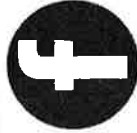


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LEXINGTON HERALD-LEADER

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Common Core has deficiencies Ky. wants to fix

At issue: March 13 Herald-Leader editorial, "Abandoning new standards would hurt Ky. schools"

By Katie Stine

I'm actually pleased the Herald-Leader published the editorial, "Abandoning new standards would hurt Ky. schools," because it provides a nice case in point regarding the massive confusion in Kentucky about Common Core State Standards.

That confusion isn't confined to parents, students and teachers. Even some of our state's leading editors clearly don't understand what is going on either.

Back in 2009, when I co-sponsored Senate Bill 1, the legislature's goal was loftier than what we have with the

Common Core. Our bill explicitly required the Kentucky Department of Education to meet the education needs of all students, including our more advanced students who need quality high-school courses in subjects like trigonometry, pre-calculus, chemistry and physics.

Our intent was that a student in any school would be able to take those upper-level high school courses that are essential prerequisites to college studies in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

While we didn't expect every student would take those more advanced courses, we did want students in every school to have those options available. We adopted this goal, in part, to help Kentucky

compete in a global economy and to give our kids the tools they need to realize all their dreams.

Sadly, as I learned more about the Common Core State Standards and the related Next Generation Science Standards, I realized these key requirements in SB 1 were not being met.

In fact, these new standards essentially omit all of the last two years of high school math and science needed to go on to more competitive colleges and STEM careers.

That creates a highly inequitable situation where students from better-equipped high schools, like several in Lexington, have a clear

advantage because those schools will teach well beyond the Common Core. Meanwhile, students from less advantaged areas would have no option to go on to a math-and-science based career because there simply were no standards requiring their school to offer such higher-level high-school courses.

It also discriminates against less affluent kids since they depend on public schools to offer what they need, while kids from wealthier families will have the means to pursue private tutoring to meet their needs.

I think it is time to acknowledge that the Common



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Core needs serious work and is contributing to unequal opportunity. Unfortunately, we cannot modify Common Core to fix those deficiencies.

These standards, created by private groups in Washington, DC, are copyrighted by those groups. Those groups funded by the Gates Foundation have total control over Common Core.

That leaves us no option, if we are really going to do what SB 1 requires, but to drop the Core and move on to a more equitable and complete standards system — a system that gives a talented but financially challenged rural Kentucky student the same opportunities enjoyed right now by kids in more affluent parts of the state.

I cosponsored Senate Bill

224 this year because I want all Kentucky students to meet the highest standards — not the lowest common denominator. The Senate Education Committee conducted only a hearing on this bill; no vote was taken. But, we learned a lot, and I think that once Kentucky's citizens better understand the real issues, we will be able to move forward with a better education system that doesn't leave some kids out just because of where they go to school.

I hope that this learning process will include our state's editorial page members, because our kids, all of our kids, deserve options for a solid education that fits their career goals, whether that is a STEM-based career or any other job in the 21st century.