

Recommendations and Guidelines Regarding the Educational Applications of Social-Networking Technology Issued by the Arkansas Professional Licensure Standards Board

Revised February 27, 2015

Increasingly, educators are utilizing social-networking technology tools for professional educational purposes. The Professional Licensure Standards Board (PLSB), in concert with the Arkansas Education Association, the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, and the Arkansas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, offers the following cautionary guidelines to assist educators in assuring that their usage of these tools is consistent with the spirit and intent of the Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators.

- 1) Prior to establishing professional social media accounts, a written explanation of the purpose of the account should be provided to district level administrators for approval. Professional use of social media should be approved by a district-level administrator, or his or her designee.
- 2) If Districts approve the use of professional social media accounts, parents/guardians should be notified of the purpose and provided an opportunity to “opt out.”
- 3) E-mail and/or social media tools and accounts should be kept separate.
 - A. Professional accounts should be created and maintained separately for student and/or parent interaction and communications. An authorized administrator or his or her designee should regularly monitor professional accounts and have full rights to modify the accounts.
 - B. Personal accounts should be for personal use only. School personnel should not add students and/or parents as “friends” or “associates” to personal accounts.
- 4) Use of social media during business/school hours should be on professional accounts and for professional or educational use only.
- 5) Digital correspondence between school personnel, students, or parents should be limited to professional and educational purposes only, and be conducted at appropriate times.
- 6) Images, audio, or videos of any school activities or students should not be digitally transmitted or streamed without prior written parental consent and/or must adhere to local district policies.
- 7) District policies should encourage personnel to report inappropriate use of digital and/or social media to appropriate district administrators. Possible ethics violations may be reported to the PLSB utilizing the “Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators Allegation of Violation” form.
- 8) Districts should orient, educate, and/or provide guidance to students, parents, and staff regarding legal, safe, and ethical use of social media.

The PLSB has sponsored two courses now available on the ArkansasIDEAS portal, Social Media Guidelines, Course ID: 1004205, and K-12 Cyber Citizenship/Leadership and Administration, Course ID: 1004218. These courses feature Frederick Lane, author of “Cybertraps for Educators” and “Cybertraps for the Young,” computer forensics expert, educational consultant, and speaker.