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Kansas is required to create a Statewide Longitudinal Data System for tracking students from Pre-K through age 20. The federal government has awarded funding to the State of Kansas to create this system – a system which allows any representative or agency of the federal government to access personal information about a student and his or her family. This is an incredible invasion of privacy. Why does the federal government need to keep tabs on each and every one of its children and families? They are so desperate for unlimited access to this information that they are willing to say, “Here, we will fund this so you don’t have to pay for it.”

People claim the data collection has nothing to do with Common Core standards and they are right. Nothing in the standards document itself requires us to share information. However, the federal government and the state of Kansas signed an agreement to “make available for linking” all “student-level data,” which is personally identifiable, compiled through the common core testing. Our state claims that the information won’t be shared with the federal government, but this is a game of semantics. The agreement says “make available for linking” they might not be delivering it to the feds, instead they say, here it is if you want it- and believe me they want it.

While Kansas has taken steps to remove itself from the Smarter Balance consortium, there have been no assurances from the state that this practice will stop.

In addition to the data collection, I’m still baffled with why the strong support for Common Core standards continues after recent evidence has shown it doesn’t work. Kentucky was the first state to adopt Common Core in 2010 and has completed two full years of teaching CCS exclusively in grades K-12. They revised their state assessments to be aligned with the CCS in 2012 and students’ scores on the new test dropped dramatically. State officials claim this was due to the new CCS tests being more rigorous than previous state assessments and they expected students to perform poorly.

That may be an acceptable answer for dismal results on a new and different test, but what about student test scores on an assessment that didn’t change? The National Assessment of Education Progress, also known as the Nation’s Report Card, has been administered to states since 1990 and tests 20% of the population in grades 4 and 8. It is a nationally, norm-referenced test which accounts for states having different standards and provides a consistent bar for states to measure their progress and compare it to other states.

After extensive implementation and over 100 million dollars, the 2013 NAEP test scores showed Kentucky’s overall academic progress was negative. How can we, in good conscious, continue down a path that has failed other states? Common standards produce common results and Kansas shouldn’t expect their results with Common Core to be any different than the negative ones in Kentucky.

The evidence just isn’t there to support Common Core and Kansas students deserve better.

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