the content of all test materials. **You must complete this agreement and forward it to your STC before receiving any test materials.**⁸

The following information regarding the signing of security agreements was provided by RCPS personnel interviewed during the investigation:

- Of the four proctors interviewed, only one reported signing a test security agreement. After further examination, it was discovered that 11 proctors were assigned to different classrooms in the building. Of the 11 proctors assigned to classrooms, VDOE has a record of signed test security agreements from only seven of those proctors. This testing irregularity was revealed through the interview process and was not reported to VDOE by RCPS. The proctors who did not sign test security agreements were not teaching faculty but were assigned other responsibilities in the building. However, failure to have all proctors sign security agreements is contrary to the procedures set forth in the *Examiner's Manual*.
- A proctor who was interviewed gave this account of proctoring in a third-grade teacher's class: "when a student raised his hand and did not know a particular word on the test, I would tell them the word but did not tell the student the answer to the question." The proctor did not receive the examiner/proctor training. It is difficult to determine if the proctor intended to help students on specific test questions or whether this action occurred because the proctor was unaware of the guidelines for test administration in the *Examiner's Manual* and was not provided training.
- The consultants' review of the signed Examiner's/Proctor's Test Security Agreements revealed that the VDOE had no record of four individuals who signed out testing materials via the SOL Examiner's/Proctor's Transmittal Form Affidavit having signed the Examiner's/Proctor's Test Security Agreement.

SOL Test Administration:

Section 5.2.3, paragraph three, of the *Examiner's Manual* states that "Help must not be given on specific test items, and no clues should be given about the correctness of a student's answer to a particular test item."⁹

The following information regarding the administration of the SOL tests was provided by RCPS personnel interviewed during the investigation:

⁸ *Examiner's Manual* p.10, section 4.2 "Sign the Examiner's/Proctor's Test Security."

⁹ Id. p.19.

- Specific school test-taking strategies that were practiced with students prior to the SOL test dates were employed on the days of the test administration. Three specific test taking strategies were designed to help improve student performance:
 - Slash the trash: Students were encouraged to slash through test responses that they were certain were incorrect.
 - Jail the detail: Students were to highlight or circle words or phrases that were significant in a question and would assist in choosing the correct response.
 - Ten question initiative: Students were to stop after every ten questions, raise their hands, and not go to the next ten questions until the examiner or proctor gave permission.
- All interviewed faculty understood that they were to use the 10 questions test taking strategy. However, those interviewed reported that different directives were given to staff concerning the purpose of having students raise their hands prior to going on to the next set of questions. Three faculty members reported that on two occasions, the assistant principal instructed them to examine student responses, and if incorrect answers were noted, to direct students to reread test items. Two of the three stated they were told to repeat this procedure if they noticed that students continued to select incorrect answers. One of the three, who was a proctor, reported the directive to the Examiner to which he/she was assigned. The Examiner refused to comply with these instructions.
- One faculty member stated that some students changed their answers in the test booklets after the examiner noticed their incorrect answers and redirected them to read over questions. The faculty member commented that this gave students an unfair advantage on the test.
- Other faculty members who used the ten question strategy gave different interpretations for the strategy. Ten staff members stated that the examiner or proctor was encouraged to read student responses. If they noticed that a student had not completed a test question, they were to indicate to the student that all questions needed to be answered. This was to be done in one of two ways: either by telling the student or pointing to the question that was not answered. Other faculty indicated that students were to take a break, shake their fingers, or stretch. Four faculty members stated that they did not use this initiative because it caused confusion in the classroom and was detrimental to student progress.
- One faculty member reported pointing to students' answers in the test booklet that were incorrect and pointing to correct responses to give assistance to the students. When asked how many times this occurred, the response was approximately 15 times. It was further revealed in the interview that this faculty member was encouraged by other faculty to aid students in this manner. This person also stated that a classroom proctor, who was also a faculty member, encouraged this practice and gave the same assistance to students. The interviewed faculty member stated that two other faculty members of the same grade level were asked whether this practice was acceptable. One indicated that it was allowable but the second faculty member indicated that it was not acceptable student assistance and indicated it would not be provided in that member's classroom.

Transcription:

- After the faculty was notified at the June 2, 2005, training meeting that answers were to be transcribed from the test booklet to the answer document, a transcription team was formed. It was expected that fifth-grade teachers would transcribe their classes' answers from the booklets to the answer documents. One fourth-grade teacher was appointed to transcribe the majority of the answers for the social studies tests and five additional transcribers were added to the team to transcribe answers for grade three students, for students tested in small groups, special education students, and fifth-grade students whose teachers could not complete the transcriptions of their students due to time constraints. It was also noted that a third-grade teacher initially transcribed answer documents, but later discovered that other third-grade teachers were not transcribing. The examiner then brought the secure SOL testing materials to the conference room for the transcription team to transcribe for the remainder of the testing window. The third-grade teacher's proctor, who was a school volunteer, and did not sign a security agreement, also assisted the third-grade teacher in the initial transcriptions. In the interview, the proctor stated that it was unclear whether the school administration was aware of the proctor's involvement in transcribing.
- On the day of test administration, teachers were asked to go to a conference room, initial the test booklet transmittal form, and check out the number of booklets needed for testing. At the conclusion of testing each day, third- and fourth-grade teachers were asked to return test booklets and answer documents to the conference room. Fifth-grade teachers were to transcribe their students' answers from the students' booklets to the answer documents prior to returning the secure materials to the conference room. All transcriptions were to be completed prior to the next test administration date.
- Three faculty members were repeatedly mentioned as those who transcribed the answers for all third-grade tests and for students tested in small groups, with the exception of the third-grade answer documents referenced above. As described by those interviewed, the environment in the conference room in which the transcription took place consisted of ongoing informal conversation and a constant flow of traffic in and out of the small assigned space by teachers returning their answer documents and test booklets. This space was also used as the secure location to house test booklets and answer documents. There were several statements that test booklets and answer documents filled the table in the conference room and were also on the floor. When asked about the large number of transcription errors, it was stated that the constant flow of staff in and out of the room, the pressure to get the transcriptions completed by the next test date, and the confusion that sometimes existed in the conference room, could have led to human error.
- Two transcribers stated that the number of transcription errors was within acceptable limits that could possibly occur due to human error or chance. Both stated that the percentage of errors was well within the limits of what you might expect from having staff transcribe answers.

- All transcribers stated that no directions were given by the STC or by the school administration as to the procedures to follow in transcribing the answers from the test booklets to the answer documents.
- Even though normal procedures require that transcriptions are only available for students with accommodations that have been documented in the student's IEP, 504 Plan, or LEP participation form, there are procedures outlined in the spring 2005 *STC Manual* that should have been followed once the decision was made to transcribe all students' answers. The *STC Manual* states the following directives:

After testing has concluded, check to make sure that the student's multiple-choice answers have been recorded on a regular SOL answer document. If the student has recorded his/her answers elsewhere, such as in the test booklet or on a separate sheet of paper, and the answers have not been transcribed, have another adult perform this transcription immediately. A second adult must verify the transcription. Regardless of the method the student used to record responses, the original response must be kept on file by the DDOT until scores have been received and verified. Follow your DDOT's instructions to return these materials.¹⁰

- Fifth-grade teachers had the option of transcribing in their classrooms or the conference room. The two examiners, who transcribed in their classrooms, were assisted by their proctors. The proctors who assisted these fifth-grade teachers were not recorded as part of the transcription team. Together, they conducted the transcriptions while class was in session.
- There is no written record as to who transcribed for which teacher and subject for third grade, some fourth-grade classes, students tested in small groups, and some special education students. The principal did confirm in the interview testing and transcribing the answers for ten special education students.
- As mentioned earlier, three faculty members performed the majority of transcriptions of answers for students other than fifth graders. Each of their accounts described the method that was employed. As a transcriber worked on a particular test for a class, he or she would either complete the transcriptions of the test for the class or place the remaining booklets and answer documents on the table for another transcriber to complete. If the transcriber finished the transcription for a class in a subject, the answer documents and test booklets would be placed on the table for verification. None of the three transcribers could verify which classes or subjects they personally transcribed. During the transcriptions of the answer documents, if one of the transcribers had to leave the conference room, he/she would place the incomplete documents on the table for other transcribers to complete.
- The three faculty members repeatedly mentioned as those who transcribed the answers for all third-grade tests and for students tested in small groups were also responsible for verifying all transcriptions. Those interviewed provided differing accounts of the verification process

¹⁰ *STC Manual* p. 30, section 5.2.3.

used by this verification team. One of the members of the team stated that a random sample of questions from each answer document was checked to see if the answers in the test booklets were transcribed accurately. Only a small percentage of the transcriptions were checked for accuracy. The two other transcribers stated that the verification process consisted of checking answer documents for stray marks and verifying that answers were bubbled dark enough for scanners to record answers. Appendix C of the *STC Manual* states “When this accommodation is chosen, the student responses must be transcribed to the regular answer document by a school official. The regular answer document must be verified by a second school official to ensure that no errors in transcription occurred.”¹¹ This is also noted in the *Examiner’s Manual* in Appendix C, Accommodations in Response.¹²

- The consultants discovered one third-grade answer document with 38 transcription errors in science. Of the 38 transcription errors, 31 of the answers were changed from correct to incorrect. Further investigation revealed that the student's math answers had been transcribed to the science section of the answer document.

TRANSCRIPTION ERRORS

A review of all answer documents and corresponding test booklets from Oak Grove Elementary School revealed the following regarding the transcription errors:

- Sixteen transcription errors were noted where students had a blank answer in their test booklet and a correct answer was transcribed on the answer document. There were two instances in which a student did not answer a question and the answer document was also left blank. There were no instances in which a student did not answer a question and the incorrect answer was transcribed.
- There were 60 instances in which two or more answers were recorded in the test booklet and only one answer recorded on the answer document. Of the 60 questions that had two or more answers indicated in the test booklet, the correct answer was transcribed 56 times (93%); the remaining four questions were transcribed as incorrect responses (7%).
- One teacher's class accounted for 138 of the 524 transcription errors discovered (26% of entire population). Of the transcription errors noted, 106 (77%) were transcribed from an incorrect answer to a correct answer, 22 (16%) transcribed from a correct answer to an incorrect answer, and ten (7%) transcribed from an incorrect answer to an incorrect answer. Of the 16 transcription errors noted in the first bullet above in which blank answers on the student's test booklet were transcribed to correct answers on the answer document, eleven were noted in this teacher's classroom.
- Another teacher's class accounted for 114 of the 524 transcription errors (22%). The breakdown of transcription errors in this class are as follows: 98 (86%) were transcribed from an incorrect to a correct answer, ten (9%) were transcribed from a correct answer to an incorrect answer, and six (5%) were transcribed from an incorrect answer to an incorrect answer.

¹¹ *STC Manual*, p.67.

¹² *Examiner’s Manual* p.82.

- The remaining 272 transcription errors (52%) recorded were from the other third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade classes.
- Two hundred and four of the 344 transcription errors that were transcribed from incorrect to correct (59%) were recorded in the two classes cited above.
- Inconsistencies were noted in the appearance of marks made to “slash” through answers believed to be incorrect. Slashes were erased and correct answers circled with the original answer having a slash that appeared inconsistent with the student's method of slashing.
- Multiple instances were observed where an answer had been erased and the correct answer chosen. Seventy-six instances where an answer had been erased and the correct answer circled were noted in a single test booklet.
- In some math test booklets, answers were circled that did not reflect the student's handwritten calculation of the problem in the test booklets. In all cases noted, the response reflected that the student's work in the test booklet was erased and the correct response circled.

CONCLUSIONS

- Multiple testing irregularities and violations of VDOE testing procedures occurred at Oak Grove Elementary School.
- School administration directed examiners and proctors to have students take the Spring SOL Test by recording answers in the test booklets and having answers transcribed to the answer documents by a transcription team.
- School administration erroneously interpreted language in the *Examiner's Manual* regarding the transcription of student answers.
- Contrary to the requirements outlined in the *STC Manual*, in depth training of examiners was not provided by the STC, resulting in examiners who were not prepared to administer the spring SOL tests.
- Some test proctors were not afforded the opportunity to take part in a training session resulting in staff that were not prepared to assist with the administration of SOL tests.
- All persons having access to the secure test items who should have been required to sign the Examiner/Proctor Test Security Agreement did not do so.
- No training was provided to any of the transcribers who transcribed answers from the test booklets to the answer documents.
- The verification process employed to verify the accuracy of transcriptions did not follow the VDOE guidelines outlined in the *STC Manual* and *Examiner's Manual*.
- There was no accountability for those who were selected to be transcribers. Except for fifth-grade teachers and one fourth-grade teacher, transcribers could not account for the SOL tests and teacher for whom they transcribed.
- Although some staff questioned the testing procedures they were instructed to follow, they relied upon the representation of the principal and assistant principal that the testing procedures were correct and in compliance with state requirements.
- Students in tested grades at Oak Grove Elementary School will not receive an SOL score report for the spring 2005 test administration because the VDOE could not determine the students' actual responses to the SOL test questions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- RCPS central office administration and school board should review this report and take appropriate action regarding staff.
- RCPS central office administration and school board should create a mechanism for school personnel to anonymously report alleged testing violations to division leadership to create an environment where staff are comfortable raising issues surrounding test administration.
- RCPS shall take appropriate action to ensure that the types of irregularities and violations reported at Oak Grove are not repeated.

ACTIONS

- The VDOE will recommend that the Board of Education withhold Oak Grove Elementary School's accreditation pursuant to 8 VAC 20-131-340 of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*.
- The Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) rating for Oak Grove for 2005-2006 will be "did not make AYP" because of the lack of valid SOL test scores for the spring 2005 administration.
- RCPS shall devise a corrective action plan that addresses the provision of training to examiners, proctors, STCs and school leadership on testing procedures and test security in accordance with VDOE guidelines. RCPS shall submit this report to the Division of Assessment and Reporting at the VDOE within 30 days of receiving this report.
- RCPS shall receive assistance and direction from VDOE on the content of training for those persons who will be involved with the administration of SOL testing.
- The VDOE shall audit and monitor the administration of SOL tests at Oak Grove Elementary School during the 2005-2006 school year.
- VDOE shall randomly select a sample of schools within RCPS for unannounced audits and monitoring visits of the administration of SOL tests during the 2005-2006 school year.
- RCPS shall document in the students' educational records that students were tested in their respective grade levels in spring 2005 but that they did not receive SOL score reports.

APPENDIX A