

Yoo hoo to the AFT and NEA: Support the Garfield teachers, for real

Teachers at Garfield HS in Seattle, Washington are re-launching the MAP test boycott of the spring test with a press conference at which they will announce important developments. Garfield teachers are concerned that because evaluations are directly tied to the spring version of the test, the district will not give the same leeway for their boycott this spring. In response, they are asking for your/our support in test resistance, on May 1st, May Day. The back story as I see it is the shameful complicity of AFT and NEA in having teachers' evaluations – and pay – linked to these standardized tests. NEA and AFT officials make grand statements criticizing the tests while they endorse legislation that chains teachers' evaluations to test scores. In doing so they maintain what they take to be their cozy rapport with vicious anti-teacher, anti-teacher union Republican bullies, like Chris Christie, or Democratic "friends," like Cory Booker, Andrew Cuomo, and President Obama, who carry out the neoliberal policies of Democrats for Education Reform. In talking one way and acting another, NEA and AFT confuse supporters and, worse, sabotage teachers all over the world who risk their jobs protesting harm done by these tests. (Here's a "shout-out" of support to UK primary teachers in the National Union of Teachers protecting kids from the tests with their own threatened boycott!) Mass public education was won in a powerful social movement led in good part by labor unions at the turn of the twentieth century. The AFT and NEA should put their money – and organizational clout – with their rhetoric is. Yoo-hoo to AFT and NEA: Organize a state-wide boycott of the MAP to support Garfield teachers!