

PEARSON'S HISTORY OF TESTING PROBLEMS

compiled by Bob Schaeffer,
Public Education Director FairTest:
National Center for Fair & Open Testing
Update August 14,
2013

1998

California – test score delivery delayed

1999-2000

Arizona – 12,000 tests misgraded due to flawed answer key

2000

Florida – test score delivery delayed resulting in \$4 million fine

2000

Minnesota – misgraded 45,739 graduation tests leads to lawsuit with \$11 million settlement – judge found “years of quality control problems” and a “culture emphasizing profitability and cost-cutting.”

http://www.news.minnesota.publicradio.org/features/200211/25_pugmiret_testsettle/

(FairTest consulted with plaintiffs’ attorneys)

2000

Washington– 204,000 writing WASL exams rescored

2002

Florida — dozens of school districts received no state grades for their 2002 scores because of a “programming error” at the DOE. One Montessori school never received scores because NCS Pearson claimed not to have received the tests.

2005

Michigan — scores delayed and fines levied per contract

2005

Virginia — computerized test misgraded – five students awarded \$5,000

scholarships http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_8014/is_20051015/ai_n41291590/

2005-2006

SAT college admissions test – 4400 tests wrongly scored; \$3 million settlement after lawsuit (note FairTest was an expert witness for plaintiffs)

2008

South Carolina – “Scoring Error Delays School Report Cards” *The State*, November 14, 2008

2008-2009

Arkansas – first graders forced to retake exam because real test used for practice

2009-2010

Wyoming – Pearson’s new computer adaptive PAWS flops; state declares company in “complete default of the contract;” \$5.1 million fine accepted after negotiations but not pursued by state governor http://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/article_d7fae426-7358-5000-a86b-aefcae258a2a.html
http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming/article_263ceb44-833a-11e0-911d-001cc4c002e0.html

2010

Florida – test score delivery delayed by more than a month – nearly \$15 million in fines imposed and paid. School superintendents still question score accuracy –
<http://www.tampabay.com/news/education/k12/florida-hits-fcat-contractor-pearson-with-another-12-million-in-penalties/1110688>

2010

Minnesota-- results from online science tests taken by 180,000 students delayed due to scoring error
http://www.twincities.com/cj_15533234?nlick_check=1#

2011

Florida – some writing exams delivered to districts without cover sheets, revealing subject students would be asked to write about
<http://www.tampabay.com/news/education/testing/testmaker-pearson-replaces-faulty-fcats-missing-cover-sheets/1153508>

2011

Florida –
new computerized algebra end-of-course exam delivery system crashes on first day of administration <http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2011-05-17/features/os-algebra-test-pearson-problems->

20110517_1_tests-algebra-high-schools

2011

Oklahoma –“data quality issues” cause “unacceptable” delay in score delivery <http://newsok.com/errors-in-testing-data-hold-up-results-for-oklahoma-districts-students/article/3597297>

Pearson ultimately replaced by CTB/McGraw Hill

http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/article.aspx?subjectid=11&articleid=20120714_19_A1_Afters391504

2011

Guam –score release delayed because results based on flawed comparison data; government seeks reimbursement —<http://www.guampdn.com/article/20111021/NEWS01/110210303>

2011

Iowa –State Ethics and Campaign Finance Disclosure Board opens investigation of Iowa Education Department director Jason Glass for participating in all-expenses-paid trip to Brazil sponsored by Pearson Foundation — <http://news.yahoo.com/formal-complaint-against-iowa-education-chief-190455698.html>

2011

New York –

Attorney General Eric Schneiderman subpoenas financial records from Pearson Education and Pearson Foundation concerning their sponsorship of global junkets for dozens of state education leaders

– <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/22/education/new-york-attorney-general-is-investigating-pearson-education.html>

2011

Wyoming –Board of Education replaces Pearson as state’s test vendor after widespread technical problems with online exam

(http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming/state-education-officials-choose-new-paws-vendor/article_6ba18e9f-858c-5846-8274-db31c13494c1.html)

2012

New York –

“Pineapple and the Hare” nonsense test question removed from exams after bloggers demonstrate that it was previously administered in at least half a dozen other states –

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/21/nyregion/standardized-testing-is-blamed-for-question-about-a->

[sleeveless-pineapple.html](#)

2012

New York –More than two dozen additional errors found in New York State tests developed by Pearson –
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304203604577394492500145150.html>

2012

Florida –

After percentage of fourth grades found “proficient” plunges from 81% to 27% in one year, state Board of Education emergency meeting “fixes” scores on FCAT Writing Test by changing definition of proficiency. <http://www.clickorlando.com/news/Passing-score-lowered-for-FCAT-Writing-exam/-/1637132/13396234/-/k1ckc2z/-/index.html>

2012

Virginia –

Error on computerized 3rd and 6th grade SOL tests causes state to offer free retakes.

http://www.newsplex.com/home/headlines/Error_on_SOL_Reading_Test_Gives_Students_Option_to_Retake_154191285.html

2012

New York –Parents have their children boycott “field test” of new exam questions because of concerns about Pearson’s process

http://rochesterhomepage.net/fulltext?nxd_id=322122

2012

Oklahoma –After major test delivery delays, state replaces Pearson as its testing contractor

http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/article.aspx?subjectid=19&articleid=20120714_19_A1_Afters391504

2012

New York –More than 7,000 New York City elementary and middle school students wrongly blocked from graduation by inaccurate “preliminary scores” on Pearson tests

http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/ed_blunder_mad_grads_JI2z8N6tA6Td0FGiwYSraP

2012 **New York** –State officials warn Pearson about potential fines if tests have more errors

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/education/fines-bad-questions-state-tests-article-1.1187220>

2012

Mississippi – Pearson pays \$623,000 for scoring error repeated over four years that blocked graduation for five students and wrongly lowered scores for 121 others

<http://www.clarionledger.com/article/20121025/NEWS01/310240052/Pearson-North-America-scoring-error-prevented-5-Mississippi-students-from-graduating-affected-121-others>

2012

Texas – Pearson computer failure blocks thousands of students from taking state-mandated exam by displaying error message at log on

<http://www.statesman.com/news/news/local-education/computer-glitch-prevents-some-texas-students-from-graduating-affected-121-others>

2013

New York – Passages from Pearson textbooks appear in Pearson-designed statewide test, giving unfair advantage to students who used those materials

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/practice-material-found-upstate-exams-article-1.1321448>

2013

New York – Pearson makes three test scoring mistakes blocking nearly 5,000 students from gifted-and-talented program eligibility

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/20/education/score-corrections-qualify-nearly-2700-more-pupils-for-gifted-programs.html>

2013

Worldwide – Pearson VUE testing centers around the globe experience major technical problems, leaving thousands unable to take scheduled exams or register for new ones

<http://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2013/04/26/pearson-vue-test-centers-experience-major-problems>

2013

New York – Second error found in New York City gifted-and-talented test scoring makes 300 more students eligible for special programs

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/11/education/new-error-found-in-test-scoring-for-gifted-programs.html>

2013

England, Wales and Northern Ireland – General Certificate of Secondary Education exam in math leaves out questions and duplicates some others

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/10118879/Exam-board-apologises-over-GCSE-test-paper-blunder.html>

2013

Texas –*State Auditor finds inadequate monitoring of Pearson’s contract: vendor determined costs of assessment changes without sufficient oversight and failed to disclose hiring nearly a dozen former state testing agency staff* <http://www.texastribune.org/2013/07/16/state-auditor-finds-testing-contract-oversight-lac/>

2013

Virginia –*4,000 parents receive inaccurate test scorecards due to Pearson error in converting scores to proficiency levels*

http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/pearson-miscalculates-scorecards-for-more-than-4000-va-students/2013/08/13/5620cc42-042d-11e3-a07f-49ddc7417125_story.html

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwid5fzjrrxAhUNAp0JHU13Bf4QFnoECAMQAw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fdeutsch29.files.wordpress.com%2F2014%2F05%2Ffairtest-pearson-errors.doc&usg=AOvVaw0AZ5Xu2LjQJhm1TuZHo5Pq>

<https://deutsch29.files.wordpress.com> > 2014/05

DOC

PEARSON'S HISTORY OF TESTING PROBLEMS ... Minnesota – misgraded 45,739 graduation tests leads to lawsuit with \$11 million settlement – judge found ...