Oral Opposition Testimony before the
Senate Education Committee
On
SB 350
Enacting the age-appropriate school device act to establish safety standards and requirements for the use of school-issued devices in certain grade levels and authorizing parents to opt students out of certain uses of such devices.
by
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Chair Erickson and members of the Senate Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present opposition testimony on SB 350. We respectfully oppose SB 350 because it imposes rigid statewide mandates on instructional technology that undermine local control, create substantial unfunded costs, and disrupt effective instructional practices already in place across Kansas school districts.

Technology integration decisions are made thoughtfully, based on research, staff input, and parent feedback. SB 350 removes that flexibility. A statewide prohibition on device use in elementary grades and strict limits in middle school replace professional judgment with statutory prescription. Districts vary widely in size, staffing, broadband access, curriculum design, and student demographics. What may be workable in one district may be impractical in another.

Over the past decade, districts have made careful investments in digital curriculum platforms, blended learning models, and online assessment systems. SB 350 would require school districts to:

- Purchase additional printed textbooks and instructional materials
- Print and store large volumes of paper resources
- Reconfigure curriculum pacing and delivery models
- Potentially duplicate both digital and print systems

These changes would carry substantial costs without additional state funding. At a time when districts are prioritizing teacher recruitment and retention, mental health supports, and academic recovery, redirecting funds to replace existing systems is fiscally imprudent.

Kansas state assessments are administered electronically. Restricting device use, especially in upper elementary grades, would complicate scheduling and logistics. Even with opt-out provisions, inconsistent device access creates inefficiencies and confusion.
In addition, our middle and high school students rely on technology for:

- Career and technical education programs
- Dual credit and online coursework
- Research, writing, and collaboration
- Digital literacy and workforce preparation

Limiting structured, supervised access during the school day does not eliminate technology use, it reduces our ability to teach responsible and appropriate usage.

In most districts, technology is not a substitute for good teaching, it is a tool that enhances it. Digital platforms allow teachers to differentiate instruction, provide immediate feedback, and support students with disabilities through assistive technologies.
Students with IEPs, English learners, and students who benefit from adaptive learning software could be disproportionately impacted by broad restrictions. While screen time balance is important, those decisions should remain in the hands of educators who understand individual student needs.

Most districts already have policies governing screen time, classroom management, internet safety, and device use. If the Legislature believes additional guardrails are needed, a framework that preserves local discretion would be more appropriate than prescriptive mandates. Superintendents are accountable to parents, their board of education, and the Kansas State Department of Education for student outcomes. I respectfully ask that you allow local leaders to continue making thoughtful, evidence-based decisions about instructional technology.

SB 350 substitutes statewide mandates for local leadership, imposes unfunded costs, and disrupts instructional systems that are working for many Kansas students. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to oppose SB 350. Thank you for your time and consideration.