

Social Media Tips

Digital engagement through social media is essential for back-to-school campaigns. Start a conversation with your parents and the community by using social media to share and promote positive messages about your schools and public education.

Successful social media messages:

- Are focused and have a clear message or requested action
- Are engaging and will encourage others to connect and share
- Stand out from the crowd with a unique, relevant and powerful message that will draw attention
- Share a personal story and passion

Images are important when posting on social media: Use high-resolution photos, graphics and videos to help draw attention to your message. Recent research has shown that photos bring much more attention to a post, even if the photos are not directly related to the message. Use real-life images from your schools where possible (after ensuring that you have the necessary permissions). You can also use a free graphic design program like Canva to create visualizations of favorite quotes or interesting statistics.

You can use social media effectively even if you don't have many followers. Consider the impact of sharing: A video can go viral if you have 300 followers who watch your video and then share it with their 300 friends, which can add up to 90,000 views in just a few hours.

Which social media sites are most important? You must know your target audience and focus on where your school or district can have the most impact, as it is too time consuming to chase every new tool that comes to the market. Traditionally, school districts have had the most success on Facebook and Twitter, and some administrators use LinkedIn to connect with business professionals and community leaders. Keep an eye on sites such as SnapChat and Instagram, as the user demographic tends to be younger and could include your high school students and some parents.

If you're unsure which sites your parents and community members are using, don't be afraid to ask PTA leaders and other engaged parents, or send a survey at the beginning of the school year.

Finally, remember that if you build it you must maintain it—one of the worst offenses in social media is opening an account and letting it languish, leaving the impression that a school or district is inactive or out of touch. Be sure to only establish accounts that you and your staff realistically have time to maintain, and let go of the rest.