

Education and Innovation Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 1 May 2013 12:31 AM
To: Education and Innovation Committee
Subject: Assessment Methods for Senior Maths, Chemistry and Physics

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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To whom it may concern,

(I request that my personal details be withheld from publication to avoid influence on my school children.)

I am a parent of a child in Year 3 who has three younger siblings following him through the school system. I am already encountering difficulties with the assessment and reporting requirements for my Year 3 child, and I have grave concerns regarding the progress of these issues as my children continue through the school system.

I am finding it increasingly difficult to understand the report cards brought home by my Year 3 child. Where I expect to see average-to-high marks in subjects such as mathematics and science, I instead find opaque non-specific descriptions of his achievements. These hazy descriptions could equally apply to half his peers, irrespective of the percentage of questions they got right on assessment tasks.

Does my child require extra work in mathematics? I can't tell from his report card!

Is my child performing to his ability in science? I have no idea, there isn't a simple 75%-type mark there to help me understand.

Do I need to do extra revision with my child in the area of technology? How could I possibly tell? Certainly not from this cumbersome, non-specific, jargon-filled description in his report card!

While having strong skills in mathematics, science and technology and being a fairly strong reader, he has great difficulty with spelling. He does not enjoy writing tasks and although he understands the subject matter very well, he dislikes spending long periods of time constructing the screeds of written responses required for assessment in these subjects. You will understand that this means that while he knows his stuff, he receives poorer descriptive ratings than he deserves.

The assessment tasks therefore have low validity, as they do not test what they are claiming to test. Where my child's knowledge in mathematics, science and technology should be tested, his spelling and written expression is being tested instead, as if his laborious performance during English assessment wasn't enough demonstration of his difficulties.

Has the QSA considered how they might respond when questions are inevitably asked demanding they justify their requirement that schools administer testing procedures with such low validity? Would they then be able to justify their demand that schools report their students' achievements in such opaque fashion as to dissuade remedial intervention as soon as difficulties are shown?

I look forward to common sense prevailing in this most important issue of the education of the next generation of Queenslanders.