

Legislative luncheon brings out discussion on Core Curriculum

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• Leader & Times

The Liberal Chamber of Commerce hosted a Legislative Luncheon Thursday that centered around Common Core, which is a topic that grows all the more controversial as the new school year rolls along.

In attendance was Superintendent of USD No. 483 Elton Argo, USD 483 GPA Coordinator Donna Argo, USD 483 Southwestern Heights principal Dan Frisby, Vice President of State School Board Scott McCall, State Representative Reid Petty, Deputy Superintendent of USD No. 480 Renae Hickert, and new USD 480 Superintendent Paul Larkin.



Common Core is a set of learning standards developed by governors and state education superintendents in 45 states designed to improve academic rigor and ensure that a high school diploma means as much in one state as another.

It was designed by teachers, parents, administrators, researchers and content experts. The states that have adopted Common Core determine how to meet the learning goals set and the curriculum and what textbooks will be used in the classroom. The federal government is not involved.

Common core was adopted by the Oklahoma Legislature in 2010.

Even though Common Core has come under fire from far-right politicians, it is not a federal vs. state or a conservative vs. liberal issue. It is an education improvement issue, according to those attending the luncheon.

“There is a difference between No Child Left Behind and Common Core,” Petty said. “No Child Left Behind was an more of an initiative of the federal government and its really involved and expects you to have certain test scores. Common Core, on the other hand, is a set of standards that the districts follow. The district itself chooses what test they use and what curriculum they use to meet those standards.”

Common Core was originally founded by the National Governors Association. Some of its supporters are Mike Huckabee, former Governor of Arkansas and current FOX News Host; Scott Walker, Governor of Wisconsin; Mary Fallin, Governor of Oklahoma; Bobby Fallin, Governor of Louisiana; Jeb Bush, former Governor of Florida; Bill Bennett, Secretary of Education for Ronald Reagan; Chris Christie, Governor of New Jersey; Mitch Daniels, former Governor of Indiana; Bill Haslam, governor of Tennessee; John Engler, former Governor of Michigan; and the U.S Chamber of Commerce.

Common Core is a large transition from previous education programs. Unlike NCLB, Common Core will use exams that are based on child educational development rather than standardized testing where improvement needs are essential. There is a hope for increased math homework

and band exams.

Members of the community were invited to ask questions.

One lady in the audience asked if NCLB is “out and over.” The Education Secondary Act (NCLB) goes until 2014. It was supposed to be reauthorized about three years ago and it has been ready in the Senate for four years. The state of Kansas hasn’t yet gotten full endorsement of the waiver.

Brad Kearn, a math instructor at Seward County Community College/Area Technical School, sees Common Core as “a step in the right direction.

“NCLB was a good concept but absolutely horrible for our education system,” Kearn said. “Teachers were teaching to the test, and students were getting passed on without sufficient knowledge. This produced a good percentage of high school graduates that were not ready for college or for the work place.

“NCLB sought to put all students at the same level,” he continued. “That is an incredibly damaging system. The key is to give equal opportunity education and to hold the students accountable. If a student doesn’t learn the required material within the year, then they do not progress to the next grade level.”

Citizen and Seward County Republican Party Chair Vanessa Reeve asked if she could see the test that her child will be doing at school or coming home with so that she knew what to expect. However, It’s not possible to see the test, because it is still not known what test will be used. It is too soon. There’s only an idea of the expectations for the test, such as having it be more than fill in the blank and that it requires the students to really think.

Most on the panel agreed Common Core is a process that will require a long, thorough transition.

