

Chairman Ron Highland and Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Shirley Koehn. I am a former teacher in middle and high school in Kansas Public Schools. I am a parent, a grand-parent, and retired business owner. I have spent much of our retirement learning about Common Core and other educational issues and advocating and for our children.

Today I am speaking about the KCTC (Kansas Communities that Care) student survey given to our Kansas students. I waded through the 141 question survey. Some of the questions are redundant. Most ask for personal information about families and friends. Although, I understand the need to find out information about alcohol and drug use, these questions urge students to inform on family and friends. Number 119: "People in my family often insult or yell at each other," Does this mean, when Mom says "hurry up, you will be late for the bus" or does it mean constant loud and abusive screaming? Number 116: Have any of your brothers or sisters ever smoked cigarettes? Number 121: We argue about the same things in my family over and over. Beyond being invasive questioning, what happens to the data? Data has a way of staying around for a very long time. Are parents informed before the survey is given? Are parents given a copy of the survey so they know what is being asked? How much time is lost from instructional time to give this survey? Coupled with the amount of standardized assessments associated with Common Core given, there is an ever shrinking amount of time for teachers to teach. There is a rising tide of push back from parents across the country against the massive and invasive amount of testing and surveying.

I imagine that many students get tired somewhere through the survey or irritated and just start penciling in the bubbles. The answers are going to depend on the mood that day. Who uses this information? This survey is another invasion of privacy. We complain about the high cost of education. There is a significant cost here, in lost teaching time. The dollars spent on these surveys to provide questionable data, to fulfill an agenda outside the parameters of classroom education is a cost not only in dollars but of instructional time lost.

Most teachers enter the profession because they like kids, want to teach, want to make a difference. Most teachers love the kids and encourage them to learn. Teachers want their students to enjoy learning. It is time we give teachers time to teach.

Thank you for allowing me to testify.

http://www.kctcdata.org/Documents/ctc_survey_.pdf