



**Oral Opponent Testimony on
SB 302, cell phone use during instructional time**

In

Senate Education Committee

By

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Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to SB 302. 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 SB 302; however, the following are some suggestions for potential amendments to New Section 1 should the committee opt to move forward with the legislation:

Page 1, line 10 and throughout the bill where the language occurs: strike “unaccredited.” The resulting language should 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.

Page 1, line 18: strike, “securely” and “from the student’s person in an inaccessible location.” This change would allow students access to their devices as directed by their IEPs or medical plans. It would also 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.

Strike lines 20-22 on Page 1. This provision would put school boards in the position of being responsible for loss or damage to devices should a student’s car be broken into.

Page 1, line 27-28: insert “individualized language plan” between “student” and “individualized education program.” This change would allow English language learners to use their phones as assistive devices.

Page 1, line 32: insert, “during instructional time” between the words “parent” and “through.”

Page 2, line 22: strike the word, “accredited” as per our recommendation above.

Regarding Section 2 of the bill, 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, SB 302’s language in section 2 is fundamentally flawed, in several ways—so much so that we struggle to suggest specific amendments to ensure that the bill addresses the kinds of communications we believe its sponsors had in mind. 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 Lines 23-32 allow employees to privately and directly communicate with students on social media “for official school purposes”; yet the definition of “official school purposes” includes only “public, one-way” communications. And it specifically excludes “private communications, direct communications or two-way communications with any student.” The contradictions among the language in these sections makes interpreting the actual requirements of the bill quite difficult.

Page 2 Lines 39-43 and Page 3 Line 1, define “social media platform.” The definition is so expansive that it would encompass almost all digital tools school districts use. 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.

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.