

## Who Is the Least Qualified to Evaluate Teachers?

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Friday, January 24, 2014

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Let's say you don't employ public school teachers. Let's say you make millions of dollars. Let's say you earn sometimes hundreds of times more money than the lowest paid worker in your organization. And let's say you may not have even attended public school in Canada?

So what should you do? Release a report on how to pay public school teachers because...YOU'RE A CEO!

That's what they've done because they want to "[improve education and skills training in Canada](#)." This is their only purported connection to any credibility in evaluating public schools. They hire people who come from public schools. But in reality, their goal is to pay less taxes by justifying paying public servants less money.

What do they say?

1. They reject merit pay. That's good because merit pay is far too subjective to be fair. Teaching is an art. It's hard to build a rubric and criteria to evaluate teachers when their students vary on so many socio-economic and psychological levels.
2. They reject seniority and education as ways of paying teachers more. This is where their rationale gets truly absurd: they do not "[offer any financial incentive for teachers to become more effective in the classroom](#)." While acknowledging that teachers early in their career do improve with experience, they can't see how that can continue as people become veteran teachers. But worse, if a teacher returns to school to get a masters or PhD in their teachable subject, they can improve their capacity to teach in those areas. That's the whole point. And that requires an investment in time and money to demonstrate to the world that their have achieved graduate level success in their teachable area. That makes them "more effective in the classroom" and with extra pay for graduate degrees, that is what a financial incentive looks like.
3. Then they argue that lazy and ineffective teachers should get paid the same as good teachers. The system is designed for good faith evaluations of teachers. Whether or it's regular or complaints-based, some teachers are lazy and ineffective. A well-functioning school system will have means for expert teachers, mentors and administrators to intervene and support teachers who have become lazy or ineffective. And teacher unions have processes in place to ensure that if there are concerns about teachers, that efforts to improve their work occur in a tone of professionalism and respect. This is simply a problem that is separate from who gets paid what. If a teacher becomes lazy and complacent and even contemptuous of their students, after a professional process to demand a minimum standard, if they fail, they should be fired. Why pay them at all.

In the end, CEOs can afford to just fire workers who they deem to be lazy or ineffective. And I get how they think public schools should work the same way, but that's based on some pretty bad assumptions,

and a demeaning, contemptuous view that schools ought to be run like corporations. How absurd is that? Let Jamie Vollmer explain it:

[YouTube Video](#)