

Guest Column: Everyday Math should get failing score

By Dr. Robert L. Mandell
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The recent article entitled "Scores still high" published Oct. 7, 2004 once again highlighted the failure of the elementary school math program "Everyday Mathematics" also known as "Chicago Math." This program, in its 12th year of implementation in the Reading schools, continues to fail our students. The table below summarizes the MCAS results for the years 1998-2004.

Year Advanced Proficient Needs Impr. Fail NI+F Total Students

1998 21 35 36 844 343

1999 27 34 34 539 327

2000 22 42 31 536 364

2001 20 36 40 444 354

2002 26 35 34 539 358

2003 21 46 28 533 310

2004 22 38 36 440 313

The conclusions made by the assistant superintendent were: "It wouldn't be accurate to say the program needs revamping." Why not? "The program is very strong," he said. It is? What is evident to any non-biased observer is that no real improvement in our children's math performances on the MCAS fourth grade examination using "Chicago Math" has occurred. On average greater than 39 percent of our students perform at below grade levels. For further discussion of the weaknesses of the Everyday Mathematics curriculum please visit the Web site <http://www.nychold.com/>. There you will find extensive reviews by top-flight mathematicians and scientists concerning the defects in "Chicago Math." The school administration has been aware of these deficiencies since 1997 when a group of Reading residents first approached the school administration with concerns about the program. Like so many other Reading parents, our concerns were ignored. One definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results, so it would seem with this math program and our school administrators.

Everyday Math is not an approved curriculum by either the state of Texas or the California State Department of Education under the 2001 Mathematics Adoption) and it does not meet the California Key Math Standards. Further investigation showed that in 1999, the Everyday Math program, along with numerous others, had been publicly denounced in an open letter to the U.S. Secretary of Education. This letter is signed by over 200 professors of mathematics from some of the most prestigious universities in the nation (). Unfortunately, The Massachusetts Department of Education neither approves or disapproves curriculum, and Reading has continued to use this inferior program.

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The booming business of the Sylvan Learning Center in Woburn and the Kumon Center in Reading is the real testament to the math curriculum Everyday Mathematics currently imposes upon our elementary school children.

Dr Robert L. Mandell

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