

# Opinion: Test scores alone not best judge of teachers

By David A. Sanchez

There are those who think the best way to determine teacher effectiveness is by looking only at students' test scores. The simplicity of this approach can be seductive, but it is inherently flawed. This approach only makes sense if you assume all children come to school with the same abilities, have the same educational resources and opportunities and return home to the same support systems. As a kindergarten teacher for more than 30 years, I can confirm what you already know to be true: Every child is different.

The fact of the matter is student achievement and teacher effectiveness aren't simple to measure, and the results of one test are not going to offer a complete assessment of either. Many different measures must be used in order to determine true effectiveness.

So how do you define teacher effectiveness? How to evaluate it? How to reward it? These are all good questions. Most research will tell you an effective teacher is one of the most important factors in a student's education, and I would agree. Research will also tell you that many other factors can and do influence student success: poverty, hunger, homelessness, language skills, parental involvement and education, the learning environment, hormones and personal motivation.

The California Education Code allows for the use of "state adopted criterion referenced assessments" as it "reasonably relates" to a teacher's evaluation. How those tests become part of the greater teacher evaluation program at each school district is agreed to by local stakeholders through collective bargaining. This allows for the buy-in and trust of principals

and teachers and ensures that local conditions and student needs are considered.

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