Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am a Kansas mother of four children currently in the Shawnee Mission School District. I am writing to respectfully ask you to support Senate Bill 350.

I have seen firsthand how excessive screen use in schools is negatively impacting students, including my own children, academically, physically, and emotionally.

My second-grade daughter is required to use an iPad regularly for math instruction through I-Ready. She frequently comes home with headaches after extended screen time. More concerning to me as a parent is that she is not learning math as effectively on the iPad as she does with pencil and paper. She asks me almost weekly why they have to do math on the iPad and wants to do "paper math" instead. When we work through problems by hand, her understanding improves, her confidence increases, and she retains the material better. I would love to see iPads out of the classroom in these lower elementary grades.

My sixth grader has told me about classmates who routinely find ways to bypass school filters to access YouTube and gaming sites during school hours. Despite safeguards, children are often more tech-savvy than the systems designed to restrict them. This creates ongoing distraction and undermines instructional time.

My high school daughter has shared that she feels “addicted” to YouTube on her school-issued laptop, especially during free time in class. She wants to focus, but the constant availability of entertainment makes it difficult. When the device meant for education becomes a source of distraction, it creates an unnecessary barrier to learning and self-discipline.

Technology absolutely has a place in education. However, it should supplement instruction, not replace foundational learning methods or create dependency and distraction. Handwriting, face-to-face interaction, and focused, hands-on, screen-free learning are essential for healthy cognitive development. Research has clearly shown that learning from screens and apps is not the best way, especially in the elementary years.

As a parent, I want my children to be prepared for the future. But I also want them to be able to concentrate, think deeply, and learn without constant digital interruption. Senate Bill 350 is an important step toward restoring balance in our classrooms.

I respectfully urge you to support this bill for the well-being and academic success of Kansas students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

~Maria Smith

Prairie Village, Kansas