

SCHOOL LEADER LEARNING: TECHNOLOGY ENABLED LEARNING AND LEADING



PART 3: USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO BUILD POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY

"To achieve success, Ontario will... Foster increased parent engagement through ongoing communication about what their children are doing in school and how parents, guardians and caregivers can further contribute to their learning... Increase public awareness and understanding of the innovation and learning taking place in schools."

Achieving Excellence, 2014

The Big Idea

Digital technologies, when used appropriately, can enhance positive communication and relationship-building with families and communities. By extending into the virtual space, the amazing learning happening at school can be shared with the community in an authentic and engaging way.

Need To Know

1. Before you begin...embrace your learning stance
2. Listen and ask questions about technology your community already uses
3. Document and share learning
4. Model digital citizenship practices

Go Deeper

1. EMBRACE A LEARNING STANCE

Digital technologies create new and exciting opportunities for educators and learners alike in a rapidly evolving, globally connected world. School leaders model a learning stance while developing their own fluency with digital tools and resources that provide opportunities to build trusting relationships with all

members of their school communities. Leaders adopt a willingness to embrace curiosity, watch for trends and explore new, more effective ways of running a school. A learning stance compels us to move outside of our comfort zone and accept our vulnerability as necessary acts of school leadership. By engaging in our own learning we truly realize the benefits of digital technologies.

2. LISTEN AND ASK QUESTIONS

Take the lead from members of your school community. Ask questions:

- ❑ What social media platforms are the people in your community using?
- ❑ For what kind of discussions are they using these platforms?
- ❑ How can these tools be used to engage the community in developing a shared vision for the school?

Once you discover the tools your community is using, you will have a window into what is meaningful

"We believe that Ontario's diversity can be one of its greatest assets. To realize the promise of diversity, we must ensure that we respect and value the full range of our differences. Equitable, inclusive education is also central to creating a cohesive society and a strong economy that will secure Ontario's future prosperity."

Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009

to them. Engaging online through social media fosters an openness to hearing the voice of your community, and therein lies the potential for creating trusting relationships.

3. DOCUMENT AND SHARE LEARNING

Once you have determined which tools to use, seek opportunities to spotlight students' work, highlight school events, and celebrate student accomplishments. Gather images, audio and video clips (be mindful of media permissions and privacy expectations) and share them with the community.

Sharing in this way creates a window into the classrooms for parents, which supports learning at home by creating conversation starters to replace "what did you learn in school today?" This fosters a sense of connection and ultimately leads to higher parental engagement and better support.

For more information on engaging parents through meaningful and purposeful communication, refer to the Parent Engagement policy.



DID YOU KNOW?



Sending parents tips on how their children could improve academically led to higher-quality home discussions and cut course dropout rates by almost half.

KRAFT & ROGERS, 2015

edutopia

4. MODEL DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Digitally fluent students navigate vast amounts of information using various digital technologies and resources in support of their learning. It is imperative that students develop the digital citizenship skills to do so in ethical ways, both at school and at home. It is the responsibility of school leaders to help parents understand the importance of:

- ❑ **Critical Thinking and Information Literacy** when searching for credible online sources
- ❑ The principles of **Creation and Credit** to properly attribute material used on students' presentation slides, videos, and on various social media platforms.

The school leaders also need to model:

- ❑ The principles of **Presence and Communication** by creating a positive online presence for the school through websites and social media
- ❑ The principles of **Health and Protection** by protecting the privacy of students by adhering to student and parental wishes around the posting of a student's work, image or name online.

Here are some social media tools you may choose to consider to improve your school's communication:

- **Blogs** - perceived as 21st century newsletters
- **Twitter** - a way to share short messages (limited to 140 characters), images and video; consider creating a hashtag for a threaded conversation
- **Facebook** - connect and share school events in this virtual space
- **Digital Photo Sharing** - capture the moment during your classroom visits and share the photos with your school community
- **Video Platforms** - perfect for sharing live school events

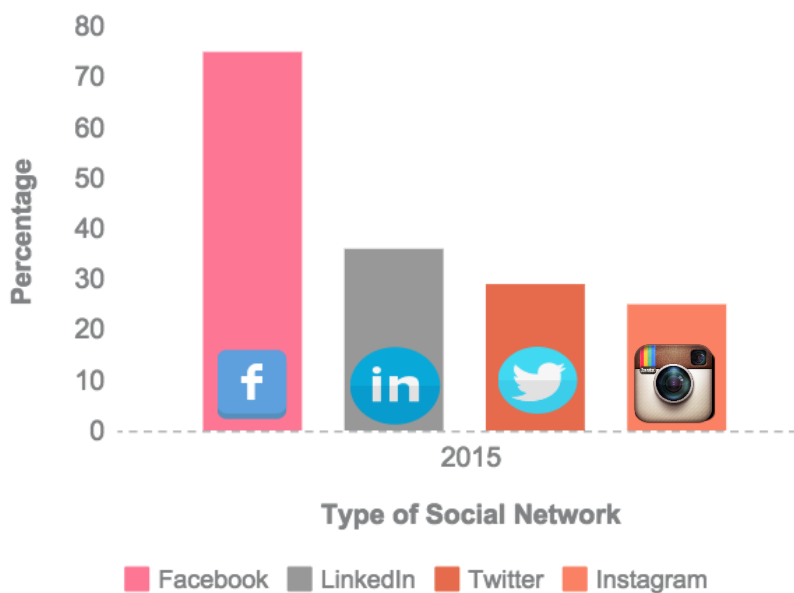
"Parent involvement that is focused on student learning has the greatest impact on student achievement. Ken Leithwood, in fact, has suggested we need to think about shifting our focus from "how to get more parents into the school to how we can support them at home," where he says, "half of the achievement we're responsible for as educators happens" (Webcasts for Educators, 2012). " (from Parent Engagement Monograph)

TWEETABLES

We encourage you to take items from this page and share them with staff, school council, or your community through newsletters or social media to spark conversations!

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Percentage of Canadian Parents on Social Networks



Source: Canadian Internet Business

<http://canadiansinternet.com/2015-canadian-social-media-usage-statistics/>

VIDEO



<http://bit.ly/parentsconn>

Connect and coordinate with parents using social media

This video highlights how to use social media resources like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to connect and communicate with parents.

References made in this document may be found at bit.ly/DCPart3ref

"Integrating social media tools into a school's work is essential ... to build meaningful relationships with stakeholders." (@wferriter)

"Engaging community consultation through school districts and ed orgs would be helpful. Use of social media is essential." (@Dunlop_Sue)

"Educators need to support parents in connecting online to see the classroom learning and to encourage out of school learning." (@fryed)

CONNECTED ONTARIO EDUCATORS ON: LEARNING ONLINE



SHANNON SMITH
@SHANNONINOTTAWA

If "the medium is the message", then tweeting a photo of students tackling a math problem is simultaneously igniting a conversation about learning.



PETER LEBLANC
@LEBLANCPETER

Collaboration and relationships are critical to learning. Social media connects us to a worldwide network. Why would we remain isolated?