

Public Comment 7.3

Renee Webster-Hawkins

This report on student assessment data is an entire year late -- way too late to have had any impact last year. The Assessment Plan is designed to give teachers, administrators and parents information in real-time, to be able to immediately adjust the instructional program for students who are missing critical reading and math skills. This delay doesn't achieve that at all. Moreover, this report does not communicate any meaningful results even now -- it doesn't include the actual results from the tests that were given. Parents are entitled to actual data on how their children are doing.

Fifty-seven percent of our students did not receive ANY of the district common assessments last year. Of those who received at least one assessment, only 9% got two so that their actual progress could be monitored. The participation rate is simply unacceptable.

Aside from that, the whole purpose of the assessments is to determine a) whether our students are actually making progress towards grade-level standards, b) whether the curriculum we are using is any good or should be changed, c) whether our teachers need professional development in evidence-based literacy and math instruction and d) whether students need tier 2 interventions or need to be referred by their classroom teachers for comprehensive evaluations in special education. This presentation doesn't answer any of these questions. Why did it take more than a year from the first district common assessments were performed to report on them at all? And when we did receive the presentation, why was there no sophisticated presentation of results? By student group? By school site? By classroom? These are the questions which need answering now, in order to fix the subpar instruction our students are getting.

Simply put, well-performing districts use common assessments to improve outcomes for their students. Our district just guesses and then wonders why our students have such poor outcomes. These tools are widely accepted and critical tools in measuring the quality and effectiveness of instruction.

More than one of you on this Board ran on a campaign that promised ending the poor reading and math skills attained by our students. Clearly, disproportionate outcomes by race and income and ability stem from racism and other privileged bias that must be eradicated. However, our instruction needs significant improvement. That SCTA has discouraged this improvement, including a lawsuit to prevent the use of these instructional tools is a disgrace. SCTA is tying the hands of its own members! We seek leadership and action from this Board in backing up the Superintendent's leadership to correct the systemic inequity that harms our students.