

Amato Puts Too Much Emphasis On Test Results

As a Hartford public schools student my whole life, I have built up a defense against outsiders railing against my schools. However, as someone who's been there and is still there, I feel the need and the right to speak out.

School Superintendent Anthony Amato's catch phrase "We will never be last again" bought him news coverage, but it has not delivered anything.

Those not in the schools can look at the test scores and think Hartford is doing better, but actually Hartford has fallen into the trap of needing instant gratification and external validation.

In the case of rising test scores, the end does not justify the means. Amato's methods of improving scores have been inconsistent and detrimental to the learning process.

In the beginning of the year, he ousted the music program because he didn't want kids to lose class time. By doing this, he limited outlets and career opportunities for kids.

Around March, he mandated two days a week for Connecticut Academic Performance Test practice for

all sophomores. So instead of learning what I am supposed to be learning, I must practice for the CAPT, a test supposedly designed to measure common sense and basic skills.

What scares me the most about the whole situation is the idea that tests can measure understanding and knowledge.

Improvement, the goal Amato claims we have achieved, means nothing. Improving on test scores was a direct result of teaching to the test, a method that is not acceptable.

If Amato really wanted to help the students, he would worry less about rankings and more about the knowledge necessary for the real world.

The saying goes that giving amanafishwillfeedhimfora day, but teaching him to fish will feed him for life. Amato has given us fish, but where will he be when we ourselves hungry again?

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