

The following pages provide some insight to the processes that made up the PACT Testing experience at Sanders Clyde Elementary/ Middle School. Included in this report is a timeline of events, staff narratives, ramifications, suggested outcomes, and final remarks from the principal. A hard copy will be provided that contains printed versions of the emails mentioned in the various sections of this report.

PACT Timeline

The timeline below represents the events surrounding the 2008 administration of the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test at Sanders Clyde Elementary/ Middle School. The instances below do not represent all PACT activities, but more specifically address concerns of the staff of Sanders Clyde surrounding the audit process on specific dates.

- April 18, 2008 Dr. Kathryn Rhodes sent an email to all PACT Testing Coordinators informing them that testing materials would be delivered April 22, April 23, or April 24; depending on the school's location.
- April 23, 2008 (am) The Sanders Clyde Testing Coordinator called Dr. Rhodes' office and emailed her to express the fact that testing materials had not arrived at the school. There was no response to the call or email.
- April 23, 2008(pm) The Sanders Clyde Testing Coordinator attended the "Inexperienced" Testing Coordinator Training. During a break, Mr. Middleton expressed the fact to Dr. Rhodes that his school had not received testing materials. At the end of the meeting Dr. Rhodes announced (while all other STCs were preparing to leave) that she needed to speak with Mr. Middleton after everyone leaves. Dr. Rhodes spent an additional ten minutes catching a late arriver up on what she had missed in the training. Dr. Rhodes expressed that because of a directive per Dr. McGinley and Mr. Bynum that Sanders Clyde's testing materials would be left at the district office. Mr. Middleton was informed that he would need to come to 75 Calhoun in order to prepare materials for testing. After leaving the meeting with Dr. Rhodes, Mr. Middleton spoke to Mr. Bynum regarding the testing mandates. Mr. Bynum expressed that there were a number of instances of high eraser marks on the booklets from the previous PACT administration. He explained that the average elementary student erases on average, once per test section. He then said that Sanders Clyde students had as many as seven. He went on to say that he did not believe that the principal had gone around erasing tests, but precautions were being made in order to rule out any wrong doing.
- April 29, 2008 Sanders-Clyde's testing coordinator, Mr. Middleton emailed Dr. Rhodes (Appendix) inquiring on the logistics for preparing materials. He was informed that he would not be provided that information until a complete schedule was submitted. (Why was it necessary to use the submission of a schedule as a condition for providing general information?)

- May 2, 2008 Mr. Middleton submitted a completed PACT testing schedule.
- May 6, 2008 Dr. Rhodes visited Sanders Clyde with questions about the testing schedule. Mr. Middleton emailed her responses to the items of concern.
- May 7, 2008 Dr. Rhodes sent Mr. Middleton a one sentence email stating "Mr. Middleton, I know you have completed your pre-test workshop and your teachers have had the opportunity to read the TAMs." (Was this correspondence sent to all Testing Coordinators in this manner? Was there any indication that the training had not taken place?) The training had already taken place days before. Dr. Rhodes also requested a map of the school to be brought to an 8:15am meeting on the 8th.
- May 8, 2008 Mr. Middleton and another staff member went to 75 Calhoun Street to prepare test materials. Mr. Middleton was informed that he would not be able to break the shrink wrapping on test booklets until the day of the test.
- May 9, 2008 Mr. Middleton was informed that he would not be able to break the shrink wrapping on test booklets until the day of the test. During the time that Mr. Middleton and one additional staff member were preparing materials at the office, Dr. Rhodes came in tapped her wrist and said "You all need to work efficiently because I've got things to do." Mr. Middleton was informed that there would be a monitor in each class and that the test materials would be delivered and picked up each day. Mr. Middleton met with Dr. Rose and Dr. Rhodes to finalize details for the first morning of PACT. Dr. Rose would bring the materials in her car daily. They would be packed in her car the night before. (Was this the most secure way of transporting materials, having the materials in her car each day over night?)
- May 13, 2008 Pact materials were delivered at 6:48 am. Because the materials had to be sorted at that time, testing was delayed over an hour and a half at times. At the end of the day, Dr. Rhodes suggested that Mr. Middleton copy pages 12 and 13 of the Test Administration Manual (TAM) because there were issues with teachers skimming through the test books and there was inappropriate communication between test administrators and students.
- May 14, 2008 Dr. Rose said to Mr. Middleton that there were some concerns that needed to be addressed to the teachers prior to beginning testing for ELA Day 2. She asked that Mr. Middleton gather all test administrators for a meeting. Dr. Rose expressed to Mr. Middleton that the reason the auditors were on the campus was because Ms. Kersey and Ms. Hutchinson had very high eraser marks on their tests last year and that they would have auditors in the classroom the entire time. She and other auditors could be heard discussing the concerns in the main hallway prior to the meeting. During

the meeting, concerns were addressed about taking breaks, coaching students, etc. The concerns will be discussed in further detail in the section containing testing administrator narratives.

May 15, 2008

At the completion of the testing for Math, Dr. Rhodes informed Mr. Middleton that he would be able to pick-up Social Studies, Science, and Field Test materials. Those materials would be allowed to be kept at the school. She said that she and Dr. Rose would be in and out the following week. No one visited the school at all the next week. Ms. Moore requested that the materials not be picked up until the afternoon of the 19th. She did not want the books in the school that long.

May 23-27, 2008

Testing continued without incident.

Staff Narratives

The subsequent pages contain narratives from various staff members involved in the testing process. They represent various points of view surrounding PACT testing. These narratives were cut and pasted from emails and documents provided to Mr. Middleton, the testing coordinator.

May 14, 2008

Dr. Janet Rose entered our school as I was awaiting the arrival of Bus 47. She stated that she needed to speak with me. We went outside of the school and she said to me exactly..... "There is coaching going on in your school." I replied, "The teachers are cheating?" She said, "No!" I said, "What are they doing then? She stated that teachers were rubbing individual students on the back and encouraging them, reminding students of the directions once the students had started taking the test. I said, "Oh my goodness....I am sorry, I didn't realize that." She stated, "I don't even think they realize what they are doing is wrong. Dr. Rose went on to say that the reason they were here was because of the high erasure marks. She then informed me of the need to have a meeting with the teachers. She asked if I could gather all of the teachers. I asked the SASI Clerk to make an all call for teacher. Before leaving, I told Dr. Rose that she could use my office if necessary. I left the building after that, because one of my staff members was in a car accident on Huger Street. That afternoon, teachers reported that Dr. Rose and her staff members were in the main hallway discussing student behavior and what the meeting was about.

MiShawna Moore
Principal

On May 13-14, 2008, as the English Language Arts instructor at Sanders- Clyde Middle School, I began administering the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test to ten eighth grade girls and approximately fifteen sixth graders. Before the students were tested, I was notified through school officials that the testing process would be audited. Therefore, three auditors were assigned to screen the testing process on the green hallway. Two auditors were constantly in and out of the classroom, and one auditor sat inside the classroom for DAY 1 and DAY 2 of testing.

Before DAY 1 testing began, Auditor 1 wanted me to leave the classroom door open. I asked her to step out the room and stated that the door being open would cause a major distraction to the students. It causes them to become inattentive. "I don't see what the problem is. We will be walking in and out, and it should not cause any distractions," she hastily replied. Auditor 1 was blunt about the door being left open. However, I closed it anyway because several students were already looking out the door. Therefore, she directed Auditor 2 to enter the room. I had my paraprofessional deliver snacks and attempt to take them to the restroom while I picked up the testing materials. However, we were stopped and Auditor 1 told me that the students were not allowed to go to the restroom as a group. Only one was allowed at a time or the paraprofessional had to go in to monitor a pair of students. This was done with boys and girls. It took approximately thirty minutes for a restroom break. Auditor 2 monitored me as I picked up the testing supplies for the sixth graders. Once testing began, Auditor 2 sat near the computers, pulled out a book and began reading. A student raised her hand for a sharpened pencil. Auditor 2 went out the door to speak with another auditor. Both auditors came in and Auditor 1 told me not to have conversations with the students. The students were supposed to take a break after twenty minutes. Auditor 2 walked out of the classroom and spoke with the Auditor 2 again. I was told not to give the students snacks as a class; therefore, I gave them snacks as they asked. I took a child's book, gave him or her a snack, and returned the book after that child was finished eating. As the children started to finish testing, I reminded them to insert a stop time, check to make sure a title, introduction, body, and conclusion were included and to ensure that spelling was checked. Auditor 1 walked out, spoke with Auditors 2 and 3. Auditor 3 told me not to ask or answer questions once they finished. However, the teacher's manual stated that I could remind students about the directions. Auditors 2 and 3 walked around the classroom while Auditor 1 finished her book. A student began to cry. I went to the student to ensure him that everything would be o.k. Student 6k was angry, frustrated, distracted, and scared.

After testing the sixth graders, my paraprofessional and I tested the eighth graders. I was cautious not to repeat the same things I was noted for. I was told that I could break the students as a class for snacks and restroom breaks. I did this every thirty minutes. Auditor 2 continued to read a book and Auditor 1 sat inside the classroom close to the door, cracked it, and walked in and out throughout testing. At 2:20 Auditor 1 came in because Student KR was not finished. Student KR, Student V and Student S complained about Auditors 1 and 2 staring at them, looking over their shoulder, and reading what they read. I assured Student KR that she was doing a good job by sticking thumbs up in the air. Auditor 1 motioned for me to stop. Student KR asked Auditor 1 for her name and where she was from. Student KR did this to feel comfortable.

On Day 2, Auditor 2 sat by Student S and I observed her constantly looking over her shoulders. On one of the testing days another school employee walked into the classroom at approx. 3:30 p.m. to relieve my paraprofessional. Student KR finished at approximately 4:20

p.m. on Day 1 and 3:10 p.m on Day 2. Auditor 2 asked if the student was on the correct section of the test, loud enough for the student to hear her. She said that the student had given up. However, this student always takes her time to complete assignments. As we took the testing materials down stairs, Auditor 2 asked me if the directions stated what high school the eighth graders were going to. I told her no and was unaware of what she was talking about. She stated that her son attends a middle school in Mt. Pleasant and told her that what the directions asked.

Latrea Hutchinson
ELA Teacher

PACT testing procedures were altered this year due to the auditing actions of Charleston County. The process they used impacted our schedule, our children's confidence, our teacher's behavior and the very atmosphere within our school.

We are very student friendly during any kind of testing situation or learning situation. We like to provide lots of encouragement. After all, we usually are the cheerleaders for our children. Unlike children in other schools, not many people in our children's lives are encouraging.

We usually take breaks during testing that include snacks. Food is very important at our school. The children start talking about the special food Ms. Moore will provide for them during this time. Fruit roll-ups, blow pops, peppermints, chips and honey buns are all on the list. This may not sound like a big deal, but for our children, this is just another way to help them feel special during this stressful time. We eat in our classrooms on a regular basis. Food is important to our children and is a part of our daily routine. It was obvious that the auditors did not understand the importance of eating in our school and how it impacts behavior and learning performance. We all do better with food in our stomach.

It is important for our children to take breaks during long periods of instruction or testing. Their attention span is very short and it gives them a mental break. Their performance depends on small quiet activities coupled with more hands-on ones. We do this all year because we know what works with our children and we try to make their educational experience the best for their needs, which will allow them the best opportunity to be successful. Not feeling comfortable to break during testing forced our children to continue, even when it wasn't best for them. Nobody can work all day and not take a snack break, especially when you haven't had supper the night before.

PACT testing was not conducive to our children's needs this year. In fact their needs were not thought to be important. Teachers were met in the hallway their first day by a stranger who would be in their class all through testing. This person was dressed for an office, not my classroom. She did not smile, introduce herself or speak at all. To my children, she was a stranger and it was very uncomfortable. The children made several comments about how she stared at them and never changed her expression. They said they thought she didn't trust them, which is normal for our children. It takes many months for an adult to be trusted in our school and the process is hard. Her lack of communication and friendliness made the atmosphere cold and indifferent.

Our schedule was altered and discussed in the hallways by the monitors. It was said that this kind of schedule just would not work for them and would have to be changed. A schedule that Sanders Clyde worked on for weeks to make the testing experience perfect for all. Our schedule was delayed due to the test proctor having to pick up materials that day. My second group, which was a 3rd grade group, was delayed until 12:00 and unknown to me, never received lunch before that. Everyone's schedule was off, so those children tested on an empty stomach. They ate lunch after testing at 2:00.

Our teachers were called to a meeting in the front office after the first day of testing. The meeting was about all of the things we were doing wrong. We were told first all that proctors were there to protect us. Anonymous phone calls had been made to the district office that we were not testing our children appropriately. Second, Ms. Rose told us no food breaks. Food wrappers had words on them and the children didn't need to be stopped anyway. They should just keep testing so they could finish. Third, we were not allowed to repeat any directions or encourage the children. I stayed in the corner of the room the whole day, as did my assistant. The atmosphere was cold and very distant. Exactly the opposite of what we try to create on a daily basis.

Lastly, the auditors from the county took liberty to stand by the front office, which by the way is our only entrance, and discuss our children's behavior. References were made as they entered the school. The auditors discussed how loud the children were and how unruly their behavior was in the halls. Parents, students and teachers were all present and overheard the conversations. This was not a positive way for a stranger to talk about children and then show up in their classrooms as a testing monitor.

The students of Sanders Clyde had many testing irregularities to occur in their classroom this year. I am disappointed in the way adults handled themselves as a guest in my school and the way they spoke of my students. We are very proud of our staff and student population and work hard to provide them with the best school experience they can have and one that will hopefully carry them out of their present world. Why peers of my district would want to upset and destroy the one positive thing in our students and family's lives is still bewildering to me.

**Melissa Kersey
5th Grade Teacher**

*Sanders-Clyde Elementary & Middle School
PACT Testing Concerns*

Sanders-Clyde was selected to be audited for PACT testing procedures. I would like to express several concerns I have regarding the audit's impact on student performance.

1. The first day of testing was extremely stressful for both teachers and students and completely avoidable. The changes and confusion likely impacted test scores. We were almost 2 hours late getting started due to the requirement that books be delivered to our school the day of testing. The coordinator was trying to juggle organizing test booklets, signing them out, arranging for the auditors, answering the auditor's questions, etc. It made for a very chaotic morning when normally it would not have been. Most importantly, due to the late start, changes in the testing schedule were recommended by the auditors and implemented. Teachers that have never tested ELA day 1 were asked to administer the PACT test at the last minute. These changes did not take into account the needs of the students or provide for the best testing environment.

2. The auditors made the students nervous, distracted the students and likely impacted test scores. "Who are these people?" and "why are they looking at me?" were comments made by the students. The auditors, with clipboards in hand, appeared to be critically observing the students and teachers without any warmth or even a smile. The business attire and close proximity by these strangers was distracting and felt threatening to many students. Would students in a predominately white school feel nervous or anxious if they were being watched by a group of African Americans? Some students will perform well regardless of their surroundings but other students are distracted by the presence of strangers. Could the mere presence of the auditors have a negative impact on student achievement? I believe so. In high-stakes testing, where every point counts, I can't help but believe that we lost a few points on this issue.

3. The auditors were invasive and interrupted the normal testing environment which could negatively impact student performance. While monitoring a small group testing situation on Day 1, the auditor interrupted the testing and asked the Test Administrator, "Are you reading from Day 1?" When the TA nodded to confirm this she was reading from Day 1, the auditor asked "Are you sure?" and moved closer to look at the testing book. All of this occurred while the student was less than a foot away trying to answer questions. This particular student has been diagnosed with a form of Autism (Aspergers) and is particularly sensitive to strangers. I personally witnessed him finish the test in less than five minutes after this interruption.

4. Changes required to our testing procedures caused confusion, were ambiguous and did not allow students the best testing environment. Beginning on Day 2 of testing, we were delayed due to a meeting called by the Auditors. During this meeting we were told we could not "coach" students. This included not being able to pat or rub students on the back for concern that we might be looking at the test and prompting them in some way. There was also much discussion about how to take breaks. We normally take frequent breaks, as stated in the TA manual, and believe that research supports breaking frequently as a means to optimize student performance. Due to the concern surrounding break, many teachers did not take the normal breaks for fear of being reprimanded. Finally, there was much discussion about snacks during testing. We normally provide for an abundance of snacks. Our students love food, are always hungry and

look forward to the snacks provided. Providing food during testing was frowned upon by the auditors. The comment was made that "crunching on Doritos could be distracting." Our students eat snack daily during class. Food is not distracting- it is comforting to our students. Strangers and interruptions are much more of a distraction and concern than the presence of food. Then it was decided that we could not have snacks on the desk (not even a blow pop) because they contained words that might influence test scores in some way. Really?

5. We will never know the negative impact of the presence of the auditors and the ambiguity of what is deemed acceptable. We work so hard everyday to build up our students and during a time when we should be encouraging them and celebrating their hard work, we were left picking up the pieces of a mess made by the presence and implications of the auditors. What a shame. I would like to think our district has the intellectual resources to have found a better way to "audit" our testing procedures. How do you know our testing procedures are not similar to those in another school? Do other schools allow snacks and blow pops? The news clip showed a Gatorade bottle on a desk during testing in one school. Is Gatorade okay but not Doritos? Furthermore, a photographer came by after testing and was amazed that there was nothing on the walls in either the classrooms or the hallway. I apologized for this and mentioned that we had taken everything down for PACT. "Oh" she replied, "the other schools I photographed didn't do that."

In conclusion, the audit itself was not the concern. It was the way it was handled and the likelihood that it adversely impacted the performance of our students. While many students probably performed as well as expected, there are others that likely did not. All of our children deserved the best testing environment possible. We failed to provide that.

**Corday Borders
Teacher Coach**

On Tuesday, May 14, 2008 representatives from the Charleston County School District were on campus in order to observe our PACT testing procedures. The testing environment felt hostile and this made everyone at Sanders Clyde on edge. I overheard children say, "why are they watching us?" "Who are those people?"

On Wednesday, May 15, 2008, again the District representatives were on campus. Dr. Rose was observed talking to several of the district personnel outside my office, by the main entrance. As I was greeting students and parents I overheard the conversation Dr. Rose was having with her colleagues. I heard comments like:

- *"just what I suspected"*
- *"they can not look at the test booklet"*
- *"they can not encourage a child"*
- *"no, they can say that"*
- *"no, they can not do that."*
- *"We are going to meet with the teachers"*
- *"they can not lead the students like that"*

Dr. Rose called all teachers who were administering the PACT test into the auditorium for a meeting. Testing was delayed by over one hour. Dr. Rose stated that we can not individually encourage a student to do his or her best. We could only tell the whole class. If we touched one child on the shoulder, we had to touch every child on the shoulder.

We were not allowed to give snacks. Dr. Rose stated that they just ate breakfast and they do not need honey buns and Doritos. I immediately said that that changes what we do everyday. We allow our children to eat in the class. Many times there are students eating a bowl of noodles while listening to instruction in English class. I told her that the children are not used to the environment she is requesting (no food or encouragement). She also stated that we could not have anything on their desks including snacks because there might be words on the packages that would assist the child.

Dr. Rose tried to explain how to take breaks during the test but she could not give us a definite procedure. First she said take a break after a certain question. Then they said we should not be looking at the test. Then they said we can take a break after 20 or 30 minutes. The teachers stated they did not want to interrupt when the children could be in the middle of reading a passage. There was no definite procedure and it made us even more confused as to what we were allowed to do.

Dr. Rose also stated that we were not allowed to ask a child if their ELA writing response had an introduction, a body, and conclusion. However, according to the TAM on page 63 the directions which are to be read aloud state:

- *"Does your response have an introduction, body, and conclusion?"*
- *"Does your response stay on topic?"*
- *"Does your response have correct spelling?"*
- *"Does your response have interesting and clear details?"*

Then on p. 63 in the TAM it states "Pause to review the directions as necessary. On page 64 of the TAM it states "Circulate throughout the room during testing. Answer questions about the directions as needed."

Dr. Rose stated that we were not allowed to look at the test booklet; however, according to the TAM on page 64 it states "Make sure the students writes the final draft of their "Time to Write" responses on the lined Final Writing pages (pages 5-7) of their test booklets."

Dr. Rose stated that there are individuals who suspect Sanders Clyde of cheating because we have some students who when from Below Basic to proficient on last year's PACT test. She stated that they were here to protect us.

Tanya Domin
Guidance Counselor

On Tuesday, May 12, 2008 at 3:15 pm I quietly entered a classroom where one 8th grade student was still completing her Day One ELA PACT test. I was there to relieve the proctor Ms. Roman. She has children and needed to leave. Since it is an un-timed test I was there to stay with the Test Administrator as long as needed.

At approximately 3:30 pm Dr. Kathryn Rhodes entered the room. She motioned for the CCSD employee, that was seated in the back of the room, to come with her. Dr. Rhodes went outside the door to talk with the CCSD employee for a few moments. Dr. Rhodes then reentered the room. She came directly over to me and asked "are you sure she (referring to the student) is doing only day one. I shook my head yes and pointed to the Test Administrator. Dr. Rhodes walked over and repeated "are you sure she is doing only day one". The student was in close enough proximity to have heard the question. The student did in fact look up for a brief moment. The student completed the ELA Day One at approximately 3:47. I escorted the student out of the room as the teacher followed with her testing envelope. Dr. Rhodes walked with the teacher.

**Roberta Dwelley
Media Specialist**

Ramifications

Because of the invasive nature of the audit process, a less than comfortable testing environment was established on numerous levels. Because the testing coordinator was required to sort testing materials the hour prior to testing (a process that others had weeks to complete) testing was delayed over an hour at times, causing student and teacher anxiety to rise. In addition, the placement of unknown individuals in the classrooms provided an additional distraction to students. Many of the children expressed concerns about the “visitors” in the classroom who were “staring” at them or “eyeing” them. One 7th grade girl went as far as to request that the auditor refrain from standing directly over her as she tested because she was experiencing a great deal of anxiety without the addition of someone peering over her shoulder.

Sadly, a quest that began with the charge of vindicating a school that that received veiled accusations of cheating may have given accusers fuel for their fire. Because of the hostile testing environment, it is likely that students may not have performed at their best, causing scores to potentially drop. Many Sanders Clyde staff members are left wondering if the distractions were intentional. Is it possible that individuals had personal agendas that included proving that the poor African-American child on Charleston’s east side could not have possibly produced the improvements documented over the past five years? Is it possible that there were certain individuals determined to make sure that the accolades would stop at all costs, including sabotage?

Suggested Outcomes

1. It is recommended that the district develop a uniform non-invasive method of conducting PACT audits. This includes designating a location for auditor meetings and developing standards for communication with audited staff and students.
2. It is recommended that the district provide the school being audited with a written outline of procedures and expectation for the audit, prior to it occurring. It is unfair to provide information in bits and pieces and to hold pertinent information hostage until unrelated information was provided.
3. It is recommended that the district provide the audited school with a written report on the outcome of the audit after it has been completed. In the case of Sanders Clyde, there was no final feedback at the end of the audit process.
4. It is strongly recommended that the district require that Dr. Rhodes receive sensitivity training, and be mandated to improve interpersonal communication skills. It is also recommended that stronger checks and balances be put in place to ensure that no one person wields absolute power over a process without some degree of oversight.

Final Remarks from the Principal

Please understand that we are not questioning the audit, just the process. I was told early in February that we would undergo an audit because of the high number of erasures on a report that was given to Districts. Elementary students, statistically, do not erase more than once in a given test administration. It was stated that they knew I didn't have anything to do with it. However, to remove any doubt, at least two staff members from the District office would be present to check for erasures. My specific questions were:

- *Was it a specific teacher or grade level where the high erasures occurred? The answer... "No"*
- *Would the SDE be involved? The answer, "No. If the SDE thought something was going on, they would have already been here." I was then specifically told not to contact the SDE.*

Fast forward to the audit process...

- *Teachers were told a variety of reasons why the audit was happening (anonymous phone calls, jealousy, protection)*
- *Personal one on one conversations with a teacher included the fact about high erasures markers from at least 4 or 5 teachers.....personal conversations should have never occurred between the auditors and the staff.....and it did on several occasions*
- *Mr. Middleton was told specifically Kersey's and Hutchinson's classes had high erasure marks....*

What exactly is the reason?

My questions now are:

- *Exactly how do we heal from this?*
 - *How do we move forward?*
 - *How do we prepare for what is to come and tell our side of the story? Perhaps we are to take the high road and say nothing... ..*
-