

Members of the State Board of Education:

My name is Melissa Randolph and I taught at the Horizon Science Academy in Dayton for two years. It was pretty horrendous. There was lots of turnover and lots of firings.

I was hired in as a Title I reading instructor making \$27,000 a year. I expected to be helping students who struggled with reading. I thought I would be doing assessments, helping with data collecting and filling out reports on student progress, working with small groups. None of that happened.

The first day of school, the principal, Mr. Ugur Zengince – he goes by Mr. Zen. – pulled me into his office and said, “You can teach English, right? You are going to teach freshman and sophomore English” instead of being a Title I teacher. They still were collecting federal Title I money but had nobody performing Title I services.

I was a brand new teacher in her first job. I did not feel as if I was in a position to say ‘no’. That first year, I was next door to a math classroom that was in constant chaos. The class went through six teachers in one year, and it was clear that the kids had far more autonomy than should have been allowed. There was no support for teachers in terms of classroom management.

Some of the issues were cultural. It was a Turkish organization, all building construction was done by Turkish companies, the building owner was in Turkey. The Turkish teachers always made more money than the Americans, and many of the Turks did not have teaching licenses or background checks. Some of us went to the ODE website where you can search for basic information on all teachers in Ohio and these teachers didn’t exist, according to the state. I would guess that 80-90 percent of the Turkish teachers were here on H1B work visas.

I can’t say for sure if I witnessed any tampering with test scores but I can tell you what I did see. There was a person who ran the testing and after the tests were collected and supposed to be locked up I did see he and some others writing over the bubbles in the tests. I asked what they were doing because I was proctoring and I was part of the group administering the tests. He said they were going over them in pencil to make sure they were dark enough.

This was at least a violation of the testing protocol. Tests are to be collected, locked up and transferred to the location where they were be graded.