

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Series 200

POLICY TITLE BOARD MEMBER SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

No. 200.6

The board sees the value in promoting the excellent work and accomplishments of the district's students and staff. Social media is one of many effective communication tools that the district may utilize. Board members have been publicly elected to govern the district and accept a fiduciary responsibility. That responsibility means board members agree to always act in the best interests of the district.

All board members enjoy rights to freedom of speech under both the U.S. and Iowa Constitutions. As such, the district will not limit protected speech of any board members. Certain categories of speech are not protected and may be subject to regulation. The Supreme Court has recognized that the following categories of speech fall outside the protections of the First Amendment: obscenity, incitement, fighting words, true threats, speech integral to criminal conduct, and child pornography. Additionally, board members should be aware that protected speech can still subject individuals to legal liability. Only the Board President is designated as official spokesperson authorized to speak on behalf of the board. Any postings by Board Members about district related matter on their individual social media accounts shall not be considered official action of the district. Official statements of the district shall be made only on district social media accounts through the designated spokespersons of the district or the entire board speaking as a governing body.

The board as a whole and individual board members in their governance role have legal obligations to safeguard the privacy of information related to student and employee matters. Board members will refrain from posting or communicating on social media in a way that violates the district's obligation to protect the privacy of its students and employees.

Board members are uniquely positioned in the school community to be both accessible and responsive to community concerns about the effective governance of the district. As a result, the board will remember their obligations to safeguard student and employee privacy when responding to any social media posts or communications, even if the response is intended to correct information for the rest of the school community. Board members will direct concerned individuals to the appropriate district staff to address their inquiry or complaint in accordance with board policy.

Legal Reference: U.S. Const. Amend. I
Iowa Const. Art. I, sec. 7
Lindke v. Freed, 601 U.S. (2024)
20 U.S.C. 1417(c)
34 C.F.R. 99.3
Iowa Code §§ 21; 22

Cross Reference: 200.03 Responsibilities of the Board
902.01 News Media Relations

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