

March 22, 2019

In support of SB 282

Dear Senator:

The Oregon state legislature will take an important step towards protecting children with the passage of SB 282. This bill would establish a basis for developing health and safety guidelines for the use of digital devices in schools, an area that is increasingly raising concerns and needs timely attention.

The dangers of overexposure to digital devices are just beginning to be defined and tracked. The national group, Parents Across America, of which I am a member, was motivated by the many concerns parents raised to us to gather and publish an extensive collection of research, information and opinion on the dangers of misuse and overuse of digital devices. Our work raises a number of serious concerns. (link: <http://parentsacrossamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/EdTechposition-paperfinal8-17-16.pdf>).

We learned that excessive screen time may:

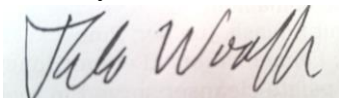
- interfere with children's brain development
- impact children's mental health
- undermine learning
- increase sitting time which can cause many physical problems
- negatively impact sleep
- contribute to screen addiction
- contribute to eyestrain and potential myopia, macular degeneration, and blindness
- expose children to excessive radiation
- encourage constant testing and data collection without adequately informing or obtaining permission from students or parents, undermining student privacy, and benefit corporations without improving education

As parents, we take full responsibility for the amount of time our children spend on devices at home, but we need the help of our state legislatures to address the growing use of digital devices and screen time in schools. Schools have been put under extreme pressure by commercial and corporate interests looking to sell their products and even extract private information about our children's lives and families. Districts trying to balance their budgets with fewer resources may see digital learning as a cheaper way to deliver instruction despite studies showing that students learn and grow much better with adult interaction.

Overall, we believe that schools, school districts, states and the federal government are requiring ever-increasing technology time with far too little oversight of the effects of these devices and programs on children's health, and even less monitoring of their academic effectiveness.

We strongly support SB 282 and urge you to vote yes to help protect our children from excessive screen time.

Thank you.



Julie Woestehoff

Past Interim Executive Director, Parents Across America