

6-16-10

Chairwoman Shapiro + committee members,
My name is Deborah Parrish,
I taught Special Education Resource
classes, including students in grades
K to 8, for 32 years, in Texas
public schools.

7 of those years were in rural
schools, 25 years were in low-income
minority schools.

I wish to speak to the "effectiveness
of Texas 'school districts' special education
programs."

For starters, when I began my
career in the 1970's, less than 10 pages
of paperwork were involved in referring a
student for special education testing,
and when the papers were completed, the
child was tested. When I retired 3 years
ago, more than 20 pages of paperwork
were required, and the student had to
wait half of a school year to be
tested to see if he/she qualified for
special education help.

During my 32 years, I used one
program that I thought truly
benefitted all students in these schools,
whether eligible for Resource students,
At-risk students, or Gifted students.
It was a reading program where every
student in the school, in grades K-5,
was tested to find his/her

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individual instructional reading level. When testing was completed, all students in the school in grades 1-5 spent 90 minutes every day in a classroom at ~~their~~ their personal instructional reading level. My students did not come to Resource reading, they went to a class with non-special education students who were at the same reading level: for example, there were reading classes made up of 1st, 2nd, + 3rd graders all reading at 1st grade level, as well as 3rd, 4th and 5th graders in classes reading at 5th grade level.

The same kind of program could be done for Math and Language Arts.

I had no problem with the special education programs for severely mentally handicapped students, or the programs for severely emotionally disturbed students which I observed during my 32 years.

However, I think Resource Reading, Writing, + Math should be stopped, and every student in Texas public schools have the opportunity to spend 90 minutes a day in classes at his/her instructional level in these subject areas.