

February 19, 2015

Dear House Education Committee,

Thank you for your service to the great state of Kansas. I appreciate our form of government that gives me the opportunity to voice my SUPPORT of HB 2292.

I have experienced first-hand the beginning of the detriment that the Common Core (CC) is to public education.

As committee members (I'd bet) you've already looked into the facts that:

- 1) CC developers are not held accountable (They claim 10 years or more to show CC effectiveness)
- 2) CC standards are not peer reviewed, and not shown to be developmentally and age appropriate
- 3) Students are not so much taught analytical skills and facts as "rigorous standards" are more "thinking through" and defending issues that are very subjective to the teachers' / facilitators' / Common Core developers' sociopolitical views and revisionism of history (like the [recent Wisconsin "teaching"](#) that the first Thanksgiving was Pilgrims celebrating the massacre of Indians instead of giving thanks along with them).
- 4) CC's data tracking invades our children's privacy
- 5) CC is very costly. Not only is it financially cumbersome, but also consider the price of a society that losses its freedom to influence what children learn in school.

Again, I believe that you've looked into these facts and more. So I'm going to share my personal experience as a mother of two elementary-aged sons.

During the 2012-2013 school year I homeschooled my then first grader through Lawrence Virtual School which was starting to use Common Core math. At first I liked the math because it really dug deep and helped the student to understand addition and subtraction in a very concrete way using blocks and drawing out pictures. My son mastered these concepts very quickly, so we skipped a good portion of the material – and I just went ahead and taught him how to carry and rename when adding. It worked well for us because – part of the beauty of homeschooling – we were able skip the redundancy and move to efficiency all the while grasping the underlying "deep" learning that CC was promoting.

This fall 2013 my now second grader started the school year at a Topeka elementary school with a great reputation. However, my son's teacher told me that *math facts*, *telling time*, and *counting money* would need to be taught at home because there isn't time in the classroom. When I made an unexpected visit to observe the classroom what I heard was her *instead* teaching energy efficiency and that oil and coal are bad for the environment. Whether this was CC driven or not, I can't say – but I will say that if we hand over our local control of education, we lose our voices and risk our children's minds to the decisions of others. Back when I was in a Kansas public high school over 20 years ago, I gravitated toward math because I knew math was "honest" and I wouldn't be fed a leftist political agenda like I was in government class. If CC is hurting an "honest", objective subject like mathematics - what will it do to more subjective and controversial subjects like History, Government, Health and Sex Education?

My younger son also started this school year at the same public elementary school. I spoke to his teacher about my concern that phonics weren't being taught. The veteran teacher knew that teaching kindergarteners what sounds the letters make is a logical and proven way to begin to teach reading skills. She whispered that sometimes she just shuts her door and tries to help students understand what sounds the letters make anyway. Similarly, a good friend of mine who is a kindergarten teacher in northeastern Kansas said that she was told she couldn't use her tried and true phonics songs anymore. And when she was unpacking her teaching materials she asked where the uppercase letters were. The response: kids should come into kindergarten knowing their uppercase letters so we won't display them. Again, like my son's previous kindergarten teacher, my friend is strictly not allowed to deviate from what is dictated to them. And

many [excellent teachers](#) like these see the pitfalls of the changes but feel helpless to teach in ways they know work, because it has been mandated to them to follow the rules. Well, these “rules” aren’t working and we Kansans must get back our voice, our influence, our dignity to teach logic and truth in methods that effectively teach the students who become tomorrow’s citizens, tomorrow’s leaders.

By the way, my boys are now in an excellent private school. I still care about public education because not everyone, probably most people in fact, can’t afford private school. It is only by extenuating circumstances that I can. My sons are in an oasis at a school free from CC, but I still care about this threat to society.

If we don’t stop CC, we give up our children’s minds, learning and intellect to a bureaucracy beyond our reach. (A bureaucracy with an agenda to train for the workforce, shape their opinions - and not to teach what they need to become fully educated, attentive and informed free-thinking citizens.) CC is not the American way. Let’s take back more control of educating young Kansans so that we’ll rise above what could become “common”. Let’s spread our freedom to the minds of upcoming generations. Let’s not hand over our power to educate to the Common Core. It is education without representation, and we parents don’t want to be silenced in the education of our children! Please represent us well.

Earnestly and Respectfully,

Lanell Griffith

Topeka, KS

Lanell.griffith@mail.com

785.969.8051

Sources:

1) Presentation by Mary Robbins for Americans for Prosperity, Topeka KS, November 5, 2013. Similar information at <http://americanprinciplesproject.org/preserve-innocence/2013/jane-robbins-stop-common-core-series/>

2) Dr. Megan Koschnick, child clinical psychologist presenting for American Principles Project <http://kansansagainstcommoncore.wordpress.com/dr-megan-koschnick-presents-on-common-core-at-app-conference/> . Math problem example and more, Glenn Beck: http://www.video.theblaze.com/media/video.jsp?content_id=31304483&topic_id&tcid=vpp_copy_31304483&v=3

3) USD 501 Topeka, KS. Fall 2013.

4) Education Datapalooza presentation (see final two minutes) <http://conservativeteachersofamerica.com/white-house-hosts-datapalooza-built-on-common-core-tests/#sthash.mVpklikX.HvMxf8SG.dpbs>

Biosensors to Monitor U.S. Students’ Attentiveness <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/13/us-usa-education-gates-idUSBRE85C17Z20120613>

5) Pioneer Institute & American Principles Project, *National Cost of Aligning States and Localities to the Common Core Standards*, February 2012



CC National Cost.pdf

Hillsdale College. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2npftyFvkWo&feature=share>

<http://www.mail.com/news/us/2663522-neighbors-unable-to-missouri-girls-abduction.html#.7518-stage-hero1-2>