



Division of Learning Services

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Chairman Highland and members of the House Education Committee.

I am submitting this testimony in opposition of HB 2292 for many reasons, all of which center around our primary goal of providing the highest quality education possible for all Kansas kids. As the Interim Commissioner of Education at KSDE, under the leadership of the State Board of Education, I have been deeply involved over the last several years in the development and implementation of many initiatives and programs that will improve the educational system in the state of Kansas. Each of these initiatives and programs plays a part to ensure that Kansas students graduate high school better prepared for postsecondary success, or entering directly into the workforce.

The state board of education is currently involved in several new initiatives that will continue to move Kansas education forward for the benefit of students, and the state of Kansas. We just completed an 18 city tour across Kansas, meeting with over 1,700 parents, business leaders, higher education officials, board members, students and educators, redefining the quality and measures of success for PreK-16 education. We are also scheduling meetings with city chambers of commerce to dialogue, at a deeper level, with business and industry.

The Kansas College and Career Ready Standards in Math and English Language Arts (ELA) were adopted in 2010, and are up for revision in 2017. In preparation for the revision process, the state board of education launched, in early February of 2015, a new web site <http://standards.ksde.org> that allows Kansans the ability to view these standards, by grade level, and provide input, guidance and suggestions to make the standards better. This process, which will be open until late fall of 2015, will be provided to the Kansas standards revision team that will begin the revision process of our Math and ELA standards.

Aside from the Math and ELA standards, this bill has dramatic effects on schools across Kansas in other content areas. As an example, the curriculum that school districts use to teach the career and technical skills for our students, would be void. Kansas schools have done an outstanding job of increasing the number of students that are graduating with industry recognized certifications, gaining them direct entrance into postsecondary pathways, or directly into the workforce. As an effect of this bill, we do not believe that students would be able to receive these certifications for several years.

The state board of education is well down the road of increasing the percent of our graduates that have the academic, cognitive, technical and employability skills to be successful postsecondary, or directly into the workforce. Kansas ranks very high as a nation for the percent of high paying jobs available, but requires postsecondary completion. What we lack is the skilled workforce to fill these positions. This bill would set the state back several years in the process of developing a better skilled Kansas workforce.

Brad Neuenswander
Interim Commissioner/Deputy Commissioner
Kansas State Department of Education

