

I want to express my strong support for Senate Bills 281, 282 and 283 currently before the Senate Committee on Education.

I have been working with local parents and teachers to open up a conversation about these concerns but our concerns are repeatedly dismissed—most teachers and school leadership just shrug and say they're doing what they've been told to do. Administrators stonewall, more interested in protecting hardware and budgets and egos than in protecting our children. We parents have no ability to put controls on the school-issued devices, and so little communication from the schools about the program at all.

For starters, no one seems to be able to answer some very simple questions:

1. What are we getting, by using technology in schools, and especially a 1:1 iPad program? How does this make learning better? Just last night, my 5th grade son was frustrated with the mandate that he create a comic on his iPad in a program that is very hard to navigate. What happened to pen and paper? Why is he not allowed to draw his comic with his hands? This is just one story among so many.

2. What are we giving up, by swapping something for technology? Many parents I've talked to are concerned about social skills, for one thing. Kids "collaborate" online, yet are afraid to speak up in class. Roam the halls of our local high schools and they are eerily quiet—students are all tapping away on their phones, instead of talking to each other.

I could send you so many articles and websites and surveys, but what I suggest is this: go see for yourself. Talk to teachers. Talk to parents. Talk to students.

Then, I urge your strong support of this legislation as a solid first step in signaling to schools that this is important. It's time to pay attention.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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