

Education and Innovation Committee

From: Ray Hendle [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 26 May 2013 4:11 PM
To: Education and Innovation Committee
Subject: QSA ... approach to assessment

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Dear Committee Members,

I have taught mathematics and chemistry for 37 years. I have been a member of the Mathematics Review Panels (Maths A and C) here in [REDACTED] for many of those years. I held the position of HOD Mathematics at [REDACTED] and was Acting in that position for several years at [REDACTED].

My submission is set out under the following headings.

Ensuring assessment processes are supported by teachers.

- The 2012 QIEU survey shows that this is not so. Roughly 50% of maths/science teachers have great reservations about QSA's assessment process
- Assessment is inconsistent from school to school
- QSA's guidelines change regularly and advice can be contradictory
- QSA bullies teachers who dare to voice different opinions

Student participation levels.

- Workloads have increased dramatically
- Students are not coping.
- Students choose subjects other than science, because they are easier

The ability of assessment to support valid and reliable judgments of student outcomes.

- **Standards vary from school to school**, district to district and year to year
- Grading with letters means that students with different marks get the same grade
- Large sections of the course are assessed by assignments and these can be copied
- **Time taken in assignments takes away from teaching time**
- The assessment is inequitable. Students who can afford tutors, those with better writing skills and with family working in maths and science do better.
- New teachers at schools which are under resourced cannot cope
- Some assessment tasks do not allow good students to get the grade they deserve
- Some schools set 'Revision Questions' which are, in fact, the actual exam questions
- Long essays have no place in Maths. Many students who excel at maths are not great at writing. This discriminates against them
- The use of long writing tasks discriminates against students from non English speaking backgrounds and boys
- The *Evaluating and Concluding* category shows that the criteria were designed with too much emphasis on the writing skills of the students. Get rid of the EC category.
- The criteria paragraphs which the QSA call standards, are highly subjective

I support state-wide exams set by teams of experienced teachers. The assessment could be [50% external exam, 50% internal of which an Experimental Investigation is no more than one fifth (10% of

the final total.)). Those who make decisions on curriculum in our schools should spend at least 6 months in the classroom every 4 years. Educational theorists without substantial classroom experience should not be employed in decision making positions.

I believe it is long overdue that teachers return to an **emphasis on teaching**, rather than on examining, their students.

Kind regards

Ray Hendle

