

## House Education Committee

**HB 2292:** A bill regarding K-12 curriculum standards, assessments and data privacy.

### Testimony in Opposition by Marcel Harmon February 23, 2015

Dear House Education Committee Members,

I am submitting written testimony in opposition of HB 2292, as by attaching SB 67, it seeks to repeal the Common Core (Kansas College and Career Ready Standards – KCCRS), reinstate the previous lower quality standards and also prohibit anything aligned to the Common Core state standards.

The KCCRS represent a positive step forward as we move away from "No Child Left Behind," providing a more consistent, clearer understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. They are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers.

In addition to being a school board member, I was one of the Kansas Review Committee members for the Next Generations Science Standards - NGSS (now KCCRSS) who provided a business/industry perspective to the process throughout the STATE-led development of these standards. They also represent a huge step forward in improving science/engineering education. Their focus on providing a deeper understanding of science and engineering concepts, the cross-disciplinary connections, and the project based learning more effectively engage students by showing them how science and engineering apply to their daily life, and in the process helping to foster a life-long curiosity of how the world around them works. They will benefit our students pursuing post high school education, pursuing professional employment (particularly science/engineering based), and just being informed, educated, logically thinking citizens. Here are two business and industry perspectives on the benefits of the KCCRSS:

- K-12 science standards key to Kansas success - <http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2015/jan/12/your-turn-k-12-science-standards-key-kansas-succes/?opinion>
- Need high-quality science education - <http://www.kansas.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/article4301395.html>

The following summarizes many of the points as to why repealing the KCCRS is a bad idea, as well as clarifies several commonly reported misunderstandings about the common core and NGSS:

- It is my understanding that as the bill also prohibits anything aligned to the Common Core state standards, it essentially shuts down K-12 education because the following would also be prohibited: the social, emotional and character development standards, the national curriculum standards for social studies, the NGSS, the national health education standards, the national sexuality education standards, core content and skills, K-12 or any other academic standards not in the public domain, free of any copyright.
- Schools are now 5 years into the implementation process and the State Board and State Department are set to review standards again in 2017. Over these 5 years, Kansas districts have invested significant resources and time in preparing our staff to implement the new standards. Rejecting the common core standards would be a significant waste of tax payer dollars. It would

also require the development of new curricula and appropriate teacher training around the new curricula (as significant additional cost), at a time when there is no money to do so.

- Actions such as those by the state legislature to repeal the KCCRS are disrupting daily school operations as it leaves our districts unsure how to plan for the next few years. Repealing them essentially puts the substandard "No Child Left Behind" back in play until new standards would be developed, potentially 2 or more years down the road.
- The bill would abolish the use of formative or summative assessments aligned to the Common Core - those developed by us or as part of a consortium.
- Programs like Lexia Reading (funded by the Legislature) and Singapore Math (a popular homeschooler's math curriculum) are both aligned to the Common Core. These programs are not aligned to the old standards and, under this bill, money could not be spent on these programs.
- Advanced placement, international baccalaureate and dual credit programs would be eliminated, as they are not aligned with the old standards.
- The Common Core Standards are not an initiative of the federal government. They were created by state governors and chief state school officers. They represent the best efforts of the states to align standards in order to prepare every student for a career or post-secondary education.
- The federal government has not been involved in the development of the NGSS standards. In addition to states, the NRC, the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), AAAS, and other critical partners such as the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the Council of State Science Supervisors (CSSS), and the National Governors Association (NGA) were active in the development and review of the new standards. Writing and review teams consisted of K-12 teachers, state science and policy staff, higher education faculty, scientists, engineers, cognitive scientists, and business leaders. No federal funds were used to develop the standards.
- When looking at the standards, it's important not to conflate the standards themselves with the implementation process as well as the development of associated assessments. There are very legitimate concerns with implementation and assessment. Successful implementation requires sufficient professional development for our teachers and staff – it requires sufficient funding from the state, and that is in jeopardy. Assessments also require sufficient funding to develop a process that is actually assessing the increased depth of understanding, critical thinking, cross-disciplinary project based learning, etc. that the new standards are attempting to teach – a much more demanding challenge than the assessments that were in place with No Child Left Behind.
- The Kansas State Board of Education is responsible for ensuring the success of the public education system of Kansas. The members of the State Board approved participation in the Common Core and NGSS standards, and it is they who work to ensure that Kansas schools will have the strongest standards for instruction. Actions such as those by our state legislature strip another elected body of its constitutional authority to oversee public education in Kansas.

I strongly encourage you to vote no on HB 2292.

Sincerely,

Marcel Harmon, PhD, PE, LEED AP O+M

School Board Member, USD #497, Lawrence, KS