

To the Honorable Ron Highland, Chair of the Education Committee

The Cancer of Common Core.

I am writing you today to ask that you immediately cut the cancer of Common Core out of our public schools in Kansas by passing HB 2292 - the Local Control of Kansas Education Act. This cancer is destroying the creativity and future of the children in our State. This one-size-fits-all, Federal mandate is a testing regimen that is simply child abuse. It turns our schools into testing centers instead of learning centers. It kills the self-esteem of our children with tests and content that are lewd and age inappropriate. It establishes standards that cannot and have not been measured. It was established as a bribe that will cause the State to fail financially, teachers to fail collectively and students to fail individually. It is eating away at the minds of our students and running off creative teachers that can no longer stand being Common Core facilitators in a Common Core mandated testing center known as our public schools.

Testing must not be a tool of the statist, but a tool of the teacher and educator.

For over 40 years the federal government has inserted itself into our State and into the lives and education of our children. Since the establishment of the federal Department of Education in the 1970's, we have seen every administration since try to control our education systems from Washington, DC.

From the America 2000, Goals 2000, No Child Left Behind and now Common Core, every President since the 1970's has pushed to force a one-size-fits-all federal solution onto our public schools. It's had disastrous results on achievement scores and the education of our children. The federal government has no constitutional role in education. Period. It is time that the State steps in and assumes their proper role and stops allowing these federal schemes to destroy our schools and our State budgets.

Please pass HB 2292 - the Local Control of Kansas Education Act now.

Testing must never again be a tool of the statist, but it should only be a tool of the teacher and used to evaluate what content each student is absorbing or not absorbing from the material presented. The use and implementation of the tests should be in complete control of the teacher and not mandated by a standard implemented by a consortium of corporations or federal entities.

A bureaucrat or a corporate entity has not sat in that classroom and has not evaluated the teaching methods and learning capabilities of each individual student and teacher in that classroom. It is impossible for them to make any determination on what material the students may or may not be retaining in every classroom in the nation.

Testing should strictly be an evaluative tool for the teacher to use in order to gauge a particular class and a particular student's retention of the material. It should never be used as a tool of the state to punish the teacher and the school like in Common Core and every other federal education mandate over

the last 40 years. This only leads to teachers dropping all creativity and simply teaching to the test and students only learning what the test requires and nothing else. You simply have a testing center and not a learning center at that point. We are getting closer to that each day that the cancer of Common Core remains in our State.

The Great Federal Experiment has failed .

The federal government scheme to take over our students, our teachers and our schools is no different than the Affordable Care Act scheme to take over our healthcare systems. The Affordable Care Act is not affordable and seeks to replace your doctor/patient relationship with a bureaucrat, corporate controlled healthcare exchange and a medical facilitator to make one-size-fits-all decisions about our healthcare needs.

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Common Core is functioning just as well as Obamacare. It is breaking our State with implementation requirements and building of new schools that will facilitate the required infrastructure. It implements costly testing systems that are running up to a billion dollars a year, every year in many States. It turns teachers into facilitators, schools into testing centers and students into robots that can only stay inside of the testing box. The individual needs of the school, the classroom, the teachers and the students are not being met. This is the same issue that you are seeing with our healthcare systems.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) works the same way with patients being seen as a number and given treatment and tests based on a bureaucratic formula instead of the actual needs of the individual patient. The costs have skyrocketed and the care of the individual patient is of little concern.

So far Kansas has not fully fallen for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) scheme by buying into the Medicaid Expansion scam. This is where the Federal Government agrees to pay the State for the expansion of Medicaid for a couple of years as they enroll hundreds of thousands more on the plan. Then that burden is dropped in the lap of the State with all the mandates that will quickly dry up all the funds in the State. Then all patients in the State will be forced into a Single Payer, government run, healthcare plan. This was all setup by design. As the healthcare system fails the federal government steps in and takes over with a mandated, government only healthcare system.

This is the same scheme as Common Core. Except that we fell for the scheme and took the Title 1 money and our State is suffering the consequences and the related funding issues. Can we afford to spend billions more on testing and requirements of the Common Core mandates? We should have been thinking about that when this scheme was hatched 5 years ago. Now we must get this out of our State because the costs will never go down and our State will never have enough funding to pay for this scheme like they won't for the ACA. It is setup this way by design so that the federal government will be the single source in control of our education and our schools.

The Great Federal Government experiment in education has failed. It was setup to fail by making unattainable goals without any way of measuring them. It takes the sovereignty and control of the State away in education. It takes away local control and parental control and hands it over to a bureaucrat in Washington, DC. This will not end well for our schools, our teachers, our parents or our children. It will not end well for our State and our ability to control our own affairs.

No Real Standards or Measures of Success

Common Core standards were implemented before they were even written. Essentially like Nancy Pelosi said with the Affordable Care Act (ACA), "we had to pass them before we could know what was in them." Well they were not passed by the legislature and the people of Kansas had no say in their implementation into our schools. We also know what is in them now. Many early adopting States are finding they have content that is not grade level appropriate or age appropriate with materials and books that should not even be read by most college aged students.

How in the world can Common Core be used to evaluate the achievement levels if the test questions are 5 years above the comprehension and understanding of the students? The answer is that it cannot. We have recent evidence from the Report of the K-12 Student Performance and Efficiency Commission that indicates our schools have no mechanism to evaluate achievement and don't understand the tools that they have been given to do it. That was a shocking finding that came straight from the Kansas Association of School Boards.

Just as disturbing is the fact that the first round of testing numbers after the implementation of Common Core suddenly turns up missing from the computers. This should have been a big red flag for the Kansas Board of Education and if I served on the board, I would be getting to the bottom of that immediately or demanding that those tests be immediately retaken.

If you are supporting a testing regimen and a new standards system like Common Core then you must demand those results. Otherwise it seems that no one is at the wheel of the school bus in the State of Kansas. Either that or those results were a huge example of the failure of Common Core in the State and someone made them disappear. I don't know. All I do know is that if we are truly concerned about the education of the children in this State, those results need to be found now or retaken or we are continuing to implement a failed experiment on our kids. What we do know from other States that do have test results is that the Common Core standards are another failed experiment.

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So Common Core is a failed experiment and we have no data available years into its implementation in Kansas. We have our Education Boards that have no idea how to use other standards to evaluate student achievement and the State still keeps paying a lot of money to implement an experimental standard. How can any teacher, board member, legislator or NEA member make any statements about how these standards are working without any data or evidence? The answer is they cannot.

Remove the Common Core Cancer before it Metastasizes

Our Kansas schools are a train wreck ready to happen. We have no one at the controls and no one that understands how the train operates. That is what happens when you take the responsibility of creating standards out of the hands of Kansas and allow outside entities to sell you an expensive package of junk. Those that developed Kansas standards in the past have just let others do most their job and then they become disconnected to the responsibility they have to our children and our State. It is time to bring that responsibility back to State and local control.

So far we have no real evidence of the effectiveness of Common Core standards in our State. All anyone can do is look at how it is working in other States. It is not working in other States and it is time we stopped this failed experiment and get back to Kansas Standards for Kansas Students. It is time Kansas was responsible for the education of our children and creates the best standards and the best achievement scores in the nation. Competition in the States is the only way to raise achievement scores and Kansas can lead the way if we get our education train back on track.

Common Core is a cancer that is destroying our State financially and destroying the creative minds of our teachers and our students. We must get back in control of our schools and control of our students success. We must implement our own measures to evaluate achievement and make sure every State Board and school knows how to use them. We must stop looking for our answers from Washington and look for answers right here in the Great State of Kansas. The farther away you look for answers, the least likely that they will achieve the intended goals.

Common Core is rapidly destroying the education system in this nation. It is a cancer that continues to go untreated in our State. It is a cancer that has been growing for 40 years without treatment or removal. It was implemented through the same Malignant and Pernicious Design as other federally mandated catastrophes and will have the same results if we don't stop it now. The results will be the bankruptcy of our State, of our schools and of our future. Many States have recognized this and have repealed it and many more are working toward that goal. We must stand up now and remove it before it metastasizes and consumes us. The mind of a child is a terrible thing to waste. We should not be continuing this failed experiment one more day!

It is my hope that the committee will think about the needs of your children and grandchildren over the needs of the special interests that are pressing to keep Common Core in place in order to keep receiving federal funds. The teachers and administrators that will speak about how Common Core is wonderful and is working just fine have nothing but antidotal evidence because by their own admission we don't have any scores or anyone that knows how to measure the outcomes.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
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