

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

Revised November 2020

Increasingly, educators are utilizing social-networking technology tools for professional educational purposes. The Professional Licensure Standards Board (PLSB) 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, consult an administrator or mentor teacher and district policies regarding the allowability and guidelines of such accounts. Documented district approval of professional social media pages or accounts is recommended.
2. Professional social media accounts or pages should be transparent. It is highly recommended that professional social media accounts or pages remain accessible to administration or the district designee. Administrators or the designee should regularly monitor professional accounts.
3. Parents/guardians shall be notified of the purpose of professional social media accounts or pages and written permission shall be obtained prior to including students on professional social media accounts or pages.
4. Personal and professional email and/or social media accounts or pages shall be kept separate. (Note: Please be mindful that information posted on “private” social media accounts or pages may still have an impact on your professional reputation.)
5. Use of social media during business/school hours should be on professional accounts and for professional or educational use only.
6. Digital correspondence between school personnel, students, or parents should be limited to professional and educational purposes only, and be conducted at appropriate times.
7. 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.
8. 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.

9. Districts should orient, educate, and/or provide guidance to students, parents, and staff regarding legal, safe, and ethical use of social media.
10. The PLSB **does not recommend** interactions with students and/or parents on personal social media accounts or pages. If interactions do occur on personal social media accounts or pages, be mindful of the following:
 - a. **Perception is everything.** What you post may be offensive or hurtful to those who are viewing it and may damage the professional relationships that you have with students, parents, and/or colleagues.
 - b. **Know your district policies.** Interacting with students on personal social media accounts or pages may violate your district's policies.
 - c. **Private is not always private.** Information may be taken off your personal social media accounts or pages and shared without your permission.

The PLSB has sponsored the following trainings available on the ArkansasIDEAS portal:

- TCC14435 Social Media Guidelines
- TCC14436 K-12 Cyber Citizenship/Leadership and Administration

These courses feature Frederick Lane, author of “Cybertraps for Educators” and “Cybertraps for the Young,” computer forensics expert, educational consultant, and speaker.