



To: Members of the Board of Education  
From: Doug Larson  
Re: Policy Readings  
Date: November 7, 2018

Policy and Legal Services will present two First Readings during the next Board of Education meeting. A description of the policy identified is provided below.

Article X.C.3. Educator and Student Communications and Social Media

This policy needs updating and expanding. Appropriate communications are critical for educators, and more and more, these communications include using electronic communications and social media. Our policy should reflect the reality of educator-student communications. We have added provisions that describe appropriate communications regardless of the communication tools or platforms. We have also clarified accountability for those communications and appropriate monitoring.

Article IX.A.1.w. Employee Questions about Policy

Article II.E. Procedures for Making, Amending, and Repealing District Policies

We are currently working with OCR on some revisions to policies. One policy that was identified for updating is Article IX.A.1.w. Employee Questions about Policy. This policy inadvertently offers a separate means to resolve reports/complaints of discrimination or harassment. The policy, therefore, was eliminated and the content was shifted to Article II.E. Procedures for Making, Amending, and Repealing, District Policies. This move clarified the intent of the language. Also, the language was modified slightly to add clarity.

## Article X.C.3. Educator and Student Communications and Social Networking Media Policy

### A. Statement of Purpose

The Board of Education recognizes the potential pedagogical value, as well as potential hazards, of the myriad communication and social media tools ~~social networking~~ available. Educators are encouraged to incorporate such tools into student learning, but educators must maintain professionalism at all times. The following policy, therefore, is promulgated to protect students and personnel.

### B. Definitions

1. Social ~~networking~~ media, as used in this policy, ~~social networking means broadly includes any online or electronic applications used for communicating establishing, maintaining, posting to, or otherwise participating with individuals, groups of individuals, or the general public in an electronic community on websites, blogs, or through accounts on social networking sites.~~
2. School-related social ~~networking media community sites are an~~ employee created or maintained ~~websites or web based accounts and applications~~ whose members include students whom the employee knows primarily by reason of ~~the employee's~~ employment.
3. Student ~~is~~ an individual whose class has not graduated ~~or and who~~ is enrolled in a school, whether the school is traditional public, online, charter, or private.

### C. Student Communications

1. Employees are encouraged to actively and appropriately communicate with students to advance learning and academic success. Generally, communications should be transparent and, wherever possible, conducted in open forums. Educators shall avoid in-person communications conducted in confined or isolated environments out of sight of others. Further, the content of conversations shall remain professional in accordance with state laws, regulations, and District policies related to educator standards, particularly those standards articulating boundary violations.
2. Telephonic or electronic communications (e.g. via email, texting, and direct messaging on social media sites) pose particular challenges related to professionalism because such conversations often create expectations of some level of privacy or confidentiality. Educators shall have no such expectations when using devices or networks owned by the District, and depending on the circumstances, all communications with students may be discoverable regardless of the devices or networks used.
3. Consistent with state laws and regulations and with District policies, educators shall not solicit personal or sensitive information from students without parents/guardians' knowledge and consent unless a student's health and/or safety are at risk. Personal or sensitive information that is offered freely or spontaneously by students shall be

- managed professionally in accordance with statutes, regulations, and policies. In particular, information involving criminal conduct, abuse, or neglect shall be appropriate disclosed to law enforcement, Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), parents, administrators, counselors, social workers, and/or school psychologists.
4. Educators shall not attempt to restrict protected student communication related to the curriculum, school sponsored activities, or student communication that occurs during discretionary time. Protected student communications are generally expressions of personal belief or opinion but *do not* include communications that unreasonably interfere with order or discipline, threaten the well-being of persons or property, or violate concepts of civility or propriety appropriate to a school setting.
  5. Regardless of means or intentions, taking photographs or video of students for non-educational purposes, excessive contact, prolonged discussions of personal or intimate issues, harassing or discriminatory communication, abusive communication, profanity, crude or off-colored humor, communications regarding sex or sexuality outside of approved curriculum, any form of pornography or indecent content, grooming of any kind, or other similar communications with, toward, or about any student is prohibited.

D. Instructional Use of Social ~~Networking~~ Media ~~Sites~~

1. ~~School~~ Administrators are authorized to grant permission for the educational use of social ~~networking~~ media tools. An educator desiring to establish a school-related ~~networking-social media site or community in which~~with students ~~can participate~~shall propose the platform and tool ~~community~~to the administration with an explanation of the instructional purposes ~~of the community for which the social media will be used~~. An educator may proceed if the administrator gives written consent. Consent can be withdrawn at any time.
2. Educator proposals shall be resubmitted and reviewed annually.
3. Any school-related ~~site-social media~~ shall comply with all school and District policies. Profanity, obscenity, defamation, discrimination, harassment, hazing, retaliation, and bullying are not permitted.
4. Educators must comply with the state and federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Acts (FERPA) and other applicable state and federal laws, and may not post ~~student photos or~~ personally identifiable student information without prior written consent from the parent or legal guardian. Social media communications shall never include confidential information about other students or staff.
5. ~~Educators shall only allow students whose parent or guardian has given written permission to post on school-related sites.~~All social media between staff and students shall include or be reviewable by more than one adult (educator, administrator, parent, etc.).

6. Educators are responsible for ensuring that student posts on school-related sites are regularly monitored. Posts which violate laws or policies shall be removed immediately within a reasonable time frame and reported to administration. disciplinary action is taken.
7. Educators are responsible for all content on the educator's school related site, including posts by students, and must limit access to those students with parental permission to participate in the instructional use. Administrators shall be granted access and shall monitor the sites for compliance with this policy.

#### DE. Personal Social ~~Networking~~Media Use

1. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit employees from engaging in personal or private social media activity ~~networking by employees~~ acting outside of the scope of their employment and with personally owned equipment.
2. Employees who maintain personal social ~~networking~~ media accounts shall keep such accounts completely separate from employment-related accounts. With the exception of family members, shall not allow Granite School District employees shall not grant students ~~to access to personal accounts sites, excepting members of immediate family.~~ and shall not follow personal student accounts on social media sites.
3. Use of district owned equipment and internet access is monitored, and employees have no expectation of privacy in activities utilizing District owned equipment whether the use is on or off contract time.
4. Personally identifiable student information, to include photographs, continues to be subject to FERPA and shall not be included on personal sites.

#### EF. Violation

Violations of this policy constitute Improper Conduct for purposes of corrective discipline.

#### References

Utah FERPA, Utah Code §53E-9-203 et seq.

Curriculum Requirements, Utah Code §53G-10-202 et seq.

Utah Educator Standards, Utah Admin. Code R277-515

Teaching and Educational Leadership Standards Utah Admin. Code R277-530