

Denise Distel, Teacher

"I believe the intent of raising Educational Standards through The Common Core System was noble and indeed needed to ensure all students throughout New York were given the opportunity to learn in a more equitable manner. However, the Governor and those creating these requirements have failed to recognize the human factor. As the well-worn phrase "one-size fits all education" comes to mind, we do not all learn at the same pace and in the same manner and expecting all students to show success in the same manner is, I believe unrealistic. Students who are the most struggling, are English Language Learners, or have other disabilities most show improvement in the same way as those who are highly gifted through an unfair and inequitable system of assessments. Teachers are being assessed based upon student testing results which is again unfair. I teach in a district that is considered to be inner city and has a large population of socio-economically depressed families who face many challenges including those who speak a language other than English. As a Reading Specialist, I have worked tirelessly to ensure my students succeed. I must differentiate their instruction to meet them where they are. My students' hard work, dedication, efforts and successes are usually never recognized because they are often not able to demonstrate or meet the demands of the NYS testing system. Testing is not differentiated for them. They must demonstrate the same successes as everyone else. As a result, should I or others who work with this student population be penalized because the students can not score a 3 or 4? Common sense does not prevail. Additionally, teachers who work in higher economically affluent communities, who have the resources and the manpower have a greater opportunity to be deemed highly effective than those of us who work where there are so many challenges facing the community and district. I submit this with respect but it's time for a change. " How wonderful that we have met with a paradox. Now we have some hope of making progress." Niels Bohr"