

SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATIVE
REGULATION

815 AR.1 ACADEMIC SOCIAL NETWORKING

As we embark on new technologies in the 21st century, it is important that educators in the Canon-McMillan School District embrace new ways to provide quality educational experiences for our students. Today’s learner is a “digital native” that builds understanding of new concepts through the use of technology.

As educators, we respect the power of discourse, collaboration and self-reflection in the classroom. However, these types of learning experiences can occur well beyond the classroom through the use of academic social networking tools such as blogs and wikis.

The following are examples of using academic social networking to facilitate teaching, writing development, and learning as a virtual extension of the classroom within the Canon-McMillan School District.

1. Debate course topics, including assigned readings.
2. Maintain a journal of work performed on group projects.
3. Collaborate on ideas.
4. Develop projects with peer review.
5. Post school and classroom documents like syllabi and handouts.

The tremendous growth in social networking among children and teens demonstrates the need for school districts to provide appropriate avenues to deliver content, as well as, model the appropriate use of these technologies. The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidance on the use of academic social networking by promoting proper digital citizenship while adhering to district policy.

DEFINITIONS

Social Networking – a social structure made of individuals or organizations that are tied by one or more specific types of specific types of interdependency, such as values, visions, friendship, etc. Types of social networks include blogs and wikis.

Employees of the Canon-McMillan School District are not permitted to enter in a social network with students of the school district for the purpose of socializing outside of school. Examples of a social network include *MySpace* and *FaceBook*.

Academic Social Networking – For the purpose of this procedure, an academic social network is an online learning community created for the specific purpose of promoting education and directly tied to the course curriculum.

Educators in the Canon-McMillan School District are permitted to create academic social networks built specifically to enhance course content and tied directly to the curriculum. District policy and procedure must be adhered in the creation and maintenance of the academic social network.

Blogs - an abbreviation of 'weblogs' - web sites which contain dated entries in reverse chronological order (most recent first) about a particular topic. Functioning as an online newsletter, blogs can be written by one person or a group of contributors. Entries contain commentary and links to other Web sites, and images as well as a search facility may also be included. A blog, typically authored by an individual, does not allow visitors to change the original posted material; only add comments to the original content.

Wiki- A collaborative web site comprises the perpetual collective work of many authors. Similar to a blog in structure and logic, a wiki allows anyone to edit, delete or modify content that has been placed on the web site, including the work of previous authors.

Discussion Board – An online bulletin board where someone can leave messages and expect responses to the message. These messages form a **thread**. Threads created for academic social networks are based on academic themes or concepts.

GUIDELINES

1. The district shall make effort to ensure that the academic social networking resources are used responsibly by students and staff.
2. Administrators and staff members have a professional responsibility to help teach students learn the value of appropriate collaboration and communication via technology.
3. Wikispaces and Blogging sites are authentic forms of journalistic publications that are posted on the Internet. Students and staff will use such sites as a discussion board to post and respond to information pertaining to various learning topics within the curriculum established by the Canon-McMillan School District. The discussion boards will serve as a tool to engage students in collaborative projects that will foster 21st century learning skills.
4. Teachers must first receive permission from his or her building principal prior to creating a blog or wiki. Permission must be given in writing (email is acceptable).

5. All content must be directly related to the course curriculum. The purpose of the blog or wiki is to promote discussion, reflection, and collaboration on topics being covered in class.
6. Teachers must review the appropriate guidelines and explain that all district and school rules apply to behavior on the website.
7. Once the rules are reviewed with the class, the student is to be given the *Academic Social Network Contract* (see samples of guidelines and contract at end of this procedure). The student and the student's parent or guardian must sign the form prior to be given permission to use the blog or wiki.
8. The academic social network must be made private and only permit students and educators associated to the class. Teachers are not permitted to create sites that do not have a privacy setting.
9. During an active topic or theme in discussion board thread, teachers must closely monitor the thread for appropriate content. Inappropriate behavior on the thread will be addressed according to district policy and the school handbook.
10. Once the class is over, the students are to be removed from the site and entrance to the wiki or blog must be closed.

PROHIBITIONS

Students and staff are expected to act in a responsible, ethical and legal manner in accordance with **Policy 815 Acceptable Use of Internet**, accepted rules of network etiquette, district policy, school rules, and federal and state law. The following are prohibited when posting information to a social networking site:

1. Personal information about oneself, other peers, staff members, administrators, and family members. Personal information includes but is not limited to: addresses, street names, email addresses, and phone numbers.
2. Inappropriate language. Inappropriate includes but is not limited to: slang, vulgar language, derogatory comments, obscene comments, swearing.
3. The use of "chat" language. Appropriate grammar should be used at all times when posting comments. The user will use complete sentences and adhere to the conventions of the English language.
4. Posting comments and/or information that does not focus on the learning topic presented by the teacher. This is not a forum to digitally socialize with peers about items outside the learning topic.

5. Plagiarism is unacceptable. Academic social networking sites such as Wikispaces and Blogging sites but not limited to represent authentic learning experiences. All references from the internet or any other publication must be cited when posting information to a social networking site.
6. Cyberbullying is unacceptable and will constitute discipline action and removal from social networking site(s).
7. A student is not permitted to edit a teacher created page unless instructed to do so by the teacher who created it.
8. Students are not permitted to send messages via the profile link within a Wikispace.