



**Oral Opponent Testimony on  
HB 2421, cell phone use during instructional time; social media; screen time**

**In**

**House Education Committee**

**By**

**Leah Fliter**

**Assistant Executive Director of Advocacy**

**Kansas Association of School Boards**

**lfliter@kasb.org**

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Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 2421. As always, our position on legislation is based on our member-approved policy platform.

Our permanent legislative policy, reaffirmed by our members in November 2025, says:

***School Board Authority and Accountability***

*As the constitutional authority charged with the management of local schools, the school board is accountable to district patrons through the electoral process and must be the final authority on local management decisions for expenditures, personnel, facilities, and programs.*

Our 2026 state resolution, adopted this past November, has similar language:

***Managing Schools***

***Local Control of Public Schools***

*Article 6, Section 5 of the Kansas Constitution directs that "Local public schools under the general supervision of the state board of education shall be maintained, developed and operated under locally elected boards."*

- *We support management of public schools under locally elected boards of education, including setting curriculum, staffing, fiscal management, and policies, so that such schools can progress and meet State Board standards.*

Our 2,000 locally elected board members — who are the parents, grandparents, and loved ones of Kansas students -- are keenly aware of concerns about the impact of cell phone use on student achievement and student mental health. In fact, **as of July 2025 at least 240 Kansas school districts had implemented policies that regulate cell phone use during the school day.** Boards adopted the policies according to local norms and expectations. A state mandate that



potentially conflicts with these local policies would be confusing and disruptive and force local boards to divert time and attention that should be focused instead on local student needs.

KASB again urges the committee to decline to advance HB 2421; however, the following are some suggestions for potential amendments should the committee opt to move forward with the legislation:

- Strike “accredited” throughout. The resulting language would read: “Each board of education of a school district and governing authority of a nonpublic elementary or secondary school...” A law that would support student achievement and well-being should apply to all Kansas students.

#### **Regarding New Section 1:**

- Page 1, line 23: strike the words “securely locked or .” Insert a period after the word, “away” and strike the rest of that subsection. This suggested amendment would reduce the chances of centrally stored devices being damaged or destroyed by vandalism, accidents, or acts of God. At a minimum, the bill should be amended to relieve school boards of liability for potential damage or destruction of stored devices.
- In subsection A(i) beginning at the bottom of page 1 insert language allowing English language learners to use their phones as assistive devices.
- Page 2, line 3: insert, “during the normal hours of the school day” between the words “parent” and “through.”

**Regarding New Section 2**, we support the goal of ensuring that school staff do not use communication channels outside those communication platforms officially approved, controlled, and monitored by school districts, and accessible to parents, to communicate with students.

Unfortunately, this bill’s language in section 2 is fundamentally flawed, in several ways. As a result, we suggest striking section 2 from the bill in its entirety. We would be glad to work with committee members and the revisors to craft language that addresses the concerns at the heart of the proposed language in the bill.

Some of the concerns and inconsistencies we have identified include:



- School employees who are also parents would be banned from using social media with their own children;
- Page 2 beginning on Line 36: The definition of “social media platform” is so expansive that it would encompass nearly every digital tool school districts use, many of which are essential to timely and transparent communication and supportive of student learning. For example, Gmail is an “online website” **and** an “application” that “permits a person to become a registered user, establish an account or create a profile.” Once a person creates a Gmail account, the platform allows “the person to create, share and view user-generated content.” The same is true for ParentSquare, Google Classroom, and a multitude of other digital tools that have valid and important educational uses in classrooms. Under the bill’s definition, these essential tools would be prohibited.

**Regarding New Section 3**, we respectfully request that the committee strike New Section 3 from the bill. The impact of screen time on student achievement is certainly a concern for Kansas school board members and parents; however, this mandate also interferes with local control and would be better addressed by cooperation between the State Board of Education and local school districts.

Thank you, and I’ll stand for questions at the appropriate time.



*KASB is a non-profit service organization built on an abiding belief in Kansas public schools. We have put the needs of students and K-12 leaders first since 1917.*