

# Discussion of Social Media Addiction Litigation: Relevance for School Districts

Board Workshop  
June 9, 2025



## Executive Summary of Social Media Litigation

On October 11, 2022, MDL No. 3047 was created involving major social media platforms accused of causing harm to youths' mental health. All federal cases in the nation have been transferred to this MDL in the Northern District of California before Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers for disposition. School districts seek to recover the additional costs of educating students linked to Social Media.

The MDL Court has divided the proceedings into three main groups of litigants against all defendants, and each has a separate leadership structure with a distinct master complaint alleging various causes of action and damages. The three litigant groups are:

1. Personal Injury Plaintiffs,
2. School Districts and Local Governments, and
3. States' Attorneys General.

Concurrently, there is a nearly identical proceeding in California JCCP 5255 related to whether a social media company may maximize its own benefit and advertising revenue at the expense of the health of that company's minor users.

## What is an MDL?

MDL stands for Multidistrict Litigation. It consolidates multiple cases with common issues of fact to a single federal court for pretrial proceedings. This streamlines the process and can lead to faster resolution.



## Texas ISD Boards Joining the Litigation

- Houston ISD
- Dallas ISD
- Cypress-Fairbanks ISD
- Northside ISD
- Fort Worth ISD
- Austin ISD
- Fort Bend ISD
- Aldine ISD
- Conroe ISD
- Frisco ISD
- Garland ISD
- El Paso ISD
- Pasadena ISD
- Klein ISD
- Plano ISD
- Lewisville ISD
- Round Rock ISD
- Alief ISD
- Killeen ISD
- Brownsville ISD
- United ISD
- Spring Branch ISD
- Richardson ISD
- Clear Creek ISD
- Corpus Christi ISD
- Edinburg CISD
- Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD
- Denton ISD
- Mesquite ISD
- Grand Prairie ISD
- La Joya ISD
- Pflugerville ISD
- Goose Creek CISD
- McAllen ISD
- Galena Park ISD
- Uplift Charter Schools
- Hays CISD
- Tomball ISD
- Beaumont ISD
- Weslaco ISD
- Mission CISD
- Abilene ISD
- Crowley ISD
- Duncanville ISD
- Deer Park ISD
- Colleyville-Grapevine ISD
- Princeton ISD
- Galveston ISD
- Texas City ISD
- Splendora ISD
- Barbers Hill ISD
- Crosby ISD
- Sharyland ISD
- DeSoto ISD
- Hearne ISD





# School District Causes of Action

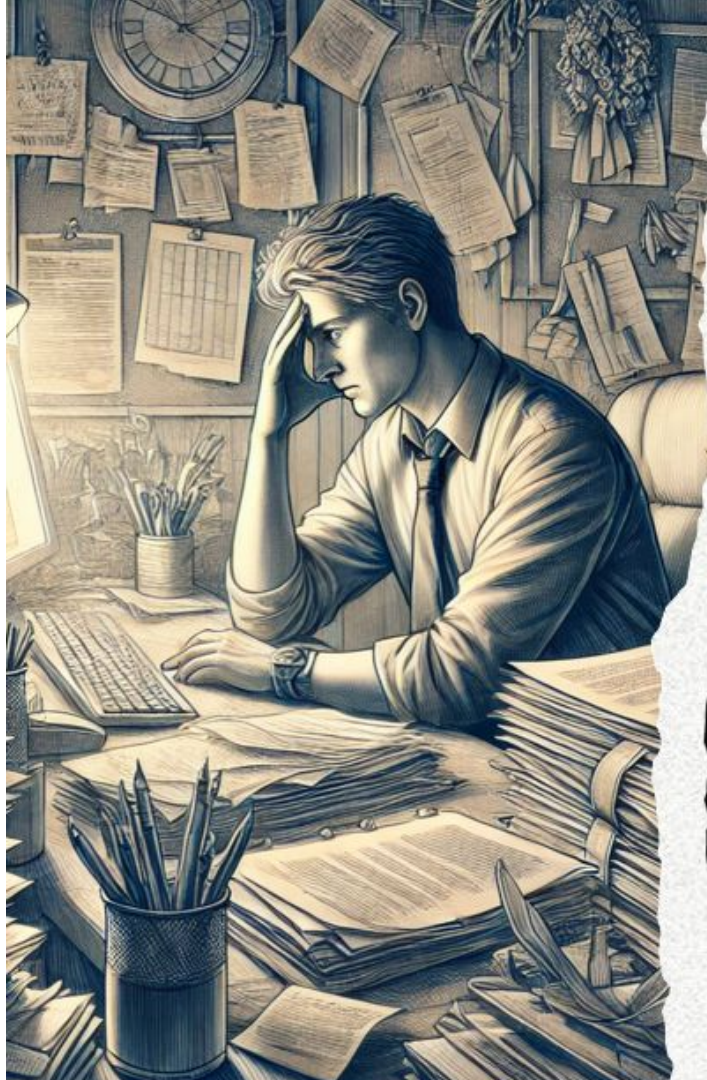
The School District Master Complaint includes:

1. **Public Nuisance:** Interference with community health and safety.
2. **Negligence:** Operating platforms that lead to compulsive use and addiction, harming students' mental health and impacting schools' education efforts.

# Damages Sustained by School Districts

1. Hiring additional staff in response to increased mental health and behavioral issues caused by students' social media use;
2. Expending staff time to confiscate cell phones and other devices;
3. Expending staff time to engage with parents regarding youth mental health, behavioral issues, and attendance problems;
4. Responding to threats made against schools and students over social media;
5. Adding information technology resources in an attempt to limit students' access to social media platforms and mitigate risks posed by students' social media use;
6. Investing in physical barriers (such as magnetic pouches or phone lockers) to keep students from accessing social media platforms on school property;
7. Developing new and revised teaching plans to address students' altered learning habits, e.g., reduced attention span, inability to communicate effectively;
8. Providing additional learning support to address students' declining achievement, e.g., after school support, as a result of the negative impact of problematic social media use.





## **If the *Kids Off Social Media Act* becomes law, what could be the financial impact on school districts?**

The impact on school districts would likely be significant, as it acts as an unfunded mandate.

1. **Implementation of Policies:** Develop policies for social media use and compliance.
2. **Monitoring and Enforcement:** Invest in tools or training for compliance and monitoring.
3. **Educational Programs:** Include digital citizenship and online safety education.
4. **Support Services:** Provide counseling services for students struggling with social media issues.
5. **Legal Compliance:** Ensure adherence to avoid fines or legal issues.





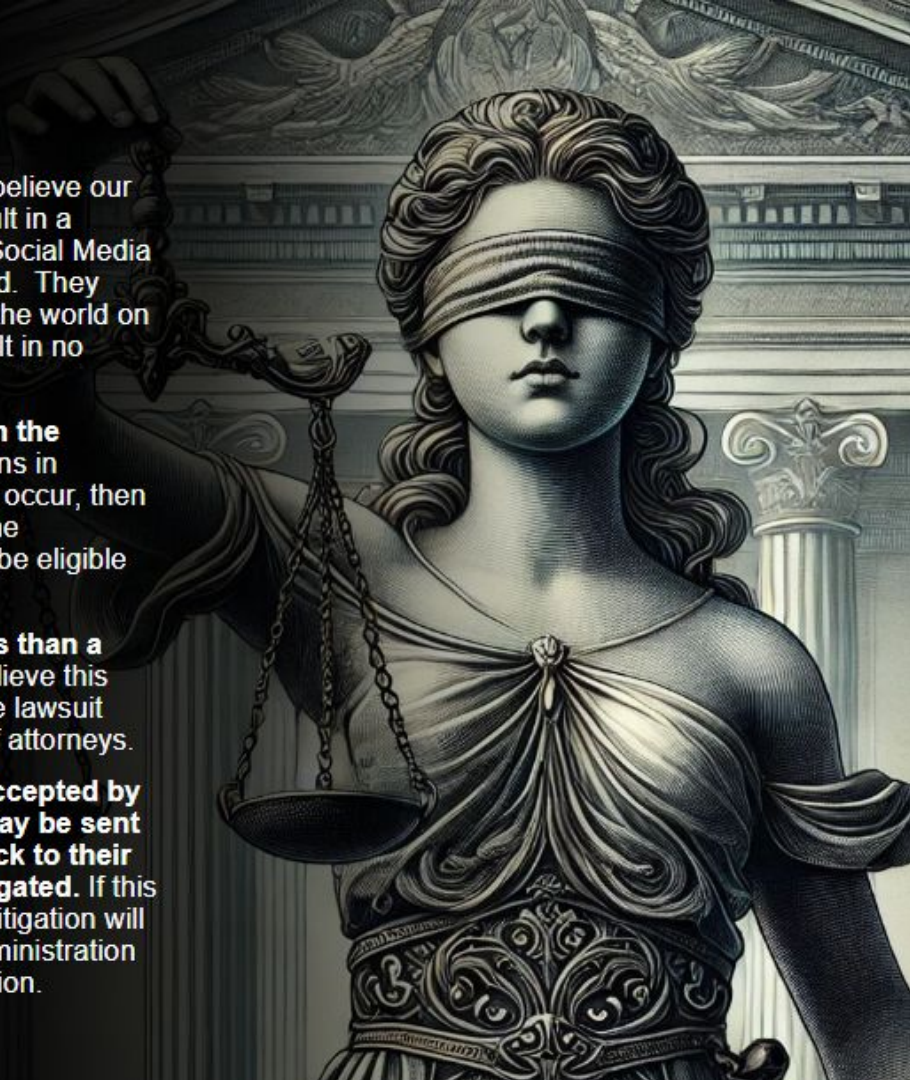
## Cost and Requirements for the District

- There are no up-front or out-of-pocket costs. We work on a contingent fee basis.
- Attorneys' fees are contingent on recovery calculated as the *lesser* of a percentage of the total recovery or four times the Attorneys' hourly rate.
- In the event there is no recovery, there are no costs to the District.
- Time commitment for the District is minimal (30-50 hours total), mostly for responding to Discovery and Plaintiff Fact Sheets.
- Consulting experts will assist in gathering PEIMS data to minimize efforts required of Districts.



## What are the Risks?

- **No settlement or award.** While we believe our case is very strong and will likely result in a substantial award or settlement, the Social Media Defendants cannot be underestimated. They have some of the best legal talent in the world on their side and the litigation could result in no award or settlement.
- **Taking too long to approve and join the lawsuit.** The first bellwether trial begins in October 2025. If a settlement were to occur, then school districts that had not filed by the settlement date would potentially not be eligible for any initial settlement.
- **Getting an award or settlement less than a comparable school district.** We believe this risk is largely eliminated by joining the lawsuit through our highly competent team of attorneys.
- **If a settlement is not offered and accepted by the parties, each individual case may be sent from the consolidated litigation back to their home judicial districts and fully litigated.** If this unlikely scenario comes to pass, full litigation will require participation of a District's administration to be brought to a successful conclusion.



## **BISD Supportive Measures**

- Trained staff on social media safety and signs of cyberbullying
- Developed parent guidance for safe internet and social media usage
- Hosted Book Study – *The Anxious Generation* – for counselors, nurses, and parents
- Facilitated morning meeting and advisory lessons regarding social media safety
- Held middle school assemblies focused on social media, digital citizenship, and cyberbullying
- Presented student and family engagement events on the dangers of social media
- Continued internet and social media oversight using digital monitoring tools
- Collaborated with PACT members to support individual students and family members
- Provided Individual and group counseling sessions to support student mental health

# Discussion