

Patrice Monks, Teacher, Huntington Union Free School District

*Sadly, I am unable to include my photos with my testimony. If only you could see "Jackson's" face like I do every day. I believe that we need to keep focused on the children. I have at least 7 "Jacksons" in my class every single year.

This is "Jackson". He's an English Language Learner and one of the hardest workers you'll ever meet. He showed more progress last year in reading than any other student in my class. He's now reading on an early 3rd grade reading level! Jackson was the last student in my school to complete his NY State ELA test last year. He spent 3 long hours a day for 3 days taking this test. 3 hours a day for 3 days!!! He's 9 years old. Look at his face. Awesome kid!!!

FYI- "Jackson" caught and questioned the typo on the 4th grade ELA exam this past year. Sadly, the test editors didn't.

This is me, Patrice Monks. I was "Jackson's" 4th grade teacher last year. I have been teaching 4th graders for 17 years. I know 4th graders. I love teaching them. I have the same passion and creativity that I had over 25 years ago when I started teaching.

I scored the NY State ELA tests last year (I've scored for the past 16 years). I cried when I saw "Jackson's" scores. He barely scored any points on the entire text!!!! He worked so, so hard, and essentially received the same score as a child who guessed at every question.

"Jackson" had NO chance on this test. No one saw (except me) that he applied multiple strategies while reading.

It was completely inappropriate for him to take this test. It will not tell us how he is progressing or how he is learning. It won't tell us ANYTHING.

In my opinion, having children like "Jackson" take this test is destructive to his learning and abusive to him as a child.

As primary teachers, we MUST differentiate our lessons every day, 5 lessons per day. Our APPR is largely based on our ability to differentiate our lessons. Why, then, are we giving EVERY student in 4th grade a reading test that is written on a grade 6+ reading level with vocabulary words that would be challenging for a high school student??? IT'S SO WRONG!

PLEASE, rethink what's happening with these tests! I believe in rigorous, high expectations for all children. I think the Common Core Standards are generally good. These assessments, however, are not appropriate for all children. Have you sat and watched the children take these tests? If you haven't, then you need to. Just watch how hard they are trying. It will break your heart.

Look at "Jackson". We are killing any sense of confidence in himself that he might have.

PLEASE THINK ABOUT THE CHILDREN when you make decisions about education- especially testing. I'm embarrassed that I had to give "Jackson" this test.

Finally, it is a total joke to think that the results of these current assessments are ANY indication of how I am performing as a teacher. Fortunately, I have been doing this long enough to know that I am highly effective in my career. I work way too hard every single day to rely on some rating scale and scores on a developmentally inappropriate assessment to judge me as a teacher. Sadly, the passionate new teachers out there might not have the confidence to endure this constant scrutiny and we are going to lose them.

Please feel free to contact me for any reason. Thank you for asking for input from the educational community.