Kansas National Education Association

Making public schools great for every child

KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Timothy R. Graham
Director of Government Relations & Legislative Affairs
Written Testimony – **Oppose**
Senate Bill 350
Senate Committee on Education
March 3, 2026

Chairperson Erickson, members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 350.

Kansas NEA is a member-driven organization representing nearly 22,000 educators across the state of Kansas. Our members are organized into more than 265 local associations and work in schools and communities across nearly all 105 Kansas counties, serving students in urban, suburban, and rural districts alike.

The positions we advocate for are proposed, debated, and adopted by hundreds of educators selected by their peers to attend our annual Representative Assembly, reflecting the collective voice of education professionals of all political parties, beliefs, and backgrounds who are united by a commitment to Kansas public schools and the students they serve.

Resolution C-1-6, as reflected in the Kansas NEA Book of Resolutions, states:

Kansas NEA believes that technology in the educational process improves learning opportunities for students, quality of instruction, effectiveness of education employees, and provides opportunities to reduce educational inequities.

KNEA further believes in supporting increased funding and local resources, along with public/private partnerships, to fully fund equipment purchases/leases/upgrades, maintenance, technical support, training, evaluation, and staffing to support the full use of technology in public schools, public colleges, and public universities.

KNEA further believes that:

a. Education employees must have access to necessary technology for managing and advancing instruction. Such technology must be compatible with and on at least the same level as technology in general use outside education. Further, education employees should be provided training, encouragement, time, and resources to experiment with and to research applications of technology in order to integrate technology into all curricula as a regular part of the instructional day;

b. Education employees, including representatives of the local affiliate, must be involved in all aspects of technology utilization, including planning, materials selection, implementation, and evaluation. Additional preparation time and ongoing technological support must be granted to teachers using technology to enrich their instruction. Further, classroom teachers, higher education faculty, and library/media specialists must have collaborative planning time;

c. Teacher preparation in technology, including the development of effective materials, and appropriate instructional strategies must be included in college and university programs;

d. Ongoing professional development must be provided for education employees in the use, integration, and applications of technologies to enhance instruction;

e. Technology should be used to support instruction and must be directed by a certified/licensed educator rather than to reduce positions, hours, or compensation;

f. Technology should be used to enhance and improve the learning opportunities for students, the quality of instruction, and/or the effectiveness of education;

g. The evaluation of education employees in any technological program should be conducted openly, be tailored to the medium, and meet the requirements of the local collective bargaining agreement or evaluation policy;

h. The impact of technology and digital learning on education employees should be subject to local collective bargaining agreements;

i. Education employees' participation in digital learning must be mutually established in employer policies, locally negotiated agreements, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment for education employees; and

j. Education employees should own the copyright to materials that they create in the course of their employment.

Resolution C-3-7, as reflected in the Kansas NEA Book of Resolutions, states:

Kansas NEA believes that the total environment, including home, school, and community, affects the social/emotional, cognitive, and physical health of children.

KNEA further believes its affiliates should support programs that:

a. Educate parents/guardians and students about the dangers of excessive screen time and social media; and

b. Ensure a healthful psychological climate and a safe physical/emotional environment at the building, classroom, and individual levels.

Based on these adopted positions, Kansas NEA approaches SB 350 with balance, not reflex.

We believe technology improves learning opportunities for students. It enhances instruction. It helps reduce inequities. At the same time, we recognize that excessive screen time and unregulated social media use can harm students' mental health. Both of those things are true.

The issue before this committee is not whether technology has risks. It does. The issue is whether this bill draws the right line.

Operational and Practical Consequences

Let me begin with practicality.

The bill requires that all instruction and all assessments in grades K–5 be conducted using printed materials. Today, statewide assessments are delivered digitally. Many district benchmark tools, adaptive assessments, and progress monitoring systems are also digital.

Moving entirely to paper-based systems would not be a minor adjustment. It would require changes to assessment platforms, reporting systems, procurement processes, and accountability timelines. That is not a simple policy shift — it is a structural one.

At the middle and high school levels, the daily minute caps present another challenge. Tracking cumulative digital minutes across multiple classes would require educators to monitor and document usage in ways that add compliance work without necessarily improving instruction.

The limitation on digital textbooks also raises concerns. Many modern curricular materials — especially in advanced sciences, career and technical education, and dual-credit courses — are built around interactive digital content. In some cases, the digital platform is not a supplement; it is the curriculum.

We are concerned that the structure of this bill, while well-intended, could create unintended operational consequences.

Instructional Judgment

This bill establishes statewide statutory limits that significantly reduce educator discretion.

Teachers are trained professionals. In some classrooms, technology is used sparingly. In others, it supports differentiation, accessibility tools, translation services, assistive technologies, and real-time formative assessment.

A rigid statewide minute cap does not distinguish between passive screen consumption and educator-directed instructional use. It treats them the same.

Technology, when directed by a certified educator, is a tool. It is not a substitute for teaching. It can expand opportunity, particularly for students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and students preparing for postsecondary pathways that are increasingly digital.

We believe educators are best positioned to determine when and how those tools should be used within age-appropriate boundaries.

National Context

Across the country, many states are examining policies related to student cell phone use and social media access during the school day. Most of those efforts focus on limiting personal device distractions.

SB 350 goes further. It establishes statutory limits on instructional technology itself.

That distinction matters.

As policymakers consider this bill, we encourage careful thought about how broad statewide restrictions on instructional tools may function differently than targeted policies aimed at personal devices. Protecting students from distraction is important. So is preserving instructional flexibility in an educational environment that continues to evolve.

Health and Mental Well-Being

Finally, we want to acknowledge something clearly.

We believe the author of this bill is coming from a sincere place. Concerns about excessive screen time and the impact of social media on children are real. Parents are worried. Educators see the effects. This is a legitimate discussion.

Kansas NEA has adopted language recognizing the need to educate parents and students about the dangers of excessive screen time and to promote a healthy psychological climate in our schools. We agree that schools should be intentional about balanced technology use.

The question is how to do that responsibly.

There is a difference between reducing harmful overexposure and eliminating beneficial instructional tools. A broad prohibition across entire grade spans risks conflating social media misuse with educator-directed instructional technology.

Those are not the same thing.

We believe there is room for this conversation. But the final solution should lean heavily on local decision-making. Districts, educators, and parents are in the best position to determine what is developmentally appropriate for their students, within broad guardrails set by the state.

A one-size-fits-all statutory structure may go further than necessary to address the underlying concern.

For these reasons, Kansas NEA respectfully opposes SB 350.

We believe the concerns raised in this bill are sincere and deserve discussion. However, the structure of this legislation goes further than necessary and creates practical and instructional consequences that warrant caution.

We remain willing to work with the committee toward a more balanced approach.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 350.