

Research Briefs: Social Networking Postings: Views from School Principals

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RESEARCH BRIEFS

November 2012

Georgia Southern College of Education

Social Networking Postings: Views from School Principals

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Abstract

Numerous recent media accounts indicate that teachers are being fired, put on probation or otherwise censured because of information found on their social networking sites (SNS). Data from pre-service teachers' SNS were compiled into a 51-item questionnaire and K-12 school principals rated each statement on its likelihood to influence a hiring decision if it were found on the SNS of a teacher applying for a position at his or her school. The statements included on the questionnaire included sexual talk, swearing, violent language, references to drugs and/or alcohol use, and language that could be considered harmful to individuals with disabilities, persons of color and/or homosexual individuals. The survey results indicated that 28 of the 51 statements were rated as likely to have a moderate-to-significant impact on hiring decisions, and 22 statements were rated as likely to have a minor-to-moderate impact in hiring decisions. Only one item of the 51 fell in the no impact-to-minor impact on hiring decision range.

Practical Application

This study shows that principals' hiring recommendations could be impacted by information on a teacher's personal social networking site. It should also present a cautionary message to in-service and pre-service teachers. Privacy law and internet use policies are still evolving, but essentially the view of online information is that it ceases to be private as soon as it is posted online. Thus, teachers should be prudent about the image they portray and information they convey on their social networking sites.

Citation

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