Sue Szachowicz, Principal of Brockton High School

I’m Sue Szachowicz, principal of Brockton High School. Just so that you know, Brockton High School has over 4,200 students in grades 9–12, and in one testing administration, we test over 1,000 students. So over the years, [there were] lessons learned the hard way and figuring out systems [to put] in place that have helped us with the test administration. Every time the boxes arrive, you get the knot in the pit of your stomach thinking, “Oh please don’t let me screw up anything and have the Department of Education chasing us down.”

So what systems have we put in place? I would say there are five areas that we maybe can help with. Even though we are a gigantic school with a massive test administration system, I would say the processes and procedures that we have here translate to any school, because it’s about systems, and checklists, and consistency, and everybody doing things the same way.

Here are the five areas that I think have made the biggest difference for us in smooth test administration.

1. Preparation in advance of materials for all the set-up and distribution of materials
   All the boxes arrive, and we get so many of them, and having everything set up before anybody touches anything is huge.

2. We can share some advice about preparation of the proctors
   Because there are so many students tested and so many proctors, it is really important to prepare your proctors in advance.

3. Preparation of the students
   Because it’s high stakes, it’s huge for them, and cheating is always an issue. They are nervous. They know they need to pass. So, making sure they understand what cheating is, and what happens when they cheat is very important—and how we prepare students for the test. By the way, it’s not all negative. It is also very important to prepare them for how they are going to do well, and they are ready for this; this is also part of that preparation.

4. How we maintain security within the testing room so that students aren’t walking around, what about when they need to go the bathroom, what about all of those things that can make you crazy in a testing room

5. Collection and accountability of all the materials

Sharon Wolder, Associate Principal

For every test administration, even if a person has been a proctor of the test year after year (after year), it’s important that we reestablish for them our expectations. So, we have a meeting with the proctors before every administration. We identify specific things that they should do, and they should make sure the students are doing. That’s critical to us.

One of the areas that we have focused on is people who are proctoring often-times are used to being in a classroom and being very active and very busy. They need to keep the environment quiet, which means they can get bored too. To sit in a room watching students take a test, for
hours at a time, is not an easy thing for an adult to do. We have to identify the do’s and don’ts as well—because it can become very easy for someone to get caught up in reading a book or to take [out] their own electronic device, or they are trying to take care of things for themselves. So we make sure we are very clear to them that these are things you can’t do. As the proctor, your responsibility is to make sure the room is adhering to the test security requirements and that students are focused on what they need to focus on. We provide for them actually a checklist of things that they are responsible for doing, so they are very clear. After we go through it verbally with them, we also, provide it to them in writing.

We pair new people with veterans in terms of proctoring of the exam; we make sure there are at least two people in every room. But the goal is to make sure that regardless of how many times they have tested, it’s not just, “Oh I know what to do, I’ll walk in and do what I feel like doing.” It’s very much “Here is what we expect of you as adults.”

So that’s part of the proctoring—that it’s important to do—and our connection with them is making sure that they understand this is important to all of us, and we respect what they do as the proctors. Their role in that room is very important, and we are expecting them to help the kids live up to meeting the goals of the exam.

Other things for our students include a more positive message, because we do tell them, “here are the security requirements and here is why it’s important to you to meet the security requirements. But more specifically, we have worked very hard to prepare you to be successful on this test.” So, the message is very positive.

This year we had 268 of our students who tested two years ago got the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, which is a great incentive for our students. And so the message to our sophomores taking the exam is always one of “We know you can do it, you’re prepared for this, here are the expectations, and we know you’ll meet them.”

So we go through all of that with them for the English Language Arts exam, we follow up with that positive message in their math classes and their science classes before each of those exams, just a reminder of the do’s and don’ts, and a reminder that “you can do this, we are proud of you, and do the best that you can.”

**Dan Corbett, Instructional Resource Specialist**

Now I would like to take you through how we set up a box to help the classroom run smoothly on the day of testing.

First thing you’ll notice that the front of the box has a checklist. The checklist includes a few things that could be in the box, depending on the test. It’s the same checklist every time, so some of the things that are on the checklist will have a zero number in them on certain days.
The first thing that’s on the checklist is calculators—obviously only on the calculator day of the Mathematics test, and possibly during a Science test. We will provide them with calculators for the tests that allow it.

The next thing on the list is the test booklets. There are always going to be test booklets. We fill in however many there are. That way the teacher will see it right on the front, and gets a constant reminder of how many they should have. It should equal the exact amount of students that are scheduled to be in the room.

The next thing is the attendance folder. Every box should have an attendance folder in it. Within that folder, there is an attendance roster. It’s not here now but there would be a stapled attendance roster that they keep for every day. Inside the folder is a loose attendance sheet, where they actually check off their attendance to be turned in to us daily. That is the attendance folder.

Then we have pre-counts of pencils, again this is time spent up front. We have 100 pencils per pencil box.

Erasers—same deal, counted by the same people, 100 per bag.

Every room gets an electric pencil sharpener.

The bane of our existence at one point was Kleenex. We now put Kleenex in every single box, because people need to blow their nose, and we don’t want to deal with the fact that “I need to go to the bathroom to blow my nose.”

The other things here are dictionaries for the long Composition section of the testing. We provide every student with a dictionary.

The last thing on our checklist on the front is word-to-word dictionaries.

**Sue Szachowicz, Principal of Brockton High School**

It really is about thinking things out and planning, and all of that. So, to all the principals here, I wish a great testing season to all of you, and wish that nobody ends up on the front page of any newspaper during the testing season. Good luck, everybody.