Wichita Public Schools 903 S. Edgemoor St. • Wichita, KS 67218

Opponent Written Testimony – SB350
Senate Committee on Education
Senator Renee Erickson, Chair

March 3, 2026
Susan Willis, Government Liaison
Rob Dickson, Chief Information Officer
USD 259 - Wichita Public Schools

Chair Erickson and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opposition testimony on Senate Bill 350.

SB 350 responds to real worries: too much screen time, passive device use, social media exposure, and mental health. Wichita takes every one of these concerns seriously. That is why we developed comprehensive *Future Ready Learning with Purposeful Technology* guidelines for the 2025-26 school year. This 20-page teacher guide and grade level family resource was built on research from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the 2024 National Education Technology Plan, and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards. We have included these guidelines as part of our written testimony.

Our guidelines establish:

- Kindergarten: Minimal to no technology. No student devices are assigned. The only screen time is brief, teacher-led, whole-group lessons of 5–10 minutes — and many days include none at all.
- Grades 1–2: 30–45 minutes maximum per day, broken into 10–15 minute sessions on shared iPads, with priority on hands-on learning.
- Grades 3–5: 45–90 minutes maximum per day on shared iPads, spread across subjects in 15–25 minute sessions, with a clear rule: if a task works equally well with pencil and paper, use pencil and paper.
- Grades 6–8: 1:1 laptops with mandatory "screens down" routines, daily non-tech activities, active teacher monitoring, and devices that stay at school and do not go home.
- Grades 9–12: 1:1 laptops with guided autonomy, preparing students for the college and career environments where digital literacy is a baseline expectation.

We also explicitly ban practices parents fear most: devices as rewards, unmonitored video time, technology used to calm behavior, digital busywork, and unstructured free browsing. We developed these guidelines specific to Wichita Public Schools - its students, its teachers, its parents and guardians, and its administration.

SB 350 would cause measurable harm:

1. As we interpret this bill, SB 350 bans use of K-5 teacher-led projector-based instruction, a widely accepted teaching tool at all levels, but especially useful for the K-5 visual learner.

2. While the bill carves out IEP and 504 exceptions, this inadvertently sets up potential stigmatizing environments where "only children with identified disabilities get to use technology."
3. Mandating paper-based standardized testing through grade 5 would require an enormous logistical and financial undertaking – with no demonstrated benefit to student performance.
4. The AAP has moved away from rigid time limits for school-age children, emphasizing the quality of digital interactions. A student spending 20 minutes passively watching a video is worse off than a student spending two hours authoring a research paper, analyzing data in a spreadsheet and presenting findings to the class. Arbitrary, one-size fits all time cap approach does not benefit students, nor create a focus on active versus passive technology use – a distinction that does matter for learning and well-being.
5. Requiring physical textbooks would force districts to procure print editions that are more expensive and cannot be update – or abandon effective curricular materials entirely.
6. We use cameras as essential instructional tools – students record voice and video retellings, produce podcasts, participate in virtual field trips, and build digital portfolios. Disabling cameras eliminates legitimate, high-quality instructional uses to address surveillance concerns that content filtering and monitoring tools already handle.
7. Prohibiting 1:1 devices in grades 6-8 forces a "shared device" structure, making monitoring harder, not easier. And it eliminates the ability to build individual accountability. We specifically created structure in our 6th – 8th grade device model because explicit structure at this age is essential – devices stay in the building, "screens down and lids at 45" routines are mandatory, and teachers are empowered to take devices if misused.

SB 350 would freeze a set of prescriptive rules into Kansas statute, overriding the professional judgment and input of teachers, administrators, parents and locally elected school boards. We respectfully ask you to not advance SB 350 and let local school communities in partnership with families keep guidelines that work for that community. Thank you.