



Weslaco Independent School District

Human Resources Department



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Superintendent of Schools

-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE FROM LEGAL COUNSEL (Jan 19, 2016)-

TOPIC: *New Texting & Electronic Use of Media Changes

1. **ONLY CERTIFIED OR LICENSED EMPLOYEES, OR THOSE DESIGNATED IN WRITING BY A SUPERINTENDENT OR CAMPUS PRINCIPAL, MAY COMMUNICATE THROUGH ELECTRONIC MEDIA WITH STUDENT ENROLLED IN THE DISTRICT. ALL OTHERS ARE STRICTLY FORBIDDEN.**

a. Electronic media is defined on the attachments, but includes any contact by phone (texting) & all forms of online communication (email, social media, etc.).

b. No texting or communication via social media, unless you are certified/licensed/designated in writing

i. Even if allowed, you are subject to restrictions on your communication: (1) you are restricted to communicate only with the students who are in your class/extracurricular activity; (2) content must be relevant to your professional relationship; (3) time must be between 6:01 AM – 9:59 PM; (4) no privacy on these conversations, must cc a parent, your supervisor or your email.

c. You may not communicate with other students who are not in your class/activity without written consent from the parent/guardian (see #2 below)

2. **THERE IS NO EXCEPTION FOR TEXTING FAMILY OR SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS UNLESS IT IS IN WRITING (see attached) TO YOUR SUPERVISOR (meaning your campus principal/designee) AND IS SIGNED BY THE PARENT/GUARDIAN OF THE CHILD FOR WHOM YOU ARE CLAIMING THE EXCEPTION.**

a. This means you cannot text your niece/nephew without written consent from parent with copy to District

- b. This means you cannot text your child's friend to look for your child, without written consent from parent which is submitted to the school
- c. This means you cannot communicate with past students who are still enrolled at the District without parental consent.

3. **WHEN YOU** (Certified/licensed/those with written permission) **DO TEXT OR COMMUNICATE WITH STUDENTS BY ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION, YOU MUST CC A PARENT, YOUR IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR** (to be figured out at the campus level by your principal), **OR YOUR OWN SCHOOL EMAIL ACCOUNT**. Moreover, all content is restricted to professional communication between the hours of 6:01 AM and 9:59 PM.

- a. This includes **any** group text messages - you must **STILL** cc a parent/supervisor or your school email account
- b. **Remind 101** - Remind 101 is a private texting program and not a District Program. If you continue to use Remind 101, you must abide by the requirement of cc'ing a parent, supervisor or your District email on each text/communication sent.
- c. If you are using District authorized programs for texting/communicating with students, you do not have to cc a parent, supervisor or your email account, as copies of the communications are retained through the program itself.

Failing to follow these new texting and electronic media rules could result in write-ups to personnel file, could affect end of year evaluations, and could result in termination or nonrenewal.

For further questions, all personnel should see Human Resources ("HR"), and **HR** will contact legal counsel for additional guidance, as needed.