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Nevada Room



Policy Considerations for Social Networking

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Goals of Presentation

- o What is a social networking website?
 - (Hint: It is more than just Facebook!)
- o Who is using it?
- o Types of uses – the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly
- o Relevant laws and policies
- o Policy considerations



What is social networking?

- o “Social media”
 - Shares information
 - Interaction between users
 - Dynamic
 - Altered content by user
- o MySpace, Facebook, Google, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, LinkedIn, Digg, Nike, etc., etc., etc.



Who is using social media?

- o Students
- o Parents
- o Teachers/District employees
- o Board members
- o The District



Types of Uses – The Good

- Socialization
- Fosters creativity, self expression
- Site building; content creation
- Communications about assignments/class discussions
- Increased parental involvement
- Ease of communications with students and parents
- District communications
 - ◆ With the community
 - ◆ Within the District
- Employment recruitment



Types of Uses – The Bad

- Cyber-sullying
- Inappropriate language, content
- Instant access by students and parents
- Personal communications during school day



Types of Uses – The Ugly

- Cyberbullying/harassment sexting
- Threats/defamation
- Security Risks; Hacking
- Inappropriate relations between students and teachers
- Violations of laws



Relevant Laws and Policies

- Free Speech
- Search and Seizure
- FERPA
- CIPRA/E-Rate
- Broadband Data Improvement Act
- Electronic Communications Privacy Act
- Discrimination and Harassment (Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504)
- NM Anti-bullying
- Whistleblower acts
- Copyright/Intellectual Property
- Electronic Record Keeping/Retention
- IPRA
- Open Meetings Act
- Union Rights
- Student Discipline
- Use of District resources
- Other District policies related to electronic devices, internet, etc.
- Licensure requirements/ethics
- Child Abuse laws/policies



Relevant Laws and Policies

- o Other considerations
 - ◊ Off campus v. On Campus conduct
 - ◊ Where was the communication sent/received?
 - ◊ Who owns the device?
 - ◊ Evidence of other misconduct
 - Employee
 - Student
 - ◊ Assumption of liability
 - ◊ Enforcement challenges
 - ◊ Accessibility by all students?



Policy Options

- o Spectrum of options
 - ◊ Prohibition
 - Careful of over-broad, vague policies
 - ◊ Tolerance, but no policy
 - Address within scope of existing policies
 - ◊ Encouragement with clear guidelines



Policy Options

- Missouri
 - State law prohibiting teacher-student “friends” on Facebook
 - District now must create own policy
- Louisiana
 - State law requires districts to implement policies requiring documentation of every electronic interaction between teachers and students through a nonschool-issued device
- Texas
 - McKinney Independent School District policy that banned teach-student communication through text, email, social networking
 - Revised by focusing on professional code of ethics
- Utah
 - State Dept. of Ed. requires each school district to have a policy or plans to implement a policy that addresses teacher-student electronic communications
- Virginia
 - Board of Education's Guidelines for Preventing Sexual Abuse and Misconduct
 - Addresses policy guidance for district's regarding electronic communications between teachers and students



Policy Considerations

- Understand and identify social media and its uses
 - Whose conduct?
 - What devices?
 - What programs?
- Permitted uses v. prohibited uses
 - Is the prohibition too broad, vague?
 - What are the consequences of a permitted use?
- What are the District's IT capabilities?
- Relationship with existing policies
- Practical enforcement; creative discipline
- Understand a program or software's terms of use
- Education for employees, students, parents



Questions?

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