Perceptions of Social Media Use by Idaho Educators: Information for Policy Development

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Bradley K. Wallace

Major Professor: Kathryn Canfield-Davis, Ph.D.
Committee Members: Paul Goldman, Ph.D.; Richard Bauscher, Ed.D.; Michael Kroth, Ph.D.
Department Administrator: Kathryn Canfield-Davis, Ph.D.

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Authorization to Submit Dissertation

This dissertation of Bradley K. Wallace, submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education with a Major in Education and titled "Perceptions of Social Media Use by Idaho Educators: Information for Policy Development," has been reviewed in final form. Permission, as indicated by the signatures and dates below, is now granted to submit final copies to the College of Graduate Studies for approval.

Major Professor: _____ Date: _____
                    Kathryn Canfield-Davis, Ph.D.

Committee Members: _____ Date: _____
                    Paul Goldman, Ph.D.

                   _____ Date: _____
                    Richard Bauscher, Ed.D.

                   _____ Date: _____
                    Michael Kroth , Ph.D.

Department
Administrator: _____ Date: _____
                    Kathryn Canfield-Davis, Ph.D.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to gather perceptions from Pre K-12 public school educators in Idaho regarding their social media use and their opinions about social media use policy. The results of the study were intended to provide educational leaders in Idaho with information to facilitate policy development or revision. A survey was designed using *Survey Monkey.* Survey items were developed during the literature review and piloted before hand. These items were categorized as social media use for education, social media policy development, and balance between administrative control and individual rights. The survey was distributed to large, medium, and small school districts from Northern, Central, and Southern Idaho. Five hundred and two people completed the survey in its entirety. Data was then organized and analyzed though the lens of each demographic allowing for comparisons to be made and patterns to be identified. The demographics included sample totals, geographical regions of Idaho divided into three areas (North, Central and South), the sizes of the districts that participated (Small, Medium and Large), grade level work assignments of participants (Elementary K-5, Middle School 6-8, High School 9-12, District Office Employees), and social media use by participants (those that use social media, those that use it sporadically, and those that did not use social media). Results should be applied as representation of the larger population of Idaho educators with caution. However, from those that participated in the study there were clear results of the distinct perceptions between digital natives and digital immigrants, the identified need for training, the tension that exists between administrative control and individual liberties, and perceptions of what should be included in a social media policy.

Keywords: Social Media in Education, Social Media Policy, Perceptions of Social Media, Policy Development, Twenty-First Century Education, Technology.

Acknowledgements

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my wife and my children.

Thank you for inspiring me to follow my goals and for being willing to make the necessary

sacrifices with me to accomplish them.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gather perceptions from Pre K-12 public school educators in Idaho regarding their social media use and their opinions about social media use policy. Merriam-Webster (2015) defines social media as "forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content." Further, social networking is defined by Merriam-Webster (2015) as the "creation and maintenance of personal and business relationships especially online." Examples of social media and social networking include sites such as YouTube, Skype, Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snap Chat, LinkedIn, Blogspot, and more.

This study provides educational leaders in Idaho with information that can possibly facilitate decisions of policy development or revision regarding social media use by school employees. Implementation of policy is more likely to be effective when perceptions of employees are understood and taken into account (Costello, Wachtel, & Wachtel, 2009, pp.49-53).

National, state, and local education reform is accelerating. In fact, the only constant in education is change. Why so much reform? The once industrialized world we lived in, and that our education system was built upon, may now be out of touch with the demands of the information age. A new set of skills is necessary in order to live, learn, and work in the 21st century (Brandt, 2010; Marzano & Heflebower, 2012; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

This new set of skills necessary for the 21st century is strongly influenced by technology. Richardson (2013) argues this "technological change is not additive; it is

ecological, which means, it changes everything" (p. 12). While our children pursue a growing array of interests and passions using technology outside of school, policymakers often narrow opportunities for learning inside of school by a restrictive focus. Technology provides the opportunity and responsibility not to ask how to do school better, but how to do it differently.

Social media is one of the powerful technological tools influencing 21st century education reform. "Individuals can learn anytime, anywhere, as long as they have access to the Web and, in turn, to other people with whom they can form groups" (Richardson, 2010, p. 289). Creating policy regarding social media use in education is essential for its effective use in curriculum and instruction. School districts have the responsibility to provide boundaries and guidelines through clear policy and procedure so teachers and students both feel comfortable with using social media for educational purposes. There are still many questions about the rights of both students and teachers in the world of social media (Hamblin & Barlett, 2013).

Background

American schools have conspicuously lost their lead in world rankings and may be failing to adapt to the culture of today and tomorrow (Lemke, 2010). The United States is behind in competition for educational achievement compared to other countries.

The high school graduation rate in the United States (70%) is now well behind that of countries such as Denmark (96%), Japan (93%), and even Poland (92%), and Italy (79%). For every 10 students who enter 8th grade, only seven graduate high school on time, and only 3 complete a postsecondary degree by age 26. (Marzano & Heflebower, 2012, p.6)

As a result, national pressure has been placed on educational leaders and educators to make changes in order to prepare students adequately for global competition in the 21st century. Marzano and Heflebower (2012) identify two reasons we need a new set of skills for the 21st century: the world is changing and will continue to change dramatically throughout the 21st century, and schools are not keeping up with the changes.

In answer to the call to prepare students for the 21st century, 36 states and the District of Colombia have adopted a set of national guidelines called the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Development of the CCSS has been, and continues to be, driven primarily by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). They received input from teachers, parents, school administrators, and experts from across the country. The standards were designed to be robust and relevant to the real world (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

Standards are a foundational piece in curriculum development. As a result, the CCSS and other reforms have caused educators to learn what the standards contain, how to teach the standards effectively, where the major shifts are from the old standards, preparing lessons or units addressing the standards, revisiting alignment issues, rewriting assessments, and wondering what new state assessments will look like. Across the nation, almost every educator teaching the CCSS standards, was beginning anew. Development and adoption on such a national scale has made some state's rights advocates uneasy, feeling a sense of submission of state power to federal agendas. Many states have pushed back and refused the standards.

Uneasiness about the CCSS is compounded not only by the new curriculum, but also by its technological demands on students. Students are to use technology and digital media strategically and capably. They will employ technology to enhance reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use. Students need to be able to acquire information online for achievement of a specific purpose. Students will understand strengths and weaknesses of different technological tools and effectively apply them for achievement of specific communication goals (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

Two companies, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), developed state standardized assessments designed to measure mastery of the CCSS. Idaho is specifically working with SBAC for their assessments. No paper assessments are available. All assessments are delivered using computers and demanding some level of fluency with technological tools (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, 2012).

As a result, classroom lessons are being revised or completely rewritten to meet the technology expectations of the CCSS. Classroom assessments are also being redesigned to parallel the technological delivery of the SBAC. Demands to use technology in education are approaching the unavoidable in both standards and assessments.

The standards have faced opposition. A political movement has been initiated and gained popularity through talk radio and other media outlets. Glen Beck, a conservative with multiple talk shows, was one of the first to set the spark and fan the flames of popularity. On his March 15, 2013 show, ironically called The Blaze, Mr. Beck attacked the common core initiative by warning America as to the dangers presented by it. He explained the standards

as dumbing down America's children. He claimed the group that developed the common core has ties to progressives and even extremist leftists and he described the common core as indoctrinating students with a liberal ideology (Beck, 2013). These oppositional comments had strong influence in several conservative red states, including Idaho.

Idaho and 21st Century Skills

In November of 2007 Idaho adopted the Common Core State Standards along with 44 other states. Soon after Glen Beck's accusations, emotionally charged groups started to form in opposition to the CCSS in Idaho. Worry about giving away state control of education to the federal government seemed the continual theme of the anti-CCSS groups. These groups established websites, blogs and Facebook pages to rally support and educate others on their stance. Examples include (http://usagainstcommoncore.blogspot.com/p/states-by-group-who-oppose-common-core.html, https://www.facebook.com/IdahoansAgainstCommonCore), and (http://www.idahoansagainstcommoncore.com). In response, Idaho's State Department of Education has created their own site to clarify what the common core will and will not do (https://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/ICS/). Also, the Idaho Department of Education decided to change the name of the standards from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to the Idaho Core Standards (ICS) to show local ownership and distance the state from any part of a national agenda.

State of Idaho Superintendent of Education at the time, Tom Luna, also pursued other reform efforts to prepare students for the 21st century. In 2011 Superintendent Luna championed a package of three laws, Propositions 1, 2 and 3, also known as Students Come First, which proposed sweeping changes to Idaho's education system. Specifically,

proposition 3 dealt with 21st century skills in technology and funding. It aimed at purchasing a laptop for every student and teacher in Idaho, requiring students to take 2 semesters of online classes in order to graduate, creation of a new formula to be used for allocating money to the objectives of the proposition, allowing school districts to employ up to ten percent fewer teachers than it gets money for and then be able to use the money for technology, and eliminating bonuses for teachers reaching master level experience on the pay scale (Cotterell, 2013).

Support for Propositions 1 and 2 was less than favorable, and Proposition 3 was no different. There was a resounding voice across Idaho in opposition to the Students Come First Legislation. "Voters in 37 of 44 counties rejected all three measures. Not one of Idaho's most populous counties voted for even one of the laws" (Idaho Statesman, 2012, para. 6).

Superintendent Luna pursued other, less sweeping, initiatives to promote development of 21st century skills in Idaho. A digital learning day, grant money for technology, awards for 21st century teachers, a movement to make every school building in Idaho a Wi-Fi hotspot, and a bring your own device (BYOD) policy mandate were a few initiatives displayed on the Idaho State Department of Education's website.

Relevant to this study, online schooling is becoming a more recognizable option for students in Idaho. Parents can choose from a variety of schools like Idaho Virtual Academy, Idaho Digital Learning Academy, isucceed, or K12 online schools. Students also have been given the option of gaining credits outside of the traditional school day through online classes, Khan Academy classes, or other online programs offered in specific school districts in Idaho.

Beyond this, schools across Idaho are naturally reforming to the lifestyle of the 21st century by applying for and receiving grants that are enhancing technology in Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade. Laptops, iPad's, Promethean boards, document readers, projectors, Google Chrome Books, and other devices are becoming more and more common. Training continues to become increasingly involved as school districts pay for technology coaches and other technological support staff for schools.

In conclusion, both national and local reform efforts are pushing to define, develop, and assess 21st century skills for the students of today and tomorrow. With so many changes in process, it is inevitable that new policies and procedures will need to be created or existing policies and procedures revised and implemented. Perceptions of teachers and administrators become a critical piece in the change process. They are key sources for correct and effective policy and procedure development, acceptance, and implementation. They can either embrace or resist the new changes, and their attitudes will influence the quality of outcomes. Motivations driving this work are guided by perceptions.

The Problem Statement

Among the issues being tackled in education reform are social media and other communication technologies that have become influential. The widespread popularity of social media, coupled with anytime access through mobile devices, continues to cause increased use by students and school employees alike. In tandem with social media platforms, electronic delivery of educational practices (teaching and assessment) are increasing in influence. Students are experiencing firsthand the powerful change social media and other technological advances are having on educational practices, policies and procedures.

Educational leaders are working to put boundaries and guidelines in place and to clearly identify best practices regarding social media use in education. Not surprisingly, school boards have had increased concerns with regards to use of social media by both educators and students (Nidiffer, 2010). Postings on social media sites can undermine the educational missions of school boards, which many believe is to teach tolerance and the fundamental values of habits and manners of civility. With the enhanced ability to communicate and the lack of privacy this new communication offers, educators are navigating uncharted territory.

> Concerns are grounded in three basic factors: 1) the sites are attracting many teens, some of whom are not making good choices. 2) Many parents are not paying attention to what their children are posting on the sites. 3) Sexual predators -- and likely other dangerous strangers -- are attracted to places where teens are not making good choices and adults are not paying attention. (Willard, 2012 pp. 1-2)

The ability of social media to penetrate such physical boundaries as classrooms and homes of students, has caused school administrators to regulate educators' private use of social media (Nidiffer, 2010). By the year, 2012 Matthews reported that at least 40 districts nationwide had adopted social media policies. In 2009, The Idaho Professional Standards Commission revised their *Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators* to include standards specific to the virtual world and digital devices. In June 2011, Pinellas County Florida School Board voted unanimously to block teachers from communicating with students via Facebook or Twitter, even about school-related matters (Toppo, 2011). Efforts

to provide boundaries regarding social media also extend into higher education. At Western Kentucky University a policy on Information Technology previously read:

> Communications on sites such as Facebook, etc. will not be actively policed; however, students should be aware that university officials could view the information posted on the Internet at any time. Accessible communications deemed inappropriate may lead to disciplinary action. (Maheed, 2012 p. 1)

In New York City, the Education Department recently released guidelines stating that teachers should maintain separate professional and personal Web pages. They may not e-mail, "friend" or otherwise communicate with students via the teachers' or students' personal pages. Teachers should use privacy settings to control access to their personal social media sites. They should have no expectation of privacy when using social media, because principals and other officials will be on the lookout for any "questionable" behavior (Chen, 2012; McGeehan, 2012). High moral standards expected from educators coupled with the continual contact they have with children, presents the likelihood of continued restriction of educators' speech on social media sites (Nidiffer, 2010).

Teachers have real fears regarding misuse or liabilities with social media in the educational setting and these fears keep them from implementing it into classroom lessons. In Idaho, *The Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators* (2019) does provide standards regarding social media use by teachers, but they lack the specificity that could be provided by a district social media policy. A district policy has the potential to provide the guidance and confidence to support teacher use. Many teachers want to use social media but are looking for training or permission by leadership (edWeb.net, IESD, Inc., MCH, Inc. & MMS Education, 2010). Social media does have the potential to add educational value.

Advantages in the classroom can include media literacy, digital citizenship, and student engagement. Several school districts have policies prohibiting cell phone use and/or blocking the use of social media, yet the ability to compete in the 21st century requires students to increase their skills with these same technological tools (Fisher & Frey, 2010).

A lack of boundaries, needed training on best practices, and the continual reach of social media use has created an environment where perceptions need to be understood in order to move forward. The perceptions of employees in education should impact implementation.

The necessity of teaching and developing professional and educational skills for the 21st century requires major change in the educational arena. Change is founded upon understanding and working on paradigm shifts. The significance of this study is to determine and understand the current perceptions regarding social media use in the educational context. Gathering and understanding current perceptions creates a powerful framework for educators to draw from in order to make successful decisions regarding social media best practices and policy development or revision.

Summary

Adaptation to the demands of the 21st century culture requires change in current policy or development of new policy. It also requires clear understanding and training on what effective teaching and learning of social media use looks like. Effective change or development necessitates understanding current perceptions. This understanding can inform training and professional development. Also, informed decisions can be made concerning policy, procedures, and implementation regarding the use of social media in education.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Literature about the topic of 21st century education is vast. However, research about educational technology is not well developed and has less depth and breadth than those on other topics in the field. Studies about the use of social media in education are limited most simply because its rapid expansion in such a short period of time. The pace of change has created a need for new policies to address social media use by educators. The review of literature, for this study, was organized as follows: social media use for educational purposes, social media policy development, and the balance between administrative control and individual liberties. This study sought to contribute to the literature in the field by gathering and analyzing perceptions Idaho educators have about social media use in the state's education system. This topic has not been well addressed by the previous research.

Social Media Use for Education

Social media use by educators for school has potential benefits. Cartner and Hallas (2017) argued that the global uptake of mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops, synonymous with web 2.0 social media, has opened up new possibilities for learning and teaching in higher education and workplace learning contexts. Some of the benefits include teaching students how to use social media as an essential 21st century skill, teaching students appropriate social media skills and etiquette, and using social media to increase their engagement.

A primary goal of education in the United States has always been the literacy of its pupils, but what does being literate mean for a 21st century student? Many scholars and studies argue that schools have a responsibility to revise what literacy means for today's and tomorrow's students (Prensky, 2013; Richardson, 2011, 2013 & Schmidt, 2013). The

widespread reach of social media uses and its continued growth has increased the pressure to determine what skills schools may need to include in curriculum and instruction in order to prepare students for a world where technology generally, and social media specifically, permeates professional and personal life. That using social media is an essential 21st century skill is reflected in research (Abe & Jordan, 2013; Boss, 2013; Fisher & Frey, 2010; Prensky, 2013; Richardson 2010 & 2011; West, 2012; & Young, 2012).

While more people have access to the Internet and other media than would have been imaginable even a few years ago, they do not necessarily possess the intellectual skills or predisposition to analyze and critically assess their relationship with these technologies or the information they encounter. More and more educators and their students have the potential to be manipulated by the media (Richardson, 2010). Too many believe that, if they see it on the internet, it must be true. They need to be able to evaluate and avoid off-target, incomplete, inconsistent, and perhaps even biased resources. There is also a need to learn and practice identifying principles of validity and reliability. Educators should be teaching the ability to identify primary and secondary sources and the roles each play in the learning process. This is especially true when seeking information independently without guidance. Educators themselves must develop the skills to understand whom students are connecting with through social media networks, webpages, blogs, or other technological tools. Schools must define what it means to be Web literate and to link students to authentic sources around the world and across the curriculum (Richardson, 2013).

What becomes critical to literacy is the ability to identify important problems, gather and critically evaluate relevant material from information networks, use this information to address central issues, and then clearly communicate findings to others. Problem-solving

methods are changing because of instant access to information and an unprecedented ability to collaborate. The effective citizen of the 21ˢᵗ century will be faced with the need to address complex problems and issues, and he or she will increasingly use the World Wide Web as a starting point (Johnson & Johnson, 2010; Marzano & Heflebower, 2012).

Some researchers agree that the most successful people in this century will be those who can acquire and use knowledge to develop and communicate creative combinations of ideas, applications and strategies to solve problems (Pearlman, 2010; Prensky, 2013 & Richardson, 2013). Cartner and Hallas (2017) shared that when students engage in real world inquiry utilizing social media to access information, they reduce their dependence on textbooks and teachers. Consequently, when teachers are no longer the source of all knowledge, their focus becomes the support of student learning. Additionally, helping students to learn to learn, examine and assess their own learning and thinking develops students' metacognitive abilities, which are part of a life-long learning skill set.

The use of social media in the day-to-day lives of students and educators will continue to grow. As a result, it can be expected that academically oriented social media use by both teachers and students will be the subject of many experiments in classrooms and schools. Today's students are growing up in a world of instant communication. The idea of writing and sending someone a letter may be a foreign, almost unknown, concept. The push to include social media in the redefinition of literacy for the 21ˢᵗ century includes reasoning that traditional literacy is boring to students (Prensky, 2013; Richardson, 2011, 2013 & Schmidt, 2013).

Another potential by-product of teachers using social media for education is to teach appropriate social media skills and etiquette. This is also referred to in literature as digital

citizenship. Instruction of digital citizenship is supported in federal law through the Children's Internet Protection Act (2001). This law, enacted by Congress in 2000 to address concerns about children's access to obscene or harmful content over the Internet, imposes certain requirements on schools or libraries that receive discounts for Internet access or internal connections through the E-rate program—a program that makes certain communications services and products more affordable for eligible schools and libraries. In 2012, requirements were revised to include any school district applying for E-Rate funding must show how they are actively teaching all students Internet safety and digital citizenship. The topics that must be covered are: Appropriate online behavior (building a positive digital footprint; respecting intellectual property), safety and privacy, and cyberbullying awareness and response (Federal Communications Commission, 2016).

It is beneficial for students, mostly who are already using social media, to be exposed to educators who use it as a model of appropriate use for students and redirect students when they may be approaching irresponsibility in their comments or other posts. For example, Cutler (2013) developed a lesson where students participated in a classroom discussion regarding former New York Congressman Anthony Weiner's sexting scandal as a part of a United States Government class. The students considered the ramifications of Weiner's actions and how the inappropriate use of Twitter ruined his political career and ultimately sent him to prison. Then students were required to apply what they learned by examining their own social media use. First, the students agreed to pause and think before posting anything online and to consider the permanence of the Internet. Then the class brainstormed possible guidelines for helping them make better personal choices regarding appropriateness when using social media. Students then used their smartphones to review

and evaluate their own recent postings and items they shared on Instagram using the

guidelines they brainstormed. Cutler (2013) shared

> I heard shrieks as some reexamined not only what others had posted, but also what
>
> images they had shared. For the most part, these students worried about scantily clad
>
> appearances. Others showed confidence in their use of Instagram to share images of
>
> smiling friends and family. My goal isn't to scare students away from using social
>
> media, which can be an extremely useful tool. I just want them to use it wisely
>
> (para. 5).

Claims of increased engagement may be the greatest potential benefit of educator use

of social media for education. Engagement requires teaching students with the tools they use

to teach themselves. Teaching students the same way teachers were taught even a decade

ago leaves students bored, frustrated, and disengaged. Boredom continues to be a leading

cause of high school dropout rates. Poor basic skills in reading, writing, and computation are

not the main reason for dropout rates; a lack of engagement is an even more important factor

(Marzano & Helflebower, 2012).

Bynum (2011) found engagement is critical in taking the education of school-age

children to the next level. West (2012) identified that teachers and administrators who use

social media breakdown boundaries between ages and disciplines. It finds and solidifies

interconnections. It builds collaboration. He notes that children today spend an enormous

amount of time, upwards of 40 or more hours per week for many of them, interacting with

social media. Social media by its very nature is engaging. If educators were to embrace this

new technology and find ways to integrate social media into the classroom, they might be

able to connect with students in the medium that they use every day (Prensky, 2013).

When educators use social media to build positive relationships, engagement can increase through higher levels of collaboration. This collaboration through social media allows students to use the teacher and each other to check facts, gain opinions or clarify perceptions. This is also true for school administrators who can develop higher levels of collaboration with parents and other stake holders. Handheld devices allow immediate sharing of important ideas and documents as well as providing a platform where participants can share thoughts, make recommendations, and react to one another's observations that enhance discourse. People from different schools or even different countries can come together and collaborate. Geographic separation can be overcome through social media, allowing for everyone to learn in connected ways (Bynum, 2011; Tarantino, McDonough & Hua, 2013).

For example, in Venosdale, MO one teacher invested in a project called KnowGlobe. Elementary aged students use Skype to regularly speak with students on other continents learning about time zones, cultural differences, global weather patterns, and education practices worldwide. During projects in class students are encouraged to seek out interviews from experts such as astronauts, space engineers, or Egyptologists through Twitter or Skype (Boss, 2013).

Abe and Jordan (2013) looked at teachers using social media to develop lessons for collaboration and engagement both in class and out of class. Teachers who used social media to develop out of class lessons provide students with new and exciting opportunities to connect in a manner that continues to provoke thought and discussion outside of the classroom setting. In a study by Nathan, MacGougan, & Shaffer (2014), a number of the student respondents felt that the use of social media in their courses effectively enhanced

their learning experience for various reasons, including greater enjoyment in learning, the facilitation of group projects and an increased number of tools to complete course projects. For example, assigning students an authentic question in class with no definite answer and then extending this assignment to out of class collaboration using social media to share resources, ideas, and opinions has the potential to engage students in critical thinking and intelligent argumentation. The students also can help in policing each other's resources as valid and reliable. The use of social media encourages students to interact with one another, with the teacher, and may increase engagement and interest in the course content. Dabbagh and Kitsantas (2012) described this out of class lesson as a Personal Learning Environment (PLE). They propose that PLE's integrate formal and informal learning so that students can engage in a self-regulated learning environment. Social media can serve to augment the delivery of course material and development of important intellectual skills.

Engagement by stakeholders' increases through social media as it provides for easy and instant communication (West, 2012). Grades, behavior issues, attendance, important calendar dates, emergencies, celebrations, and other important announcements have become routine communication through social media by schools. Students or parents who may have a question about school work after school hours can find solutions if social networking connections have been established. Another advantage for teachers is to see what students are thinking and discussing. This can be an enormous benefit helping teachers identify how to reach students effectively by gaining an understanding of their perceptions and what their interests include.

An example of this is found in a lesson designed by a teacher at High Tech Middle School in San Diego. The teacher created a lesson where students used Facebook to

personally identify with the elements in the periodic table. Students were asked to create a list of personal characteristics and then another list of characteristics of some of the elements from the periodic table. They were to compare the two lists and choose the element that displayed similar characteristics to their own personality. Then they were asked to establish a Facebook page for their element and "friend" other elements that were closely aligned to their own in characteristics (Lemke, 2010). The teacher was provided with valuable insight of how and what students viewed as characteristics of themselves and others.

In summary, educator use of social media networks for education potentially benefit students by building their 21st century skills, teaching responsible social media skills and etiquette, and increasing engagement.

Despite the growing use of social media and the potential benefits, there are also concerns. Some school districts have been resistant to this "challenge," meaning the negative impact social media can have as an educational tool. As with an advertisement for a newly found medicine, the list of side effects can be alarming. The most common risks for social media use for education noted in research include addiction, multi-tasking, and cyber-bullying (Baumeister & Tierney, 2011; Marzano & Heflebower 2012; Williamson, 2012; Hamblin & Bartlett, 2013).

Increased social media use, specifically in the classroom, may contribute to student disengagement. Students using social media may put off an assignment to check the various social media sites they frequent. In a study designed to measure willpower Wilhelm Hofmann (cited in Baumeister & Tierney, 2011) asked more than 200 men and women in Central Germany to wear beepers that went off at random intervals, seven times a day. The participants were prompted to report whether they were currently experiencing or had

experienced an addictive pull against their will testing their self-control or self-discipline. They received more than 10,000 reports from morning until midnight. An addictive pull turned out to be the norm, not the exception. Among the most commonly resisted desires were the urge to check e-mail and social-networking sites and surfing the Web. To ward off temptation people used various strategies. The most popular was to look for a distraction or to undertake a new activity, or simply toughing their way through it. Overall they succumbed to about a sixth of the temptations. They were relatively good at resisting most of the common desires. However, when they tried resisting the lure of social networking and the Web, they failed nearly half the time.

The addictive use of social media is often justified by comments claiming enhanced ability to multi-task. Multi-tasking is deceivingly spoken of in normal conversation as a valuable skill. Research clarifies the risks of multi-tasking and the fallacies surrounding it. Neuroscientists have found that the brain simply cannot effectively multitask, and there are long-term effects of continually asking it to do so (Marzano & Heflebower, 2012). When the brain switches between tasks, it has to complete two steps every time it switches: goal shifting and rule activation. The switching can cause performance on all tasks to deteriorate. Constant multitasking behavior actually impairs one's ability to concentrate, focus, and deal with distractions. High-levels of multitasking cause stress. Thus the brain seems to work better when implementing a single sustained task than when multitasking, despite most people's perception they are doing more and at a faster pace when they multitask (Marzano & Heflebower, 2012).

Successful and effective completion of complex tasks usually requires single tasking, an unbroken and unbothered focus. Such digital activities, as social media, encourage

multitasking and constant interaction. Today's students have grown so accustomed to multi-tasking and steady stimuli that the prospect of two hours alone focused on one task with no connectivity could cause severe boredom and be a highly unsatisfying experience. This inability to focus is a dangerous possible side effect from teacher use of social media for classroom lessons or learning. It can also be especially problematic for students who already struggle with impulse control (Bauerlein, 2011). Teachers encouraging social media use in the classroom may confront student engagement in off-task activities because of the addictive pull by social media and the distracting influence of multi-tasking.

Another growing concern inside and outside the classroom that can be compounded by social media use by educators is cyber bullying. It involves the use of technology to bully another person and can occur through the use of email, instant messaging or texting, blogs, postings on websites, or through social media. The most common definition of cyber bullying is that it involves repeated, unwanted aggressive behavior directed towards another individual over a period of time (Williamson, 2012). For example, in West Virginia a student created a webpage targeting a fellow student. The webpage was entitled SASH, an acronym meaning Students Against Sluts with Herpes. The student received five-day suspension, was kicked off the cheerleading squad, and received a ninety-day social suspension preventing participation in school social events based on the school's policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation or bullying. The parents, feeling the student's freedom of speech was violated filed a lawsuit. The court supported the school's assigned consequences with the reasoning that the intent of the website was to bully a classmate at school, and therefore, was disruptive to the learning environment (*Kowalski v. Berkeley County Sch.,* 2012). In Oregon a group of students tweeted about a teacher, saying the

teacher, a female, flirts with her students. The tweets could have had a lasting damage on the teacher's reputation and career. The school principal determined that the teacher was a victim of cyber bullying and suspended the students who tweeted or re-tweeted about the incident. Twenty students received that consequence (Fosmire, 2014).

Social media use by educators does have potential benefits as well as concerns. Some feel that increased training will help to mitigate concerns and increase the benefits. Bolat (2018) argued that it will be important for educators to accept the idea that social media networks can be used as an educational tool by today's teachers and future teacher candidates who will be the educators of the future. Cartner and Hallas (2017) demonstrated that a growing number of studies call for teachers to engage in professional development activities that will support the integration of mobile devices and social media into their teaching practice. They also recognized that some studies have found that technology-related professional development has not been successful with recent research focusing on two main issues: (1) professional development interventions tend to be predominantly technologically focused rather than pedagogically focused and (2) teachers are unlikely to change their conceptions of teaching despite engaging in professional development activities (p.2). When these issues are addressed in training teachers can change their perspectives and even their skills. After an effective training teachers indicated that they had become more open-minded about the possibilities of social media. Additionally, they found that after training educators who participated were thinking about teaching with educational technologies from a pedagogically focused perspective. They viewed themselves as agents of change in addressing their students' learning contexts, and they thought about how social media would be used by students to achieve their learning goals. Bolat (2018) believed that

it will be necessary to enable educators to use social media networks effectively in education and training processes through various training activities to be provided to them. By receiving the required training, teachers and teacher candidates can transform students' use of social media networks, which they use every day and spend a lot of time on, into an opportunity by enabling their effective use in education. Addressing the concerns presented by social media use he argued that teachers, however, must make their students aware of the risks that may be encountered in social media networks and the precautions that can be taken.

The use of social media for education impacts the classroom environment directly. Weighing benefits against concerns is an important task for educational leaders. Also, determining what type and how much training should be provided is important. Even though providing training in order to increase benefits and mitigate concerns can help, school districts will also need to develop policies and procedures to aid in determining when, where, and what kind of communication through social media is appropriate and inappropriate.

Social Media Policy Development

The possible dangers social media presents encourage thoughtful policy development for educator use. In many cases, social media's use near universality has already breached the barriers of faculty misuse prior to the establishment of clear policy or guidelines. In Florida, a high school teacher was allegedly using profane language and posting sexual images on his social media page where he had more than 100 friends who were students. The district had no official district policy against "friending" students online. The teacher was terminated but later reassigned due to the lack of a clear policy (Hawes, 2012). In Idaho,

a basketball coach and substitute teacher was removed from both positions after district officials became aware the coach/teacher had posted a picture on her social media page where her fiancé was touching her clothed chest. The coach/teacher had "friended" several students, parents, and community members online. The coach/teacher was reinstated to both positions and district officials were informed by the grievance panel of the need for "a social media policy to be adopted by the district" (Bryce, 2014, para. 6). Without clear boundaries and prior communication to all parties, inappropriate use cannot be recognized, taken to due process administrative hearings, and depending on the outcome, penalties dispensed.

Weeks and Discala (2013) argue that public school districts often react to the possible risks of social media by immediately blocking access to online social media tools. While considered a preventive measure to ensure student safety and limit district liability, this policy strips collaborating educators of opportunities to instruct students in using social media tools creatively and responsibly.

When approaching strategic policy development Anderson (2012) recommended following seven steps in order to determine the best approach for one's own community: (1) examine your school culture; (2) organize a team; (3) research other polices that have been established elsewhere; (4) draft your document and incorporate feedback; (5) make sure the school attorney and school board see the draft; (6) introduce the policy to the school community; and (7) review periodically. With a strategic plan, ideas and direction are organized, focused, and more effective.

After reviewing social media policies for educators in 30 traditional public school systems from the Midwestern United States, Rodesiler (2016) noted that common policies

include a clear definition of social media, support for educational uses of social media, and implications for misuse by school employees (p.293).

Nathan, MacGougan, and Shaffer (2014) stated that there is a need to create proactive, adaptive policies guiding the pedagogical use of social media. They argued that if we expect school graduates to be proficient and critical users of perpetually evolving social media technologies, we need to create learning environments that support the ethical, reflective and effective use of these tools. They studied the policies of thirteen institutions and they recommended: (1) clearly articulate why such a policy is critical; (2) provide a firm, clearly-articulated set of principles that the academic unit is willing to stand behind (e.g. respecting student privacy, adhering to accessibility guidelines, maintaining secure student records, etc.); (3) a succinct statement of any requirements related to social media use and a protocol for reporting if the requirements are not met; (4) a set of guiding questions to reflect on during the design of instructional materials and assignment descriptions and to be used in classroom discussions at the beginning of the term; (5) a concise list of resources for instructors and students to use to increase familiarity with institutional resources, legislation, and recent scholarship; (6) a set period of time after which the policy must be reviewed, updated and renewed (pp. 124-125)

Warnick, Bitters, and Falk (2016) reasoned that schools are justified in taking action against teachers when evidence emerges from social networking sites that teachers are (1) doing something that reflects badly on their strictly professional judgments and attitudes, (2) pursuing or contacting students in a way that makes the students uncomfortable, and of course (3) doing something that is illegal (p.771). Another point they made was that policies that ban teacher use of social networking are counter-productive. As long as teachers take

reasonable precautions to ensure that their online activities are not easily connected to students, schools, or their professional identities, they should be permitted a realm of privacy to express their individuality as human beings. If teachers are not engaged in harmful activities, open teacher involvement with social networking may provide productive educational possibilities. At the same time, educators must realize that like all online activity, social media cannot be totally "private."

A review of existing school social media policies from different areas of the country provides an opportunity for examining and learning from others' work. This study will review social media policies used by the San Diego Unified School District Communications Department (2013), the New York City Department of Education (2016), the Minnetonka Public Schools (2018) in Minnesota, and the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (2014). These exiting policies provide a good deal of practical insight for guiding policy development.

The policies from these districts differ in minor details but overall they follow a common format. First, the districts provided an explanation of the purpose of the policy. For example Minnetonka Public Schools (2018) "recognizes the value of teacher inquiry, investigation, and innovation using new technology tools to enhance the learning experience" (p. 1). The New York City Department of Education (2016) acknowledged that social media use by employees "can have both educational and professional benefits, including student success" (p. 1). Second, there is a clear definition set forth of what is considered social media. For example, New York's definition that includes "any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, Internet websites, Internet forums, and wikis" (New York

City Department of Education, 2016, p. 1). Third, clear expectations and procedures for professional use are established. It is not uncommon for these expectations to include guidance and procedures for social media use in a professional manner including authorization, foundation and PTA sites, use of the district logo, general district sites and accounts, sponsors and advertising, use of content disclaimers, and maintenance and monitoring responsibilities (San Diego Unified School District Communications Department, 2013). Fourth, expectations and guidelines of personal use are included. These guidelines set forth by different districts may differ in title, but are parallel in intent. They include limiting use during on-duty time, keeping work and personal accounts separated, understanding privacy or lack thereof, guidance on posting of student photographs, transparency and being honest about identity, guidance for maintaining a responsible online profile, guidance on the practice of "friending" students, and guidance on contacting students during off-duty hours (Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, 2014; San Diego Unified School District Communications Department, 2013; Madison School District 321, 2015; New York City Department of Education, 2016; Minnetonka Public Schools, 2018 & Coeur d'Alene School District 271, 2019). Towards the conclusion of each policy was a cautionary reminder of smart practice. For example, the San Diego Unified School District Communications Department (2013) policy states,

> Courts have held that off campus online communications may be connected enough to campus to result in either student or staff-member discipline. Online content can be spread in mere seconds to a mass audience, the District encourages employees to ask themselves before posting any information online whether they would be comfortable having this information printed in the newspaper alongside their photo.

If you would not bring it into the classroom, do not post it online! (p. 7)

In Idaho movement for creating social media policy has been and, as of this writing, is being developed in different districts across the state. Policy development is accelerated in Idaho's more populated areas. Boise Independent School District #1 (2017), West Ada School District #2 (2015), Pocatello/Chubbuck School District #25 (2015), Idaho Falls School District #91 (2018), Coeur d'Alene School District # 271 (2019), and Madison School District #321 (2015) all have developed policies and review them regularly. Rural districts have been working to establish employee social media policies. For example, in the Minidoka County School District, policy development was initiated in response to increasing liability issues faced by inappropriate teacher-student relationships occurring nationwide (Welch, 2010). The Shelley School District also started the process of creating an official social media policy in response to cyber bullying amongst students (Valla, 2013). The Melba School District began revisions of a policy to allow social media use in the classroom, seeing its use as an essential 21st century skill (AdvocateAnne, 2010). The results of this study, from this dissertation, can provide information to district leaders during the policy development that may be influential in creating an effective and informed policy.

Gaining knowledge of educator perceptions informs policy makers understanding as they develop and refine social media policy. Building administrators and teachers are most aware with what is actually happening in schools and are the front line that will actually have to implement and enforce policy. A policy that has teacher input, whether locally developed or based on data gathered statewide, will encourage greater acceptance by those whose behavior is governed by the policy as they have had representation in development.

Balance of Administrative Control and Individual Rights

When developing social media policy, it is important to recognize the tension between administrative control and individual liberties. This complexity has existed previously, though it is now being applied to the world of social media use. Does governance of a school educator's use of their personal social media use intrude upon their individual liberties?

Hendricks and Vasek (2016) raised that the issue of teachers' inappropriate or controversial use of social media amplified the need for school leaders to be cognizant of teachers' First Amendment free speech rights and the circumstances permitting them to investigate possible problems. In addition, school leaders must balance the competing goals of appropriate restriction with sufficient freedom that the educational benefits of social media are not unduly limited.

Historically, the legal system has used the Garcetti-Pickering Test to determine the balance for public employee's freedom of speech and governance of that speech by their employers. The test has two parts. First, the legal system must determine if the public employee has spoken as a citizen on a matter of public concern. Second, the legal system must determine whether the government entity had an adequate justification for treating the employee differently from any other member of the general public, the public concern of the employee must outweigh the public concern of the employer (Gauthier, 2015).

When school leaders are developing policy, understanding legal ramifications is important in order to create policies that can be effectively implemented and enforced. Can school officials discipline teachers or students for what they post on social media sites outside of school? Is it a violation of their freedom of speech? The Supreme Court has been

silent on the matter (Hamblin & Bartlett, 2013). Meanwhile, across the country, most

districts and schools try to apply the "Tinker test." In a landmark case, *Tinker v. Des Moines*

Independent Community School District (1969), three students were suspended for wearing

black armbands to school to protest the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War.

Learning in advance about the students' plans to protest, the school's administrators

instituted a rule that any students wearing such armbands to school would be suspended

until they returned without the armbands. In a ruling by the Supreme Court that has been

cited repeatedly in other legal cases, the court stated, "it can hardly be argued that either

students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the

schoolhouse gate" (as cited in Hamblin & Barlett, 2013, p. 45). As of 2013, judges have

continued to support First Amendment freedom of speech rights, provided that students'

behavior does not substantially disrupt the school day (Hamblin & Bartlett, 2013).

Hendricks and Vasek (2016) identified five court cases that policy makers need to be

aware of when trying to balance administrative control with individual liberties. The first

two are *Pickering v. Board of Education* (1968) and *Connick v. Myers* (1983). High school

teacher Marvin Pickering wrote a letter to the editor of a local newspaper criticizing the

board and superintendent for what he considered the disproportional allocation of funds

toward the school district's athletic programs at the expense of academic programs. The

school board terminated his employment. Pickering appealed, claiming the board's actions

violated his free speech rights guaranteed by the First Amendment. The Court flatly rejected

the argument that public school teachers relinquish their First Amendment free speech rights

as a condition of public sector employment.

In *Connick v. Myers* (1983), assistant district attorney Sheila Myers was transferred

to a different section of the office by the district attorney, Harry Connick. Myers opposed

the transfer and distributed a questionnaire to other employees in the district attorney's

office to solicit their views regarding the office transfer policy, office moral, the need for a

grievance committee, the level of confidence in supervisors, and the degree of pressure they

felt to work on the district attorney's political campaigns. Connick dismissed Myers for

insubordination. Myers filed suit alleging she was terminated due to speech that fell within

the parameters of First Amendment protection. The court employed the Pickering balancing

test and found Myers' questionnaire touched upon matters of public concern in only a most

limited sense; her survey was characterized as an employee grievance concerning internal

office policy, and Connick is not required to tolerate action which he reasonably believed

would disrupt the office, undermine his authority, and destroy close working relationships

(p.2-3).

Hendricks and Vasek (2016) explained that the combined effect of the Pickering

and Connick decisions creates a two prong test for public school teachers' free speech

challenges. To satisfy the threshold prong, the teacher must show that the offending speech

addresses a matter of public concern. The first prong being satisfied; the teacher must then

show that his or her free speech interests outweigh the school's efficiency in operations

interest (p.3).

Three more cases help in determining balance between administrative control and

individual liberties. In *Spnierman v. Hughes* (2008), Jeffery Spanierman, a high school

English teacher, opened a personal MySpace account and created a profile called "Mr.

Spiderman." Spanierman used his MySpace account to have casual conversations with

students. The site included pictures of students in close proximity to pictures of naked men

with inappropriate comments beneath the pictures. In addition, some of the banter between Spanierman and students included sexual innuendo. The school counselor found out and informed Spanierman that the content on his MySpace profile was not appropriate and suggested he restrict his off campus communications with students to educational topics delivered through the school email system. Spanierman voluntary deactivated his account but shortly thereafter created a new profile called "Apollo68." Another faculty member and multiple students informed the school counselor of the new profile page, which was nearly identical to the "Spiderman" profile. The counselor informed school officials, who declined to renew Spanierman's contract for the next school year. Spanierman contested his contract non-renewal in federal district court alleging that the dismissal was a result of expression protected by the First Amendment. The court dismissed the case explaining that it is reasonable to expect a teacher with supervisory authority over students, to maintain a professional, respectful association with those students. This does not mean that the teacher could not be friendly or humorous; however, the teacher communicated with students as if he were their peer, not their teacher. Such conduct could very well disrupt the learning atmosphere of a school, which sufficiently outweighs the value of the teacher's MySpace speech (p. 4-5).

In *Munroe v. Central Bucks School District* (2014), English teacher Natalie Munroe began a blog titled, *Where are we going, and why are we in this handbasket.* She blogged without using personal information, such as workplace or address, nor did she use her last name. The majority of Munroe's 84 blog posts, written over a one-year period, discussed personal matters such as her children, food and film preferences, and exercises classes. On a number of occasions, however, Munroe wrote about school issues, some of which included

disparaging comments about her students and their parents. Students discovered the blog, uncovered the teacher's identity, and circulated the disparaging comments through Facebook and other social media. Eventually, the content of the blog become common knowledge throughout the larger school community. The district argued that the offensive language used by Munroe to describe her students and their parents damaged relationships beyond repair, resulting in her suspension and ultimately her termination. Munroe filed suit, claiming her termination was an infringement upon her First Amendment free speech rights. In juxtaposing Munroe's speech with Pickering's, the court noted that Pickering restricted his speech to matters of public concern and avoided use of personally disparaging or inflammatory language, and while raising the ire of his superiors, Pickering's letter resulted in no discernable disruption to the operations of the school. The court concluded, in this case, Munroe's speech, in both effect and tone, was sufficiently disruptive so as to diminish any legitimate interest in its expression, and thus her expression was not protected (p. 5).

In *Land v. L'Anse Creuse Public School Board of Education* (2010), Anna Land, a middle school teacher in a Michigan school district, attended a combined bachelor - bachelorette party in the summer of 2005. During the course of the festivities, Land, in a presumptive attempt at levity, simulated the act of fellatio on a male mannequin. Unbeknownst to Land, she was photographed and the pictures were posted on a social networking site. Two years later students became aware of the salacious photos and began to circulate them. Even though the social networking site immediately deleted the photographs at Land's request, the school district terminated her employment. A hearing before an administrative law judge resulted in a finding for the district; however, the State Tenure Commission subsequently overturned that decision. The commission was sympathetic to

Land's argument against the dismissal since two years had passed, the action was not illegal, and was not associated with Land's duties as a teacher. The Michigan appeals court, in upholding the commission's decision, ruled that the district failed to establish that the negative publicity resulting from Land's behavior was fatal to her effectiveness as a teacher (p. 6).

Hendricks and Vasek (2016) summarized the review of these 5 cases with the suggestion that educational leaders consider following three questions as a framework for determining when administrators should respond to inappropriate or controversial teacher expression delivered through personal social media accounts or devices while off-duty:

(1) Was the inappropriate or controversial content directed toward students or other members of the school community?

(2) If the offensive content was not intended for members of the school community, did the teacher approve of the posting and carelessly disregard the possibility that students or other members of the school community would gain access?

(3) If the response to questions one or two is affirmative, does the content suggest a breach of the state's educators' code of ethics or negatively impact the teacher's ability to perform his or her responsibilities effectively (p.8).

A mistake often made appearing in the previous cases discussed is the misinterpretation of privacy when using social media. An individual logs-in and engages in networking in a private setting. Even though someone may participate intimately, they are not alone; others are watching and participating from their own individual settings. Independent engagement in social networking may create a false sense of privacy, which in turn, may contribute to a participant posting very personal or inappropriate information to

the public. Both teachers and students are subject to this misinterpretation. This can be especially problematic when occurring as a part of a lesson during the school day.

The false sense of privacy felt by individuals using social has led to numerous court cases surrounding teacher misconduct. In New Jersey a teacher lost their job after a post, "I'm not a teacher-I'm a warden for future criminals" (Aziz, 2011, para. 2). A Brooklyn teacher was involved in school discipline after hearing about a Harlem student who drowned on a class trip to the beach and posted on their "private" page "I'm thinking the beach is a good trip for my class. I hate their guts" (Pleshaw, 2011, para. 4). A student teacher was dismissed from his assignment after a negative post about his supervisor and posts of images of himself drinking. Unable to finish his student teaching, the student had to switch majors during senior year (*Snyder v. Millersville University et al.*, 2007). This misinterpretation of private discourse can have career ending consequences for educators. Venting about students, supervisors, or colleagues, or posting something that could possibly be considered unethical are just a few examples. Educators' privacy and freedom of speech on social media sites necessitate caution (Hamblin & Bartlett, 2013).

Summary

A review of literature reveals that social media use continues to increase and cannot be ignored by school systems. Use has become so common that it has probably changed the type of skills needed for living and working in the 21st century, demanding a re-examination of what being literate means. Taking the steps to involve social media use in educational practice does have benefits; however, there are also possible negative effects if policies and guidelines are not established to provide definitions and norms for social media use by educators. A balance of social media use allowing for skill development but also teaching

digital responsibility is necessary. This balance requires clear policies and guidelines for educators. Some districts, as referenced previously, have demonstrated what these policies and guidelines should look like.

Chapter 3: Methods

This study gathered perceptions from Idaho public school employees about social media use by educators. The purpose was to provide information for educational leaders, helping improve policy development regarding social media use. The methods used to prepare survey instruments, collect and analyze data information are based on standard procedures in the field (Gray, Thomas, & Lewis, 2010; Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009; Parker, Bianchi, & Cheah, 2008; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008; Weirsma & Jurs, 2005; Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Creswell, 2002; Moursund & Bielefeldt, 1999). In this chapter, the survey design and the data analysis strategy are presented in turn.

Sampling Design

The population for the study was drawn from 115 public and charter school districts in Idaho serving approximately 307,416 students and employing about 1,337 administrators and 19,630 teachers. The largest school districts have an enrollment between 8,000 to 40,000 students. This includes 8 school districts that only make up 6% of the total number of school districts in the state but serve approximately half (47%) of the entire student population. There are 46 medium sized school districts that have between 1,000 to 7,999 students enrolled and make up 40% of the total number of districts in the state, and there are 61 small districts serving from below 70 students to 999 students that make up the majority, 54%, of the school districts in the state (Idaho Education News, 2019).

Because the nature of web-based surveys (or any surveys not utilizing a captive population) generally results in a low response rate, traditional formulas for calculating sample size may not apply (Creative Research Systems, 2012). Parker, et al. (2008) make the point that a survey should require at least an 80% participation rate, but also recognize that this is extremely difficult, usually impossible, despite best efforts in the current climate.

Balance can be maintained by sampling a smaller percentage but highly representative population of the sample demographics (Dillman, et. al. 2009, p. 1). As a result, the sampling strategy included a focus on sampling a representative demographic that could represent Idaho school districts as a whole.

An electronic questionnaire, or survey, was chosen to meet the project's goals. Survey research was chosen because it is the most commonly used tool for gathering a sample from a population in order to generalize to the larger population (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009) share that for almost a century, surveys have been a remarkable tool for learning about people's perceptions. They continue explaining the benefits by describing surveys as allowing for the characteristics of millions of people to be estimated with confidence by collecting information from only a few hundred or thousand respondents. Both of these points were in alignment with the goals of this study (p.1).

In order to gather a sample from the population, possible participating school districts were divided into 3 regions as shown in Appendix A. The regions included Northern, Central, and Southern Idaho. The Northern region was made up of 10 counties and 37 school districts. The Central region, 15 counties and 57 school districts. The Southern region, 19 counties and 59 school districts. The survey was distributed to every large, medium, and small school district from Northern, Central and Southern Idaho with the hope that at least 500 participants would respond.

In order to enhance participation, requests were addressed directly to all public school superintendents through their work emails. The approach to involve these educational leaders included a description of the study, researcher qualifications including status as an

Idaho principal, and discussion of the potential usefulness of the survey results for the evolution of social media policy at the state and local level. The request to participate assured these leaders that the study was approved by the University of Idaho Institutional Review Board, was completely anonymous, and would take staff less than 15 minutes to complete.

Superintendents were assured that study results would be released in a form that made it impossible to identify districts or individual respondents. These educational leaders were sent a link to the study for examination. Finally, the superintendents participating were asked to use district email, assuring staff that he or she was aware of the study, and sending the *Survey Monkey* URL so staff could connect to the survey at their convenience. Requests coming from known educational supervisors are more likely to encourage participation than those coming from an unknown outside researcher (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005, p. 176). Two follow-up emails were sent to encourage those who did not participate and thank those who did (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005, p. 177).

Although there have been few surveys about educator use of social media that were located during the literature review, published research about the use of technology in schools has frequently used surveys. Gray et al. (2010) collected a series of surveys over a period of years (1994-2005) to determine access and use of technology in public elementary and secondary schools across the United States. Moursund and Bielefeldt (1999) published a national survey of American schools, colleges, and departments of education to gather perceptions about teacher-training institutions. Parker, et al (2008) conducted a web-based survey gathering perceptions of technology and its effects on classroom dynamics such as student attendance, participation, and student learning. Wattam, et al. (2012) performed a

study, in which this researcher participated, seeking perceptions of pre-service teachers, who had not yet been employed by schools, and pre-service administrators regarding social media use in schools through a web-based survey. The latter also used a survey for gathering perceptions of education trainees in Idaho and Washington Universities.

Construction of the survey questions and piloting the survey were important steps in developing a final product. Creswell (2002) suggested including questions that are personal, attitudinal, and behavioral, sensitive, and closed- and open-ended. This survey followed this guidance with questions designed to measure perceptions, approaching sensitive issues surrounding social media use in schools, and using both closed- and open-ended questions to do so. For example, the first 21 questions used were closed-ended. Specifically, questions 1 to 5 were demographic including age, size of the participants' district, the grade level(s) they work with, and the region from Idaho where they work. Questions 6 to 11 gathered information about how often the participant uses social media. Questions 12 to 16 asked perceptions about the most frequent topics of social media use found in research. These topics include: the benefits of using social media verses the concerns (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012; Lemke, 2010); social media as a twenty-first century skill (Marzano & Heflebower, 2012; Brandt, 2010); social media used to increase engagement (Prensky, 2013; Richardson, 2013; Richardson, 2011); responsibilities of teaching digital citizenship (Rivotella, 2012; Williamson, 2012; Lenhart et al., 2011); and the need for training educators how to use social media in the classroom (Richardson, 2010; Moursund & Bielefeldt, 1999).

Questions 17 to 20 were designed to elicit views about what social media policy should and should not include as they were taken from a review of policies from four different districts already in place across the United States: The San Diego Unified School

District Communications Department (2013), the New York City Department of Education (2016), the Minnetonka Public Schools (2018) in Minnesota, and the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (2014). These districts already had a current social media policy from which general ideas can be taken and against which perceptions can be measured to inform policy development. There was also an opportunity where participants in the survey could add ideas of their own that were not provided as an option.

Questions 21 and 22 asked about governance and civil liberties (Hamblin & Barlett, 2013). Question 21 asked participants if school administrators should have the right to search a potential employee's personal social media account for inappropriate use before hiring them and question 22 asked if oversight by district policy of an employee's personal social media use is a violation of their freedom of speech. Question 22 was the only open-ended question in the survey giving respondents the chance to add comments. To see the survey in its entirety see Appendix B.

The Wattam et al. (2012) and Parker et al. (2008) surveys provided an excellent format for question construction specifically focused on measuring perceptions through web-distributed surveys that influenced the construction of this study. Wattam et al. (2012) sought to measure perceptions of social media use in schools by pre-service teachers and pre-service administrators from two separate universities. The web-based survey was offered to pre-service administrators at the University of Idaho (UI) and pre-service teachers at Central Washington University (CWU) during the spring and summer sessions of the 2012 school year. The survey was given to four different classes of pre-service administrators at UI and two separate classes of pre-service teachers at CWU. Forty-three pre-service administrators and 29 pre-service teachers completed the survey.

Parker, Bianchi, and Cheah (2008) sought to discover the perceptions of instructional uses of technology amongst college students and professors. They used a mixed method approach, but of significance is the web-based survey they constructed. The sample they wanted to survey included approximately 27,500 students and professors on a large college campus. The survey was distributed in sets of 5,000 and two follow-up emails were sent to encourage participation. The student survey included 78 questions and the professor survey included 75 questions regarding PowerPoint, WebCT, and other technologies. Results from both of these studies indicate that they were successful in determining perceptions for their intended purposes.

The survey draft was piloted to administrators and teachers in Idaho's Southern region in the spring 2013, but results were not tabulated. Revisions were made including wording, format and drop-down menus, menu options of questions, and eliminating questions that duplicate. It is this version, with the modifications mentioned, that was used for the dissertation research.

Analysis Plan

The sampling plan presented sought participation from public school employees working in large, medium, and small districts from Northern, Central and Southern Idaho. The survey was distributed on April 29, 2015 and closed on June 10, 2015 allowing for 43 days to participate. There were 511 people who started the survey and 502 that completed the entire survey.

Data generated *by Survey Monkey* were directly downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet, to facilitate handling and analysis. Because of the nature of the survey, frequency distributions were most useful for communicating the state of educator opinion in

Idaho. Predictor variables used for analyzing and presenting the agree/disagree items (Questions 12 to 19 & 21) included comparisons by region, district size, employee assignment, respondent age, and frequency of social media use. An F-test was used to assess statistical significance. In addition, cross tabulations highlighted potential differences on the non-interval items (questions 1 to 11). Analysis of responses to question 22, the only open-ended question in the survey, required classification into categories. While most responses were brief, the minority of more thoughtful answers provided depth and detail about the range of opinions on this particular question. Standard procedures suggested by Trochim and Donnelly (2008) and Johnson and Christensen (2004) were used to carry out this task. The plan resulted in generalizations about the state of attitudes and opinion about social media in Idaho and, although this was not the intent of the study, it also provided some data concerning social media familiarity and frequency of use among the state's educators. The data analysis strategy for the open ended question was piloted with the previous survey of pre-service teachers and pre-service administrators.

Summary

The study of gathering perceptions about social media use in Idaho schools was based upon current best practices and provided a response meeting the goals of this study. The expectation was that the study would both further educational research and serve as an aid to educational leaders in the development of policy about social media use in schools by employees. The methods used for survey design and data analysis. As stated in Chapter 1, the increasing use of social media for both personal and professional purposes by Pre K-12 public school employees in the state of Idaho requires a matching need for policy governing social media use in the educational setting. The purpose of this study was to gather

perceptions from employees of Idaho public school districts grades Pre K-12 regarding their social media use. The results will hopefully be helpful in policy development for either district or state educational leadership.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter is organized by first examining participation. Did the study gather a diverse enough sample to be able to generalize it to the larger population? The sequence of the analysis follows the research questions, based on three main categories: educator's perceptions of significant topics in social media research; their beliefs about the relationship between administrative control and personal rights; and identification by respondents of topics that should be included in a district or state social media policy. Following examination of participation, results of three main categories in which the study's questions can be divided has been analyzed. Furthermore, each of these categories was examined through the lens of specific demographics. These demographics include sample totals, the different geographical regions of Idaho, the sizes of the districts that participated, grade level work assignments of participants, and social media use by participants.

Participation Examined

Examining the demographics presented in Table 4.1, Northern Idaho had the lowest proportion of participants with 6%, Central Idaho with 20%, and Southern Idaho had the highest with 73%. These results make it difficult to claim that the sample represents Idaho as a whole because of the low numbers from Northern Idaho. In all tables, regions are broken out so that readers can see the response percentages from Northern Idaho. Interpreting them must be done with caution. The other demographics, however, do suggest that the sample reasonably represents the population from districts of different sizes, different grade levels taught, social media use, and age.

The largest districts in Idaho represented approximately half (53%) of those who participated while medium size districts represented a third (31%) and small districts 16%.

The representation was possibly unbalanced because Northern Idaho has less populous and because the researcher had tighter networks in the Central and Southern portions of the state.

The majority of the participants were Pre K-Elementary (42%) and High School (31%) teachers. The lowest proportion of participants were those who work in the district office (10%). It is not surprising that Pre K-Elementary teachers had higher proportions of participation as they are generally better at responding to requests for participation. High School teachers may have higher percentages of participation as the use of social media in the professional setting is more common at the high school level. It is common for teachers at the high school level to be involved with Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and other social media sites for professional purposes.

Table 4.1

Demographics of Sample

		%	N
Sample Total		%	502
Regions	Northern	6	32
	Central	20	102
	Southern	73	368
Size of District	Large	53	266
	Medium	31	154
	Small	16	82
Grade Level	PreK-Elementary	42	213
	Middle School	23	114
	High School	31	158
	District Office	10	52
Social Media Use	Frequent Use	76	381
	Sporadic Use	13	62
	No Use	11	52
Age	30 and Younger	16	81
	31-40	21	101
	41-50	30	153
	51 and Older	33	167

As would be expected, the majority (76%) of the sample in the survey indicated they use social media on a frequent basis. Thirty-three percent of the sample was 51 and older, 30% was 41 to 50 and only 16% were 30 and younger. The lower percentage of participants 30 and younger may coincide with the reported teacher shortage or it may be that veteran teachers are more woke to the issues and therefore inclined to participate (García & Weiss, 2019).

There was some concern with participation that social media use within specific age ranges would affect response rates. The assumption was that older participants would be less familiar with social media because they do not use it as much as younger participants. Newberry 2019 reported that 45% of the total world population are using social networks and that 69% of adults in the United States use at least one social media site. In addition, 88% of 18 to 29 year olds use social media. Table 4.2 analyzed age ranges and frequency of social media use of participants of this study.

Table 4.2
Age and Frequency of Social Media Use

Demographics	Frequent Use	Sporadic Use	No Use	N
Sample Totals	58%	30%	12%	502
30 and Younger	75	16	9	81
31-40	69	16	15	101
41-50	58	26	16	153
51 and Older	41	48	11	167

As indicated in Table 4.2, the majority of the participants do use social media frequently, regardless of age. Frequency of social media use did decline with age, although not dramatically: 75% at ages 30 and younger down to 41% who aged 51 and older. Those who indicated they did not use social media were similar in percentage amongst age groups (9% to 16%), as expected. Similarity amongst age groups may tell us that approximately

12% of teachers, of all age ranges, are not using social media. Thus, a policy regarding social media use by school employees will not greatly affect their day-to-day work and life. The highest percentage of those that use social media only sporadically were those aged 51 and older. This matches the assumption that although older generations are using social media, they are not using it as frequently as the younger generations are.

Perceptions of Social Media Use for Education

Tables 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7 addressed whether and how teachers use social media as an educational tool. The specific items surveyed included: the benefits and concerns of social media use in education, social media as a part of a 21st century education, the responsibility of schools in teaching appropriate social media use, social media as an engagement tool, and the need for training of appropriate and effective uses of social media in education. This section presents results for each of these questions.

Table 4.3

Benefits of Social Media in the Educational Setting Outweigh Concerns

Demographics		Agree	Disagree	Undecided	N
Sample Totals		34%	30%	36%	502
Regions	Northern	22	40	38	32
	Central	34	31	35	102
	Southern	36	28	36	368
Size of District	Large	39	25	36	266
	Medium	27	38	35	154
	Small	30	33	37	82
Grade Level	PreK-Elementary	34	32	34	213
	Middle School	33	32	35	114
	High School	45	9	46	158
	District Office	44	21	35	52
Social Media Use	Frequent Use	40	23	37	381
	Sporadic Use	23	40	37	62
	No Use	8	60	32	52
Age	30 and Younger	44	20	36	81
	31-40	36	29	35	101
	41-50	52	20	28	153
	51 and Older	68	19	13	167

Results of the sample total, presented in Table 4.3, indicated that participants were divided in their beliefs about whether the benefits of using social media outweigh concerns about it. Thirty-four percent agreed, 30% disagreed, and 36% were undecided. Differences emerged with responses of geographical regions, the grade levels participants work with, and whether or not responders use social media themselves.

In Northern Idaho 40% disagreed, 38% were undecided, and 22% agreed that the benefits of using social media in the educational setting outweigh the concerns. This is most likely due to the impact of demographics of the participants in Northern Idaho such as age, social media use, grade level, size of the district, or a combination of these. Central and Southern Idaho split with similar percentages, though not exact, between agreement,

disagreement, and indecision. Balance by respondents between benefits and concerns showed that additional knowledge and guidelines are necessary before being definite on the survey question. These responses may indicate the need for both training and social media policy development.

Employees of High Schools and District Offices that participated were 44% and 45% in agreement. From there, only 9% of high school employees who participated disagreed and 46% were undecided. At the district office, 21% were in disagreement and 35% were undecided. These results relate to familiarity and reliance on social media for communicating with stakeholders. As stated before, it is common for high school and district office employees to communicate schedules, calendar events, and more through social media. Schools and the school district would have to develop new methods for communication without this benefit.

Forty percent of frequent users of social media thought the benefits outweighed the concerns, while just 23% of sporadic users agreed. Almost equal to those who agreed, 37% were undecided. Again, such a large percentage of those who were undecided demonstrates a lack of knowledge or training leading to indecision. The largest discrepancy was from respondents who indicated they did not use social media. Only 8% thought the benefits of using social media in educational settings outweighed their concerns and 60% disagreed. This is not surprising, as those who did not use social media would most likely not see the benefits of its use outweighing concerns. When looking at responses by age, 51 and older agreed with 68% and 41 to 50 with 52%. Possibly those who have both lived in a world with and without social media have a better understanding of the benefits of social media use.

Table 4.3 showed high levels of indecision. The respondents not knowing the exact benefits of social media in the educational setting beyond communication and notification explain this. It is probable that they have used social media in limited ways and primarily for personal tasks. This indecision pleads for knowledge and guidance that can be influenced through a social media policy.

The topic of 21st century skills has been widely researched and there is a great deal of literature surrounding it. What skills do students need to be successful? Is social media use one of them? The majority (72%) of the respondents agreed teaching students how to use social media was an important 21st century skill. Looking at Table 4, each demographic, looked at separately, also agreed with approximately 70% to 85%. The only exceptions to this were respondents who did not use social media and those who were 51 years and older. On the opposite end, High School educators agreed with 79%, only 1% disagreed, and 20% were undecided. This was the lowest percentage of disagreement. The highest level of agreement was from the age range 31 to 40 with 86%. All of these results were as expected, disagreement by older educators and those that did not use social media and agreement from younger educators and high school educators.

Table 4.4

Teaching Students How to Use Social Media is a Useful 21st Century Skill

Demographics		Agree	Disagree	Undecided	N
Sample Totals		72%	14%	14%	502
	Northern	75	9	16	32
Regions	Central	69	16	15	102
	Southern	70	15	15	368
	Large	73	13	14	266
Size of District	Medium	67	19	14	154
	Small	76	11	13	82
	PreK-Elementary	67	19	14	213
Grade Level	Middle School	74	14	12	114
	High School	79	1	20	158
	District Office	83	8	9	52
	Frequent Use	82	7	11	381
Social Media Use	Sporadic Use	69	15	16	62
	No Use	21	40	39	52
	30 and Younger	83	9	8	81
Age	31-40	86	9	5	101
	41-50	71	11	18	153
	51 and Older	59	24	17	167

The survey continued with this line of questioning, if students need to learn how to use social media because it is an important 21st century skill, then should schools be responsible for teaching appropriate social media skills and etiquette? The perceptions, shown in Table 4.5, had a sample total of 60% agreed, 25% disagreed, and 15% who were undecided. This is similar to responses to the previous question. Those who did not use social media did not see its importance for building 21st century skills. Actually, levels of disagreement in all demographics was nearly the same (approximately 20% to 30%) with this exception. As in the previous question, 73% of High School educators agreed and only 5% disagreed. Again, the results of this question were as expected.

Table 4.5

Schools Should be Responsible for Teaching Appropriate Social Media Skills and Etiquette

Demographics		Agree	Disagree	Undecided	N
Sample Totals		60%	25%	15%	502
	Northern	59	25	16	32
Regions	Central	64	22	14	102
	Southern	60	25	15	368
	Large	59	25	16	266
Size of District	Medium	64	23	13	154
	Small	57	28	15	82
	PreK-Elementary	60	26	14	213
Grade Level	Middle School	64	24	12	114
	High School	73	5	22	158
	District Office	69	19	12	52
	Frequent Use	63	24	13	381
Social Media Use	Sporadic Use	63	19	18	62
	No Use	35	35	30	52
	30 and Younger	52	31	17	81
Age	31-40	65	24	11	101
	41-50	63	19	18	153
	51 and Older	59	28	13	167

Student engagement is identified as a major ingredient in the recipe of learning and achievement (Marzano & Pickering, 2011; Danielson, 2013). Teachers, therefore, have put in large amounts of thought, time, and energy into creating, implementing, and revising lessons designed to grab and hold student attention. Can creating lessons involving social media be a tool that will engage today's digital natives? Results to this question are found in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Students Would be More Engaged in Learning if Lessons Involved Social Media Use

Demographics		Agree	Disagree	Undecided	N
Sample Totals		52%	21%	27%	502
Regions	Northern	44	9	47	32
	Central	59	21	20	102
	Southern	50	23	27	368
Size of District	Large	53	22	25	266
	Medium	55	22	23	154
	Small	43	17	40	82
Grade Level	PreK-Elementary	49	24	27	213
	Middle School	53	25	22	114
	High School	62	2	36	158
	District Office	54	13	33	52
Social Media Use	Frequent Use	58	18	24	381
	Sporadic Use	44	18	38	62
	No Use	12	52	36	52
Age	30 and Younger	82	9	9	81
	31-40	83	9	8	101
	41-50	71	10	19	153
	51 and Older	59	24	17	167

Just over half of the respondents felt students would be more engaged if social media was used in lessons while the other half was split between disagreement (21%) and indecision (27%). The highest demographics that agreed were high school teachers with 62% and those who frequently use social media with 58%. Again, this could be because of the increased student access and use of mobile devices in high schools. High school teachers can possibly see the benefit of harnessing and shifting the level of engagement that currently pulls students attention from their studies to social media on their mobile devices. Also, those who know this engagement first hand with their frequent use can also connect to the benefit. As could be assumed, the highest level of disagreement came from those who did not engage with social media themselves with 52%.

Table 4.7

Educators Need More Training Regarding Social Media Use in Education

Demographics		Agree	Disagree	Undecided	N
Sample Totals		81%	7%	12%	502
	Northern	88	6	6	32
Regions	Central	82	6	12	102
	Southern	80	8	12	368
	Large	80	7	13	266
Size of District	Medium	81	8	11	154
	Small	83	6	11	82
	PreK-Elementary	78	8	14	213
Grade Level	Middle School	86	7	7	114
	High School	86	2	12	158
	District Office	90	2	8	52
Social Media Use	Frequent Use	83	6	11	381
	Sporadic Use	82	6	12	62
	No Use	62	15	23	52
	30 and Younger	73	7	20	81
Age	31-40	87	7	6	101
	41-50	85	4	11	153
	51 and Older	77	11	12	167

Finally, responses were strong with 81% agreeing, only 7% disagreeing, and 12% undecided that educators need more training regarding social media use in education. Table 4.7 showed that the majority of each demographic felt training was necessary. Even those who did not use social media agreed with 62%. This is not surprising as Table 4.3 previously showed the higher levels of indecision indicating a lack of knowledge or training when trying to decide if the benefits of social media outweigh the concerns. This study sought to help bring findings like this to light. The study also sought to help educational leaders take the next step and develop policy and guidelines that may lower the levels of indecision and give teachers the training through policy participants felt is necessary.

Perceptions of Administrative Control and Personal Rights

Oversight granted by school policy about what employees can and cannot do during their personal time, out of work, on social media is seen by many as a violation of their personal rights. A portion of the survey was dedicated to gathering perceptions from participants about the balance between administrative control and personal rights.

The survey asked if participants believed that school administrators should have the right to search a potential employee's social media account(s) for inappropriate use before hiring them, the results are shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8
The Right to Search a Potential Employees Social Media Account Before Hiring Them

Demographics		Agree	Disagree	Undecided	N
Sample Totals		38%	39%	23%	502
Regions	Northern	30	43	27	32
	Central	44	37	19	102
	Southern	37	39	24	368
Size of District	Large	38	39	23	266
	Medium	44	32	24	154
	Small	28	49	23	82
Grade Level	PreK-Elementary	40	41	19	213
	Middle School	33	43	24	114
	High School	43	24	33	158
	District Office	47	18	35	52
Social Media Use	Frequent Use	38	40	22	381
	Sporadic Use	45	32	23	62
	No Use	29	39	32	52
Age	30 and Younger	43	37	20	81
	31-40	42	26	32	101
	41-50	39	35	26	153
	51 and Older	29	47	24	167

Responses by the sample total were almost equal in agreement and disagreement with approximately a quarter of the participants who were undecided about the right for

schools to search the social media account(s) of a potential employee for inappropriate use. Looking at the demographics, the highest percentages of agreement came from the district office (47%) and those who were sporadic with their social media use (45%). The response by district office employees is no surprise as they are the ones who would most likely be searching a potential employee's social media use before hiring them. Those who sporadically use social media may be less concerned about their account being searched because of their infrequent use. However, both of these percentages are still less than half of the respondents in each demographic and therefore represent less than a majority. This is a complex question and is evident by the division of responses.

The survey then asked participants if they believed that a policy allowing oversight of an employee's social media account(s) is a violation of their freedom of speech rights. This was one of the only question to include an open-ended component. The results are displayed in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9

Is Oversight by Policy of Personal Social Media Account a Violation of Free Speech?

Demographics		Agree	Disagree	Undecided	N
Sample Totals		48%	38%	14%	502
Regions	Northern	48	31	21	32
	Central	51	36	13	102
	Southern	47	39	14	368
Size of District	Large	49	40	11	266
	Medium	47	38	15	154
	Small	44	44	12	82
Grade Level	PreK-Elementary	50	38	12	213
	Middle School	51	38	11	114
	High School	45	40	15	158
	District Office	29	56	15	52
Social Media Use	Frequent Use	47	40	13	381
	Sporadic Use	46	46	8	62
	No Use	52	36	12	52
Age	30 and Younger	48	25	27	81
	31-40	41	38	21	101
	41-50	51	33	16	153
	51 and Older	51	34	15	167

There was concern expressed from the sample about the oversight of personal use of social media. When looking at Table 4.9, the sample totals show approximately half (48%) in agreement 38% in disagreement, and 14% undecided that oversight granted through policy of an employee's personal social media account is a violation of the employee's freedom of speech rights. The highest percentage of agreement came from those who do not use social media (52%) and the lowest from district office employees (29%). Older educators were more likely to respond to the opportunity to comment on this question. Participants who agreed, shared similar comments as this middle aged elementary school educator who frequently uses social media wrote: "Yes, because the district cannot hold judgement of an employee's opinions and activities during their own time." An older, elementary educator, who did not use social media stated, "The district cannot assume

control over a person's activities during time that the district is not paying them for."

Another older respondent who works in the district office and frequently uses social media

shared, "personal use and professional use are two separate issues." A 51 and older middle

school educator who does not use social media summarized this perception,

> "district oversight can become a form of censorship and a violation of freedom of
>
> speech. An American citizen's rights do not end at the school-house door. School
>
> districts do not have the right to limit a citizen's freedom of speech. If they are
>
> allowed to do this, where do we draw the line? Can districts prohibit employees from
>
> writing letters to the editor, or writing books, or appearing on the radio or TV?
>
> Having said that, rights come with responsibilities. It's a two-way street; people have
>
> a responsibility to exercise discretion when expressing themselves. They do not have
>
> a right to impugn the reputation of the district."

Approximately half of every demographic, except employees at the district office,

were in agreement that oversight by school policy of an educators personal social media

account is a violation of an educators freedom of speech rights.

As stated, the highest disagreement came from employees at the district office with

56%. Comments indicating disagreement were similar to that of a younger high school

educator who does not use social media, "No. I don't think it is a violation. There are several

laws that govern language/behavior when it pertains to kids so why not do the same with

social media." Agreeing with this perception was a middle-aged high school educator who

frequently uses social media, "No - freedom of speech does not preclude the freedom of

others to judge your speech. If you want to control your audience, don't post it." A younger

high school educator who frequently uses social media shared the perception of

disagreement, "People should be responsible about what they post on personal social media. If they post something inappropriate then let the natural consequences fall." Other comments indicating disagreement included sentiments similar to this 41 to 50 year old district office employee who frequently uses social media, "No. District policy should cover the use of social media…, considering the fact that these postings can be public and reflect on the school district." Another participant, 30 and younger, high school educator who frequently uses social media, referred to a code of conduct and this expectation outweighing individual freedoms,

> "No. there is a code of conduct that the teachers should be living up to. Just like
> background checks are necessary, a person's social media will show a lot about the
> type of person they are and the values they will teach to students."

A 31 to 40 year old high school educator who does not use social media identified that there is a greater expectation when working with kids. This participant stated, "…when you have adults working with kids you play by a different set of rules." This was echoed by a 30 and younger high school educator who frequently uses social media with the response, "…this is a case of a greater good outweighing individual rights." A younger high school educator who frequently uses social media addressed digital presence as part of who you are, "Social media is our digital being. It represents us and who we work for. Just as we are role models in life, we should be role models online." Looking closer at the demographics there was not one area that was under 30% in disagreement.

Relatively few participants conveyed indecision. Those who communicated they were undecided did so with a few different comments. Some simply stated "undecided" or "I don't know." In some cases the participants shared a "yes and no" response indicating

difficulty deciding. Some participants were obviously torn, made evident with answers similar to the response by this middle-aged high school educator who frequently uses social media, "Yes and No. We should have the right to a personal life however we have a unique career that puts us at more risk of lawsuits due to interaction with minors." A separate participant, 30 and younger elementary educator who sporadically uses social media referred to ethics with the comment, "I am undecided. To me it's a matter of ethics, and how to use social media discretely to still allow the employee to maintain a personal life, but set guidelines on the proper ethics of certain aspects that blend into your job in education."

In summary, approximately half of the participants felt that administrative control granted through policy of a school employee's social media use is a violation of freedom of speech rights. The other half of the participants were split, with a heavier portion sharing their perception of disagreement of infringement on freedom of speech rights (38%) and the lighter portion undecided with such an emotionally charged and complex question (14%).

Perceptions of What to Include in Policy

The primary purpose of this study was to provide educational leadership with tools and guidance for facilitating policy development or revision regarding social media use by school employees. A portion of the survey goes right to the heart of that purpose. Participants chose from a list of common ideas or themes found in existing school district social media policies from around the country. These responses were calculated into percentages. Participants were also provided the opportunity to add other ideas that were not included as one of the themes provided. Table 4.10 presents a summary of responses, but does not include the original ideas provided by participants.

Table 4.10

What to Include in Social Media Policy

Demographics		Keeping professional and personal accounts separate.	Guidelines for professional use and disciplinary procedures for misuse.	Use during on-duty time.	"Friending" of students.	Communication with students.	Understanding differences of public and private.	Appropriate and inappropriate posts.	Definition of what Social Media is and is not.	Expectation of a responsible online presence.	Guidelines for posting of photos.	Transparency and honesty.	Guidelines for personal use and disciplinary action for misuse.	Use during off-duty time.	N
Sample Totals		84%	83%	82%	80%	79%	78%	73%	71%	66%	62%	49%	37%	30%	502
Regions	Northern	91	84	84	91	84	78	88	81	69	75	63	9	28	32
	Central	85	81	72	84	84	82	81	76	67	65	50	37	37	102
	Southern	83	84	82	80	79	78	77	71	65	60	47	39	29	368
Size of District	Large	82	85	85	80	77	78	77	71	66	60	48	39	29	266
	Medium	84	81	83	86	84	83	79	77	68	66	51	38	32	154
	Small	87	85	79	79	82	74	74	71	62	61	46	44	30	82
Grade Level	PreK-Elementary	87	85	85	83	83	80	79	76	70	63	49	38	29	213
	Middle School	100	94	95	97	97	91	90	96	81	80	56	54	36	114
	High School	98	100	99	98	98	94	96	84	78	72	59	48	35	158
	District Office	77	79	71	85	85	87	88	88	79	79	62	54	50	52
Social Media Use	Frequent Use	85	86	84	82	82	81	81	74	67	64	49	39	32	381
	Sporadic Use	84	85	89	85	82	82	79	69	66	56	47	42	24	62
	No Use	83	77	81	85	73	73	71	73	69	65	56	48	31	52
Age	30 and Younger	81	75	79	78	80	73	64	84	60	59	42	32	30	81
	31-40	82	86	79	84	78	78	68	79	65	61	45	70	38	101
	41-50	84	86	82	80	78	82	76	85	69	63	51	36	29	153
	51 and Older	86	83	85	79	79	77	75	84	66	63	66	42	28	167

Some items displayed have over 70% agreement, others moderate agreement and few with low agreement. Examination of responses from 70% to 100% demonstrate that keeping professional and personal accounts separate, establishing guidelines for professional use and disciplinary procedures for misuse, use during on-duty time, "friending" of students, communication with students, understanding differences between public and private accounts, and defining what social media is and is not are important ideas to be addressed in a social media policy being developed by educational leaders. Additionally, 69% and below of participants felt the themes of appropriate and inappropriate posts, expectations of a responsible online presence, guidelines for posting of photos, transparency and honesty online, guidelines for personal use and disciplinary action for misuse, and use during off-duty time need to be included in social media policy governing school employees.

Looking deeper, the least supported ideas to include in a social media policy for educators include administrative control over personal use (guidelines for personal use and disciplinary action for misuse 37% and guidelines for use during off-duty time 30%), a feeling mirrored earlier when examining the questions from the survey specifically addressing the balance between administrative control and individual liberties. Comparatively, the highest levels of support for this idea came from participants who work in a high school and at the district office (54%) and participants who were 31-40 years old (70%). Looking at the idea of use during off duty time, again the greatest level of support (50%) was from the district office and the lowest level of support (28%) came from Northern Idaho and participants who were 51 and older. Out of the 502 participants 20 offered up additional ideas to include in a social media policy for school district employees.

The responses can be classified into 3 main categories: 1) communication; 2) balance of administrative control and individual liberties; and 3) ethics.

Social media is a powerful and effective communication tool. Several schools have established social media sites to try and convey information as part of their regular routine. An older middle school educator who frequently uses social media recognized this, "Frankly, there is a lot of value in utilizing social media to communicate with families and students relative to academic information." A different respondent, who is a 31 to 40 year old elementary educator who does not use social media felt that policy should include not just "friending" of students or communication with students but should also include "friending" and communication with parents or other stakeholders. Another respondent, an older high school educator who frequently uses social media felt it was necessary to scale back the idea of social media use until students are more mature.

"Social media on a college level is very beneficial to student/professor communication. However, I certainly would not use social media with my elementary students or their parents." They continued, "I do believe that even at the high school level these children students need direct communication with their teacher. Face to face. There are too many variables for mishandling this type of media."

Concerns of balancing administrative control and individual liberties was shared from separate participants. A 31 to 40 year old elementary educator who does not use social media felt, "Freedom of expression or thought within social media should be defined and repercussions should be defined." Specifically, that idea was shared by a 31 to 40 year old middle school educator who frequently uses social media. "District policy on criticisms of

the district should be in place so expectations can be met." A feeling shared by a younger middle school educator who frequently uses social media summarizes the perception of preventing governance from robbing school employees of the personal freedoms allowed to others outside of education. "Teachers should be able to have a reasonable expectation of privacy, that is, the employer will stay out of our personal lives, when using social media for personal use outside of contract time."

Participants also felt that guidance regarding ethics was needed. Specifically, a 41 to 50 year old middle school educator who frequently uses social media stated,

> "we need training regarding social media use in the classroom, and a major part of
> that training needs to be ethics regarding social media use. School employees need to
> learn digital citizenship too, so they can imbed these standards through modeling and
> direct instruction. This needs to be part of a developed policy."

Another participant, 41 to 50 years old high school educator who frequently uses social media was more specific in stating that, "procedures for reporting abusive or suspicious posts or when someone shares something that may need to be reported for that individual's safety or well-being needs to be included. We know in schools, in our classrooms, we must report, but I feel that maybe we don't know or know how to do this when we see something on social media."

The development of a policy regarding social media use by school employees can be difficult. A 41 to 50 year old district office employee who sporadically uses social media shared, "I am unsure about what should and should not be in policy. This is a quickly evolving subject that is hard to manage by policy." Another older high school educator who did not use social media agreed, "I am just not sure how this grows in the future and if it is

growing; how do you develop a policy that can grow with it? I'm not sure you can." Another participant, 51 and older middle school educator who sporadically uses social media shared their doubts about having a policy, "I would hope that common sense would be the guide." Conversely, an older middle school educator who frequently uses social media shared the necessity of developing a policy, "we have seen through experience that people do not always act ethically or with common sense." Another participant, 31 to 40 year old high school educator who frequently uses social media shared, "It is not always or hardly ever the case that everyone will do the right thing, there are always outliers and we must develop policy for them, just like we have laws." A separate response from a middle-aged elementary educator who sporadically uses social media summed this idea up with, "so it seems the burden falls on the district to be very explicit."

The ideas highly supported by participants, those with lower support, and the addition of original ideas of what to include in social media policy for school employees provides clear information for educational leaders and a great platform to launch from for flying into social media policy development.

Summary

Examination of perceptions of using social media in education, perceptions of the balance between administrative control and individual liberties, and perceptions of what to include in a social policy provided clear results. The need for guidelines and training was found. This need can be met through the development of a social media policy. School leadership in Idaho should be able to use these results to inform this policy development addressing the existing increase in social communications and its facilitated access with so many tools and methods that have and are currently impacting school environments.

Chapter 5: Summary and Discussion

Over 1 billion people use the popular social media site Facebook at least once a day and over 1.5 billion use it at least once a month (Facebooknewsroom, 2016). Millions more use other social media platforms. The populated and growing use of social media has had an impact in the educational setting. As a result, school districts face, not only student, but also employee use and misuse of social media. The growing influence of social media on the school environment has required a corresponding response from educational leadership. Districts across the country have developed, are developing, or are revising policy regarding student and employee use of social media (San Diego Unified School District Communications Department, 2013; Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, 2014; New York City Department of Education, 2016; Minnetonka Public Schools, 2018).

This study provided the opportunity to highlight and analyze perceptions of educators in Idaho have about social media use. Hopefully it contributes useful information that adds to the current literature about social media use and policy development in education. The data from the study can be a resource for school leaders as they make decisions on development, revision, and implementation of school social media policy.

Review of Methodology

The study sought to survey a representative population of Idaho educators that resembles the demography of the state. The survey was sent to superintendents in every large, medium, and small school district from Northern, Central, and Southern Idaho with the hope that at least 500 participants would respond. A link to the survey was sent, via email, to the superintendents. The superintendents were asked to participate and then to send the survey link to their school district employees for participation. There were 511 people who started the survey and 502 who completed the survey in its entirety. The survey was

designed so that administrators could modify it if they desired to use it for their own study.

Discussion of Results

Results should be applied as representation of the larger population of Idaho educators with caution. However, from those that participated in the study there were clear results of the distinct perceptions between digital natives and digital immigrants, the identified need for training, the tension that exists between administrative control and individual liberties, and perceptions of what should be included in a social media policy.

Several of the questions allowed for comparisons between elementary and secondary educators, young and older educators, and frequent and infrequent users of social media. Results were predictable. High school educators, young educators, and those who frequently use social media are more familiar with and more active on social media. As Prensky (2001) explained, "Today's average college grads have spent less than 5,000 hours of their lives reading, but over 10,000 hours playing video games, using social media, etc." (p.1).

He argued that younger generations are digital natives and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors because of being born into and surrounded by new technology. "Students today are all 'native speakers' of the digital language of computers, video games, social media and the Internet" (p.1). The older generation, who are learning and adopting new technology, he called digital immigrants. Prensky noted that "the importance of the distinction is this: As Digital Immigrants learn – like all immigrants, some better than others – to adapt to their environment, they always retain, to some degree, their 'accent,' that is, their foot in the past" (p.2). This distinction was evident in the different perceptions in the study between digital natives and digital immigrants.

At high schools, even those teachers not using social media are around students who

usually have access to mobile devices and are using these devices to access social media while at school, and therefore have more exposure to it. Also, high schools commonly use social media for communication purposes. Younger educators have grown up in a world with constant exposure to social media use. Opposite this familiarity with and reliability on are older educators and those who did not use social media. The study showed that older educators are using social media, just not as frequently as younger educators. Again this was foreseeable. It may be because of unfamiliarity with social media use, but it is more probable that it is because older educators and those who did not use social media rely less or not at all on social media use. This would definitely influence how they responded.

Another clear result in the study was the perceived need for training on and about social media use by educators. Cartner and Hallas (2017) found that when receiving social media training for educational purposes teachers were placed in a position of uncertainty that challenged their existing mental models. There were a few topics surveyed that mirrored this finding with roughly 25% to 30% of the participants responding with indecision. These items included: do the benefits of using social media in education outweigh the concerns; would students be more engaged in learning if lessons involved social media use; and in a different vein should school administration have the right to search a potential employee's social media account before hiring them. This uncertainty can be explained by a lack of knowledge and real dilemmas. For example, it is difficult to be definitive about whether the benefits of social media outweigh the concerns if you are not familiar with the benefits, the concerns, or both. This was verified by the 81% of respondents who indicated they needed more training. Cartner and Hallas (2017) noted that "a growing number of studies call for teachers to engage in professional development activities that will support the integration of

mobile devices and social media into their teaching practice" (p.2). The need for training ties directly into policy development. This training, in order to be effective, is usually based on clear standards. A social media policy has the potential to provide those standards and can operate as the base for the training participants in the study identified as necessary.

Along with the need for training, another clear perception from the study was the need for balancing administrative control with individual rights. This tension was found during the literature review and was communicated again with responses from the survey. Respondents provided clear feelings about what they felt infringed on their individual liberties. For example, a younger high school teacher who sporadically uses social media explained, "I expect guidance and policy for using social media professionally, but personal off-duty use should not be dictated or influenced by the school district. It is an infringement on my personal rights."

Approximately half of the respondents from the survey felt policy that addressed personal use did infringe on their personal liberties. This feeling was again communicated with only 30% feeling that use during off-duty time should be addressed in policy and 37% feeling that guidelines for personal use and disciplinary action for misuse was necessary.

Those who disagreed with this feeling mostly worked in the district office. It is very likely these differences are a result of experience. In the State of Idaho, from July 2016 to January of 2019, 18 out of 83 violations of the Idaho Code of Ethics for Educators reported to the Professional Standards Commission involved some form of misuse of social media by educators (Idaho Professional Standards Commission, 2019). Assuredly, district office administration was involved addressing these cases, possibly influencing their perception. Moreover, district officials do not have the same everyday contact with students that

teachers and building administrators do. It is easier to deal with discipline when there are clear guidelines and policies, when things are black and white as when they are not. It becomes difficult when lines blend, when things become grey.

Determination of when administrative control of personal social media use is applicable can be difficult as stated by a 31 to 40 year old high school teacher who frequently uses social media and participated in the study, "I am unsure about what should and should not be in policy. This quickly evolving subject is hard to manage. Frankly, there is a lot of value in utilizing social media to communicate with families and students relative to academic information. I am just not sure how this grows in the future." This difficulty is demonstrated in a situation where a teacher chaperoned a dance at Highland High School in the Pocatello/Chubbuck School District #25. The teacher identified students who the teacher felt were intoxicated. The students were removed from the dance and received some disciplinary action. After the dance when the teacher was at home with his/her son, a student at Highland, and his friends. One of the student's friends asked the teacher about the incident and then recorded the teacher's response on a phone without the teacher's knowledge. The student then shared this information on social media, but only in parts. Without context, parents became extremely upset and the teacher ended up facing the Professional Standards Commission under the violation of the Idaho Code of Ethics. Was this a violation of the teacher's rights? Was this a punishable offense? Can educators say what they want to say in their own home? Answers to these questions do not come easily. Incidents like this, and others contribute to the desire to have clear lines drawn between personal and professional use of social media.

Some districts have undertaken the challenge of addressing personal social media use

in policy. For example, Madison School District 321 (2015) states, "If you identify yourself as a District employee online, it should be clear that the views expressed, posted, or published are personal views, not necessarily those of the District, its Board, employees, or agents." Coeur d'Alene School District 271 (2019) explains, "Staff members who decide to engage in personal social media activities will maintain separate professional and personal accounts."   Minnetonka Public Schools (2018) in Minnesota makes clear "On social media, the lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred. If you identify yourself as a District employee…be sure that all content associated with you is consistent with your work and with the District's beliefs and professional standards." San Diego Unified School District (2013) uses a Venn diagram visual, see figure 1, for clarifying understanding regarding administrative control and individual rights. The policy describes, "Although staff members enjoy free speech rights guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, certain types of communication, typically by virtue of their subject-matter connection to campus, may relate enough to school to have ramifications of the author or subject at the district site." The policy further warns, "Off-campus internet usage is largely unrelated to school; however, in certain circumstances courts have held that the off-campus online communications may be connected enough to campus to result in either student or staff-member discipline."

Figure 5.1
San Diego Unified School District (2013)
On-Campus and Off-Campus Social Media Use
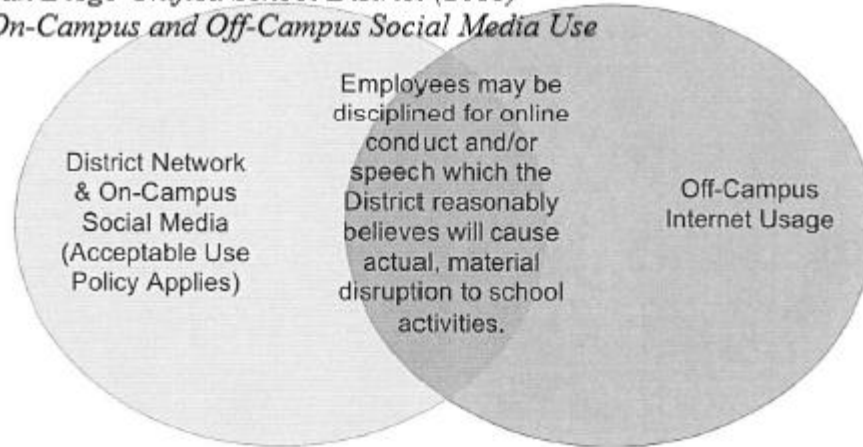
School leaders developing or revising social media policy need to be aware and ready to address the tensions between administrative control and individual rights. The Oregon School Boards Association (2017) has provided excellent guidance for any school leader seeking to understand this balance by providing the benefits and risks to be considered, guidance on the separation of professional and personal use, things to consider when developing policy, discipline for misuse, and court cases involving social media use by school employees.

Participants also responded to questions about what items to include in a social media policy that was being developed or revised. Currently in Idaho, guidance from the state department of education on social media use by teachers can be found in the Idaho Professional Standards Commission *Code of Ethics for Professional Educators* (2019). This policy addresses virtual relationships between educators and students, digital photography and video of students, pornography, and digital images of colleagues. These are good generic standards, but more explicit guidance is needed. Table 5.1 summarizes the suggestions of what to include in policy from the educators who responded to the survey.

Table 5.1

Perceptions of What to Include in Social Media Policy	%
Keeping professional and personal accounts separate.	84
Guidelines for professional use and disciplinary procedures for misuse.	83
Use during on-duty time.	82
"Friending" of students.	80
Communication with students.	79
Understanding differences of public and private.	78
Appropriate and inappropriate posts.	73
Definition of what Social Media is and is not.	71
Expectation of a responsible online presence.	66
Guidelines for posting of photos.	62
Transparency and honesty.	49
Guidelines for personal use and disciplinary action for misuse.	37
Use during off-duty time.	30

The good news is some school districts have already developed policies that sought to balance administrative control and individual rights while including the suggestions provided by the participants in the survey. For example, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho School District 271 (2019) helps employees understand the difference between public and private in their policy by warning employees,

> Privacy does not exist in the world of social media, therefore the district recommends that employees consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known or how that may reflect on the person, the district, or its patrons….Contrary to what many people think, email, and social media, and social networking sites are very public places. (p.1)

Madison, Idaho School District 321 (2015) sets guidelines regarding contact with students through social media,

> Individuals shall maintain a professional relationship with all students, both inside and outside of the classroom. Do not list current students as friends on social media

sites, do not give students your personal email address or phone number, and do not

text students. Excessive informal and/or social involvement with students is therefore

prohibited. (p.2)

Minnetonka Public Schools in Minnesota (2018) provides a clear definition of social media,

Public social media networks are defined to include: websites, social networks,

online forums, virtual and augmented reality environments, and other social media

generally available to the public or consumers…District approved online

engagement tools are those the District has approved for educational or official

communication purposes. The District has greater ability to protect minors from

inappropriate content and can limit public assess with such tools. (p.2)

New York City Department of Education (2016) sets expectations regarding professional

use of social media,

Employees should treat professional social media space and communication like

classroom and /or a professional workplace. The same standard expected in

professional settings are expected on professional social media sites. If a particular

type of behavior is inappropriate in the classroom or a professional workplace, then

that behavior is also inappropriate on the professional social media site; employees

should exercise caution, sound judgement, and common sense when using

professional social media sites. (p.3)

San Diego Unified School District (2013) clarifies on-duty use of social media,

Staff members are encouraged to limit their personal technology use during duty

hours. Use of Personal Technology for non-District business should be limited to off-

duty time and designated breaks. (p.5)

To see complete examples refer to appendix C for Coeur d'Alene, Idaho School District 271 (2019), appendix D Madison, Idaho School District 321 (2015), appendix E Minnetonka, Minnesota Public Schools (2018), appendix F New York City, New York Department of Education (2016), and appendix G San Diego, California Unified School District (2013). Each of these policies presents clear and robust guidelines providing excellent models for other districts to follow.

Conclusion

Educational leaders are not alone in facing the challenges of social media policy development or revision for school employees. Understanding the perceptions and examining existing social media policies provided in this study can be valuable tools for the policy development or revision process. Social media research and its impact on the different variables in education merit ongoing study. Comparing and contrasting policies from state-to-state, engaging in specific case studies, measuring the impact of specific policies and pieces of policies are all worthy areas to explore and expand the field of knowledge that currently exists. Social media use in education will continue to be a dynamic and exciting field of study. It will be interesting to see how the continued expansion of social media affects the future of education.

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Appendix A: Regions and County Lines of Idaho
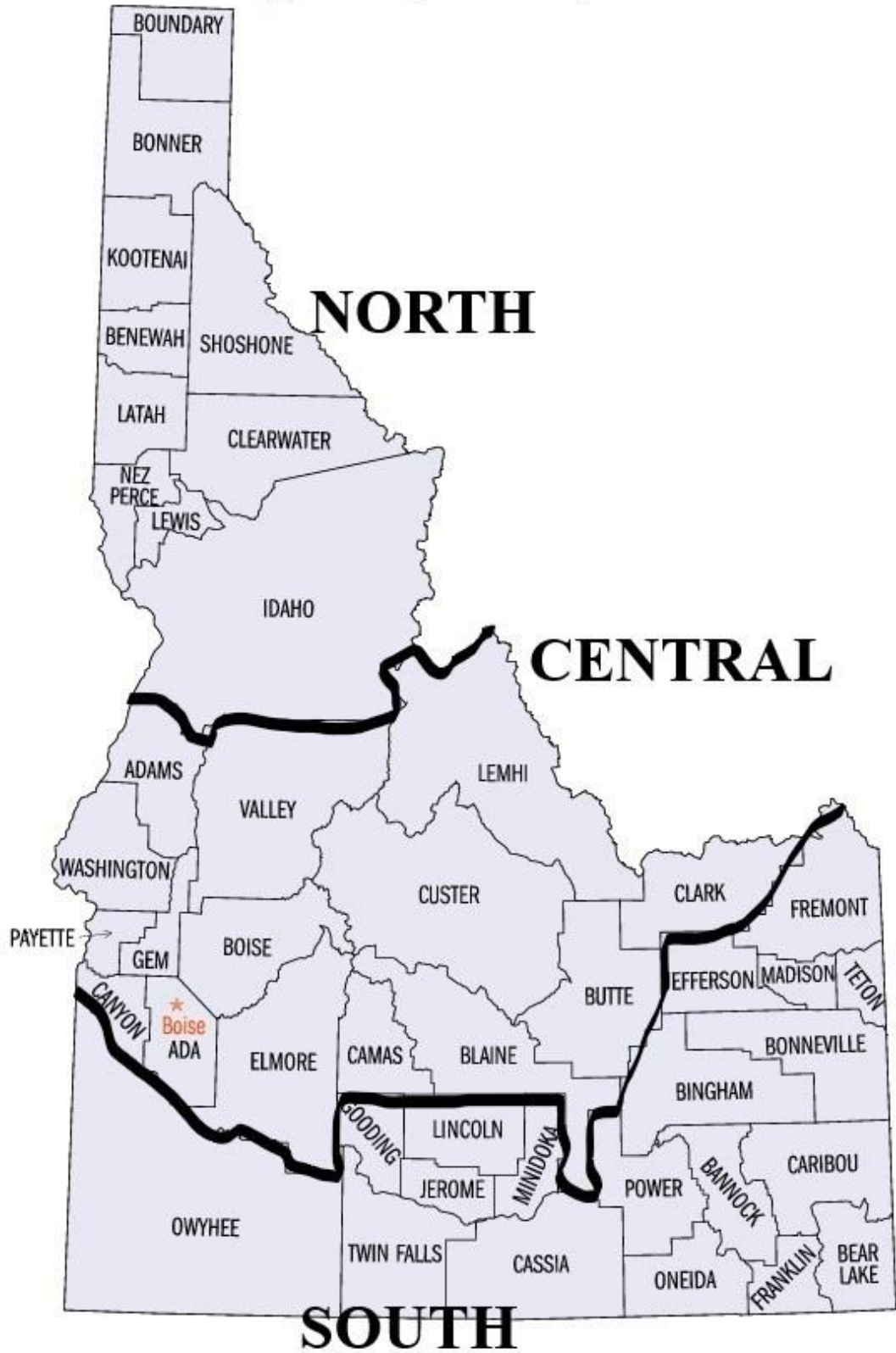
Appendix B: Copy of the Survey

Idaho Perceptions of Social Media in Education

My name is Brad Wallace. I'm an educator in the Pocatello/Chubbuck school district and a doctoral student at the University of Idaho. My dissertation is a study about perceptions of social media policy governing use by school employees in Idaho's public school system. I hope my research will prove useful to districts that will be developing policies for social media use by school district employees. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Please complete this short online survey.

The responses are completely anonymous. Neither I nor anyone else will be able to identify your individual answers. Because of this, there are no risks involved in the study.

The major benefit to the study will be in acquiring data helping school districts in the development of sound policy regarding social media use by school faculty. The study will also advance discussions of how schools should address the ramifications of this fast moving phenomenon.

My dissertation and any reports I prepare will contain summary data containing no identifying information. As I mentioned above, participation will be completely anonymous.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary.

Please feel free to ask any questions or share concerns by calling me at (208) 405-1841 or emailing me at wall7935@vandals.uidaho.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (208) 885-6340 or visit their website at http://www.uidaho.edu/ora/committees/irb

*1. Which region of Idaho do you work in?

[▼]

*2. What is your specific job assignment in your district? (choose all that apply)
☐ Certified
☐ Classified
☐ Other (please specify)
[   ]

*3. How would you best describe the district you work in?
○ Large student population (examples: Meridian, Coeur d'Alene, Pocatello, Twin Falls)

○ Medium student population (examples: Shelley, Weiser, American Falls, Wallace)

○ Small student population (examples: Cambridge, Garden Valley, Genesee, Whitepine)

*4. What grade level(s) do you work with? (choose all that apply)

☐ Preschool

☐ Elementary

☐ Middle School

☐ High School

☐ District Office

*5. What is your age range?

[▼]

*6. Which social media account(s) do you use? (choose all that apply)

☐ Facebook (Personal)

☐ Facebook (Professional)

☐ Twitter

☐ Tumblr

☐ Pinterest

☐ LinkedIn

☐ Instagram

☐ Blogspot

☐ MySpace

☐ Skype

☐ None

☐ Other(s) (please specify)

[   ]

*7. How long have you been using social media?

[▼]

*8. How often do you check your social media account(s)?

| ○ I don't use social media | ○ Almost never | ○ Monthly | ○ Weekly | ○ Daily | ○ Several times each day |

*9. How many email accounts do you have?

○ More than 6

○ 5-6

○ 3-4

○ 1-2

*10. How often do you check your email account(s)?

| ○ Almost never | ○ Monthly | ○ Weekly | ○ Daily | ○ Several times each day |

*11. I spend more time checking or using....

○ My social media account(s)

○ My email account(s)

○ I check or use them both about the same

*12. The benefits of using social media as a teaching and learning tool outweigh the concerns.

| ○ *Strongly Disagree* | ○ *Disagree* | ○ Undecided | ○ Agree | ○ Strongly Agree |

*13. Teaching students how to use social media is a useful part of a 21st century education.

| ○ Strongly Disagree | ○ Disagree | ○ Undecided | ○ Agree | ○ Strongly Agree |

*14. Schools should be responsible for teaching students appropriate social media behavior and etiquette.

| ○ Strongly Disagree | ○ Disagree | ○ Undecided | ○ Agree | ○ Strongly Agree |

*15. Students would be more engaged in learning if lessons involved social media use.

| ○ Strongly Disagree | ○ Disagree | ○ Undecided | ○ Agree | ○ Strongly Agree |

*16. Educators need more training regarding social media use in education.

| ○ Strongly Disagree | ○ Disagree | ○ Undecided | ○ Agree | ○ Strongly Agree |

*17. School district policy for social media use by employees should clearly define what social media is and is not.

○ Strongly Disagree   ○ Disagree   ○ Undecided   ○ Agree   ○ Strongly Agree

*18. School district policy should provide guidance and disciplinary procedures of employee's use of social media when used for educational purposes.

○ Strongly Disagree   ○ Disagree   ○ Undecided   ○ Agree   ○ Strongly Agree

*19. School district policy should provide guidance and disciplinary procedures of employee's personal use of social media.

○ Strongly Disagree   ○ Disagree   ○ Undecided   ○ Agree   ○ Strongly Agree

*20. School district policy for social media use by employees should provide expectations on the following topics: (choose all that apply)

☐ Use during on-duty time

☐ Use during off-duty time

☐ Keeping work and personal accounts separate

☐ An understanding of privacy or lack thereof

☐ Appropriate and inappropriate posts

☐ Posting of photographs

☐ Transparency and honesty of identity

☐ Maintaining a responsible online profile

☐ "Friending" of students

☐ Communication with students

☐ Other (please specify)

*21. School administrators should have the right to search a potential employees personal social media account(s) for inappropriate use before hiring them.

○ Strongly Disagree   ○ Disagree   ○ Undecided   ○ Agree   ○ Strongly Agree

*22. Is oversight by district policy of teacher and administrator personal use of social media a violation of freedom of speech rights? Why or why not?

Thank you for participating in this study.

Appendix C: Example of Social Media Policy

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho School District 271 (2019)

**Coeur d'Alene School District
No. 271**

PERSONNEL 5325 (No Starting Policies)

Employee Use of Social Media

Coeur d'Alene School District recognizes that many of our staff, students, parents and community members are active social media users. The purpose of social media policy and procedures is to help employees participate online in a respectful, relevant way that protects the employee's reputation, and the reputation of Coeur d'Alene School District, and that respects the relationship between teachers and students.

For the purposes of this policy, social media includes, but is not necessarily limited to, social networking and media sharing sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Flickr, Tumblr, and YouTube. It also includes blogs, comments on web sites, discussion forums, and any other activity online involving connecting or communicating with other users.

These policies and procedures complement, but do not replace, any existing policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the Internet that are in place in the Coeur d'Alene School District.

Because of the unique nature of social media sites and because of the District's desire to protect its interest with regard to its electronic records, the following policies have been established to address social media site usage by all employees:

Protect Confidential and Proprietary Information

Safety is the overriding concern with regard to information posted online. Employees will respect the privacy and confidentiality of student and staff information. Employees shall not post confidential or proprietary information about the District, its employees, or students on district or personal sites. The employee shall adhere to all applicable privacy and confidentiality policies adopted by the District or as provided by State or federal law.

Personal information, including student names, locations, photographs etc., should not be posted on social media without informed consent from students' parents/ guardians, except for images of students taken in the public arena, such as at

sporting events or fine arts public performances. This includes, but is not limited to student work, individual and group photographs, videos featuring the student or other identifying information.

The District or School Name, Logo, or Images

Employees may reference their professional identity as part of their personal online profile using the school district's name or a specific school's name, with work information of job title and job activities and personal participation in district-sponsored events, including volunteer activities.

Employees shall not use District or school names, logos, images, iconography, etc. on personal social media sites that implies or "represents" themselves as a spokesperson, representative or official site of the district. Nor shall employees use the District or school names to promote a product, cause, political party, or political candidate. Nor shall employees use personal images of students, names, or data relating to students, absent written authority of the parent.

For district-sponsored social media, school or program names and logos may be used with prior approval granted by the building administrator or respective department head. The district's logo and name may be used for district-sponsored social media with prior approval granted by the Superintendent or Communications Director.

Respect District Time and Property

Use of social media on district equipment is permitted, if used for an educational, professional purpose. Employees may use e-mail and social media sparingly for personal purposes only during non-student contact times, such as during lunch or before or after school. Any use must occur during times and places that the use will not interfere with job duties, negatively impact job performance, or otherwise are disruptive to student safety, the school environment or its operation.

Keep Personal and Professional Accounts Separate

Employees will maintain a clear distinction between their personal social media use and any district-related professional social media use.

Staff members who decide to engage in professional social media activities will maintain separate professional and personal email addresses. Staff members will not use their district email address for personal social media activities. Use of district email for this purpose is prohibited and will be considered a violation of district policy that may result in disciplinary action.

Contact with Students

Pursuant to the Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators, individuals shall maintain a professional relationship with all students, both inside and outside of the classroom, and through any mediums of communication. Staff should not have online interactions with students on social media outside of group forums/ platforms dedicated to educational use or athletic/ club activities that have been approved by the district.

The intent of student contact using electronic and social media communication tools is meant for one to many verses one-to-one interaction. Excessive informal or social involvement with students is therefore prohibited. This includes:

1. Listing current students as "friends" on networking sites or following students wherein personal information is shared or available for review which results in the certificated professional employee not maintaining the Code of Ethics requiring professional relationships with students both inside and outside the classroom. Employees who have pre-existing students on their networking sites such as their own children, minor relatives and children's friends need to exercise sound judgment to ensure the safety of all students.

2. Contacting students through electronic means other than the District's email, telephone or other district approved methods.

3. Coaches electronically contacting a team member or members without including all team, or multiple team members in the communication – intent is to encourage group texting and diminish one-to-one texting.

4. Giving private cell phone or home phone numbers to students without prior approval of the direct supervisor. If there is an academic or extra-curricular reason to call or text the student, the staff member should contact the student through a parent/guardian.

5. Inappropriate contact of any kind including via electronic media.

Nothing in this policy prohibits district staff and students from the use of education websites or use of social networking websites created for curricular, co-curricular, or extracurricular purposes where a professional relationship is maintained with the students.

Failure to maintain a professional relationship with students, both inside and outside of a classroom setting, including interaction via social networking websites of any nature, e-mailing, texting, or any other electronic methods will result in the required reporting of such conduct to the Professional Standards Commission by the district's administration.

Rules Concerning District-Sponsored Social Media Activity

If an employee wishes to create a district approved social media site as part of their job to communicate meetings, activities, games, responsibilities, announcements etc., for a class, team, school-based club or activity or an official school-based organization, the employee must complete a social media site authorization form to register the social media site with the district. Employees setting up and/or maintaining a social media site also agree to add a direct supervisor as an administrator of the site or page. Employees receiving authorization to create a social media site will comply with the following rules:

1. The employee must set up the class, club, activity, etc. as a group list that will be "closed and moderated"; your building administrator may approve open public access sites for school-wide social media activities;

2. The employee must set up mechanisms for delivering information to students that are not members of the group via non-electronic means;

3. Members will not be established as "friends" but as members of the group list;

4. Anyone who has access to the communications conveyed through the site may only gain access by the permission of the employee. Persons desiring to access the page may join only after the employee invites them and allows them to join;

5. Parents shall be permitted to access any site that their child has been invited to voluntarily join. Both employees and parents are encouraged to report any communications by students or school personnel they believe to be inappropriate to district administration;

6. Access to the site may only be permitted for educational purposes related to the club, activity, organization, or team;

7. The employee responsible for the site will monitor it regularly;

8. The employee's supervisor shall be permitted access to any site established by the employee for a school-related purpose;

9. Employees are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in the establishment and maintenance of all such district-sponsored social media activity. This includes maintaining a separation between the school activity pages and employees' personal social media profiles and pages;

10. Postings made to the site must comply with the district's Policy 5335 Employee Use of Electronic Communications Devices; and

11. The Superintendent or designee reserves the right to shut down or discontinue the group if he or she believes it is in the best overall interest of the students.

Best Practices for Use of Social Media Sites

All employees are expected to serve as positive ambassadors for the district and appropriate role models for students. It is vital that staff maintain professionalism in their interactions with students and the community. Failure to do so could put an employee in volition of existing district policy and at risk of disciplinary action.

Think Before Posting

Privacy does not exist in the world of social media, therefore the district recommends that employees consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known or how that may reflect on the poster, the district, or its patrons. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created and comments can be easily forwarded or copied. If you would not say it publicly at a televised board meeting or to a member of the media or a colleague, consider the propriety of posting it online. Before posting content, employees should ask themselves: "Would I mind if that information/ image appeared on the front page of the local newspaper?" If the answer is "yes" or "probably", it should not be posted. Contrary to what many people think, email and social media and social networking sites are very public places.

Information that an employee posts on official, district-approved social media sites is subject to public record/ public information.

District employees are personally responsible for content they publish, pictures they post, or dialogue they maintain, regardless of the medium, for the life of the content. No posting by a district employee should compromise the professionalism, integrity, and ethics in their role as a Coeur d'Alene School District professional.

Be Respectful

Posts should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the poster, colleagues, the district, and its students, patrons, and employees.

Although not an inclusive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment.

Remember Your Audiences (Those Known and Unknown)

Be aware that a presence in the social media world is or easily can be made available to the public at large. This includes students, fellow employees, and peers. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not unnecessarily alienate, harm, or provoke any of these groups.

Social media networks, blogs and other types of online content sometimes generate press and media attention or legal questions. Staff should refer these inquiries to authorized Coeur d'Alene Public Schools spokespersons (Superintendent and Communications Director).

Contact with Students

Social media and networking is intended for public/ group communications and not used for interpersonal (one to one) district related communication. The intent of social media and networking usage should be for approved group-to-group or group to general public communications.

Pursuant to the Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators, individuals shall maintain a professional relationship with all students, both inside and outside of the classroom. In order to avoid the appearance of partiality or impropriety, all electronic communications with students should be through the official district e-mail or other district communication tools, not personal cell phones or personal email accounts.

The boundaries between the role of a public district employee and personal relationships with student should always be upheld and strongly communicated. "Friending" or "following" students who are currently enrolled in the district (or under the age of 18) to an employee's personal social media account is discouraged, nor should employees accept "friend requests" of students. This recommendation is to protect both employees and students. The district understands there are circumstances where an employee "friends" their own child and their child's friends; this should be an exception not the norm.

Do not list current students as friends on social media sites, do not give students your personal e- mail address or phone number, and do not text students.

Keep Personal and Professional Use Separate

Staff members who decide to engage in personal social media activities will maintain separate professional and personal email addresses. Staff members will not use their district email address for personal social media activities. Such uses will be considered a violation of district policy and may result in disciplinary action. The district reserves the right to monitor communications transmitted and received through the district network. This may include social media messages and updates sent to a district e-mail account.

• Staff should get appropriate permission before you refer to or post images of current or former staff, members, or students. Additionally, staff should get appropriate permission to use a third party's copyrights, copyrighted material, trademarks, service marks or other intellectual property.

• Social media use shouldn't interfere with staff's responsibilities at Coeur d'Alene Public Schools. District computer systems are to be used for business purposes only, with nominal personal use. When using Coeur d'Alene Schools' computer systems, use of social media for business purposes is allowed (ex: Facebook, Twitter, Coeur d'Alene Schools website), but personal use of social media networks or personal blogging of online content is discouraged during the school day and during student-contact times and could result in disciplinary action.

District Social Media Sites

Notify the District: Employees that have or would like to start a school social media page should contact their supervisor or designee. All district pages must have an appointed employee who is responsible for content. Supervisors should be aware of the content on the site, arrange for periodic monitoring of the site, and for the receipt and addressing of any complaints about the content on the site. The Superintendent or designee reserves the right to shut down or discontinue the site if he or she believes it is in the best overall interest of the students.

Have a Plan: District employees should consider their messages, audiences, and goals as well as their strategy for keeping information on social media sites up to date, accurate, and in the best interest of the students.

Timeliness & Monitoring: Content should be kept current and accurate. Employees maintain active social media sites need to respond to all outside questions, comments or concerns. Inappropriate comments and incorrect information is subject to removal.

If an employee encounters a situation while using social media that threatens to become antagonistic, the employee should disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and seek the advice of a supervisor.

Protect the District Voice: Posts on district affiliated social media sites should protect the district's voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. Carefully consider the naming of pages or accounts, the selecting of pictures or icons, compliance with district policy and State and federal laws with regard to student and employee confidentiality and the determination of content.

SOCIAL MEDIA SITE AUTHORIZATION FORM

Employees of the Coeur d'Alene School District wishing to create and/or maintain an official school-

related presence on any social media site must have a copy of this completed form on file in the school/department supervisor's office, and a copy submitted to the district's Communications Department, *prior* to a social media site's activation. (Any pre-existing sites must also be authorized and registered with the district.) Please submit a signed authorization form electronically through email as a .pdf attachment.

Employees setting up and/or maintaining a social media site must also agree to add their immediate supervisor as an administrator for the page/site and keep their login information on file with their supervisor. In case of an emergency that prevents the primary employee from being able to access the page, this will ensure timely and accurate information, monitoring and administration of the site.

Once authorized by a school principal or department supervisor, the employee and their supervisor are fully responsible for regular monitoring of the site, the appropriateness of on-line conduct and adhering to the district's official social media policies and procedures. Any social media sites existing without authorization will be subject for review, editing and removal. Any employee not adhering to the district's social media policies and procedures may result in loss of social media privileges and/or disciplinary action.

Date: _____
___

Employee name: _____ Dept. or school: _____

Employee title: _____ District e-mail address: _____

I will represent the following class/ team/club/ project, etc. on social media: _____

Social media tool (check one): [ ] Facebook [ ] Twitter [ ] Instagram [ ] Blog [ ] Other: _____

Purpose of presence on social media site:
_____

_____
_____

SITE ACCOUNT INFORMATION:

Associated district email: _____ User name: _____

Password created (unique to Social Media, not your computer login password):
_____

Login URL:_____ Public view
URL:_____

Others with social media account access (list additional names on back of form): Name/Title: _____ Name/Title: _____

The AUDIENCE for this site (check all that apply): [ ] Students [ ] Parents [ ] Community [ ] Team/Group/Club Members [ ] Other _____

AUTHORIZATION BY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL OR DEPARTMENT SUPERVISOR:

Supervisor Name: _____ Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

New Facebook sites must be created as a "Business" or "Place" — "Personal" sites are **not acceptable for conducting official district or school business.*

Appendix D: Example of Social Media Policy

Madison, Idaho School District 321 (2015)

Madison School District 321 PERSONNEL 5325

Employee Use of Social Media Sites, Including Personal Sites

Because of the unique nature of social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter and because of the District's desire to protect its interest with regard to its electronic records, the following rules have been established to address social media site usage by all employees:

Protect Confidential and Proprietary Information Employees shall not post confidential or proprietary information about the District, its employees, students, agents, or others. The employee shall adhere to all applicable privacy and confidentiality policies adopted by the District or as provided by state or federal law.

Do Not Use District Name, Logos, or Images Employees shall not use the District logos, images, iconography, etc. on personal social media sites. Nor shall employees use the District name to promote a product, cause or political party, or political candidate. Nor shall employees use personal images of students, or names or data relating to students, absent written authority of the parent of a minor or authority of an adult or emancipated student.

Respect District Time and Property Limited Use of Social Media on District Equipment Permitted Employees will use e-mail and social media for personal purposes only during non-work times, such as during lunch or before or after school. Any use must occur during times and places that the use will not interfere with job duties, negatively impact job performance, or otherwise be disruptive to the school environment or its operation.

On Personal Sites If you identify yourself as a District employee online, it should be clear that the views expressed, posted, or published are personal views, not necessarily those of the District, its Board, employees, or agents.

Opinions expressed by staff on a social networking website have the potential to be disseminated far beyond the speaker's desire or intention, and could undermine the public perception of fitness of the individual to educate students, and thus undermine teaching effectiveness. In this way, the effect of the expression and publication of such opinions could potentially lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member, up to and including termination or nonrenewal of the contract of employment

Keep Personal and Professional Accounts Separate Staff members who decide to engage in professional social media activities will maintain separate professional and personal email addresses. Staff members will not use their District email address for personal social media activities. Use of District email for this purpose is prohibited and will be considered a violation of District policy that may result in disciplinary action.

Contact with Students Although it is desired that staff members have a sincere interest in students as individuals, partiality and the appearance of impropriety must be avoided. Pursuant to the Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators, individuals shall maintain a professional relationship with all students, both inside and outside of the classroom. Do not list current students as friends on social media sites, do not give students your personal e-mail address or phone number, and do not text students. Excessive informal and/or social involvement with students is therefore prohibited. This includes:

> • Listing current students as "friends" on networking sites wherein personal information is shared or available for review which results in the certificated professional employee not maintaining the Code of Ethics requiring professional relationships with students both inside and outside the classroom;
> • Contacting students through electronic means other than the District's email and telephone system;
> • Coaches electronically contacting a team member or members without including all team members in the communication;
> • Giving private cell phone or home phone numbers to students without prior approval of the District;
> • Inappropriate contact of any kind including via electronic media.

Nothing in this policy prohibits District staff and students from the use of education websites and/or use of social networking websites created for curricular, co-curricular, or extracurricular purposes where the professional relationship is maintained with the student.

Failure to maintain a professional relationship with students, both inside and outside of a classroom setting, including interaction via social networking websites of any nature, e-mailing, texting, or any other electronic methods will result in the required reporting of such conduct to the Professional Standards Commission by the District's Administration.

Rules Concerning District-Sponsored Social Media Activity If an employee wishes to use Facebook, Twitter, or other similar social media sites to communicate meetings, activities, games, responsibilities, announcements etc., for a school-based club or a school-based activity or an official school-based organization, the employee must also comply with the following rules:

> • The employee must set up the club, etc. as a group list which will be "closed and moderated."
> • The employee must set up mechanisms for delivering information to students that are not members

of the group via non-electronic means.

• Members will not be established as "friends" but as members of the
group list.

• Anyone who has access to the communications conveyed through the site may only gain access by the permission of the employee (e.g. teacher, administrator, or supervisor). Persons desiring to access the page may join only after the employee invites them and allows them to join.

• Parents shall be permitted to access any site that their child has been invited to join. Parents shall report any communications they believe to be in appropriate by students or school personnel to District Administration.

• Access to the site may only be permitted for educational purposes related to the club, activity, organization, or team.

• The employee responsible for the site will monitor it
regularly.

• The employee's supervisor shall be permitted access to any site established by the employee for a school- related purpose.

• Employees are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in the establishment and maintenance of all such District-sponsored social media activity. This includes maintaining a separation between the school activity pages and employees' personal social media profiles and pages.

• Postings made to the site must comply with the District's Employee Electronic and On-Line Services Usage Policy.

• The Superintendent reserves the right to shut down or discontinue the group if he/she believes it is in the best overall interest of the students.

Appendix E: Example of Social Media Policy

Minnetonka, Minnesota Public Schools (2018)

MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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POLICY #470: EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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I. PURPOSE

As a national leader in using technology as an accelerator of learning, the Minnetonka School District recognizes the value of inquiry, investigation and innovation in using new technology tools and resources to enhance the learning experience and to share information. The District also recognizes its obligation to teach, model and ensure responsible safe use of such technology tools.

District staff are expected to model appropriate and healthy use of technology tools in their interactions with one another, students and the global community both in person and through technology. With social media continuing to emerge and thrive as a dynamic, influential and evolving aspect of communication, the District developed this policy to address the unique circumstances that arise when employees engage through publicly available social media such as personal websites, virtual and augmented reality environments, social networks, online forums and other similar tools.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The District recognizes the importance of social media networks and platforms as communication and e-learning tools. To that end, the District provides select, approved social media accounts and other online engagement tools and encourages use of these tools for collaboration by employees, as appropriate for employees' roles with the District. Public social media, outside of accounts sponsored and approved by the District, may not be used for classroom instruction or school-sponsored activities without the prior authorization of the Superintendent, or designee. Additionally, such use must comply with all District policies and with regulations set forth by the social media provider.

The District has official accounts on select social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vimeo, YouTube, other) and additional technologies

(Schoology, PreciouStatus, Peachjar, Let's Talk) it uses in fulfilling its responsibility for effectively communicating with its various audiences, including the general public. Communications Department staff members and designated staff at each of the schools and in some additional departments, such as Athletics and Community Education, are approved to post for the District on accounts that have been designated as their responsibility. They are the only employees who may post for the District or schools on such accounts without additional approval from the Superintendent or designee.

Employees must limit personal use of social media during work, using professional discretion. If a building principal or executive staff member determines personal use of social media is becoming an issue for an employee, restrictions may be placed on employees' use of personal devices. Such restrictions would take place at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee.

When a new official District social media account is desired by an employee, the request should be elevated to a principal or executive staff member, who then will discuss it with the Superintendent or designee and the Executive Director of Communications. From there, any approved social media account will be created in coordination with the Communications Department. The login, password and recovery information will be shared with the Communications Department, and any update to that information in future will be shared, as well.

All employees must avoid posting any information or engaging in communications that violates state or federal laws or District policy.

When employees choose to join or engage with District students, families, fellow employees or members of the general public in a social media context that exists outside those approved by the District, they must maintain their professionalism as District employees and have responsibility for addressing inappropriate behavior or activity on these networks, including requirements for mandated reporting.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. **Public social media networks** are defined to include: websites, social networks, online forums, virtual and augmented reality environments, and any other social media generally available to the public or consumers. Examples of public social media include but are not limited to the following platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, LinkedIn, Vimeo, YouTube and blogs.

B. **District approved online engagement tools** are those the District has approved for educational or official communication purposes. The District has greater ability to protect minors from inappropriate content and can limit public

access with such tools. Examples include but are not limited to the following platforms: Schoology, Let's Talk, PreciouStatus.

IV. REQUIREMENTS

As set forth in the District's Vision, all employees are expected to serve as positive ambassadors for our schools and to remember they are role models to students in the community. Because those on social media networks may view the employee as a representative of the schools and the District, the District requires employees to observe the following rules when referring to the District, its schools, students, programs, activities, employees, volunteers and communities on any social media networks:

A. An employee's postings, displays, or communications must comply with all state and federal laws and any applicable District policies.

Employees must be respectful and professional in all communications (by word, image, implication and other means). Employees shall not use obscene, profane or vulgar language on any social media network or engage in communications or conduct that is harassing, threatening, bullying, libelous, defamatory or that encourages any illegal activity, the inappropriate use of alcohol, the use of illegal drugs, sexual behavior, sexual harassment or bullying.

Employees should not use their District e-mail address for communications on public social media networks for personal use or without approval from the Superintendent or designee.

Employees must make clear that any views expressed are the employee's alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the District. Employees may not act as a spokesperson for the District or post comments as a representative of the District, except as authorized by the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee or as appropriate for their defined role as a spokesperson or social media poster for the District. When authorized as a spokesperson for the District and not posting from a District account, employees must disclose their employment relationship with the District.

Employees may not disclose information that is confidential or proprietary to the District, its students, or employees or that is protected by data privacy laws.

Employees may not use or post the District's logos on any social media network nor create a social media account that represents the District without permission from the Superintendent or designee.

Employees may not post images on any social media network of co-workers without the co-workers' consent.

Employees may not post images of students on any public social media network if the parent has opted out of image use of their child, except for images of students taken in the public arena, such as at sporting events or fine arts public performances.

Employees may not post any nonpublic images of the District's floor plans.

B. The District recognizes that student groups or members of the public may create social media accounts representing teams or groups within the District. When employees, including coaches/advisors, choose to join or engage with these social networking groups, they always do so as an employee of the District. Employees have responsibility for maintaining appropriate employee-student and employee-public relationships at all times and have responsibility for addressing inappropriate student behavior or activity witnessed on these networks. This includes acting to protect the safety of minors online.

1. When an official student group or team creates a social media site or team website for itself, the coach or advisor must request and secure the login, password and recovery information for that online group. This will prevent, for example, dozens of out of date Twitter accounts for a sports team, as each year's team captain has graduated and the social media account remains up but not active.

C. Employees who participate in social media networks may decide to include information about their work with the District as part of their personal profile, as it would relate to a typical social conversation. This may include:

1. Work information included in a personal profile, to include District name, job title, and job duties. 2. Status updates regarding an employee's own job promotion. 3. Personal participation in District-sponsored events, including volunteer activities. 4. Words of praise for a District accomplishment.

D. The District monitors social media and will respond to content when necessary. An employee who is responsible for a social media posting that fails to comply with the requirements set forth in this policy may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. Employees will be held responsible for the disclosure, whether purposeful or inadvertent, of confidential or private information or information that violates the privacy rights or other rights of a third party.

E. Anything posted on an employee's personal or professional website, blog, social media account or other online content for which the employee is responsible will be subject to all District policies, rules, regulations, and guidelines. The District is free to view and monitor an employee's publicly viewable website or blog at any time without an employee's consent or previous approval or knowledge. Where applicable, employees may be asked to disclose to the District the existence of and to provide the District with access to an employee's personal or professional website, blog, social media account or other online content for which the employee is responsible as part of an employment selection, promotion or disciplinary process.

Guidelines for Policy #470: Employee Use of Social Media

These are guidelines for social media in the Minnetonka School District. If you're an employee contributing to blogs, social networks, virtual or augmented reality environments, or any other kind of social media both on and off the District network—these guidelines are for you.

We expect all who participate in social media to understand and follow these guidelines. Failure to do so may place your employment at risk. These guidelines will continually evolve as new technologies and social networking tools emerge. Employees are encouraged to check in periodically on the Social Media Use policy to stay current.

It's your responsibility. What you write, upload, post, react to or publish in any other way is ultimately your responsibility. If it seems inappropriate, use caution**.** If you're about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, don't shrug it off and hit 'post.' Take time to review these guidelines and determine what's bothering you and fix it. If you're still unsure, you may want to discuss it with your supervisor. Ultimately, what you publish is your responsibility. What you publish is widely accessible and may be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully. Trademark, copyright, and fair use requirements must also be respected.

Ensure the safety of students. When employees, especially coaches/advisors, choose to join or engage in social networking, they do so as an employee of the District and have responsibility for monitoring content and addressing inappropriate behavior or activity on these networks. This includes acting to protect the safety of minors online.

Be transparent. Your honesty—or dishonesty—will be quickly noticed in the social media environment. If you are posting about your work, use your real name and identify your employment relationship with the District. Be clear about your role; if you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, be the first to point it out. If you publish to a site outside the District's network, please use a disclaimer to state in clear terms that the views expressed are yours alone and that they do not necessarily reflect the views of the Minnetonka School District.

Protect confidential information. Be thoughtful about what you publish. Make sure you do not disclose or use confidential information. Students, parents and colleagues should not be cited or referenced without their approval. For example, ask permission before posting someone's picture or statement in a social network (student photos require parental consent). Do not publish a conversation that was meant to be private.

It is acceptable to discuss general details about projects, lessons, or events and to use non- identifying pseudonyms for an individual if you do not have permission from the individual to use their name, so long as the information provided does not make it easy for someone to identify the individual or violate any privacy laws. Furthermore, public social networking sites are not the place for employees who are not designated as official posters for the District to conduct school business with students or parents.

Respect your audience and your coworkers. Always express ideas and opinions in a respectful manner. Make sure your communications are in good taste. Do not denigrate or insult others, including other schools or competitors. Remember that our communities reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Be respectful. This includes not only the obvious (no racial slurs, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory. Be sensitive about linking to content. Redirecting to another site may imply an endorsement of its content.

Perception can be reality. On social media, the lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred. Just by identifying yourself as a District employee, you are creating perceptions about your expertise and about the District by community members, parents, students and the general public; and you are creating perceptions about yourself with your colleagues and managers. If you chose to join or engage with District students and families in a social media context, do so in a professional manner, ever mindful that in the minds of students, families, colleagues and the public, you are a District employee. Be sure that all content associated with you is consistent with your work and with the District's beliefs and professional standards.

Are you adding value? Communication associated with our District should help fellow educators, parents, students, and co-workers. It should be thought-provoking and build a sense of community. If it helps people improve knowledge or skills, do their jobs, solve problems, or understand education better—then it's adding value.

Keep your cool. One of the aims of social media is to create dialogue, and people will not always agree on an issue. When confronted with a difference of opinion, stay cool. If you make an error, be upfront about your mistake and correct it quickly. Express your points in a clear, logical way. Don't pick fights, and correct mistakes. Sometimes, it's best to ignore a comment and not give it credibility by

acknowledging it with a response.

Be careful with personal information. Make full use of privacy settings. Know how to disable anonymous postings and use moderating tools on your social media site(s). Astute criminals can piece together information you provide on different sites and then use it to impersonate you or someone you know, or even re-set your passwords.

Be a positive role model. Educational employees have a responsibility to maintain appropriate employee-student relationships, whether on or off duty. Both case law and public expectations hold educational employees to a higher standard of conduct than the general public.

Don't forget your day job. You should make sure that your online activities do not interfere with your job. Remember that District technologies are provided for educational use. Use of social media for personal use during District time or on District equipment should be limited, using professional discretion. If a building principal or executive staff member determines personal use of social media is becoming an issue for an employee, restrictions may be placed on employees' use of personal devices.

Appendix F: Example of Social Media Policy

New York City, New York Department of Education (2016)

NYC Department of Education Social Media Guidelines

A. Introduction/Purpose

1. Social media technology can serve as a powerful tool to enhance education, communication, and learning. This technology can provide both educational and professional benefits, including preparing New York City Department of Education ("DOE") students to succeed in their educational and career endeavors.

2. The Chancellor is committed to ensuring that all DOE stakeholders who utilize social media technology for professional purposes, including staff and students, do so in a safe and responsible manner. The DOE strives to create professional social media environments that mirror the academically supportive environments of our schools.

3. These Social Media Guidelines ("Guidelines") provide guidance regarding recommended practices for professional social media communication between DOE employees, as well as social media communication between DOE employees and DOE students. 4. In recognition of the public and pervasive nature of social media communications, as well as the fact that in this digital era, the lines between professional and personal endeavors are sometimes blurred, these Guidelines also address recommended practices for use of personal social media by DOE staff.[1]

B. Definition of Social Media

Social media is defined as any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, internet websites, internet forums, and wikis. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, and Flickr.[2]

1. **Professional social media** is a work-related social media activity that is either school-based (e.g., a DOE principal establishing a Facebook page for his/her school or a DOE teacher establishing a blog for his/her class), or non-school-based (e.g., a DOE office establishing a Facebook page to facilitate the office's administration of a Chancellor's Regulation).

2. **Personal social media** use is a non work-related social media activity (e.g., a DOE central administrative employee establishing a Facebook page or a Twitter account for his/her own personal use).

C. Applicability

These Guidelines apply to DOE employees. The DOE will take steps to ensure that other DOE stakeholders, including DOE vendors, DOE volunteers, and DOE independent contractors are informed of these Guidelines.

D. Professional Social Media Use

1. **Maintenance of Separate Professional and Personal E-mail Accounts**

DOE employees who decide to engage in professional social media activities should maintain separate professional and personal email addresses. As such, DOE employees should not use their personal email address for professional social media activities. The professional social media presence should utilize a professional email address and should be completely separate from any personal social media presence maintained by the DOE employee. Regular and continuous use of a personal email address for professional purposes, including social media use, will result in DOE considering the email address, and the corresponding use of that address, as a professional account.

2. **Communication with DOE Students**

DOE employees who work with students and communicate[3] with students through professional social media sites[4] should follow these guidelines:

a. Professional social media sites that are school-based should be designed to address reasonable instructional, educational or extra-curricular program matters;[5]

b. Professional social media sites that are non-school based should have a reasonable relationship to the mission and function of the DOE office creating the site;

c. Each school year, DOE parents[6] will be notified about the professional social media activities their children will be invited to utilize through a media release. The media release will inform parents of the purpose and nature of each professional social media account their children will access and will instruct parents to contact the school with any questions or concerns. The media release will be updated and redistributed as necessary throughout the school year;

d. To the extent possible, based on the social media site being used, DOE supervisors or their designees should be given administrator rights or access to the professional social media accounts established by DOE employees;

e. DOE employees are required to obtain their supervisor's approval before setting up a professional social media presence. A registry form, which contains a description of the proposed professional social media usage, including the purpose and the scope of the audience who can access the site, will be submitted to the supervisor for approval;

f. Supervisors and their designees are responsible for maintaining a list of all professional social media accounts within their particular school or office; and

g. Professional DOE social media sites should include language identifying the sites as professional social media DOE sites. For example, the professional sites can identify the DOE school, department or particular grade that is utilizing the site.

3. **Guidance Regarding Professional Social Media Sites**

a. DOE employees should treat professional social media space and communication like a

classroom and/or a professional workplace. The same standards expected in DOE professional settings are expected on professional social media sites. If a particular type of behavior is inappropriate in the classroom or a professional workplace, then that behavior is also inappropriate on the professional social media site;

b. DOE employees should exercise caution, sound judgment, and common sense when using professional social media sites;

c. DOE employees should use privacy settings to control access to their professional social media sites to ensure that professional social media communications only reach the employees' intended audience. However, DOE employees should be aware that there are limitations to privacy settings. Private communication published on the internet can easily become public. Furthermore, social media sites can change their current default privacy settings and other functions. As a result, employees have an individualized responsibility to understand the rules of the social media site being utilized;

d. Professional social media communication should be in compliance with existing Chancellor's Regulations, DOE policies and applicable laws, including, but not limited to, prohibitions on the disclosure of confidential information and prohibitions on the use of harassing, obscene, discriminatory, defamatory or threatening language;

e. No personally identifiable student information may be posted by DOE employees on professional social media sites, including student photographs, without the students' parents providing the school with a media release; and

f. DOE students who participate in professional social media sites may not be permitted to post photographs featuring other students.

4. **Monitoring of Professional Social Media Sites**

a. Employees using professional social media have no expectation of privacy with regard to their use of such media. The DOE will regularly monitor professional social media sites to protect the school community;

b. DOE supervisors, or their designees, such as webmasters, are responsible for monitoring their employees' professional social media sites. The monitoring responsibilities include reviewing the professional social media sites on a regular basis. If supervisors discover questionable communications or behavior on professional social media sites, the supervisors are required to contact the appropriate authorities for assistance. If DOE employees decide to create a professional social media site and they are notified of questionable communications or behavior on their site, they are required to contact the appropriate authorities as well as their supervisor for assistance.[7]

c. DOE supervisors reserve the right to remove, disable, and provide feedback regarding professional social media sites that do not adhere to the law or Chancellor's Regulations or do not reasonably align with these Guidelines;

d. To assist in monitoring, as a recommended practice to the extent possible, the default setting for comments on professional social media sites should be turned off. If the default

setting for comments is turned on, the comments on the site must be monitored on a daily basis;

e. When establishing professional social media sites, supervisors and employees should consider the intended audience for the site and consider the level of privacy assigned to the site, specifically, whether the site should be a private network (for example, it is limited to a particular class or particular grade within a school) or a public network (for example, anyone within the school can participate, or a larger group outside of the school can participate). It is a recommended practice for professional social media sites to be private networks, unless there is a specific educational need for the site to be a public network; and

f. DOE supervisors should maintain a detailed log of all reported non-compliant communications as well as any violations that are otherwise brought to the supervisor's attention.

5. **Press Inquiries**

Any press inquiries received via professional social media sites should be referred to the DOE Office of Communications and Media Relations (http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/default.htm).

E. Personal Social Media Use

1. **Communication with DOE Students**

In order to maintain a professional and appropriate relationship with students, DOE employees should not communicate[8] with students who are currently enrolled in DOE schools on personal social media sites. This provision is subject to the following exceptions: (a) communication with relatives and (b) if an emergency situation requires such communication, in which case the DOE employee should notify his/her supervisor of the contact as soon as possible.

2. **Guidance Regarding Personal Social Media Sites**

DOE employees should exercise caution and common sense when using personal social media sites:

a. As a recommended practice, DOE employees are encouraged to use appropriate privacy settings to control access to their personal social media sites. However, be aware that there are limitations to privacy settings. Private communication published on the internet can easily become public. Furthermore, social media sites can change their current default privacy settings and other functions. As a result, employees have an individualized responsibility to understand the rules of the social media site being utilized;

b. DOE employees should not "tag" photos of other DOE employees, DOE volunteers, DOE contractors or DOE vendors without the prior permission of the individuals being tagged;

c. Personal social media use, including off-hours use, has the potential to result in disruption at school and/or the workplace, and can be in violation of DOE policies, Chancellor's

Regulations, and law;

d. The posting or disclosure of personally identifiable student information or confidential information via personal social media sites, in violation of Chancellor's Regulations, is prohibited; and

e. DOE employees should not use the DOE's logo in any postings and should not link to the DOE's website or post DOE material on any personal social media sites without the permission of the DOE Office of Communications and Media Relations.

F. Applicability of DOE Policies and Other Laws

1. These Guidelines provide guidance intended to supplement, not supersede, existing DOE policies, Chancellor's Regulations and laws. Users of professional social media sites are responsible for complying with all applicable federal, state and local laws, including, but not limited to the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) (http://business.ftc.gov/privacy-and-security/children%E2%80%99s-privacy), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/index.html), and intellectual property laws.

2. These Guidelines are not designed to serve as a code of conduct for social media use. However, all existing DOE policies, regulations and laws that cover employee conduct may be applicable in the social media environment. These include, but are not limited to, Chancellor's Regulations, the Conflicts of Interest Law, and Section 3020-a of the Education Law.

3. DOE employees who are mandated reporters[9] are required to abide by the same reporting responsibilities in a social media context.

G. Additional Inquiries

This document is meant to provide general guidance and does not cover every potential social media situation. Should any questions arise, please consult the Frequently Asked Questions segment or contact your DOE Senior Field Counsel. As these Guidelines address rapidly changing technology, the DOE will regularly revisit these Guidelines and will update them as needed.

H. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

OVERVIEW

1. Why is the DOE issuing guidance regarding social media?

• Social media technology offers many educational benefits. The DOE is issuing this guidance to provide recommended practices for employees to take advantage of this technology in a manner that encourages professionalism, responsibility, safety and awareness.

• In addition, these Guidelines provide recommended best practices for employees who use social media for personal communications.

GETTING STARTED

2. What if DOE employees are already using social media for either professional or personal purposes?

> • Professional social media use: DOE employees currently using social media for professional purposes should submit a registry form to, and obtain approval from, their supervisors. At the same time, employees should also examine whether their use aligns with the Social Media Guidelines and these FAQs. Any use not consistent with these documents should be altered or amended within a reasonable period of time. If employees have linked their social media site to a personal email address, they should transition the site to a professional email address.

> • Personal social media use: DOE employees who use social media for personal purposes should take steps to remove current DOE students, subject to the exceptions listed in the Guidelines, from those sites. Additionally, employees should review all of the Social Media Guidelines and FAQs to ensure familiarity with the recommended practices.

3. What are some common types of social media?

> • **Blogs** - Short for 'web-logs', these are sites that can function as ongoing journals with multiple entries. Typically, entries are categorized with 'tags' for easy searching. Most blogs allow for reader comments. Examples: *Blogger, Wordpress, TypePad.*

> • **Micro-Blogs** - These blogs allow for shorter content posts, typically with a limited set of typed characters allowed. Micro-blogs can be used for status updates and to quickly communicate information to 'friends' or 'followers.' Examples: *Twitter*, *Tumblr.*

> • **Networking -** These sites allow people to connect with each other around common interests, pursuits and other categories. Examples: *Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Ning.*

> • **Photo/Video** - These sites allow people to share videos, images, slideshows and other media. Often these sites allow viewers to comment and share posted content. Examples: *YouTube*, *Vimeo*, *Flickr.*

4. What should DOE employees who want to develop professional social media for their classroom, school, or office do?

> • Employees should review the Social Media Guidelines and FAQs periodically to ensure that they are familiar with their contents and are aware of any updates.

> • Employees should research and familiarize themselves with the social media site they intend to utilize. For example, if the proposed professional social media use involves students, employees are required to review the social media site's regulations and determine whether children under a certain age are allowed to use the site. In addition, employees should, for example, understand the default privacy and viewing settings for the social media site. Where possible, we recommend that DOE employees establish group pages, rather than individual profiles, for educational purposes.

> • Employees should complete and submit a registry form to their supervisor for approval.

The registry form includes questions about key information regarding the intended use of professional social media such as purpose and audience, description of use, and alternative methods of communication. Once supervisor approval is obtained, employees may begin creating the professional social media site, sending parent notification, and begin posting relevant information.

MONITORING

5. Who monitors professional social media sites and how frequently are they monitored?

• Professional social media sites will be reviewed and monitored by supervisors or their designees, such as a webmaster, on a regular basis. The specific level of review required for each professional social media site will depend on the particular characteristics of the social media site. Sites that are interactive, for example, those that allow comments and posting, will need to be monitored more closely. Other factors that will impact the frequency include the level of privacy assigned to the site, specifically, whether the site is a private network (for example, limited to a particular class) or a public network (open to anyone within the school or open to a larger group outside of the school). Employees who decide to establish professional social media sites can engage in a voluntary review of their specific site on a regular basis.

STUDENT COMMUNICATION

6. Do these Guidelines apply to DOE students?

• These Guidelines do not address student-to-student communication via social media. The DOE's Bill of Student Rights and Responsibilities sets forth expected standards of behavior with respect to student communication. The DOE's Discipline Code establishes the range of disciplinary options and guidance interventions that can be used when students engage in misconduct involving social media.

7. How should DOE employees respond to "friend" requests by current DOE students on their personal social media sites and accounts?

• If DOE employees receive a request from a current DOE student to connect or communicate through a personal social media site, they should refuse the request. The following language is one suggested response: "Please do not be offended if I do not accept or respond to your request. As a DOE employee, the agency's Social Media Guidelines do not permit interactions with current DOE students on personal social media sites. If you do want to connect, please contact me through the school (or class) page at _____ [insert link]."

PERSONAL USE

8. May DOE employees using social media for personal use communicate with DOE colleagues?

• These Guidelines do not address communication between employees on personal social media sites. DOE employees who use personal social media are encouraged to use appropriate privacy settings to control access to their personal social media sites.

9. Why is it a recommended practice to have separate professional and personal social media sites and email addresses?

• The reason for this distinction is to ensure separation between personal and professional spheres of online communication for DOE employees. In this context, this separation is intended to clarify that professional social media and personal social media are different. Professional social media is work-related and may involve employee-to-student communication. Personal social media is not work-related, and subject to certain exceptions noted in the Guidelines, does not involve employee-to-student communication.

FEEDBACK

10. May DOE parents, students and employees provide feedback on these Guidelines?

• Yes. The DOE welcomes feedback regarding these Guidelines and the FAQs. Because technology changes rapidly, the DOE plans to review and update its guidance as necessary. If you have any feedback or suggestions, please forward them to SocialMedia@schools.nyc.gov.

Parents

11. Will DOE parents be notified regarding their children's social media use for school-related activities?

• Yes. DOE schools will notify parents and obtain their consent through media release forms before students may participate in professional social media activities. The media release forms will describe the professional social media sites that are available to their children. Parents who have questions or concerns about their children's use of social media for school purposes should contact the school for more information.

REPORTING

12. What should DOE supervisors and their designees, who are responsible for monitoring professional social media, do when they discover or receive a report of inappropriate activity?

• A DOE supervisor who discovers or receives a report of inappropriate or questionable content posted on a professional social media site should contact the appropriate authorities for assistance, in accordance with existing DOE reporting requirements. Depending on the circumstances, the appropriate authorities may include, but are not limited to: the Network or Cluster Leader, Borough Safety Directors, the Office of the Special Commissioner of Investigations, the Office of Special Investigations, the Office of Equal Opportunity, the Office of the General Counsel, the Senior Field Counsel, the New York City Administration for Children's Services, and the New York City Police Department.

• In addition, if other members of a school community find inappropriate material on a professional social media site, they are encouraged to report it to a DOE supervisor.

13. How can DOE employees and supervisors determine what constitutes confidential

information or personally identifiable student information that should not be posted or disclosed?

> • If DOE employees and supervisors have any questions about what constitutes confidential information or personally identifiable student information, they should contact their Senior Field Counsel, the DOE's Office of Legal Services at (212) 374-6888 or asklegal@schools.nyc.gov.

Appendix G: Example of Social Media Policy

San Diego, California Unified School District (2013)

STAFF SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

San Diego Unified School District supports the use of online social media to facilitate District programs, departments and school sites in building a more successful parent, community, student and employee network. This document contains San Diego Unified School District's guidelines regarding the use of online social media.

A. Definitions:

"Social Media" includes the various online technology tools that enable people to communicate easily over the internet to share information and resources. Social media can include text, audio, video, images, podcasts, and other multimedia communications. These websites not only provide information, but allows for interaction during this informational exchange through user-generated content.

"Technology" includes computers, notebooks, the Internet, telephones, cellular telephones, personal digital assistants, pagers, MP3 players, such as iPod's, USB drives, wireless access points (routers), or any wireless communication device.

"District Technology" is that which is owned or provided by the district.

"Personal Technology" is non-district technology.

B. Official District Social Media Presence

These guidelines are tailored primarily to social networking sites. Some examples include:

- Facebook (http://www.facebook.com)
- Hi5 (http://hi5.com/friend/displayHomePage.do)
- Flickr (http://www.flickr.com/)
- Twitter (http://www.twitter.com)
- YouTube (http://www.youtube.com)
- LinkedIn (http://www.linkedin.com)
- Blogs (Web Logs)
- Any district social media site

C. Requisite Authorization

1. **Authorization -** District presence on any social media site, including school-related accounts, such as clubs, teams, field trips, course, or other sites associated with the district or a district school must be authorized by the Director of Communications or designee. Any sites, accounts, or pages existing absent prior authorization will be subject to review, editing, and removal. As appropriate, a recommendation for disciplinary action may result.

To request permission for a district-related site, please utilize the following form and identify a "content owner," or individual responsible for performing regular monitoring and maintenance of the website or account, and a responsible administrator assigned to the specific site. Please note that for emergency purposes only, each district-affiliated site or social media account must name the district's Communications Department as an administrator. However, the site, specifically, the content owner and responsible administrator shall be responsible for monitoring and maintaining these sites and accounts.

2. **Foundation and PTA Sites -** Authorized school websites shall maintain a clear separation from the website of their school foundation or parent-teacher group. However, a link to the school foundation or parent-teacher group website is permissible. Principals direct certain aspects of foundation and PTA websites, including, but not limited to, directing that district policies regarding fundraisers and fees be properly reflected on the website.

3. **District Logo -** The use of the San Diego Unified School District logo(s) on a social media site must be approved by the Communications Department. For approved logo use, follow San Diego Unified Logo Guidelines established by the Communications Department.

4. **General District Sites and Accounts -** The district's general social media sites, including the district's blogs, Facebook and Twitter accounts, will be managed by the Communications Department. Duplicate, unofficial sites shall be reported, and investigated.

5. **Sponsors and Advertising -** Sponsor logos are permissible on district-related websites, with the prior approval of the site administrator. The page must also include or link to contact information for an individual who can provide information about sponsorship. Advertising for third-party events or activities unassociated with official district business is strictly prohibited.

Content Disclaimer – Any approved official presence on social media sites outside of those created and monitored by the district's Communications Department shall include the following text:

> "The views expressed on this site do not reflect the views of the San Diego Unified School District. This site contains user-created content which is not endorsed by the District. The purpose of this site is". . . (then specify the purpose).

D. Maintenance and Monitoring Responsibilities

Content Owners are responsible for monitoring and maintaining official presences on social media sites as follows:

1. Content must conform to all applicable state and federal laws, as well as all district and board policies and administrative procedures.

2. Content must be kept current and accurate, refreshed at least weekly, following San Diego Unified Website Guidelines and Policies established by the Communications Department.

3. Content must not violate copyright or intellectual property laws and the content owner must secure the expressed consent of all involved parties for the right to distribute or publish recordings, photos, images, video, text, slideshow presentations, artwork or any other materials. Before posting any photographs of students, content owners shall review the list of students whose parents have not consented to having their child's photograph taken or published. No student photographs should be published for personal, promotional use or any other non- school related purpose. The Communications Department recommends that content owners request that a second person review all photographs prior to publication. One person may catch issues that the first set of eyes overlooked.

4. All postings and comments by users are monitored and responded to as necessary on a regular basis. Postings and comments of an inappropriate nature or containing information unrelated to official or District business should be deleted promptly. Such postings shall be reported, investigated, and authors will be disciplined as appropriate.

E. Off-Campus versus On-Campus Social Media and Internet Use Guidelines

Although staff members enjoy free speech rights guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, certain types of communication, typically by virtue of their subject-matter connection to campus, may relate enough to school to have ramifications for the author or subject at the district site.

When using district technology, electronic communication is governed by the district acceptable use policy, which will be enforced accordingly. Students and staff should not expect privacy in the contents of their personal files on the district's Internet system or other district technology, including email. District technology may only be used for educational purposes. Use for entertainment purposes, such as personal blogging, instant messaging, on-line shopping or gaming is not allowed. The use of district technology is a privilege, not a right.

Use of personal technology/devices may violate the district's acceptable use policy if the district reasonably believes the conduct or speech will cause actual, material disruption of school activities or a staff member's ability to perform his or her job duties.

Off-campus internet usage is largely unrelated to school; however, in certain circumstances courts have held that the off-campus online communications may be connected enough to campus to result in either student or staff-member discipline.

This section of the guidelines is intended to present to district staff members examples of such situations, and guidelines for responsible, ethical internet use.

District Network & On-Campus Social Media (Acceptable Use Policy Applies)

Employees may be disciplined for online conduct and/or speech which the District reasonably believes will cause actual, material disruption to school activities.

Off-Campus Internet Usage
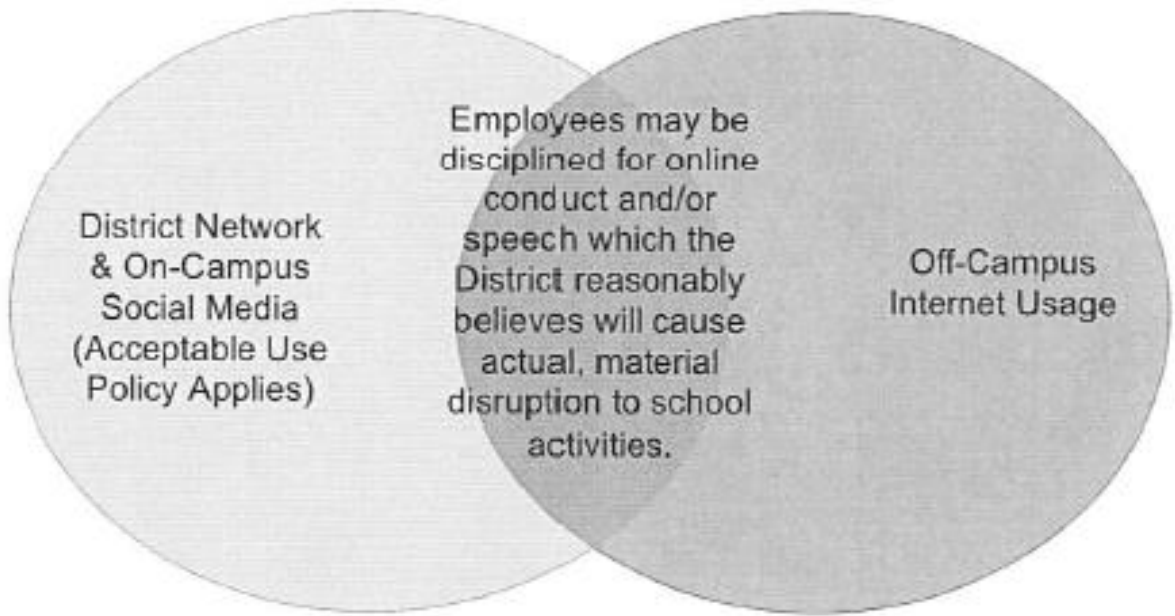
1. Staff Use of Personal Technology

a. Limit On-Duty Use – Staff members are encouraged to limit their personal technology use during duty hours. Use of Personal Technology for non-District business should be limited to off-duty time and designated breaks.

b. **Work/Personal Distinction** – Staff members are encouraged to maintain a clear distinction between their personal social media use and any District-related social media sites.

c. **Student Photographs** – Absent parent permission for the particular purpose, staff members may not send, share, or post pictures, text messages, e-mails or other material that personally-identifies district students in electronic or any other form of Personal Technology. Staff members may not use images of students, e-mails, or other personally- identifiable student information for personal gain or profit.

d. **Professional Effectiveness** - District employees must be mindful that any Internet information is ultimately accessible to the world. To avoid jeopardizing their professional effectiveness, employees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the privacy policies, settings, and protections on any social networking websites to which they choose to subscribe and be aware that information posted online, despite privacy protections, is easily and often reported to administrators or exposed to District students.

e. **Personal Social Networking & Media Accounts** – Before employees create or join an online social network, they should ask themselves whether they would be comfortable if a 'friend' decided to send the information to their students, the students' parents, or their supervisor. Educators must give serious thought to the implications of joining an online social network.

f. **Responsible Online Identity Monitoring** – Employees are encouraged to monitor their 'online identity,' by performing search engine research on a routine basis in order to prevent their online profiles from being fraudulently compromised or simply to track information posted about them online. Often, if there is unwanted information posted about the employee online, that employee can contact the site administrator in order to request its removal.

g. **Friending District Students** – Employees should not have online interactions with students on social networking sites outside of those forums dedicated to academic use. District employees' social networking profiles and personal blogs should not be linked to district students' online profiles. Additionally, District employees should use appropriate discretion when using social networks for personal communications and should limit this activity to off-duty hours and the use of their own electronic communication devices.

h. **Contacting Students Off-Hours** – When in doubt about contacting a district student during off-duty hours using either district-owned communication devices, network services, and Internet access route or those of the employee, begin by contacting the student's parent(s) or legal guardian through their district registered phone number. District employees should only contact district students for educational purposes and must never disclose confidential information possessed by the employee by virtue of his or her district employment.

Because online content can be spread in mere seconds to a mass audience, the District encourages employees to ask themselves before posting any information online whether they would be comfortable having this information printed in the newspaper alongside their photo.

If you would not bring it into the classroom, do not post it online!

SOCIAL MEDIA SITE AUTHORIZATION FORM

Employees of San Diego Unified School District who wish to create and maintain an official district or school presence on any social media site must have a copy of this completed form on file in the school/department supervisor's office, and a copy submitted to the district's Communications Department, prior to a social media site's activation. Either a hard copy or .pdf copy filed electronically is acceptable. Note: Once authorized by a school principal or department supervisor, the social media site administrator and their supervisor are fully responsible for regular monitoring of the site, appropriate on-line conduct and adhering to the district's official Social Media Guidelines.

Date:
_____

Dept. or School Site: _____

Employee Name: _____ID:_____

Employee Title: _____District e-mail: _____

Nature of
request:

☐ Website/page: _____

☐ Blog: _____

☐ Other:_____

☐ Other: _____

☐ Other: _____

Purpose of presence on social media site: _____

_____

SITE ACCOUNT INFORMATION: E-mail address associated with site:
_____ User name:
_____Password: _____

All individuals with site account
access:

Name: _____Title: _____
Name: _____Title: _____
Name: _____Title: _____

**AUTHORIZATION BY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL OR DEPARTMENT
SUPERVISOR:**

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Title: _____Date:_____

*New Facebook sites must be created as a "Business" or "Place" – "Personal" sites are not acceptable
for conducting official district or school business. As a requirement, the district Communications
Department must be named as a site administrator by granting administrator access to:
communications@sandi.net, only for the purpose of emergency access. The social media site's
administrator and school principal/department supervisor are 100% responsible for monitoring the site
and adhering to the district's official Social Media Guidelines.*