

September 30, 2009

Dr. Eric J. Smith, Commissioner
Florida Department of Education
Turlington Building, Suite 1514
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

SENT VIA FAX AND U.S. MAIL

Dear Commissioner Smith:

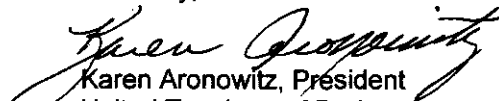
The issues surrounding the FAIR testing technology have not been resolved for the teachers and students of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, even though we were assured by your office on Sept. 20th that they had been corrected.

At the very least:

- The testing for Kindergarten students cannot be completed by Oct. 6th due to consistent system failures.
- Students, including our most fragile ESOL and Special Education students, who successfully begin testing, are told after they have begun that they will need to start over at another time, due to system shut-down.
- There are not enough support staff available in schools to assist K-2 teachers who are instructed to test one-on-one while continuing to instruct and monitor their classes.
- The validity of the test scores is seriously impacted due to the number of interruptions, background noise while testing, and stops and starts.
- Special Education students are being asked to use technology that is beyond their comprehension.
- Students sit idle during designated testing time because teachers cannot access the online test, either because the system crashes or because it does not allow them access.
- The next cycle of FAIR testing will be upon us before we are able to complete Cycle 1.

We are requesting that FAIR testing stop immediately until the state can assure that it has the online capacity to continue it successfully. Teachers can not be responsible for the results of such a flawed implementation process.

Sincerely,


Karen Aronowitz, President
United Teachers of Dade

CC: Chancellor Dr. Frances Haithcock
FEA President Andy Ford
MDCPS Superintendent Alberto Carvalho
MDCPS Assessment Administrative Director Gisela Feild