

C. Tracy Grimm, Parent

I have a son in 9th grade and a daughter in 2nd in Syracuse City School district. I am outraged the common core was written without enough (or any?) input with teachers in each appropriate grade. It is obvious that the curriculum is rigid and well above the level of many of the children. It is confusing and there have been times where I could not help my 6 and now 7 year old daughter with her homework because I didn't understand it (college grad) and the examples used did not explain well enough to figure it out. The kids spend way too much time testing (this month my daughter's class tested every single day (3 hour tests for 7 year olds!!!) and many of the kids were crying since it was too hard and too long. She was a child that used to look forward to school, now I have to drag her out the door every day. My son, thank GOD is brilliant and was able to maneuver the curriculum without help from me. HOWEVER, him and his entire algebra class last year were fluent in the subject matter, all getting honors or high honors all year. Test scores 95-100 consistently. Each child still went to extra workshops that the math teacher organized outside of school hours to work on regents prep. We hired a private tutor who worked with our children on the weekends. This tutor told me my son would do great that he had thorough knowledge of the materials. He took practice test after practice test. Then they took the regents. No one in his ENTIRE HONOR ROLL CLASS scored above a 78. He got a 71. Again, kids were crying during and after the test, my son included. My son took the test again after prepping for another few months. He again got a 71. There were GEOMETRY questions on the ALGEBRA regents. He is taking Geometry THIS year. Having questions on a test that they have NOT covered in the dictated curriculum is unfair to say the least. It is setting the children up for failure & low self esteem. The low regents score will affect his future as that is what colleges will see. He may not get into the school he wants now due to a faulty testing system. This is unfair!!! Systematically, the curriculum is above the grade level, and the tests are well above that. The curriculum and the tests do not match!!! AND - by tying the teacher's evaluations to any of this faulty testing is setting them up for failure also. Of course they will look "ineffective" if half of the kids can't keep up because it's just too hard. Poverty is a problem in our district. Many kids don't have educated parents capable of figuring this out to help their children. We are leaving those kids behind. You are building an entire generation of lost kids, kids with low self esteem, who hate learning. That is an outrage. Furthermore, if any of this is tied to investment opportunities - then THAT IS CRIMINAL. I refuse to let anyone profit off of the failure of my kids and their teachers. I have the utmost respect for my kids' teachers. They try very hard in a climate that seems to not care about their safety or their self esteem. They are taken for granted, given too many kids to manage and made to deal with kids that have emotional issues that disrupt the classrooms on a regular basis. This is chaos. I don't know how anyone could teach such a rigid curriculum under those circumstances. COMMON CORE NEEDS TO GO!