

March 21, 2013

Representative Kelley and House Education Committee Members-

It is my honor and privilege to stand before you today to address my concerns about House Bill 2289: Prohibiting the Use of Common Core Standards.

Growing up as a Kansas citizen, I proudly claimed Kansas as my home state. During the course of my adulthood these same feelings remain strong, but never as much as when the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were being drafted in 2009-2010. This state-led initiative organized by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) led our state department of education to once again involve the field of professionals at a critical time in the education of Kansas students. Local control is essential to the residents of our state. Kansans believe in involving those closely connected with the issues at hand, because they are the ones best suited to provide practical solutions.

Receiving the call to co-vice chair the state committee charged with the responsibility of reviewing and converting each of the various English Language Arts (ELA) CCSS drafts into a workable document worthy of being adopted by the Kansas State Board of Education (KSBE) for the students of Kansas brought admiration and respect for those responsible in making that decision. Throughout the weeks and months our committee members began to clearly understand just how special our situation in Kansas stood in relationship to the other 47 states completing the same task. Very few states, if any other, had organized a committee of classroom teachers and specialists to act in the same manner. As the ELA CCSS drafts returned for additional examinations, we began to notice more and more wording was coming straight from our suggestions. Our committee recognized the fact that the authors of the ELA CCSS received many similar recommendations, and knew we were not alone in convincing the authors to utilize our proposals. Even though, many educators throughout the United States of America collaborated to create the ELA CCSS, they have Kansas fingerprints all over them. In addition to the CCSS, the committee created the Kansas 15% for ELA. These standards address concepts important in Kansas and may be reviewed and altered as needed. Kansas educators will be hard-pressed to create a set of standards more in line with Kansas beliefs and expectations for our children than the ELA CCSS and the Kansas 15% for English Language Arts.

The CCSS provide teachers with a framework that is clear and consistent outlining what is to be taught in their classrooms, yet they leave the resources implemented by each district and classroom to local control. This offers professionals in the educational field the opportunity to individualize and adapt resources to match local concerns and needs. Creativity and thinking will find their way back into our state's classrooms. No longer will educators be reduced to providing our children with merely rote learning. Kansas students will be college and career ready. It is in the best interest of our state to have citizens who take their place in society as thinkers and problem solvers.

In summation, the CCSS provide Kansas children with the opportunity to achieve high levels of learning with deep understanding and knowledge that will take them through the 21st century. This being accomplished through a document created and well-matched with Kansas philosophy. Alternate plans will surely delay quality education in Kansas schools by a decade or more, so today, I implore you to say no to HB 2289 and yes to the Common Core State Standards. Thank you for your time and efforts on behalf of the children of Kansas.

Carolyn Boyd, Lansing Unified School District #469