Policy 1114: District-Sponsored Social Media **Status:** ADOPTED

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CSBA NOTE: The following optional policy is for use by districts that have created an official district (i.e., district-sponsored) social media account. "Social media" is defined in the accompanying administrative regulation as an online platform for collaboration, interaction, or active participation, or that allows users to post content, including social networking sites such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, X/Twitter, SnapChat, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc.

District strategies for effective use of online social media may be incorporated into the district's comprehensive communications plan; see BP 1100 - Communication With The Public.

The Governing Board recognizes the value of social media to share district information with families and the community and promote community involvement and collaboration in district decisions. The purpose of any official district social media account shall be to further the district's vision and mission, to support student learning and staff professional development, and to enhance communication and engagement with students, families, staff, and community members. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the content posted by the district on an official district social media account is accessible to individuals with disabilities.

CSBA NOTE: To minimize liability to the district, it is important to clearly define the official social media accounts which the district sponsors and to specify the standards, guidelines, and protocols for their use. Board policies and administrative regulations do not apply to personal social media accounts that may be created by students, staff members, or other individuals which may sometimes include discussion of district-related issues but are not sponsored by the district.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop content guidelines and protocols for official district social media accounts to ensure public access, appropriate and responsible use, and compliance with law, board policy, and administrative regulation.

Guidelines for Content

CSBA NOTE: Social media platforms typically allow users to post or reply to content posted on users' accounts, which is or can be made viewable to other users and even the public. This may create a "limited public forum," which grants individuals certain freedom of speech rights and limits the district's ability to remove comments or posts. Any removal of content by the district should be based on viewpoint-neutral considerations to protect against possible legal challenges. This may include, but is not limited to, removing content that constitutes discrimination, harassment, or bullying, as specified in the accompanying administrative regulation, or that is unrelated to the purpose of the account. Additionally, in order to help maintain the district's ability to remove content, users should be informed of the purpose of the account(s) and the limited nature of the discussion. District staff should regularly monitor all such accounts so that materials are removed as permitted by law. See the accompanying administrative regulation for language regarding removal of posts and monitoring of accounts. It is recommended that districts consult CSBA's District and County Office of Education Legal Services or district legal counsel to ensure that any provisions related to removal of posts or discipline of students or staff are consistent with law.

Official district social media accounts shall be used only for their stated purposes and in a manner consistent with this policy and administrative regulation. This policy is not intended to create an open public forum or otherwise guarantee an individual's right to free speech on any of the official district social media accounts even if one or more features on the account that permit interaction with and between members of the public are enabled.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the limited purpose of official district social media accounts is clearly communicated to users. Each account shall contain a statement specifying the purposes of the account, that the account shall only be used for such purposes, and any other user expectations or conditions as specified in the accompanying administrative regulation.

Official district social media accounts may not contain content that is obscene, libelous, or so incites students as to create a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts on school premises, violation of school rules, or substantial disruption of the school's orderly operation.

CSBA NOTE: Staff and students who post prohibited content on official district social media accounts are subject to discipline in accordance with board policies and administrative regulations. Pursuant to Education Code 48900(r), a student may be subject to suspension or expulsion if the student engages in an act of bullying by means of an electronic act as defined in Education Code 32261; see AR 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process. Pursuant to Education Code 32261, an "electronic act" includes, but is not limited to, posts on a social networking site.

When staff and students misuse the district's technological resources, they also may be subject to cancellation of user privileges in accordance with the district's Acceptable Use Agreement; see BP/E 4040 - Employee Use of Technology and BP/E 6163.4 - Student Use of Technology.

Staff or students who post prohibited content or otherwise engage with an official district social media account in a manner that violates board policies and administrative regulations shall be subject to discipline in accordance with such applicable policies and regulations.

Users of official district social media accounts, and anyone who posts, replies, or otherwise leaves a digital footprint on an official district social media account, should be aware of the public nature and accessibility of social media and that such information posted or left on an official district social media account may be considered a public record subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act.

Privacy

To the extent practicable, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the privacy rights of students, parents/guardians, staff, Board members, and other individuals are protected on official district social media accounts.

As it pertains to the posting of student photographs and the privacy of telephone numbers, home addresses, and email addresses, official district social media accounts shall operate in accordance with Board Policy 1113 - District and School Websites.

Social media and other online platforms shall not be used by district employees to transmit confidential information about students, employees, or district operations.