

## **Mary Ricotta, Parent**

Students in Elementary Schools are human beings first. They are still babies at ages 7, 8, 9, and even 10 years old. They play with dolls and miss their parents. They need nurture. I agree that high expectations belong in schools, that eventually these children will need to compete on the world market, but it is being implemented in a horrible fashion. Students were thrown right in, instead of being raised with it from Kindergarten. It is cruel to expect students with special needs to be performing on the same level as regular ed. students. Their parents are filled with anguish at what they are being subjected to and the children (all of them) are filled with chronic stress regarding unrealistic expectations and constant pressure. There is no time to play on the playground anymore, Piaget has been thrown out the window, along with singing, crafts, free time, etc... Companies and businesses, charter schools and testing companies (Pearson) have no business in the public school setting. Teachers and unions are not the reason for all of America's ills, either. The blame needs to stop targeting middle class, hardworking people as a scapegoat. The testing is really only being used to undermine teachers and unions and the public school setting so that big businesses can get their sticky fingers into the "last man standing" to take over and make profits on the backs of our children while turning a free appropriate public education into an inappropriate business opportunity. My child will not be taking standardized testing to be used as a weapon against public schools and teachers.