

Autism Society of Ohio's representative to the State Superintendent's Advisory Council on Special Education, a returning college student in the field of special education and a teacher and a parent of a son severely challenged by his disability. I have met many, many parents asking for the same things I was: an appropriate education for my child. Too often these parents are dismissed as "trouble." So for us to see the data supporting the fact that children with special needs are not making gains in districts like Worthington and Hilliard is not news. We've known this for our children's lifetimes.

The spin from the district's administrators, from columnist Lyndsey Teter and from other editorial writers does not surprise me either. Their attitude is Worthington and Hilliard used to be Excellent districts under the old system, No Child Left Behind is flawed and that the rating under the new system is kind of a technicality that should be changed. They argue children with special needs are difficult to educate and no district should be penalized for not meeting those needs. I have felt this attitude throughout my son's education – or lack of it, actually, in these two districts.

You can hate No Child Left Behind and all its rules and tests but the data are in: some Excellent districts are making or maintaining gains and Worthington and Hilliard are not. So, why not? The proper response from Worthington and Hilliard is not a cry for a change in the law but a change in attitude and effort towards the education of children with disabilities.

So none of our children are ever left behind, we need to ask hard and honest questions then collect the data and use it to find out the answers to help these very special children truly reach their full potential. I am tired of hearing people waste time blaming the law and the tests. I wish they'd put that much needed energy into our children.

Martha Anglim

Scoring makes it difficult for good to become great

To the Editor:

I don't presume to speak for Worthington City Schools, but here's my take on what to learn from the recent alleged decline in the Adequate Yearly Progress rating of the district.

First, it's largely a sham and extremely misleading. The scores for our district are almost all better than ever – and in all categories. Second, the scores are improving despite our community make-up changing significantly. Consequently, a one-size-fits-all approach to structure, curriculum and instruction will no longer be sufficient. Our district leadership appears to know that or the scores wouldn't be improving. District leaders will likely continue to take steps to address our changing demographics. But, along with changes in approaches to teaching and learning, it will take additional resources to do this well.

Third, before becoming alarmed at the announced decline, people must become informed about the seriously flawed system being applied to determine all this. This was a system foisted on the unsuspecting public largely by a neo-conservative ideology run amok. While on the one hand this system raises awareness of a legitimate issue of the varying needs of a diverse population, on the other hand it ignores fundamental psychology, modern neuroscience and so basic a factor as whether we are measuring the right things and in the right way.

it off at the pass.

Bob Barkley

Test scores often don't tell the whole story

To the Editor:

Gnashing of teeth aside, it's probable that most important aspects of education simply cannot be measured with numbers. While a test score can be derived from one sitting, everything that goes into that experience – from the home setting to the self-confidence needed for testing success – defies numerical calculation.

Even universities have begun the swing away from weighing SAT/ACT scores heavily. It's all of the personal, life-enhancing moments that mean success in the long run for students in the Worthington school system. Sometimes numbers just don't "measure up."

Tom Kearns