

## The Vocabulary of High Stakes Testing

(Click on word for link to more information)

**TIMSS** – Trends in International Math and Science Survey. Assessment that is administered approximately every four years to fourth and eighth graders, and used as the standard for comparing student academic achievement in math and science internationally. In the most recent survey, Singapore and South Korea topped the list, with the United States coming in at number nine in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade survey and 11 in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Approximately 1000 schools and 20,000 students across the United States participated in the survey in 2011. No New York State public school has ever been included in TIMSS or PIRLS. Two U.S. states were included in the 2011 4<sup>th</sup> grade survey and nine in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade survey.

**PIRLS** – Progress in International Reading Literacy Survey. Similar to TIMSS, except that this assessment is used to compare student achievement in literacy and reading internationally in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. U.S. was ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in 2011.

**Title I** – Created under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the primary purpose of Title I is to provide financial assistance to school districts that serve large numbers of students from low-income families. Nonetheless, even many affluent districts receive some Title I funding (under the “Basic Grant Formula”) if at least 2% of the school age population is determined to be economically disadvantaged. “Title I Schools” refer to those schools where more than 35% of the student body is economically disadvantaged according to federal guidelines.

**No Child Left Behind** – Federal Legislation passed in 2001 that requires states and districts receiving federal education funding to administer state standardized exams yearly in English/Language Arts and Mathematics in grades 3-8, and a bit less frequently in science. If “Title I schools” fail to show “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP), certain restrictions and requirements are imposed on local school governance.

**Race to the Top** – Contest created by the Department of Education in 2009 which promises funding to states that tie teacher evaluations to student performance on standardized tests in exchange for additional federal funding.

**The Common Core Curriculum** - Curriculum developed at the direction of the *National Governors Association for Best Practices* in 2009. The Common Core has essentially created a national curriculum for English Language Arts and Mathematics. The framework establishes uniform learning standards that have been adopted by 45 states (including New York), the District of Columbia and four territories. According to the Common Core Website, “these standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic **college courses** and in workforce **training programs**. The standards . . . are informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society. . . .”

The grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics exams administered during this past school year were reworked to fit this curriculum, even though the curriculum itself is not being fully implemented until the 2013-14 school year.

**PARCC**-According to its website, “the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for **College and Careers** is a consortium of 22 states plus the U.S. Virgin Islands working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English and math anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers. The PARCC assessments will be ready for states to administer during the 2014-15 school year.” The PARCC assessments require that a technology infrastructure be put in place before they can be administered. A major financial sponsor of PARCC and the Common Core is **ACHIEVE**, an education reform organization headed by a group of **political and corporate leaders**, and that is financed by a variety of foundations that are closely connected to the high tech industry. They include the AT&T Foundation, Batelle, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The Cisco Foundation, IBM Corporation, Intel Foundation, Microsoft, and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

**APPR** – Annual Professional Performance Review. The new New York State teacher evaluation system. Teachers are rated “ineffective”, “developing”, “effective”, or “highly effective.” 80% of a teacher’s evaluation is based on district criteria (20% of which is a district-wide assessment), and 20% is based on student performance on state exams. An rating of ineffective on the State portion results in an overall rating of ineffective, regardless of scores on district measures. Districts can terminate a teacher who receives two consecutive years of ineffective ratings.