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The Trouble with the State Assessments

Sometimes, teachers struggle with discussing the issues with the state tests. As teachers in the trenches, it is sometimes so personal that we forget to use the facts that are so much in our favor. Hopefully, some of the information below will help frame some conversations going forward.

Point 1: The tests are developmentally inappropriate

Using the newly released 3rd grade assessment passage titled: *Secrets are Hard to Keep*, I entered the passage into Lexile.com's lexile analyzer. The results are troubling. This third grade passage has a lexile score of 830. What does that mean? Lexile.com states that 3rd graders should fall between 330 at the lowest 25% and 700 at the highest. In order for the majority

of students to have a chance at success, *this passage should be given to children no younger than 6th grade.* Clearly, these tests are developmentally inappropriate and are designed to make children fail. This is free to try at lexile.com.

Point 2: These tests provide little meaningful feedback to improve student performance

The fact that the results come back with almost no information (beyond percentiles) and that teachers are unable to discuss the tests, there is no meaningful reason for punishing 8 year olds with 6 hours of testing. The information cannot inform instruction.

Point 3: Opting out students should not impact the teacher's state provided score.

There is no evidence that a higher percentage of opt-outs impact an individual teacher's score. It is expected that the largest number of opt-outs will continue to be more affluent, higher performing students. The growth model is based on a relative scale. The scale uses "how each student in a teacher's classroom compares to other students that scored the same in prior years (also taking into account ELL, SWD, poverty) with the results averaged and then compared to all other teachers." In fact, lower performing students have a greater ability to show growth.

Get the facts and start to reframe the debate around assessments and their use in our classrooms.

In solidarity,

Jason

Actions Available on the NYSUT MAC

- Email your regent: Stop the Insanity of APPR
- Fax your legislator: Support a parent's right to opt their child out of developmentally inappropriate exams
- Fax your legislator: Amend the Revised APPR System!

Contract 101-Article 15

Students with Individual Education Programs

13. Students with Individual Educational Programs

a. Students with Individualized Educational Programs (IEP's) will be allocated to classes **in as equitable manner as possible after consultation with the teachers involved**. Student placements will be consistent with the legal requirements governing students with IEP's.

b. A teacher who has a student with an IEP assigned to him/her shall, **upon request, meet with the Building Instructional Support Team** to discuss matters relating to modification of the IEP. **The teacher shall also be released from regular duties for the annual review of the student's IEP.**

c. The District agrees to provide a **minimum of eighteen (18) hours of training per year during the regular teacher work day to each regular education teacher assigned students with IEP's.**

Additionally, according to state law, an inclusion co-taught class should not have more than 12 students with an IEP. If there are more than 12, then the District must file for a waiver with the state.

If you are working with students with Individual Education Plans, you have rights under the contract and under NYS Law.

If you have any questions, please contact the GTA office.

Building Visits

During our building visits, we have been asked about class sizes. The contractual ratios/information is below. Additionally, the District has provided the most recent student enrollments and staffing allocations. As of September 23, 2015, the District seems to be in compliance with the contract. If there are any examples of a classroom or school that doesn't fit the language below, contact your building representative.

Primary grades 25.5:1

Intermediate grades 26:1

- At any elementary school at any grade level a single class with one teacher may not exceed 30 pupils, two classes may not exceed 60 pupils, three classes may not exceed 90 pupils, four classes may not exceed 120 pupils and five classes may not exceed 150 pupils, above five classes may not exceed 30 pupils per class. No student, mainstreamed or otherwise, will be added to a class if such student causes the class to exceed the above limits. The size of classes for art, music and physical education teachers shall not exceed 32 students. A classroom aide will accompany the students if class size exceeds 30. This limitation shall not affect band, orchestra, chorus or intramurals

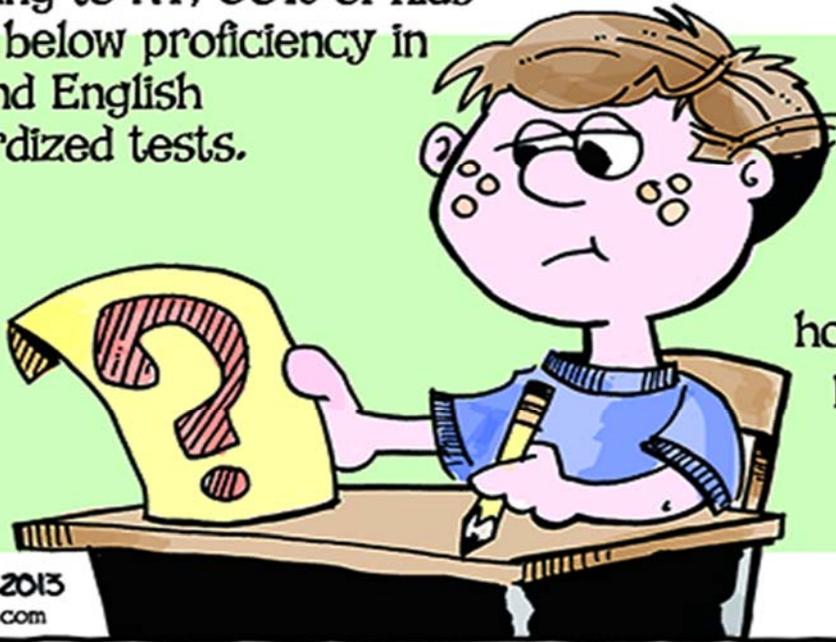
Middle School 19:1

High School 19:1

- There shall not be included in the number of teachers as calculated above, the principal, assistant principals, librarian, ESOL teachers, psychologists, school counselors, teachers of special education, nor shall the staff in any school be diminished because of the creation or existence of special education classes.

Common Core Political Cartoons

According to NY, 60% of kids scored below proficiency in math and English standardized tests.



Considering how long it took parents to get results, NY knows all about lacking proficiency.

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