

Teaching is my career. I have spent many long hours obtaining degrees and certificates required by the state of Connecticut. I have completed all these requirements and additional coursework and experience that was not required. I have worked tirelessly for four long years to build a rapport with my students and fellow colleagues. I have spent much of my own money to obtain resources for the children in my classroom. The long hours and money spent has been rewarding. I feel I have successfully helped my students to improve their skills, I have obtained tenure ( a right to due process) as well as several glowing evaluations from teachers and administrators. It was extremely disheartening to hear the governor and others say that all I had to do was show up to keep my job. This is my lifetime career, not a high school summer job. I do more than just show up. The majority of teachers do infinitely more than just show up. To be clear, tenure does not guarantee a teacher a job for life. It does guarantee a right for due process a fair hearing between administrators and representatives of the teachers choosing. These representatives act as a support in the event that administrators unfairly undermine a teacher's ability and reputation. As in the world of politics, this does happen in the public school system. Tenure does not guarantee the teacher will keep his or her job. It simply puts in a burden of proof for both sides. And this right to tenure is not and should not be granted unless the teacher has earned it.

On that note, I have earned tenure and believe me **I have earned it**. Thankfully, I have not needed representation through due process. But now more than ever it is necessary. The standards put in place by NCLB, the effort to enhance NCLB with SRBI (the state's mandates), and the new evaluation proposal have me fearful for my career. I believe that knowledge is powerful and therefore teaching is very influential on a child's life. But to believe that I am solely responsible for a child success would be narcissistic and foolish. I cannot control a child's economic status, home environment, community environment, home relationship, health state, mental state, parental involvement, or self motivation. Many of these obstacles have done irreversible damage to the child's health, brain, and self esteem. Now imagine nearly a whole classroom full of children like these. The kind of children that need the most help. The kind of children I chose to work with because I could make the most impact. Imagine having to boost these children up to the standards of the whole state, children in Simsbury, Fairfield, and Ridgefield. It is unrealistic at best to suggest that the emotional and economic hardships that a child faces has no bearing on their educational success. I teach the children of Torrington, children who face many hardships, more than most. I expect a great deal from my students. I expect them to make progress year over year. They do. But they also come in with very large gaps in language, experiences, nurturing, and social graces. This keeps them from meeting the high expectations set for them, for their teachers. They must demonstrate these skills on an assessment that many of them do not yet grasp, one blip in the educational year of a child.

Who will be rewarded and who will be dismissed for the achievements of each child? So many teachers and staff contribute throughout a child's school career. How can an assessment given during one week of the year measure growth? The state does not measure the growth of the children year over year. How can a teacher be penalized when their evaluation states that the growth of their class was not enough, especially when economic, social, emotional, and health hardships that impede children's progress? The evaluation process should measure growth of children's learning year over year. A child coming in who has less exposure to print and language should be expected to make significant growth, but should not be expected to be on the same level as a child who has had a lot of experience. Each child's growth should be determined individually not collectively. The baseline of that growth should be documented for each child

when they enter school. Parents should be involved, not in the evaluation necessarily, but in scheduled meeting to review their children's progress. They need to take some responsibility as well. Every child is capable of making progress. They are not all going to be able to read at the same time. They will not all think abstractly at the same time. They are not all going to do anything the same way or at the same time. Some will need more time to get where they need to be. And teacher will need more time to get them all to succeed.

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