USE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA WITH STUDENTS

As defined in Board Policy DH(LOCAL), Certified and/or Classified employees who intend to communicate through electronic media with students who are currently enrolled in the District must notify the campus principal in writing prior to use. The employee must comply with the provisions outlined below. All other non-authorized employees are prohibited from directly communicating with students who are enrolled in the District through electronic media. Failure to comply with these regulations will result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including a possible recommendation for termination of employment.

An employee is not subject to these provisions if the employee has a familial relationship with a student. For example, an employee may have a relationship with his or her own child, niece or nephew. Despite this exception, any communications shall not violate any established District policy in regards to content or purpose. See Policies [DH(LOCAL) and FFH(LOCAL)].

The following definitions apply for the use of electronic media with students:

- Electronic media includes all forms of social media, such as traditional text messaging and classroom text messaging (e.g., Remind101), instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video sharing Web sites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, videotelephony (e.g., Facetime) and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn). Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunications such as landlines, cell phones, and Web-based applications.

Communicate means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee’s personal social network page, blog, tweet or photo sharing application/site) is not a communication:
however, the employee may be subject to District regulations on personal electronic communications. [See Policy DH(LOCAL)]. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a communication.

An employee who is authorized and uses electronic media to communicate with students shall observe the following:

- The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee’s professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an example with an extracurricular duty, matters relating specifically to the extracurricular activity

- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page (“professional page”) for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable District/campus administration and parents to access the employee’s “professional” social network page, if utilized.

- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents. However, an employee is not subject to these provisions to the extent the employee has a familial relationship with a student

- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, including:
  - Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records
  - Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student, which is a violation of the Texas Penal Code and can result in criminal penalties beyond the potential employment consequences imposed by the District. [See Policy DF(LEGAL)].
• Upon request from District/campus administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with any one or more currently enrolled students.

• Upon written request from a parent/guardian, student or administrator, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through electronic media. In the event the request to discontinue communication is from a parent/guardian or student, the employee shall inform campus administration.