

## **Michael Reilly, Parent, President, NYC Community Education Council 31**

I begin with a 1st grade math homework problem my daughter Emma had two years ago.

"How do you take apart 8?" choices a)  $7+1=8$  b)  $8+8=16$  c)  $8-1=7$  d)  $9-1=8$ :

My wife and I looked at the wording and thought how ridiculous. With a little back and forth I was able to help Emma find the answer. When I told her to color in the circle for the answer she replied, "Bubble in dad, we have to bubble it in!"

This is what Common Core has promoted; a constant testing society. How does bubbling in lead to critical thinking? And how does making a 1st grade math problem wordy help them learn Math. The answer is it does not.

Common Core as it exists now will not help meet the needs of every individual student, especially those with special needs. I like the thought of higher standards. After all, what parent wouldn't want their child challenged and prepared for college or a career.

Unfortunately, the roll out of Common Core was horrendous. There were teacher material delays, one lesson a day and move on policies, increased assessments and most of all a lack of transparency, especially regarding the student information transmitted to the Education Data Portal EngageNY.

I have been trying for months to obtain the exact data categories transmitted but have been continually blocked by both NYC & NYS DOE. What's the big secret about categories? The transmitted data is an integral part of Common Core. In 2010 there was a change to FERPA allowing contractors to be classified as "Education Officials", having access to student data to create material as a for profit company.

So basically it all comes down to money via Race To The Top and contracts with companies like Pearson and Scholastics, to develop the education materials and tests.

NYS received \$750 million from RTTT. NYC received \$250 million, but guess what, most of it didn't go into classrooms it went into creating a data mining system to help contractors make a profit via assessments and materials.

We are at a crossroads. We have the ability to straighten out the ship. We need to improve the state standards making them age and cognitively appropriate.

We hear educators use terms like scaffolding and multiple entry points in lesson plans. The current standards and the state testing pressure make it almost impossible to effectively incorporate these strategies on a daily basis.

The NYS Education Department, Board of Regents and our federal, state and city elected officials adopted the Common Core Standards and aligned tests without appropriately vetting them. They were far too concerned with getting a piece of the Race To the Top money to fully understand the ramifications of the acceleration. Meryl Tisch, the NYS Regents Chancellor even acknowledged the acceleration and inappropriate content when she suggested parents of Special Education students opt out of the state ELA and Math exams.

Thank you,

Michael Reilly, President, NYC Community Education Council 31