BLUE VALLEY SCHOOLS

Opposition Testimony on Senate Bill 350 - The Age Appropriate School Device Act

Submitted by: Gillian Chapman, Superintendent, Blue Valley School District
Date: February 27, 2026

Chairperson Erickson and Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB350 – The Age Appropriate School Device Act.

On behalf of the Blue Valley School District, I submit testimony in opposition to SB350 as drafted.

While we share the Legislature's interest in supporting healthy technology use for children, SB 350 represents a sweeping, unfunded mandate that undermines local control, conflicts with current Kansas and national assessment requirements, and overreaches into instructional decision-making best left to locally elected boards of education and professional educators. In the Blue Valley School District, an advisory committee made up of students, parents, educators, business and health professionals have researched national journals and recommended studies on technology use in the classroom has proposed guidance that provides the appropriate balance and oversight of technology use in schools. At no time in the Blue Valley School District are students using devices during the school day for entertainment purposes or passive use only. All device use is intentionally scheduled and purposed for diagnostic or instructional purposes where students are actively engaged and creating content in a structured and educational environment.

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Unfunded Mandate

SB 350 would impose significant operational and financial burdens without providing funding. A return to print-based instruction would require districts to repurchase materials, duplicate assessment systems, increase paper and staffing costs, redesign device management systems, and reconfigure curriculum pacing all at local expense and in a district the size of Blue Valley, would cost millions of dollars.

Conflict with Assessment and Accountability Systems

Kansas statewide assessments are administered digitally. College entrance exams, industry certifications, and workforce training are also electronic. Restricting device use to one hour per day in grades 6–8 and 90 minutes in grades 9–12 makes it unrealistic to adequately prepare students for required digital assessments and future workforce expectations. This places districts in direct conflict between state testing mandates and statutory device caps.

Education, Not Prohibition

Public schools have a responsibility to teach responsible technology use including digital literacy, cybersecurity awareness, information evaluation, and digital citizenship. The bill's inclusion of media literacy while limiting access to digital tools undermines authentic learning. Education and guided practice, not prohibition, is the sustainable solution.

A More Targeted Approach

If the concern is social media harm and excessive personal device use, a more effective solution would be age-verification requirements for social media platforms rather than instructional device restrictions in schools. Blue Valley already filters internet access, blocks social media on school networks, enforces acceptable use policies, and limits devices to instructional purposes. Responsibility for social media access should rest with platform providers and personal device oversight not classroom instruction.

Equity Concerns

SB 350 may unintentionally widen opportunity gaps by limiting structured access for students without home technology, disadvantaging students in STEM and advanced coursework, and reducing preparation for technology-dependent careers.

Conclusion

We respectfully urge the Committee to oppose SB 350 because it:

- Imposes significant unfunded mandates
- Conflicts with Kansas assessment systems
- Undermines local control
- Overreaches into instructional practice
- Addresses social media concerns through the wrong policy lever
- Risks unintended academic and workforce consequences for Kansas students

If the Legislature wishes to address social media harms and excessive screen exposure, we encourage a focused exploration of age gating policies and platform accountability measures, while preserving the authority of local boards of education to determine developmentally appropriate instructional practices.

Kansas public schools are committed to balanced, responsible technology use. We ask that you allow locally elected boards and professional educators to continue making those decisions in partnership with families and communities.

Respectfully submitted,
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