

Kansas State Board of Education's Common Core "Fact" Sheet Void of Facts

By [Shane Vander Hart](#) & [Dr. Walt Chappell](#) – May 16, 2013

On Tuesday, May 14th, 2013, seventeen Kansans spoke out against the Common Core at the Kansas State Board of Education meeting that was held in Topeka, KS. It was covered by [WIBW TV](#), the [Lawrence Journal-World](#) and [The Wichita Eagle](#).

During the “citizens open forum” of the board’s meeting, which usually only lasts about 30 minutes, the state board listened for over an hour and a half as speaker after speaker from many parts of the state spoke out against the new Common Core standards for reading and math.

Unfortunately the board didn’t seem to listen. Instead the Commissioner of Education handed out a “fact” sheet to those in attendance which is full of misinformation and inaccurate claims.

Myth: “The Common Core Standards initiative was led by states through the National Governor’s Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers.”

Fact: No, “states” did not lead this effort. The National Governor’s Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers are non-governmental trade organizations. Parents, teachers and state legislators were cut out. Some governors were involved, but the [Gates Foundation has paid](#) \$150 million for these groups and select non-profits to develop and promote the Common Core. Kansas Legislators were deliberately circumvented. This [short video](#) makes it clear.

Myth: “The federal government was not involved in the standards development and has not mandated adoption of the standards.”

Fact: [Kansas applied for a Race to the Top grant](#). Unless Kansas adopted the Common Core State Standards they didn’t have a prayer in being chosen. The U.S Department of Education directed the competition judges to award a state “high” points “if the consortium includes a majority of the States in the country,” but “medium or low” points if the consortium includes one-half the states or fewer. The Department admitted that the “goal of common K-12 standards is to replace the existing patchwork of State standards” and that its view was “that the larger the number of States within a consortium, the greater the benefits and potential impact.” The only set of standards that fit their requirements was the Common Core State Standards.

Also [Kansas was awarded a No Child Left Behind waiver](#). Since 7 of the 10 State Board members voted to adopt the CCS to apply for a RTTT grant in 2010—without knowing the cost or how Kansas students would be tested—that part of the waiver was OKed by Washington in 2012. So, while it isn’t a clear mandate, the Feds used a carrot and stick approach with bribes and coercion to “incentivize” the Kansas State Board of Education to adopt the only standards which the US Department of Education bureaucrats would accept.

Myth: “A diverse team of teachers, parents, administrators, researchers and content experts developed the Common Core to be academically rigorous, attainable for students and practical for teachers and districts.”

Fact: A list of authors is not [on the Common Core State Standards Initiative website](#). Achieve, INC. [does not have a list](#). National Governor’s Association has a list [here](#). There are no classroom teachers or K-12 administrators on [this list](#). However, [from this list](#) there are five people who were on the development teams that are connected to a local school district. Only three were classroom teachers at the time. The top math and English specialists on the validation teams refused to sign off on the CCS as an improvement over current state education standards.

Myth: “Standards are not curriculum. Standards identify where a student should be academically at a point in time. Curriculum is how students get there and is determined by local school districts.”

Fact: Ordinarily that would be true. The only problem with that assertion is the standardized testing that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards which will (and as NCLB has shown) driven curriculum plus classroom teaching and textbook selection.

Myth: “The Common Core Standards are bench marked to international standards to ensure our students are competitive at home and around the world.”

Fact: That’s a claim we hear a lot, but whose standards are the Common Core State Standards bench marked to? Which countries? Are their students as productive and creative as Kansans?

Myth: “States that adopted the Common Core Standards were able to add unique, state specific content to the standards.”

Fact: If the KSDE staff are excited that they can add 15% of their own standards—that is pretty sad. 100% of the standards are controlled by national groups. The 15% added by Kansas will not be on the national assessments and therefore will not be taught to most Kansas students.

Myth: “At least one state that received a RTTT grant did not adopt the Common Core Standards.”

Fact: Who? Here are the RTTT recipients: Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Tennessee. The only states that have not adopted the Common Core State Standards in full are: Alaska, Minnesota (ELA standards only), Nebraska, Texas and Virginia. They are not on the list of Race to the Top winners.

They also make claims about Kansas involvement in giving feedback. Who was involved? Let’s see a list. How much feedback was given? Did it actually change anything?

Parents and legislators were still left out of the loop. The KSDE “fact” sheet also makes some false claims regarding individual student and teacher data collection.

While Kansas didn't win a RTTT grant, it was awarded over \$9 million dollars under the Stimulus funds for the purpose of building a Statewide Longitudinal Data System. Some of the outcomes identified are:

- Expand the ability of the state longitudinal data system to link across the P-20 education pipeline and across state agencies.
- Ensure that data can be accessed, analyzed and used; and communicate data to all stakeholders to promote continuous improvement.
- Build the capacity of educators to use the system to develop expertise in effective practices; to use academic and behavioral data to inform instructional decisions; and to evaluate the effect of their decisions on student learning; and build the capacity of other stakeholder to use longitudinal data for effective decision making.

Kansas received 6 million dollars beyond that with two other grants that deal with education data as well.

Kansas then signed a MOU with Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, which has also signed a MOU with the U.S. Department of Education to “develop a strategy to make student-level data that results from the assessment system available on an ongoing basis for research, including for prospective linking, validity, and program improvement studies, subject to applicable privacy laws.”

Jan. 3, regulatory changes went into effect that gutted the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA); now governments can share highly personal data with any entity, public or private, as long as they describe the sharing as necessary to an audit or evaluation of an educational program.

So the Kansas State Department of Education claims that they don't transfer teacher and student specific data now, but will that be the case later on? It remains to be seen. Frankly it is hard to believe an organization that promotes misinformation and assertions which are simply not true. That doesn't help build a foundation of trust.

CONCLUSION:

The one-size-fits-all, Common Core Standards are not how teachers teach or students learn. Students are not robots. They do not all learn at the same rate or the same way. So, professional teachers adjust their instruction to each classroom and individual students. But the Common Core Standards force every teacher to be on the same grade-level standard during the same week—regardless of how fast or slow each class of students are learning. This means that the best students are held back while the slower students never catch up and are left behind.

The Kansas Legislature needs to defund the Common Core Standards implementation and associated national assessments this Session. Otherwise, more damage will be done and local districts will be forced to spend millions of dollars to prepare for the national assessments of this untested, unfunded takeover of every public, private, parochial and home school in the state.