

I am a high school English teacher at Leavenworth High School. I am the 2014 Kansas Teacher of the Year. During this year I have travelled over 30,000 miles all over Kansas to work with teachers, administrators, preservice teachers and communities. I have carried out missions on NASA simulators with other state and international teachers of the year at Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama, and worked with legislators in Washington, D.C. All of this to innovate, collaborate, and solve the best ways to educate in the 21st century. It has been my honor to represent Kansas across America and internationally.

House Bill 2378 is not reasonable for the following reasons:

First, the Kansas Teacher of the Year program celebrates the best of education on many levels. It celebrates what unites us and what gives us hope for our future. Most teachers understand what is going on in their school and district, but do not appreciate the full scope of possibilities in other districts, regions, and across America. The KTOY program makes that possible.

Second, the KTOY program works with preservice teachers in every college and university in Kansas to mentor about the practicalities, problems, and solutions of actual teaching. This unique part of the KTOY program is one of its most important functions and one of its most appreciated, as my team and I can attest from our presentations last year.

Third, the KTOY program has never been about award money, but about service for the betterment of Kansas education.

The Kansas Teacher of the Year program is one of the three or four programs that is consistently held up as a model across America. This is because of the experienced, knowledgeable, expert leadership at KSDE who develop and encourage the partnership of college educators, educational organizations, rural, suburban and urban school districts, small and large businesses, students and parents. To my knowledge, no other state has such a varied, vast assembly of supporters and selectors.

The KTOY program is exceptional and exceptionally conducted.

In my years of coaching basketball, I learned a great deal about how to coach from Kansas native and legendary North Carolina basketball coach, Dean Smith. Coach Smith believed that if you had talented players and a system for offense and defense that was working that the coach should, in his words, "get out of the way."

On the other hand, if you didn't have talented players and the system was not working, then you coached "like crazy."

The Kansas Teacher of the Year program as developed, organized and operated by KSDE is working on all cylinders.

With all due respect, I cannot for the life of me understand why it should be touched.