



**Social Media Litigation
Discussion
January 23, 2023**

Agenda

- Overview of the Issue
- Impact in our Schools
- Overview of the Litigation
- Question and Answer

Impacts of Social Media on our Kids

- Leading social scientists have studied the impact of social media on our kids and have made a clear connection to the mental health crisis being experienced by our youth, including:
 - Increased levels of anxiety and depression
 - Body dysmorphia and eating disorders
 - Suicidal thoughts and ideation and self-harm
- Social media companies have caused and exacerbated this impact through:
- Targeted algorithms
 - Designed to be addictive
 - Ineffective age control measures
 - Lack Parental Controls

Impacts of Social Media on our District

- The mental health crisis our kids are experiencing is impacting school systems, including DCSD, causing the need for:
 - Additional mental health professionals to support student needs
 - Training for educators, staff and the community
 - Increased disciplinary measures to address bullying, harassment, property damage, etc, precipitated by the use of social media
 - Investigate and respond to threats made over social media
 - Lesson plans on social media harms

Impact in our Schools Overview

- Evolution of Social Media Impact
- Creating a Safe School For All Students
- What Supports Do We Have in Place
- Partnership with Parents/Guardians
- How has social media impacted our daily lives in our schools?



Principal Perspectives

- *“As a middle school administrator I have seen an increase in the number of students and parents reporting unkind behavior along with safety concerns with the boom of social media. A hefty percentage of these events occur outside of school hours but impact our students at school. Administration often spends hours investigating social media messages and pictures to ensure our students feel safe at school. This has included: no contact contracts, restorative meetings, counseling and mental health supports, parent meetings, and discipline measures. Last year we even implemented Saturday School to help put in place accountability for (inappropriate) behavior that occurred through social media and offer education around these behaviors. “*
- *“Social media has changed my job from being a principal who not only has to try control things during the school day within the building, but also outside of school hours within the greater community.”*
- *“A crucial aspect that concerns me about social media is the potential hindrance in the development of essential interpersonal skills among our youth. While social media can facilitate communication, it only goes so far. Students need to learn how to interact in person with people of all ages. Spending too much time in the digital world deprives them of the opportunity to read expressions, interpret body language, and discern the authenticity of others. These skills are vital for success in the workplace and future social interactions”*
- *“It (social media) has exposed them to content that is beyond their level of maturity. Once a child is exposed to graphic, violent, and maladaptive material they cannot forget those experiences. And, unfortunately, I have observed this content burn into the memory of many young minds much stronger than content that is enriching and uplifting. It frequently has an addictive impact (which is the hope of the creators) causing them to seek more and more. We must protect the innocence and joy of childhood.”*

Principal Perspectives (con't)

- *“I have had to deal with several issues starting with social media. I have received Safe to Tells regarding issues that happen outside of school but pour into the classroom. I have had to deal with students doxing other students outside of school. This led to law enforcement in my building and ultimately a no trespass against a parent. All of the social media challenges take time away from my ability to be an instructional leader and be present in my building. I am forced to investigate issues that occur outside of my building.”*
- *“The impact (social media) has on teenagers and elementary students, and even on adults like myself, is profound. One of the significant challenges I've observed is the difficulty in disconnecting from social media long enough to fully engage in the real world.” A crucial aspect that concerns me is the potential hindrance in the development of essential interpersonal skills among our youth. While social media can facilitate communication, it only goes so far. Students need to learn how to interact in person with people of all ages. Spending too much time in the digital world deprives them of the opportunity to read expressions, interpret body language, and discern the authenticity of others. These skills are vital for success in the workplace and future social interactions.”*
- *The majority of issues that arise in middle school can usually be traced back to something on social media. Social media, while giving a chance for people to connect, creates dangerous avenues for behavior that is harmful such as bullying and harassment, rude or mean interactions between kids, kids sharing their participation in illegal activities or even self-harm or suicide ideation. And for today's educator, administrator, and mental health professional, it has now fallen on our shoulders to support victims of social media as well as hold aggressors on social media accountable to their actions. And there isn't enough time in the day to manage that well and without the partnership of families.*

Impact in our Schools - Cimarron Middle School



Impact in our Schools Overview- Student

- Insert Student Videos

Proposed Social Media Litigation

- Numerous lawsuits have been brought by school districts across the country against social media companies, like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and YouTube.
- It is staff's recommendation that we join this effort.
- Joining other school districts in bringing such litigation will:
 - Make a powerful statement to our parents and community that we are taking this issue seriously and will be taking many measures to educate and combat the harmful effects.
 - Get us engaged in a process that tells the social media companies that we find the media companies that current state is unacceptable;
 - Contribute to promoting an important national change/shift;
 - Help the school district potentially obtain damages to address social media-caused mental health issues impacting students in our schools.



Questions

