

**Danielle Larson, Teacher, Great Neck Public Schools**

"I am a Special Education teacher with students who have significant disabilities and delays. Most read at a 3rd grade reading level, despite the fact they are in 7th grade. I worked hard with them all last year to comprehend text, support their details in their writing with textual evidence, and just enjoy the process of reading and writing. Despite all my hard work and effort and double that for my students, they were defeated when it came to the ELA assessment last spring. The passages they were given were well above 7th grade level and way out of reach for my students. They sat and cried. Yes. I watched 13 year olds cry. They told me I broke a promise to them that they would be able to do the work on the assessment. I lied to them. They had no chance of doing well. They sat in front of something that looked like a foreign language. They flipped back and forth from ambiguous questions that asked too much for my students. They failed. I failed. Please stop this torture of our kids, especially special education students. It's criminal and after 18 years of teaching, I feel like I want to quit. I can't do for them what is asked by NYSED. The target keeps moving and they'll never have success under the current testing and curriculum standards."