

A bill to ban common core and just about everything else

The House Education Committee held a hearing today on **HB 2292**, a bill brought forth by opponents of the common core state standards (known in Kansas as the Kansas College and Career Ready Standards) that they hope will repeal the current standards and replace them with standards developed in 2003.

The bill goes much farther than common core. This bill ends anything done by a board or consortium outside of Kansas. It would end use of the SAT, the PSAT, and the AP Tests from the College Board. It goes on to specifically call out the AP tests and the International Baccalaureate Programs, requiring that those programs be rewritten to align with the 2003 Kansas curriculum standards.

In testimony on the bill KNEA lobbyist Mark Desetti pointed out that, if passed, the bill would end National Merit Scholarships in Kansas, eliminate the potential for college credits for Kansas high school students through the AP program, and severely limit the chances of Kansas high school students for scholarships or entry into selective post-secondary programs.

Desetti also noted that the Legislature in adopted the Kansas Reading Initiative had specifically chosen the Lexia Reading program. But since Lexia aligns their program with the Common Core State Standards, the bill would prohibit school districts from using it.

The Common Core State Standards are supported by the United States Military to ensure that the children of military families can be certain of a basic set of educational standards no matter where the family is posted. Kansas, as a state with a strong military presence, would not be well-served by repealing the standards.

There were many conferees in the hearing today on both sides of the bill. No questions were permitted of the conferees and no action was taken on the bill.

Five Collective Bargaining Bills - Where They Stand

SB 136/HB 2257 - This is the consensus bill crafted by the education community (KASB, KNEA, USA/KS, KSSA). This bill would change the dates for notice and impasse to a more reasonable timeline; allow each side in the negotiation to notice no more than five items

for negotiation thus limiting the number of items on the table in any given year; require salary to be negotiated every year; and provide training for bargaining teams. **HB 2257** has not been given a hearing and sits in the House Education Committee. **SB 136** had a hearing the Senate Education Committee but has not been acted upon. ***KNEA, KASB, USA/KS, KSSA all support these bills.***

HB 2034 - This is the so-called "minority report" bill. It was crafted by Dave Trabert, Mike O'Neal, Dennis DePew, and Sam Williams. The bill limits negotiations to only salary and hours. If both sides agree, other topics could be negotiated but either side could refuse to negotiate on those items. **HB 2034** had a hearing in the House Education Committee and was voted out. It now sits on the House calendar pending action by the full House. ***KNEA, KASB, USA/KS, KSSA all oppose this bill.***

HB 2236 - This is a 2013 bill resurrected by the House Commerce Committee. This bill radically restricts collective bargaining and ends the exclusive representative provisions of the PNA. The Association could still be a negotiating representative but the contract would apply to members only. Any individual teacher could request that the board bargain an individual contract. The board would have no obligation to enter into individual negotiations and could simply make a "take it or leave it" offer. **HB 2236** had a hearing in the House Commerce Committee and was voted out. It now sits on the House calendar pending action by the full House. ***KNEA, KASB, USA/KS, KSSA all oppose this bill.***

SB 176 - This bill was introduced by Senator Melcher. It would end negotiations on anything except minimum salaries. Nothing else would be negotiable even if both sides wished to negotiate. This bill also ends provisions in the PNA for mediation and fact finding and allows the local school board to issue a unilateral contract as soon as impasse is declared. This bill had a hearing in the Senate Education Committee but no action has yet been taken. ***KNEA, KASB, USA/KS, KSSA all oppose this bill.***

Today's hearing on collective bargaining for teachers

Let's repeat, the Kansas Association of School Boards, United School Administrators of Kansas, the Kansas School Superintendents Association, and the Kansas National Education Association spent the last 18 months crafted a consensus bill to make changes to the professional negotiations act which all four groups could support and would make bargaining more efficient, effective, and focused. That bill is **SB 136** in the Senate and **HB 2257** in the House.

But there must be some people who just can't stomach the idea of the entire education

community rallying together in support of one bill. We keep seeing bills tossed out to essentially end collective bargaining for teachers.

First there was **HB 2034**, the so-called "minority report" bill, supported by Dave Trabert of KPI. In a hearing on this bill in the House Education Committee, the four education groups testified against it while Dave Trabert supported it. Naturally the committee ignored the educators and sided with the Kansas Policy Institute. **HB 2034** now sits on the House floor.

And despite having **HB 2257** in Committee, Chairman Ron Highland has declined to hold a hearing on the education community's bill.

Up in the House Commerce Committee, a hearing was held on **HB 2326**. This bill ends the exclusive representative provision in the PNA that allows employees to choose an organization to represent all the employees in bargaining. Under this bill a school board could still negotiate with the local association but the contract would only be for members of the association. Non-members could ask the board to negotiate with them individually but the board could simply make a take it or leave it offer.

Again, the whole education community testified against the bill which was supported by KPI, Walt Chappell, Steve Roberts, and Ken Willard. This Committee too chose to ignore educators and approve the anti-PNA bill. **HB 2326** now sits on the House floor with **HB 2034**.

Over in the Senate, the Senate Education Committee held a hearing on **SB 136**, the educators' bill, but took no action on it.

Today, the Senate Education Committee held a hearing on **SB 176**, a bill that limits negotiations to "minimum salaries" and ends all provisions for mediation and fact finding. Walt Chappell, Steve Roberts and KPI all testified in favor of the bill while KASB Executive Director John Heim testified against it on behalf of the four education groups.

Walt Chappell told the Committee that collective bargaining has allowed teachers to work only 2/3 of the day, the other third being spent in homeroom, planning periods, and other non-teacher activities. Chappell asserted that "You can hear a pin drop in schools 15 minutes after the last bell" because teachers all leave for the day.

Trabert told the Committee that he had spoken with superintendents and the superintendents were in favor of the bill (despite the fact that the Kansas School Superintendents Association opposes the bill). When asked who these superintendents are

and why they don't come to testify in support, Trabert said they were too intimidated to come forward and that he would protect their anonymity. Sen. Molly Baumgardner (R-Louisburg) challenged this saying that she found it absurd that the leaders in school districts, the ones making the most money at the apex of authority, could somehow be too scared to come to a public hearing and make their position known.

The committee took no action on the bill today.

A little light reading!

If you're a faithful reader of Under the Dome, you've probably had occasion to roll your eyes and wonder to yourself, "What are they thinking?!" Frankly, so do we. Today we came across this editorial in the Salina Journal and found it a particularly good summary of how crazy things can get up here.

Don't think, just vote Republican, shut up (The Salina Journal, 2/22/15)^[1]

Links

1. <http://click.email.nea.org/?qs=39b0e5a2dc48ff3b25e0812175c888a8444e4506e69e3efb2bb9f61ee6e482b81d8f1d5e407c9b5d>

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