



## Council of Administrators & Supervisors

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My name is John Nocero and I have served as a teacher and school administrator in the Smithtown Central School District for 37 years, retiring this past July. I speak today as a representative and Executive Board member of the Council of Administrators and Supervisors of Nassau and Suffolk Counties. I would like to share the concerns of our members related to implementation of the Common Core Standards.

You have stated we cannot delay this implementation, as we cannot afford to leave students behind. We do not disagree with this and the fact that our students need rigor and higher learning standards to be well prepared for college and careers in the 21st Century. And we do not disagree with the need for standardized testing. But we believe that we are moving too fast in rolling out the Common Core initiatives and this will hurt students in the long run. Please consider this evidence.

- The implementation of new standards have been rushed and lacked the necessary teacher preparation. For example, only two of the 20 teaching guides promised were available prior to last spring's assessments. You stated that improving instruction, not remediation is the key, but how can significant teacher training occur in such a short time? How do you address the concerns of eighth grade students who have not had the benefit of the new Common Core rigor from the beginning of their schooling and now have high stakes tests thrust upon them? You have heard the statement that we are flying the plane before it has been built. We need a bottom to top overhaul of how and what we teach, implemented in a fair and well-planned manner.
- This past spring the test questions were developmentally beyond the grade level ability of students, often ambiguous in nature, and designed for students to fail. We need to consider the developmental stages of the human brain and the fact that the transition from concrete to analytical processing does not

occur until later in adolescence. Again, meaningful implementation in a fair manner is needed.

- The time allocated for testing is excessive and significantly reduces contact time within the classroom. Three ninety minute sessions over three days for ELA and again for Math are beyond the capabilities of children as young as eight. Additionally, the imbedded field test questions were beyond the abilities of students, causing unnecessary stress, anxiety, and the feeling of hopelessness. And, schools were still assigned field tests, losing yet one more day of instruction.
- Remediation for students who do not make the mark involve additional staffing costs in an era of the 2% tax cap. Test scores were not released until August, too late for summer teacher training and after students schedules and staffing have been completed. The state will release the "Comparable Rigor" charts which will give a comparison of where the student would be in previous testing years. But the state is not requiring students who fall short to receive remediation. This is a contradiction and disservice to our students who need this support.
- As a result of schools striving to meet the new standards teachers are now teaching to the test. Therefore, enrichment and creativity have been discouraged. The arts and exploratory subjects are no longer a priority, contradicting research-based objectives for learning.
- It is known that high poverty is directly correlated to a lack of student achievement. Students across the state, in situations that are no fault of their own, have not succeeded on the assessments due to broken families, lack of food, and sub-standard housing. These sad conditions are not within the control of educators or students, yet schools and students are being penalized. How are these schools, many in our state's larger cities being helped? What support is being given from state agencies?
- "Over testing" and the manner in which testing has been implemented is taking an emotional toll on students. Instead of being excited about learning they have become apprehensive about attending school. Students who once were "successful" have developed a negative self-image and self-esteem. Unwarranted stress and anxiety have resulted in an increase in at-risk behavior and the need for counseling services. Teachers have become demoralized, with morale, optimism, and passion at an all time low. Parents have begun to opt out from testing for these reasons.

We have an opportunity to implement higher standards and Common Core learning in a meaningful, timely, and appropriate manner. Done correctly, this

can have a long lasting positive impact for the students of New York State As we begin this new school year isn't it our responsibility to bring change about in a fair and meaningful manner?

On behalf of the Council of Administrators and Supervisors thank you for this opportunity and we implore you to consider the concerns shared today as we move forward.