



SB 1503 school employees; pupils; electronic communications (Boyer)

This bill outlines policies and procedures for electronic communication between school employees and students. If passed, it would go into effect immediately following the signature of the Governor.

- Specifies that a school employee, substitute teacher, or volunteer serving in the capacity of a school employee shall only use school technology to directly engage with a student currently enrolled in the school and shall engage in electronic communications with a student only about academic or extracurricular activity matters.
- Exempts the following from this requirement:
 - A volunteer with a parent-teacher organization or site council
 - An immediate family member
 - A person with a social relationship to a student
 - A chaperone who volunteers on a field trip or other extracurricular activity
- Requires each school district governing board and charter school governing body to prescribe and enforce policies and procedures for school employees on electronic communication using school technology with current students
 - Specifies these policies must be distributed to all employees at the beginning of each school year and to all newly hired school employees
 - Requires the policies to include the following:
 - A list of approved school technology that school employees and students may use to communicate
 - Provisions that prohibit employees from using personal technology, mobile technology, or social media to interact online or communicate directly with a student unless through school technology
 - Exceptions to the personal use policy for immediate family relationships
 - Exceptions to the personal use policy for social relationships with written consent of the student's parent or guardian
 - Provisions to prevent improper electronic communication between employees and students
 - Factors for school employees to consider when assessing whether an electronic communication from a student is improper
 - Specific guidance on the proper method for notifying the school principal and other administrators about an incident where a student indicates in an electronic communication that they are a threat to themselves or others



Arizona School Boards Association

- Specific guidance on the proper method for notifying the school principal and other administrators about an incident where a student engages in improper electronic communication with the employee
- An administrative process for a student, parent or guardian to file a complaint if a school employee has violated these policies and procedures
- Disciplinary actions for violating these policies and procedures
- Requires each district and charter school to include these policies in its student handbook and provide a copy upon enrollment and annually to every parent or guardian
- Requires the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (ASDB) to prescribe and enforce policies for employees to use electronic communications.
- Requires, at the beginning of each school year, members of the ASDB Board of Directors to receive the policies and procedures.
- Requires the State Board of Education to develop and post on its website a parental resource guide that provides parents and guardians with the information regarding how and the electronic means in which to file a complaint if they believe a school employee has violated these policies
 - Requires the resource guide to include American Sign Language
- Defines “electronic communication” as any communication facilitated by using any electronic device including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, computer network, personal digital assistant or pager. This includes emails, text messages, instant messages, and any communication made through a website, including a social media or social networking website
- Defines “personal technologies” as any technology not owned or controlled by a school district or charter school
- Defines “school technology” as any technology owned or controlled by a school district or charter school
- Includes in the definition of school, a school operated by a school district, a charter school or ASDB.
- Defines “social relationship” as a relationship between a school employee and a student in which any of the following applies:
 - The student is a relative outside of the employee’s immediate family
 - The student is the child of the school employee’s friend
 - The student is a friend of the school employee’s child
 - The student and the school employee participate in the same civic, social, recreational, or religious organization