

Testimony before the  
**House Education Committee**  
on

**HB 2292 – Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards.**

by  
**Mr. William D. Hall, Superintendent of Schools**  
Salina Public Schools – USD 305

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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on **HB 2292**. This bill would prohibit the implementation of Common Core Standards in Kansas schools. Salina Public Schools strongly opposes this bill.

The vision of Salina Public Schools is that all students will graduate college and career ready. The Common Core Standards are the necessary vehicle to meet this vision by providing the rigorous curricular standards necessary to prepare students for life after high school. As such, Salina Public Schools espouses the Common Core Standards, also known as the Kansas College and Career Ready Standards, and has included their continued implementation as part of the district's legislative platform approved by the board of education for the current legislative session. As stated in the platform, "The Kansas College and Career Ready Standards, developed by a consortium of state government and educational leaders, represent a clear set of shared goals and expectations for the knowledge and skills that help our students succeed. The standards are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared for credit-bearing entry courses in two or four-year college programs or for entry into the workforce. Local teachers, principals, superintendents and others decide how the standards are met by developing lesson plans that tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students and maintain a high level of creativity."

Common Core Standards are an essential building block for a better education system. They are rigorous and take instruction to higher levels of learning for students. The standards challenge students to be thinkers and innovators who can solve real-world problems, not just find an answer. Today's information society requires workers with different skills and knowledge than were needed in the past. Do we want our workers to be competitive in order to rebuild a healthy state economy? Do we want an education system that prepares students for success? We have to create learners, collaborators, creators and problem-solvers if our children are to compete in the next quarter-century.

The Common Core Standards are not a new educational craze, a federal intrusion, or an untested idea. Rather, they are already part of the College and Career Readiness curriculum and programming being implemented in schools across this great state. The development and adoption by 46 states representing 90 percent of all students was a historic event in US education history. The effort was led by Republican and Democratic governors and chief state school officers. The Common Core Standards are *not* a federal mandate or in any way initiated by the Obama administration.

In our present society, mobility of students from school to school, district to district, and state to state is a constant. The alignment of the Common Core Standards across schools, districts, and states, provide our children a consistency that has never been achieved. It will help ensure that students in all (participating) states meet the same high standards for college and career readiness, which will help our students well into the future.

In Kansas, the implementation of these standards has already begun. The adoption of the Common Core Standards in English language arts and mathematics by the Kansas State Board of Education occurred in October of 2010. Most districts have already started to create a comprehensive system that includes

- development of aligned curriculum;
- support and time for appropriate professional development;
- instructional materials and other resources including model lesson plans;
- collaborative planning efforts; and
- assessments that are aligned to inform instruction.

Passage of **HB 2292** would require the development of new curricula and extensive teacher training around the new curricula. In the Salina school district and other districts across the state, we have been implementing the Kansas Common Core Standards for 4.5 years. In Salina, we first trained all principals and administrators on the standards in the spring of 2011. We then trained our K-5 teachers in the standards in the fall of 2011. Our secondary math and English language arts teachers were trained over the course of the 2011-2012 school year. We have sent teachers and instructional leaders to the Kansas Common Core Standards Academies, state and national conferences, and brought in national experts to help with the implementation of the Common Core in the classroom.

The establishment of curricular standards is a function of the Kansas State Board of Education and needs to reside with them, not the state legislature. The Kansas State Department of Education is set to review these standards again in 2017. **HB 2292** would eliminate all of these efforts resulting in an imprudent waste of the resources already expended to implement the Common Core Standards.

If your interest is to save the state and districts money by preventing implementation costs of Common Core Standards, it is too late. Thousands of dollars and hundreds of employee hours have already been spent on curriculum alignment, professional development and instructional resources. To ban the implementation of the standards would cost us far more than continuing with the implementation we have already begun.

With the implementation of the Common Core Standards, instructional resources and textbooks are finally being aligned to Kansas standards. In the past, the best we could hope for when adopting an instructional resource or textbook was about 40 percent alignment between our state standards and the textbook content. Since Kansas is a small state, resources were created for the larger states and Kansas was forced to adopt them to our standards. This meant that our teachers would have to spend valuable time finding additional resources to fill in the missing pieces. This is very time consuming and costly.

As you are aware, the Kansas State Department of Education has been cut extensively over the past several years. The Common Core Standards allow our state department of education to collaborate with other states and share resources. It allows our districts to collaborate and use resources from other states. This sharing of knowledge, costs and resources is vital to our continued success. With budgets dwindling and new revenues bleak, collaboration and sharing is a much needed opportunity to continue to grow and excel.

**HB 2292** would eliminate participation of Kansas students in advanced placement and dual credit programs, a provision that would create inequity for Salina students seeking post-secondary advancement while in high school. Salina Public Schools is fortunate to have extremely talented students who consistently achieve at very high levels. Many Salina students take advantage of the academic opportunities provided by advanced placement and dual credit programs. These opportunities level the playing field when Kansas students compete against peers from other states for post-secondary placement. Elimination of these additional learning opportunities would place Salina students at a tremendous disadvantage.

I feel strongly that the passage of **House Bill 2292** would be a big step backward for Kansas, cause undue harm to Kansas students, and take the Kansas educational system back several years and waste valuable time, resources and funds that have already been spent. The adverse impact of this bill is not in the best interest of Kansas students, teachers or schools.