

SUBJECT: SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (SNS)**Philosophy Statement**

To accommodate new communication paradigms and tools and remain at the forefront of preparing students for the future, educators and school districts must explore new and emerging technologies to supplement the range of services they currently offer to their respective "customers." "Customers" may include Board members, parents, students, teachers, staff, media, and the community at large. Among the newest tools available to educators and school districts are social networking sites (hereinafter referred to as SNS).

SNS have great potential to connect peoples across the globe and enhance communication; however, they are also more informal, less structured and still emerging. These guidelines are designed to establish some basic parameters on the creation and use of SNS for the School District and its personnel.

Definition of Social Networking Sites

Social networking sites are Web sites or online communities that connect people through social and other networks. Social networking sites, such as Facebook, MySpace, etc., often include a range of communication platforms including, but not limited to, creation of profiles, blogs, discussion boards, instant messaging and file sharing (sharing of text, photos, video, etc).

Establishing the District's Social Networking Site

- 1) The Superintendent will appoint staff to establish and maintain the initial District SNS (e.g., on Facebook) to the District's various "customers" and will monitor all of the content on this SNS.
- 2) The Superintendent shall have the exclusive and final authority to determine whether individual District buildings/facilities may initiate and maintain separate page(s) on the District's SNS.

Quality Control/Content Integrity

- 1) The District's official Web site will remain the primary source for all content. Any and all material on the District's SNS will supplement information that exists on the District's official Web site.
- 2) All the material/content that is entered/posted to the District's SNS (e.g., Facebook) account/page must include a link back to District's official Web site.

SUBJECT: SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (SNS) GUIDELINES (Cont'd.)

- 3) The District shall provide general training, including training on ethical, legal considerations and compliance with all applicable policies and regulations, for all personnel on use of the District's SNS.
- 4) District personnel may not obligate student participation in a public SNS for educational purposes. Closed systems such as Moodle, Course Management System, Ed Modo, etc. may be utilized provided equal student access is assured.

Ethical Standards/Legal Obligations for District Personnel

- 1) District personnel shall conduct themselves in the "virtual" or online world of SNS just as they would in all face-to-face human interactions, namely treating others with dignity and respect and observing all other established standards of professional conduct.
- 2) District personnel acknowledge and agree that when they create or post material on the District SNS they are in effect "content publishers" and as such are subject to a host of ethical and legal obligations including, but not limited to, compliance with the federal Digital Millennium Copyright Act.
- 3) The Superintendent/designee, in conjunction with the Technology Coordinator, shall monitor the District SNS to encourage users to contribute accurate, valuable and high-quality information on the District SNS. Protocols will be developed to govern the daily operation of District SNS, including the respective rights and responsibilities of the District and site users.
- 4) While mindful of employees' First Amendment free speech rights, District personnel who participate in social networking Web sites, including the District's SNS, shall not post any material which may result in the disruption of classroom or District activities. A District is entitled to make such a determination based on the facts surrounding the material as the District reasonably believes them to be.
- 5) Due to the evolving nature of these primarily social Web sites, District personnel should not use SNS to create or maintain personal relationships with students. For purposes of these guidelines, "personal relationships with students" shall mean any behavior or conduct that is unrelated to course work or official school matters. Such behavior may erode the professional authority and traditional roles of teacher and student within the School District and may violate District policies and/or regulations.
- 6) Access to social networking sites for personal use during the School District's workday is prohibited. However, access to the District's SNS for matters related to school business and/or educational activities may be permitted as authorized by the employee's supervisor.

SUBJECT: SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (SNS) GUIDELINES (Cont'd.)

Reporting Requirements

District personnel shall be required to report known or suspected violations of the District's SNS Guidelines to their Building Principal or Supervisor.

Disciplinary Sanctions

District personnel who violate any provision of the District's SNS guidelines shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures up to and including termination of employment in accordance with legal guidelines, District policy and regulations, and the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

Compliance with Other Applicable Policies and Regulations

District personnel who participate in social networking Web sites, including the District's SNS, shall be subject to all applicable District policies and regulations including, but not limited to, the following:

- 1) Confidentiality of Computerized Information;
- 2) School District Standards and Guidelines for Web Page Publishing;
- 3) Teacher Web Pages Including Web 2.0 Tools for Collaboration;
- 4) Code of Ethics for Board Members and All District Personnel;
- 5) Sexual Harassment of District Personnel;
- 6) Staff-Student Relations: Fraternalization;
- 7) Sexual Harassment of Students; and
- 8) Staff Use of Computerized Information Resources.