

Proponent of SB 302

For the Senate Education Committee

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Good afternoon Chairwoman Erickson, members of the Senate Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 302. My name is Michael Chartier, and I am the Legislative Director with ExcelinEd in Action for the Midwest Region, and I am happy to be here in support of SB 302.

ExcelinEd in Action is excited that you are willing to take on this important piece of legislation. We have all witnessed, firsthand, the rise of smartphone usage, not only in our own lives, but in the lives of all young people. A technology that was once rare, is now in the hands of 5 year olds to 100 year olds.

When I was in high school, smartphones were not a thing. When I turned 16, my parents got me an old brick phone, that I had to pay 10 cents for a text message. Back then, most kids didn't text in class, there was no reason. You just talked to your friends. Ironically, the only time I ever received an, informal, detention, was when my mom called me in the middle of class. I ended up washing labware after school. Thankfully, I turned out fine.

The University of Michigan Medicine's CS Mott Children's Hospital conducted a [study](#) on student's cell phone use that found that on average, 97% of students use their phones during the school day. Additionally, they receive 237 notifications a day, with 25% of those occurring while at school. Most students spend 7-9 hours a day on their phones, which has very real implications both inside and outside the classroom.

Additional studies have shown that it takes 23 minutes on average to regain complete focus following an interruption. Something so small as checking a quick text or social media before walking into a class can lead to a student falling off track very quickly. Just a few of these distractions can cascade into a missed school day.

In terms of outcomes, the National Bureau of Economic Research just released findings that showed that in FL, where they have a bell-to-bell policy, test scores have significantly increased and unexcused absences have been significantly reduced. Additionally, a survey of more than 20,000 public school teachers, released last October,

links stricter cell phone policies to less in-class cell phone use and higher teacher satisfaction.

In a bit of irony, states that have implemented this policy have indicated noisier lunchrooms and hallways, a testament to the fact that students are interacting more with each other. And lastly, schools have reported lower incidence of bullying.

Looking across the country, more than 30 states have a policy that restricts cell phone use. Most states have policies that are bell-to-bell throughout the day, and then the others have policies regarding cell phone use during instructional time. In fact, your neighbors to the north and south, Oklahoma and Nebraska, both have bell to bell policies.

We support the bill and agree that the distracting harm of cell phones impacts students at all schools; however, we believe private schools should have broad authority to set their own procedures and policies.

I want to thank you for giving me the time to speak today. I urge you to support this bill. This bipartisan policy proposal is an important tool that will help the children of Kansas learn in a distraction-free environment. States from Vermont to Texas and from Oregon to Florida have enabled students to concentrate while in school, and Kansas has the opportunity be next. Thank you.