

## **Testimony on HB 4791:**

**Social Media Policies Between Students and School Personnel**  
**House Education Committee**  
February 4, 2016

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### **Empower educators to practice and model appropriate digital citizenship**

- Educators use social media in a variety of ways everyday to interact with parents, the community, other teachers and students.
- Student experiences in the classroom need to mirror their real world experiences which include social media.
- Social media provides a real life opportunity for teachers and students to be apprenticed into appropriate digital citizenship and authentic interaction with digital literacy.

### **Encourage interactions rather than restrictions**

- Social media is difficult to define since it is constantly changing and evolving.
- School districts may seek to err on the side of caution and restrict all social media interactions.
- All channels of communication can be misused, but that does not mean policies are needed for each of them.

### **Research supports the use of social media**

- Social network sites can serve as direct and indirect supports for learning including validation of creative work and help with school-related tasks.
- Students use social network sites to connect with subject matter experts as well as build social relationships with other learners - including their teacher.
- Integrating social media into formal curriculum could increase student engagement, help organize academic and extracurricular activities, and facilitate social supports for school-related tasks and activities.

### **Considerations for HB 4791**

- School districts have policies about the behavior of school personnel.
- Consider a "Code of Conduct" or other non-mandatory policy for school districts to use.
- Encourage students, teachers, and parents to work together to develop and create digital citizenship norms to support students.
- When developing any policy be sure to include "teachers" rather than broadly categorizing "school personnel" in the decision making process.



## Supporting Research

\*SNS = social network sites

Educational researchers who conduct empirical investigation into the educational uses of social media, including two prominent social media researchers from Michigan State University, Dr. Christine Greenhow and Benjamin Gleason, have found positive outcomes of social media use. In a number of academic articles (outlined below), Greenhow and Gleason have reported that social media use in formal and informal learning settings increases student engagement (with the course content), facilitates interactions between students and between instructor and students, encourages discussion of course themes and material, and allows students to organize learning-related activities, such as homework and study groups.

### Impact of Social Media on Student Learning

*Source 1:* Gleason, B., Greenhow, C. and Li, J. (2014) 'Psychological, social, and educational dynamics of adolescents' online social networking', 5(2), pp. 115–130.

- "...studies on adolescent learners' beliefs about informal or formal learning practices within SNSs suggest important design considerations for media educators, educational technologist and researchers interested in creating and evaluating SNS or designed social networking applications for education. These studies argue for teaching and learning that reflects many of the features of social network spaces: they are fun, participatory, and invite connection and communication between learners. These studies also demonstrate the centrality of SNS in young people's lives, blurring boundaries between online and offline, in- school and out-of school, social and academic."
- "Erjavec (2013) noted that adolescent Facebook users acknowledged the connection between their SNS use and their learning; in fact, young people indicated they used Facebook for school, but also for 'school-related' issues. Thus, it seems clear that young people are interested in using Facebook as a site not only of active teaching and learning (to connect with subject matter experts, to create and watch videos, and to share useful learning resources), but as a way to build social relationships between all learners (including the teacher)."
- "...research suggests that integrating SNS into the formal curriculum could bring a number of advantages, including increasing engagement, using the platform to organize academic and extracurricular activities, and facilitating social supports for school -related tasks and activities (Greenhow et al., 2014; Robelia et al., 2011)."

*Source 2:* Greenhow, C. (2011) 'Online social networks and learning', *On the Horizon*, 19(1), pp. 12–4. doi: <http://dx..org/10.1108/1074812111107663>.

- "(1) social network sites can serve as direct and indirect supports for learning, such as providing an emotional outlet for school-related stress, validation of creative work, peer-alumni support for school-life transitions, and help with school-related tasks; and (2) online social networking can stimulate social and civic benefits, online and offline, which has implications for education."
- "Currently, social media are largely blocked in schools due to privacy, security, and copyright concerns. In the USA, the National Educational Technology Plan published in November 2010, and recent educational standards, both assume 24/7 access and use of newer web technologies for learning and advocate appropriation of technologies students already use, and prefer to use, for educational purposes. Consideration of how social media, such as social network sites, currently support informal learning may advance one's ability to construct effective social media-enabled environments for more formal learning purposes."
- "...students used their online social network to fulfill social learning functions within and across informal and formal learning spheres of activity. These social learning functions included: obtaining



validation and appreciation of creative work through feedback on their profile pages; peer/alumni support – that is, reaching out to former classmates to give or receive help in managing the ups and downs of high school or college life; and help with school-related tasks (Greenhow and Robelia, 2009a)"

### **Parents and Social Media**

Source: Duggan, M., Lenhart, A., Lampe, C. and Ellison, N.B. (2015) Parents and social media. Available at: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/07/16/parents-and-social-media/> (Accessed: 2 February 2016).

- Roughly nine-in-ten American adults (92%) own a mobile phone of some kind.
- 74% of parents who use social media get support from their friends there.
- 79% of parents who use social media agree that they get useful information via their networks.
- 59% of social-media-using parents indicate that they have come across useful information specifically about parenting in the last 30 days while looking at other social media content.
- Fully 94% of Facebook-using parents share, post or comment on Facebook (as opposed to simply reading or viewing content), with 70% of parents doing so "frequently" or "sometimes."

### **Teens and Social Media (Ages 13-17)**

Source. Lenhart, A. (2015) *Teens, social media & technology overview 2015*. Available at:

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/04/09/teens-social-media-technology-2015/> (Accessed: 2 February 2016).

- African-American teens are the most likely of any group of teens to have a smartphone, with 85% having access to one, compared with 71% of both white and Hispanic teens.
- Fully 91% of teens go online from mobile devices at least occasionally. Among these "mobile teens," 94% go online daily or more often.
- Nearly three-quarters of teens have or have access to a smartphone and 30% have a basic phone, while just 12% of teens 13 to 17 say they have no cell phone of any type.
- A majority of teens — 71% — report using more than one social network site out of the seven platform options they were asked about.
- Some 88% of teens have or have access to cell phones or smartphones and 90% of those teens with phones exchange texts.
- And Hispanic and African-American youth with phones are substantially more likely to use messaging apps, with 46% of Hispanic and 47% of African-American teens using a messaging app compared with 24% of white teens.

### **Additional References**

Greenhow, C., & Gleason, B. (2012, October). Twitteracy: Tweeting as a new literacy practice. In *The Educational Forum* (Vol. 76, No. 4, pp. 464-478). Taylor & Francis Group.

Greenhow, C., & Gleason, B. (2014). Social scholarship: Reconsidering scholarly practices in the age of social media. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 45(3), 392-402.

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