

**Remarks of Kimberly Patella
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**For the Education Committee
On Senate Bill 24, (Section # 30)
(Teacher Evaluations)**

February 28, 2012

I am writing as an individual regarding 'using student test scores in evaluations'.

I want to tell my story; I have approximately 95 students with a 43 minute planning period and 25 minutes for lunch. The rest of my contracted day I am instructing students in the area of language arts/reading. To help all to understand the demographics of my students; of the 95 students, 25 are identified with 18 page IEP's (all with different accommodations), 15 have 504 accommodations, 5 are emotionally fragile, and others are either; general education students, take anxiety medication, are frequently tardy, and/or are remedial readers.

It is a week before CMT's begin and I already learned from some parents that they will be taking their children off medication because the child didn't like being on the meds. I have a group of parents who have taken their children on vacation during school and have asked for missing work (as if we teach out of a book or use worksheets), one student just learned that his dad walked out on the family, my remedial readers have informed me that they usually create patterns on the bubble sheets during the test because they don't like taking the DRP.

Then our administrators develop schedules for the teachers/students so that the students don't have recess during the day. The CMT's are dragged out for 3 weeks, the make-ups for CMT's can be on the same day as the planned CMT (so students are taking two tests on one day), and when students are taken out of the classroom for small setting accommodations, they are with teachers/tutors that they have never seen before.

All of the above is 'out of my hands', but I will be held accountable.

Now, as an educator, I have all of these factors that can impact my students' ability to perform well on a CMT assessment. If, I have to be out of the classroom due to an illness, I can't rely on the substitute teachers to follow through effectively. So, using test scores to determine if I am effective is unreasonable.

Would a doctor be held accountable if his or her patients didn't lose weight, stop smoking, or get treatments to save their lives?

I use the results of the CMT's to drive instruction for the following year, because by the time I receive the results, the students have been promoted to the next grade. So, I can use the scores as a tool for revising and rethinking my strategies of instruction.

In the district of New Milford, students are given a district-wide assessment in the beginning of the year, mid year, and at the end of the year. This has been effective to watch for the trends in students' learning. But having one test score in a teacher's evaluation is not giving anyone a clear picture.

With that said, the information I have presented above, can be shared with legislators, and other stakeholders that need to be informed about the concerns regarding students' test scores in teachers' evaluations.