Employers use these sites to screen job applicants and check up on their employees. When you pursue, or become a party to, an employment case, employers and their attorneys will survey these sites hoping to find information about you that could destroy your teaching career, marriage or employment case. In addition, if you file a workers compensation claim, or have an automobile accident case, your social media sites will be checked.

This information can and will be used against you in all employment related settings. For example, it can disprove or prove:

- Doctors’ diagnoses
- Your ability to work
- If you were sick or on vacation

Social media posts to “friends” or “followers” have appeared on TV news; in criminal cases, in credential cases, and dismissal cases with devastating effects on teaching careers.

You might post pictures, videos, and/or other personal information. Your friends might make funny comments about you. You need to think about how your pictures and comments might be viewed by a principal, parent, superintendent, Commission on Teacher Credentialing, judge, jury, or decision-maker. Even innocent and seemingly irrelevant things can be distorted.

In addition to causing you problems with your current employer, the credential commission, and with any legal claims you may have, social media sites can create problems obtaining another job.

Setting your pages private may not be enough. You may inadvertently make a friend or follower the employer or employer’s attorney knows, such as a law clerk. Depending on the circumstances, a judge may order you to produce copies of your social media content. My general rule is NOT to post something you wouldn’t want your mother to read.

If you must use social media, please protect yourself as follows:

1. Do not post anything you wouldn’t want your employer, attorney, judge, or your children to read.
2. Set privacy settings to block anyone you do not know from viewing your content.
3. Google your name. See what comes up and take action to remove anything which could be detrimental.
4. **DO NOT FRIEND STUDENTS, THEIR SIBLINGS, OR PARENTS!!** **DO NOT FRIEND YOUR PRINCIPAL!!** The potential harm to your career is not worth the risk.

Although these sites are fun and are great ways to keep in touch with family and friends, they can and will be used against you in many different ways. THE BOTTOM LINE IS TO USE COMMON SENSE. If you have questions, please call us.

#Don’t tweet away your career!