



# THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

*A high-quality education system that prepares all students for college, career, and life.*

This policy applies to all Washington State Board of Education board members and staff.

## DEFINITION

Social Media is an umbrella term encompassing various activities that integrate technology, social interaction and content creation. There are numerous forms of social media, such as blogs, wikis, photo and video sharing, podcasts, social networking, ideation, bookmarking, discussion boards, gamification, and virtual worlds. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to Wordpress, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Blogger, YouTube, Flickr, Wikipedia, and website comment sections.

### 1. The Purpose of the Policy

Social media tools are a powerful method of communication and are used by millions of individuals and groups to share information and connect with others. The State Board of Education will use social media tools and channels when appropriate to enhance communication and engagement with the public, partners, stakeholders, employers, and others to support its mission, key goals, and core processes.

This policy describes how the agency will use social media and gives SBE board members and staff direction and guidelines for proper use of social media in connection with their SBE role while at work and outside the workplace.

### 2. Management of SBE Social Media Accounts

The SBE communications manager, at the direction of the executive director or designee(s), is responsible for establishing and supervising all social media accounts for the agency. This includes establishing, monitoring and administering policies for appropriate conduct, content, security, and records retention on all social media accounts for the agency. These accounts are considered agency tools. Individual staff may not establish a social media account using an SBE email without approval from the executive director.

The posting and maintenance of content on SBE social media accounts is limited to the communications manager at the direction of the executive director or designee(s). Only the communications manager is to log on and/or contribute content to SBE social media accounts. Social media account management shall take place during paid work hours using state equipment.

### 3. Staff Access to Social Media

SBE staff may view (but not log on to) social media for professional use. Professional use is defined as furthering specific job responsibilities or promoting professional development. Reasonable use in this manner for professional use during work hours using state equipment is permitted. If a staff requires logon access to a social media site to accomplish a specific task related to agency business, prior approval of the executive director must be obtained.



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SBE staff may view the agency's social media accounts for the purpose of staying informed of SBE external communications. Reasonable use in this manner during work hours using state equipment is permitted. No staff may use state resources, including but not limited to work time, computers, and software programs such as Internet and e-mail for the purposes of viewing, logging on or posting to non-work related social media. There is no de minimis personal use of social media allowed.

#### 4. Board Member and Staff Obligations Regarding Personal Use of Social Media

SBE takes no position on individuals' personal use of social media outside the workplace (that is, using personal time and resources). It is the agency's obligation, however, to inform all staff and board members of their responsibilities regarding communications involving the agency, its employees and its stakeholders on personal social media sites:

##### a. Board Members and Staff Cannot Represent SBE on Personal Social Media Sites

No board member or staff may, or represent that they do, speak on behalf of the Board on a personal social media site except as authorized by the communications manager. Staff or board members who mention their affiliation with SBE on a personal media site should identify any views they express as theirs alone and not necessarily representative of the views of the agency or the Board. Board members should follow [Board Norms](#) (for example, supporting board decisions when providing information to the public) when using personal social media accounts in a potentially public social media setting. Board members and staff should be aware that when posting comments, some sites will pull information from your profile and post it as an identifier.

##### b. Disclosure of Confidential Agency Information Is Prohibited

SBE board members and staff may not post confidential or private information about the agency, board members, staff, or SBE stakeholders on any social media site. Board members and staff should avoid sharing any media which may include confidential or private information (for example, photos with reports on desks or computer screens in the background).

##### c. Conduct of Agency Business on Personal Social Media Sites Is Limited

Staff must not conduct or discuss SBE business on personal social media sites. Board members may conduct outreach on social media, but should avoid discussing board business with other board members on social media.

##### d. Use of SBE Name, Logo and Media is Strictly Limited

Staff may list SBE as his or her employer on a personal social media site, but use of the SBE logo is prohibited. Use of other agency media (for example, photos, images, or video) is allowed with attribution to the State Board of Education. Use of the agency's name and/or



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logo to: promote personal causes or political beliefs; solicit or conduct outside employment; or engage in similar unofficial usage, on a social media site is also prohibited.

### 5. Personal Legal Responsibility

SBE board members and staff should be aware that an individual is legally responsible for anything he or she posts or writes on a personal social media site.

### 6. Best Practices Are Recommended

Common sense and sound judgment are usually the best tools in avoiding problems. The following best practices are highly recommended for any SBE board members or staff who use social media for personal use:

**Be respectful.** Individuals should be thoughtful in personal posts and respectful of how other people in your work and personal life may be affected or viewed by those who read your posts. When disagreeing with others' opinions, keep it appropriate and polite.

**Honor others' privacy.** If you plan on posting photos you have taken of work-related events and activities, be courteous by checking first with co-workers who are in the picture. Not everyone wants their photo displayed on the Internet.

**Strive for accuracy.** Make sure you have your facts straight before posting. Correct errors quickly. If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and quickly provide the correct information. If appropriate, modify an earlier post to make it clear that you have corrected an error.

**Be aware of your SBE association.** If you identify yourself as SBE board member or staff, or have a public facing position for which your SBE association is known to the general public, ensure your profile and related content (even if it is of a personal and not an official nature) is consistent with how you wish to present yourself as an SBE professional, appropriate with the public trust associated with your position.

**Have no expectation of privacy.** It's social media, after all. Remember that posts in the social media world are or can easily be made available to the public at-large. Keep in mind that what you publish will be widely accessible for some time and, in some cases, indefinitely.