

Testimony before the
House Education Committee
on

HB 2292 – AN ACT concerning schools; enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act; amending K.S.A. 2014 Supp. 72-6216, 72-6217 and 72-6439 and repealing the existing sections.

by
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Geary County Schools, USD 475

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Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding HB 2292. This bill repeals the Kansas college and career ready standards and reinstates the standards in place prior to its adoption in 2012. However, because the bill also prohibits anything aligned to the Common Core state standards, the social, emotional and character development standards, the national curriculum standards for social studies, 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, it essentially shuts down K-12 education. Geary County Schools, USD 475, strongly opposes this bill.

Just today, a Principal stated to me that our students are achieving at a higher level than ever before because we have fully implemented the Kansas college and career ready standards. These 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 messy problems, not just locate an answer. Many of our students were answer-getters due to old standards that focused on rote memorization and lower-level thinking. We have to create learners, collaborators, creators and problem-solvers if our children are to compete and lead our state into the future.

Geary County Schools, USD 475, serves the children of military personnel stationed at Fort Riley Army Base. Currently 62% of the students in USD 475 are military affiliated. The alignment of the Kansas college and career ready standards to the common core provide a level of continuity for our military students. We have students coming from across the country and these standards align grade level expectations and skills to help our students avoid gaps in instruction. Our students of those bravely serving our country deserve to have some level of alignment in educational standards as they are sent from state to state.

Most national assessments like the ACT, SAT and National Assessment of Educational Progress are aligned to common core. These assessments compare KS to other states for academic achievement and will leave our students at a disadvantage when competing for scholarships, awards, and admittance

into our Colleges and Universities. Advanced placement, international baccalaureate and dual credit programs would be eliminated, as they are not aligned with the old standards. Abandoning the Kansas College and Career Ready standards will have a direct negative impact on or students competing in a national economy.

The state of KS has spent millions of dollars aligning assessments to these standards. The funding spent hiring CETE to align to the standards would be for nothing. We have trained staff and sent teachers and instructional leaders to the Kansas college and career ready standards academies and state and national conferences. We have also brought in experts to help with the implementation of the standards in the classroom. A lot of time, effort and funds have been spent on curriculum development and alignment, professional development and instructional resources. To ban the implementation of the standards would be a great loss to USD 475 and other districts throughout Kansas. This action would require the development of new curricula and appropriate teacher training around the new standards and curricula at a time when there is no money do so.

The Kansas college and career ready standards are a set of shared goals and expectations for the knowledge and skills that our students need to succeed. They are not curriculum. Districts and teachers still control the development of the curriculum, selection of the instructional resources and the instructional strategies used in the classroom. Teachers decide how the standards are to be met by devising lesson plans and tailoring instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms. With passage of this bill, you take away all of that decision making and mandate what we can and cannot teach.

The Geary County School Board has adopted a resolution in support of the Kansas college and career ready standards. As elected community leaders charged with providing the students of USD 475 with the best possible educational opportunities for success in college and career endeavors, the Geary County Board of Education has implementation and support of common core standards as a part of its Board goals. The USD 475 Board strongly feels the Kansas college and career ready standards are vital to our district's efforts to provide the students of USD 475 with the knowledge and skills they need to compete in a global society.

Kansas state statute currently states that Kansas must revisit and make updates to standards every seven years, so I would suggest the state allow the process to work as it has in the past and the standards will be revisited in 2017 as currently planned by the Kansas State Board of Education which is the agency that through state statute is supposed to make standards decisions.

As an educator, leader and parent, I am extremely concerned for the ramifications this bill will have on the current and future endeavors of our children. My first concern is preparing students for a successful future. I feel that passage of **House Bill 2292** would be a big step backward for the state of Kansas and Kansas students. It would 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 interests of Kansas students, teachers or schools.