



Bad education policy is no excuse for cheating—especially cheating from principals and teachers, whom we hope will serve as role models for our kids.

But the sad truth is that we shouldn't be surprised by [USA Today's disheartening findings](#) on test score irregularities in the Washington, D.C., public schools during the reign of [Michelle Rhee](#), the firebrand former chancellor best known for firing teachers, closing underperforming schools, and linking teacher and principal pay to student test scores rise.

Such irregularities are, in part, the unintended consequence of a spate of popular education reform policies that over-rationalize teaching and learning—both of which are creative processes—by measuring them almost exclusively through the results of multiple-choice standardized tests. Reporters Jack Gillum and Marisol Bello found that from 2008 to 2010, D.C.'s testing company, CTB/McGraw-Hill, recommended that the school district investigate higher than typical answer sheet erasure rates at 103 of its 168 schools—possible evidence that adults had corrected students' mistakes. Even D.C.'s own superintendent of education, Deborah Gist, recommended that Rhee's administration launch an investigation of erasures at eight schools, those that displayed a consistent pattern of wrong answers being replaced by correct ones.

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