

Social Media for Schools Quick Tips to Get Started

EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT IT...BUT HOW DOES SOCIAL MEDIA FIT IN TO YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT'S COMMUNICATIONS? IT'S EASY TO FEEL OVERWHELMED, BUT SCHOOLS THAT COMMUNICATE BETTER WITH THEIR COMMUNITY HAVE MORE ENGAGED PARENTS, STUDENTS AND LOCAL BUSINESSES. SOCIAL MEDIA IS THE NEW MEDIA —AND SCHOOLS NEED TO BE PART OF THE CONVERSATION.

Twitter



What is it? A microblogging site - you have 140 characters to say something.

Who “sees” it: Twitter is gaining ground in your local business community. Your chamber, businesses that support and cater to your school and real estate agents are all eager to hear what you have to say, and to “re-tweet” your message. The media also make heavy use of Twitter; local reporters will “follow” you to get the scoop before anyone else.

What you can “tweet” about: Congratulations to sports teams, shout-out’s to great students or staff, upcoming concert announcements, links to media coverage, or school board meetings.

Who can Tweet: Twitter accounts are free, and easy to set up. You can choose your “identity” to be either you as a person, or you as a District. Superintendents, public information officers, or a principal can be your “designated tweeter.”

Getting started: Even if you’re not ready to “say” anything, the best way to learn what Twitter is all about is to start “listening.” Set up an account, then choose some people or organizations you admire to follow. Then see what develops over time as your network grows!

Twitter DO's & DON'Ts

- DO** follow local businesses and media outlets.
- DO** regularly check your account and make relevant posts. TweetDeck, HootSuite, CoTweet or TwitterGadget for Google makes this easy.
- DO** share helpful and interesting information.
- DO** point people to more information on the District website.
- DO** “re-tweet” information that you think others would be interested in.
- DO** link your Twitter feed to your Facebook account.
- DO** be patient and persistent. It takes time to build a following.

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DO plan at least 15 minutes a day to maintain your account and catch up on posts.

DON'T advocate or share opinions under the District persona.



Facebook

What is it? A free social networking site. The “parents” age group (30-44) is one of the fastest growing demographics on Facebook.

Who “sees” your information: Anyone can see basic “page” information, even if they’re not a fan. “Fans” of your page will get any updates you post in their “news feed” as soon as you post them.

What you can post about: Your fans will probably be students and moms. Post what will interest them!

Who can post updates: Anyone who you give administrative privileges. Having a few people with posting privileges can give you richer and more varied content.

Getting started: Setting up your page so that it looks professional is important. To ward off imitators, you should clearly state that it is the “official” page of your school district

Facebook DO's and Don'ts

DO set the District up as a Page (like a business) not an individual. You want “fans,” not “friends.”

DON'T allow your fans post new items to your Wall.

DO develop and post a social media policy that encourages appropriate feedback.

DO monitor your page daily to check for feedback.

DO link to more information on your website. Check links regularly to make sure they are up to date.

DO consider Facebook ads if you are using your page to promote a specific program, such as open enrollment or 4K registration.

DO link to parent, PTO and booster club Facebook pages — this is a great way to build your fan base.

A few notes on privacy and security

No technology, including social media, is 100% risk-free. Being aware of the risks, setting up your accounts properly, and having someone committed to maintaining and monitoring your social media presence will go a long way to minimizing your risks. Establishing a clear social media policy is also key to protecting your interests.

For more information on Social Media for Schools, please visit www.mktondemand.com/school_marketing.htm