

James Oliver
Second-grade Teacher
Harriet Treem Elementary

On October 18, a Thursday, my fourth day there, Mrs. Robertt who I think is a resource teacher, came into my room, and reminded me we need to get the progress reports out and asked if I knew how. I said yes. Mrs. Robertt then proceeded to ask me to login to my computer. As I logged her in, she went ahead and proceeded to open the grade book up in Infinite Campus. I went back to study my next lesson as it was my prep period. Mrs. Robertt remarked we need to get these printed and handed out tomorrow to bring home. As she looked at the progress reports and printed them, she remarked how low the kids' scores were. Mrs. Robertt then called on her radio and said she was in Mr. Oliver's room and to come see the report. A short time later, Mrs. Cyprus and Mrs. Tippetts came into my room. Mrs. Robertt had the progress reports spread out on the desks. Mrs. Tippetts was standing up over the desk looking at the progress reports. Mrs. Cyprus was sitting down at the desk facing me as I was standing behind Mrs. Robertt. The teacher's aide came to look and sat down next to Mrs. Robertt. The group of individuals were myself, the Principal Mrs. Tippetts, Assistant Principal Mrs. Cyprus, Mrs. Robertt, and the teacher's aide in my classroom. Mrs. Cyprus commented, "Wow, nothing but D's and F's. I have never seen so many." And Mrs. Tippetts replied, "we can't show that."

The teacher's aide said, "Yes, the long-term sub said they have not made any progress from the first of the year. The sub already has all the grades for the progress report already."

Mrs. Robertt said, "Yes, she told me the same thing."

Mrs. Cyprus said "We can't send these grades out. We can't show that there is no improvement since the beginning of the year, and we don't want the parents to see this either."

Then, Mrs. Tippetts said "I agree."

Mrs. Cyprus said, "Can we find some grades that they did do well on and use them?"

Mrs. Robertt said, "How are we going to average out the bad grades to look like good grades?"

Mrs. Cyprus said, "Don't worry about that now, let's just get some good grades out to bring those up." and continued on with "We can always put them back after we have sent out the progress reports to the parents." Mrs. Cyprus asked Mrs. Robertt to look in their workbooks to see if there were any problems or pages that we can use for a test. Mrs. Robertt looked and said, "Almost all of the pages are not filled in." Mrs. Tippetts asked, "Are these computers working back here"? Mrs. Cyprus, Mrs. Tippetts and Mrs. Robertt all went to the three computers on the back table along the back wall. I told them I had to go pick up my kids. The teacher's aide had already left for the day.

When I came back to my classroom to get my stuff ready to go home, Mrs. Robertt was still in my room. She said, "Don't send out any progress reports till Monday. Just tell the kids to tell the parents that their progress reports will come out on Monday."

I got my stuff to leave to go home. Mrs. Robertt was still at one of the back computer in my room as I left.

The following day (Friday October 19th, 2018), I told the students to tell the parents on Monday what Mrs. Robertt had said. That Friday, all through the day, Mrs. Robertt, Mrs. Tippetts, and Mrs. Cyprus, kept spending time on the three computers on the back table. Sometimes Mrs. Robertt would ask me to log her in to my computer. I would have to stop my lessons and go log her in. This went on all through the day. When I left that Friday to go home, Mrs. Robertt was on one of the back computers.

The week of October 22-26, from that Monday till Friday, Mrs. Robertt, Mrs. Tippetts, and Mrs. Cyprus all spend different periods coming into my room while I was giving lessons and worked on the back three computers. Mrs. Robertt would go back and forth to my computer and ask me to log her in. Once she was logged in, I would go back to teaching my lesson. This routine continued every day. The teacher's aide never did anything that I saw, except tell them about what the long-term sub had said. But she saw all that I saw and heard.

That week, from that Monday till Friday, when I would log Mrs. Robertt into my computer, she would close out my grade book, then ask me to do it again, only a minute after. Then, after looking at the grade book, she would ask me again to login. This went on like this many times through the week. Then around Wednesday October 24th, 2018, Mrs. Robertt came into my room and put some papers in my basket and said, "Hand these out to the kids for evaluation. We need to know what they know and don't know." Later the papers were handed out and I told the students that this was not a test. We were just trying to see what they were having trouble with to help them do better in school and when you're finished put them into the homework basket and Mrs. Robertt will pick them up at the end of the day. Mrs. Robertt, Mrs. Tippetts, and Mrs. Cyprus were in my room, virtually every day all two weeks I was there.

The teacher's aide was always in the room from 11:00 am to around 1:00 pm.

Friday October 26th, when I had already brought my students to afternoon specials and was leaving my room, I was met by Mrs. Robertt.

Mrs. Robertt said, "Just got these done. Can you hand these out when you go pick up your kids — and tell them to put them in their backpack and be sure their parents get them?" I said yes and continued out my room as she went inside my room.

As I was walking to pick up the students, I started looking at their grades. I was shocked to see their grades! Now that I was seeing proof that they really did change the grades, I knew I had to find someone I could trust quickly and tell and show the grades before releasing them to the students. Not seeing Mrs. Robertt around, I went and showed the grades to my second-grade chair, Ms. Villalpando, and she was shocked and upset.

I said to Ms. Villalpando "how can their progress report show D's and F's and now show A, B, and C's? I saw maybe one F and just a couple of D's."

Ms. Villalpando said “Yeah, I heard one of your students shouting out, “I got all A’s and B’s!” I never got that before.”

Ms. Villalpando continued on, saying, “I wish I could add grades to some of my low students.”

Ms. Villalpando then told me, “They are trying to set you up. They had you log-in with your username and password to make it look like you did it. You need to talk to your Union Rep. immediately.

I said, “I can’t touch that computer or even come back here unless I report it.

“I also need to tell the parents that I did not post these grades or even grade them. In fact, I have not given one test paper out or even graded one paper since I have been here these past 10 days. I’ve never even seen any test taken by any students, just an evaluation paper. Knowing this I have to report it.”

I then went and talked to another second-grade teacher that had the room next to me, Ms. Pilate. She also agreed with what Ms. Villalpando had said about them trying to set me up, and said that I need to talk to my Union Rep. She gave me the name of a Union Representative she used before, Ron Lopez. I tried to call and speak with Mr. Lopez that evening, but Mr. Lopez had a voice message saying that he was out of town. So, I left some voice mails explaining a lot of issues at Harriet Treem Elementary. Monday, when the Union was open, I made some calls to a Union Rep. Ashley explaining the problem. Ms. Ashley said, “Let me call someone,” and then gave me a number and said, “call this number after 10 minutes.” I followed her instructions and called and scheduled an appointment at 3 p.m. to speak with Mr. Alexander Roche, on Monday October 29th, 2018. I told my story to Mr. Roche.

Since I left on Friday October 26, 2018, the next day, Saturday October 27, I put in for Family Medical Leave (FLM). My mother — currently bedridden with high risk of heart attacks, and suffering dementia, chronic UTI, and other medical conditions — is dying in hospice care in my house, with a preacher and a nurse coming frequently to my house. My mother had a small stroke on October 27th. I went ahead and took my FLM as my Mother only has a short time to live. Harriett Treem’s administration got the FLM letter, but after three hours of receiving the letter was still trying to get me to answer my phone.

Mrs. Cyprus left a voicemail on my cellphone saying, “we had a parent come in and say that her child heard from you on Thursday that you weren’t coming back to Treem.” Knowing I did not want anybody to know that I was reporting this, I knew she was lying, and just trying to get me talking about this. Two more calls came in, but they did not leave any messages. Then today, October 30th at 1:28pm, Treem’s Office Manager Natalie called and said call to call her back because she wanted to speak to me about the curriculum. Now, knowing that HR had told me I did not have to talk to admin or anyone and to just take care of my Mother, I know that Treem administration also knows these rules, and are just trying to talk to me to try and discredit me.

James Oliver