

My name is Karla Reed and I am a District Reading Program Specialist in the USD 231 school district. My message today is simple. I oppose the bill under your consideration and I am here to show my support for moving forward with funding and implementation of the Common Core Standards in Kansas.

Over the last two years, I have had the opportunity to study, work with and implement the Common Core standards. The standards are far more comprehensive than the benchmarks and indicators that we have been working with over the last decade in our state. The Common Core standards allow for more conceptual learning at higher levels. They call for literacy skills and strategies that work to develop students as readers and writers through application and real world learning. The steps of rigor that are built into the standards allow for students to not only gain more knowledge within a particular grade level but to retain and continue to further that knowledge within the consecutive grade levels .

My role as a district reading specialist has allowed me to work directly with the teachers who are implementing the Common Core Standards. We have been working with the standards throughout the last two school years in several capacities. We have already put a lot of time and effort into the implementation process since our state board adopted the Common Core standards. Our district has spent time realigning our curriculum to meet the standards, revising our student report cards, and providing professional development to teachers and staff. We have also provided information to parents to educate them about the standards. A lot of work has been done over the past few years toward implementing the standards. The advantage to all of the hard work that has been done is that we are already seeing positive growth and achievement from our students. I would hate to see all of that come to a screeching halt if this bill passes.

Our hard work with the CCS has allowed for more conceptual learning and deeper thinking on the students' part and far better use of instructional practices on the teachers' part. The students are more engaged in learning with the challenge of the standards. We have seen some of our lower performing students scoring better on formative assessments and their scores are continuing to steadily increase. The exciting thing is that not only are we seeing results with the lower performing students but we are also seeing these increases with achievement with our middle and high performing students. One teacher shared with me that she feels the standards have allowed her to teach to ALL of the students and not just spend her time teaching to the low kids so they can pass the state test. Another teacher shared that he is not only seeing positive growth in academics, but he is also seeing a rise in students' ability to work with others and their self-confidence as learners. He attributes this growth to working with all four strands of the ELA standards.

My role in the district also allows me to work with teachers through professional development. Teachers have been excited to learn new strategies for implementing the standards. They are eager to learn instructional practices that will allow them to provide far more engaging lessons to students with the standards. Professional development will need to be at the heart of moving forward with implementation of the standards. One advantage of the Common Core standards in this regard is the ability to collaborate within and across states. I have already been involved in this collaboration process and have seen the advantages of working together with one common goal. This collaboration not only allows us to work with other educators but also opens the door to working directly with the leading

experts in our field. In education we have always looked to the experts in the field of reading to guide our decisions around best instructional practices and strategies. Many of the leading experts such as Tim Shanahan, Anita Archer, Lucy Calkins, and Isabella Beck are very much in support of the Common Core and have been sharing the latest information on strategies that foster effective implementation of the standards. In fact, it is difficult to find experts in the area of reading that are not in favor of the standards. I believe we cannot ignore the fact that there are that many experts rallying around the standards and calling for full implementation.

I am also here today as a parent. I want more for my children in education than what we have been able to provide for them in the past with our benchmark and indicators. As I visit with other parents in the district and surrounding districts I have found the reaction to the Common Core standards to be very positive. Many districts have spent time educating parents around the common core and I think it would be very confusing for parents if the message would have to change.

I have been in education for over twenty years and I feel that implementing the Common Core standards is the best step we have taken in Kansas to improve student learning. I feel strongly that moving away from the Common Core standards would be a huge disservice to our students!

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.