

I am late submitting comments for the hearings on Tuesday 2/21. I feel that not nearly adequate notice was given to the public. Hopefully these comments can be included in the hearings.

I am a high school teacher and a Board of Education member. I am fully in support of teacher evaluation and tenure reform, as long as it is done correctly. Using standardized test results (CMT and CAPT) is not the correct way. These tests evaluate the overall status of the child, a status determined more by parenting and social issues than by their current teacher. An 8th grade teacher has had 6 months to influence a child before the March CMT's. That is not nearly enough time to overcome 12 years of other factors. Even worse, consider the greatest ever teacher of the lowest level 9th graders, whose students will struggle on the CAPT, versus the worst ever 9th grade honors biology teacher, whose students will all succeed. It would be extremely unfair to evaluate teachers based on CMT and CAPT scores. Also, many grades and subjects are not tested, so how would that be factored in?

What would be much more equitable would be to evaluate a teacher based on the growth of students from September to June. This is something for which a teacher can be held responsible. This concept might require some type of pre- and post-testing that will have to be created and agreed on, but at least it will be fair. For statistical fairness, maybe the 2 lowest and highest scores are not considered because they are probably due to factors outside the teacher's control.

Another concern I have is peer's evaluating each other. This might lead to competition between teachers within the same department. This would be troubling because close cooperation between these teachers can be a huge positive in improving learning. Good practices need to be shared. Student issues need to be discussed. Formative assessment results need to be reviewed together. Peer review will certainly only be reasonable if time is provided for teachers to directly observe their peers. And possibly, no matter what the procedures, peer review will not differentiate good teaching because it may only result in all positive reviews because no one will want to offend anyone.

Thanks for your consideration of these comments.

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