

## What Is Fair For Seia Noas?

By

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My name is Seia Noas (**Student Enrolled In A Need Of Assistance School**). I am a fourth grader. I am in a classroom with 31 other students. I have been struggling with reading and math since I was in the third grade. I was receiving help in third grade, but for some reason that ended. I was getting help this year, but that ended too. I want to learn. Sometimes I don't understand what she is teaching me. Not because I am dumb. I just can't hear her over the 1, 2, 3....., 18 other students that won't stop talking, fighting, or playing. People think because we live in a poor neighborhood we don't want to learn. I feel sorry for my teacher. I believe she really wants us to learn. Maybe I should just stop trying to learn. It looks like the bad kids get all of the attention anyway.

How many students feel this way? Many of our urban classrooms are overpopulated with students that fall academically shy of meeting grade level standards. School districts are claiming to hold the best interest for all of the students. However, many students like the fourth grader in the scenario are basically considered spilled grains of salt from the shaker of bureaucracy. Where is the equity of education for students that suffer in silence or lose their desire to learn?

Let's begin with class size. This student is one of 32 students in her class. This class may have an average of seven special education students that may receive small group pull out services for math and reading. The number of students that are consistent classroom disruptors maybe synonymous with the number of students that are one or two grade levels below in math or reading. Then there are the students like the one in the scenario. She has stated that she also struggles in math and reading, however, she is trying to learn. How can one person effectively service numerous academic, emotional, and behavioral needs? Tennessee researchers found, poor and African-American students appeared to reap the greatest learning gains in smaller classes (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2011). Research from Columbia University Teachers College in New York showed the context of class-size reduction can affect its success in improving student achievement (Ready, 2008). Why would anyone think these students can achieve high learning standards with so many distractions? Class size should not rely only on the number of live bodies in a space. The academic background and needs of the students should bear weight in the decision to enroll to capacity.

Now, we will tackle the elephant in the room, classroom disruptions. There is nothing quite so distracting for a teacher than a student disrupting the classroom. Many times the disruptive student is behaving inappropriately due to academic shortcomings. They use the negative behaviors to take the focus off of the lesson or learning. Unfortunately, in an urban setting where students are academically below average, the class sizes are at maximum capacity. Therefore, these students most likely will remain below average, escalate their behaviors, and continue to prevent others from learning.

Classroom disruptions waste valuable instruction time and can also lead to ongoing behavioral problems for students (Concordia Online, 2013).

In the end, who is caring about Seia Noas? She is getting lost in the academic labyrinth of her school. She is frustrated and is giving up. Many times she may see those that prevent her from learning and her teacher from teaching get rewarded. Those rewards come in the form of mentors, special treats for behaving appropriately, getting out of class (suspensions or sitting in the office) and not doing their work but still getting promoted. What message are we sending our students? As she stated, she should give up because she isn't receiving what she needs to be successful. What has happened to the extra help she was receiving? Many times pull-out teachers are thrown into other duties instead of servicing the students they were hired to serve.

This situation is sadly common across our nation. The equity that many fought for during the civil rights movement has changed into a new beast. Inequality is rampant within school districts, throughout cities, and across our country. How can our First World country be wrought with Third World education concerns?

Many of the decisions that are made should not be implemented as a blanket across our schools. Each school is different because their students are different. Our school system is a quilt made up of several pieces that represent each of the delicate lives we are responsible for adequately educating. Equity can be destroyed by class size, class disruptions, and ignoring academic needs. Stand up for the Seia Noas in your school district.

References

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