

Testimony of Dr. Diane Watkins
March 21, 2013
House Education Committee
Kansas House of Representatives
House Bill 2289 –Common Core Standards

Mdm. Chair and Committee Members:

I appreciate the opportunity to speak today. I am a native Kansan and a life-long educator. I am currently Assistant Superintendent of USD 413 Chanute Public Schools and I am speaking against House Bill 2289.

The “connectedness” that the Common Core Standards provide help to diminish GAPS and redundancies that result when states do not have a common framework from which to teach. This framework was initiated by the National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers for that very reason. Comparisons could not be made between states because each state had very different expectations. These standards create a common structure, a common vocabulary, **a common language** for educators and students throughout the nation. Collaboration among educators of various states nurtures cooperation and provides enhanced communication in the sharing of ideas and materials but still honors the individual strengths of the teacher and expectations of the district in this framework. In short, a common language is imperative for educators to communicate from state to state. This expanded sharing of instructional ideas among teachers benefits Kansas children in the classroom.

Presently, the institutions of higher learning in Kansas are working toward common outcomes: a common language for courses in the state for the purpose of seamless transfer within our state institutions. This is an example of the using a common language to help students transfer among Kansas higher education institutions.

Kansas is not a state in isolation. It is a part of an interconnected and interdependent whole. Educators and districts have invested much time and energy into moving the language and increased rigor of the common core standards forward. We are well in the midst of a paradigm shift. To grow educated workers (who think critically, creatively, innovatively), Kansans need to be able to collaborate and communicate with educators beyond Kansas borders.

In summary, the common core standards will enable us **to be connected with a common language and common purpose** for teaching and learning. Our students deserve no less.

I appreciate this opportunity to speak.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Diane Watkins
Chanute