

Testimony before the
House Education Committee

HB 2289– Relating to prohibiting implementation of Common Core Standards

Presented by:

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify on **HB 2289**. This bill would prohibit the implementation of Common Core Standards in Kansas schools. United School Administrators of Kansas (USA|Kansas), Kansas Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (KASCD), and Salina Public Schools strongly oppose this bill.

I know you have already heard contradictory testimony, both positive and negative, regarding the Common Core. I plan to speak from a practitioner’s perspective of the adoption and implementation of Common Core Standards.

Common Core State 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 find an answer. Many of our current students are answer-getters due to a system that focuses on rote memorization and lower-level standards. We have to create learners, collaborators, creators and problem-solvers if our children are to compete in the next quarter-century.

The Common Core Standards are not a new educational craze, a federal intrusion, or an untested idea. Rather, they are already part of our College and Career Readiness curriculum and programming we are implementing in our schools across this great state. The development and adoption by 46 states representing 90 percent of all students was a historic event in US education history. The effort was led by Republican and Democratic governors and chief state school officers. The Common Core Standards are *not* a federal mandate or in any way initiated by the Obama administration.

In our present society, mobility of students from school to school, district to district, and state to state is a constant. The alignment of the Common Core Standards across schools, districts, and states, provide these children a consistency that has never been achieved. It will help ensure that students in all (participating) states meet the same high standards for college and career readiness, which will help our students well into the future.

In Kansas, the implementation of these standards has already begun. The adoption of the Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and mathematics by the Kansas State Board of Education occurred in October of 2010. Most districts have already started to create a comprehensive system that includes:

- development of aligned curriculum
- support and time for appropriate professional development
- instructional materials and other resources including model lesson plans
- collaborative planning efforts
- assessments that are aligned to inform instruction

In the Salina school district and other districts across the state, we have been implementing the Kansas Common Core Standards for 2.5 years. In Salina, we first trained all principals and administrators on the standards in the spring of 2011. We then trained our K-5 teachers in the standards in the fall of 2011. Our secondary math and English language arts teachers were trained over the course of the 2011-2012 school year. We have sent teachers and instructional leaders to the Kansas Common Core Standards Academies, state and national conferences, and brought in national experts to help with the implementation of the Common Core in the classroom.

If your concern is to save the state and districts money from having to implement the Common Core Standards, you are too late. A lot of funds have already been spent on curriculum alignment, professional development and instructional resources. To ban the implementation of the standards would cost us far more than continuing with the implementation we have already begun.

With the implementation of the Common Core Standards, instructional resources and textbooks are finally being aligned to Kansas standards. In the past, the best we could hope for when adopting an instructional resource or textbook was about 40 percent alignment between our state standards and the textbooks content. Since Kansas is a small state resources were created for the larger states and Kansas was forced to adapt them to our standards. This meant that our teachers would have to spend valuable time finding additional resources to fill in the missing pieces. This is very time consuming and costly.

The adoption has also led to more collaboration in K-12 education across the country than ever before. For the first time, we are able to share resources from state to state and create a dialogue with practitioners from across the United States. I just attended a conference titled, "M4." It was a collaboration of education leaders from a four state region to provide shared support and resources to implement common core math. This is an exciting aspect of the implementation of Common Core Standards.

As you are aware, the Kansas State Department of Education has been cut extensively over the past several years. The Common Core Standards allow our state department of education to collaborate with other states and share resources. It allows our districts to collaborate and use resources from other states. This sharing of knowledge, costs and resources is vital to our continued success. With budgets dwindling and new revenues bleak, collaboration and sharing is our only opportunity to continue to grow and excel.

I feel that passage of **House Bill 2289** would be a big step backward for Kansas, 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 far exceeds any political agenda and is not in the best interests of Kansas students, teachers or schools.

I'll be happy to stand for questions.