

# Williamson County Board of Education

Monitoring:  <b>Review: Annually, in August</b>	Descriptor Term:  <h2 style="text-align: center;">School System's Electronic Mail</h2>	Descriptor Code: <h3 style="text-align: center;">1.805</h3>	Issued Date:  
		Rescinds: <h3 style="text-align: center;">1.805</h3>	Issued: <h3 style="text-align: center;">08/21/06</h3>

1 It is the policy of the Williamson County Board of Education (Board) to utilize new technology that is  
 2 available to the Board and that has the capacity to enhance the efficiency of the Board, its schools, staff  
 3 and its departments. The Board finds that the use of electronic mail (e-mail) through the Board's  
 4 computer system is such a tool. E-mail is to be used at all times in a professional manner that is geared  
 5 toward Board efficiency and respect for each Board member and the employees of the Board. It is an  
 6 invaluable tool for communicating but one which is to be used according to the law and as a positive  
 7 example to the students of the Williamson County school system of professional communications  
 8 among Board members and staff. The Board recognizes, however, that the use of e-mail has  
 9 limitations that should be recognized, and it wishes to adopt a policy that will ensure that the use of e-  
 10 mail will conform to sensible and professional practices and comply with the law.

- 11 1. The Board of Education and any of its employees, parents, and students are prohibited from  
 12 using e-mail through the Board's computer system for personal financial gain. Board  
 13 communications are subject to the Public Records Act (TCA 10-7-503) which says in the  
 14 opening paragraph of the Act that "**ALL** . . . county records . . . except any public documents  
 15 authorized to be destroyed by the county public records commission in accordance with TCA  
 16 10-7-404, **SHALL** at all times, during business hours, be open for personal inspection by any  
 17 citizen of Tennessee, and those in charge of such records shall not refuse such right of  
 18 inspection to any citizen, unless otherwise provided by law." (Emphasis supplied.)  
 19 Communications sent through the Board's computer system are stored in the system and  
 20 retrievable if necessary or required. Therefore, the Board reminds its members and its  
 21 employees that sending messages through its network is similar to sending a photocopy of a  
 22 hard copy communication to the central office. Just as such a hard copy would then become a  
 23 public record, so it is with stored electronic e-mail.  
 24
- 25 2. The Tennessee Open Meetings Act is not to be circumvented by the use of e-mail. The Board  
 26 is aware of TCA 8-44-102(c) which states, in part, "No electronic communication shall be used  
 27 to **DECIDE** or **DELIBERATE** public business in circumvention of the spirit or requirements  
 28 of this part." (Emphasis supplied.)  
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- 30 3. Any individual student information is confidential and cannot be released as a public record.  
 31 Such confidential student information includes, but is not limited to, grades, test scores, health  
 32 information, student behavioral and disciplinary records, psychological reports, Individualized  
 33 Educational Program records, and Section 504 Accommodation Plans. Such information shall  
 34 not be transmitted via electronic mail, except when the communication occurs between school  
 35 system professional staff (e.g., teacher-to-teacher, counselor-to-counselor, etc.) or between a  
 36 specific teacher and the specific parent/guardian of the student involved. In no case will such  
 37 information be released to the public or press.

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Cross References

Use of the Internet 4.406