

ETHICS, LEADERSHIP & TODAY'S COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGES



Presented by Carroll ISD in conjunction with
National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA)

PRESENTED BY:
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- 2016 Community Impact Award Recipient, *Southlake Style Magazine*
- 2014 Southlake Citizen of Year, *Southlake Chamber of Commerce*
- 2010 Region XI Superintendent of the Year
- Member, Texas Association of School Administrators
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Superintendent, Carroll ISD in Southlake, Texas since 2006

PRESENTED BY:
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- President of the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA)
- Past President of the Texas School Public Relations Association (TSPRA)
- Accredited in Public Relations (APR) since 1999
- Member, Texas Association of School Administrators
- Eastern Illinois University



Assistant Superintendent for
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Carroll ISD, Southlake, TX
Since 1997

ANYTHING LIKE THIS EVER HAPPEN TO YOU?

- A local citizen promises you a family vacation if you will rule a certain way in a student discipline case
- You receive an anonymous letter questioning the eligibility of a star athlete who claims to be living in your district
- You are invited to consult for a company doing business with your district
- You find out a teacher has sent hundreds of texts to a student after midnight
- Atheist parents in your district complain a church is advertising at your stadium
- Trustees begin talking about a non-agenda item in closed session
- A taxpayer accuses your district of nepotism because you hired a coach's wife

OR WHAT ABOUT THIS?

- A teacher sends an email during her lunch break encouraging parents to vote yes in your upcoming bond election
- You get an open records request and have a sinking feeling that there are emails or texts on your personal email account
- You are at a conference and a colleague from another district begins flirting with you
- You are out having a beer and wings with your family when the school soccer team walks in the restaurant
- Parents ask you to say the prayer at an inter-faith community church service
- You have a suspicion that your neighbor is excessively hitting his third grade son
- A current School Board candidate asks to meet with you to discuss supporting him in the upcoming election



ETHICS

an area of study that deals with **ideas about what is good and bad behavior** : a branch of philosophy dealing with what is morally right or wrong

(Merriam-Webster Online)

- Excellence
- Relationships
- Character & Integrity
- Innovation
- Open & Honest Communication
- Compassionate Service

SOURCE: INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL ETHICS

The Institute for Global Ethics reports that studies have consistently found that ethical decision-making:

- fosters employee morale
- boosts brand reputation
- encourages loyalty in customers and employees, and
- improves your bottom line

Ethics is more than the right thing to do: it's the smart thing to do.

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES FOR PROFESSIONALS

- Tell the truth
- Cite your sources and get permission before using the work of others
- Be loyal to your organization, but protect the public interest
- Don't release confidential information
- Don't misrepresent or overstate your qualifications
- Be transparent and forthcoming
- Treat others fairly and don't show favoritism
- Don't make promises you or your organization cannot keep
- Disclose your identity; do not pretend to be someone else
- Do not accept gifts or favors or use your position for personal gain
- Disclose any conflicts of interest

SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS

Establish a systemic, two-way communications effort that regularly engages internal and external stakeholders in an effort to create a better understanding and support for the organization

School Safety

School Calendar

Attendance Zone Changes

Budget Cuts

Grading Policy

Major Policy Changes

Capital Needs/Bond

Dress Code

CULTURE:

SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

- Establish & Review Educator **Code of Ethics**
- Provide training for employees; practice
- Talk about expectations for truth and transparency
- Set a good example as leader of **Character**
- Recognize and commend others

CHARACTER:

ESTABLISH CORE VALUES

- Identify your non-negotiables in advance
- Be a centrist (but also be collaborative)
- Be consistent
- Be confidential
- Consider establishing personal and professional **Core Values**, then **Communicate** them

COMMUNICATION: ENGAGE OTHERS

- **Research** key audiences and target messages
- **Plan** meaningful engagement with your students, staff and community, must be two-way
- **Implement** ongoing communication with consistent and redundant target messages
- **Evaluate** regularly for effectiveness & understanding to ensure **Credibility**

CREDIBILITY:

BE LIKEABLE & BELIEVABLE

- Become known as a person of high standards
- Act first - you only have one chance to tell your own story (self-report)
- Find someone you trust as a sounding board
- Apologize if you have done something to lose public trust

AN ETHICAL SCHOOL LEADER:

- Follows national, state and local laws & district policies
- Protects the civil and human rights of all individuals
- Ensures neutrality in bond & Trustee elections
- Deals honestly with media/reporters
- Honors contracts and commitments
- Functions as the conscience of the district
- Creates an environment of ethical accountability
- Upholds intent of Open Meetings Act & Public Information Act
- Understands that just because you can, doesn't mean you should

BE AWARE OF PERSONAL INFLUENCE

Avoid promises or granting of unprofessional advantages to others; refrain from accepting special considerations for influences on organizational decisions;

Avoid unauthorized use of organizational facilities, resources or professional services for personal gain or for promotion of candidates for elected offices; forego derogatory acts or utterances against other professionals.

BEWARE OF ETHICS PITFALLS

Do not accept fees, commissions, gifts or any other consideration from anyone except clients or employers for who services are performed without their express consent, given after a full disclosure of the facts.

Scrupulously safeguard the confidences and privacy right of present, former and prospective clients or employers.

Do not intentionally damage the professional reputation or practice of another practitioner.

ETHICS DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

- Define the specific ethical issue or conflict.
- Identify internal and external factors (legal, political, social, economic) that may influence the decision.
- Identify the key values.
- Identify the audiences who will be affected by the decision and define the organization's obligation to each.
- Select ethical principles to guide your decision-making process.
- Make your decision and justify it.

INTEGRITY

Who you are when no one is watching.



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THE FIRST AMENDMENT



Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

In dealing with special interest groups:

- Encourage face-to-face dialogue
- Listen (*really listen*) to what others are trying to say
- Model and encourage respectful dialogue
- Ask them what would be a “100” for their group
- Try to find some common ground
- Be honest; don’t make promises you cannot keep

- Realize and accept not everyone will be a fan

DISCLOSURE

Superintendents and elected officials must disclose potential conflicts of interest.

Public relations professionals must work to ensure transparency and that the sponsorship of a person, news (traditional and online), blog posts, and other social media platforms is fully disclosed, consistently clear and easily identifiable to readers/viewers/users/audience.

KNOW THE ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF:

- Open Meetings Act
- Public Information Act
- Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Child Abuse Reporting Requirements
- Copyright, Trademark & Fair Use

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP & SOCIAL MEDIA

The same guiding principles for integrity, ethics and disclosure apply to the digital mediums. ***“Tweet others as you would want to be tweeted.”***

- Know your district or company policies
- Identify yourself
- Distinguish clearly between personal and professional posts
- Understand that your right to free speech does not guarantee you freedom from consequences (or that you get to keep your job)
- Honor copyright, trademark laws and your professional code of ethics; give credit where credit is due and don't incite others to act badly; use good taste and understand posts last forever
- Recognize what constitutes political speech and opinion especially when it comes to people in the public eye

SOCIAL MEDIA

STANDARD 3.9. THE EDUCATOR SHALL REFRAIN FROM INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION WITH A STUDENT OR MINOR, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION SUCH AS CELL PHONE, TEXT MESSAGING, EMAIL, INSTANT MESSAGING, BLOGGING, OR OTHER SOCIAL NETWORK COMMUNICATION.

THE “INAPPROPRIATE” TEST

NATURE, PURPOSE, TIMING, AND AMOUNT OF THE COMMUNICATION;

SUBJECT MATTER OF THE COMMUNICATION;

WHETHER THE COMMUNICATION WAS MADE OPENLY OR THE EDUCATOR ATTEMPTED TO CONCEAL THE COMMUNICATION;

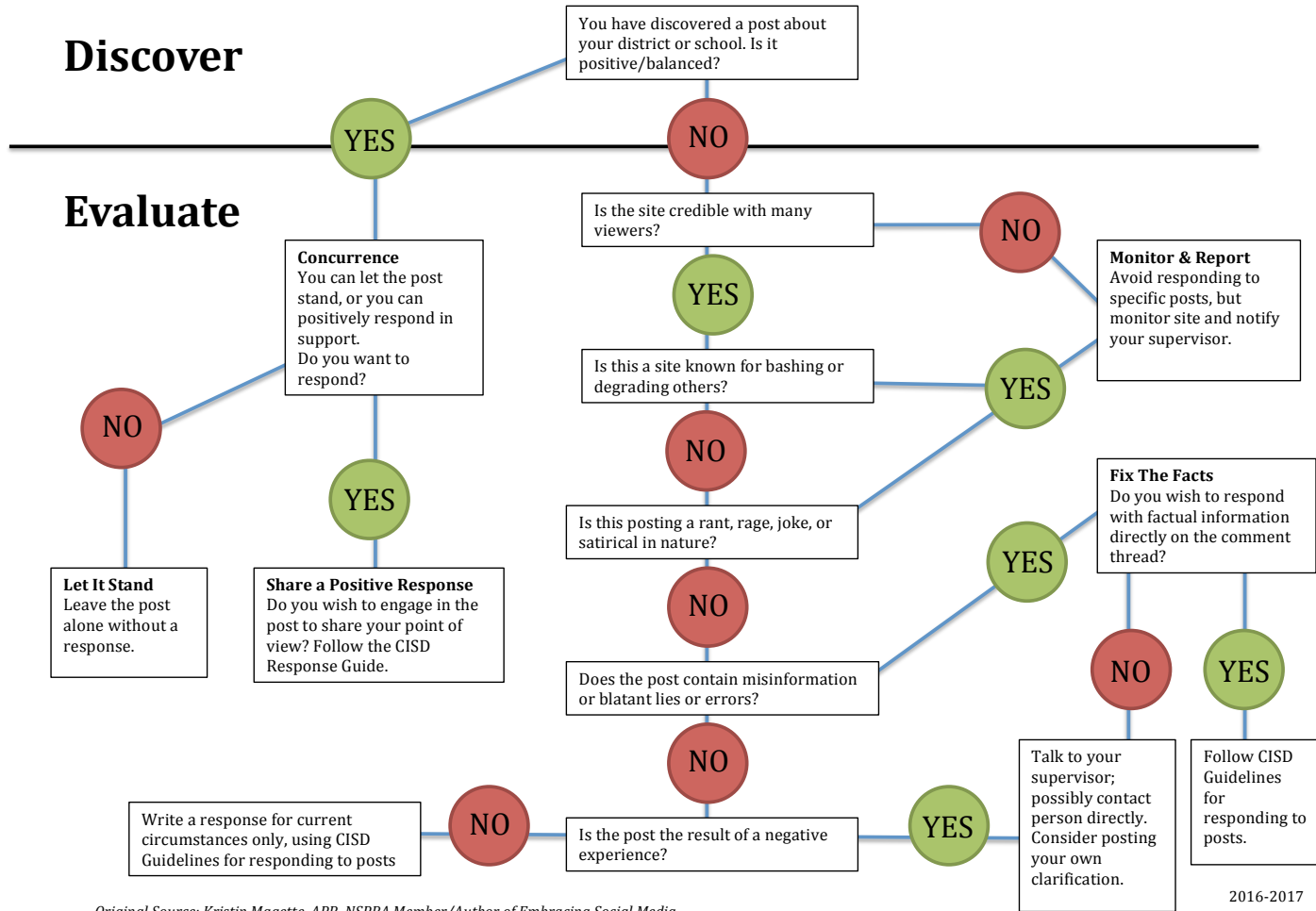
WHETHER THE COMMUNICATION COULD BE REASONABLY INTERPRETED AS SOLICITING SEXUAL CONTACT OR A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP;

WHETHER THE COMMUNICATION WAS SEXUALLY EXPLICIT; AND

WHETHER THE COMMUNICATION INVOLVED DISCUSSION(S) OF THE PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ATTRACTIVENESS OR THE SEXUAL HISTORY, ACTIVITIES, PREFERENCES, OR FANTASIES OF EITHER THE EDUCATOR OR THE STUDENT.

TO RESPOND OR NOT TO RESPOND?

Carroll ISD: Guide To Responding On Social Media



Original Source: Kristin Magette, APR, NSPRA Member/Author of Embracing Social Media

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ALTERNATIVE FACTS



Source: *The Guardian*

FAKE NEWS

- **Fake news websites** (also referred to as **hoax news**) deliberately publish hoaxes, propaganda, and disinformation purporting to be real news — often using social media to drive web traffic and amplify their effect. Unlike news satire, fake news websites seek to mislead rather than entertain, readers for financial, political or other gain.

- *Wikipedia*

Civic Online Reasoning – Stanford University Study

THINK CAREFULLY BEFORE RESPONDING

- Resist the urge to respond too quickly
- Double check the facts
- Avoid using sarcastic or snarky responses
- Do not get in a back-and-forth battle of words online
- Be empathetic when you can
- Share a contact name and number

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- National School Public Relations Association (nspra.org)
- PRSA Ethics Web Resources
www.prsa.org/aboutUs/ethics/index.html
- PRSA Ethics App
Available free to download from Android and Apple online stores
- The Institute For Global Ethics
<https://www.globalethics.org>

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