



Use of Social Media by School Administrators

Administrators can use social media on their personal account to take any position on candidates, voting, ballot measures etc. However, there are many nuances that make this simple statement fraught with legal and political issues.

Education Code section 7054 specifically notes that no "district resources, facilities..." can be used to voice support to a candidate, ballot proposition etc. Therefore, using a district issued device, district space, or use of district's internet access make this statute's breadth extremely sweeping. The olden days of using the district copying machine to copy a mailer has now been replaced with the scrutiny of whether the pro Prop 51/55 tweet was made during work hours on district device, using the district's wifi, while sitting in a district facility. While Education Code 7054 specifically mentions candidates and propositions, it generally does not apply to non-persuasive messages like "please vote." Further, the administrator should also examine who owns the social media account. If the FB page belongs to the school, these persuasive political commentaries are problematic. However, information posts, such as notice regarding an upcoming candidates forum, polling place location might be appropriate.

Ultimately, it is challenging to issue blanket social media use guidelines for political speech, without looking at the nuances of the community, political climate and the sophistication of the administrator with social media and accounts. This is also important to note as there is at least one published California Court of Appeal decision that held an employee accountable for his off-hours, off-site internet post that did not involve district equipment ([Lampedusa](#)), therefore blanket generalizations around appropriateness of messages on social media are challenging.

However, we do provide the following best practices around use of social media.

1. Maintain a separate professional social media account from your personal one.
2. If engaging in persuasive political speech, be aware of Education Code 7054.
3. Be cognizant that as a high profile administrator, there is a greater reach to make the "nexus" between your speech and employment.

Consult your legal team if you have any questions. F3's eMatters team can provide training to administrators on the use of social media, as well as broader issues concerning appropriate use of technology by staff and students.