

## **Gov., Skandera, Journal just don't get it on evals**

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What more can a teacher do when a student, in spite of the teacher's best efforts, still doesn't "get it?" The teacher has tried every tool in the toolbox, every technique, every "best practice," but still no comprehension.

Finally, the teacher realizes the student is refusing to learn the material, no matter how well it is presented. Instead of listening, the student dismisses everything the teacher says, refuses to listen to valid criticism, makes excuses and rejects any information that contradicts the student's preconceived notions.

Please reread the above two paragraphs and replace the word "student," with the phrase, "Our current governor, the Education secretary-designate and editors of the Albuquerque Journal."

Teachers must keep trying until these "students" understand the damage they are doing to our children and public education in New Mexico. Let's hope they listen this time.

Any evaluation process must be valid, consistent, fair, truly reflect the quality of the work teachers are doing and give them clear guidelines for improvement. The new system, in spite of claims to the contrary, fails every test. In spite of assertions in the Journal editorial, the people who really understand statistical analyses have tried, repeatedly, to point out the numerous flaws, but so far, few are listening.

It is outrageous to rate a teacher's performance based on subjects she or he has not taught and students who have never been in that teacher's classroom. It is even more outrageous to judge a teacher based on factors that are out of that teacher's control. Perhaps the governor and Education secretary-designate would like to be evaluated based on what takes place in another state.

No one in charge of education in New Mexico seems to grasp the simple truth that raising student test scores becomes more difficult as the scores improve and yet a school's grade is lowered if an arbitrary increase is not made.

No one seems to understand that basing a large part of a teacher's evaluation on student test scores only captures part of the picture. It demeans students and the profession of education by treating teachers like piece-workers and children like widgets on an assembly line. While private-sector businesses can reject raw materials that don't meet their standards, our public schools welcome all students.

No one seems to understand that overloading students with incessant testing is demoralizing to them and their teachers and that forcing students to take more tests lessens their motivation to do well. Why does taking the SAT require less than four hours, but testing in New Mexico schools takes weeks?

No one seems to realize that cherry-picking statistics to make "school reform" look good gives a false picture of what is happening in public school classrooms.