



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

February 21, 2013

Dear Parents,

The Hawaii State Department of Education (DOE) is tracking a disturbing national trend on Facebook called "Confessions" pages, which are focused on schools and colleges. These pages allow students and others to anonymously post comments about their schools.

The "confessions" postings are of great concern to the DOE and school administrators. The majority of the comments are inappropriate, explicit, and in some cases threatening. While there is no way of verifying the authenticity of the posts, there are students "liking" and commenting on these pages.

We have reported the pages to Facebook and have requested that they be removed immediately. Unfortunately, our requests have gone unanswered. Other schools, including private schools, have also addressed this situation with Facebook and have had their requests for removal denied.

The department has enlisted the assistance of Honolulu Police Department. We advise parents and students to alert administrators and the police of any posts that may be threatening to students, teachers, or staff.

A recent story by a local media outlet has raised the profile of these pages and as a result there has been more activity on these sites.

Facebook access is prohibited at public schools. However, most students are advanced technology users and find ways to access Facebook on their personal devices. This problem goes well beyond Facebook – there are many online forums and platforms in which children can be exposed to and engage in inappropriate behaviors. As our students will be lifelong users of technology, it is important not only that we teach children to navigate and use these tools appropriately, but also teach them to take responsibility for their online identification. Their activity today creates a digital trail into the future. I urge you to have a discussion with your child about what is acceptable and what is not. Posting personal information and/or comments that are sexual in nature are not appropriate.

If you have any questions, please contact our Communications and Community Affairs Office at 586-3232.

Very truly yours,

Kathryn S. Matayoshi
Superintendent