

While I continue to support passage of this bill, I am concerned about current amendments which ask ODE to determine what alternative, if any, students will be given beyond a standardized test to demonstrate that they are proficient in "skills or academic content areas that are not related to career and technical education".

Based on my interactions with the ODE over the past decade or so, which include serving as a teacher on a statewide work group for implementation of HB 3499 (EL School and District Improvement Program) as well as meeting with staff and the past three Deputy Superintendents in a variety of settings, I fear ODE as it is currently constituted may lack the imagination and vision to address how students could demonstrate proficiency in any other way than producing a specific score on a standardized test. ?

The last two decades of building up ODE's number crunching staff versus a staff that could help provide high quality professional development of this sort throughout the state almost guarantees a conclusion that we must continue to produce the single number type of data that current systems at ODE seem to rely on for their existence.

Unless and until our system trusts the educators in our classrooms and their supervisors in our school buildings and district offices, and provides the funding that is needed to do this work, we will never achieve something like the promise shown by the New York Consortium Schools performance assessments (<http://www.performanceassessment.org>) That is because this kind of high quality assessment must be conducted and carried out by classroom teachers whose professional development is prioritized.

Obviously, a single number or set of numbers is much easier for the adults at ODE to work with to produce reports to the governor and the legislature but that is not the best way for many students to show what they actually know when it comes to academic content.

I hope that hearing input from the marginalized students and communities who have experienced the effects of being reduced to a single number on a single day will be given priority in discussions about alternatives and not just lip service and that the people who are and have been negatively affected by the current system will hold more influence over final decisions than ODE staff whose continued employment depends on maintaining the current system.