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## DUNBAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

403 Richardson Street SW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

Principal: Betty Greene  
Testing Coordinator: Lera Middlebrooks

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

### **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Dunbar Elementary in 2009 and in other years. Thirty-three teachers at this school were interviewed, some more than once. One teacher confessed to cheating and described a schoolwide effort to systematically change students' answers. Cheating at Dunbar is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, a confession and witness testimony. Teachers altered student tests at the direction of the testing coordinator. In 2009, Principal Betty Greene knew, or should have known, about the cheating and did nothing to stop it. She failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

### **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

#### A. 2009 vs. 2010

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	68.8	22.2
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	35	8
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	12(12)	4(3)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	10.6	4.3
High Flagged Standard Deviation	25.5	5.7
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	5.7	3.1

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
CLEVELAND	1 RD	17.22939083
CLEVELAND	1 LA	16.99132645
CLEVELAND	1 MA	11.47314625
ROBINSON	1 RD	13.47719177
ROBINSON	1 LA	11.79453268
ROBINSON	1 MA	11.81766289
BUCKNER WEBB	2 RD	9.956665175
BUCKNER WEBB	2 LA	13.44381668
BUCKNER WEBB	2 MA	10.72902389
NEAL	2 RD	13.38424431
NEAL	2 LA	12.94238772
NEAL	2 MA	12.63677355
FINCH	3 RD	12.74161831
FINCH	3 LA	13.07106849
FINCH	3 MA	8.163582603
SIMS	3 RD	13.6532191
SIMS	3 LA	15.51816483
SIMS	3 MA	14.46837268
MERO	4 RD	15.29138298
MERO	4 LA	16.71096832
MERO	4 MA	13.65208524
JACKSON	4 RD	8.644315347
JACKSON	4 LA	15.37803113
JACKSON	4 MA	9.828594528
MORRIS	4 RD	8.305788944
MORRIS	4 LA	5.692897979
MORRIS	4 MA	16.63570708
BROWN	5 RD	19.00286597
BROWN	5 LA	19.20845225
BROWN	5 MA	19.24820175
MERO	5 RD	25.48075585
MERO	5 MA	17.29375013
IVEY	5 RD	24.52850503
IVEY	5 LA	19.77430582
IVEY	5 MA	23.00447453

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that educators at Dunbar cheated on the 2009 CRCT.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 68.8% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only eight schools in APS with a higher percentage that year.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only one school had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Dunbar.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 68.8% to 22.2%.

Fourth, of the 35 flagged classrooms at Dunbar, all (100%) had standard deviations that exceeded five and 29 (83% of the total number of flagged classrooms) classrooms exceeded ten

standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Dunbar.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures 98.6% were produced by the flagged classrooms which accounted for only 68.6% of the total classrooms.

Additionally, several witnesses state that teachers at Dunbar changed answers on the 2009 CRCT and probably in previous years as well.

B. Narrative

Testing Coordinator Lera Middlebrooks called teachers to the computer lab to “clean up” the tests. They were called by grade level. One teacher confessed to changing answers in the computer lab with other teachers of her grade level. Given the high standard deviations in all grades at Dunbar, we find it likely that third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers altered test documents as well. Lera Middlebrooks attempted to influence witnesses by threatening them with harm if they told investigators about the erasing.

At least one teacher, Gloria Ivey, gave students the correct answers during the test.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Rose Neal (Teacher)

Rose Neal taught second grade and confessed to cheating on the 2009 CRCT. Lera Middlebrooks approached Neal in 2009 and told her that she could “clean up” the tests if she wanted. Neal believed Middlebrooks meant that she could erase and change answers. Neal erased her students’ answers in the computer lab with fellow first and second grade teachers Pamela Cleveland, Shani Robinson, and Diane Webb Buckner. They all changed answers for approximately thirty minutes. Middlebrooks did not change answers but she was in the room.

All grade levels received the same opportunity to cheat. Neal heard that three teachers declined to cheat: Martina Jackson, Shawntye Finch, and Kimberly Brown Yontz. She believes the others changed answers.

Cleveland, Ivey, Neal, and Middlebrooks discussed that if they did not say anything this investigation could not find anything. They agreed to tell the same story. Middlebrooks threatened the teachers that if they told investigators what happened she would place a lien on their house or “get them at their car.” She said, “If any bitch mentions my name . . .,” implying that she would do something violent to anyone who implicated her.

According to Neal, cheating occurred during the tenure of the prior principal Corliss Davenport as well. Davenport had a team of teachers that would change answers in a back office.

2. Jonathan Baggett (Teacher)

Jonathan Baggett started teaching at Dunbar in the 2009-2010 school year. Baggett soon heard “What happens at Dunbar stays at Dunbar . . . You wouldn’t believe what goes on here.” Baggett was a monitor during the 2010 CRCT. During the math portion each student in Ivey’s fifth grade class had a sheet of paper on their desk. Baggett and another hall monitor say they believe there were math formulas on the paper.

During the social studies portion of the CRCT, Baggett saw suspicious activity. Immediately prior to the administration of the test, the students had their social studies books out. When Baggett walked into the classroom, he says he felt that the students knew they were doing something wrong and looked guilty and uncomfortable. Baggett reported this activity to the SRT monitor. The SRT monitor told him to tell Principal Greene. Principal Greene told Baggett that since the children had their books out prior to the test, there was nothing improper.

During the 2010 ITBS, Baggett heard Ivey giving her students the answers to the test questions.

3. Lashaine Blake (Teacher)

Lashaine Blake taught at Dunbar in 2004 and 2005. She witnessed former principal Corliss Davenport point to the correct answers on the CRCT for students.

4. Larita Dixon (Teacher)

In the 2004-2005 school year, Dixon tutored students. On one occasion, she asked the students how they scored so well on the CRCT because she knew they had not studied the material. Corliss Davenport filed an OIR complaint against Dixon for confronting students. Davenport wrote the report in such a way that it did not reference test scores. Dixon believes Ivey was the one who gave her tutorial students the answers to the CRCT.

Parents requested that their children be placed in Ivey’s class because she would give students the answers to the CRCT. Dixon believes that Ivey wrote the answers on the board.

5. Shawntye Finch (Teacher)

Teachers got together by grade level and erased stray marks and “cleaned up” tests with the test books open. Five to six people were in the room at a time “cleaning up” the tests. Teachers at all grade levels participated.

Students request to be tested by teacher Gloria Ivey. Finch thinks this is because Ivey gives the students the answers.

6. Martina Jackson (Teacher)

Students request to be tested by Gloria Ivey. The students say that if Ivey tested them she would help them on the CRCT.

7. Oreta Taylor (Proctor)

Oreta Taylor proctored during the 2009 CRCT. She told Lera Middlebrooks she did not want to proctor Ivey's class in 2009 because she suspected Ivey gave students the answers.

In some year prior to 2009 she heard former principal Corliss Davenport and Middlebrooks say to each other, "What are we going to do about these test scores?" She thought this was suspicious.

Alan Gotlieb, a Teach for America teacher, told Taylor his students' answer sheets had been altered and that he took pictures of the answer sheets. Gotlieb was at Dunbar when the prior principal was there.

No teacher would report cheating because the procedures require the teachers to talk to the testing coordinator who then reports to the principal. Teachers would not report misconduct to the people who were cheating. Also, teachers were told they would be fired if they did not improve test scores but would receive bonuses if test scores improved. Taylor feels that the environment was ripe for cheating. She does not believe APS planned the cheating but that there was a "culture of carelessness," and that there was pressure combined "with looking the other way."

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Betty Greene (Principal)

Principal Greene testified that she did not cheat and does not have knowledge of cheating. When asked to explain the statistical evidence, she stated that the classes at Dunbar are very small and so it does not take much erasing for the standard deviations to be high.

Principal Greene testified under oath that she did not know that Middlebrooks directed teachers to "clean up tests" or erase stray marks.

2. Gloria Ivey (Teacher)

Gloria Ivey denied knowledge of cheating. In 2009, Ivey had three subjects flagged with standard deviations of 19, 23, and 24. Ivey's test results dropped in 2010, and when investigators asked her to explain why the scores dropped, she blamed it on the children. Ivey said her students in 2010 were not as bright as her students in 2009.

3. Lera Middlebrooks (Testing Coordinator)

Lera Middlebrooks was interviewed four times and denied any knowledge of cheating.

4. Corliss Davenport (former principal)

Corliss Davenport denied cheating while she was the principal of Dunbar. Three particular teachers had CRCT score gains that made her suspicious, but she has no direct knowledge of cheating.

Davenport was the principal of Dunbar from 2003 to 2007. Test scores steadily improved while she was principal, but not at a level satisfactory to SRT-2 Director Michael Pitts. Pitts asked Davenport sign a guaranty in 2006 stating that all of her Dunbar students would pass the CRCT. She refused to sign the document and Pitts began sending harassing and threatening e-mails regarding her dedication to the job. Davenport discussed the issue with Dr. Kathy Augustine. Augustine told Davenport that Davenport and Pitts needed to work together and understand each other better. It was after this that Pitts opened an investigation into a personal bank account used by Davenport to deposit monies obtained from renting out the school. This was a common practice within APS. Davenport opened a personal account because Pitts never responded to her e-mails asking where she should put the money. Davenport accounted for all proceeds that entered and exited the account and cooperated with the investigation. The APS investigation stated that she did not break the law but used poor judgment and she should be terminated. The termination was rescinded after Davenport's attorney spoke with APS. Davenport was tired of fighting with Pitts and resigned on April 1, 2007.

E. Testimony of Additional Witnesses

1. Dunbar Student

A student at Dunbar told investigators about an altercation among the students over the scores received by Ivey's students. Students in Brown's fifth grade class were upset because the students in Ivey's class received awards for their CRCT scores. After an awards ceremony there was a fight in the hallway between the two classes over the awards. The children in Brown's class did not believe the students in Ivey's class were "smart enough" to win the awards.

F. Other Evidence

In June 2009, the Georgia Department of Education ("DOE") passed along an allegation of cheating to APS. The allegation came to the DOE from the Toombs County Public School System. According to the complaint, in March of 2009, Lera Middlebrooks gave a friend and former colleague, Wanetta Jones, who was working in Toombs County, two Grade 5 prompts for the 2009 Georgia Writing Assessment. Jones e-mailed educators in Toombs County. Jones' e-mail stated: "A friend gave me these suggested topics for this year's writing assessment." The topics were two of the three topics that appeared on the writing assessment administered in March. Jones told investigators that she spoke to Middlebrooks about test topics on February 24 and February 28. She sent the e-mail to Toombs County teachers on March 1. The APS-hired outside investigator determined that Dunbar received the writing test on February 26. Middlebrooks' defense was that the two topics she suggested are topics she used during training throughout the school year and that she told Jones the topics before the tests arrived at Dunbar. Middlebrooks said she only talked to Jones on February 24 and that they did not talk on February 28. According to Middlebrooks, she could not have known the topics before the tests arrived at Dunbar. The APS investigation concluded that the evidence did not support a finding that Middlebrooks shared test topics with Jones.



#### **IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We find that Testing Coordinator Lera Middlebrooks directed and facilitated cheating on the 2009 CRCT. Our conclusion is based on the statistical evidence, the testimony of Rose Neal, and the Dunbar teachers who say tests were “cleaned up” in Middlebrooks’ presence.

Rose Neal testified that the first and second grade teachers changed answers together. She implicated the following first and second grade teachers: Pamela Cleveland, Shani Robinson, and Diane Webb Buckner. Each of those teachers is flagged and we conclude that they altered students’ answer sheets.

Teachers in all five grades at Dunbar are flagged. Witnesses testified that teachers “cleaned up” tests by grade level in the computer lab with Lera Middlebrooks. Neal confirmed what many teachers suspected: that “cleaning up” meant erasing answers. Based on the statistical evidence in third and fourth grades, we believe that other flagged teachers cheated in the same manner. However, we lack sufficient evidence to determine which additional teachers engaged in cheating.

There are three flagged teachers in the fifth grade with standard deviations that range from 17.3 to 25.5. It is highly improbable that these wrong-to-right erasures occurred without human intervention. One of the fifth grade teachers is Gloria Ivey. A student, Oreta Taylor, Martina Jackson, Shawntye Finch, Neal and Jonathan Baggett all testified that Gloria Ivey cheated on the CRCT and on the ITBS test. We conclude that Gloria Ivey cheated on the CRCT in 2009 and in other years. We believe that other flagged fifth grade teachers cheated in the same manner. However, we lack sufficient evidence to determine which additional teachers cheated.

It is likely that Principal Greene knew teachers were cheating. The computer lab was on the same hallway as Principal Greene’s office and Neal stated that Principal Greene was in her office when the teachers were erasing answers. The evidence further indicates that prior principal Corliss Davenport cheated, or had knowledge of, cheating on the CRCT in the years prior to 2009.

We further conclude that Principal Betty Greene failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper securing for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Greene failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

In summary, we conclude that Rose Neal, Pamela Cleveland, Shani Robinson, Diane Webb Buckner, Lera Middlebrooks, Gloria Ivey, Corliss Davenport and Betty Greene were involved in, or knew about, cheating on the CRCT.

## D.H. STANTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

970 Martin Street  
Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Principal: Willie Davenport  
Testing Coordinator: Francis Mack

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

### I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at D.H. Stanton Elementary in 2009. Forty-three people were interviewed at D.H. Stanton, some more than once. Cheating at this school is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms and witness testimony. Principal Willie Davenport falsified attendance records and failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

### II. STATISTICAL DATA

#### A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	58.3	17.6
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	28	9
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	13(10)	5(3)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	7.1	4.5
High Flagged Standard Deviation	16.4	6.8
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.2	3.3

#### B. Flagged Classrooms

Teachers	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
FREEMAN, S	1 LA	3.156218027
FREEMAN, S	1 MA	5.993240792
HENDERSON	1 LA	3.919355265
HENDERSON	1 MA	6.982042641
PEARSON	1 LA	4.742821759
PEARSON	1 MA	6.721165913
BEAN	2 LA	6.097889682
BEAN	2 MA	4.412189693
LONGLEY	2 LA	4.457594802
RAILEY	2 RD	3.323602389
RAILEY	2 LA	5.034765376
RAILEY	2 MA	13.35227113
CROWDER	3 RD	9.079333524
FREEMAN, J	3 RD	10.59476171
FREEMAN, J	3 LA	4.001932283
FREEMAN, J	3 MA	3.51359273
MARTIN	3 RD	13.15889705
DRIGER	4 RD	5.654729531
DRIGER	4 LA	4.549254822
DRIGER	4 MA	4.596643495
HALL	4 RD	16.41395851
HALL	4 LA	13.83837352
HALL	4 MA	9.647934367
COWAN	5 LA	5.273507313
COWAN	5 MA	5.402169957
TURMAN	5 RD	7.739448899
TURMAN	5 LA	8.890014444
TURMAN	5 MA	8.224118733

### **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

#### **A. Overview**

Several facts point to the conclusion that D.H. Stanton Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported to the Georgia Department of Education.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 58.3% for the 2009 CRCT. With state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 58.3% to 17.6%.

Second, of the 28 flagged classrooms at D.H. Stanton, 18 (64% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and five classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at D.H. Stanton.

Third, is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at D.H. Stanton, 87% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 58.3% of the total classrooms in the school.

Fourth, of the 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only two schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms.

Fifth, there was a culture of cheating at D.H. Stanton. Chari Cowan testified that she was instructed to cheat on the CRCT writing test. Many teachers spoke of conversations of cheating at D.H. Stanton. If teachers heard these conversations, Principal Davenport probably did also, yet she did nothing.

Last, test security was poor at D.H. Stanton. Testing Coordinator Francis Mack admitted to leaving CRCT materials unattended in her unlocked office. Moreover, an eyewitness saw the CRCT answer sheets spread across Mack's desk when she was out of the building.

#### **B. Narrative**

The attendance clerk, Carmen Smith, entered Francis Mack's office at Principal Davenport's direction when Mack was absent and discovered tests and answer sheets spread out on the desk and table. The clerk reported the discovery to Principal Davenport and was told to retrieve the tests. By the time Smith returned to Mack's office to retrieve the test materials, she found that the tests had been gathered up. Smith suspected that Davenport directed another teacher, Valerie Hall, to remove the tests and answer sheets from Mack's office.

Carmen Smith confessed to altering attendance logs at the direction of Principal Davenport, who threatened her with termination if she did not comply.

Principal Davenport created an atmosphere ripe for cheating by applying pressure on teachers to improve test scores. Teachers were told exactly how many students in their class had

to pass the CRCT. Some teachers prompted students during testing, and some gave students the answers.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Carmen Smith (Attendance Clerk)

Carmen Smith testified that Principal Davenport gave her the key to Francis Mack's office and asked Smith to locate a form. Mack was absent from school that day. Carmen Smith opened Francis Mack's office and saw test booklets and answer sheets spread out on Mack's desk and on an adjacent table. Smith left immediately, reported her discovery to Principal Davenport, and asked if she should retrieve the tests from Mack's office. Davenport told her to retrieve the tests but did not appear concerned. Smith was stopped by someone in the hall on the way to Mack's office. By the time she arrived at Mack's office, she found the desk and table cleaned off and the test materials were gone. Carmen Smith suspected that Principal Davenport sent someone to waylay her in the hallway and ordered Valerie Hall to collect the tests from Mack's office. She believed it was Valerie Hall who retrieved the tests because Hall had a key to Mack's office. Smith believed that Mack and Hall erased and changed answers with Principal Davenport's knowledge. Smith stated that Mack "ran" the school.

Principal Davenport ordered her to change attendance logs in 2009 to mark certain students "present" who were absent. Smith complied with Davenport's orders because she was threatened with termination.

Teachers at D.H. Stanton, including Erica Turman, Valerie Hall, and Pamela Kirkland Pearson prompted students with answers, changed students' answers, and gave answers to students. Principal Davenport and Francis Mack pressured teachers about test scores and making targets.

Principal Davenport was training Francis Mack to become principal at D.H. Stanton after Davenport retired. Davenport and Mack were close and believed Davenport wanted Mack to become principal to enable cheating to continue. She filed an OIR complaint against Davenport, Mack, and SRT-2 Executive Director Michael Pitts to try to prevent Mack from becoming a principal.

2. LaVerne Nash (Proctor)

LaVerne Nash was a proctor in 2009. During the 2009 CRCT testing week, Nash saw test booklets on Francis Mack's desk. Mack's office was open, but she was not in her office. Nash thought that was odd because the test booklets were to be secured at all times.

Although she lacked proof, Nash believed that Principal Davenport may have instructed Mack to change test answers because Davenport was always trying to "make the floor." She believed that Mack changed the tests with the help of Valerie Hall and Erica Turman because they always stayed late after school during testing.

3. Chari Cowan (Teacher)

Chari Cowan was a fifth grade teacher in 2009. She recalled that in 2009, Francis Mack called Cowan to her office and directed her to look at a document on her desk. Cowan recognized the document as the “prompt” for the upcoming Fifth Grade Writing Test. She refused to review the document further or to use the information on the document. Cowan felt she was being “set up” by Mack because when she had previously questioned Mack and Principal Davenport about how students were able to progress to the fifth grade or pass the CRCT without being able to read, she was met with verbal abuse from them.

Cowan stated that at least half of her 2009 class of 16 boys could barely read but somehow passed the summer CRCT and went on to sixth grade. When she asked them how they had passed in previous grades, they told her that teachers Valerie Hall and Cassandra Driger had given them the answers.

Pamela Kirkland Pearson told Cowan in 2009 that she overheard Francis Mack, Erica Turman and Valerie Hall discussing how they were going to change the test scores. Pearson stated that Tracy Jones-Salifu also overheard that conversation.

4. Tracy Jones-Salifu (Math Coach)

Principal Davenport told Tracy Jones-Salifu that she would not have a job if the school did not meet targets. Davenport said “what am I going to tell Mr. Pitts if you don’t meet targets?” Davenport was threatening and abusive to everyone except Francis Mack. It was important to teachers and administrators that D.H. Stanton “make the floor” at Convocation. Jones-Salifu heard that third and fifth grade teachers gave answers to students and changed wrong answers in 2009.

Jones-Salifu said that Pamela Kirkland Pearson used to be friends with Principal Davenport, Francis Mack and Valerie Hall until Pearson “decided not to cheat anymore.” Jones-Salifu stated that Pearson came to her in tears reporting that Valerie Hall and Francis Mack told Pearson that she needed to “buy into the plan” of how to cheat on the 2010 CRCT. Pearson was ostracized when she refused to cheat.

Chari Cowan said that Francis Mack left the prompts for the Fifth Grade Writing Test on the desk in her office for Cowan to use, but Cowan refused to take the information.

Jones-Salifu believed there was cheating in 2009-2010 by Mack and others accessing the tests during the CRCT make-up test. Jones-Salifu said that Valerie Hall had a key to Mack’s office. Jones-Salifu stated that cheating may have occurred in 2009-2010 because Mack arranged the schedule to allow friends to test each others’ class. She stated that Erica Turman tested Valerie Hall’s class, and Michelle Martin tested Turman’s class.

5. Remika Smith (Reading Coach & Co-Testing Coordinator)

Remika Smith was the reading coach and the “co-test coordinator” with Francis Mack in 2009. Mack suggested cheating. Mack’s friends participated in the cheating, including Valerie Hall, Erica Turman, Cassandra Driger, and Pamela Kirkland Pearson. There had been a falling out between Mack and Pearson. Pearson was reported to use voice inflection to prompt students.

Principal Davenport pressured the teachers to meet targets and told them that certain numbers of students must pass.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Willie Davenport (Principal)

Willie Davenport stated that she never touched a test and was not aware that Francis Mack did anything to the tests. She denied being told about tests and answer sheets spread out in Mack's office. Davenport thought that Carmen Smith would have motivation to lie about her. She thought that Carmen Smith had a rivalry with Francis Mack.

Principal Davenport thought that targets were realistic and stated that no one had ever complained to her that they could not be achieved. She denied any allegations of cheating. She did not understand how anyone could claim she was involved in cheating.

2. Francis Mack (Testing Coordinator)

We interviewed Francis Mack twice. She was represented by counsel. She became Testing Coordinator for the 2009 CRCT, only one year after coming to D.H. Stanton. In her first interview, Mack denied that she erased and changed answers on the CRCT. Mack was aware of allegations that tests and answer sheets were seen in her office. She claimed that if there were tests in her office it was because she had to fill in student identification information on the forms. She usually performed this task in the media center, but claimed she decided to do it in her office in 2009 because the media center was unavailable. Mack would never leave answer sheets unattended in her office, and stated that if the answer sheets were in her office then she was in the building. Then she admitted that she may have left early one day during test week. When asked why someone would report seeing answer sheets spread out in her office, Mack stated that Carmen Smith had lied about her in the past.

Mack stated that only she, Principal Davenport, and the custodian had keys to Mack's office. It was important to Principal Davenport to "make the floor" and she told teachers to do everything they could to help students pass the test as long as it was ethical. Mack denied she was under pressure from Davenport to increase test scores. When asked whether she knew of anyone cheating at D.H. Stanton, Mack voiced suspicions that first grade teachers may have prompted students during the test. She believed the students were responsible for the high erasures. She stated she would not benefit from changing answers because she was only the test coordinator.

When Mack was interviewed a second time, she stated that Carmen Smith sometimes went into her office in her absence and "probably" had a key; that Smith "distributed the keys," and had keys to "everything in the building." She claimed that Smith had a master key to the building, locked the building at night and left around 6:30 p.m. Mack usually left school around 4:00 p.m. Valerie Hall and Mack became friends in 2009 and anyone who said Hall had a key to Mack's office was lying.

She stated for the first time that her "co-test coordinator," Remika Smith, would have been in her office when she was filling in student ID information on test forms, unless Smith was in a meeting elsewhere. She could not recall whether Remika Smith was attending a meeting in

2009 when test sheets were in her office. Mack recalled filling in the student ID information on the answer sheets with Remika Smith in the media center, not in her office. She claimed she never had answer sheets in her office, but admitted she may have carried a few to her office when she needed to look up information on her computer. Mack stated that she and Principal Davenport are not friends but only have a working relationship. She disputed that Principal Davenport had been grooming her to be the next principal of D.H. Stanton.

Carmen Smith filed a false OIR report against her after she confronted Smith about reports from teachers that Smith was altering attendance records. Smith told her she was doing it under orders but would not tell her who instructed her to change the records. Carmen Smith was incompetent. She thought Carmen Smith was out to get her. She insisted that she would not cheat for Principal Davenport. She reiterated that she had no motive to change answers. When asked who had motive to change answers, she said if anyone changed answers it could be Carmen Smith, Remika Smith, and Tracy Jones-Salifu. She felt that people were trying to undermine her. Ultimately, she thought that the children were responsible for the erasures.

3. *Valerie Hall (Teacher)*

Valerie Hall denied changing answers, prompting students, providing answers, or doing anything wrong. She was aware that people thought she had a key to Mack's office, and that she and Mack changed answers. She admitted to being friends with Mack, but denied having a key and changing answers.

Hall was flagged in all subjects. She stated that her students erased due to the testing strategies she taught them. When she was confronted with data about her students' erasures, she agreed that the numbers looked odd but had no explanation for the erasures other than her testing strategies. Hall was aware that people thought she cheated during the 2010 CRCT as well, which she found surprising.

4. *Pamela Kirkland Pearson (Teacher)*

Pamela Kirkland Pearson was a first grade teacher in 2009, and was flagged in language arts and math. She denied changing answers, prompting students or giving answers to students. Pearson received threatening phone calls from Davenport and Mack in the summer of 2010 in which they cursed her and accused her of telling people that she had seen them with the tests.

Principal Davenport pressured teachers to improve their students' scores and wanted "100%" from all first grade teachers. Davenport told each teacher how many students she wanted to pass the test. Regarding our investigation, Principal Davenport and Francis Mack told her to "be careful what you say. Your license is on the line."

Pearson believed there was cheating on the 2010 CRCT, and that it was accomplished in part by teachers administering the test to their friends' classes.

5. *Erica Turman (Teacher)*

Erica Turman taught fifth grade in 2009. Turman did not believe Mack would change answers. She claimed she would never erase answers at Mack's request and questioned why people claimed they were friends.

Turman was flagged in all subjects. She did not recall her students erasing as much as the data indicated but denied she had cheated. Some students claimed that Turman gave them answers to the test in 2010, but Turman denied the allegations.

She said in APS, pressure came “from the top.” She stated that if you can’t “produce scores” you might be moved from a critical grade to another one.

Turman was interviewed by Stan Williams from the Office of Internal Resolution (OIR) about cheating complaints after we instructed APS to stop further investigations into the CRCT allegations. Turman stated that OIR was convinced she had cheated and that Williams interviewed her for three to four hours and shouted at her.

6. Cassandra Driger (Teacher)

Cassandra Driger taught fourth grade in 2009. She was flagged in all subjects, but denied cheating. She had no explanation for the erasures in her class. She stated that there was a lot of pressure to have students pass the CRCT. Targets were considered a “big deal” because there was money associated with meeting them. Driger was transferred from fourth grade to second grade in August 2010, due to low test scores.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

Principal Davenport directed Carmen Smith to falsify attendance records.

We also conclude that Principal Davenport pressured teachers to meet targets and raise test scores. She created an environment for cheating by exerting pressure on teachers to ensure that specific numbers of students passed the test. When a witness discovered tests and answer sheets spread out in Mack’s office, Davenport attempted to prevent the witness from retrieving the materials. We conclude that Principal Willie Davenport directed and facilitated cheating on the CRCT and Testing Coordinator Francis Mack orchestrated a scheme to erase and change student answer sheets. Some teachers provided answers to students in 2009 and other years.

We conclude that Principal Willie Davenport failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for, the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Davenport failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.



## **FINCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

1114 Avon Avenue  
Atlanta, Georgia 30310

Principal: Dr. Linda Paden  
Testing Coordinator: Sheila Maxwell

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

### **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Finch Elementary in 2009. Twenty-five people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Three teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Finch is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions, and witness testimony. Principal Linda Paden failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

### **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

#### **A. 2009 vs. 2010**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	48	10.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	36	8
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	14(12)	5(2)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	6.4	4.3
High Flagged Standard Deviation	12.5	6.9
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3	3.3

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
FLORENCE	1 RD	8.846474026
FLORENCE	1 LA	10.19554239
FLORENCE	1 MA	5.910475918
WILLIAMS	1 RD	4.998094435
WILLIAMS	1 LA	7.957153707
WILLIAMS	1 MA	5.462605321
COLLIER	2 RD	4.646391888
COLLIER	2 LA	7.56492777
COLLIER	2 MA	11.29655878
DANIEL	2 RD	3.675444286
DANIEL	2 LA	3.822209124
DANIEL	2 MA	5.179953847
MAY	2 RD	3.162734205
MAY	2 MA	4.706895666
SHORTER	2 RD	8.856146833
SHORTER	2 LA	4.839756297
SHORTER	2 MA	6.943705203
THOMAS WILSON	2 RD	8.450655498
THOMAS WILSON	2 LA	4.932053882
THOMAS WILSON	2 MA	11.26949673
GATES	3 RD	6.534536821
JACKSON	3 RD	7.877656967
JACKSON	3 LA	5.137420301
SIMS	3 RD	4.136286631
SIMS	3 LA	3.011752305
SIMS	3 MA	4.721896378
FULLER	4 RD	7.710450651
FULLER	4 LA	4.546424278
FULLER	4 MA	4.27940952
RICHARDS	4 RD	3.5223442
RICHARDS	4 LA	4.121365048
RICHARDS	4 MA	4.807330648
WOODS	4 RD	6.822352397
SCOTT	5 RD	12.47303933
SCOTT	5 LA	8.177833943
SCOTT	5 MA	8.846474026

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Finch Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 48% for the 2009 CRCT. With state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly, from 48% to 10.3%.

Second, of the 36 flagged classrooms at Finch, 20 (55% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and four classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Finch.

Third is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Finch, 73% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 48% of the total classrooms in the school.

Finally, Principal Paden expected her teachers to cheat. She allowed teachers to take their CRCT materials to their classrooms after the testing period. Three teachers confessed to cheating. Principal Paden knew of and directed cheating on the 2009 CRCT at Finch Elementary School.

B. Narrative

Three teachers confessed to cheating. Two teachers pointed to answers, re-read questions, or used other cues to ensure their students chose correct answers. One teacher confessed to erasing and changing answers in the principal's conference room where teachers were gathered by grade levels to erase stray marks. The testing coordinator, Sheila Maxwell, supervised the room where stray marks were erased but claimed to be too busy to notice what teachers were actually erasing.

Principal Linda Paden was on a PDP and told teachers if she was on a PDP, they would also be on a PDP. Teachers who cheated did so out of fear of negative evaluations or job loss if they failed to improve test scores. Principal Paden told them, "Walmart's hiring." The pressure exerted by Principal Paden on her staff to meet targets, raise test scores, and "push the children" created an environment conducive to cheating.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Ashley Daniel (Teacher)

Ashley Daniel confessed to cheating in 2009. She was flagged for high wrong-to-right erasures in all subjects. Teachers were called to the principal's conference room by grade level for the purpose of erasing stray marks. All second grade teachers were present. In her first interview she stated that she erased stray marks and darkened in circles if they were light. If two answers were marked and she could tell which one was darker, she would erase the lighter colored answer. After Daniel was informed that the evidence indicated she was responsible for changing answers she initially admitted responsibility for the erasures, but then stated she "really did not change" answers. Daniel repeatedly confessed and recanted.

At her second interview, Daniel admitted she changed answers during the time that stray marks were being erased in the conference room. She believed that other teachers also changed answers. The second grade teachers, and first grade teachers Joya Florence, Richanda Williams, and Curtis Collier were present.

Daniel said that there were several reasons teachers would cheat. Principal Paden linked test scores to evaluations, and told Daniel that she needed better scores to get a better evaluation. Scores were posted at faculty meetings and teachers were singled out in front of their colleagues. Principal Paden threatened teachers in a meeting, and told them if she was going to be on a PDP, then they should be on one also. Principal Paden made threatening statements, like "The door swings both ways," and "Walmart is hiring."

2. *Danielle Jackson (Teacher)*

Danielle Jackson confessed to cheating on the CRCT by prompting her students to change answers from wrong to right. She gave extra attention to students having difficulty during the test. For example, she pointed to questions and nodded her head if an answer was wrong, and sometimes reiterated a learning point such as “you know I taught you about pronouns...” If a student finished a section too quickly, she instructed the student to look at the questions again, and sometimes encouraged them to erase the answers if she noticed they were wrong. She believed her actions resulted in students changing answers from wrong to right.

Jackson recalled that when she turned in her tests at the end of the day she was asked by either Maxwell or Paden, on more than one occasion, if she needed her tests back after lunch. She did not understand why she would need her tests back after lunch and said no. She later learned that first and second grade teachers were allowed to test under a different schedule that permitted testing before and after lunch. Jackson taught third grade. She heard that first and second grade teachers spent a long time in the conference room “erasing stray marks,” and stated that it became a joke around the school.

She was surprised that two or three students who did not read well passed the CRCT.

There was great pressure on teachers to have their students get high test scores. Principal Paden publicized teachers’ scores in faculty meetings and if a teacher did not do well they would be told to seek the advice of a teacher with higher scores, a practice which teachers found humiliating. Principal Paden told Jackson on the first day of testing that SRT-1 Executive Director Sharon Davis-Williams was watching Jackson and knew that her test scores were low.

3. *Richanda Williams (Teacher)*

Richanda Williams confessed to prompting her students to erase and change answers. She read the question twice to her students, walked by their desks, and if she saw several students marking the wrong answer she read the question a third time. She stated that if her “smarter students” were marking wrong answers, then she knew the others were missing the answer as well. Williams claimed that she did not use voice inflection, but raised her voice and told the class to “stay focused.”

Williams stated that she and other teachers were called by grade level to erase stray marks, but denied changing any answers. Williams admitted that if the answer was not completely bubbled in they would fill in the rest. She understood that to be “standard procedure,” but did not know where she got that understanding. If an answer was not sufficiently erased, she would erase it more completely. Williams estimated she was in the room about 30 minutes. Principal Paden came in and out of the conference room while tests were being “cleaned.”

Williams stated that there was a lot of pressure at staff meetings to meet targets. Principal Paden stressed that they had to “move the children” along.

4. Sharona Thomas-Wilson (Teacher)

Sharona Thomas-Wilson denied cheating and had no explanation for the high number of wrong-to-right erasures in her class. She stated that during the 2009 CRCT, her class finished early on the first day so she tried to turn in her tests. Principal Paden offered to let her take the tests back to her class and give the students more time. Thomas-Wilson declined and turned in her test materials. Teachers Melissa May and Curtis Collier also finished early and were present during the exchange. Principal Paden threatened to write them up for creating a testing irregularity by finishing the test early. Testing Coordinator Sheila Maxwell communicated the same message later. On the second day, Principal Paden instructed Thomas-Wilson to test her students from 9:00-10:30 a.m. only on section one of the test, then stop for lunch and turn in the tests. The schedule change allowed the students an extra 30 minutes to complete section one. After lunch the students were to start section two of the test and work until they were finished. Thomas-Wilson had to follow the altered schedule for days two and three of testing.

The teachers cleaned stray marks in the conference room after testing. Thomas-Wilson recalled being in the room “about an hour” and stated that other second grade teachers were in the room, including Curtis Collier. She believed the only reason Collier might have denied being in the room was because it might be viewed as an opportunity to erase answers. Principal Paden and Maxwell were present when the teachers entered the room, but Principal Paden left shortly thereafter. Maxwell entered and exited the room periodically, leaving the teachers alone with the tests.

Thomas-Wilson testified that when she started at Finch she inflated students’ grades to C’s because Principal Paden made it known that she did not want students to receive D’s or F’s. Later she was told by Paden that she needed to change the C’s to even higher grades because a C implied that Finch was average. Thomas-Wilson felt she could not make the grade higher because she had already given C’s to some students who deserved D’s or F’s.

In 2009, a student told Thomas-Wilson that a teacher who is no longer at Finch provided answers during a previous CRCT. Thomas-Wilson had questioned the student about his decline in performance between first and second grade, which she found strange because the material was basically the same. The student said his previous teacher gave the student answers and told classmates to “look on each others tests.” Thomas-Wilson said that she had a number of students in the past who could not read but passed the CRCT.

5. Veatris Wright (Teacher)

Veatris Wright was a third grade teacher in 2009. Wright now teaches second grade because she was demoted for having low test scores on the 2009 CRCT. She said that she felt a lot of pressure but she did not cheat. When the 2009 CRCT scores came back, Principal Paden called Wright to her office and told her that her scores were the worst on her grade level. Wright explained that she had a tough class that year and had a problem with some of the girls being bullies. Principal Paden told her that SRT-1 Executive Director Davis-Williams “didn’t want to hear any of that.” She was told that her scores were not low enough to be placed on a PDP, but if the scale should change Wright would be notified. She and other teachers were threatened on more than one occasion with a PDP for low test scores. Principal Paden said she knew that

Wright was being considered for tenure and that her scores had better be good. One week into the summer, Principal Paden called Wright and told her she was being moved back a grade. Wright knew it was due to low test scores. Another teacher was also moved back a grade for low scores.

Wright stated that teachers were called to the conference room at the end of testing to erase stray marks. She did not cheat or observe anyone else cheating. She was asked on more than one occasion by Principal Paden and Testing Coordinator Sheila Maxwell if she needed her tests back after lunch. Wright heard that answers were being changed, but had no specific information.

Veatris Wright stated that every year she had one or two students coming into her class who could not read but who had exceeded standards on the prior year's CRCT.

D. Testimony of Additional Witnesses

1. Curtis Collier (Teacher)

Curtis Collier attempted to turn in his test materials early but was told to take them back to his class because it was "too early." He did not re-distribute the tests to the students, he just returned the tests later. Collier denied entering the room when stray marks were being erased.

2. Melissa May (Teacher)

Melissa May denied cheating on the CRCT. She stated that during the 2009 CRCT she, Thomas-Wilson and Collier, attempted to turn in their test materials and were told it was "too early" and they should take the tests back to their classrooms. May went back to her room and placed the materials on a table. She recalled that teachers erased stray marks in the conference room and that Collier, Thomas-Wilson, Tyrone Shorter and Ashley Daniel were present. May stayed "about ten minutes" and Collier finished before her and left.

Principal Paden told May that teachers would be put on a PDP if their test scores were low.

3. Joya Florence (Teacher)

Joya Florence stated that teachers were called to the conference room by grade level to erase stray marks. She became distressed when we informed her that there seemed to be a correlation between schools where groups get together to erase stray marks and schools where systematic cheating occurred. However, she denied changing answers or seeing others change answers. When Florence was told in a follow-up interview that the evidence suggested she had changed answers on her students' tests, she became emotional. She stated that she had been dealing with a difficult student all day and wanted to go home.

4. Demiris Gates (Teacher)

Demiris Gates denied cheating or having knowledge of cheating. Teachers were called to the conference room by grade level to erase stray marks. APS created an environment regarding

test scores in which teachers “must make it happen.” Students must pass the test and scores must keep rising. He knew that Principal Paden was on a PDP for low test scores. Gates was surprised one of his students passed the CRCT.

5. *Tyrone Shorter (Teacher)*

Tyrone Shorter recalled that Collier and May tried to turn in their tests early but were not allowed to do so by Sheila Maxwell. Shorter stated that at the end of testing the teachers were called by grade level to erase stray marks. He acknowledged that he was in the room when stray marks were erased but denied making any erasures, even when told that others contradicted this statement. Shorter stated that Maxwell asked him, when he was leaving the room, if he had “checked the test.” He told her yes, but she repeated the question two more times. Shorter believed that she was trying to convince him to change answers. Principal Paden and Maxwell did not get along because Principal Paden wanted things done a certain way, and Maxwell tried to “uphold proper testing procedures.”

Shorter did not get along with Principal Paden because after he asked questions in faculty meetings, she transferred him from fourth to second grade for “challenging her authority.” When contacted for a follow-up interview, Shorter stated he was concerned about the consequences of being truthful, and was concerned that his answers might jeopardize his teaching certificate. Shorter told us he wanted to consult his attorney before speaking again to us. When Shorter appeared with counsel at a subsequent interview, he stated that he had already answered questions and refused to answer any more.

6. *Walda Jefferson (Math Coach)*

Walda Jefferson was the math coach in 2009. When shown the list of flagged teachers, she stated she was not surprised at many of the names on the list. She thought the test scores were high and that some students were passing the math portion when they clearly did not grasp the fundamentals and scored low on pretests. It was obvious someone cheated because the test scores did not reflect the ability of the students. She had students transfer in from Gideons, Peyton Forest, Venetian Hills and other schools who exceeded standards on the math portion of the CRCT but could not perform single-digit addition.

7. *Lincoln Woods (Teacher)*

Lincoln Woods denied any knowledge of cheating and stated that he did not go to the conference room to erase stray marks. He stated he did not feel pressure for his students to do well on the CRCT.

8. *Charlotte Scott (Teacher)*

Charlotte Scott denied cheating. Scott had no explanation for her wrong-to-right erasures.

E. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Sheila Maxwell (Testing Coordinator)

Sheila Maxwell was the Testing Coordinator at Finch in 2009. She never witnessed cheating in classrooms and did not know when it could possibly occur. People would not cheat around her because they knew that she would report it. She did not recall asking teachers if they needed more time or if Principal Paden asked teachers either. She did not know why anyone would make that statement and speculated that teachers may have been confused.

Maxwell said she was a “stickler” for protocol and procedure. Erasing stray marks was a common procedure and mandated by the state. It was her job to supervise that procedure. She called teachers down to the principal’s conference room by grade level after the testing was completed. The tests were stacked on the table and labeled with the appropriate teacher’s name. Teachers were directed to their stack, given a pencil, and told to “clean the tests.” She said that the third, fourth and fifth grade teachers only had the answer sheets when erasing; the test booklets were in a separate stack.

Maxwell admitted it was possible for a teacher to see that two answers were bubbled in and erase the lighter one if it appeared that it had not been completely erased. She said it was important to make sure that stray marks were erased completely so that they could not be picked up by the machine that grades the tests. After stressing the importance of that procedure, Maxwell claimed that she never checked the tests to make sure that stray marks were actually erased. She insisted that teachers were simply asked to clean the tests; whether they actually did so was up to them. She stated that she did not have time to sit and watch the teachers while they erased, because she was too busy packing tests and filling out paperwork at the side of the room. Her focus, she said, was to ensure that all the test materials were prepared and packed. She would glance over and see that teachers had pencils and were erasing. Principal Paden was “in and out of the room” while stray marks were being erased.

Maxwell could not recall how long teachers were in the room, but thought they spent only eight to 12 minutes erasing stray marks. She denied that any teacher spent an hour erasing stray marks. She did not recall any teacher refusing to report to the room to erase stray marks. She recalled that all teachers reported to the conference room.

Maxwell and Principal Paden had professional difficulties. She filed a complaint with OIR against Principal Paden, alleging that Paden had pressured her to sign a form attesting that the CRCT materials were stored in the vault, which Maxwell stated was not true. Paden was known to lie. Maxwell felt that she was ostracized for standing up to Principal Paden and filing a complaint. She was put on a PDP by Principal Paden. She recalled Paden stating, “If I’m on a PDP, you’re going to be on a PDP,” and “Walmart is hiring.” It was important to Principal Paden to meet targets and “make the floor.”

2. Linda Paden (Principal)

We interviewed Linda Paden two times and she was represented by counsel. Principal Paden stated she was not aware of cheating and that no reports of cheating had been brought to her attention. Regarding Testing Coordinator Sheila Maxwell’s allegations in the OIR



complaint, Principal Paden claimed that Maxwell was mistaken that the test materials were not stored in the school vault. Principal Paden explained that in 2009, she decided “for some reason” to have the test materials placed in the school vault upon delivery to the school, instead of the conference room where they were usually kept. She said that the next day they were moved to the conference room, but Maxwell was probably not aware they were originally in the vault. The only reason she asked Maxwell to sign the form certifying the tests were placed into the vault when received at Finch was because SRT-1 Executive Director Davis-Williams wanted her signature in addition to the principal’s. Principal Paden denied “pressuring” Maxwell to sign the form.

Principal Paden admitted that she had been placed on a PDP more than once by Davis-Williams for not meeting targets. She is presently on a PDP. She would not say if she felt pressure to meet targets. She denied pressuring teachers to meet targets, stating that the pressure was just their “perception.” Her teachers knew she was on a PDP. She denied threatening to put teachers on PDPs for not meeting targets. She admitted telling teachers she “may” have to put them on PDP’s but claimed she never put anyone on one. She denied telling teachers that “Walmart is hiring.” She recalled somebody else saying that. Paden denied ever telling a teacher to change a grade.

When asked why teachers were offered more time with the tests and told they could not turn them in early, Principal Paden speculated that teachers who finished early may have been sent back to their class if the testing coordinator had not gotten to the conference room to receive the tests. She admitted coming in and out of the conference room while stray marks were erased from answer sheets by teachers. She could not recall if teachers had the test booklets in addition to the answer sheets.

F. Other Evidence

- In 2007-2008, Finch met AYP and received the APS 2008 Bronze Award for Greatest Gain in Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards.
- In 2008-2009, Finch met AYP and was a “distinguished school.”
- In 2009-2010, Finch did not meet AYP or district targets.
- Principal Linda Paden was consistently on PDPs for low test scores and not meeting targets. She could not recall how often her targets had been met.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that cheating occurred on the 2009 CRCT at Finch. Danielle Jackson, Richanda Williams, and Ashley Daniel confessed to cheating. Daniel believes that other teachers were also erasing answers. Other teachers denied cheating; however, based upon the statistical improbability of the erasures in their classrooms and the inconsistent testimony

provided by them, we conclude that Sharona Thomas-Wilson, Curtis Collier, Joya Florence, and Tyrone Shorter also cheated.

While there is no evidence that Testing Coordinator Sheila Maxwell or Principal Paden erased and changed students' answers themselves, Maxwell's actions facilitated cheating when the tests were in her custody. Principal Paden and Sheila Maxwell improperly offered teachers more time with the tests and refused to allow those who finished testing early to turn in the tests, which allowed time to cheat. Maxwell was adamant that stray marks had to be cleared from the tests, yet backed away from responsibility for verifying that it had been done. She seemed to recall that all teachers reported to the conference room, yet claimed not to notice what they were erasing in her presence. Her lack of supervision and apparent willingness to turn a blind eye facilitated cheating by at least one teacher who confessed that she erased in the presence of her peers.

It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence that Principal Paden failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

# COAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

1550 Hosea L. Williams Dr. NE  
Atlanta, GA 30317-1902

Principal: Dr. Andre Williams  
Testing Coordinator: Wayne Campbell

SRT-3 Executive Director: Dr. Gloria Patterson

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Coan Middle in 2009. Twenty-one people were interviewed at Coan, some more than once. One teacher confessed to cheating. Cheating at Coan is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, a confession, and witness testimony. Principal Andre Williams failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

### **A. 2009 vs. 2010**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	31.4	3.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	16	2
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	8(4)	2
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	18.1	3.2
High Flagged Standard Deviation	33	3.2
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	10.8	3.2

### **B. Flagged Classrooms**

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Grade &amp; Test</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
BARNETT	6 RD	23.01393141
BARNETT	6 LA	20.28747089
BARNETT	6 MA	23.00039919
HAWK	6 MA	24.79023205
SOUTHALL	6 MA	33.06486997
STUCKEY	6 RD	10.81191503
STUCKEY	6 LA	11.28838549
STUCKEY	6 MA	12.52164359
LARE	7 MA	23.74792961
TOLIVER	7 MA	28.63176724
USHRY	7 RD	14.46301261
USHRY	7 LA	13.28241752
USHRY	7 MA	15.17633931
WALLER	8 RD	12.51678332
WALLER	8 LA	11.5333268
WALLER	8 MA	11.74704368

## **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

### **A. Overview**

There are several significant facts which point to the conclusion that Coan Middle School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 31.4% for the 2009 CRCT. With state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 31.4% to 3.3%.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the State of Georgia taking the 2009 CRCT, only 21 schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Coan Middle School.

Third, of the 16 flagged classrooms at Coan, all 16 had standard deviations that exceeded ten. At ten standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for all of the classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Coan Middle School.

Fourth, is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures 74% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 31.4% of the total classrooms in the school.

Finally, Principal Andre Williams created an environment that encouraged cheating. He threatened teachers with PDPs if CRCT scores did not improve. Classroom doors were closed during testing, giving teachers privacy needed to cheat. He allowed teachers to instruct the parents of low-performing students to keep their children home from school during CRCT testing so teachers could cheat for those students.

#### B. Narrative

In 2009, special education teachers at Coan cheated during the administration of the CRCT by using voice inflection, pointing out key words, or teaching the CRCT as if it were a class lesson. Teachers also improperly allowed students additional time to complete the CRCT. Teachers cheated because they feared job loss or being placed on a PDP for low test scores.

Coan students struggled in math and Principal Andre Williams constantly emphasized improving math scores. Ron Washington, who served as testing coordinator while Dr. Wayne Campbell was on leave, was the lead special education teacher. Washington instructed at least one teacher to call parents and tell them to keep their child at home during testing or to bring them later in the day for makeup testing. These students were typically lower performing students, but not those with testing accommodations. The teacher explained to the parents that the children could not test with his or her regular class due to “behavioral issues.” A teacher observed Washington, Dr. Campbell, and Principal Williams’ cars at the school late one evening during test week.

#### C. Testimony of Witnesses

##### 1. *Alicia Waller (Teacher)*

Alicia Waller stated that Washington, the lead special education teacher and the acting test coordinator for the first two days of the 2009 CRCT testing period, instructed her to call parents of children she feared would perform poorly, and tell them to either keep their child

home from school during testing or to send them to school late. Washington told Waller that she should test these “late” or “absent” students in a small group, make-up session outside of their regular class. Waller tested those students in a small group on multiple occasions.

Waller saw Washington’s, Principal Williams’ and Testing Coordinator Campbell’s vehicles at the school late one evening during test week.

Test booklets and answer documents remained in the school long after testing ended. During one year, Waller was told to give a student a test after make-up testing was already over.

Principal Williams told Waller to make sure that all students passed the test. Waller confessed to using voice inflection, pointing out key words and using strategic pauses to prompt her students to answer correctly. When one particular student did not pick up on her voice inflection, Waller admitted helping out that student more than the others. Waller could prompt students in this way, since classroom doors remained closed during testing. Waller also admitted to allowing students more time than was allotted for the test because no one monitored the time.

Waller witnessed another special education teacher, Johnson Stuckey, prompting his students to the right answers on the CRCT. Stuckey sat down at a table with his students and administered the CRCT as if it were a lesson. Stuckey told Waller that he was doing this because Principal Williams wanted the students to pass and that they had to do this in order to make AYP.

Waller said Principal Williams put tremendous pressure on the teachers. He threatened teachers constantly with PDPs, and people who did not comply with administrators’ wishes were transferred to other schools. Waller lived in fear every year that her contract would not be renewed.

2. Cynthia Ushry (Teacher)

Cynthia Ushry stated she was not at school during testing in 2008-2009 because she was in the hospital. She could not understand how her class was flagged if she was not at the school. Ushry heard that Principal Williams solicited people to stay at school after hours and help change the tests. According to Ushry, Ron Washington and Principal Williams were very close. Ushry recalled parents coming to the school complaining about being told to keep their children home during the CRCT.

3. Francine Greer (Assistant Principal)

Francine Greer said Principal Williams put pressure on teachers to make targets. Greer wondered how certain schools were able to make targets and she noticed that, over time, more and more schools seemed to be hitting targets. She voiced concerns that the closet in Dr. Campbell’s office where the tests were stored was accessible by a master key. She raised this question during an administrative meeting where Williams, Campbell and Washington were present. Greer felt that they did not take her concerns seriously, but eventually the lock was re-keyed. Greer denied that any students not entitled to special testing accommodation were tested in small groups. She has no knowledge of administrators telling parents to keep their children home during test week.

4. Teidra Yvetta Hutchings-Hoskins (Teacher)

Teidra Yvetta Hutchings-Hoskins recalled teaching eighth grade students who could hardly read, but ended up scoring 100% on the math portion of the CRCT. Because of this type of inconsistency between student abilities and their test scores, Hoskins questioned what was occurring at Coan.

5. Deborah Mills (Teacher)

Deborah Mills taught sixth through eighth grade language arts, reading and social studies at Coan from 1994 until 2005. When Principal Williams arrived at Coan, Mills became uncomfortable with changes at the school. She and other teachers were amazed by the performance of some students on the CRCT, as their high scores did not seem to match their low performance in the classroom. Word spread around the school that administrators changed the students' answer documents. Principal Williams heavily emphasized making AYP and meeting targets.

6. Quentin Southall (Teacher)

Quentin Southall reported that Principal Williams would place teachers on a PDP for low test scores. Southall was surprised by the test scores of some of the special education students in that their scores were much higher than their apparent abilities in the classroom. Southall heard that Principal Williams asked a teacher, Frances Warner, to stay after school one day to change students' CRCT answer sheets.

7. Deborah McRae (Teacher)

Deborah McRae stated that while she worked at Coan, Principal Williams and Dr. Campbell asked her to promote students to the next grade who did not actually pass. She refused to do so. Principal Williams advised McRae that if she wanted to remain at Coan, she needed to be more compliant. McRae verbally reported her concerns to APS' Office of Internal Resolution (OIR), but instead of support, OIR told McRae to respect the authority of Principal Williams. McRae stated she also emailed Dr. Beverly Hall and Dr. Kathy Augustine, but never received a response. McRae advised that Principal Williams told Waller to contact several parents of her students and tell them to keep their child at home during CRCT testing. Williams told Waller to tell parents the reason their child had to stay home was due to behavioral issues. These students were lower performing and not likely pass to the CRCT. McRae stated that Waller complied with Williams' instruction and that ultimately some parents came to the school and complained.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Dr. Andre Williams (Principal)

Principal Williams previously worked in the New York school system where Dr. Beverly Hall recruited him to come to Atlanta. Williams became Principal at Coan in 2005, but was terminated in 2009.

Principal Williams denied cheating. He told investigators he had no motive to cheat because at the time of the 2009 CRCT, he had already accepted another job in another district. However, Williams stated that “cheating is so intertwined in Atlanta Public Schools.” It is “such a part of what the culture is all about.” Everyone knows that cheating is going on. Principals joke about cheating at their meetings. Everyone knows about the cheating at Parks. The APS Administration conducted “investigations” into cheating over the years, but nothing ever happened.

In 2006, after his first year at APS, Principal Williams claimed that he filed an OIR complaint about the test scores at Coan because so many students passed when there was “no way in hell” they could have passed. Students might actually increase their scores by five points in a year, but not by 15 or 20. He stated that Colinda Howard from OIR came to Coan and investigated. She ultimately told Principal Williams that the students performed well due to his work.

Principal Williams thought he cleaned up the cheating when he arrived at Coan, which explains why Coan’s test scores dropped. He heard about how the cheating occurred in 2009. Ron Washington wanted to be assistant principal and Williams heard that Washington changed the tests after testing was over. The majority of the erasures were in special education, and Washington, the special education administrator, had served as the testing coordinator for the first three days of CRCT testing in 2009.

According to Williams, to be promoted, you must show growth in test scores. People accomplish this goal “by any means necessary” in order to get \$100,000 per year jobs. APS is about movement and prestige. “If you cheat, you can move kids, you are going to get promoted,” and everyone knows it. Principal Williams stated he could get a meeting with the President before he could see Dr. Hall.

2. *Dr. Wayne Campbell (Testing Coordinator)*

Dr. Campbell moved to Jamaica. We attempted to reach him by telephone, but he did not return our calls.

3. *Johnson Stuckey (Teacher)*

We attempted to reach Johnson Stuckey for an interview but received no response.

4. *Ron Washington (Special Education Administrator)*

Ron Washington denied any participation in, or knowledge of, cheating. During the first two days of the 2009 CRCT, Washington had sole access to the tests, but said he secured the tests each day. He acknowledged that it was easier to change tests if students were pulled for small group testing. During his second interview, Washington acknowledged that some students were taken to the cafeteria to take the re-test if they were a “big disruption.” He states this only occurred a few times during the years he was at Coan. He denied instructing any teachers to contact parents and tell them not to bring the child to school. Washington said he was aware that Waller called parents, but that she either did so on her own, or another administrator directed her

to do so. Washington stated he questioned Alicia Waller about her actions, but did not recall what explanation she offered.

E. Other Evidence

- In 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, Coan met AYP. In 2010, Coan did not meet AYP.
- Between 2009 and 2010 Coan saw a double digit increase (11%, 13% and 23%) in the number of students across sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, respectively, that failed math on the CRCT.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that Alicia Waller cheated on the CRCT. We conclude that Principal Andre Williams and Ron Washington knew of and allowed cheating at Coan.

Based on the statistical evidence and the evidence we have found at schools with similar statistical data, we believe that other flagged teachers cheated. However, we lack sufficient evidence to determine which additional teachers cheated.

We also conclude Ron Washington instructed a teacher to tell parents of certain low-performing children to keep their children home during testing or bring them to school late. These students were then tested in a small group. Although Washington denied he gave this instruction, he was aware that Waller had done this, but apparently took no action. He also admitted that “behavior problem” students would be pulled out and tested in a small group.

We further conclude that Principal Andre Williams failed in his ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for, the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Williams failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and he is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Attendance

Grade Section: 04/01

NAME	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	TOTAL	REMARKS

10-0110-22-11 EXHIBIT \_\_\_\_\_

# **DOBBS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

2025 Jonesboro Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Principal: Dana Evans  
Testing Coordinator: Warren Edwards

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Dobbs Elementary in 2009 and other years. Fifty-four people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Four teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Dobbs is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions and witness testimony. Principal Dana Evans was one of the few APS employees to accept responsibility for cheating that occurred in her school, and she is to be commended. Nevertheless, she received multiple reports of cheating at Dobbs and therefore knew or should have known of the cheating occurring at this school.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	33.3	6.9
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	30	6
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	14(11)	4(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	7.3	3.5
High Flagged Standard Deviation	21.3	4.2
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.2	3.1

## **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

### **A. Narrative**

Since 2005, cheating on the CRCT has occurred at Dobbs Elementary. Under the administration of the previous principal, Carolyn Brown, CRCT materials were improperly returned to teachers after testing hours. Wanda Harmon brought the CRCT answer sheets and test booklets around on a cart, distributed them to teachers, and picked them up the next day. Thus teachers had possession of both the testing booklet and CRCT student answer sheets outside the testing period, and were able to erase and change students' answers.

Principal Evans became principal in 2007, and cheating continued at Dobbs under her leadership, but not at her direction. She denied any knowledge of cheating, but accepts professional responsibility for all cheating that occurred at Dobbs during her tenure as principal. We commend her for accepting responsibility – she is one of the few in APS to do so.

Principal Evans regularly employed volunteer proctors (generally parents) who had no training in test administration. At least one teacher witnessed a parent-proctor prompting students on the CRCT.

Multiple fifth grade teachers testified that their incoming students lacked the skills required to score as highly as they did on their fourth grade CRCT. Fourth grade teachers, Derrick Broadwater, Shayla Smith, and Angela Williamson prompted their students to change answers during the administration of the CRCT. Angela Williamson threatened students by telling them they would have to repeat the fourth grade if they ever told of the cheating.

In addition to prompting, Derrick Broadwater and Shayla Smith possessed a photocopy of the CRCT. They used the photocopy to prepare students for the upcoming questions on the CRCT. Derrick Broadwater and Angela Williamson confessed to prompting students during the administration of the CRCT.

Shayla Smith prompted Danielle Blair's students on the 2010 CRCT. Shayla Smith said to another teacher "I had to give them [her students] the answers, those kids were dumb as hell."

Arlette Crump, a second grade teacher, prompted students on the 2009 CRCT. Dessa Curb, a special education teacher, prompted students on the CRCT. Two paraprofessionals assigned to Dessa Curb's classroom all testified that Curb not only prompted, but also erased and changed students' answer sheets.

Sidnye Fells, who is no longer with APS, spoke to Principal Evans about her suspicions that the fourth grade team cheated, and about testing violations at Dobbs in general. Principal Evans changed the subject and took no action. Malcolm Brooks, who is no longer with APS, also spoke to Principal Evans about his suspicions of cheating by the fourth grade team. Principal Evans told Brooks that the fourth grade teachers simply had a rapport with their students and knew how to motivate them.

Naomi Williams told Principal Evans about Curb's cheating, but Principal Evans took no action and instead fired Williams.

Principal Evans instructed Tameka Grant to falsify CRCT records to indicate that students who failed to meet expectations in 2009 received remedial help when they received no such help. Tameka Grant met with GBI agents pursuant to this investigation, and informed them of Principal Evans' instruction. Tameka Grant said she was terminated by Principal Evans a few days later.

Principal Evans informed teachers at a staff meeting that if she were placed on a PDP for low test scores, she would place every teacher on a PDP for low test scores as well.

Teachers suspected cheating at Dobbs, but did not report it for fear of retaliation. SRT-2 Executive Director Michael Pitts, speaking about this investigation, told the teachers, "If you know something you are incriminating yourselves." Michael Pitts also said that some teachers at other schools had attempted to retaliate against a principal and that these teachers told the GBI about "all this stuff" that principal had done, "and guess what, that principal is still there."

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Vera Yates (Teacher)

Vera Yates proctored the 2009 CRCT in Angela Williamson's classroom. Yates saw Williamson prompt students to change incorrect answers during the administration of the test. Williamson walked around the classroom, stood over students' shoulders, and pointed to the correct answers. Williamson instructed Yates: "You didn't see that." Williamson gave answers to the children she knew would perform poorly on the CRCT.

During the week of the 2009 CRCT, Yates saw Principal Evans and Assistant Principal Mario Watkins in Principal Evans' conference room after school with the CRCT materials. Principal Evans was seated at a table with a pencil in her hand and a stack of CRCT booklets in front of her. Mario Watkins stood beside Principal Evans. Yates made eye contact with Principal Evans, and quickly walked away. Yates never spoke with Principal Evans about the incident. Yates stated that her performance reviews steadily declined after she witnessed Principal Evans and Watkins in the conference room with a stack of CRCT booklets. Shortly thereafter, Yates' contract was non-renewed. Yates believes Principal Evans is retaliating against her because of what she witnessed.

2. Diane Brewer (Substitute Teacher)

Diane Brewer is a retired teacher that often substitute teaches at Dobbs. Brewer stated there are many allegations at Dobbs that the fourth grade teachers, Derrick Broadwater, Shayla Smith, and Angela Williamson cheat on the CRCT. Diane Brewer further stated that many fifth grade teachers expressed frustration to her because the incoming former fourth grade students could not perform at a fifth grade level.

3. Tameka Grant (Teacher)

Tameka Grant began working at Dobbs in October of 2009. Immediately upon her assignment to the fourth grade, she began receiving warnings and hearing that other teachers on the fourth grade team were known to cheat on the CRCT.

Shayla Smith administered the 2010 CRCT to the students of Danielle Blair, a new teacher in 2009-2010. Tameka Grant testified that Danielle Blair's students were some of the lowest performers at Dobbs on the benchmark exams, but scored among the highest classrooms on the CRCT.

Principal Evans instructed Tameka Grant to falsify records to indicate that students who failed to meet expectations on the 2009 CRCT received remedial instruction, even if the students did not receive such instruction. Tameka Grant further testified that Principal Evans told all teachers that if Principal Evans was placed on a PDP by Michael Pitts for low CRCT scores, then Principal Evans would place every teacher on a PDP as well.

Tameka Grant was interviewed by the GBI on February 9, 2011. On February 11, 2011, Principal Evans informed Tameka Grant that her contract would not be renewed with APS for the upcoming school year.

4. Arlette Crump (Teacher)

Arlette Crump stated that “certain people at the school have a habit of cheating.” She was referring to allegations that Shayla Smith, Derrick Broadwater, and Angela Williamson cheated on the CRCT. Crump testified that two students told her that the fourth grade teachers cheated on the CRCT in 2009. Specifically, the students told Arlette Crump that Derrick Broadwater and Angela Williamson took them to the science lab before the CRCT and “prepped” them with a copy of the CRCT. The students told Arlette Crump that the photocopied test had the words “CRCT DO NOT COPY” printed on it. The students told Crump that Angela Williamson threatened the students that if they ever told, they would have to go back and repeat the fourth grade.

The father of one student contacted Crump and relayed the story to her as well. Crump reported the cheating to Principal Evans. Principal Evans’ response to Arlette Crump was that she did not know how that could have happened since there were monitors in the classroom. Principal Evans asked Crump if she knew of any other cheating. Crump told Principal Evans that she had heard Broadwater and Williamson gave students answers during testing and that Smith had taken the accelerated reading test herself in place of her students.

Crump thinks that word must have gotten back to Broadwater because one of the students later told Crump that Broadwater told the students that the test was a coaching manual and not a copy of the CRCT.

Crump admits to “bumping” students’ desks when she noticed a wrong answer on the CRCT and instructing the student to “look at that again.” She stated that Principal Evans “silently condones” cheating.

5. Brook Hanson (Teacher)

Brook Hanson stated that many of her incoming fifth grade students performed at a much lower level than their fourth grade CRCT scores indicated. Hanson stated that Principal Evans informed the teachers that if she were placed on a PDP by Michael Pitts for low CRCT scores, then Principal Evans would place all teachers on a PDP for low test scores as well.

6. Francis Leach (Teacher)

The same student who told Arlette Crump about cheating on the 2009 CRCT told Francis Leach that Angela Williamson cheated on the 2009 CRCT. Leach also heard claims at Dobbs that Shayla Smith, Derrick Broadwater, and Angela Williamson cheated on the CRCT. Vera Yates told Leach that Williamson prompted students with correct answers on the 2009 CRCT while Yates proctored in Williamson’s classroom. Leach also stated that Dessa Curb’s students always performed well on the CRCT, but most of them could not read.

Leach feared that he would lose his job if he reported cheating. Leach stated that he called an Atlanta Journal-Constitution reporter to report cheating within Dobbs. The reporter emailed Leach at his APS email address, causing Leach to fear APS would discover he reported cheating, so he never spoke to the reporter. Leach stated that, while attending a professional development workshop, an APS official, identified only as Dr. Washington, instructed teachers

that they “were not to blast APS” when interviewed, and that teachers were “only to answer the questions asked.”

7. *Binta Moncur (Teacher)*

Binta Moncur testified that several teachers warned her about cheating in the fourth grade when she began at Dobbs in 2008. She also received warnings to stay away from Derrick Broadwater, Angela Williamson, and Shayla Smith. Malcolm Brooks, another teacher, explained to Moncur that Broadwater, Smith, and Williamson copied the CRCT and used it to cheat. Brooks also informed Moncur that the teacher she replaced refused to participate in the cheating scheme, and no longer teaches at Dobbs.

During the week of CRCT testing in 2009, Broadwater and Smith approached Moncur and asked her how many of her students would exceed standards on the CRCT. Moncur was confused by the question, since it was impossible to tell midway through testing how many students would exceed standards. Smith had a sheet of paper and was poised to write down Moncur’s answer.

8. *Danielle Blair (Teacher)*

Shayla Smith administered the 2010 CRCT to Danielle Blair’s students. Danielle Blair testified that one of her students told her and the entire class that Smith gave that student answers on the CRCT. Blair spoke to Smith, and Smith confirmed the student’s story. Blair recounted a conversation she had with Schajuan Jones, a fifth grade teacher who taught Shayla Smith’s former fourth grade students in 2010. Jones stated that Shayla Smith’s former students could not perform at the level they performed for Shayla Smith on common assessments in Jones’ classroom.

9. *Naomi Williams (Paraprofessional)*

Naomi Williams was a paraprofessional assigned to Dessa Curb’s classroom. During the 2009 CRCT window, but after the testing period, Williams witnessed Curb erasing and changing students’ answer sheets. Curb kept the tests approximately two hours after the testing period ended. Williams gave the investigators photographs that depict Curb’s CRCT test booklets and answer sheets spread out on a table in preparation for erasing. The photographs are included as **Attachment A**. Curb instructed Williams to take a particular student to the back of the classroom “and erase this mess and get with [the student] about the right answers.” Williams witnessed Principal Evans in the classroom after the testing period when the CRCT booklets and answer sheets were still in the classroom.

Williams reported Curb’s actions to Principal Evans, but she “acted like she didn’t want to hear it.” Later that day, Principal Evans called Williams’ home and told her son that Williams was not to report to Dobbs, and instead to report to the downtown office. Williams was terminated from APS.

10. Erica Gober (Paraprofessional)

Erica Gober took the photographs included as Attachment A on her cellular telephone. Gober was assigned to Curb's classroom after Naomi Williams was disciplined at Dobbs in 2009. Gober stated that because she heard that Curb cheated on the CRCT, she took the pictures so she would not later be accused of tampering with the CRCT materials. Gober stated that she took the pictures when Curb improperly left the classroom to take the students to their next class.

Gober heard that fourth grade teachers and Curb cheated on the CRCT. She also heard that Williams tried to report cheating to Principal Evans and was terminated.

11. Sidnye Fells (Teacher)

Sidnye Fells was a fourth and fifth grade teacher at Dobbs from 2005 to 2008, when she resigned. Fells served under Principal Dana Evans, and her predecessor, Carolyn Brown. On February 18, 2010, after reading a news story about cheating in APS, Fells sent a letter detailing the cheating she witnessed at Dobbs to John Grant of the Professional Standards Commission. A copy of that letter is included as **Attachment B**.

Fells was instructed by Carolyn Brown to mark every student present at Dobbs even if they were absent. Fells refused, and marked her students absent when they were absent. On at least one occasion, Fells' attendance records were altered. Fells took a picture of one of the altered attendance records, and a copy is included as **Attachment C**.

Principal Evans often assigned volunteer proctors for the CRCT. The volunteers were not trained in any way, and Fells witnessed at least one volunteer proctor prompting students to change their answers on the CRCT. Under Principal Evans' administration, CRCT materials were not counted at the end of the testing period, allowing teachers to retain copies of the CRCT. Principal Evans did not make announcements over the intercom system telling the teachers when testing was over. As a consequence, teachers improperly kept their tests after the testing period, and allowed their students to work on the test longer than the allotted time. Fells voiced her concerns to Principal Evans, but no changes were made.

Fells recalls a specific special education student who scored higher than any other student in the school on the reading section of the CRCT. Fells heard that the special education teachers read the CRCT to their students and used voice inflection to cheat. Fells stated that she no longer fears retaliation since she is no longer employed by APS, but that other teachers would be afraid to be truthful.

12. Malcolm Brooks (Teacher)

The skills of fifth grade students entering Malcolm Brooks' class did not match their performance on the fourth grade CRCT. One student could barely read or perform basic computations and exceeded standards across the board on his fourth grade CRCT. Malcolm Brooks believes Derrick Broadwater, Shayla Smith, and Angela Williamson cheated on these students' fourth grade CRCT exams. Brooks met with Principal Evans to discuss his concerns. Principal Evans stated that the fourth grade teachers had a rapport with their students and were able to motivate them in ways Brooks could not.

Brooks left the APS system and now teaches in North Carolina. One reason he left APS was because APS was “selling these kids short,” by “giving them a false sense of accomplishment.”

13. Anthony Greene (Teacher)

Anthony Greene stated that incoming fifth grade students performed at a lower level than their fourth grade CRCT score would indicate. He testified that he and other fifth grade teachers believe the fourth grade teachers cheated on the CRCT in 2009 and other years.

14. Mario Watkins (Assistant Principal)

Assistant Principal Watkins stated that Principal Evans did not place teachers on PDPs for low test scores. He denied any knowledge of cheating on the 2009 CRCT or in any other year. When he viewed the wrong-to-right data, including the standard deviations for the teachers at Dobbs, he stated “it’s on them,” indicating that only the teachers were involved in any cheating at Dobbs.

15. Schajuan Jones (Teacher)

Jones heard Shayla Smith yelling at a student because the student told people that Smith cheated on the CRCT. She also heard Smith tell another teacher, “I had to give them [her students] the answers, those kids are dumb as hell.”

Jones heard a student tell Principal Evans that Smith was cheating on the CRCT in 2010. That same week, Jones overheard two students discussing how Smith gave them answers on the CRCT.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Derrick Broadwater (Teacher)

Derrick Broadwater admitted he prompted students to re-read particular questions he noticed they answered incorrectly on the 2009 CRCT and in other years. Broadwater testified he was forced to prompt students to change their answers on the CRCT because when the students came into his class from the third grade, their skills were far below the expected level. Broadwater stated that at the time he prompted students he did not believe it was wrong or a testing violation, but he has since realized it was wrong and a testing violation.

Principal Evans told all teachers that if she was placed on a PDP by Michael Pitts for low CRCT scores, then every teacher would be placed on a PDP as well.

Broadwater described a meeting between the teachers at Dobbs and Pitts during the 2010-2011 school year. In that meeting, Michael Pitts told the teachers that with regard to being interviewed for this investigation, “If you know something you are incriminating yourselves.” Pitts went on to say that some teachers at other schools had attempted to retaliate against a principal and that these teachers told the GBI about “all this stuff” that principal had done, “and guess what, that principal is still there.” Broadwater interpreted this to mean that if teachers



report cheating to us they are only hurting themselves, and that adverse action would not be taken against principals by APS.

2. Shayla Smith (Teacher)

Shayla Smith denied any knowledge of cheating, and denied participating in any cheating. Principal Evans told the Dobbs teachers that if she was placed on a PDP by Michael Pitts for low CRCT scores, then all teachers at Dobbs would be placed on PDPs as well.

3. Angela Williamson (Teacher)

Angela Williamson admitted to improperly prompting students during the administration of the 2008 and 2009 CRCT by telling the students to “go back over” a specific question when the student answered the question incorrectly. She denied prompting any students on the 2007 CRCT or in any years prior. Angela Williamson stated that in 2009, her proctor, Tamara Franco also prompted students in this way. Williamson denied saying to any of her proctors “you didn’t see that.” Williamson testified that Principal Evans never instructed her or any other teacher to cheat. Williamson returned her CRCT tests in a particular order, and sometimes the next day the tests would be returned out of order.

4. Warren Edwards (Testing Coordinator)

Warren Edwards denies any knowledge of cheating on the CRCT. He stated that the only way to explain the high number of wrong-to-right erasures at Dobbs was that the teachers must have given students answers to the CRCT questions in the classroom.

5. Dessa Curb (Special Education)

Dessa Curb initially testified that she never left CRCT materials alone with a paraprofessional, as that is a testing violation. When confronted with the pictures taken by Erica Gober, she recanted her testimony, and stated that if she had left the room, she would have locked the CRCT materials in her closet. Curb did not explain how the CRCT materials ended up on the table as depicted in the photographs.

Curb admits she filled in answers to questions that students left blank on the CRCT. She further admitted that when students selected more than one answer on the CRCT, she would erase the wrong answer. When confronted with the testimony of witnesses who saw her erase and change answers and give students answers for the CRCT, Curb claimed she was “being set up.”

6. Dana Evans (Principal)

Principal Evans stated that she never received a report of a testing violation or heard any concerns from teachers regarding cheating. She further stated that certain fifth grade teachers reported problems with their incoming students. Evans instructed the fifth grade teachers to provide her with the names of the students and the reasons they were not performing, but she believed the teachers’ responses were vague. She thought the allegations the fifth grade teachers made were a defense mechanism to compensate for their scores not being as high as the fourth

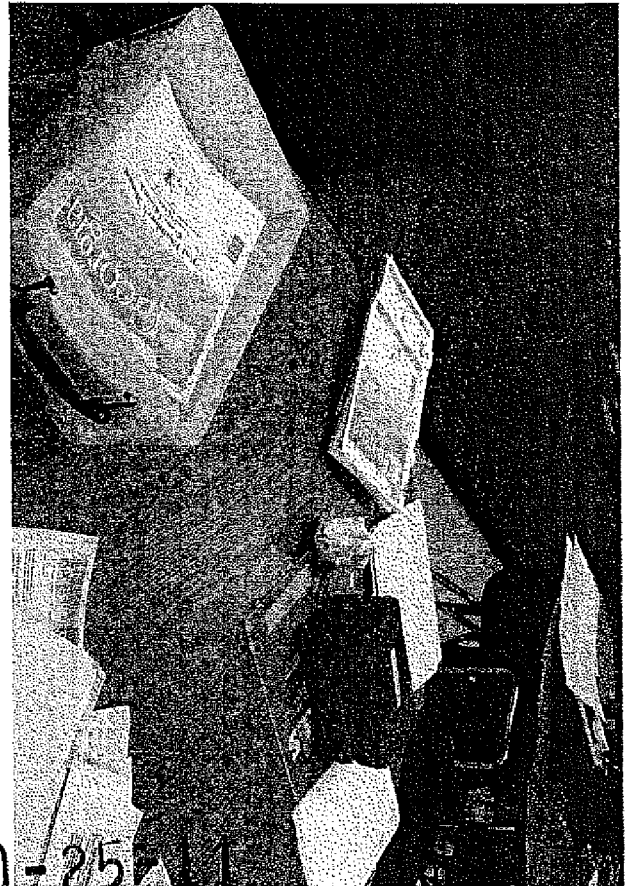
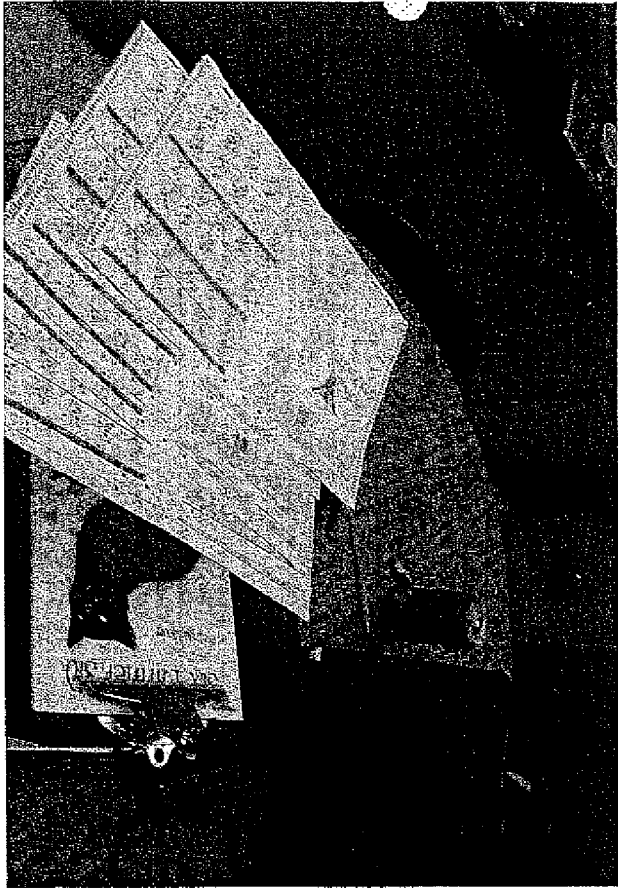
grade teachers' scores. Principal Evans believes "people cheat because they have a flaw in their moral character."

Principal Evans testified that Dobbs was a problem school full of problem employees. She specifically identified Naomi Williams. When confronted with Williams' statements to investigators, Principal Evans stated that Ms. Williams had a vendetta against her because Principal Evans terminated her. Principal Evans denied ever being in a conference room with CRCT materials. She also denied ever seeing Dessa Curb's CRCT materials spread out on a table. Principal Evans stated that she has tried to instill discipline in the staff and faculty at Dobbs, with varying degrees of success. She believes that many teachers have or would attempt to retaliate against her discipline by fabricating stories about cheating. She denied ever cheating or condoning cheating.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that Arlette Crump, Dessa Curb, Derrick Broadwater, Angela Williamson, and Shayla Smith cheated on the 2009 CRCT.

We further conclude that Principal Evans knew, or should have known, that cheating on the CRCT occurred at Dobbs in 2009, and in other years. Multiple teachers testified that they brought concerns to Principal Evans regarding cheating, but Evans dismissed their concerns and took no action. Former employees testified that they informed Principal Evans of cheating and were terminated. Principal Evans testified that there were many bad teachers and paraprofessionals at Dobbs, and that she believed the ones she terminated fabricated stories in an attempt at retaliation. Principal Evans was one of the few APS employees to acknowledge that, as a leader, she was responsible for everything that happened in her school. She denies cheating, condoning cheating, or having any knowledge of cheating. We conclude that Principal Evans did not cheat or direct anyone to cheat, but conclude that she should have known cheating happened at Dobbs.



10-0110-25-11

EXHIBIT

February 18, 2010

Georgia Professional Standards Commission  
Attn: Mr. John Grant  
Two Peachtree, suite 6000  
Atlanta, GA 30303-3141

Dear Mr. John Grant:

Thank you, again, for allowing me the time to voice my concerns and give testimony of cheating/unlawful behavior that I have witnessed at Dobbs Elementary School. I began my teaching career at Dobbs Elementary in the beginning of the 2003-04 school year as a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. From then until the end of the 2007-08 school year, I was employed with Atlanta Public Schools as a teacher of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades at Dobbs Elementary School.

During my first year at Dobbs Elementary, and each year following, I was pressured to cheat on the CRCT. I was told that we needed to "make the floor" by any means necessary, and that if our school did not make AYP and meet targets, we (teachers) could be put on PDPs and possibly lose our jobs. Teachers were threatened and intimidated as a whole. From the beginning of the 2007-08 year, under the new leadership of Dana Evans, both intimidation of some teachers and favoritism of others (based on test scores) began. Teachers who had high scoring classes were given such special privileges as bonus supply money and the opportunities to attend conferences that I was not allowed to attend. In one instance, my supply request list was "lost" even though it was submitted in a pack with the lists of other coworkers who all received their complete orders without issue. I had the lowest scoring class on grade level.

From my first year, I saw and heard mention of several different cheating strategies. They are:

- Once the seal is broken the first day of testing, you can look ahead to the next day's test, remember or write down as many questions as possible, and teach them to the students that afternoon or the morning before the test.
- The principal/administrator can ensure that certain teachers have no proctor while others do. This makes it easier for certain teachers to cheat.
- Proctors with no orientation/training who were parent volunteers, rather than APS employees, were placed in certain classrooms, as well.
- A test booklet can be taken home. The person can either study it, photocopy the questions, or simply copy the questions by hand. (The administrator in charge of the booklet count will purposely overlook the inaccurate booklet count at the end of testing time that day.)
- Some teachers may give students certain signals, each for a different letter – A, B, C, or D.
- A teacher walking past a student may softly kick the desk or chair of a student, alerting that student that he/she has marked the wrong answer.
- A teacher /administrator reading the test aloud to a student may emphasize the correct answer with the volume of his/her voice.

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EXHIBIT \_\_\_\_\_

- A teacher may point to a question/answer and tell the student to "look it over" in order to alert that student that he/she has marked the wrong answer.
- A teacher/administrator can ask that student mark their initial answers on a sheet of scrap paper. Once that teacher/administrator approves the answers, the student can then copy them to the real answer sheet.
- Administrators can return the booklets and answer sheets to the teachers when the state proctors have left the building.
- Administrators can access the booklets and answer sheets and change the answers, since they have full access to all test materials during the week of testing.
- Teachers/administrators can change answers AS students are taking the test, or simply verbally tell the student to change it.
- Administrators can change attendance figures in order to meet the attendance targets.
- Administrators can tell low-scoring students to stay home certain days of the test, or the entire week.
- Administrators can instruct teachers to mark their entire class present, whether it is true or not, in order to meet attendance targets.

During my tenure at Dobbs Elementary, I was told at times to mark all students present, whether they were actually present or not. When I marked a student absent anyway, the "A" (for absent) was crossed off when my attendance sheet was returned. And, I saw many attendance figures changed in the data base. This happened during my last two years at Dobbs Elementary, from 2006-2008.

During my earlier years at Dobbs Elementary, under the administration of Carolyn Brown, an administrator brought my students' test booklets and answer sheets back to me after the state proctors had left the building. When I asked why I was getting them back, I was told that I was supposed to check over the answer sheets for any stray marks and erase any that I saw. When I asked why I needed the test booklets as well, I was told that they wanted to keep everything together. I said I did not need them, and was told to "just look over them anyway". I never touched them.

During my last year at Dobbs Elementary, under the administration of Dana Evans, the pressure to cheat escalated and I witnessed more unlawful testing practices. Teachers who spoke up against her policies and opinions were punished. We were constantly threatened with PDPs. Some of my coworkers had no proctor. I was there when Evans was informed of this. She appeared surprised, but made no effort to assign them one. The next day, there was still no proctor. (It is my understanding that a proctor is not needed if the class count is below 30 students.) My coworker and I were given one proctor to share between our classes. About every 15 minutes, this proctor would come back and forth between our classes, talking to the students as they tested. She obviously had not been trained or had an orientation. I had never seen her working in the building before. And, I do not recall her name. There was some confusion about the break times. And, some teachers would take breaks during the test while others were still testing. Many teachers continued testing long after the signal was given for the test to end. Before testing, when I spoke with Mrs. Evans about the pressure to match scores that had been obtained by cheating, I was not taken seriously. To my knowledge, nothing was done by her to investigate or stop any possible cheating.

Finally, here is a list of former APS employees were worked at Dobbs Elementary. They are all willing to give their personal testimony of the cheating that has been allowed there for so many years.

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EXHIBIT \_\_\_\_\_

# TOOMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

65 Rogers Street  
Atlanta, Georgia 30317

Principal: Dr. Tonya Saunders  
Testing Coordinator: Hezekiah Wardlow

SRT-3 Executive Director: Dr. Gloria Patterson

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Toomer Elementary in 2009 and in other years. Fifteen people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Two teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Toomer is evidenced by confessions and witness testimony. Principal Tonya Saunders and Testing Coordinator Hezekiah Wardlow instructed teachers to cheat on the CRCT and the Fifth Grade Writing Test. Principal Tonya Saunders failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	21.4	0
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	9	0
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	4(3)	0
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	6.6	0
High Flagged Standard Deviation	14.6	0
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.8	0

## **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

### **A. Narrative**

Principal Saunders instructed teachers to prompt students to change their answers during the 2009 CRCT, and to look ahead in the CRCT booklet and make sure the students were prepared for the material to be tested.

Hezekiah Wardlow instructed Latoya Stiffend to arrange her students in a way that would ensure that the lower achieving students received easier Fifth Grade Writing Test prompts.

Teachers used voice inflection to prompt their students during the administration of the 2009 CRCT.

### **B. Testimony of Witnesses**

#### **1. *Lysandra Hardaway (Teacher)***

Lysandra Hardaway admitted to prompting students by inflecting her voice to emphasize the correct answer during the administration of the 2009 CRCT.

Hardaway testified that there were no proctors in the classrooms at Toomer, only monitors who would occasionally walk into individual classrooms.

2. Sheila Brown (Teacher)

Sheila Brown confessed to prompting students by inflecting her voice to emphasize the correct answer during the administration of the 2009 CRCT. She also admitted to prompting students to change incorrect answers during the administration of the 2009 CRCT.

3. Megan Dosmann (Teacher)

During the administration of the 2006 CRCT, Principal Saunders instructed Megan Dosmann to look ahead at the next section. Saunders said, “Your students better know everything on the math section.” Dosmann testified that she felt that Principal Saunders was encouraging her to cheat, or “feeling her out” to see if she would cheat.

Dosmann heard that the CRCT was photocopied at Toomer, but she never saw a photocopy of any CRCT.

Megan Dosmann saw Denita Carr prompting students during the administration of the CRCT. She was unsure of the year, but knew it to be between 2005 and 2009.

4. Latoya Royal Stiffend (Teacher)

Testing Coordinator Wardlow approached Latoya Stiffend during the Fifth Grade Writing Test and suggested she seat students in an order such that students would obtain writing topics that would improperly maximize students’ scores. Stiffend denied that she seated her students in the order Testing Coordinator Wardlow suggested.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Tonya Saunders (Principal)

Principal Saunders testified that she was in the hospital undergoing emergency surgery during the administration of the 2009 CRCT. Testing Coordinator Wardlow was in charge of the school during the 2009 CRCT. She testified that the tests were kept in Wardlow’s office, and that she did not have a key to his office.

Principal Saunders admitted to instructing her teachers to look ahead in the CRCT booklet and make sure that they taught the covered material before the next testing session. She admitted instructing her teachers to tell individual students to check their answers when the teacher noticed they had answered a particular question incorrectly. She later recanted and denied making both admissions.

Principal Saunders placed teachers on PDPs for low test scores, and given this pressure she was not surprised that they cheated. She was surprised that some students passed the CRCT because their classroom performance did not match their CRCT scores. She stated that as long as teachers met targets and students passed, she did not question how CRCT scores occurred.

2. Hezekiah Wardlow (Testing Coordinator)

Testing Coordinator Hezekiah Wardlow denied ever instructing Latoya Stiffend to seat her students in a particular order for the Fifth Grade Writing Test. Principal Saunders had a key to his office. A representative from SRT-3 was present with him during the CRCT testing window.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that Principal Saunders instructed her teachers to cheat by prompting students to change answers on the 2009 CRCT. We also conclude that Principal Saunders instructed her teachers to cheat by looking ahead in the 2009 CRCT test booklet to improperly discover what material would be tested in those sections. Testing Coordinator Wardlow instructed Latoya Stiffend to seat her students in a way that would alter the results of the 2009 Fifth Grade Writing Test. Sheila Brown and Lysandra Hardaway cheated by prompting their students to change answers on the 2009 CRCT.

It is also our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Tonya Saunders failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise the testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.



## **BENTEEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

200 Cassanova Street  
Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Principal: Dr. Diana Quisenberry  
Testing Coordinator: Theresia Copeland

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

### **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Benteen Elementary in 2009. Thirty-six people at this school were interviewed, some more than once. Cheating at Benteen is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms and witness testimony. The principal, testing coordinator, and math coach improperly viewed the CRCT early and “tutored” failing students by giving them the test questions and answers. The testing coordinator changed answers and Principal Diana Quisenberry knew that answers were changed. Principal Diana Quisenberry falsified attendance records and failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

### **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

#### **A. 2009 vs. 2010**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	43.1	0
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	22	0
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	9(8)	0
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	12.5	0
High Flagged Standard Deviation	23.8	0
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	0

#### **B. Flagged Classrooms**

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Grade &amp; Test</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
KIRK	1 RD	4.816114506
KIRK	1 LA	7.106036004
KIRK	1 MA	6.592589571
EVANS	3 RD	17.90282248
EVANS	3 LA	3.317897736
EVANS	3 MA	13.89030544
RHODES	3 RD	15.96607601
RHODES	3 MA	11.23728008
SMITH C	3 RD	20.56060439
SMITH C	3 LA	3.109935704
SMITH C	3 MA	20.84487831
BENTEEN	4 RD	4.88559548
BONDS	4 RD	16.26859827
BONDS	4 LA	18.51439902
BONDS	4 MA	14.68023992
DIMES SMITH	4 RD	5.336297633
DIMES SMITH	4 LA	3.55988236
PAULK	5 RD	18.37528305
PAULK	5 LA	8.336628077
VACTER	5 RD	22.37132955
VACTER	5 LA	23.81421432
VACTER	5 MA	13.49026513

### **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

#### **A. Overview**

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Benteen Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported to the Georgia Department of Education.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 43.1% for the 2009 CRCT.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT only ten schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Benteen Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 43.1% to 0%.

Fourth, of the 22 flagged classrooms at Benteen Elementary School, 17 (77% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and 13 classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. The deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at this school.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Benteen, 78.5% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 43.1% of the total classrooms in the school.

Finally, Principal Quisenberry, Testing Coordinator Theresia Copeland, and Math Coach Dr. Marty Cummings improperly viewed the CRCT before it was administered and provided struggling students with the questions and answers so that they could pass the test. After the tests were administered in the afternoon and the SRT monitor left the building, Copeland took the tests out of the vault and to her office where she changed answers from wrong to right.

#### **B. Narrative**

Benteen teachers returned CRCT materials, counted them in front of either Patricia Whitehead or Dr. Marty Cummings, and put them in a plastic bin. Whitehead and Cummings took the bins to the vault, where they were “secured” by Copeland and the SRT monitor. The next morning, Whitehead and Cummings would get the tests from the vault and take them to the classrooms. Five teachers testified that they put the tests in a particular order, but when they got them back the next morning, the tests were out of order or altered. Cummings explains this by saying that he counted the tests again when he got them back to the vault. This might explain why the tests would be out of order except that Whitehead and Copeland testified that they were not counted again.

Five people saw Copeland take the tests from the vault to her office in the afternoon. One person saw the tests in her office spread out on a table. Cummings, who helped administer the tests, testified there was no reason for the tests to come out of the vault in the afternoon.

Nine teachers did not believe the high CRCT scores reflected the actual abilities of their students.

Principal Quisenberry, Copeland, and Cummings took students who had been identified as likely to fail the CRCT out of class for “tutorial sessions.” Students who were tutored later told their teachers that they had seen all of the CRCT questions in these sessions.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Patricia Whitehead (Coach)

Patricia Whitehead assisted Testing Coordinator Theresia Copeland with the administration of the CRCT in 2009. The classroom teachers collected the tests, counted them out in front of Whitehead (or Dr. Marty Cummings), and placed the tests in a clear plastic box. Whitehead watched the teachers count the tests and then wheeled the boxes on a cart to the “vault” where they were stored until the next morning. In the morning, Whitehead returned the boxes to the teachers who counted them again and administered the test. Whitehead never took the tests out of the boxes or counted them. Only the teachers counted the tests. According to Whitehead, there was no need to touch the tests between pickup and delivery.

At approximately 3:30 p.m. during the week of the CRCT, Whitehead was in the cafeteria with Naja Brittain, Lucrelia Craig, and Jamesa Rhodes. They saw Copeland pushing the tests on a cart down the hallway from the vault to her office. On another occasion that week, Whitehead saw Copeland lock the tests in the vault in the presence of Cecil Jackson, the APS monitor. Later that day, again around 3:30 p.m., Whitehead saw Copeland taking the tests toward her office.

On another occasion, Whitehead went to Copeland’s office and saw the test booklets and answer sheets out on a table.

Some teachers put their students’ tests in a particular order at the end of testing each day. Two teachers, Sheila Evans and Lori Revere-Paulk, complained to Whitehead that their tests were out of order when they got them back in the morning. Whitehead could not explain why the tests would have been in a different order.

Whitehead heard students who were tutored by Dr. Marty Cummings say that they had seen the test questions prior to the CRCT.

2. Naja Brittain (Monitor)

Naja Brittain saw Copeland pushing the tests on a cart toward her office in the afternoon during the testing week.

3. Lucrelia Craig (Cafeteria)

Lucrelia Craig also saw Copeland pushing the tests on a cart toward her office in the afternoon during the testing week.

4. Jamesa Rhodes (Teacher)

A student told Jamesa Rhodes that she had already seen the questions on the CRCT. All of her students passed the CRCT, including one student who could not read the word “cat.” According to the GOSA erasure analysis, that student had 14 WTR erasures out of 17 total erasures on the reading section of her 2009 CRCT.

At 6:30 a.m., Rhodes saw Copeland come out of the main office with the tests on a cart.

Principal Quisenberry made Rhodes change a student’s report card grade from a D to a C.

In the years before Principal Quisenberry became principal of Benteen, many students failed the reading portion of the CRCT. The reading scores went up dramatically in 2007-2008. In that year, only one student failed.

5. Javacia Jones (Paraprofessional)

In 2009, Javacia Jones proctored Lori Revere-Paulk’s fifth grade class. Revere-Paulk always put the tests in alphabetical order at the end of the testing day. She also always put the instructional booklet on top of the stack of tests. On two occasions the tests came back out of order and the instructional booklet was missing. Revere-Paulk complained to Copeland who said not to worry about it.

Jones saw Theresia Copeland with the tests in her office in the morning.

Principal Quisenberry kept a list of who had been interviewed by the GBI, and for how long.

6. Nicole Taylor (Teacher)

Nicole Taylor administered the CRCT to her first class in 2009. On the second testing day her students’ test booklets had their names written on the inside. The names had not been there the day before.

In 2009, at approximately 3:00 p.m., she saw Copeland take the tests from the vault to her office. Taylor knew something was going on because she thought there was a disconnect between CRCT scores and actual abilities.

Some Benteen students told Leslie Bonds that they had seen the CRCT questions before. Bonds covered her ears.

7. Shawn Vactor (Teacher)

Shawn Vactor taught fifth grade in 2009. His students told him that the actual test questions were just like the questions in their tutoring sessions. Vactor asked them, “Did y’all have the answers,” and a student replied, “I told you that.”

Vactor put the tests each day in a certain order. When they were returned to him the next day they were out of order. Some pages of the test booklets were folded back and opened.

8. Terrell Emerson (Teacher)

Terrell Emerson started at Benteen in the fall of 2009. He heard teachers talk about how the administrators, Principal Quisenberry, Theresia Copeland, Dr. Marty Cummings, and Towanda Harris, altered tests.

Emerson claimed Principal Quisenberry has been falsifying attendance records. One of his students was absent over one hundred days, but when Emerson got the attendance report back from the main office it showed only three or four absences. Emerson complained about the discrepancy to Principal Quisenberry who said there must have been a 'glitch' in the system. After he reported the attendance issues to Principal Quisenberry, she started sending observers to watch him teach. Shortly thereafter he was placed on a PDP. Emerson said that Principal Quisenberry took similar retaliatory actions against Ryan Abbott when Abbott reported that Sheila Evans gave her students the answers to the CRCT.

9. Ryan Abbott (Teacher)

Twelve students in Ryan Abbott's fourth grade class told him that their former teacher, third grade teacher Sheila Evans, gave them the answers to the CRCT. He called the APS hotline to report the cheating.

10. Joann Banks (Front Office)

A student told Joann Banks that her teacher, Toni Travis, gave her answers to the CRCT.

11. Bethanie Barnes (Teacher)

Bethanie Barnes turned in report cards with D and F grades. Principal Quisenberry and Theresia Copeland told her that grades below a C were against school policy. They sent the report cards back to Barnes and told her to change the students' grades.

12. Leslie Bonds (Teacher)

Students told Leslie Bonds they had seen the CRCT in their tutorial sessions.

13. Alexis Dimes-Smith (Teacher)

Alexis Dimes-Smith put the tests in a certain order when she turned them in at the end of each day. Two out of five days of testing, the tests were returned to her in a different order.

14. Veronica Kirk (Teacher)

Veronica Kirk administered the test to her first grade class in 2009. She put the tests in a certain order when she turned them in and every day they were out of order when she got them back.

Some results surprised her. For example, one of her students left an entire section blank yet passed the CRCT.

Copeland told Kirk during the week of the tests that her students did well. She would have only known if she had been looking at the tests.

15. *The following people testified that there were one or more students in their class whose passing scores surprised them*

Patricia Whitehead (literacy coach) (she taught reading to students who could not read at their grade level); Sheila Evans (third grade teacher who had a number of students who had difficulty reading and passed the CRCT); Kimberlyn Gaston (paraprofessional who knows of fifth graders who cannot read yet met expectations on the CRCT); Towanda Harris (School Improvement Specialist who testified that students cannot pass their grade level assessment tests but passed the CRCT); Clinton Smith (third grade teacher who identified one student who surprised him that she passed the CRCT; this student had 10 WTR erasures out of 10 total erasures on the reading portion of the CRCT); Anne Elizabeth Martin (first grade teacher who identified one student she was surprised to learn passed the CRCT; this student had 17 WTR erasures out of 20 total erasures on the language arts section and 26 WTR erasures out of 32 total erasures on the reading section); and Javacia Jones (paraprofessional who knows of many children who cannot read and passed the CRCT).

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. *Dr. Diana Quisenberry (Principal)*

Principal Quisenberry denied cheating and claims she is not aware of anyone changing test answers. She denied changing attendance records or causing anyone else to alter them. She does not have a school policy that children cannot make less than a C, and has never suggested that grades change from a D or F to a C.

Principal Quisenberry saw teachers bring the tests to Copeland's office to count and sort. On one occasion she knocked on Copeland's door and Copeland said she could not come in because the tests were in there. Principal Quisenberry saw the tests stacked on a table through a window. Quisenberry said that this observation was prior to the administration of the test and that Copeland needed to sort the tests into boxes for the teachers.

Principal Quisenberry thinks that this investigation is politically motivated and pointed out that the schools under investigation are predominantly African-American schools.

2. *Theresia Copeland (Testing Coordinator)*

Theresia Copeland denied cheating on the CRCT.

Copeland worked with Principal Quisenberry in two other schools and they are close friends.

According to Copeland, the teachers counted the tests, not the test administrators.

3. Dr. Marty Cummings (Math Coach)

Dr. Cummings assisted in the administration of the 2009 CRCT. He picked up the tests, counted them in front of teachers, and then re-counted them before putting them in the vault.

He testified there would be no reason to take the tests out of the vault in the afternoon after they had been secured.

4. Sheila Evans (Teacher)

Sheila Evans denied giving her students any test answers in 2008. She heard that people were erasing answers at Benteen for years prior to 2009. She said that students identified as not likely to meet expectations were pulled out of class for tutorials in the weeks prior to the CRCT. They were tutored by Principal Quisenberry, Theresia Copeland, or Dr. Cummings.

Principal Quisenberry tells teachers the lowest grade they may give students is a C. Evans no longer works for APS. We have learned that she has sued APS.

E. Other Evidence

A teacher at Benteen reported cheating in May of 2009. The allegations were that Copeland and Dr. Cummings pulled students from the classroom in the weeks before the CRCT and gave them the questions and answers directly from the CRCT book. The complaint also alleged that there were children who scored very high on the test even when they slept through the CRCT or did not know the answers to most of the questions. APS hired Penn Payne to investigate. Teachers at Benteen told Payne much of the same information they gave us. Payne concluded that because she obtained a large amount of “inconsistent, contradictory, and uncorroborated information,” she was reluctant to reach conclusions about whether there was cheating. Instead, she recommended that the testing and achievement experts hired by APS examine Benteen in their analysis.

On September 17, 2010, after we began our investigation, Payne amended her report on Benteen. She concluded that Sheila Evans cheated and that it was possible Copeland, Cummings and Principal Quisenberry cheated.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that Testing Coordinator Theresia Copeland changed answers on the 2009 CRCT. After the tests were administered in the afternoon, and the SRT monitor left the building, Copeland would take the tests out of the vault and to her office where she changed answers from wrong to right. This explains the tests being out of order each day, and why the students scored better on the CRCT than was reflected by their abilities in the classroom. We conclude that Principal Quisenberry knew Copeland was changing answers.

We also conclude that Principal Diana Quisenberry, Theresia Copeland, and Dr. Marty Cummings viewed the CRCT early and “tutored” students by reviewing the actual test.

Principal Diana Quisenberry failed in her responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence that Dr. Quisenberry failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

Finally, we find that Principal Quisenberry ordered her teachers to improperly give all students a C or above and falsified attendance records.



## BEECHER HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2257 Bollingbrook Drive  
Atlanta, Georgia 30311

Principal: Dr. Robin Hall  
Testing Coordinator: Crystal Jones

SRT-3 Executive Director: Dr. Gloria Patterson

### I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Beecher Hills Elementary in 2009 and in other years. Forty-two people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Three teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Beecher Hills is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions, and witness testimony. Principal Robin Hall failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

### II. STATISTICAL DATA

#### A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	42.6	2.4
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	23	1
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	10(7)	1(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	8.1	3.4
High Flagged Standard Deviation	19.2	3.4
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.0	3.4

#### B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
MEADOWS	1 RD	7.425756593
MEADOWS	1 LA	9.185159218
MEADOWS	1 MA	5.360238788
DAVIS	2 MA	3.325295443
FOWLER	2 RD	6.925389177
FOWLER	2 LA	6.939522682
FOWLER	2 MA	7.654532653
LONG	2 RD	14.44128005
LONG	2 LA	12.54966787
LONG	2 MA	12.62085791
LITTLE	3 RD	7.586797809
LITTLE	3 LA	4.508882848
LITTLE	3 MA	5.789043049
ROSS	3 RD	3.300656702
ROSS	3 LA	3.032519074
ROSS	3 MA	8.870670614
UPSHAW	3 RD	11.95338131
UPSHAW	3 LA	8.873571835
UPSHAW	3 MA	3.700818309
AKINS	4 MA	3.684144795
HUMPHRIES	4 MA	4.874674245
VARNADO	5 RD	19.19833328
VARNADO	5 LA	14.61152034

### **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

There are several facts which point to a conclusion that Beecher Hills Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 42.6% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only 14 schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 42.6% to 2.1%.

Third, of the 23 flagged classrooms at Beecher Hills, 15 (70% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and six classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a further indication of cheating on a broad scale at Beecher Hills Elementary School.

Fourth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures, 51% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 27.8% of the total classrooms in the school.

Fifth, testing procedures were not clearly understood by the teachers. Teachers were allowed to read passages aloud to first and second grade students during the reading portion of the 2009 CRCT. Latenza Lawrence testified that she was instructed by Reading Coach Joye Bradley to read passages aloud to her second grade students. The practice ended after the erasure analysis was published.

Sixth, testing security was poor at Beecher Hills. The CRCT materials were stored in the testing coordinator's office and people came in and out throughout the day during testing. Catherine Mack witnessed Brandon McClendon, a paraprofessional, in the science resource room with a stack of CRCT answer sheets and a pencil "taking care of stray marks."

Finally, three teachers, Florence Bankston, Michelle Ross, and Dana Little, admitted to cheating during the 2009 CRCT. Michelle Ross purposefully seated her students such that the higher achieving students sat next to lower achieving students during the 2009 CRCT so that the lower achieving students could copy the work of the higher achieving students. She also allowed her students to use extra time to copy one another's answers.

#### **A. Testimony of Witnesses**

##### **1. Latenza Lawrence (Teacher)**

Lanza Lawrence testified that in 2006, Joye Bradley entered her room during the administration of the reading portion of the CRCT and instructed her to read the passages of the reading section aloud to her students. Lawrence believed that was improper.

2. Catherine Mack (Teacher)

Catherine Mack believes cheating occurred at Beecher Hills on the 2009 CRCT, and in other years. She heard that teachers prompted their students during the administration of the CRCT. She testified that classroom doors were closed during the 2009 CRCT, and windows were covered. She believes that most teachers looked ahead to the next day's section of the CRCT test booklet. Teachers always met after each testing day to discuss what was going to be tested in the next session.

She saw Paraprofessional Brandon McClendon in a room with a stack of CRCT answer sheets and a pencil in 2009. She asked him what he was doing, and he responded "taking care of stray marks." She recalled many of her students told her in 2009, and in years past that their former teachers gave them answers during the CRCT.

During the reading portion of the CRCT at Beecher Hills, the first grade teachers were permitted to read the passages aloud to students. Once the news of the cheating investigation broke, however, the first grade teachers were no longer permitted to read the passages aloud.

B. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Florence Bankston (Proctor)

Florence Bankston administered the 2009 CRCT to PEC children in the media center. She admitted to prompting students to change answers on the 2009 CRCT.

2. Michelle Ross (Teacher)

Michelle Ross admitted to seating higher achieving students next to lower achieving students in 2009 and other years so that the students could cheat. Ross admits that she sat her students in that particular order specifically to allow her students to cheat. She also admits that once her students finished the CRCT she allowed them to use the extra time to copy each other's work.

Ross also admits to prompting her students to change incorrect answers during the administration of the 2009 CRCT, and in other years.

3. Dana Little (Teacher)

Dana Little admits to prompting her students to re-read particular questions when she noticed a student answered a particular question incorrectly. She further testified that she was currently on a PDP for low test scores in 2010.

4. Crystal Jones (Testing Coordinator)

Crystal Jones became principal of Beecher Hills in 2009 after Principal Hall was promoted to SRT-3 Executive Director. Crystal Jones was the Testing Coordinator during the 2009 CRCT at Beecher Hills. She testified that she knew of no testing irregularities or cheating.

Because she was a kindergarten teacher before becoming ILS and then principal, Crystal Jones has never administered the CRCT.

Crystal Jones testified that she is currently on a PDP for low CRCT scores on the 2010 CRCT.

5. Robin Hall (Principal)

Robin Hall denied any knowledge of cheating on the CRCT in 2009 or in any other year.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that Florence Bankston, Michelle Ross, and Dana Little cheated on the CRCT in 2009 and in other years.

Based on the statistical evidence and what we have found at schools with similar statistical data, we believe that other flagged teachers also cheated. We lack sufficient evidence to determine which additional teachers cheated.

It is also our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Robin Hall failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise the testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

## **FAIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

101 Hemphill School Road NW  
Atlanta, GA 30331-1621

Principal: Dr. Marcus Stallworth  
Testing Coordinator: Pamela Ringer

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

### **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Fain Elementary in 2009 and in previous years. Twenty-nine people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Two teachers confessed to cheating. Teachers and administrators erased and changed answers on the CRCT. Cheating at Fain is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions and witness testimony. Principal Marcus Stallworth directed teachers to cheat on the CRCT by telling them to use voice inflection, point to answers, prompt students to erase and change answers, re-word questions, or by any other means necessary. Testing Coordinator Pamela Ringer also encouraged teachers to cheat using these methods.

### **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

#### A. 2009 vs. 2010

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	39.7	18.8
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	31	13
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	17(9)	8(4)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	9.68	4.1
High Flagged Standard	30.6	5.5
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.02

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
CARWISE	1 RD	3.705585441
CARWISE	1 LA	6.088895616
CARWISE	1 MA	4.610629223
MCALPIN	1 RD	7.805389288
MCALPIN	1 LA	9.562743096
MCALPIN	1 MA	6.101663918
HOLMES	1 MA	3.590645178
LUCKIE	1 LA	4.856240058
LUCKIE	1 MA	4.078116832
DICKEY	1 LA	5.640940021
SALES	2 RD	16.70813386
SALES	2 LA	20.81894726
SALES	2 MA	22.77842843
SIMON	2 MA	4.231286213
TIMMON	2 LA	3.186094992
RICKS	2 LA	3.790038236
WITMER	3 RD	27.26168023
WITMER	3 LA	25.68539899
WITMER	3 MA	30.65179877
STEVENS	3 RD	9.732968355
STEVENS	3 LA	16.28511265
STEVENS	3 MA	14.61380638
JOHNSON	4 RD	3.862024884
JOHNSON	4 MA	4.577041882
FRANCIS	4 RD	3.565992132
HOWARD	4 LA	7.687164629
BUTLER	4 RD	4.750123138
BROWN	5 RD	4.819573861
BROWN	5 LA	5.929359881
FORDHAM	5 RD	7.120942884
FORDHAM	5 LA	6.609480502

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Fain Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported to the Georgia Department of Education.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 39.7% for the 2009 CRCT.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only ten schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Fain Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 39.7% to 18.8%.

Fourth, of the 31 flagged classrooms at Fain Elementary School, 18 (58% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and eight classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations

from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Fain Elementary School.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Fain, 72.4% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 39.7% of the total classrooms in the school.

Last, multiple teachers confessed to cheating and testified that Principal Stallworth directed the cheating at this school.

B. Narrative

Witnesses at Fain testified that Principal Stallworth and Testing Coordinator Ringer instructed teachers to assist students on the CRCT by using voice inflection, pointing out answers, using non-verbal communication to indicate when a student marked a wrong answer, rewording questions, and any other means necessary. Many teachers followed Principal Stallworth and Ringer's directives and cheated on the test.

In addition, Principal Stallworth and Ringer either participated in erasing and changing student answers or they failed to enforce proper testing protocols, giving teachers the opportunity to erase and change student answers. One teacher testified that she saw Stallworth and Ringer "looking over test documents" and that both were together at the school on weekends while the tests were in the school.

Teachers cheated in many instances because of pressure from Stallworth to meet targets. Principal Stallworth constantly and routinely threatened teachers with job loss or negative evaluations if they failed to improve scores. Principal Stallworth embarrassed teachers that had low-performing students.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Geneva McCall (SST)

Principal Stallworth pressured teachers to make sure students passed the CRCT. Stallworth used PDPs to keep teachers from transferring out of Fain.

2. Tasha Marks (Teacher)

APS administrators generally, and Principal Stallworth and Pamela Ringer specifically, put a great deal of pressure on teachers to meet targets. Stallworth told teachers during a faculty meeting that if their students' test scores were low on the CRCT, he would change the teachers' evaluations that had previously been completed.

In 2009, Marks taught reading at Fain. No more than 30% of her students could have passed based on how they performed prior to the test. She felt the reading scores on the CRCT did not accurately reflect the students' actual academic performance. Marks made it clear that she would not cheat, and feels Stallworth retaliated against her because she would not go along with the cheating culture.

3. Melvina Holmes (Teacher)

Principal Stallworth made it abundantly clear that teachers needed to do what they needed to do to make sure that the requisite number of students met or exceeded standards on the CRCT. He openly encouraged teachers to use voice inflection. He demonstrated how to prompt students using his eyes and eyeglasses. Melvina Holmes believes that Testing Coordinator Pamela Ringer was present during faculty meetings when Principal Stallworth gave these instructions.

Cedric Carwise told Ms. Holmes how Principal Stallworth had demonstrated to him how to use voice inflection and then told him, “that’s how you do it.”

It was important to the administrators that Fain “made the floor” at the Convocation. During teachers’ pre-evaluation conferences, Principal Stallworth informed teachers that if they did not meet targets, he would add it to their evaluation and place them on a PDP.

4. Darius Dowdell (Former Fain Teacher)

Darius Dowdell taught at Fain from 1997 to 2008. Principal Stallworth pressured teachers and students to improve scores on the CRCT. Principal Stallworth singled out teachers in meetings and announced their CRCT scores. If the scores were low, Principal Stallworth ordered the teacher to crawl under the table in front of all the other faculty. He routinely made statements like: “It’s my school and I will run it how I want. If you don’t like it, leave.”

Dowdell had no direct knowledge of cheating, but recalled that one year one of his students refused to take the test. That student still achieved a passing score on the CRCT.

5. Marsha Howard-Holliday (Teacher)

Marsha Howard-Holliday taught at Fain from 2006 to 2010. One year during the CRCT, she saw Pamela Ringer and Principal Stallworth looking at the tests in a way that made her suspicious. Ringer and Principal Stallworth were at the school on weekends during the testing period and had access to the tests.

Holliday suspects cheating at Fain. She became suspicious after Fain “made the floor” several years in a row. Some children at Fain could not function at the level the testing indicated, yet the school continued to make targets. In one particular year, one of Holliday’s students did not finish the math portion of the CRCT, but still achieved a passing score.

It was extremely important to Principal Stallworth to “make the floor.” Principal Stallworth told teachers they need to “do whatever it takes.”

Holliday denied erasing anything on her students’ test, giving students answers, or using voice inflection to prompt students on the CRCT.



6. Yolanda McQueen (Teacher)

Principal Stallworth told the teachers that they should “use whatever means necessary” to ensure students passed the CRCT.

7. Douglas Rozier (Teacher)

Douglas Rozier taught at Fain for fifteen years. When Stallworth was principal, Principal Stallworth told teachers during faculty or grade-level meetings to use voice inflection to assist the students on the CRCT. He instructed teachers to “make it work” and that when monitoring the room, teachers should direct students to the correct answers. Principal Stallworth also said teachers should give students additional time on the test. Principal Stallworth pressured teachers to follow his instructions by making statements such as: “This is my school and if you don’t abide by my rules, I will ship you out.”

Testing Coordinator Pamela Ringer followed Principal Stallworth’s instructions to cheat. She encouraged voice inflection and advised teachers to put the test questions in the “simplest form” while administering the test.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Sabrina Luckie (Teacher)

Sabrina Luckie admitted to prompting students on the CRCT. Principal Stallworth instructed Sabrina Luckie and other teachers that while administering the CRCT, they needed to use voice inflection to assist the students. Luckie denied using voice inflection, but admitted that she would improperly give her students “the look” if she noticed they missed certain answers. She also pointed to a question if the student had it wrong so that the student would look at it again. Luckie attributed the high erasures in her class to these types of prompts. Luckie believed that other teachers similarly assisted their students. One former teacher at Fain, Ms. Moore, had a class that struggled academically but all her students exceeded on the CRCT.

2. Cedric Carwise (Teacher)

Cedric Carwise admitted to improperly rewording questions so his students could better understand them. Principal Stallworth drilled the teachers at Fain with APS targets, especially grades three through five. He told Carwise not to forget the “power of the voice.” Stallworth then demonstrated to Carwise how to use voice inflection. Stallworth often told teachers that they needed to use “any means necessary” to ensure the students passed the CRCT.

3. Marcus Stallworth (Principal)

Marcus Stallworth served as Principal at Fain until December 2010. He denied cheating on the CRCT or encouraging teachers to cheat. He never suggested that teachers use voice inflection during a test and never told them to reword questions. Once, in a faculty meeting, he demonstrated the use of voice inflection on a test as an example of a tactic that teachers should not use. He claimed that some of the teachers may have misinterpreted that suggestion.

He denied telling teachers to “do what they needed to do” to make sure students pass the test. Rather, he said he told his teachers to “do what they needed to do to make sure students were ready to sit down and take the test.”

Stallworth confirmed that he told teachers that their evaluations could be changed based on their students’ CRCT scores. APS administrators instructed principals to convey that message to their teachers. He never changed any teacher’s evaluation as a result of test scores.

In December 2010, APS terminated Stallworth claiming he screamed at teachers and demeaned them. He believes that his termination was in retaliation for statements he made in an interview in the spring of 2009 as part of an investigation into cheating. Stallworth explained that during that interview he said that some APS schools made huge jumps in test scores and that he understood why APS had come under suspicion. Stallworth suspects that some cheating was going on in APS due to large jumps in test scores in such a short period of time.

In the fall of 2009, SRT-1 Executive Director Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams held a conference call with all the principals in SRT 1. She instructed her principals to collect everything they had regarding the CRCT, including e-mails, teacher materials, testing motivation, and training packets. Stallworth sent those items to her in a three-ring binder. It appeared that Davis-Williams was in a hurry to get the material. During that same teleconference, Dr. Davis-Williams told the SRT-1 principals they were not to use their email or the telephone to send out anything related to the CRCT. Stallworth commented to his ILS that, “if APS did nothing wrong, they were certainly making it appear as if they had.”

APS put pressure on principals to meet targets. During principals’ meetings, and in the annual meeting with Dr. Hall, the administrators told principals that their evaluations were tied to targets. Dr. Hall would go around the room and almost force principals to say they would meet 90% of their targets.

The APS system is hostile from the top to the bottom. “If you are not a puppet, you get gone.” The “puppeteering comes from the top.”

4. *Pamela Ringer (Testing Coordinator)*

Pamela Ringer denied knowledge of, or participation in, cheating. She denied ever hearing Principal Stallworth tell teachers to use voice inflection or prompt students in any way on the CRCT.

E. Other Evidence

- Fain met AYP in the 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009 school years.
- In 2009-2010, Fain did not meet AYP criteria for academic performance.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that Principal Stallworth and Testing Coordinator Pamela Ringer directed and facilitated cheating on the CRCT in 2009 and other years. Stallworth and Ringer deny any

knowledge of cheating, but numerous teachers testified that Stallworth and Ringer instructed them to assist students during the administration of the CRCT by using voice inflection, prompting, giving answers, allowing students additional time and changing answers to improve student scores. Many teachers admitted that they followed their leaders' directives to cheat due to intimidation, fear of job loss or negative evaluations.

Sabrina Luckie and Cedric Carwise admit that they followed Principal Stallworth's instructions to cheat.

Although no one confessed to erasing and changing answers, the statistical improbability of even the lowest standard deviations at Fain, as well as a review of the student test data, points to adults erasing and changing answers. One witness observed Principal Stallworth and Testing Coordinator Ringer looking over the tests. This same witness stated that these administrators were frequently at the school together.

Principal Marcus Stallworth failed in his ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Stallworth failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and he is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

# **SLATER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

1320 Pryor Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Principal: Dr. Selena Dukes-Walton  
Testing Coordinator: Vanessa Jackson

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Slater Elementary in 2009. Twenty-seven people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Two teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Slater is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions and witness testimony. Testing Coordinator Vanessa Jackson and Principal Selena Dukes-Walton knew about cheating. Principal Dukes-Walton failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

### **A. 2009 vs. 2010**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	30.3	5.2
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	30	5
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	15(10)	4(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	10	3.4
High Flagged Standard Deviation	31.8	3.7
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3	3

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
GRESHAM	1 LA	3.364767019
LYNUM	1 RD	3.036639216
LYNUM	1 MA	3.074088147
WALKER	1 RD	5.609065799
WALKER	1 LA	13.37276937
WALKER	1 MA	19.84048361
GRAHAM	2 RD	15.76058602
GRAHAM	2 LA	16.91452997
GRAHAM	2 MA	16.59604769
NOLAN	2 RD	7.388164275
NOLAN	2 LA	5.165466638
NOLAN	2 MA	8.327930008
ST ARRE	2 MA	7.002698269
UNUNAKWE	2 LA	6.016216606
UNUNAKWE	2 MA	8.565931576
AUSMORE	3 LA	3.351043196
AUSMORE	3 MA	3.702572445
COLEMAN	3 RD	5.038191689
TAYLOR	3 RD	15.16808995
TAYLOR	3 LA	6.073024418
TAYLOR	3 MA	4.317325691
WINSTON	3 RD	20.02061696
WINSTON	3 LA	3.114788407
BLACKMON	4 RD	4.354670541
BLACKMON	4 LA	4.321901605
GRANT	4 RD	11.86774071
GRANT	4 LA	18.72779953
GRANT	4 MA	23.89018266
HICKS	4 RD	31.79652758
JONES	5 RD	3.564907392

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Narrative

Teachers Ellen Grant and Nettie Walker gave students the answers during the 2009 CRCT. Grant allowed her students to go home and look up answers and then change the previous day's answers. She also erased and changed answers on her students' tests. Nettie Walker gave students the answers during the test and changed answers in the media center while "erasing stray marks."

Testing Coordinator Vanessa Jackson saw Ellen Grant changing answers and did not tell her to stop. Principal Dukes-Walton created an environment that pressured teachers to cheat, and she knew they were cheating.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. *Katrina Coleman (Teacher)*

Katrina Coleman heard that Principal Dukes-Walton asked Math Coach Shenita Monroe to cheat on the 2009 CRCT. Coleman also heard that Gwendolyn Taylor's husband saw Principal Dukes-Walton's car at Slater on the weekend between the first and second week of the CRCT when the tests were located at the school.

Principal Dukes-Walton was focused on CRCT results. At a faculty meeting she used a power point presentation to list every teacher and their students' test scores. Coleman felt this was done to embarrass teachers with lower test scores. Each year, Principal Dukes-Walton prepared a document that informed the teachers how many students needed to meet or exceed expectations on the CRCT. They would go over this information in January, and a copy of the memorandum would be placed in the testing materials in April. A copy of the Memorandum included as **Attachment A**.

Coleman's students tried to tell her that teachers gave them the answers in previous years but Coleman would not let them explain because she did not want to have to report cheating. She feared retaliation if she reported the students' allegations.

Coleman heard that Principal Dukes-Walton asked each teacher at Slater whether they had been subpoenaed for this investigation. Administrators constantly reminded teachers they should keep quiet and not cooperate with the investigation.

Coleman said she believes APS is like an "organized crime family" because APS has a way of making things disappear. For example, Coleman filed a grievance while at Slater and submitted it to SRT-2 Executive Director Michael Pitts. The grievance was about stolen money that Principal Dukes-Walton knew about but did not address. Coleman has never heard anything from APS about her grievance.

2. Schajuan Jones (Teacher)

At the end of the testing week teachers from each grade level were called to the media center to erase stray marks. Schajuan Jones saw Ellen Grant erasing an entire section on an answer sheet. Jones told Grant to stop cheating and then approached Testing Coordinator Vanessa Jackson to report this misconduct. Jackson did not take any action until Jones complained a second time, when Jackson finally told Grant to stop erasing answers. According to Jones, the other teachers in the room were laughing during this exchange. An SRT-2 representative, Maxine Coleman, was present for this incident, as were most of the fourth and fifth grade teachers. Jones specifically remembers that Janice Hicks and Jermaine Ausmore were present. Jones indicated that this "erasing of stray marks" as a group occurred all three years she taught at Slater.

During the 2009 CRCT, Jones saw Shenita Monroe walking from the direction of the school's main office making comments about not doing something. Jones asked Monroe what she was talking about. Monroe said she was talking about changing answers on the CRCT. Monroe also mentioned Principal Dukes-Walton's name, but did not specifically say that the principal asked her to change answers. However, Jones believes that Principal Dukes-Walton asked Monroe to change answers on the CRCT.

3. Shenita Monroe (Teacher)

Shenita Monroe denied the incident reported by Schajuan Jones. Monroe says that Principal Dukes-Walton never asked her to cheat. However, Dukes-Walton did put Monroe on a PDP for low test scores. The PDP did not explicitly state that low test scores were the reason for the PDP, but Dukes-Walton told Monroe that was the reason for the PDP.

4. Ellen Grant (Teacher)

Ellen Grant admitted to cheating on the 2009 CRCT. She encouraged students to go home and look up the answers to the CRCT questions. The next day she allowed the students to go back to previous sections and change their answers. Grant also changed answers herself while her proctor took the students to the restroom. She changed answers for the “middle performers.”

Grant denied changing answers in the media center with other teachers. She claimed she could not have changed answers then because she did not have the test booklets. Grant emphasized several times she was alone when she cheated and that she did not erase answers in front of anyone and that no one directed her to cheat.

5. Nettie Walker (Teacher)

Nettie Walker admitted to cheating on the CRCT. She gave her students the answers to CRCT questions in 2009 and in previous years. Walker walked around the classroom during the test and when she noticed that a majority of the class was getting a particular question wrong, she would give the whole class the answer. Walker thinks that she provided five to seven answers per section. She also admitted to changing one answer in 2009. One student had a “meltdown” during the test and while Walker was erasing stray marks in the media center she reviewed that student’s test. She saw one answer that she believed the student knew but had wrong, and she changed the student’s answer. When the teachers erased stray marks in the media center, they had both the test booklets and the answer sheets available.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Dr. Selena Dukes-Walton (Principal)

Principal Dukes-Walton denied cheating or having knowledge of cheating. In her interviews, she pointed out that Slater did not make AYP in 2009. She was unable to offer an explanation for why the wrong-to-right erasures at her school were so high.

Principal Dukes-Walton observed the erasing of stray marks in the media center. She claimed that test booklets were not available while the teachers erased stray marks.

She denied asking any teacher whether the investigators subpoenaed them. She claimed that teachers told her when they had to be out of the school to meet with investigators because she had to arrange for someone to watch their class.

2. Vanessa Jackson (Testing Coordinator)

Vanessa Jackson called all of the teachers to the media center by grade level to erase stray marks. The teachers would check the tests of their own students and make sure the tests were clear of stray marks. No one erased answers and no one ever told her that anyone was erasing answers.

3. Wanda Harmon (Assistant Principal)

Wanda Harmon denied cheating or having knowledge of cheating.

4. Maxine Coleman (SRT-2 Proctor)

Maxine Coleman was assigned to Slater to observe the 2009 CRCT administration. Coleman denied seeing anyone erase answers.

5. Akisha Graham (Teacher)

Akisha Graham was not implicated by anyone but the wrong-to-right erasure analysis flagged three of her classes with standard deviations of 16, 17, and 17. When interviewed by a GBI agent, she smirked and said that the interview was a waste of her time.

6. Janice Hicks (Teacher)

Schajuan Jones testified that Hicks witnessed Jones complain about Grant changing answers in the media center. Hicks denied cheating; however, Hicks had the highest number of wrong-to-right erasures in the school. She was flagged in the reading subject area with a standard deviation of 31.9.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

There was cheating on the 2009 CRCT at Slater Elementary. Our conclusion is based on the following evidence: (1) Principal Dukes-Walton put pressure on teachers to raise CRCT scores; (2) teachers erased “stray marks” in the media center and Nettie Walker and Ellen Grant changed answers while “erasing stray marks”; (3) Ellen Grant let her students look up the answers and change tests themselves; and (4) Schajuan Jones reported Grant for changing answers and no action was taken. This evidence leads us to conclude that many teachers at Slater altered test documents.

Teachers changed answers in the media center while they claimed to be erasing stray marks. Ellen Grant admitted that she changed answers in her classroom. We believe Grant changed answers in the media center in the presence of Maxine Coleman, Vanessa Jackson, Janice Hicks, and Jermaine Ausmore. We conclude that Janice Hicks erased students’ answers, too, due to the statistical improbability of 31.8 standard deviations from the state norm, combined with the testimony of Schajuan Jones.

Testing Coordinator Vanessa Jackson knew the teachers were changing answers. The cheating occurred in the media center, when only four to six people were present. With such a small group in the media center at a time, Jackson would have noticed someone erasing answers.

We conclude that Principal Dukes-Walton knew or should have known there was cheating at this school. She created an environment in which teachers felt pressured by ridicule to ensure that their students’ scores improved. She also put memorandums in each teachers’ testing materials to inform them of how many students must meet or exceed expectations. As



one teacher stated, teachers could not ensure how students did on the test once the test started, unless they cheated.

It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence obtained in this investigation as to system wide cheating on the 2009 CRCT, that Principal Dukes-Walton failed to adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

# MS. K. COLEMAN'S CLASS MAKES APTS TARGETS!!!

The table below shows the number of students from your class that **MUST EXCEED** standards on the 2009 - 2010 CRCT in Reading, English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Georgia 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Assessment. It also shows the number of students we can afford to have absent 10 or more days from your class. **It will take EVERYONE working TOGETHER, EVERYDAY to make the above headline a REALITY!!!**

Grade Level	Reading		English/ Language Arts		Mathematics		Science		Social Studies		Writing		Attendance Students Absent 10 Days or More
	Does Not Meet	Exceed	Does Not Meet	Exceed	Does Not Meet	Exceed	Does Not Meet	Exceed	Does Not Meet	Exceed	Does Not Meet	Exceed	
3 <sup>rd</sup>	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	N/A	N/A	2

*This data... is showing that we are most of the way there! We are only 10 days away from making 850 more in our class!*

Principal's Signature: Mrs. K. Coleman Date: 1-12-10

Every grade & classroom has this chart specifically tailored to each curriculum.

**T**ogether **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore

10-0110-25-11 EXHIBIT

# **THOMASVILLE HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

1820 Henry Thomas Dr. SE  
Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Principal: Janice Kelsey  
Testing Coordinator: Tracey Fisher

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Thomasville Heights Elementary in 2008 and 2009. Thirty-two people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Two teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Thomasville Heights is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions and witness testimony. Principal Janice Kelsey failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

### **A. 2009 vs. 2010**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	39.1	7.2
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	34	5
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	15(11)	3(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	7.1	6.3
High Flagged Standard Deviation	14.6	9.6
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.2

## B. Flagged Classrooms

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Grade &amp; Test</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
BEAUFORT	1 RD	6.592096573
BEAUFORT	1 LA	12.56542713
BEAUFORT	1 MA	7.893137848
COHEN	1 RD	6.294592751
COHEN	1 LA	5.940398975
COHEN	1 MA	5.116794989
MCKEITHEN	1 MA	4.886755241
NICKOLICH	1 MA	3.285995043
OLIVER	1 LA	4.546905732
DALIDE	2 RD	5.285191345
DALIDE	2 LA	5.396477417
DALIDE	2 MA	4.29678822
SWAIN P	2 RD	8.79181171
SWAIN P	2 LA	10.23762982
SWAIN P	2 MA	6.088495889
WALLER	2 RD	5.856558037
WALLER	2 LA	7.920618241
WALLER	2 MA	9.078163504
HUBBARD	3 RD	9.676394581
HUBBARD	3 LA	6.743629425
HUBBARD	3 MA	4.751842097
BROWN	4 RD	3.111356934
SAVAGE	4 RD	10.38147811
SAVAGE	4 MA	10.73819265
BIDULESCU	5 RD	12.79621953
BIDULESCU	5 LA	14.64533258
BIDULESCU	5 MA	3.152159194
DAY	5 RD	4.320453585
DAY	5 MA	5.589028002
FORRER	5 RD	8.890145458
FORRER	5 LA	6.260625917
FORRER	5 MA	11.36464914
THOMASVILLE	5 LA	3.707339187
THOMASVILLE	5 MA	5.589336097

## III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

### A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Thomasville Heights Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 39.1% for the 2009 CRCT.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only 15 schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Thomasville Heights.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 39.1% to 7.2%.

Fourth, of the 34 flagged classrooms at Thomasville Heights, 25 (74% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and seven classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult

intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Thomasville Heights.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures, 68% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 39.1% of the total classrooms in the school.

Last, two teachers admitted to cheating. Two first grade teachers confessed to prompting their students in the classroom. One teacher walked around while testing and if several students missed a question, she might rephrase the question and prompt students to remember what they were taught in class. Another teacher admitted to reading the questions aloud more than twice and pointing to questions she noticed students got wrong and telling them to re-read it. These teachers believe that their actions caused their students to erase and change answers from wrong to right.

#### B. Narrative

Teachers who cheated, and others interviewed, cited the intense pressure they felt to increase test scores and make targets. Principal Janice Kelsey had been on several PDPs and felt pressure from her SRT Executive Director. Teachers were threatened with PDPs and job loss. Principal Kelsey and Testing Coordinator Tracey Fisher allowed teachers to pick up tests as early as 7:30 a.m. and keep them late. Stray marks could be erased by teachers in their classrooms or in the conference room. No one seemed clear on the proper policy.

APS was alerted to cheating on the 2009 CRCT based on events in 2008. Between March and May 2008, APS's Office of Internal Resolution received allegations of cheating and workplace improprieties involving Principal Janice Kelsey. The cheating allegations stemmed from an anonymous phone call in April 2008 to the Georgia Department of Education (DOE). The caller alleged that Principal Kelsey was putting extreme pressure on teachers to meet targets and threatening to place teachers not meeting targets on a PDP. The caller also alleged that Principal Kelsey told teachers that "hints" should be provided to students during CRCT testing. The cheating allegations were investigated by an external investigator, Stan Williams, who conducted interviews of staff at Thomasville Heights and submitted reports of his findings to OIR in May 2008.

The 2008 external investigation looked into other allegations of testing-related improprieties that had occurred at Thomasville Heights. One allegation was that Principal Kelsey went into teacher Emily Cohen's first grade classroom during testing and administered part of the test. Cohen was having difficulty controlling the students' behavior during the test. On the second day Principal Kelsey selected certain students from Cohen's class, and some from other classes, and tested them separately in Cohen's classroom. Principal Kelsey took over the reading of different test subjects, at times reading too quickly, or re-reading the questions more than two times. Cohen stated that Principal Kelsey also leaned over students and pointed to the test book, but was not sure she was pointing at answers.

There was a missing answer sheet on the second day of CRCT testing in 2008. Fourth grade teacher Giselle Brown had turned in 19 answer sheets on Friday, but on the next Monday, she received back only 18 answer sheets. Additionally, her tests booklets were in a different order from when she turned them in. The missing answer sheet was reported to Principal Kelsey, and Testing Coordinator Tracey Fisher. After an extensive search, the answer sheet could not be found and the matter was reported to Cari Ryan in APS Research, Planning and Accountability. Days later, the missing answer sheet was found by Giselle Brown under a bookcase in her classroom. She was unable to explain how that had occurred.

Principal Kelsey's car was seen at the school on Saturday of the weekend the answer sheet was missing in 2008. At least one witness mentioned that other teachers' cars had been seen that day along with Principal Kelsey's, including Raine Hackler, Stacey Brundage, and Makisha Boddie. Some witnesses questioned had difficulty recalling whether the sighting of Principal Kelsey's car happened during the 2008 or 2009 CRCT. The OIR report indicates that the alleged sighting was reported in 2008.

Williams' report found that all allegations of cheating and testing improprieties by Principal Kelsey "had no merit." In a separate report, Williams found "no evidence" that Kelsey threatened teachers to meet targets or be placed on PDPs, or that she instructed teachers to give hints or answers during CRCT testing. In a June 23, 2008 letter, Superintendent Beverly Hall informed Principal Kelsey that the investigations were complete and the allegations found to be unsubstantiated.

#### C. Testimony of Witnesses

##### 1. Jennitra Oliver (Teacher)

Jennitra Oliver admitted that during testing she walked around and if several students missed a question she rephrased the question and told the students to remember what was taught in class. Oliver believes that accounted for the erasures in her class. She denied giving children the answers and denied erasing answers. She erased stray marks in her classroom and may have erased them in the conference room. Testing Coordinator Tracey Fisher was present in the conference room when stray marks were erased. Oliver could not recall if other teachers erased in the conference room. No one instructed her to erase stray marks in her classroom or the conference room. She erased the marks because she knew they were picked up by the scoring machine.

##### 2. Theresa Nickolich (Teacher)

Theresa Nickolich admitted to prompting her students during testing by pointing to questions that she noticed were incorrect and telling the student to re-read the question. She read the question more than twice but denied telling students the answer. Nickolich recalled that teachers were instructed by Testing Coordinator Tracey Fisher to erase stray marks after testing each day. She cleaned the stray marks in her classroom, and could not recall whether teachers cleaned stray marks together in the conference room. She denies changing any answers.

Nickolich stated that there was pressure to raise scores from Principal Kelsey, who was being pressured herself. Everything in APS was driven by the test scores.

3. *Giselle Brown (Teacher)*

Giselle Brown was a fourth grade teacher in 2009. She recalls the incident of the missing answer sheet that was investigated in 2008. She said that the Friday after testing began she took her test booklets and answer sheets to the conference room as usual. She and the testing coordinator, Tracey Fisher, each counted 19 booklets and 19 answer sheets. Monday morning Brown went to the conference room to pick up her tests for the last day of test administration. There were 19 test booklets but only 18 answer sheets. Brown and Fisher searched everywhere but could not find it. Brown also noticed that her test booklets were out of order. She knew that when she turned them in on Friday they were in alphabetical order. Brown found the missing answer sheet days later under a bookcase. She felt that it had to have been placed there long after the answer sheet was noted as missing because it could not have fallen in that spot. Brown believed that someone went through her students answer sheets and changed answers from wrong to right.

Brown stated that there is tremendous pressure on teachers to meet targets. It was “all about the numbers.” Principal Kelsey was no longer at the school but Brown said the current principal was also focused on the numbers and ruled with a “heavy hand.” She believed, and it was obvious to her, there was cheating at Thomasville Heights. She had several fourth grade students who could barely read simple sentences and yet did well on the CRCT.

4. *Makisha Boddie (Literacy Coach)*

Makisha Boddie was the literacy coach in 2008 and left Thomasville Heights after the 2007-2008 school year. During the 2008 CRCT, Boddie was a hall monitor. Teachers were able to pick up their tests as early as they wanted. The testing coordinator, Tracey Fisher, would sign them out. Boddie recalled the incident of the answer sheet that went missing over the weekend of the 2008 testing. It was eventually found under a bookcase in Giselle Brown’s classroom and Boddie recalled that there was something peculiar about how it was found. Boddie discussed the matter with Principal Kelsey, who admitted that she was at the school over the weekend that the answer sheet went missing. Principal Kelsey stated that she went to school to clean her office.

The administrators placed a lot of pressure on teachers to score high on the CRCT. Teachers were threatened with PDPs if their test scores were low. She heard Principal Kelsey say “if I am going to be placed on a PDP for low test scores, then so will you.” SRT-2 Executive Director Michael Pitts told teachers that they would be fired if targets were not met. Boddie was surprised that some students passed the CRCT. As the literacy coach, she knew certain students whose ability did not match their high test scores.

5. *Christopher Forrer (Teacher)*

Christopher Forrer was a fifth grade teacher in 2009 and was flagged in all subjects for high wrong-to-right erasures. He was not surprised by the number of answers changed in his class and thought there was cheating at the school. Teachers were under so much pressure that they likely changed answers themselves. Forrer thought that administrators changed answers as well. He cited numerous testing violations and irregularities. For example, during the 2009 CRCT, his students told him on the third day of testing that their answers had been erased and

corrections made. Forrer looked at the answer sheets and noticed numerous answers had been changed. He thinks there was “funny business” going on with the tests and that someone changed answers from wrong to right. Teachers could pick up their tests as early as they wanted. Teachers could be alone with the test materials for as long as an hour before testing started, and could bring the tests back late “with no questions asked.” The lack of protocols was “deliberate.”

6. Deborah Clements (Teacher)

During the 2009 CRCT, one of her students raised her hand after testing had begun and informed Deborah Clements that two or three pages of her test book had the answers already marked in it. Clements reported it to Testing Coordinator Tracey Fisher. The student was given a new test book, and a few days later the incident was written up and also reported to APS by Clements and Fisher via speakerphone from Fisher’s office. (Fisher denied this incident ever occurred, or if it had, it was not during the CRCT.) Clements was interviewed again, at which time she confirmed that it was the CRCT.

Clements suspects someone changed answers on the CRCT. She had students from lower grades who scored well on the CRCT, but lacked basic skills and could not read.

Clements was reassigned to teach second grade. She believes this was a demotion for low test scores. There was tremendous pressure exerted to ensure students performed well on the CRCT. Principal Kelsey would come back from SRT meetings and “rake the teachers over the coals” for low test scores. Test scores were tied to evaluations.

D. Testimony of Additional Witnesses

1. Stacey Brundage (Teacher)

Stacey Brundage left Thomasville Heights in 2008 and was not present for the 2009 CRCT testing. She denies being at the school on the Saturday of 2009 CRCT testing as some had reported. She thinks Lisa Hubbard may have cheated because her scores were always higher than average.

2. Ashley Beaufort (Teacher)

Ashley Beaufort said that Principal Kelsey entered her class during 2009 CRCT testing, pointed to questions, and stood beside some of the students to get them to focus.

3. Susan Young (School Secretary)

Susan Young was the school secretary in 2009. The tests were kept in the vault where student records were kept. Only she and Principal Kelsey had the key to the vault. She knew that in 2008, an answer sheet went missing over a weekend and knew Principal Kelsey was there that weekend.



4. Lisa Hubbard (Teacher)

Lisa Hubbard was flagged for high wrong-to-right erasures in all subjects. She stated that she had been suspended on allegations she had struck a student. She did not plan on returning to work for APS. There was a lot of pressure to meet targets, especially from the SRT directors and other school administrators. She denied cheating.

5. Valerie Oliver (Teacher)

Valerie Oliver was a fourth grade teacher in 2008. During the 2008 CRCT, she picked up her students' test booklets on the Monday following the first week of testing and found that they were out of order. She told the testing coordinator, Tracey Fisher, who stated that it must have been a result of how Fisher had picked them up and handed them to Oliver.

E. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Janice Kelsey (Principal)

Janice Kelsey was principal of Thomasville Heights Elementary School in 2009 and retired after the 2008-2009 school year. She presently works part-time at a charter school run by former Thomasville Heights teacher Raine Hackler. Kelsey was placed on a PDP for her last two or three years by Michael Pitts for failure to meet targets and "other reasons." She and Pitts did not get along. They had different management philosophies and styles. Principal Kelsey inherited a number of disgruntled employees who wrote an anonymous letter to Pitts about her. Pitts came to the school and conducted a survey of the employees with regard to her leadership style. She believed there was pressure in the system but tried not to pass it on. She denied telling teachers she would put them on a PDP for low test scores. Teachers who said that about her "were lying."

Principal Kelsey recalled the OIR investigations in 2008 and the missing answer sheet. Giselle Brown found the missing answer sheet behind a shelf when she was cleaning her classroom at the end of the school year. Principal Kelsey believes that the answer sheet fell behind the shelf before Brown turned them in and that her instructional coaches, Stacey Brundage and Makisha Boddie, miscounted the tests.

Regarding her car being seen at the school over the 2008 CRCT weekend when the answer sheet was missing, Principal Kelsey recalled that she went to the school that Saturday, which she usually did not do during testing week. She had her grandsons with her but could not recall her reason for going to the school that weekend. She does not recall how long she was at the school, and denies that any staff members were present.

Principal Kelsey had no idea why people would suspect her of doing anything to the tests. She said if she was going to cheat she would have done it well enough to make targets. Principal Kelsey denied going to the school on the weekend of the CRCT in 2009. She did not remember going into Emily Cohen's class during the 2008 CRCT and denied re-reading questions to Cohen's students.

Principal Kelsey was surprised at the high number of flagged classes at Thomasville Heights. She had no explanation for the erasures and did not know of anyone who would have cheated.

2. Tracey Fisher (Testing Coordinator)

Tracey Fisher was the testing coordinator in 2009 and recalled having one OIR complaint filed against her, which resulted in a suspension. She gave the wrong tests to a class of PEC students, who were all supposed to have the same version. By the time she discovered they had the wrong version, students had begun marking on the answer sheets. Fisher erased the answer sheets and returned them to the teacher with new booklets. She stated she was not trying to cheat.

There was a lot of pressure on teachers to raise test scores. Former Principal Janice Kelsey and current Principal Charles Penn threatened to put teachers on PDPs for low test scores. She recalled the incident of the missing test answer sheet from Ms. Brown's class. Fisher said she counted the sheets and there were 19 sheets turned in on Friday but on Monday they only found 18. She recalled that Brown mentioned that her test booklets were out of order. Fisher suspects that Principal Kelsey took the answer sheets to change answers and forgot to put one back. She was told by Makisha Boddie that Principal Kelsey's car was at the school on the weekend that the answer sheet went missing.

Fisher does not recall an incident during the 2009 CRCT administration concerning a test booklet given to one of Deborah Clements' students that had answers already marked. She stated that if such an incident occurred, it happened with a different type of test where the booklets are reused, and not the CRCT. Fisher said stray marks were erased in a conference room. In a previous interview, Fisher denied that stray marks were erased. Teachers were allowed to pick up their tests as early as 7:30 a.m. for the CRCT. She was following the directive of Principal Kelsey. Fisher was aware that early pick-up would provide teachers with a significant amount of time alone with the test documents.

F. Other Evidence

- In 2008-2009, Thomasville Heights met AYP.
- In 2009-2010, Thomasville Heights did not meet AYP.
- Thomasville Heights did not meet its district targets in 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010.
- One second grade teacher flagged in all subjects in 2009 was flagged again in all subjects in 2010, with even higher standard deviations for wrong-to-right erasures.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that cheating occurred at Thomasville Heights on the CRCT in 2009 and in other years. Jennitra Oliver prompted her students to change answers from wrong to right by

rephrasing questions students had missed and telling students to remember what she had taught them in class. Theresa Nickolich admitted to prompting students by pointing to questions she knew they had missed and telling them to re-read it, and by re-reading questions.

We also conclude that Testing Coordinator Tracey Fisher either facilitated or participated in cheating in 2008 and 2009.

In summary, we find Jennitra Oliver, Theresa Nickolich, Janice Kelsey and Tracey Fisher were involved in cheating on the 2009 CRCT.

Principal Janice Kelsey failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper securing for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Kelsey failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

## **FICKETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

3935 Rux Road SW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30331

Principal: Dr. Anthony Dorsey  
Testing Coordinator: Angela Thomas

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

### **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Fickett Elementary in 2009. Thirty-nine people were interviewed at Fickett, some more than once. Two teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Fickett is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions and witness testimony. Principal Anthony Dorsey failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

### **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

#### **A. 2009 vs. 2010**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	51.4	9.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	37	7
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	17(13)	7
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	7.0	3.9
High Flagged Standard Deviation	20	5.5
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.0

**B. Flagged Classrooms**

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Grade &amp; Test</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
NJIE	1 RD	5.613835169
NJIE	1 LA	5.247525305
NJIE	1 MA	3.783090582
PARKER	1 RD	3.458742598
PARKER	1 LA	3.244756486
ROMENESKO	1 RD	3.299238647
LITTLE	2 LA	5.068094291
LITTLE	2 MA	6.779296001
MARTIN	2 LA	6.876834481
MARTIN	2 MA	5.284125896
TAYLOR	2 LA	4.72562397
TICKLES	2 RD	5.9150809
TICKLES	2 LA	4.758242311
TICKLES	2 MA	5.060000744
WATKINS	2 LA	4.618315338
WATKINS	2 MA	8.606311776
CARTER	3 RD	6.82539656
CARTER	3 LA	4.924853502
CARTER	3 MA	6.605357541
KING	3 RD	3.779877173
KING	3 LA	3.903783686
REDD	3 LA	3.630615899
YOUNG	3 RD	16.47921964
YOUNG	3 LA	10.3293602
YOUNG	3 MA	8.411153143
MILES	4 RD	17.71092772
MILES	4 LA	9.970842028
MILES	4 MA	8.700386529
SCOTT	4 RD	6.378501335
SCOTT	4 LA	5.402838655
SCOTT	4 MA	5.193382083
WHEELER	4 RD	7.988916116
WHEELER	4 LA	3.140110356
WHEELER	4 MA	4.844024558
GRAY	5 RD	8.993842585
WILBOURN	5 RD	19.98720414
WILBOURN	5 MA	14.53405541

**III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

**A. Overview**

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Fickett Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 51.4% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only 20 schools in APS with a higher percentage that year.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT only six schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Fickett Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 51.4% to 9.3%.

Fourth, of the 37 flagged classrooms at Fickett Elementary School, 24 (64.8% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and five classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Fickett.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Fickett, 72.3% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 51.4% of the total classrooms in the school.

In addition, Principal Dorsey created an environment that encouraged cheating. He informed teachers of the exact number of students that needed to meet expectations on the CRCT to make APS targets. He was pressured by SRT-1 Executive Director, Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams to make targets, and he in turn pressured his teachers.

#### B. Narrative

At least two teachers cheated by prompting students to erase and change their own answers. The number of classes flagged across all subject areas, and every grade level, is consistent with the pattern at schools system-wide where teachers confessed to organized cheating by erasing.

Principal Anthony Dorsey pressured teachers to improve test scores and meet targets, threatening those who did not meet expectations with PDPs. Teachers were anxious about the pressure to raise scores and about the new, more rigorous evaluation process put in place. Those who confessed to cheating felt it was necessary to keep their jobs.

Principal Dorsey says he had the only key to the area where the tests were stored. When Testing Coordinator Angela Thomas needed access, Dorsey unlocked the door for her. The door locked automatically upon closing.

#### C. Testimony of Witnesses

##### 1. *Karen Wilbourn (Teacher)*

Karen Wilbourn was a fifth grade teacher and confessed to cheating on the CRCT in 2009.

Wilbourn admitted that she and her proctor, Wanda Patterson, gave students the answers during CRCT testing in 2009. She stated that the proctor assisted her in making answer keys, particularly for the math and reading portions of the test. She and Patterson would use the answer keys to provide students with correct answers. She stated that 2009 was the only year she cheated. Principal Dorsey told teachers that they would be put on a PDP if they did not have enough students meeting and exceeding expectations on the CRCT. She believes Principal Dorsey knew there was cheating. He made it clear that they needed to meet targets.

2. Charlene Martin (Teacher)

Charlene Martin was a second grade teacher in 2009. She confessed to using voice inflection to prompt students when reading the questions and answers on the CRCT. If she saw that a student answered a question incorrectly, she told the student to go back and check it. Martin's motivation for cheating was the pressure she felt from the administration, and because she wanted to keep her job. There was a lot of pressure on teachers to have their classes meet AYP and APS targets. Charlene Martin was told by students during her first year at Fickett that teachers had helped them in the past during testing. She wished she had reported that information to APS.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Anthony Dorsey (Principal)

We interviewed Principal Anthony Dorsey on three occasions. He was represented by counsel each time. He became principal of Fickett in 2007-2008. Principal Dorsey admitted that he informed teachers how many students needed to pass the test in order to meet their targets. He was very knowledgeable about the data concerning targets and was interested in raising the math scores at Fickett. He was the only one with access to the room where the tests were kept, and unlocked the door for the testing coordinator, Angela Thomas. He stated that Thomas secured the door as she left the room. He did not believe that cheating occurred but could not explain the high erasures at his school.

Principal Dorsey stated in his first interview that he did not feel pressure to make targets and did not understand why APS and teachers felt that "making the floor" at Convocation was important. He admitted that Davis-Williams pushed targets and told him that his job was to make targets. Fickett has never made targets under his leadership.

In his second interview, Principal Dorsey was asked to clarify his contradictory statements concerning targets. He explained that he was concerned about student achievement rather than meeting targets. In his third interview, Principal Dorsey refused to answer questions concerning why there were such high wrong-to-right erasures at Fickett in 2009. Through his counsel, he stated that he already answered that question and had nothing more to say.

2. Wanda Patterson (Teacher)

Wanda Patterson was a teacher at Fickett in 2009. She taught small groups of gifted children in several subject areas in grades one through five. Patterson served as a proctor during CRCT testing. She said Karen Wilbourn would go to particular students and point to the answer. This caused the students to erase and change the answers. Patterson denied that she also pointed out answers to students.

3. Angela Thomas (Testing Coordinator)

Angela Thomas was the testing coordinator at Fickett in 2009. She stated that Principal Dorsey had the key card to the room where the tests were kept and access to the school building after hours and on weekends. Dessie Hardwick, Mary King and Assistant Principal Shirley

Smith helped Thomas administer the test. Thomas never erased anything on students' tests or felt pressure to make targets. She stated she was never told that a particular student must pass the CRCT.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that Charlene Martin, Karen Wilbourn, and Wanda Patterson cheated on the 2009 CRCT. Based on the statistical evidence and the evidence we have found at schools with similar statistical data, we believe that the flagged teachers at Fickett cheated in the same manner. However, we lack sufficient evidence to determine which additional teachers cheated.

It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Dorsey failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and he is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.



# HUTCHINSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

650 Cleveland Avenue  
Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Principal: Dr. Rebecca Dashiell-Mitchell  
Testing Coordinator: David Brown

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Hutchinson Elementary in 2009. Twenty-one people at this school were interviewed, some more than once. Cheating at Hutchinson is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, a confession and witness testimony. Principal Rebecca Dashiell-Mitchell failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

### **A. 2009 vs. 2010**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	47	1.6
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	31	1
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	14(9)	1(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	8.1	3.6
High Flagged Standard Deviation	26.6	3.6
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.6

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teachers	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
ELLIS	1 RD	4.983861483
ELLIS	1 LA	6.464134027
ELLIS	1 MA	8.66682616
GREGOIRE	1 RD	6.49358428
GREGOIRE	1 LA	10.44392629
GREGOIRE	1 MA	8.056756575
JAMES	1 RD	8.469019887
JAMES	1 LA	9.337532558
JAMES	1 MA	11.22006373
PHILLIPS	1 RD	6.612179083
PHILLIPS	1 LA	6.664243578
PHILLIPS	1 MA	12.33001556
ROSSER	1 LA	3.284978647
POLLOCK	2 RD	6.95120196
POLLOCK	2 LA	8.75822097
POLLOCK	2 MA	7.329514704
TRUITT	2 MA	4.098384896
WILLIS	2 RD	4.144427467
MATHIS	3 RD	4.050555889
NEAL	3 RD	4.952403437
STROZIER	3 RD	8.495768181
STROZIER	3 MA	3.172082989
PATTERSON	4 RD	3.069905974
PATTERSON	4 LA	4.069629285
PATTERSON	4 MA	3.572792509
SWEDARSKY	4 RD	9.255002155
SWEDARSKY	4 LA	7.029930938
SWEDARSKY	4 MA	7.543710616
NGUYEN	5 RD	26.55535419
NGUYEN	5 LA	9.809644757
NGUYEN	5 MA	24.91448727

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts that point to the conclusion that Hutchinson Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 47% for the 2009 CRCT.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only seven schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Hutchinson Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped dramatically from 47% to 1.6%.

Fourth, of the 31 flagged classrooms at Hutchinson Elementary School, 21 (68% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and five classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard

deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at this school.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures, 72.1% were produced by the flagged classrooms, which account for only 47% of the total classrooms in the school.

Last, one teacher confessed to giving his students the answers while administering the 2009 CRCT. Teachers were surprised when low-performing students passed the test despite their poor performance on benchmark tests and in the classroom.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Hau Nguyen (Teacher)

Hau Nguyen admitted to cheating in 2009. Nguyen walked around the classroom during the test and stood over his students while they answered questions. If the student answered incorrectly, Nguyen would point to the right answer. He assisted students every fifth question or so.

Yolanda Udoh proctored for Nguyen's class during the 2009 CRCT. Nguyen believes Udoh must have noticed what he was doing. She did not come back after the fourth day of testing and he does not know whether she reported him for cheating.

When The Atlanta Journal-Constitution published the erasure analysis done by GOSA, Principal Rebecca Dashiell-Mitchell gave teachers a questionnaire that asked them to explain their high number of wrong-to-right erasures. Nguyen filled out the questionnaire and was then called to Principal Dashiell-Mitchell's office to meet with her to discuss his response. Testing Coordinator David Brown was present when Nguyen and Principal Dashiell-Mitchell met.

2. Marly Gregoire (Teacher)

When The Atlanta Journal-Constitution published the results of the wrong-to-right erasure analysis, Dashiell-Mitchell placed a one-page questionnaire in each teacher's box. The questionnaire asked the flagged teachers to write any reasons why their classroom had so many wrong-to-right erasures. Principal Dashiell-Mitchell then met with each teacher to discuss the erasure analysis and their explanations.

Gregoire was surprised that some of her students passed the CRCT despite indications that they would not pass. She suspected that Nguyen cheated because his students achieved near perfect pass rates on the test.

3. Yolanda Udoh (Proctor)

Yolanda Udoh was the proctor of Hau Nguyen's classroom during the 2009 CRCT. Udoh denied observing Nguyen assist students by giving them answers to the 2009 CRCT.

4. David Brown (Testing Coordinator)

David Brown gave the investigators the form that Principal Dashiell-Mitchell gave to the flagged teachers requesting an explanation for the flags. Principal Dashiell-Mitchell told Brown that the teachers did not write on the forms and that she did not collect them.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Dr. Rebecca Dashiell-Mitchell (Principal)

Principal Dashiell-Mitchell was interviewed at least two times over the course of this investigation. At her first interview, Dashiell-Mitchell denied conducting her own investigation and denied distributing a questionnaire regarding erasures on the 2009 CRCT. When a GBI agent showed her a copy of the questionnaire obtained from a teacher, Principal Dashiell-Mitchell remembered handing it out. She said that she could not provide a copy of the answered questionnaires because the teachers did not actually write answers, they just met to discuss them. When we interviewed Principal Dashiell-Mitchell she remembered both that she issued questionnaires (she said that she denied it to the GBI because they called it a “survey” and she called it an “audit”) and that the teachers filled out the answers. However, she was unable to give them to us because she did not keep them.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that teacher Hau Nguyen cheated on the 2009 CRCT. Based on the statistical evidence and the evidence we have found at schools with similar statistical data, we believe that other flagged teachers cheated in the same manner. However, we lack sufficient evidence to determine which additional teachers cheated.

We also find that Principal Dashiell-Mitchell failed in her ultimate responsibility for supervising testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for, the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Dashiell-Mitchell failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

# CAPITOL VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1442 Metropolitan Parkway  
Atlanta, Georgia 30310

Principal: Arlene Snowden  
Testing Coordinator: Trennis Harvey

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Capitol View Elementary in 2009. Thirty-seven people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms. Principal Arlene Snowden falsified attendance records in 2009 and in other years, and failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

### **A. 2009 vs. 2010**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	70.8	19.0
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	34	8
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	12(11)	4(3)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	11.4	4
High Flagged Standard Deviation	20.3	6.2
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	4.7	3.2

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
JONES	1 RD	7.203792952
JONES	1 LA	6.795730409
JONES	1 MA	13.17567274
ROBERTSON	1 RD	12.6333877
ROBERTSON	1 LA	13.17067211
ROBERTSON	1 MA	13.88294262
LONGINO	2 RD	5.084938216
LONGINO	2 LA	9.127838661
LONGINO	2 MA	9.654566353
MORELAND	2 LA	4.892918323
GOODMAN	3 RD	10.66126736
GOODMAN	3 LA	12.07847995
GOODMAN	3 MA	11.56960919
JACKSON	3 RD	9.740819486
JACKSON	3 LA	9.605708465
JACKSON	3 MA	10.38831197
ROSS	3 RD	12.0873275
ROSS	3 LA	15.20524426
ROSS	3 MA	20.34651763
HUMMING	4 RD	17.19047309
HUMMING	4 LA	11.5437338
HUMMING	4 MA	17.15986815
WRIGHT	4 RD	8.291637643
WRIGHT	4 LA	4.705049781
WRIGHT	4 MA	9.624676572
BENNETT	5 RD	13.98962206
BENNETT	5 LA	8.066369977
BENNETT	5 MA	16.87181048
PIRTLE	5 RD	16.51922992
PIRTLE	5 LA	8.213768677
PIRTLE	5 MA	12.10537845
SMILEY	5 RD	14.19492007
SMILEY	5 LA	6.866148885
SMILEY	5 MA	13.87975717

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several significant facts which point to the conclusion that Capitol View Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 70.8% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only six schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only one school had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 70.8% to 19%.

Fourth, of the 34 flagged classrooms at Capitol View, 32 (94% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and 20 classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five

standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations, the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Capitol View.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Capitol View, 94% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for 70.8% of the total classrooms in the school.

Last, Principal Snowden stated that erasures could be explained by teaching strategies. Capitol View teaches its children to go back and check their work, and erase answers that may be incorrect. Principal Snowden provided no reason why this method – common throughout the country – produced significantly more wrong-to-right erasures at Capitol View than most schools in Georgia. When asked if teachers changed answers at her command, Principal Snowden stated “Did cheating happen? I don’t know, I didn’t do it, I know that,” and that she “can’t make anyone do anything unless I have a gun to their heads, adults are going to be adults.”

#### B. Narrative

Capitol View had extremely high numbers of wrong-to-right erasures on the 2009 CRCT, particularly in the first, third, fourth, and fifth grades. Multiple teachers discussed students who lacked the skills to meet expectations on the 2009 CRCT, but met or exceeded expectations. Multiple teachers testified that Principal Snowden placed great pressure on them to return high scores on the CRCT.

Corlis Robertson provided an explanation for the high number of wrong-to-right erasures in the first grade. No explanation was provided for the high erasures in the third, fourth, and fifth grades.

At least one teacher acknowledged that cheating occurred on the 2009 CRCT. Principal Snowden directed an office worker to falsify attendance records.

#### C. Testimony of Witnesses

##### 1. *Tiffany Kelley (Teacher)*

Tiffany Kelley stated that teachers did not have enough time during the testing period to change the number of answers that were changed on the 2009 CRCT. Kelly believes that none of the flagged teachers would have assisted Principal Snowden in changing CRCT answer sheets because of the lack of a close relationship with her.

2. Marcus Goodman (Teacher)

When shown the 2009 CRCT erasure data for Capitol View, Marcus Goodman agreed that cheating must have occurred. Goodman denied changing any answers, but had no explanation for the high number of erasures on his students' answer sheets.

3. April Gomez-McMillian (Teacher)

April Gomez-McMillian did not administer the 2009 CRCT to any students, but served as a hall monitor. She described the pressure placed on teachers by Principal Snowden to achieve high CRCT scores. "Making the floor" was very important to Principal Snowden. Principal Snowden and Trennis Harvey analyzed the APS targets and informed the teachers how many of their students could fail to meet expectations on the CRCT. When CRCT scores were announced, Principal Snowden called all teachers into a meeting and displayed the scores. Principal Snowden praised and applauded the teachers whose students met APS targets.

4. Corlis Robertson (Teacher)

Corlis Robertson denied any knowledge of cheating on the 2009 CRCT. She testified that she and Kimberly Jones participated in a pilot teaching program in 2009. The assessments in the teaching model all required students to select multiple correct answers. She gave the following example: the test question asks the student to select all words below that have the "long e" sound in them. Two or three of the answer choices would contain the "long e" sound, and the students were required to select all correct answers to receive full credit for the question. Robertson explained that although the 2009 CRCT required students to select only one correct answer, the first grade students were confused and often selected more than one answer. She had to repeatedly instruct students to select only the best answer, and to erase all incorrect answers. Only the first grade teachers participated in this program in 2009.

5. Michael Ross (Teacher)

Michael Ross stated that the APS target system is unfair to children. He attempted to get extra help for students who struggled, but not qualify for extra assistance because their CRCT scores were too high.

APS referred Ross to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission for having a high "Caveon Index." The first time he received notification that he was under suspicion for cheating was when he received notice from the PSC. Ross was never interviewed by the Blue Ribbon Commission or anyone from APS. He stated that he never cheated, was never asked to cheat, and had no knowledge of cheating on the CRCT.

Ross stated that he saw a large decrease in Capitol View students exceeding expectations on the 2010 CRCT as opposed to the 2009 CRCT.



D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Trennis Harvey (Testing Coordinator)

Trennis Harvey stated that during the 2009 CRCT testing window, Principal Snowden only worked until lunch due to health issues. Harvey stated that he had a spare key to Snowden's office, and only he and Snowden possessed keys. Snowden left the building as soon as the tests were returned to her office, and locked her office before she left. Snowden always instructed Harvey that "she wanted to be the one to open her office and the one to be the last one to lock it to make sure everything was secured."

Trennis Harvey stated that if adults changed CRCT answers, he had no knowledge of it, and denied any unethical behavior on his part. When asked if Principal Snowden may have changed answers, Harvey replied "Well, I can only say 100% for myself. But what I will say is that she never gave me any inkling that it was occurring, or that it could be occurring." He did not believe Principal Snowden changed CRCT answer sheets.

2. Arlene Snowden (Principal)

Principal Snowden denied any knowledge of cheating on the CRCT in 2009 or any other year. Capitol View never had a testing irregularity under her tenure. She now works at the APS central office, having been transferred after the Blue Ribbon Commission Report. She believes that this investigation and the Blue Ribbon Commission were politically motivated, and that her transfer from Capitol View by APS was politically motivated as well. She believes she was targeted as a scapegoat by APS. She also stated that she does not "buy in to the whole erasure bit," meaning that she does not believe the erasure analysis to be indicative of cheating.

Principal Snowden stated that erasures could be explained by teaching strategies. Capitol View teaches its children to go back and check their work and erase answers that may be incorrect. Snowden provided no reason why this method – common throughout the country – produced significantly more wrong-to-right erasures at Capitol View than most schools in Georgia. When asked if teachers changed answers at her command, Snowden stated, "Did cheating happen? I don't know, I didn't do it, I know that." She further stated that she "can't make anyone do anything unless I have a gun to their heads, adults are going to be adults."

Snowden acknowledged that only she and Trennis Harvey had keys to access the CRCT materials in 2009.

E. Other Evidence

1. Michelle Redwine (Paraprofessional)

Michelle Redwine testified that Principal Snowden falsified attendance records. Redwine worked in the front office and was responsible for creating folders for teachers that recorded attendance and tardy records. She described one instance when such a folder was given to her by Snowden empty of records. Snowden instructed Redwine to recreate the records. Redwine understood that fewer absences should be shown. Unknown to Snowden, the teacher in question kept a second set of records allowing Redwine to accurately recreate the records. Redwine stated

the accurately recreated records were also subsequently lost, and that multiple teachers voiced complaints of similar issues with attendance records.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that Principal Arlene Snowden falsified attendance records.

It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Snowden failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

# **TOWNS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

760 Bolton Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30331

Principal: Carla Pettis  
Testing Coordinator: Dr. Dorothy Keen

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Towns Elementary School in 2009. Forty-two people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating is evidenced at Towns by high numbers of flagged classrooms. Principal Carla Pettis falsified attendance records at this school and failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

### A. 2009 vs. 2010

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	63.6	12.1
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	42	8
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	16(14)	5(3)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	8.6	4.0
High Flagged Standard Deviation	16.1	5.1
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.7	3.0

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
DYKES	1 RD	11.16874145
DYKES	1 LA	7.566044607
DYKES	1 MA	5.005126128
FOSTER	2 RD	5.675632634
FOSTER	2 LA	6.189106522
FOSTER	2 MA	5.6588774
NERO	2 MA	3.827116987
WADDEL	2 RD	4.639239175
WADDEL	2 LA	8.780351531
WADDEL	2 MA	8.470834727
CORBETT	3 RD	5.313970403
CORBETT	3 LA	6.839071744
CORBETT	3 MA	11.76788515
FARMER	3 RD	8.495768181
FARMER	3 LA	4.072435023
FARMER	3 MA	7.523044579
NASH	3 RD	6.997372147
NASH	3 LA	4.611869244
NASH	3 MA	9.66038967
TROFORT	3 RD	6.639906071
TROFORT	3 MA	4.094854428
GILBERT	4 MA	5.744326994
GREEN	4 RD	3.73568251
GREEN	4 MA	10.50930578
WEAKS	4 RD	12.36810578
WEAKS	4 LA	7.193411565
WEAKS	4 MA	3.929096979
WOOTEN	4 RD	11.51578308
WOOTEN	4 LA	15.10221601
WOOTEN	4 MA	16.14723092
BURSON	5 RD	12.70347511
BURSON	5 LA	10.30020245
BURSON	5 MA	13.86202075
MORRISON	5 RD	11.76340829
MORRISON	5 LA	11.83901344
MORRISON	5 MA	9.848021516
STEWARD	5 RD	10.16101793
STEWARD	5 LA	5.754511104
STEWARD	5 MA	15.94607529
THOMAS	5 RD	12.70347511
THOMAS	5 LA	7.528097453
THOMAS	5 MA	10.98091468

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Towns Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported to the Georgia Department of Education.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 63.6% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only 12 schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only two schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Towns Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 63.6% to 12.1%.

Fourth, of the 42 flagged classrooms at Towns Elementary School, 35 (83% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and 16 classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Towns Elementary School.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Towns, 89.1% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 63.6% of the total classrooms in the school.

Last, the statements of Principal Carla Pettis are in direct conflict with other witnesses. Principal Pettis claimed she left the school at 3:30 p.m. during CRCT testing, and that she left with Testing Coordinator Dorothy Keen. But Keen stated that she always stayed late during testing. A staff member corroborated Keen's testimony. Principal Pettis also denied hiring her mother and aunt to help proctor the CRCT. Keen saw both the mother and aunt at the school during the CRCT. Compounding the conflict, Principal Pettis refused to answer questions under oath.

## B. Testimony of Witnesses

### 1. Michelle Torrey (Office Paraprofessional)

In 2009, Michelle Torrey was a paraprofessional working in the front office where Principal Pettis' office was also located. Torrey's desk was next to the conference room off of Principal Pettis' office where the tests were primarily kept during the 2009 CRCT.

At the end of the testing period each day, teachers took the tests to the media center where they checked them in with Testing Coordinator Dr. Dorothy Keen. Keen then wheeled the tests on a cart to the conference room off of Principal Pettis' office and next to Torrey's desk. Keen was generally with the tests in the conference room throughout the afternoon. On a few occasions Principal Pettis was there as well. Around 4:30 or 5:00 p.m., the tests were taken to yet another room where they were "secured." According to Torrey, they were taken to a room "off of the back hall." Sometimes when Torrey left for the day around 5:00 p.m. the tests were still in the conference room.

Torrey saw people erasing things on the answer sheets, but she assumed they were correcting names and student identification numbers. Keen did not let the teachers put student identification numbers on the answer sheets, but insisted on doing it herself.

The room where the tests were kept was locked but Principal Pettis, Keen, the secretary Ms. Thomas, and the night custodian all had keys.

Principal Pettis hired retired teachers to assist with various events, like field day and the CRCT. Two of those teachers were Principal Pettis' mother and aunt. In 2009, they proctored during the CRCT.

Torrey kept the attendance and discipline records at Towns. Beginning in 2004, Principal Pettis instructed Torrey to delete and falsify attendance records to a level that was within the target numbers for AYP. Teachers entered the attendance for their class each day. At the end of the year, Pettis asked Torrey what the numbers were for the school. If the numbers were high, Torrey asked teachers if they had tardy slips they had "missed." Some of the veteran teachers knew what this question meant and produced false tardy slips. If the tardy slips were not enough to get the attendance numbers within the target, Principal Pettis directed Torrey to alter the absences in the computer system.

Torrey believes there was cheating at Towns on the CRCT but that it is more likely the administrators and not the teachers who cheated.

2. Chenee Gilbert (Teacher)

Chenee Gilbert no longer teaches in APS. She left the system in part because of the pressure placed on test scores. Principal Pettis placed Gilbert on a PDP for test scores in 2005 or 2006. She knows of other teachers who were placed on PDPs for test scores.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Carla Pettis (Principal)

Principal Pettis denied cheating; however, she refused to give testimony under oath. Her explanation for the abnormal number of wrong-to-right erasures is that students are taught the process of elimination.

Principal Pettis denied that her mother and aunt helped during the 2009 CRCT testing week. She believes they did assist during the 2008 CRCT.

Principal Pettis said that she left the school around 3:30 in the afternoon during CRCT testing. She and Dorothy Keen left together.

We asked Principal Pettis why she believed the Governor asked us to investigate APS. She responded that she thinks the investigation is racially motivated: "I think that the city of Atlanta, that they [white people] want the city of Atlanta back, and in order to get it back, [they] have to destroy the schools first."

2. Dr. Dorothy Keen (Testing Coordinator)

Dorothy Keen was the testing coordinator in 2009, and she denied cheating.

Each answer sheet required a student identification number. The student identification number is six digits. According to Keen, it takes approximately one second per sheet to fill in this number. If a student was new to the school their number needed to be filled in. Keen, with

assistance from the retired teachers and sometimes Principal Pettis, would check the tests to make sure all student identification numbers were present. If a student identification number was missing, Keen or one of her helpers would add the student identification number. There were only about five students whose student identification numbers were not already on the tests.

According to Dr. Keen, tests were secured in Principal Pettis' office each evening. The tests were only in the conference room for a short period of time and then were moved into Principal Pettis' office, which was then locked. Keen stayed at the school until around 5:00 or 6:00 p.m.

Principal Pettis' mother Charlotte Everett and her aunt Mary Sherman are retired teachers and helped proctor during the 2009 CRCT. Retired teachers helped to enter student identification numbers in 2009.

Keen stayed "late" in the evenings during testing.

D. Other Evidence

Kelli Augburn-Johnson, Dorothy Butler, and Gentry Weaks testified that the teachers are intimidated and are not likely to tell investigators if cheating occurred at Towns.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We have concerns about the conflicting testimony of Michelle Torrey, Dorothy Keen, and Carla Pettis regarding the entering of student identification numbers and how late the testing coordinator and principal were at the school in the afternoons. However, the evidence is not sufficient to conclude that Dorothy Keen or Principal Carla Pettis cheated.

It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Carla Pettis failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise the testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

We also find that Principal Carla Pettis directed Michelle Torrey to falsify attendance records.

# **BLALOCK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

CLOSED

Principal: Frances Thompson  
Testing Coordinators: Charla Cheatham

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Blalock Elementary in 2009. APS closed Blalock at the end of the 2008-2009 school year. However, Blalock Elementary was the primary feeder school into Harper-Archer Middle and former Blalock Principal Frances Thompson is now the principal of Harper-Archer Middle. The testimony discussed below came from interviews conducted at that school. Cheating at Blalock is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms and witness testimony. Principal Frances Thompson failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

### **A. 2009 vs. 2010**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	66.7	N/A
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	26	N/A
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	11	N/A
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	15.1	N/A
High Flagged Standard Deviation	38.2	N/A
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.9	N/A



B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
HUNT	1 MA	4.50425563
GACHETT	1 RD	3.863706346
GACHETT	1 LA	8.485545057
GACHETT	1 MA	9.153922316
MOMPOINT	2 RD	4.266953431
OKEKE	2 LA	3.855958923
HUNTER	3 RD	25.35470283
HUNTER	3 LA	21.63926106
HUNTER	3 MA	23.79024
THURMOND	3 RD	11.77386079
THURMOND	3 LA	10.33781373
THURMOND	3 MA	12.06332534
MAR HALL	3 RD	14.94355801
MAR HALL	3 LA	11.31142492
MAR HALL	3 MA	11.94334015
GRAVES	4 RD	8.493858299
GRAVES	4 LA	7.93008065
FLOOD	4 RD	19.58507323
FLOOD	4 LA	17.52580503
FLOOD	4 MA	13.20184625
JEFFERSON	5 RD	21.85147016
JEFFERSON	5 LA	19.1172379
JEFFERSON	5 MA	38.22817627
BOYD	5 RD	16.47685954
BOYD	5 LA	21.33040312
BOYD	5 MA	30.97232589

**III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Blalock was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 66.7% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only eleven schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only two schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Blalock.

Third, of the 26 flagged classrooms at Blalock, 22 (85% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and 17 classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Blalock.

Fourth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Blalock, 94.4% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 66.7% of the total classrooms in the school.

Finally, current Harper-Archer principal Frances Thompson was the principal at Blalock in 2009. A number of teachers at Harper-Archer believed there was cheating at Blalock. A teacher also told us that students from Blalock seemed to have learned that cheating was acceptable and often cheated at Harper-Archer. There have been conversations among teachers at Harper-Archer that Frances Thompson was brought to Harper-Archer by Tamara Cotman because she cheated at Blalock and Cotman wanted her to cheat at Harper-Archer to get test scores up.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Kelli Koen (Teacher)

Kelli Koen testified that students in her classes that had previously attended Blalock talked about their teachers at Blalock giving them answers on the CRCT. Koen often talked with other Harper-Archer teachers about how many of their students had inflated test scores from elementary school.

2. Malika Syphertt (Teacher)

Malika Syphertt believes that there was cheating at Blalock. The students in her classroom who went to Blalock for elementary school are accustomed to cheating and attempt to cheat “regularly.” She has taught sixth grade students who cannot multiply—a skill they should have learned in elementary school.

Syphertt heard that former Harper-Archer principal Michael Milstead was asked to leave because Harper-Archer had not met AYP in two years and SRT-4 Director Cotman wanted a new principal who would get test scores up.

3. Jerry Willard (Teacher)

Jerry Willard testified that he has taught students that came from Blalock Elementary and he felt they were very far behind academically.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Frances Thompson (Principal)

Principal Thompson denied that there was cheating at Blalock on the 2009 CRCT.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

The evidence suggests someone at Blalock cheated. However, we lack sufficient evidence to determine who specifically engaged in cheating.

We conclude that Principal Frances Thompson failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for, the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Frances Thompson failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and

adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

# **WHITEFOORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

35 Whitefoord Avenue, SE  
Atlanta, GA 30317

Principal: Patricia Lavant  
Testing Coordinator: Shaun German-Tucker

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Whitefoord Elementary in 2009. Thirty-two people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating at Whitefoord is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms. Principal Patricia Lavant failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

### **A. 2009 vs. 2010**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	59.3	13.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	32	6
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	14(9)	5(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	7.0	4.5
High Flagged Standard Deviation	12.9	6.0
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.5	3.1

**B. Flagged Classrooms**

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Grade &amp; Test</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
ALEXANDER	1 MA	5.264860448
RICHARDSON	1 MA	3.967454252
CANTER CAIN	2 MA	3.540054612
ROSALES	2 RD	9.475066106
ROSALES	2 LA	4.601887446
ROSALES	2 MA	7.368520452
BOYANTON	3 RD	5.791856405
BOYANTON	3 LA	4.003054588
BOYANTON	3 MA	9.454887209
CHARLES	3 RD	5.256071631
CHARLES	3 LA	5.464209762
CHARLES	3 MA	5.961345377
WILSON	3 RD	3.851400073
HERBERT	4 RD	4.494680016
HERBERT	4 LA	4.660405272
HERBERT	4 MA	4.071482246
JOYNER KNIGHT	4 RD	10.51475583
JOYNER KNIGHT	4 LA	4.835073703
JOYNER KNIGHT	4 MA	6.099255533
SIMPSON	4 RD	9.795525526
SIMPSON	4 LA	8.196941788
SIMPSON	4 MA	5.713593313
WASHINGTON	4 MA	3.832842202
BRADLEY JAMES	5 RD	11.87061022
BRADLEY JAMES	5 LA	11.03151915
BRADLEY JAMES	5 MA	11.80964867
BYRD	5 RD	12.98517898
BYRD	5 LA	8.032027764
BYRD	5 MA	9.53207868
COLLIER	5 RD	12.41750665
COLLIER	5 LA	4.905974642
COLLIER	5 MA	5.10644017

**III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

There are several facts which point to a conclusion that Whitefoord Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 59.3% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only 14 schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only two had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Whitefoord Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 59.3% to 13.3%.

Fourth, of the 32 flagged classrooms at Whitefoord Elementary, 21 (66% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and six classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state

mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Whitefoord Elementary School.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Whitefoord, 86% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 59.4% of the total classrooms in the school

Principal Patricia Lavant was the principal at Whitefoord Elementary School for the entire 11½ years she was employed by APS. She remained past her eligible retirement time because the erasure scandal was “her mess to fix” and happened under her watch. She remained to do what she could for the teachers and the school. She said there was lots of pressure to improve on students’ scores but not enough to do something immoral. We believe her, but conclude she failed in her managerial role. We commend her acceptance of responsibility for the situation we found at her school and find her acceptance of responsibility to be rare in APS.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

From all of the above, we believe that there is no other rational conclusion but that there was widespread cheating at Whitefoord Elementary School on the 2009 CRCT and that the principal should certainly have known of this misconduct.

Principal Patricia Lavant failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation that Ms. Lavant failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

## **BOYD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

1891 Johnson Rd. NW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30318

Principal: Emalyn Foreman  
Testing Coordinator: Lovie Alridge

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

### **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Boyd Elementary in 2009. Thirty-six people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating at Boyd is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms. Principal Emalyn Foreman failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

### **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

#### **A. 2009 vs. 2010**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	56.1	15.7
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	32	8
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	13(11)	6(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	8.5	4.1
High Flagged Standard Deviation	23.3	6.3
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.3	3.2

## B. Flagged Classrooms

Teachers	Grades & Test	Standard Deviation
JONES, D.	1 RD	3.392897049
JONES, D.	1 LA	3.614377155
JONES, D.	1 MA	4.72146137
NASH	1 LA	3.768145723
NASH	1 MA	15.49960551
DREW	1 LA	5.946929996
DREW	1 MA	4.413271695
HOLLIS	1 RD	11.00600298
HOLLIS	1 LA	13.04612483
HOLLIS	1 MA	14.47479705
BISHOP	2 RD	19.64372563
BISHOP	2 LA	22.68786194
BISHOP	2 MA	23.30240378
NELSON	2 RD	9.902731254
NELSON	2 LA	4.401081116
NELSON	2 MA	6.631521845
BENTON	2 RD	10.8615193
BENTON	2 LA	7.17956838
BENTON	2 MA	6.574156055
CLARK	2 RD	5.260713844
CLARK	2 LA	3.784059819
MCCORMICK	3 RD	12.16623541
MCCORMICK	3 LA	8.913555206
MCCORMICK	3 MA	8.686863626
MOMON	3 RD	4.250014593
MOMON	3 LA	8.233257646
MOMON	3 MA	3.27411782
EVERETT	4 RD	7.459472938
SAMUELS	5 LA	3.925887521
ARCHIBALD	5 RD	3.393715479
ARCHIBALD	5 LA	5.763550874
ARCHIBALD	5 MA	4.416404002

## III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

### A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Boyd Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported to the Georgia Department of Education.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 56.1% for the 2009 CRCT. With state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 56.1% to 15.7%.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only three schools had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Boyd.

Third, of the 32 flagged classrooms at Boyd, 20 (62.5% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and nine classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the State mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Boyd.



Fourth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Boyd, 86.1% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 56.1% of the total classrooms in the school.

B. Narrative

Cheating occurred on the 2009 CRCT by teachers or administrators erasing and changing student answers. Boyd Elementary has an open concept design in which classrooms have no doors. The tests were locked in a cabinet in the media center. Principal Foreman had the only key to the cabinet; the media specialist and Principal Foreman had the only keys to the media center. Although no witness testified to seeing anyone changing answers, the weight of the evidence indicates that cheating occurred at this school.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. *Ephigenia Paulk (Teacher)*

Ephigenia Paulk was a Spanish teacher at Boyd in 2009. Paulk claimed she had not witnessed cheating but believed cheating has occurred since the 1990s based on her observations of students' inability to read. She stated that Principal Foreman did not like teachers to report disciplinary issues because she expected teachers to resolve it on their own. Principal Foreman told her to change an F to a passing grade on more than one occasion. Principal Foreman has an inner circle including Tiffany Momon, Rhonda Nelson, Tiffany Hollis, and Mignon Hardemon.

2. *Shanay Benton (Teacher)*

Shanay Benton denied knowledge of cheating on the CRCT. On a couple of occasions while passing out her test booklets she noticed a few of them were out of order. Benton also indicated that Principal Foreman and Testing Coordinator Lovie Alridge pressured teachers to improve test scores, meet targets and "make the floor." Benton believed that some targets were unattainable.

3. *Lovie Alridge (Testing Coordinator)*

Lovie Alridge was the Testing Coordinator in 2009. She did not erase answers or return to the school after hours. She did not believe that any teachers erased answers but thought that the erasures were caused by students changing answers.

4. *Shanelle Clark (Teacher)*

Shanelle Clark stated that she was not surprised by her students' scores. Lovie Alridge appeared to be very strict about testing protocol. Clark stated that Principal Foreman asked her to change an F to a passing grade because Clark had not followed proper procedures before giving the F. She resigned because she felt Principal Foreman made false reports against her when she was eligible for tenure. Principal Foreman had a close relationship with Alridge, Mignon Hardemon, Amzie Samuels and Tiffany Momon.

5. Chalita Bishop (Teacher)

Chalita Bishop claimed it was impossible for a teacher to cheat on the CRCT. The testing coordinator had strict protocols. Bishop thought it was strange that particular students passed the test, but was sure that cheating had not occurred in her classroom.

6. Mignon Hardemon (Counselor)

Mignon Hardemon was the counselor in 2009 and assisted Alridge with the tests. She recorded her interviews with us on her cellular phone. Hardemon had no explanation for the high wrong-to-right erasures.

7. Emalyn Foreman (Principal)

Emalyn Foreman was the principal of Boyd in 2009. She became principal in the 2008-2009 school year. She denied any cheating or knowledge of cheating. Foreman's explanation for the high wrong-to-right erasures was that students were taught to go back over their tests. She was not surprised by the students' high scores but could offer no explanation for the drop in scores in 2010. Principal Foreman denied she felt pressure to meet targets. She stated that Boyd did not meet its targets but had met AYP.

Regarding allegations that she had told teachers to change an F to a passing grade, Principal Foreman explained that there was a process that had to be followed before a student could receive an F. Parents had to be notified and made part of the process and documentation had to be produced to justify the grade.

Principal Foreman claimed that she had the only key to the cabinet in the media center where the tests were stored. She also had a key to the media center. Both keys were on a chain and locked in her desk. Only the testing coordinator had access to the tests during the testing window.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We believe there is no other conclusion but that there was widespread cheating at Boyd Elementary School on the 2009 CRCT and that the principal should have known of this.

Principal Foreman failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation, that Principal Foreman failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

# **WEST MANOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

570 Lynhurst Drive, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30311

Principal: Cheryl Twyman  
Testing Coordinator: Tiffany Harvey

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at West Manor Elementary in 2009. Thirty-two people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating at West Manor is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms. Principal Cheryl Twyman failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

### **A. 2009 vs. 2010**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	54.9	28.9
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	28	13
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	13(9)	8(3)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	7.9	6.1
High Flagged Standard Deviation	18.5	19.8
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.3	3.2

B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
ANDERSON	1 MA	3.908283396
DALLAS	1 MA	5.616478234
WHITAKER GRAHAM	1 RD	5.715533773
WHITAKER GRAHAM	1 LA	4.742821759
WHITAKER GRAHAM	1 MA	8.416864645
PAGE	2 LA	5.034765376
PAGE	2 MA	3.338647544
WILDER	2 LA	4.50232861
CARTER	3 RD	7.673099015
CARTER	3 LA	5.322826534
CARTER	3 MA	12.82614325
LAWRENCE	3 RD	9.140511243
LAWRENCE	3 LA	4.733632175
LAWRENCE	3 MA	14.38694627
LEWIS GAMBLE	3 RD	13.82862802
LEWIS GAMBLE	3 LA	8.995334767
LEWIS GAMBLE	3 MA	18.49699548
TURNER	3 RD	11.59467722
TURNER	3 LA	6.2593922
BULLARD	4 RD	5.623989755
JASPER	4 RD	6.343220061
JASPER	4 MA	7.931151075
BLOXSON	5 RD	5.927166066
BLOXSON	5 LA	4.351273098
BLOXSON	5 MA	9.752388171
FERGUSON	5 RD	6.827040213
FERGUSON	5 LA	6.941173209
FERGUSON	5 MA	12.42261959

III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

There are several facts which point to a conclusion that West Manor Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 54.9% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only 17 schools in APS with a higher percentage.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only four had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than West Manor.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped from 54.9% to 28.9%.

Fourth, of the 28 flagged classrooms at West Manor, 22 (78% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and six classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at West Manor.

Fifth, is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures 82% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 54.9% of the total classrooms in the school

Last, Principal Twyman had no explanation for the high standard deviations on the 2009 CRCT at West Manor, and was barely cooperative.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We believe that there is no other rational conclusion but that there was widespread cheating at West Manor Elementary School on the 2009 CRCT and that the principal should have known of this misconduct.

Principal Cheryl Twyman failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Cheryl Twyman failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

## TURNER MIDDLE SCHOOL

CLOSED

Principal: Karen Riggins-Taylor  
Testing Coordinators: Melanie Robinson & Keala Edwards-Cooper

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

### **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Turner Middle in 2009. Two people were interviewed at this school. Cheating is evidenced at Turner Middle by a high number of flagged classrooms. Principal Karen Riggins-Taylor failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

### **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

#### **A. 2009 vs. 2010**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	54	9.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	34	5
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	18(13)	3(2)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	8.4	3.2
High Flagged Standard Deviation	26	3.7
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.2	3.0

## B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
BROWN	6 RD	10.51882653
BROWN	6 MA	16.23933127
CULPEPPER	6 RD	8.670894583
CULPEPPER	6 MA	25.97920266
DAVIS	6 RD	8.20082255
DAVIS	6 LA	4.467418713
DAVIS	6 MA	25.14705933
WORD	6 RD	5.598186093
WORD	6 MA	7.801212402
JONES, B.	7 RD	3.569289253
BALL RIVNER	7 RD	3.371698651
BALL RIVNER	7 LA	4.784116263
BALL RIVNER	7 MA	8.320695667
CLAY	7 MA	5.401134352
LEONARD	7 LA	4.783422885
LEONARD	7 MA	15.04301674
THOMAS	7 MA	15.43576822
BAYNES	8 RD	3.403346392
BLAIR	8 RD	3.526341592
BLAIR	8 MA	16.55822821
CARR	8 RD	5.197767678
CARR	8 MA	4.679822562
CHAPMAN	8 RD	4.738508821
CHAPMAN	8 LA	3.193839303
CHAPMAN	8 MA	5.173015929
CRAWFORD	8 RD	4.004065578
CRAWFORD	8 MA	14.15098834
MUKONO	8 MA	5.567967465
NUNN	8 RD	9.979282261
NUNN	8 MA	9.18464465
SAWYER	8 RD	8.23781398
SAWYER	8 MA	4.527173489
SMITH	8 RD	5.850408204
SMITH	8 MA	5.219466222

## III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

### A. Overview

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that Turner Middle School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 54% for the 2009 CRCT. With state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 54% to 9.3%.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only four had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than Turner Middle School.

Third, of the 34 flagged classrooms at Turner Middle School, 22 (63% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and eight classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state

mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Turner Middle School.

Fourth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures 85% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 54% of the total classrooms in the school.

B. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Mary Gordon (Teacher)

Mary Gordon taught at Turner Middle School in 2009 and now teaches at Benjamin Carson. Gordon was given the common assessment test and an answer sheet one year and told to administer the test. She refused to administer the tests and when she told her supervisors about the incident later, she was told that she misunderstood. She was told the assessment and accompanying answer sheet were meant to be “teaching tools,” but Gordon said it was clear she was supposed to cheat. She was later placed on a PDP.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Karen Riggins-Taylor (Principal)

Principal Riggins-Taylor denied cheating but did not have an alternate explanation for the unusually high number of wrong-to-right erasures. She stated that she always made a point not to go into the halls or the classrooms during testing. She stayed in the main office. She did not have an explanation for why this was her practice.

D. Other Evidence

OIR investigated allegations of cheating at Turner in the spring of 2009. An anonymous complainant alleged that Principal Riggins-Taylor and other teachers cheated on the 2009 writing test. He or she also alleged that Principal Riggins-Taylor organized a group of teachers to cheat on the 2009 CRCT.

APS hired Stan Williams to investigate the allegations. Williams found that the claims were unsubstantiated.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

From all of the above, we believe that there is no other rational conclusion but that there was widespread cheating at Turner Middle School on the 2009 CRCT and that the principal should have known of this.

Principal Riggins-Taylor failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in the investigation that Principal Karen Riggins-Taylor failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for,



falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

## WHITE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1890 Detroit Avenue  
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

Principal: Tamarah Larkin-Currie  
Testing Coordinator: Kevin Wright

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

### I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at White Elementary in 2009. Twenty-nine people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating at White is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms. Principal Tamarah Larkin-Currie failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

### II. STATISTICAL DATA

#### A. 2009 vs. 2010

	2009	2010
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	47.4	22.9
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	27	11
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	14(11)	8(3)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	6.8	4.2
High Flagged Standard Deviation	18.8	5.7
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.2

#### B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade & Test	Standard Deviation
ANDREWS	1 LA	3.093352558
ANDREWS	1 MA	13.31846401
DICKENS	1 LA	4.305045861
DICKENS	1 MA	6.582281814
WRIGHT	2 MA	5.396188472
GILBERT JACKSON	2 MA	3.095028739
HOWARD	3 RD	5.696759054
HOWARD	3 MA	7.216407716
MOMON	3 RD	18.77228641
MOMON	3 MA	10.22071985
YOUNGINER	3 RD	4.019487408
YOUNGINER	3 MA	12.2710999
BLOUNT	4 RD	9.625215713
BLOUNT	4 MA	4.500538231
NEGUSSE	4 RD	4.109736232
NEGUSSE	4 MA	3.156223239
BARRETT	5 RD	3.761841042
BARRETT	5 MA	4.00108088
CARVIL	5 MA	10.32101268
CONYERS	5 RD	9.50849652
CONYERS	5 MA	5.544520999
DONDELL	5 RD	10.30434773
DONDELL	5 LA	3.400448928
DONDELL	5 MA	5.161987619
EDWARDS	5 RD	8.182077833
EDWARDS	5 LA	4.58897914
EDWARDS	5 MA	3.727487447

### **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

There are several facts which point to the conclusion that White Elementary School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 47.4% for the 2009 CRCT. There were only 23 schools in APS with a higher percentage in 2009.

Second, of the approximately 1,800 non-APS schools in the state taking the 2009 CRCT, only six had a higher percentage of flagged classrooms than White Elementary School.

Third, with state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 47.4% to 22.9%.

Fourth, of the 27 flagged classrooms at White Elementary School, 15 (55.6% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and six classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at White Elementary School.

Fifth is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at White, 77% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 47.4% of the total classrooms in the school.

Sixth, Kevin Wright, the Instructional Liaison Specialist at White Elementary during the 2009 CRCT, stated only Principal Larkin-Currie had both keys to her office and the conference room within her office where CRCT materials were stored when not being used for testing. She thus had sole access to the stored tests at White.

Last, Larkin-Currie stated in her February 2, 2011, interview that she believed students were responsible for the erasures. She further stated she had no knowledge or belief of how cheating could have occurred at White Elementary. In her May 10, 2010, interview by KPMG representatives as a part of the Blue Ribbon Commission investigation, she stated as a fact that no teacher would cheat. It is apparent Larkin-Currie was out of touch with what was going on in her school.

### **IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

Principal Tamarah Larkin-Currie failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of and proper security for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion from the statistical data and the other evidence secured in this investigation that Principal Tamarah Larkin-Currie failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

## HARPER ARCHER MIDDLE SCHOOL

130 Trinity Avenue SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303-3626

Principal: Michael Milstead  
Testing Coordinator: Mary Brooks

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

### **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Harper Archer Middle in 2009. Fifty-two people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Although no one confessed, the teachers, almost unanimously, agree that cheating occurred. Cheating at Harper Archer is evidenced by witness testimony.

### **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

#### A. 2009 vs. 2010

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	24.1	0.7
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	34	1
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	26(4)	1(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	15.8	3.2
High Flagged Standard Deviation	34.7	3.2
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.8	3.2

## B. Flagged Classrooms

Teacher	Grade& Test	Standard Deviation
AXTEL	6 MA	12.03118873
BOWERS	6 MA	28.16160923
BROWN	6 RD	5.320535643
BROWN	6 LA	3.778722147
BROWN	6 MA	20.0207102
DEEPNARIN	6 RD	22.62421034
DEEPNARIN	6 LA	13.33491863
DEEPNARIN	6 MA	27.13603784
GOODWIN	6 MA	22.48896968
KOEN	6 MA	5.451050354
MOBLEY	6 MA	26.91451486
STARR	6 MA	7.484407902
WILLIAMS	6 MA	8.80465121
GLENN	7 MA	13.4282406
JONES	7 MA	9.893280264
LESLIE	7 RD	9.878794894
LESLIE	7 LA	6.430200754
LESLIE	7 MA	21.61988291
MAY	7 MA	17.85009224
MILLS	7 MA	13.79356918
PRESIDENT	7 RD	5.744667327
WILLARD	7 MA	15.84628142
BROWN	8 MA	14.89348894
DEEPNARAIN	8 MA	4.582951024
JONES, N	8 MA	13.69397201
JONES, T	8 RD	34.6715554
JONES, T	8 LA	19.66876267
JONES, T	8 MA	15.76473105
LEFTWICH	8 MA	21.15254429
LOVETT	8 MA	19.63901724
MILLEDGE	8 MA	13.31518156
PURNELL	8 MA	19.39589402
STALLWORTH	8 MA	13.84211581
SYPHERTT	8 MA	29.48081698

## III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

### A. Overview

There are several significant facts which point to the conclusion that Harper Archer Middle School was not managed to ensure that the 2009 CRCT results were accurately reported.

First, the percentage of flagged classrooms is 24.1% for the 2009 CRCT. With state monitors present in 2010, the percentage of flagged classrooms dropped significantly from 24.1% to 0.7%.

Second, of the 34 flagged classrooms at Harper Archer 32 (94% of the total) had standard deviations that exceeded five, and 24 classrooms exceeded ten standard deviations. At five standard deviations, the probability that the number of erasures occurred without adult intervention, or cheating, is no better than one in a million. At ten standard deviations the probability is no better than one in a trillion. This signifies that the deviations from the state mean were, for a number of classrooms, a strong indication of cheating on a broad scale at Harper Archer.

Third is the individual student wrong-to-right (WTR) erasure analysis. Of the WTR erasures at Harper Archer 69% were produced by the flagged classrooms which account for only 24.1% of the total classrooms in the school.

Finally, the majority of the teachers interviewed believed cheating occurred. The teachers' consensus is the administrators and SRT-4 personnel cheated. The teachers also believe that Principal Milstead left Harper Archer because SRT-4 Executive Director Tamara Cotman wanted him to cheat and he refused.

#### B. Narrative

Harper Archer Middle School has historically struggled in math. Low math scores and a 20% special education population prevented Harper Archer from making AYP year after year. Harper Archer had not made AYP for at least the last three years and was on the State's Needs Improvement List in the 2008-2009 school year. Tamara Cotman, whose office was located in the same building as Harper Archer, put pressure on Principal Michael Milstead and the math coaches (Barbara Bienemy and Arn St. Cyr) to improve math scores and make AYP. Cotman put Principal Milstead on a PDP. Milstead said he understood that if Harper Archer did not make AYP in 2009, he would be fired. Cotman made it clear to Milstead that the key to staying employed by APS was to make AYP "by any means necessary."

Principal Milstead believed that Cotman was more interested in the test scores than the students. Principal Milstead refused to pressure teachers about scores. He explicitly instructed teachers they were not to do anything unethical. Under Milstead, the school made steady, but incremental improvements. In early 2009, prior to the CRCT, Principal Milstead announced that he was leaving APS at the end of the school year because of differences with the administration. Although he did not specifically name Cotman, the teachers knew that she constantly threatened Milstead with his job if the school did not make AYP. The teachers and staff suspected that Cotman fired Milstead because he refused to cheat to get scores up.

Milstead expressed his concern at a principals' meeting that too many students arrived at Harper Archer from the "feeder" elementary schools with exemplary CRCT scores, but these students were several grade levels behind. Milstead suggested that the elementary and middle school principals work together more and share information to address this problem. This meeting occurred in May 2008. In August of 2008, Cotman met with Milstead and told him that the principals were very upset about his comments. Cotman was angry and gave Milstead a verbal reprimand. Later, she told him she would not be renewing his contract. Milstead resigned instead.

Teachers were shocked at the large jumps in math scores on the 2009 CRCT. Many teachers discussed that the math scores could not be legitimate. They knew their students could not have scored so well. Teachers described a Special Education math student who could not use a calculator, but exceeded on the CRCT. Students who could not read passed the CRCT. One teacher reported that one of her students slept through the entire test, but still passed.

Teachers were not surprised to learn that Harper Archer was flagged and that 25 of the 34 flagged classes were math classes. Virtually every teacher at Harper Archer believed that

cheating occurred. Not one teacher believed that Principal Milstead was involved in cheating. Teachers uniformly pointed to administrators and SRT-4 personnel who had access to the tests. The individuals on the testing team with access to the tests included: Testing Coordinator Mary Brooks, ILS Sharon Green, Special Education Director Tanya Woods, math coaches Barbara Bienemy and Arn St. Cyr, and SRT-4's Model Teacher Leader, Diamond Jack. Principal Milstead and his secretary, Ms. Westbrooks, and certain SRT-4 personnel, including Tamara Cotman, had access to the vault where the tests were stored.

The day after the math portion of the test was given in 2009, the custodian, Joie Phillips, went to the SRT-4 office to change out a water cooler when he heard some of the SRT-4 staff discussing that the students were "doing good on the test." Mr. Phillips shared this information with some of the teachers.

C. Testimony of Witnesses

1. Michael Milstead (Principal)

Principal Milstead worked at Harper Archer Middle School from 2006 to 2009. Tamara Cotman placed Milstead on a PDP two out of the three years he was employed at Harper Archer because the school did not make AYP targets. Even though the school showed growth, because they did not make AYP or targets, Milstead scored below expectations on his evaluations. Mr. Milstead attributes the challenges at Harper Archer to a 20% special education population. The state average is approximately 7-8%. The school also historically struggled in math and science, but showed progress over the years he served as principal. Milstead believed his math teachers worked hard and spent a lot of time tutoring students and developing strategies to assist them. Cotman made it clear on several occasions that Milstead would be without a job if the school did not make AYP. Cotman did not want Harper Archer in the "needs improvement" category again. Principal Milstead understood Cotman wanted him to make AYP "by any means necessary." It was clear to Principal Milstead that Cotman's primary concern was test scores, not the students.

Principal Milstead resigned from APS in 2009 after Cotman told him she would not be renewing his contract. Milstead believes that Cotman did this because of comments he made at a principals' meeting in May 2008. During that meeting, the principals were talking about the CRCT. Milstead expressed that a lot of students arriving at Harper Archer from the elementary schools showed exemplary CRCT scores from fifth grade, yet were multiple grade levels behind academically. Milstead expressed his desire that the principals work together and share information to eliminate this problem. In August of 2008, Cotman told him the principals were very upset about what he said at the meeting. One principal wanted Cotman to do something about his remarks. Cotman was angry with Milstead and gave him a verbal reprimand.

When the 2009 CRCT scores were published, Principal Milstead was astonished by how well the eighth grade students had performed as a whole, but particularly by the double-digit jump in math scores. Milstead had been in administration for a decade and had never seen double-digit gains in one subject area.

Milstead could not explain the high number of erasures. Cheating could not have occurred during the school day without him knowing about it. Only those with keys and access to the tests could be responsible. The tests were stored in a vault in one of the hallways. Milstead, and his secretary, Selitha Westbrook, had a key. Testing Coordinator Mary Brooks either had a key as well or she used Ms. Westbrook's key. Principal Milstead assumed Cotman also had a key to the vault. Cotman had access to the building as well, as did some of her SRT-4 employees. On some mornings, Principal Milstead reported to school early and the model teacher leaders from Cotman's office were already there. One of the SRT-4 employees was Model Teacher Leader Diamond Jack. She was very close with Executive Director Cotman and was "not a friend of Harper Archer." SRO Campbell and ILS Green were also close to Cotman.

Principal Milstead did not remember anyone staying late the week of testing and added that he tried to get everyone out of the school when testing was over. No one should have been in the building during the weekend after testing. Principal Milstead was surprised at the length of time the test documents remained in the school when testing was over.

During the 2008-2009 school year, Milstead noticed that more SRT employees were present during the week of testing than in years past. Typically only one SRT-4 representative would be at the school, but that year there were two or three additional SRT employees at the school.

2. Lebroyce Sublett (Assistant Principal)

Lebroyce Sublett served as the assistant principal at Harper Archer beginning in 2006-2007. Sublett said Principal Milstead left Harper Archer because he was forced out by Cotman, who wanted higher CRCT scores to meet AYP and APS targets. It was implied at APS that if you did not make targets, you would lose your job, and he saw this happen to others. Sublett and Principal Milstead were both put on a PDP by Cotman because of the performance of the school. Sublett and Principal Milstead refused to do anything unethical, but after being put on a PDP repeatedly, Milstead began looking for a new job. Cotman wanted Milstead to put teachers on a PDP. Principal Milstead was told that if he would not put the teachers on PDP he would be put on one himself. Sublett knew that PDPs were used to get rid of teachers who did not "fit the mold." Milstead refused.

Cotman encouraged Principal Milstead and Assistant Principal Sublett to visit Parks Middle School, to see what Parks was doing "right." They visited Parks, and were not surprised that they saw nothing extraordinary going on. They believed Parks' scores were achieved by cheating.

Sublett suspects the SRT and model teacher leaders are responsible for the erasures that occurred at Harper Archer. SRT employees had access to the building and the secure storage area.

3. Deborah Mills (Special Education Teacher)

Deborah Mills was surprised at the high number of WTR erasures on the CRCT at Harper Archer. She did not recall any excessive erasing during the testing for her special education students. She did hear regular education teachers discussing that they were surprised by the



results for the math section of the CRCT. Mills believed it was clear something happened with regard to the math portion of the CRCT and states that APS created a culture where testing was “do or die.”

4. Renee Goodwin (Teacher)

Renee Goodwin has been a teacher at Harper Archer since 2005. Goodwin reported that she was shocked that her classroom was flagged and wondered what happened. The math scores in 2008-2009 increased significantly and the increase was not consistent with the work that students did throughout the year. There were students that passed or exceeded that should not have passed according to projections by the teachers.

The teachers at Harper Archer provided a projection list to the administration, referred to as “bubble list.” This list projected how each student in each class would perform on the CRCT.

5. Robin Glenn (Teacher)

Robin Glenn was a teacher at Harper Archer from 2006 until January 2011 when she was transferred to Perkerson Elementary. Harper Archer always struggled in math. The students at Harper Archer could barely do their multiplication tables. When Glenn saw the 2009 CRCT scores, she was shocked. Some special education students scored higher than gifted students in math. Glenn does not believe that teachers or administrators changed the students’ tests.

6. Brandy Williams (Teacher)

Brandy Williams began working at Harper Archer during the 2008-2009 school year. Williams was surprised by several students in her class who passed the CRCT. She described one student in particular that failed in class all year, but passed the CRCT. Williams recalls providing a projection sheet of how she expected her students to perform on the CRCT to ILS Green, Principal Milstead and possibly the math coach, Arn St. Cyr.

Williams denied erasing anything on her students’ tests or doing anything to trigger her students to erase. Cotman and Principal Milstead pressured Green and St. Cyr with regard to improving math scores. During content meetings, Green and St. Cyr would give the faculty a hard time about improving math scores as well.

Williams left immediately after school during testing, but recalled that Green, as well as the other instructional coaches, worked late.

Principal Milstead put Williams on a PDP for low test scores after her first year at Harper Archer because Cotman instructed him to do so.

7. Sheena Simmons (Teacher)

Sheena Simmons arrived at Harper Archer in 2008 under the Teach for America program. During the time she was employed at Harper Archer there were four different principals assigned to the school. She described the climate at Harper Archer as a negative atmosphere. She felt that the teachers were “setup” because of all the change and instability among the administration.

Mr. Milstead was the principal in 2008-2009, but left because he had one idea of what was best for the students and other people had different ideas. Simmons did not believe that Principal Milstead would cheat or erase answers on students' tests. Cotman told the principals that they needed to make AYP "by any means necessary." Principal Milstead stressed that teachers should not do anything they felt would be wrong.

When confronted with the erasure analysis, Simmons was suspicious of the amount of erasures from wrong to right. Simmons was concerned that 36 questions were erased from wrong to right.

8. Malika Syphert (Teacher)

Malika Syphert administered the CRCT in 2009. She placed her students in alphabetical order in rows. After administering the test, she picked up the tests in alphabetical order and returned them in that fashion. Sometimes the testing documents would no longer be in alphabetical order when she picked them up the next day. Syphert said this could have been because of the makeup tests, which were administered by Testing Coordinator Brooks.

Syphert recalled conversations among teachers about former principal Michael Milstead refusing to cheat resulting in Cotman asking him to leave. Cotman was considered an authoritarian and a dictator. Frances Thompson replaced Principal Milstead. Cotman and Thompson were close.

When the teachers received the 2009 CRCT results, they did not want to share them with the students. The math teachers believed the math scores were inflated. Two teachers expressed their concerns about these math scores to St. Cyr and Bienemy, the math coaches.

Syphert was not surprised when Harper Archer was flagged because of the inflated math scores.

9. Kelli Koen (Teacher)

Kelli Koen denied knowledge of, or participation in, cheating. She did not see any students erasing excessively during testing and said she would have noticed if students had erased excessively. When she learned Harper Archer was one of the flagged schools, she discussed this with Brandy Williams, and other math teachers. There was discussion among the teachers that Green, who had a math background, and Tanya Woods were responsible for the erasures.

Koen believed something was happening with CRCT documents when teacher Matthew Leftwich's students' test scores came in. All of his students passed, with large gains in math scores. Koen knew those students could not have performed on that level.

Principal Milstead wanted the school to make targets during the 2008-2009 school year, but never threatened to place teachers on a PDP. However, Principal Frances Thompson told the teachers that they could be placed on a PDP for low test scores.

10. Roshanda May (Teacher)

Roshanda May believes there was cheating, but denied that she was involved. Cotman and Green would have access to the tests. Cotman pressured Principal Milstead to improve the test scores, which is why he left after the 2008-2009 school year.

11. Nautrie Jones (Teacher)

Principal Milstead resigned prior to the 2009 tests being given. He told the faculty he had resigned and said that everyone had certain goals they were trying to achieve, but he had different ideas about how to reach them. When the 2009 CRCT scores came back, Nautrie Jones and other teachers on her grade level team were all very upset because they knew their students had not legitimately achieved their scores. Teachers at Harper Archer were not involved. She believed people on the SRT level, including the model teacher leaders, were involved.

12. Andrea Leslie (Special Education Teacher)

Andrea Leslie said that the high number of erasures in all three of her special education classrooms could only occur by someone erasing and changing her students' answers. Leslie named Green, Brooks, and the math coaches, Jack, St. Cyr and another math coach, as having access to the tests. The SRT-4 staff and model teacher leaders also had access to the tests and testing materials. Leslie denied cheating.

Ms. Leslie recalled there was a student in her class who had on headphones and a hood during the 2009 CRCT. Coach Gibson took this student out of the classroom, talked with him, and brought him back. That student had very high WTR erasures.

She recalled a student who could not read or even write her name. This student had substantial WTR erasures on the math section of her test.

13. Harold Lovett (Teacher)

Harold Lovett's eighth graders read on a fourth to fifth grade level on the 2009 CRCT. He noticed that seals were broken on one or two of the CRCT booklets. He never reported this to anyone because he thought a student had possibly done it. Lovett explained the high number of erasures in his classroom as someone other than himself changing answers and altering tests.

14. Jerry Willard (Teacher)

Jerry Willard said Green had both key card and alarm code access to the building. Willard arrived at school around 6:30 a.m. each morning. He would have to wait to be let into the building by Green, who used her key card and alarm code to access the building.

Willard believed Principal Milstead left because he would not do something that Cotman asked him to do with regard to the CRCT.

15. Elbert Edwards (Teacher)

Elbert Edwards believed cheating occurred at Harper Archer. He did not believe Testing Coordinator Mary Brooks was involved in changing any answers. He described Brooks as a “stickler” about procedure. Edwards routinely worked late and sometimes did not leave until 8:00 p.m. SRT-4 personnel would still be in the building. Edwards suspected these SRT employees, especially Cotman, altered students’ tests. He did not suspect Assistant Principal Sublett or Principal Milstead of anything unethical.

16. Sheila Brown (Teacher)

During the 2009 CRCT, one of the janitors, Joie Phillips, approached Sheila Brown the day after the math section of the CRCT was given to the students. Phillips said that the students had done well on the CRCT. Brown asked Phillips how he knew that since there was no way anyone should already know how the students had performed. Phillips told Brown that he overheard some SRT-4 employees talking about it.

Brown denied doing anything to prompt her students to change answers. Brown did not notice her students erasing excessively during the test.

Brown was not shocked when she found out that Harper Archer was one of the flagged schools. Teachers complained about students who passed the CRCT that year who should never have passed the examination.

Brown recalled one specific student in her class who was a special education student, but exceeded on the math section of the CRCT. This student could not read.

There was discussion that the SRT-4 model teacher leaders and Cotman erased answers on the tests. Brown does not believe that St. Cyr would cheat, but Green and Testing Coordinator Brooks were very close. Green often worked late at the school.

17. Alana Allen (Teacher)

Alana Allen reported that she was surprised by the high 2009 CRCT scores of other teachers. Allen recalled several students who she did not feel could pass the CRCT, including one special education student, but who exceeded standards on the CRCT. The special education students’ scores were higher than some of the students who were known to perform well on the test. One of the math teachers, Mr. Leftwich, complained that one of his students fell asleep during testing, yet he achieved very high test scores. Leftwich could not understand how this could happen.

Allen and Leftwich knew something was wrong with the test scores when they assessed the eighth grade math test scores at the school. Allen taught the students at Harper Archer who were the lowest performing students in the eighth grade. Students on Leftwich’s team scored similarly to Allen’s students on benchmark tests, but on the CRCT performed exceptionally well.

Harper Archer teachers believe that the SRT-4 employees, including SRT Executive Director Tamara Cotman, were responsible for the erasures. It was obvious to the teachers that

something had gone wrong. Cotman said that the students in the school had to pass the test or the school was going to close and no one would have a job. Allen and other teachers at the school believed Principal Milstead was forced to resign because he would not do the things that Cotman wanted him to do.

18. *Katie Reichenbach (Teacher)*

When the spring 2009 CRCT scores were announced, many of the teachers were surprised at the scores and concerned that somebody within Harper Archer's administration cheated. Teachers acknowledged that the math scores were "not real." Reichenbach believed ILS Sharon Green was under a lot of pressure to improve scores. Green said that they needed to get the test scores up so "these people [SRT-4] will get off of our backs."

Reichenbach believed that Principal Milstead was forced out because Tamara Cotman wanted him to cheat and he refused.

19. *Shanequa Yates (Teacher)*

Shanequa Yates recalled that when the 2009 CRCT scores came in everyone at the school was thrilled. However, when they looked over the test scores, something was not right. The scores for many of the students did not match up with what the teachers knew about them. Yates and her co-workers talked about their shock at the scores. All of the eighth grade teachers believed that Cotman and the SRT-4 model teacher leaders were responsible for the erasures.

20. *Matthew Leftwich (Teacher)*

Matthew Leftwich recalled that the teachers were excited when they first heard about the percentage of students who had passed the CRCT in the 2008-2009 school year. But when the teachers looked at individual student scores, the excitement disappeared. Leftwich knew that some of the students could not have scored as high as they had in math. Leftwich and the other teachers at Harper Archer knew someone altered the tests.

When the erasure analysis came out, Leftwich recalled APS employees saying students just erased a lot, especially at the middle school level. Leftwich never saw his students erasing. On average, any given student would erase less than four times per section on a standardized test like the CRCT.

The teachers believed the SRT employees were responsible for the erasures. Leftwich heard that some of the SRT-4 employees were overheard talking about how well the students performed on the math section of the CRCT before anyone knew how students actually performed.

21. *Joie Phillips (Custodian)*

Joie Phillips said ILS Sharon Green was the "boss" of Harper Archer and tried to run it as if she was in charge of Principal Milstead. Green did not report to work early, but often stayed late after school.

While changing a water jug in the SRT-4 office, Phillips overheard one female worker say that the students at Harper Archer were “doing good” on the CRCT. This comment was made during the week of testing. Phillips did not know who made the comment. Phillips told a couple of the teachers on the eighth grade hall. He believes one of those teachers was Sheila Brown.

22. Tatia Mobley (Teacher)

Tatia Mobley said that one day after the 2009 CRCT test, math coach Barbara Bienemy came to Leon Bowers’ classroom and said he did a great job. Bienemy stated, “Your kids did so good in math.” This occurred prior to the results of the CRCT tests being published to the teachers. When the CRCT results came out, the teachers felt that something was not right with the test scores. Mobley recalled that some students on her team slept during the CRCT, yet passed the test. Mobley recalled another student in her class who could not read, but passed the CRCT.

Mobley feels her students were cheated. Mobley said she did not cheat and did not prompt her students to change their answers.

23. Arn St. Cyr (Math Coach)

During the administration of the 2009 CRCT, Arn St. Cyr assisted ILS Sharon Green and Testing Coordinator Brooks with sorting and preparing the test materials for the teachers. He also administered the CRCT make-up examination in the media center. The tests were stored in the school vault. Only Principal Milstead and his secretary, Ms. Westbrook, had a key to the vault. St. Cyr believed Cotman had a key to the vault as well.

When the Harper Archer test scores came out, St. Cyr recalled Bienemy saying that the math scores were unusually high. The percentage of students meeting standards on the math section on the CRCT had jumped to around 50%. St. Cyr believed this was impossible. Principal Milstead was also suspicious of the scores, but he had already been forced to resign at the time the scores came in. St. Cyr believed that Principal Milstead had not improved CRCT scores quickly enough for Cotman, so she refused to renew his contract. Principal Milstead expressed to St. Cyr that he had not moved the school at the pace Cotman had expected.

St. Cyr said the Special Education sub-group and the math scores prevented Harper Archer from making AYP. St. Cyr expressed his desire for the cheating to end. According to him, the number of erasures at Harper Archer was “statistically impossible. Not improbable, but impossible.”

24. Travis Jones (Special Education Teacher)

Travis Jones denied he prompted his students during testing or erased any of his students’ answers. Jones believed that SRT-4 employees had something to do with the erasures. According to Jones, if an employee had integrity, Cotman would get rid of them. If employees did not fit Cotman’s mold, she would find a way to get rid of them. Cotman was often seen with Special Education teacher Woods, ILS Sharon Green, SRO Veronica Campbell, and the

counselors. Jones did not believe that Principal Milstead would have had anything to do with cheating. He did not think the teachers had anything to do with cheating.

25. Barbara Bienemy (Math Coach)

When Barbara Bienemy arrived at Harper Archer in February 2009, she immediately noticed that students lacked basic math skills such as adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing, and the students were multiple grade levels behind. Based on the trend data, math and the special education population always prevented Harper Archer from making AYP. Bienemy believed that whoever was responsible for erasures had to be good in math and have access to the tests. Testing Coordinator Brooks and ILS Green were close, both were good in math, and both had access to the tests.

D. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Mary Brooks (Testing Coordinator)

Mary Brooks has worked at Harper Archer since 2006, when she was transferred from Turner Middle School by Executive Director Tamara Cotman. Brooks claimed that Principal Milstead did not speak with her and that she was not treated as fairly as her male counterparts. She described Milstead as a male chauvinist, although she had no knowledge of Milstead treating other females on the staff any differently. Nonetheless, Brooks admitted that Milstead did a “wonderful” job turning around Harper Archer, and he did a lot for the students.

Brooks denied any knowledge of cheating or participation in cheating. She did not suspect any teachers of cheating or assisting students on the CRCT. Brooks could not explain the high number of wrong-to-right erasures and did not know when they occurred. The testing team during the 2009 CRCT consisted of Jacquelyn King, Tanya Woods, math coaches St. Cyr and Bienemy, and ILS Green. Brooks stored the testing materials in crates in the school vault overnight. She obtained the key to the vault from the school secretary, Ms. Westbrook, and only had access to the vault during the testing week and following make up days. Brooks denied having unrestricted access to the school. Because SRT-4 is housed in the same building as Harper Archer, SRT-4 staff had their own entrance and could enter the Harper Archer school building from downstairs. During testing week, certain individuals from the central office came to Harper Archer, but she could only recall Lester McKee’s name from APS’s Research Planning and Assessment division. Model teacher leaders Diamond Jack and Tracey Colston were also present from SRT-4.

2. Sharon Green (ILS)

Green currently serves as the math and science instructional coach at Harper Archer.

During the 2008-2009 CRCT Mary Brooks served as the Testing Coordinator at Harper Archer. Jacquelyn King, the Success for All coach, St. Cyr, Bienemy, and Green assisted Brooks with testing. Several model teacher leaders from SRT-4 also assisted during testing: Diamond Jack, Nikki Stroud, and Tracey Colton. Green denied any knowledge of how the wrong-to-right erasures occurred. She was aware that Harper Archer struggled in multiple areas, but mostly math. Special education held Harper Archer back from attaining AYP. Green

acknowledged she did have key card access to the school but that the school had an alarm and the Principal and Assistant Principal had those codes. SRT personnel could also access Harper Archer from downstairs where the SRT office was located. Green had a close relationship with Brooks, and the instructional coaches.

E. Other Evidence

- The percentage of classes flagged for high WTR erasures dropped from 24.1% in 2009 to .7% in 2010.
- Correspondingly, the percentage of sixth grade students who met or exceeded standards in math dropped from 68% in 2009 to 34% in 2010, while the percentage of students who failed math skyrocketed from 32% in 2009 to 67% in 2010.
- The percentage of eighth grade math students who exceeded standards on the CRCT dropped from 31% in 2009 to 4% in 2010. Correspondingly, the percentage of students who failed increased from 18% to 33% in 2010.
- Some of the students identified by teachers as students who should not have passed the CRCT, who slept through the test, or who could not read, had the highest numbers of wrong-to-right erasures.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that cheating occurred at Harper Archer through the erasing and changing of student answers. The statistical data from the erasure analysis, student data, and a review of score drops in 2010 reveal patterns similar to those seen in schools where teachers or administrators confessed to erasing and changing answers. We cannot conclude who erased and changed the students' answers at Harper Archer. ILS Green, Testing Coordinator Brooks and SRT-4 personnel, including Model Teacher Leaders Diamond Jack and Tamara Cotman, had access to the tests. Almost unanimously, the teachers pointed to Green, Brooks and the SRT-4 personnel.

Virtually every teacher acknowledged that someone altered the answers on the students' tests, particularly in math. It is well known that Harper Archer struggled in math and special education. Only math and special education classes were flagged. Green has a math background, and Diamond Jack is the Model Teacher Leader for math. Cotman put incredible pressure on Milstead and Green to get the scores up and meet AYP, and Green feared she would lose her job if the scores in math did not improve. Green had a close relationship with Testing Coordinator Brooks, who had access to the tests. According to Milstead, Cotman non-renewed him after he suggested in a principals' meeting that students' CRCT scores from elementary school did not reflect their academic abilities in the classroom. Cotman made it clear that Milstead should improve student scores by any means necessary.

Student data also indicated that someone in administration or SRT-4 cheated. Some of the lowest performing students had the highest number of erasures and achieved the highest



scores on the test. These low performing students were well known to the administrators, since teachers had been required to turn in “projection sheets” listing each student’s expected performance just a few weeks before the test. Some testimony indicates this was the first time the teachers were required to turn the projection sheets over to the administration.

We conclude that cheating occurred at Harper Archer, but we are unable to determine who cheated. We conclude that Principal Milstead did not cheat, condone cheating, or know of cheating. Milstead may have been forced out of his position by Tamara Cotman because of his refusal to condone cheating.

## M. AGNES JONES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1040 Fair Street South  
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

Principal: Margul Retha Woolfolk  
Testing Coordinator: Andrea Johnson Lewis

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

### **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at M. Agnes Jones Elementary in 2009 and in other years. Twenty-five people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Six people confessed to cheating on the CRCT. Cheating at M. Agnes Jones is evidenced by confessions and witness testimony.

### **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	23.1	7.8
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	18	7
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	11(4)	6(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	5.3	3.8
High Flagged Standard Deviation	9.5	5.6
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.1

### **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

#### **A. Narrative**

Andrea Lewis was the testing coordinator in 2009. She was assisted by Gwendolyn Alston, Sedric Scott, and Petrina Howard. Sedric Scott denied any knowledge of cheating until he took and failed a polygraph examination. After failing the polygraph examination, he admitted to erasing and changing students' CRCT answer sheets and to prompting students to change incorrect answers.

Several teachers confessed to cheating on the 2009 CRCT, and some described students whose skills and abilities did not correspond to their high CRCT scores. Many witnesses heard that teachers prompted their students to erase and change answers during the 2009 CRCT, and in other years. Curtis Gale, who confessed to prompting students and erasing and changing answers on the 2009 CRCT, testified that he feared he would be terminated if his scores did not improve.

#### **B. Testimony of Witnesses**

##### **1. Ann Hill (Teacher)**

Ann Hill testified that the skills and abilities of her second grade students did not match their first grade CRCT scores. She heard that Curtis Gale only read two answer choices to his first grade students.

Former Principal Eunice Robinson threatened teachers with PDPs if they failed to raise CRCT scores, stating if she were placed on a PDP, teachers would also be placed on PDPs.

2. Demetrius Barnes (Teacher)

Demetrius Barnes testified that the skills and abilities of his second grade students did not match their first grade CRCT scores. Curtis Gale only read two answer choices to his first grade students.

In 2006, Demetrius Barnes was placed on a team with Corliss Love and Precious Moon. When the three were working late, Love and Moon suggested they open the vault and look at testing materials. Barnes could not recall if this was during the administration of the CRCT or a state writing test. Barnes refused to participate and threatened to “go over the principal’s head” if anyone looked at the testing materials.

Love and Moon had copies of the Fifth Grade Writing Test before it was administered. Barnes heard that they knew the prompt for the writing test “word for word,” well in advance of the test.

After threatening to “go over the principal’s head,” and report Love and Moon’s plan to get into the vault, Barnes began receiving poor evaluations and was moved from the upper grades to the lower grades.

3. Haneefa Rasheed (Teacher)

Haneefa Rasheed testified that the skills and abilities of her second grade students did not match their high first grade CRCT scores.

4. Erica Franklin (Teacher)

Erica Franklin testified that the skills and abilities of her second grade students did not match their high first grade CRCT scores. She heard that Curtis Gale only read two answer choices to his first grade students.

5. Ginneen Smith (Teacher)

Former Principal Robinson told teachers that if a certain number of students did not pass the CRCT, the teachers would be placed on a PDP. Ginneen Smith heard that Curtis Gale only read two answer choices to his first grade students.

6. Chelsea Vines (Teacher)

Chelsea Vines testified that former Principal Robinson threatened teachers with PDPs if they failed to raise CRCT scores, stating if she were placed on a PDP, teachers would also be placed on PDPs. She too heard that Curtis Gale only read two answer choices to his first grade students.

Vines heard that Precious Moon instructed her students to mark their CRCT answers in the testing booklet and not on the answer sheet. This allowed her to check student answers and instruct them to change incorrect answers and avoid wrong-to-right erasures.

7. *Ovella Roberts (Teacher)*

On the 2006 ITBS test, Sedric Scott told Roberts that she could tell students “something was wrong” with a particular question if she noticed they answered it incorrectly.

Former Principal Robinson told teachers that if a certain number of students did not pass the CRCT then the teachers would be placed on a PDP.

8. *Stephanie Englert (Teacher)*

Stephanie Englert admitted to prompting her students to change their answers during the administration of the 2009 CRCT.

In 2003, Gwendolyn Alston had a copy of that year’s CRCT, and showed it to Englert and others.

During the administration of the 2009 CRCT, a student told Englert that his former teacher, Idalina Couto, told students they answered a question incorrectly on the 2008 CRCT by “popping them in the head.”

During the week of CRCT testing in 2009, while Englert was working late, a paraprofessional asked if she could borrow some erasers for Judy Walker and Nneka Reynolds. Englert reported that it was unusual for Walker and Reynolds to work on anything without her because they were teammates. Reynolds rarely worked late, and the fourth grade students performed better on the CRCT than she expected in 2009.

9. *Ayana Townsend (Teacher)*

Ayana Townsend reported that she did not administer the reading section of the 2009 CRCT (for which she was flagged) because she was out of town. Several of her students asked for help on the 2009 CRCT and acted confused when she did not provide assistance.

Townsend heard that the first grade teachers cheated on the 2009 CRCT. She also testified that the skills and abilities of her fourth grade students did not match their high third grade CRCT scores.

Principal Woolfolk threatened to place teachers on PDPs if their CRCT scores did not improve. She had been directed by “her boss” to do so.

10. *Dorris Freeman (Substitute)*

Dorris Freeman administered the 2009 CRCT Reading section to Ayana Townsend’s students. Freeman had no knowledge of cheating, and stated that she would have no motivation

to change answers on the 2009 CRCT because she only substituted for Englert for one day of testing.

11. Idalina Couto (Teacher)

Idalina Couto admitted to prompting students to re-read a question when the student answered the question incorrectly on the 2009 CRCT. She also admitted to re-wording or explaining questions that students could not understand.

Couto said that Curtis Gale prompted his students or only read two answer choices when administering the CRCT.

12. Stephanie Bagley (Teacher)

Stephanie Bagley could provide no explanation for the high number of wrong-to-right erasures in her classroom. She believed “the administrators” may have erased and changed answer sheets.

13. Rose Logan (Teacher)

Rose Logan admitted to erasing student answers when the student selected two answers for a particular question. Logan also admitted that she filled in the correct answer on students’ answer sheets when students failed to answer a question on the 2009 CRCT. She felt pressure to increase her CRCT scores. Because she was close to retirement, she did what she was required to do to keep her job. Logan says that she never actually changed any student’s answer on the 2009 CRCT.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Precious Moon (Teacher)

Precious Moon could provide no explanation for the high number of wrong-to-right erasures in her classroom. She described a previous OIR investigation regarding her giving answers to a student during a previous CRCT. Moon stated she was investigated and cleared by OIR.

2. Corliss Love (Teacher)

Corliss Love admitted to prompting students to change their answers on the 2009 CRCT. She now realizes her prompting was a testing violation.

3. Curtis Gale (Teacher)

Curtis Gale admitted to prompting his students to change answers during the administration of the 2009 CRCT, and in other years, by using voice inflection. Gale also admitted that he only read two answer choices, omitting the third. Gale further admitted that in 2009 and other years, when his students completed their tests, he would scan the tests and erase and change wrong answers.

Gale erased and changed answers in the conference room when the tests were returned during the time teachers were supposed to be cleaning up “stray marks” on the CRCT. Gale erased and changed answers when other teachers and the testing coordinator were present. Gale did not see any other teacher erase or change answers during the stray mark cleaning session, but was focused on his own tests.

Gale prompted his students and erased and changed their answer sheets because he felt pressure from former Principal Robinson and current Principal Woolfolk to improve his CRCT scores. He feared he would lose his job if his CRCT scores did not improve.

4. *Sedric Scott (Math Coach)*

Sedric Scott originally denied any knowledge of cheating. After he took and failed a polygraph examination, however, he confessed to erasing and changing answers on students’ CRCT answer sheets, and to prompting students to change incorrect answers on the CRCT. Scott showed signs of deception by responding negatively to three questions during his polygraph examination: Have you ever instructed anyone to change any answers on a CRCT? Have you ever personally changed any answer on a CRCT? Have you ever knowingly allowed anyone to change an answer on the CRCT?

5. *Andrea Johnson Lewis (Testing Coordinator)*

Andrea Lewis stated that Gwendolyn Alston, Sedric Scott, and Petrina Howard assisted her during the 2009 CRCT. Alston and Howard passed out, and accepted the return of, CRCT materials for the first and second grades. Lewis and Scott passed out, and accepted the return of, CRCT materials for the third, fourth, and fifth grades. The two teams sat in separate conference rooms. The tests were stored in the principal’s office after they were returned by the teachers. No teachers picked up their tests early or turned them in late. While former Principal Robinson allowed teachers to erase stray marks together in a conference room, Principal Woolfolk would not.

Only Principal Woolfolk and her secretary, Kandis Hendrix, had a key to the principal’s office.

6. *Margul Retha Woolfolk (Principal)*

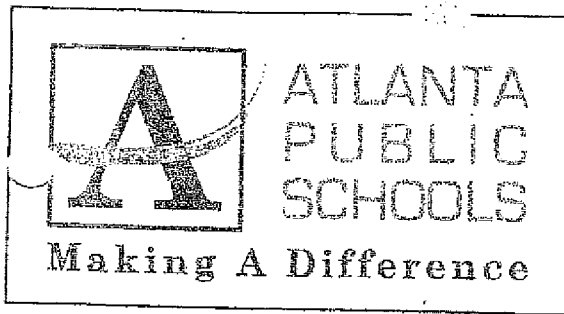
Principal Woolfolk had no knowledge of cheating on the 2009 CRCT. She received one report of a teacher cheating, but that teacher was cleared after an APS investigation. The parent of a student reported that Precious Moon assisted her students on the 2009 CRCT. Principal Woolfolk immediately mailed a letter to Lester McKee informing him of the allegation against Moon. A copy of that letter is included as **Attachment A**.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that Curtis Gale, Corliss Love, Precious Moon, Sedric Scott, Idalina Couto and Rose Logan cheated on the CRCT in 2009 and in other years.

Based on the statistical evidence and the evidence we have found at schools with similar statistical data, we believe that other flagged teachers also cheated, but we lack sufficient evidence to determine which additional teachers cheated.

We do not believe that Principal Woolfolk condoned or knew of cheating at M. Agnes Jones. The only time cheating was reported to her, she immediately alerted OIR and Lester McKee.



**MARGUL RETHA WOOLFOLK**  
PRINCIPAL  
M. AGNES JONES ELEMENTARY  
1040 FAIR STREET, SW  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30314  
PHONE (404) 802-3900  
FAX (404) 752-5655

May 21, 2009

Mr. Lester McKee,

I would like to inform you of a complaint that I received from Ms. Montgomery-Dent, the mother of Kayla Dent, on Thursday, May 21, 2009 at approximately 2:00 p.m. Ms. Montgomery-Dent alleged the following against her child's 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Mrs.

Precious Moon:

- Students were given answers by the teacher on the CRCT
- A student was advised to change his answer on the test
- Students were told to bubble anything on the science portion of the test and she would change the answers later

Due to the severity of these allegations, I felt it necessary to report the matter to you immediately as well as the Office of Internal Resolutions.

Ms. Montgomery Dent's phone number is 1-216-374-7130

Sincerely,

Margul Retha Woolfolk

*Margul Retha Woolfolk*  
Principal

Cc: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

Ms. Colinda Howard

1U-U11U-25-11

EXHIBIT \_\_\_\_\_



# PARKSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

685 Mercer St.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

Principal: Dr. Phillip Luck  
Testing Coordinator: Clementine Shanks

SRT-3 Executive Director: Dr. Gloria Patterson

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Parkside Elementary in 2009. Sixteen people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Three teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Parkside is evidenced by confessions.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	21.3	4.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	16	3
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	7(5)	3(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	6.1	4
High Flagged Standard Deviation	9.5	4.9
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.2	3.3

## **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

### **A. Testimony of Witnesses**

#### **1. Selena Wyatt (Teacher)**

Selena Wyatt confessed to prompting students to change their answers. If Wyatt felt like the students were not focusing or were getting obvious questions wrong, she said “listen again” and she re-read the question. She often saw students erase their answers when she did this. Wyatt only did this on the math section of the test.

#### **2. Pelita Johnson Meredith (Teacher)**

Pelita Johnson Meredith taught third grade in 2009 and confessed to prompting her students when they answered incorrectly. As Meredith walked around monitoring her class, if she noticed they had an incorrect answer, she pointed to the test question. Her students understood that they needed to erase that particular answer. She did not tell them the correct answer.

Meredith sometimes questioned the validity of students’ CRCT scores when they transferred to Parkside from another school. Transfer students’ test scores often did not match their ability in the classroom. She specifically identified students from Deerwood Academy.

3. Terance Shipman (Teacher)

Terance Shipman taught second grade in 2009 and confessed to prompting students during the CRCT. If he noticed a student answered a question incorrectly he sometimes reminded them to go back and review the question. Shipman never gave the students the answers. Shipman discussed various ways to prompt students with teachers Selena Wyatt and Tamara Sparks.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that Selena Wyatt, Pelita Meredith, and Terance Shipman cheated on the 2009 CRCT by prompting their students to change answers during the administration of the 2009 CRCT. Principal Phillip Luck did not know of the cheating at Parkside Elementary.

# **BETHUNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

220 Northside Drive  
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

Principal: RoseMary Hamer  
Testing Coordinator: Aretha Ragland

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Bethune Elementary in 2009. Thirty people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Two teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating is evidenced by a high number of flagged classrooms, confessions and witness testimony. Principal RoseMary Hamer failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	23.1	3.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	18	2
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	13(4)	1
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	4.2	5.6
High Flagged Standard Deviation	6.8	7
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	4.3

## **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

### **A. Narrative**

One teacher confessed to prompting students by reading questions a third time and rephrasing them to assist her students' comprehension. A second teacher confessed to prompting her students by reading questions a third time if they missed the question or fell behind.

Bethune met AYP consistently for years, but the percentage of students meeting and exceeding standards steadily dropped. Principal RoseMary Hamer was under constant scrutiny and pressure from her SRT Director to meet district targets. As a result, pressure was passed down to the teachers. One teacher described it as "a culture of pressure" to meet targets.

### **B. Testimony of Witnesses**

#### **1. Angela Gardner (Teacher)**

Angela Gardner admitted to cheating on the 2009 CRCT by prompting students during testing. Gardner walked around the class and if she noticed that several students had missed the same question she would go to the front of the class and read the question a third time. She sometimes rephrased the question. As a result of her actions, many of Gardner's students erased and changed their answers from wrong to right.

2. Holly Thomas (Teacher)

Holly Thomas was a special education teacher for kindergarten and first grade in 2009. Thomas admitted to causing the students to erase and change their answers from wrong to right. During the 2009 CRCT, Thomas administered the test to eight special education students. All eight passed the test. If she noticed students worked ahead, she would make them erase the answers and only select answers after she read them the question. If she noticed that a student had fallen behind, she would read the question to the student a third time. If she noticed, while walking around the classroom, that a number of students had missed a question then she would read it a third time.

Thomas had two particularly bright students who would sometimes shout out the answers to the test questions. The other students knew those two were bright and would erase and change their answers to what was shouted out. Thomas said that happened “a lot.” A third child was particularly good at math and he only shouted out answers during the math section.

There was a culture of pressure on the teachers. Principal Hamer never said or did anything inappropriate as far as putting pressure on teachers but if a teacher’s class did not do well it reflected badly on the teacher.

3. Sandra Wilson (Teacher)

Sandra Wilson was a third grade teacher in 2009. She denied cheating. She resigned from Bethune due to harassment from Principal Hamer about low test scores on the 2009 CRCT. Her students were performing below grade level when they were assigned to her class. Principal Hamer told Wilson she “needed to do whatever she had to do to make sure the kids were going to pass.” She was never explicitly told to cheat, but the message was clear to her. Others on the third grade level conveyed similar messages. She was frustrated and told them she was not going to cheat. She knew she had the lowest test scores in the school but her students did the best they could. Wilson said she did not cheat and was ostracized at the school.

When questioned about specific students with improbable wrong-to-right erasures on the math section, Wilson was shocked. One child, who had ten out of 11 erasures changed from wrong to right, was identified as a special education student who Wilson did not believe erased at all. She recalled that he had emotional issues and just “shut down,” and probably did not finish the test. Another student, who had five out of five erasures changed from wrong to right, was also a special education student who Wilson believed could not have made those erasures. Wilson tested both students with the entire class; they were not pulled out for separate testing. Wilson said about half of her third grade class performed at a kindergarten level and could barely read.

Principal Hamer “hammered” the teachers about test scores in meetings. She grilled them about their scores on the benchmark tests which Wilson recalled were “awful, just awful . . . really terrible.” By the time they took the CRCT, everyone’s scores suddenly improved except Wilson’s, which remained just as they were on the diagnostic tests. Some of the teachers on her grade level had students that performed as poorly as Wilson’s, yet passed the CRCT. Wilson felt certain that she was the only teacher who had valid scores, and she suspected

cheating but had no proof. Principal Hamer “called her out” in front of everyone because of her test scores. Wilson said that “if you didn’t dance their dance and do what they want you to do, whether it was right or wrong—they didn’t like you and they would try to harass and intimidate you.”

Money was a motivation for doing well. Wilson heard Principal Hamer say that she knew they were looking forward to getting their check and she (Hamer) was looking forward to getting hers too. Wilson was not surprised to learn that APS was being investigated for cheating. She felt there were well-qualified teachers at Bethune but their focus was not on the children.

4. Alexandra Pajak (Teacher)

Alexandra Pajak was a program coordinator at Bethune in 2009. She was assigned to Bethune through a program called Community in Schools. Her responsibility was to monitor attendance. Pajak left Bethune because the work environment was “toxic.” Pajak gave investigators a document she had prepared for the interview. A copy of the document is included as **Attachment A**. The document includes the following information:

- a. Principal Hamer told the teachers at a staff meeting in November 2010 that the GBI would be coming to interview them, that they would have a gun in their pocket, that they would try to intimidate them at their interview, and that teachers could choose what to tell them.
- b. In September 2010, administrative assistant Djuana Edmond told Pajak, “It wasn’t the teachers that cheated at this school. The administration really dodged a bullet [during first round of interviews]. I didn’t cheat and they’re not interviewing me, so I’m not saying anything.”
- c. On May 5, 2010, Principal Hamer withdrew students who missed ten or more days of school in order to meet APS attendance targets, and allowed students who lived outside of the zone to remain at school as long as their test scores and attendance were strong.

5. Aretha Ragland (Assistant Principal & Testing Coordinator)

Aretha Ragland was the assistant principal and testing coordinator in 2009. She had no information or knowledge of testing improprieties.

6. Brenda Rattler (Teacher)

Brenda Rattler was surprised over the years by children she believed would not perform well. She attributed their unexpected success to them “taking their time.”

7. Charice Coston (Teacher)

Charice Coston was a fifth grade teacher in 2009. She was on maternity leave during the 2008-2009 school year and was not present to administer the 2009 CRCT to her class.

8. Lisa Stanley (Teacher)

Stanley was a second grade teacher in 2009. She denied cheating or knowledge of cheating. Stanley said she never erased anything on her students' tests, not even stray marks. At no time have teachers erased stray marks. They tell their students to erase them. Stanley recalled that she had four or five students in 2009 who received extra tutoring from Traci Walker, a special education teacher. She believed those students may have been tested separately by other teachers.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. RoseMary Hamer (Principal)

RoseMary Hamer was the principal of Bethune in 2009. She stated that the school has met AYP for so many years that although they did not technically meet AYP in 2010, Bethune was "deemed" to have met AYP "by confidence." Principal Hamer attributed the drop in flagged classes in 2010 to the students being afraid to erase. She has been principal of Bethune for ten years, and has met the district targets only a few times. Last year she was placed on a PDP by SRT-4 Executive Director Sharon Davis-Williams for low test scores, which she felt was unfair. Principal Hamer said she wanted to make targets, but did not feel pressure to do so. Asked if the teachers felt pressure about meeting targets, Principal Hamer said they "probably" did.

The tests were locked in the vault to which only she, the secretary and Testing Coordinator Aretha Ragland had a key. Teachers could collect their tests between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. The tests were passed out and collected in the media center. Principal Hamer said they did not erase stray marks. She was not aware of any cheating allegations at Bethune, but was confident that any allegations that were reported would be thoroughly investigated by APS. She was not aware of students shouting out answers in class during 2009 testing. She would be surprised to learn that teachers at Bethune admitted to cheating.

Regarding former teacher Sandra Wilson, Principal Hamer stated that Wilson was at Bethune for one year and was not a great teacher. Hamer thought that Wilson's students were not progressing at the pace they should have been. Principal Hamer felt that her third grade teachers were not a "solid group of teachers" in 2009. She would not have wanted Wilson to remain on the third grade level.

D. Other Evidence

- In 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, Bethune met AYP.
- In 2009-2010, Bethune met AYP. The school's status dropped from "Distinguished" to "Adequate." The percentage of students not meeting standards increased by 6%.

- In 2010, teachers did not gather to erase stray marks as they had in prior years.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that cheating occurred on the 2009 CRCT at Bethune. Angela Gardner encouraged her second grade students to erase and change answers from wrong to right by rephrasing questions or reading them a third time. Holly Thomas prompted her special education students by reading questions a third time if several had missed the question or fell behind.

Principal Hamer pressured teachers to “do what you need to do” to raise the test scores. She created an atmosphere where teachers felt it was necessary to cheat. Principal RoseMary Hamer failed in her ultimate responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper securing for the 2009 CRCT. It is our conclusion, from the statistical data and the other evidence, that Principal Hamer failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, and adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and she is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.

Alexandra Pajak  
Interview, April 5, 2011  
Documentation

Directly Related to CRCT

-On November 23, 2010 Principal RoseMary Hamer called a staff meeting in the media center at Bethune Elementary School. She told staff members, "The GBI will be coming to the school. They'll walking like this with their arm over their pocket [demonstrated walking with arm over pocket]. They'll have a gun in their pocket. They'll try to intimidate you when they interview you. And you can choose what to tell them."

-September 2010, Administrative Assistant Djuana Edmond told me, "It wasn't the teachers that cheated at this school. The administration really dodged a bullet [during first round of interviews]. I didn't cheat and they're not interviewing me, so I'm not saying anything."

-May 5, 2010: Principal withdraws students who miss 10 or more days of school to meet APS Attendance Target. Principal allows students to remain at the school if out of zone as long as their test scores and attendance are strong.

-Spring 2010 The day the CRCT tests arrived to Bethune, an Administrative Team Meeting was held (already scheduled on calendar) in the front office conference room. I presented my attendance data. The other people present (Principal RoseMary Hamer, Counselor Tamika Witcher, ILS staff member Stephanie Renfro, Reading Coach Melanie Searcy, and Success for All coach Alicia Walton) looked [in my opinion] very nervous and scared. When I finished with my data, Principal RoseMary Hamer said to me, "You can decide to stay or leave the meeting now." I left the meeting. The meeting (which usually lasted about an hour) lasted four hours that day.

Behavior of Administration

-January 6, 2010: While Principal out of the building, I was "mobbed" by administrative team. I was called into a meeting by ILS staff member Stephanie Renfro. The group of women began to shout at me, telling me if I did not do as they said (to take a lunch monitor slot the principal told me not to) they would tell the principal I'm not "a team player." I walked out of the meeting. I informed the principal of the situation on January 6, 2010 in the main hallway when she returned to the building. She rolled her eyes and said, "I don't want this drama," and walked away. I complained to my supervisor, who held a meeting with the principal on January 12, 2011. Ms. Renfro continued to shout at me, accusing me of shouting while in the meeting in which I was mobbed. Principal did not ask Ms. Renfro to lower her voice. The principal asked me (in my opinion, oddly),

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EXHIBIT \_\_\_\_\_



why I did not like the school counselor, Tamika Witcher. I told her that in Summer 2009 the counselor told a student who was seen by the school social worker for stab wounds, "I should put you on hotghettomess.com," after the student told her he had pet rotweilers at home. The principal then said, "That isn't leaving this room." (I had informed my then supervisor of the comment the day of the comment in 2009.)

-November 12, 2010 Principal RoseMary Hamer opened and shut the door halfway and I assumed it was a kid (I couldn't see anyone outside the little window part on the door, so I assumed it was a tiny kid that had trouble opening the door and would reopen it). The principal walked in and said, "You should have looked up. I could have been a sniper. You should be more careful" to the attendance clerk, Mr. Cabral Williams, and me.

-April 20, 2010 a fifth grader skipped school. Principal RoseMary Hamer told ILS staff member Ms. Stephanie Renfro that if the student tries to skip school, "Tell her [the student] will have the student handcuffed and taken away from the school in a police car."

-On September 29, <sup>2011</sup> the Principal refused to give me space to store food after I told her I was asked not to write a press release for the Blessings in a Backpack program until Spring semester.

- September 29, <sup>2010</sup> 2011 a parent came in with a yellow shirt that had pencil marks on it. The parent said two to three boys had thrown glass bottles at his daughter on the way home from school and that the pencil marks were where the boys stabbed her with a pencil. The principal did not suspend any of the students. Once the parent and students left the front office, the principal said, "I might call the police on them," referring to two brothers (one eight years old and another ten years old) to discipline them for throwing bottles and stabbing the girl with a pencil.

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## MILES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

4215 Bakers Ferry Road, SW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30331

Principal: Christopher Estes  
Testing Coordinator: Shuanta Broadway

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

### **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Miles Elementary in 2009. Thirteen people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Two teachers confessed to cheating. Cheating at Miles is evidenced by confessions and witness testimony.

### **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	21.7	2.9
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	13	2
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	6(5)	1(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	6.1	3.8
High Flagged Standard Deviation	9.8	4.4
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.3	3.1

### **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

#### **A. Testimony of Witnesses**

##### **1. *Rae Debose-Douglas (Teacher)***

Rae Debose-Douglas recalled that teachers complained that their students' skills and abilities did not match their high scores on prior CRCT tests.

Testing Coordinator Shuanta Broadway once commented that she had to review each student's CRCT answer sheet to make sure they answered the majority of the questions.

##### **2. *Shondra Etheridge (Teacher)***

Shondra Etheridge denied any knowledge of cheating, but admitted that based on the statistical data, someone tampered with her tests. She heard of teachers using voice inflection to prompt students.

##### **3. *Lillian Williams (Teacher)***

Lillian Williams admitted that she prompted students using voice inflection, and that her voice inflection could have caused the high wrong-to-right erasures in her classroom on the 2009 CRCT.

4. Kiatonya Wormley (Teacher)

Kiatonya Wormley admitted that she erased the incorrect answer choice when students filled in one or more bubbles on the CRCT. She denied any further knowledge of cheating.

5. Sabrina Claude (Teacher)

Sabrina Claude heard that Debose-Douglas obtained a copy of the CRCT from another district, and used it to cheat on the 2009 CRCT.

Claude identified a student in her classroom in 2010 that told her Lillian Williams gave the student answers during the 2009 CRCT.

6. Temica Bell (Teacher)

Temica Bell taught the daughter of fellow teacher Lakeisha Davis. That student told Temica Bell that she recognized a reading passage on the 2009 CRCT because she had studied it the previous night. Lakeisha Davis was friends with Rae Debose-Douglas and Lori McAdoo, both flagged teachers on the 2009 CRCT.

7. Lakeisha Davis (Teacher)

Lakeisha Davis stated that her daughter studied a CRCT coaching book that Lakeisha Davis borrowed from Miles Elementary, and denied Temica Bell's assertion that the book was a copy of the 2009 CRCT.

Davis admitted to instructing her students to re-read a question when she noticed they had selected a wrong answer, and says this prompting could have accounted for the high number of wrong-to-right erasures in her classroom on the 2009 CRCT.

8. Lori McAdoo (Teacher)

Lori McAdoo denied all knowledge of cheating, and denied possessing a copy of the CRCT.

9. Shuanta Broadway (Testing Coordinator)

Shuanta Broadway testified that only Principal Estes and she had keys to the area where the tests were kept. The first and second grade teachers were permitted to clean stray marks from their testing materials, but the third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers were not. She denied telling Rae Debose-Douglas that she checked to make sure the students filled in the majority of their answers on their answer sheets. Broadway denied any knowledge of cheating on the 2009 CRCT or in any other year.

10. Christopher Estes (Principal)

Principal Estes denied any knowledge of cheating at Miles.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that Lakeisha Davis, Kiatonya Wormley and Lillian Williams cheated on the 2009 CRCT. We also conclude that Principal Estes did not know cheating occurred on the 2009 CRCT.

# GROVE PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

20 Evelyn Way  
Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Principal: Caitlyn Sims  
Testing Coordinator: Derick Brown

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Grove Park Elementary in 2009. Seven people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating at Grove Park is evidenced by two confessions and witness testimony.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	20	4.5
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	15	3
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	7(5)	3
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	8.5	3.9
High Flagged Standard Deviation	15.8	4.3
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.2	3.1

## **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

### **A. Narrative**

The weight of the evidence indicates that cheating occurred in classrooms by teachers. Two teachers confessed to prompting their students to erase and change their answers from wrong to right. First grade teacher Allison Tollman cheated by prompting her students through voice inflection and stressing key words when reading questions and answers, and by reading questions a third time. Fifth grade teacher Beverly Shanks prepared her students a week before testing to watch for her verbal and non-verbal cues during testing. If she noticed a student with a wrong answer, she would look away from the student and tell the class to check their answers.

We could not locate Testing Coordinator Derick Brown for an interview.

### **B. Testimony of Witnesses**

#### **1. Caitlyn Sims (Principal)**

Caitlyn Sims' first year as principal at Grove Park was 2009. She had no explanation for the high wrong-to-right erasures in her school. Principal Sims feels that the target system at APS was very difficult and created a great deal of pressure and intimidation. She stated that instead of celebrating a school's accomplishments, APS constantly ranks and reminds schools of how "low" they are and that they didn't meet the targets. Additionally, principals are constantly reminded that evaluations are based on whether you make targets. She felt that targets were "statistically inappropriate" and that the system was like a house of cards.

Principal Sims was placed on a PDP by her SRT-4 Executive Director, Tamara Cotman. Principal Sims knew that she had not met her targets but was surprised by the PDP because she had received commendations in other areas. Cotman told her, “Based on your test scores, obviously you weren’t really doing enough with your staff.”

2. Allison Tollman (Teacher)

Allison Tollman admitted to cheating on the 2009 CRCT by prompting students and causing them to erase and change answers from wrong to right. Tollman also stated that she sometimes read the question a third time and stressed a portion of the question. She never gave students the correct answer. She believed that the high number of wrong-to-right erasures could have been caused by her voice inflection when she read the answer choices a third time.

Tollman stated that she felt pressure to improve her students’ scores from the “system” and administration. She felt that the former principal, Dr. Paula Snowden, applied more pressure with respect to scores. Tollman added that teachers did not gather to erase stray marks in 2009 but had done so in previous years.

3. Beverly Shanks (Teacher)

Beverly Shanks was flagged in reading and math for high wrong-to-right erasures. Shanks confessed to cheating on the 2009 CRCT. She said that one week prior to the CRCT, she instructed her students that if she told them to check their answers during the test, they had a wrong answer and needed to review the question and answer choices again. She did not provide those instructions on test days because she was afraid of being overheard on the intercom. During the test, if she noticed an incorrect answer on a student’s answer sheet, she would look away from the student and tell the class they needed to check their answers. She never directly told a student to check his or her answer. Shanks admitted she did this numerous times while the students were testing. She believed it would explain the high number of wrong-to-right erasures in her class.

She heard of others cheating on the CRCT by assisting students with answers and erasing and changing answers on student tests.

4. Pamela Lewis (Teacher)

Pamela Lewis was flagged for high wrong-to-right erasures in all subjects. She denied cheating and knowledge of cheating. She did not know why her students had high numbers of wrong-to-right erasures because she did not see a lot of erasing. Lewis reported a testing irregularity in 2009. One student read and answered every question in the reading section of the test before Lewis read them aloud to the class. He filled in all of the answer choices for each question, so Lewis instructed him to go back and choose one answer per question.

5. Maya Moore (Teacher)

Maya Moore was flagged in all subjects for high wrong-to-right erasures. She stated that she read the question the first time in a monotone voice, but the second time she read the question she might add some inflection to her voice. Moore’s interview was interrupted while

she administered a test. When the interview resumed, Moore recanted some of her statement. She said the first time she read the question in a normal tone. The second time she added some inflection to get the students to focus. She stated that she did not do that often on the CRCT. If re-reading the question caused students to change answers from wrong to right, it was not her intention. She felt that due to the high number of erasures, there may have been “outside help” as well as students looking at each other’s answers during the test. She did not believe her actions could have caused all the erasures in her class.

Moore added that she was close to the Testing Coordinator in 2009, Derick Brown, and thought he should be interviewed.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that Allison Tollman and Beverly Shanks cheated by prompting their students during the administration of the 2009 CRCT. Principal Sims did not know of cheating at Grove Park.

# **JACKSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

1325 Mt. Paran Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30327

Principal: Dr. Lorraine Reich  
Testing Coordinator: Jimmie Hawkins

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Jackson Elementary in 2009. Jackson was not flagged for having classrooms with higher wrong-to-right erasures than the state mean. During the course of this investigation, however, we became aware of possible cheating at Jackson on the 2009 CRCT. Five people were interviewed at Jackson and two teachers confessed to cheating.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	3.7	6.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	4	7
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	3(1)	6(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	3.6	3.5
High Flagged Standard Deviation	4.8	4.2
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.1

## **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

### **A. Testimony of Witnesses**

#### **1. Ann Offen (Teacher)**

Ann Offen admitted to prompting her students with voice inflection on the 2009 CRCT. She explained that her voice inflection was accidental because she read “dramatically” to her students all year long. She was “certain” that students “caught on to the way I inflect my voice.” She further admitted that if she noticed a student mark the same answer choice over and over she would direct that student to re-read the questions. She further testified that she was not surprised she was flagged, but she was embarrassed to be flagged.

#### **2. Lori Dewberry (Teacher)**

Lori Dewberry testified that she never prompted a student, never suggested they re-read a particular question, and never pointed to or suggested correct answers. Dewberry stated that if she saw a student mark the same answer choice over and over she did nothing. Dewberry stated that she may have unconsciously prompted her students to change answers on the 2009 CRCT. She explained that she read “dramatically” to her students throughout the school year, and may have accidentally used voice inflection when reading the correct answer choices during the 2009 CRCT.



3. Lorainne B. Reich (Principal)

Lorainne Rech denied any knowledge of cheating at Jackson.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

Of the three flagged teachers at Jackson, two admitted they “accidentally” used voice inflection when reading the answer choices to their students during the 2009 CRCT. We conclude that Ann Offen and Lori Dewberry cheated on the 2009 CRCT. We find that Principal Reich did not know of the cheating at Jackson.

# CLEVELAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2672 Old Hapeville Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Principal: Dr. Rhonda Ware-Brazier  
Testing Coordinator: Lillian Jackson

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at Cleveland Elementary School in 2009. Sixteen people were interviewed at this school, some more than once. Cheating at Cleveland is evidenced by a confession.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	26.1	8.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	18	5
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	10(6)	3(2)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	6.0	4.2
High Flagged Standard Deviation	13.8	5.3
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.0	3.8

## **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

### **A. Testimony of Witnesses**

#### **1. Alvia Barnett (Teacher)**

Alvia Barnett admitted to prompting students on the 2009 CRCT. Barnett said that if she noticed that a student answered a question incorrectly she told the student to go back and check the answer. She also rephrased an answer if she thought it was a word the student was not familiar with.

Barnett's proctor prompted students as well. She read the question again to individual students, even though Barnett had read the question twice. Barnett heard her proctor direct students to go back and check particular questions.

#### **2. Dr. Rhonda Ware-Brazier (Principal)**

Dr. Rhonda Ware-Brazier denied knowledge of cheating.

She brought in retired teachers to proctor during testing in 2009. The retired teachers erased stray marks on the answer sheets, but teachers did not.

3. Lillian Jackson (Testing Coordinator)

Lillian Jackson was the testing coordinator in 2009. She denied knowledge of cheating.

Jackson gave teachers an opportunity to erase stray marks for approximately five to ten minutes after testing.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that Alvia Barnett cheated on the 2009 CRCT by prompting students to change their answers. Principal Ware-Brazier did not know of the cheating at this school.

# **ALONZO A. CRIM OPEN CAMPUS HIGH SCHOOL**

256 Clifton Street  
Atlanta, Georgia 30317

Principal: Dr. Angelisa Cummings  
Testing Coordinator: Isabella Copridge

SRT-5 Executive Director: Joyce McCloud

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Alonzo A. Crim High School had one eighth grade class. Three sections of the CRCT were administered to this single class. One of those three sections was flagged, resulting in a 33% flag rate being assigned to the school. This overall percentage was sufficient to put Crim in the severe category under the state's analysis even though there was only a single flagged subject. That one flagged classroom did not justify investigating Crim given the scope of the larger investigation. No one was interviewed with respect to Crim.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	33.3	0
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	1	0
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	1	0
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	5.2	0
High Flagged Standard Deviation	5.2	0
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	5.2	0

## **III. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

There is insufficient evidence to make any conclusions.

# **BENJAMIN S. CARSON PREPARATORY ACADEMY**

CLOSED

Principal: Flora Goolsby  
Testing Coordinator: Nelta Lattimore

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

There is only statistical evidence that cheating occurred on the CRCT at Benjamin S. Carson Preparatory Academy (Carson) in 2009. Twenty-one people were interviewed at this school, some more than once.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	30	N/A
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	9	N/A
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	5(3)	N/A
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	4.7	N/A
High Flagged Standard Deviation	9.4	N/A
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	N/A

## **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

### **A. Narrative**

In 2009, Carson contained about 125 eighth grade students. The sixth and seventh grades had been moved to the new BEST Academy and only the eighth grade remained on site at Carson. The school was a “Needs Improvement Year 8” school in its final year of existence. Principal Flora Goolsby was assigned to Carson to help close the school. A state monitor, Joel Standifer, was assigned to Carson on a full time basis. During administration of the CRCT, the tests were stored in Principal Goolsby’s office, locked in a closet. The Testing Coordinator, Nelta Lattimore, distributed and collected the tests from a cart in the hallway. After testing, Lattimore said the tests were rolled back to Principal Goolsby’s office. A witness claimed that the tests were rolled into Lattimore’s office and returned to Principal Goolsby’s office at the end of each day.

### **B. Testimony of Witnesses**

#### **1. Arthur Jones (Math Coach)**

Arthur Jones taught at Benjamin Carson in 2009. He testified that he believes the school was flagged due to the test-taking strategies he taught. He stated that he told students that when there was not much time that they should mark “b” or “c” on the answer sheet and come back later and erase the answer if they had time to work through the problem and found that the answer was incorrect. Jones stated that some of the flagged teachers, specifically Ms. Shorter and

Charles Ball, would not have the knowledge to change math answers from wrong to right. He claimed no knowledge of cheating at Carson.

Arthur Jones stated that any sixth grade teacher at an APS middle school can tell you that there is cheating on the CRCT in APS elementary schools, and it is just accepted that the scores are inflated.

2. Charles Ball (Teacher)

Charles Ball testified that it was “common knowledge” that cheating occurred in the elementary schools. He stated that Arthur Jones sometimes referred to himself as “Top Gun” and claimed to be the best math teacher. Ball’s class was flagged at 6.6 for high wrong-to-right erasures on the math portion of the CRCT.

3. Jacqueline Middlebrooks (Proctor)

Jacqueline Middlebrooks proctored in Ms. Shorter’s classroom and testified that Ms. Shorter’s students were actually tested by a gifted teacher. Shorter’s classes were flagged in all three subject areas.

4. Mary Gordon (Teacher)

Mary Gordon, a former teacher, testified that having seen the test scores, there was no doubt there was cheating. She believed it could not have happened in the classroom due to lack of time and that some teachers did not know sufficient math to change the answers.

5. Nelta Lattimore (Testing Coordinator)

Nelta Lattimore testified that she was a counselor assigned as testing coordinator and was “scared to death” about anything going wrong with testing procedures. She stated that the tests were returned to a table in the hallway, then were placed on a cart that she rolled into Principal Flora Goolsby’s office. She believed only the principal had the key. Lattimore did not believe Principal Goolsby or other administrators would ever erase answers.

6. Joel Standifer (State Monitor)

Joel Standifer was assigned to Carson as a full time monitor for the 2008-2009 school year by the Georgia Department of Education because it was a “Needs Improvement Year 8” school. The tests were returned to a table in the hall. They were then rolled into Nelta Lattimore’s office and then later to the principal’s office and stored overnight. He only observed the first day of testing.

7. Marilyn Wallace (Secretary)

Marilyn Wallace was the principal’s secretary and testified that Nelta Lattimore brought the tests to the principal’s office around 3:30 or 4:00 p.m. She stated that if there was cheating on the tests it had to have happened while the tests were in Lattimore’s office.

8. Flora Goolsby (Principal)

Flora Goolsby was assigned to Carson during the 2008-2009 school year to oversee the closing of the school. The school was comprised of eighth grade only, with approximately 125 students. Many had extreme academic deficits or behavioral problems. She testified that the teachers flagged with high wrong-to-right erasures were among those she “inherited” when she was assigned to the school in 2008-2009. She stated that the tests were locked in her office.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

For the 2009 CRCT at Carson, 30% of the classes exceeded three standard deviations from the State mean for wrong-to-right erasures. Five teachers had classes exceeding three standard deviations. Although we have concerns, the evidence we observed does not warrant further action.

## **C.W. HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

CLOSED

Principal: Yolanda Brown  
Testing Coordinator: Tracey Fletcher

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

### **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

There is limited statistical evidence that cheating occurred on the CRCT at C.W. Hill Elementary in 2009. Because C.W. Hill closed at the end of 2009, only one witness was interviewed at this school.

### **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	29.4	N/A
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	15	N/A
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	7(4)	N/A
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	10.3	N/A
High Flagged Standard Deviation	25.1	N/A
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.7	N/A

### **III. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

For the 2009 CRCT at C.W. Hill, 29.4% of the classes exceeded three standard deviations from the State mean for wrong-to-right erasures. Fifteen teachers had classes exceeding three standard deviations. Although we have concerns, the evidence does not warrant further action.



## ADAMSVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

286 Wilson Mill Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30331

Principal: Sharon Suitt  
Testing Coordinator: Lucille Gourdine

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

### **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

There is limited statistical evidence that cheating occurred on the CRCT at Adamsville Elementary in 2009. Eleven people were interviewed at this school.

### **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	27.8	1.9
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	20	1
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	10(7)	1(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	5.5	3.8
High Flagged Standard	9.7	3.8
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.2	3.8

### **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

For the 2009 CRCT at Adamsville, 27.8% of the classes exceeded three standard deviations from the state mean for wrong-to-right erasures. Ten teachers had 20 classes exceeding three standard deviations. In 2010, the percentages of classes with wrong-to-right erasures exceeding three standard deviations from the state mean dropped significantly from 27.8% to 1.9%. Although we have concerns, the evidence does not warrant further action.

# **CASCADE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

2326 Venetian Dr.  
Atlanta, GA 30331

Principal: Dr. Alfonso L. Jessie, Jr.  
Testing Coordinator: Barbara Ash

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

There is only limited statistical evidence that cheating occurred at Cascade Elementary in 2009. Fourteen people were interviewed at this school, some more than once.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	28.8	1.9
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	19	1
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	10(6)	1(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	5.2	3.3
High Flagged Standard Deviation	13.7	3.3
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.2	3.3

## **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

### **A. Testimony of Witnesses**

#### **1. Dr. Alfonso Jessie (Principal)**

Dr. Alfonso Jessie said there is pressure from APS to make targets and improve test scores. SRT-1 Director Sharon Davis-Williams put Dr. Jessie on three PDPs when Cascade failed to meet targets. On occasion Davis-Williams would ask Dr. Jessie what he was going to do about a particular teacher whose students did not do well on the CRCT. Dr. Jessie testified that he has no knowledge of anyone at Cascade cheating on the CRCT.

## **IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

Due to the statistical evidence and the testimony of witnesses, we cannot determine what happened at Cascade. A number of teachers told investigators that there was no time limit within which they had to turn the tests in to the testing coordinator. It is possible that the teachers had time to prompt students or change answers in the classroom. No witnesses admitted to prompting students or changing answers. Although we have concerns, the evidence does not warrant further action.

## HERITAGE ACADEMY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

3500 Villa Circle SE  
Atlanta, Georgia 30354

Principal: Yvonne Bernal  
Testing Coordinator: Meribell White

SRT-2 Executive Director: Michael Pitts

### **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

There is only limited statistical evidence that cheating occurred on the 2009 CRCT at Heritage Academy Elementary. Eighteen people were interviewed at this school.

### **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	28.2	9.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	22	7
Number of Teachers Flagged fro WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	17(4)	7(2)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	5.5	6.3
High Flagged Standard Deviation	10.6	11.0
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.0	3.0

### **III. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

For the 2009 CRCT at Heritage Academy, 28.2% of the classes exceeded three standard deviations from the State mean for wrong-to-right erasures. Seventeen teachers had 22 classes exceeding three standard deviations. In 2010, the percentage of classes with wrong-to-right erasures exceeding three standard deviations from the State mean dropped from 28.2% to 9.3%. The evidence we observed does not warrant further action.

# UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ACADEMY

2050 Tiger Flowers Drive, NW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

Principal: Dr. Jim Harris  
Testing Coordinator: Tammy Miller

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Cheating occurred on the CRCT at University Community Academy (UCA) in 2009 and other years. Two people confessed to cheating. Cheating at UCA is evidenced by confessions and witness testimony. Twenty-six people were interviewed at UCA, some more than once. Principal Jim Harris failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	25	4.2
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	5	3
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	4(1)	3(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	8.3	3.6
High Flagged Standard Deviation	13.9	4.3
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.3	3.2

## **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

### **A. Narrative**

Cheating occurred at UCA during CRCT testing in 2008 and 2009. One teacher confessed to cheating in 2009 during CRCT testing. When students raised their hands during testing, she provided answers. Her proctor was present but was reportedly unaware of the teacher's actions. Three proctors said teachers for whom they proctored cheated. Melvin McClain circulated among the lower achieving students in his class during 2008 and 2009 testing, and read off a series of answers for the students. Haron Wood confessed that he also provided answers for McClain's students.

Wanda Nevett was implicated by two of her proctors for cheating.

Wanda Williams was implicated by her proctor and other witnesses for cheating during 2009 CRCT testing. Williams would go to students who raised their hand and provide answers.

### **B. Testimony of Witnesses**

#### **1. Christine Clyne (Teacher)**

Christine Clyne confessed to cheating on the CRCT in 2009. Clyne admitted to cheating by providing students with answers during testing. She said she gave answers to students who raised their hands. Her proctor was unaware of what she was doing. Clyne was unaware of

anyone else in the school engaging in similar behavior. A combination of personal pressure and pressure from Principal Harris may have motivated her actions. She was accused of testing improprieties while teaching at another school several years ago.

2. *Dr. Jim Harris (Principal)*

Dr. Jim Harris was the Principal of UCA in 2009. Principal Harris denied knowledge of cheating. Although he had a statistics background and understood the meaning of high standard deviations, he refused to believe that cheating could account for the high erasures at UCA. Principal Harris appeared surprised when shown the names of the flagged teachers, many of whom he had recruited from other schools. He admitted hiring Clyne despite knowledge of previous allegations of cheating made against her at another school. He denied putting pressure on teachers. When informed that some had made confessions and implicated others, Principal Harris refused to believe that cheating was possible because testing procedures were tight. He claimed he personally went from room to room monitoring the school during testing.

3. *Haron Wood (Proctor)*

Haron Wood proctored for Melvin McClain in 2009 and for a few days in 2008. Wood testified that during 2008 and 2009 CRCT testing in McClain's sixth grade class, McClain would walk around the class and "blatantly" provide answers to the students. Wood stated that McClain would stand over particular students, instruct them to write quickly and read them a series of 10 to 15 answers. Some students had already filled in wrong answers, which they erased and changed to the right answers provided by McClain. Other students left questions unanswered and waited for McClain to come over and provide answers. McClain had materials in hand to assist him in providing answers. McClain focused on the lower achieving students and left the higher performing students alone.

Wood admitted to providing some students with answers during testing in McClain's class during CRCT testing.

Wood said he also proctored for Wanda Nevett during 2008 CRCT testing. He said that in 2008 Nevett cheated by using voice inflection to give her students answers. Wanda Nevett would also walk around and "abruptly" inform students when they had missed a question and provide the correct answer. If a student was taking too long to fill in an answer, Nevett would tell the child, "What is taking so long, the answer is \_\_\_\_."

4. *Rhonda Smith (Proctor)*

Rhonda Smith worked as a lunchroom assistant and served as a proctor for Wanda Williams in 2009. Smith stated that Williams went to students who raised their hands during CRCT testing and gave them the answer. Smith could hear Williams providing answers. Students sometimes asked Smith for the answers, but because it was sixth grade and she was unsure of the correct answer, she would summon Williams over to the student, and Williams provided the student with the answer. Smith observed that Williams had papers in her desk drawer that she appeared to be referencing. Smith said she knew there were different versions of the test and did not know how Williams had access to the correct information.

5. MeiTei Smith (Proctor)

MeiTei Smith was a proctor for Wanda Nevett in 2009. Smith stated that during the 2009 CRCT, Nevett walked around the classroom and erased on students' test books as she administered the test. Smith was uncertain whether Nevett was erasing answers. Nevett walked around the room pointing at students' test books, but Smith was not certain if Nevett was prompting them to change their answers. Nevett used voice inflection when reading answer choices. Nevett read the questions more than twice which Smith knew to be a testing violation.

6. Tammy Miller (Testing Coordinator)

Tammy Miller was the Testing Coordinator in 2009. She denied any knowledge of cheating.

7. Shirley Shivers (Tutor & Proctor)

Shirley Shivers was a tutor and proctor in 2009. A proctor or monitor told Shivers that Wanda Williams' classroom door was locked during the CRCT. Students said that Wanda Williams and Melvin McClain provided answers during testing. Shivers said that if cheating occurred, it would have taken place in the classroom.

8. Kimberly Lucas (Teacher)

Students told Kimberly Lucas that Wanda Williams cheated by using coughing as a signal. Williams coughed a certain number of times to indicate the correct answer. Lucas was flagged in math with a standard deviation above 12, which she could not explain. She said most of her students "sucked" in math.

9. Janice Mencey (Counselor)

Janice Mencey was the school counselor in 2009. She assisted testing coordinator Tammy Miller with the test materials. Mencey denied cheating or knowledge of cheating; however, she admitted that even if she had information about cheating she might not disclose it to us. She stated that if she told anyone, it would most likely be the principal.

C. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. Melvin McClain (Teacher)

Melvin McClain stated that the majority of his students performed at high levels and that their success was due to his "teaching to the test" methodology and emphasis on the CRCT coach book. He stated that everywhere he has worked, the administration placed him in grades that needed the most work to raise test scores. McClain took pride in calling himself "the disciplinarian of the school." McClain could provide no explanation for his high wrong to right erasures.

2. Wanda Williams (Teacher)

Wanda Williams was a sixth grade teacher at UCA. She was flagged in all three subject areas. She stated that if anyone claimed she provided answers to students, they were lying. Williams did not believe that any student would be angry enough to accuse her of cheating. She claimed that she did not have the ability to answer some of the math problems on the test. She denied that her doors were locked during the test. Williams erased stray marks but denies changing answers.

3. Wanda Nevett (Teacher)

Wanda Nevett was one of two first grade teachers at UCA and had over 30 years of teaching experience. She and the other teacher, Torri Brown, split the first grade students into high and low performing groups, and Wanda Nevett taught the lower achieving students. At her first interview, Nevett claimed that the high erasures might have been the result of her “body language.” Her students knew her so well that they knew what she was trying to say without her having to say anything. Nevett believed the erasures took place in her classroom and that the tests were not tampered with after leaving her classroom. She denied erasing anything on the students’ tests, including stray marks. Nevett was unsure how many times she was allowed to read the questions and admitted she probably read them more than twice.

At her second interview, Nevett claimed she read some questions substituting language familiar to her students. When advised that she was seen walking around making erasures on students’ tests, she denied erasing answers but claimed she was erasing stray marks. She admitted she lied at her first interview, claiming she was scared. Nevett testified that the only thing she did that may have influenced the students’ answers was changing the language when she read some questions, and hitting a student’s desk and saying “pay attention!” Nevett denies pointing to answers on the test.

D. Other Evidence

Haron Wood believed that teachers at UCA provided assistance to students during test administration as a result of pressure placed by Principal Jim Harris. Principal Harris told the staff that the school must make AYP “by any means necessary.” Wood believed that several teachers helped their students cheat.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that cheating occurred at UCA in 2008 and 2009.

We conclude that Christine Clyde, Haron Wood, Melvin McClain, Wanda Williams, and Wanda Nevitt cheated on the CRCT.

Principal Harris exerted pressure to make AYP. We conclude that Principal Harris either knew or should have known that cheating occurred. He created an atmosphere where teachers felt it was necessary to cheat.

Principal Jim Harris failed in his responsibility for testing activities and for ensuring the ethical administration of, and proper security for, the 2009 CRCT. It is clear from the statistical data, and the other evidence with regard to cheating in the APS system, that Harris failed to properly monitor the 2009 CRCT, adequately supervise testing activities and test security. This resulted in, and he is responsible for, falsifying, misrepresenting or erroneously reporting the results of the 2009 CRCT to the Georgia Department of Education.



# **WILLIAMS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

CLOSED

Principal: Mary Joyce Harris  
Testing Coordinator: Teresa Ayers

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Williams Elementary had six flagged teachers in 2009, and closed at the end of the 2008-2009 school year. Each of those flagged teachers administered the test to seven or fewer students. Given the small sample size of each flagged classroom, and the fact that it is closed, we did not interview anyone at this school.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	20.4	N/A
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	11	N/A
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	6(3)	N/A
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	6.9	N/A
High Flagged Standard Deviation	11.8	N/A
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.5	N/A

## **III. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We have no opinion on whether there was cheating at Williams, but do not believe it warrants any further investigation.

## HERNDON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

350 Temple Street  
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

Principal: Betty Tinsley  
Testing Coordinator: Patrice Lisbon

SRT-1 Executive Director: Dr. Sharon Davis-Williams

### **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

There is limited statistical evidence that cheating occurred on the CRCT at Herndon Elementary in 2009. Fourteen people were interviewed at this school.

### **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	20.4	1.9
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	11	1
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	5(3)	1(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	5	3.7
High Flagged Standard Deviation	7.3	3.7
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.1	3.7

### **III. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

For the 2009 CRCT at Herndon, 20.4% of the classes exceeded three standard deviations from the state mean for wrong-to-right erasures. Eleven classes exceeded three standard deviations. Seven of these classes were first and second grade classes. In 2010 the percentages of classes with wrong-to-right erasures exceeding three standard deviations from the state mean dropped significantly from 20.4% to 1.9%. Although we have concerns, the evidence does not warrant further action.

We note that the report made by Dr. Jackie Boyce in 2009, regarding a student saying a teacher at Herndon helped the students with answers, was not properly investigated by APS at the time. The evidence with regard to that matter was stale by the time of this investigation.

# **BOLTON ACADEMY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

2268 Adams Drive, NW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30318

Principal: Laura Strickling  
Testing Coordinator: Pamela Patterson

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

There is only limited statistical evidence that cheating occurred on the 2009 CRCT at Bolton Academy Elementary, and this evidence lacks sufficient detail upon which to base further action. Ten teachers were interviewed at this school.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	15.9	4.5
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	11	3
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	5(4)	1(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	5.9	3.6
High Flagged Standard Deviation	9.7	4.0
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.0	3.0

## **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

### **A. Testimony of Witnesses**

#### **1. Ameera Lucky (Teacher)**

Ameera Lucky witnessed teachers erasing stray marks as a group in the conference room in 2009.

Lucky also stated that Principal Strickling routinely backdated materials such as evaluations, observations, and receipt of documents. Some teachers reported this to SRT-4 Director Tamara Cotman, but Cotman took no action. After the teachers reported this conduct to Cotman, Principal Strickling sent a memorandum ordering teachers to send correspondence to Cotman through Principal Strickling.

Teachers at Bolton were told that if GBI agents came to their homes, they were to tell the agents they could only interview them through Principal Strickling.

#### **2. Tabitha Stroud (Teacher)**

Tabitha Stroud believes voice inflection was used to prompt first and second grade students on the CRCT.

Principal Strickling asked Stroud to backdate documents on more than one occasion. Stroud heard other teachers complain that Principal Strickling put false information in their

personnel files. All of this was reported to SRT Executive Director Cotman, but Cotman never responded to the teachers' concerns. Principal Strickling e-mailed the teachers and instructed them not to correspond with Cotman anymore.

3. *Pamela Patterson (Testing Coordinator)*

Pamela Patterson denied cheating or knowledge of cheating, and denied she erased any stray marks in 2009. Patterson is aware of teachers complaining that the previous year's CRCT score of a particular student did not match up with their abilities. Patterson implied that generally this was because the teacher did not feel he or she could prepare the student as well. On one occasion a teacher brought this concern to her and she concurred that the student's score was surprising.

4. *Kristi Tompkins (Teacher)*

Kristi Tompkins heard that Theresa Powell gave answers to her students on the 2008 CRCT. Tompkins heard Powell was "dealt with" by APS but does not know any further details.

B. Testimony of Individuals Implicated

1. *Laura Strickling (Principal)*

Laura Strickling denied knowledge of cheating.

2. *Theresa Powell (Teacher)*

Theresa Powell was suspended for thirty days for improperly prompting students on the 2008 CRCT. She said that she told the students to "check their answers and make sure they are correct." She recognized this was a testing violation and submitted to the suspension.

According to Powell, she was surprised to see that she was flagged. She had specifically requested and been given a proctor for the 2009 CRCT. She says she would not have had an opportunity to cheat. If anyone erased answers it must have been the teacher who administered the test to her ESOL students with accommodations or the administration.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

Although we have concerns, especially regarding the possible attempts by Principal Strickling to interfere with this investigation, the evidence we observed does not warrant further action.

# MORNINGSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1053 East Rock Springs Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30306

Principal: Rebecca Pruitt  
Testing Coordinator: Kori Sanchez

SRT-3 Executive Director: Dr. Gloria Patterson

## **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

There is only limited statistical evidence that cheating occurred on the CRCT at Morningside Elementary in 2009. Five people were interviewed at this school, some more than once.

## **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	3.2	4.9
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	4	5
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	4(0)	5(0)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	3.9	3.8
High Flagged Standard Deviation	4.8	4.3
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.2	3.4

## **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

### **A. Narrative**

In 2009, four teachers were flagged for having wrong-to-right erasures higher than the State mean. During the course of this investigation, allegations were made that Elizabeth Richman told a teacher at Springdale Park Elementary that teachers at Morningside instructed their students to leave questions blank when they did not know the answers, allowing the teachers to fill in the correct answers later. Elizabeth Richman denied making that statement, and denied any knowledge of cheating on the CRCT.

One teacher testified that although teachers were required to turn their CRCT materials in immediately after testing, “no one checked on teachers to make sure their tests were turned in immediately.”

### **B. Testimony of Witnesses**

#### **1. Elizabeth Richman (Teacher)**

Elizabeth Richman denied telling anyone that teachers at Morningside instructed students to leave answers blank and filling the answers in later. She stated that she had no knowledge of cheating on the CRCT, but that teachers were not “checked on” to make sure they turned in their CRCT materials immediately after testing.

2. Rebecca Pruitt (Principal)

Rebecca Pruitt denied any knowledge of cheating on the 2009 CRCT.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

For the 2009 CRCT at Morningside, 3.2% of the classes exceeded three standard deviations from the state mean for wrong-to-right erasures. Four teachers had classes exceeding three standard deviations. Two of these classes were first and second grade classes. In 2010 the percentages of classes with wrong-to-right erasures exceeding three standard deviations from the State mean grew from 3.2% to 4.9%, consisting of one classroom that tested one student. The evidence we observed does not warrant further action.

## MORRIS BRANDON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2741 Howell Mill Road Northwest  
Atlanta, Georgia 30327

Principal: Karen Evans  
Testing Coordinator: Peter Settelmayer

SRT-4 Executive Director: Tamara Cotman

### **I. INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

We found no evidence of cheating at Morris Brandon. Six people were interviewed at this school, some more than once.

### **II. STATISTICAL DATA**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	1	4.3
Number of Classrooms Flagged for WTR Erasures	1	5
Number of Teachers Flagged for WTR Standard Deviations above 3.0 (Number of Teachers Flagged in Multiple Subjects)	1(0)	4(1)
Mean WTR Standard Deviations from State Norm	5.8	3.4
High Flagged Standard Deviation	3.8	3.8
Low Flagged Standard Deviation	3.8	3.1

### **III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

In 2009, Sarah Elizabeth Visel was the only teacher flagged for high wrong-to-right erasures. While Visel was the only homeroom teacher identified by the state, she did not administer the CRCT in 2009. She was out on maternity leave. The test was actually administered by Omema Martin and proctored by Judith Maisonneuve. Both Martin and Maisonneuve denied any knowledge of cheating. We conclude that there was no cheating at Morris Brandon given the low standard deviations for both 2009 and 2010, the small number of classrooms flagged, coupled with the lack of other evidence.

### **IV. ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE**

We conclude that there was not cheating at Morris Brandon on the 2009 CRCT. No further investigation is needed.

### **2009 VS. 2010**

The GOSA erasure analysis performed on the 2010 CRCT provides additional proof of cheating in 2009 and other years. By the time the CRCT was administered in the spring of 2010, the GOSA 2009 erasure analysis had been made public and Governor Perdue ordered the district to investigate the flagged schools. Media attention was focused on the district, and the state sent representatives to some of the district schools to observe administration of the test.

Following the 2010 CRCT, GOSA commissioned another erasure analysis. That study revealed a dramatic drop in WTR erasures, and consequently, the overall percentage of classes flagged plummeted in virtually every school in the “moderate” and “severe” concern categories. For example, Parks Middle School, with the highest percentage of classes flagged in Georgia in 2009, dropped from 89.5% in 2009, to 4% in 2010. Gideons Elementary went from 88.4% to 25%; F.L. Stanton Elementary from 83.3% to 7.1%.

We presented the principals of these schools with the 2010 erasure analysis and asked for an explanation of the precipitous drops in flagged classes. Many claimed that some students were afraid to erase in 2010 because of the media coverage surrounding the erasure analysis. None of those principals offered proof that the students actually erased less. A few principals recalled an occasional



student or parent asking whether it was okay to erase. Most confirmed that teachers still encouraged students to erase when necessary.

The problem with the “students are afraid to erase” explanation is that it assumes that the students were erasing in the first place. It is possible that students’ reticence to erase may account for some drops in flagged classes in a few schools. It does not account for the 85 percentage point decrease at Parks, and the significant drops at schools where we have confirmed cheating occurred.

Cook Elementary and BEST Academy provide a distressing example of how the presence of state monitors (and not the students’ fears) resulted in fewer flagged classes. Cook Elementary had 40.7% of its classes flagged in 2009, and we found direct evidence of coordinated cheating by Principal LaPaul Shelton on the 2009 CRCT. In contrast, BEST Academy was “clear of concern” in 2009. In 2010, the district transferred LaPaul Shelton to BEST Academy to serve as principal. There were no state monitors at BEST because it had previously been “clear of concern.” Apparently, Shelton has engaged in the same improper practices at BEST that he did at Cook in 2009. The percentage of classes flagged at BEST increased from 3.9% in 2009 to 19.4% in 2010. At Cook, where state monitors supervised the CRCT administration in 2010, and Shelton was no longer the principal, the percentage of flagged classes fell to 5%. This shift between Cook and BEST shows that the percentage of flagged classes at Cook dropped not

because the students stopped erasing, but perhaps because Principal Shelton was removed.

**ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**PERCENTAGE OF CLASSES WITH FLAGGED WTR'S**

<b>School</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Parks Middle	89.5	4.0
Gideons Elementary	88.4	25.0
Peyton Forest	86.1	26.1
F L Stanton	83.3	7.1
Usher Elementary	78.4	13.3
Venetian Hill	75.4	1.5
Capitol View	70.8	19.0
Connally Elementary	70.5	9.9
Dunbar Elementary	68.6	22.2
Scott Elementary	68.0	1.4
Perkerson Elementary	66.7	7.0
Blalock Elementary	66.7	closed
Towns Elementary	63.6	12.1
Woodson Elementary	63.3	15.7
Whitefoord Elementary	59.3	13.3
D H Stanton Elementary	58.3	17.6
Boyd Elementary	56.1	15.7
West Manor Elementary	54.9	28.9
Turner Middle	54.0	9.3
Kennedy Middle	53.2	6.0
Fickett Elementary	51.4	9.3
Finch Elementary	48.0	10.3
Deerwood Academy	47.8	8.6
White Elementary	47.4	22.9
Hutchinson Elementary	47.0	1.6
Humphries Elementary	46.7	10.4
Benteen Elementary	43.1	0.0
Beecher Hills	42.6	2.4
East Lake Elementary	42.0	0.0
Cook Elementary	40.7	5.0
Fain Elementary	39.7	18.8
Thomasville H	39.1	7.2
Dobbs Elementary	33.3	6.9
Crim High School	33.3	0.0
Coan Middle School	31.4	3.3
Slater Elementary	30.3	5.2
Benjamin S Carson	30.0	
C W Hill Elementary	29.4	closed
Cascade Elementary	28.8	1.9
Heritage Academy	28.2	9.3
Adamsville Elementary	27.8	1.9

<b>School</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Cleveland Elementary	26.1	8.3
University Co	25.0	4.2
Harper Archer	24.1	0.7
M A Jones Elementary	23.1	7.8
Bethune Elementary	23.1	3.3
Miles Elementary	21.7	2.9
Toomer Elementary	21.4	0.0
Parkside Elementary	21.3	4.3
Williams Elementary	20.4	closed
Herndon Elementary	20.4	1.9
Grove Park Elementary	20.0	4.5
The Bridge	16.7	0.0
Bolton Academy	15.9	4.5
Imagine Wesle	13.7	3.2
Long Middle	12.4	13.9
Kimberly Elementary	11.7	7.9
Young Middle	11.4	3.9
Sylvan Hills	10.4	3.0
Garden Hills	9.7	6.9
Brown Middle	9.3	7.5
Continental C	9.1	12.3
Bunche Middle	7.5	2.8
Burgess Peter	7.1	0.0
King Middle	6.1	3.4
Charles R. Drew	5.1	1.0
Inman Middle	4.5	5.0
The Best Academy	3.9	19.4
Kipp West Elementary	3.9	7.8
Jackson Elementary	3.7	6.3
Coretta Scott	3.7	5.6
Morningside Elementary	3.2	4.9
Atlanta Charter	3.0	0.0
Hope Elementary	2.8	5.0
Price Middle	2.2	4.8
Smith Elementary	1.0	1.9
Brandon Elementary	1.0	4.3
Sutton Middle	0.9	1.9
Lin Elementary	0.0	0.0
Rivers Elementary	0.0	1.5
Centennial Pl	0.0	3.0
Neighborhood	0.0	2.2
APSCEP Partner	0.0	0.0
Hillside Cona	0.0	0.0

## GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
APS	Atlanta Public Schools. An independent school system in the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia. Officially the “Atlanta Independent School System.”
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress. Part of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, AYP is a measure of year-to-year student achievement on statewide assessments. Schools, school districts, and states must demonstrate a certain level of performance on reading and/or language arts and mathematics assessments. Schools that do not “meet AYP” for two consecutive years in the same subject area are designated as schools in “Needs Improvement.”
Certified educator	Individuals trained in education who hold teaching, leadership, service, technical specialist, or permit certification issued by the PSC.
Classroom level data	CRCT erasure analysis data for specific teacher or homeroom, including the subject tested, number of students, total number of wrong to right erasures, and resulting standard deviation.
Confessed	Admitted to the truth of a charge or accusation.
Convocation	Annual celebration held by APS to recognize schools that have met at least 70 percent of its performance targets. All APS schools’ faculty are expected to attend.
CRCT	Criterion-Referenced Competency Test. A standardized test used by Georgia as the AYP assessment tool for elementary and middle schools. Tests grades 1-8 in reading, English/language arts, and math. In addition, grades 3-8 are tested in science and social studies.
ELA	English /language arts
Fifth (5 <sup>th</sup> ) Amendment	The privilege against self-incrimination grounded in the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, providing that no person will be compelled to be a witness against himself. In a criminal case, if a defendant invokes the 5 <sup>th</sup> Amendment and refuses to testify, he may not be presumed guilty based on that refusal. However, in a civil case, if a witness invokes the 5 <sup>th</sup> Amendment and refuses to answer questions concerning whether he or she committed a particular act, “it creates an implied admission that a truthful answer would tend to prove that the witness had committed the act.” <i>Perez v. Atlanta Check Cashers, Inc.</i> , 302 Ga. App. 864, 870 (2010).
GOSA	Governor’s Office of Student Achievement. State agency which provides accountability for Georgia's schools, pre-K through postsecondary levels. The intent is to improve student achievement and school completion in Georgia.
GTR ID#	Unique identification number assigned to each student.

IEP	<b>Individualized Education Program.</b> Free, appropriate, public special education services which students with certain disabilities or impairments are eligible to receive. An IEP is a written plan developed by a team of teachers, other qualified personnel, parents, guardians, and the student if appropriate.
Implicated	Shown to be also involved, usually in an incriminating manner.
LA	Language arts
MA	Mathematics
Makes the floor	At Convocation, schools that “make the floor” have met at least 70 percent of its targets. Those schools’ faculty members are seated in groups on the floor of the host venue, with the schools meeting the highest percentage of its targets seated closest to the stage. Schools that do not make the floor are seated in bleachers or other remote seating.
Meets, exceeds	Refers to a measurement, usually expressed as a percentage, of students who “met” or “exceeded” state standards in certain core curriculum subjects (math, reading, English/language arts, science, and social studies) as measured by the CRCT.
Monitors	Persons assigned to a school to observe test administration procedures; e.g. test distribution, test collection, storage of test materials. Observes testing sites to see that schedules are being followed, reports unusual activity.
OIR	<b>APS Office of Internal Resolution/Employee Relations.</b> Processes and investigates complaints and reports of employee wrongdoing and related employment matters.
Parapro/paraprofessional	A person who may have less than professional-level certification, who relates in role and function to a professional and does a portion of the professional’s job under the professional’s supervision, and whose decision-making authority is limited and regulated by the professional. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-204. Georgia paraprofessionals must be certified by the PSC.
PDP	<b>Professional Development Plan.</b> A plan developed and implemented to correct perceived deficiencies in performance of teachers and administrators, used to encourage and support improvement in specific areas.
PEC	<b>Program for Exceptional Children.</b> Program offering specialized, educational testing, evaluation and other services to eligible children with certain disabilities or impairments. Each eligible student must have an IEP.
Preponderance of the evidence	A standard of proof in civil cases. Evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not.
Proctors	Persons assigned to monitor classrooms or other specific areas during testing; circulate to observe students and discourage misconduct; assist test examiner to maintain testing security; report unusual activity or irregularities.

Prompting	Assisting students during testing by use of verbal or nonverbal cues. Examples include voice inflection, pointing to answers, repetition or rephrasing of words or passages, physical cues, movements, sounds, or signals meant to suggest or convey the answer or encourage students to erase and change an answer.
PSC	Georgia Professional Standards Commission. A state agency created “to set and apply high standards for the preparation, certification, and continued licensing of Georgia public educators.” The PSC also handles the investigation and due process of cases referred for disciplinary action.
RD	Reading
RPA	APS’ Department of <b>R</b> esearch, <b>P</b> lanning and <b>A</b> ccountability. Among other functions, RPA manages and oversees all testing programs at APS.
Social promotion	The practice of promoting a student from one grade level to the next on the basis of age rather than academic achievement.
SRTs	School <b>R</b> eform <b>T</b> eams. APS is organized into four (4) geographically aligned areas comprised of elementary and middle schools, each headed by an executive director. The structure is meant to provide greater accountability and faster service to schools and parents.
Standard deviation	A measure of the variability or dispersion of a distribution of scores that represents the average difference between individual scores and the mean. The more the scores cluster around the mean, the smaller the standard deviation.
Student level data	CRCT erasure analysis data for each individual student for each subject tested (RD, ELA, MA) showing the total number of erasures made on that test, and the number of those erasures that changed from wrong to right.
Stray marks	Pencil markings made on answer sheets that are visible outside of the “bubble” or oval area where answer choices are to be marked.
Targets	An accountability program implemented by APS, consisting of specific performance goals set for each school at the beginning of the school year. The targets are based on quantifiable measures, primarily CRCT test scores, and also include factors such as student attendance, and enrollment in rigorous academic courses.
Testing accommodation	A change in a test administration that modifies how a student takes or responds to the assessment. Accommodations are designed to provide equity and serve to level the playing field for students with disabilities and English Language Learners.
Totality of the evidence	Finding or conclusion based on all of the circumstances of a particular case, rather than any one factor.
WTR	<b>Wrong To Right</b> = an incorrect answer choice is erased and changed to a correct answer choice on an answer sheet, as detected by erasure analysis using high speed optical scanners.