



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

Office for Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education
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TO: District Superintendents of Schools
School Superintendents
Secondary School Principals

FROM: Gerald E. DeMauro

M. E. D.

SUBJECT: Missing Student Answer Papers

The Department is concerned that too many student answer papers are lost between the administration of State examinations and the recording of students' grades on their permanent records. This is particularly frustrating for middle-level and high-school students and their parents, as the only remedies available in such cases are for the students to retake the State examination or to take one of the Department-approved alternatives (SAT II, AP, etc.).

To avoid such incidents—and allegations of such incidents—you must continually evaluate your policies and procedures for the collection and temporary storage of answer papers at the conclusion of each test administration and during the rating and score recording processes.

When a student has completed a State examination, the student's answer materials should be collected and confirmed, or "checked in," by a proctor and logged into a list of examinees before that student is permitted to leave the testing room. When they are hand scored, answer papers for all State examinations must remain in the custody of teachers or administrators in the school building or regional scoring site until the rating process is complete and scores are recorded on the students' permanent records. When student papers are scored in cooperation with another school, answer papers may be transported to the cooperating school for such scoring. It remains the principal's responsibility to ensure the security of such papers while they are out of the building. Answer papers that are sent to a scanning center for scoring may be stored either at the scanning location or in the schools where the examinations were administered, as long as storage conditions are maintained that will not limit the principal's access to an individual student's answer documents. As an additional precaution, all scrap paper should be stored until all examination scores have been recorded.

If a student's answer paper is lost, the principal or superintendent must conduct an inquiry and file a written report with this office. This report must include (1) a description of the loss or disappearance, including a list of all students whose papers are missing; (2) the examination title and administration date; (3) the likely cause of the loss or disappearance; and (4) what steps will be taken to prevent a similar occurrence in the future.

Please do not hesitate to contact this office with any questions you have about these guidelines. Thank you very much for your cooperation in this matter.