

House Education Committee
on
House Bill 2292
submitted by
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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony concerning House Bill 2292 concerning the Common Core Standards, or as we present them in Kansas, the College and Career-Ready Standards. I can assure you that the vast majority of educational leaders overwhelmingly support the State Board of Education's adoption of these standards. There are more reasons to support this than can even be discussed in this brief space.

First of all, I trust that you are aware of the many reports as to how American students are performing when compared to the rest of the world. Lower in Mathematics, lower in Science—on and on. Whether they are called Common Core Standards or College and Career-Ready Standards, they are simply a way to develop a consistency in what needs to be taught—and I emphasize *what* is taught, not *how* it is taught in individual districts. There is still great flexibility for local control of these Standards.

I have challenged many people when asked how I felt about these standards to find one—just *one*—of the Standards with which they do not agree. No one has taken that challenge yet, nor have I had anyone in my small, conservative Western Kansas district (or the small, conservative Western Kansas district I served when these were first contemplated!) complain about them in any way.

Further on this issue, we are one of the few nations in the world, if not the *only* nation in the world, that does not have some semblance of a “national” curriculum or at least an agreed upon set of standards every student should meet to be successful in life. When we are not, as a country, working toward one set of goals for everyone, how can it be considered that we are able to compete with other educational systems in the world that *are* working toward a common set of standards or goals? Currently we have, essentially, fifty sets of standards—where is the consistency there? How can we be expect to be “graded” as a nation against the rest of the world when the individual states are not all teaching anything close to the same basic standards or goals? As an educator in my 41st year of service, I can tell you that it has frustrated me for much of

my career. I emphasize again—*how* these or any standards are taught is still, as it should be, a decision made by the locally elected school board!

Second, assuming I am reading it correctly, if this bill becomes law it completely takes away a local school board's right to even *continue* to operate under the well-thought-out College and Career-Ready Standards should it choose to do so. That may be the most offensive part of this bill to me—its “my way or the highway” tone. The boards of the last two districts this administrator has served have both been in unanimous agreement as to the sensibility of the Standards and the purpose for which they were presented—some consistency for a more fair comparison of districts and certainly as well as states.

Finally, the cost of textbooks and other curricular items, be they hard copy textbooks or on CD, as many of our district's classes are provided, will be prohibitive in this era of budget cuts. As an example, our district just spent about \$23,000 on new Mathematics curricular items—will we have to change yet again to meet yet-to-be-determined standards? We are ready to appropriate for the Science curriculum for next year. What do we do? These types of things just do not seem to have been well thought out, at least at this time.

There are certainly many more areas of this bill I would like to address, but I want you to read this most important part and ponder it well. This is a bill that should go *nowhere*—it is unnecessary and will cause a great burden on absolutely every school district in the state at a time when too many changes are coming at once. Many of our districts are struggling to stay alive and serve our local districts and this is just one more “lead to tote” that we do not need!

Again, thank you for the privilege of presenting this written testimony to you. Should any member of the committee have questions I will be glad to try to answer them. I encourage you to call me or send a text: 785.839.4265 (O), or 785.737.8106 (C) at your convenience. E-mail will also work: llysell@usd269.net.

Respectfully submitted,

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