



Social Media Plan 2017-2020

The following document provides an overview of the effective and appropriate use of social media to further guide and support the communications efforts of District 34.

This strategic plan was developed based on current trends, research, review of best practices in the industry, training sessions specific to social media use, and strategies found to be successful or supportive by other public school districts. In addition, all current district policies and procedures related to social media activity were carefully reviewed to ensure continued alignment.

Developed By

Director of Communications & Public Relations Jenn Nimke

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Why Social Media?

In today's digital age, social media is often the preferred or go-to method of communication. More and more, we are seeing that social media is how people feel a sense of community. It is how they connect with friends, relatives and colleagues, and it is also how they seek information about the world around them. Without an active presence on social media, we are not only missing an opportunity to connect with our stakeholders, but we are also allowing them control over the conversation. In other words, if we aren't talking about our district on social media, then someone else is.

Social Media Objectives in District 34

Overall, the use of any social media account in District 34 is to support the following goals.

- 1: Share key messages to build awareness of the district's mission and vision.
- 2: Promote truth and transparency through frequent and informative posts in order to build public support and maintain trust.
- 3: Engage stakeholders and be open and responsive to feedback.

Choice of Social Networks

The social media industry is one of the most rapidly evolving industries, with platforms constantly changing to include new types of engagements, analytics and other features that greatly influence or change user behavior. At the same time, just as quickly as new platforms are introduced, others may be phased out or even absorbed by competitors. Because of this, it is critical the district identify what types of social media platforms our stakeholders actually use and focus our efforts specifically to these areas. We must also, within an appropriate timeframe, continue to survey our stakeholders to ensure their continued usage and our success in these areas.

In the development of this plan, it was realized that the district has never surveyed its stakeholders about specific social media use. Therefore, one of the recommendations moving forward will be to survey external and internal stakeholders about their preferred social media networks. We can do so by utilizing existing systems such as the Parent Satisfaction Survey (external stakeholders) and surveys distributed by the teacher and support staff unions (internal stakeholders).

Once we have this data, we will reevaluate our social media channels and determine whether additional platforms should be added or if existing platforms should no longer be utilized. By making sure we are meeting our audience where they currently are, this will ensure greater and authentic engagement and conversation about the most critical district initiatives.

In 2017, there are several types of social media being actively used or explored by school

districts. In discussion with area colleagues and or through our own research, we found the more popular choices to include:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- Google +
- Tumblr
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Voxer

While all school districts certainly have the same types of audiences, the social behavior of our audiences can vary district to district. Therefore, in our efforts to simply start somewhere in terms of using social media, we consulted with Glenbrook High School District 225 back in 2012 to learn more about their use of social media. Prior to their launch of Facebook and Twitter, the Glenbrooks had surveyed parents and found these to be the most popular networks. Knowing that we share much of the same audience, we decided to follow in similar fashion and began with Facebook and Twitter. We continue to utilize only these two platforms in terms of our official social media presence.

The following chart includes specific information about the utilization of these platforms for the district in the last 28 days.

Network	Number of Followers	Frequency of Posts	Total Reach/Impression <i>(number of times users saw our posts)</i>	Total Engagements <i>(how many users interacted with our posts such as likes, shares or comments)</i>
D34 Facebook	1,435	1-2 times weekly	3,334 followers	1,282 followers
D34 Twitter	1,165	1-2 times weekly	4,100 followers	62 followers

It should be specifically noted that our schools also utilize these social media platforms when communicating externally. While we do engage with their posts, the Communications Department does not decide nor have any control over the frequency or type of content that

is posted on the school accounts. The Communications Department, in collaboration with the Technology Department, does offer support, when needed, and is specifically involved with the initial launch of any account. From there, the building principal manages or other designee (i.e. technology facilitator) and monitors the account(s).

This plan will be shared with the schools to further inform their own activity on social media and, when appropriate, align our efforts to be more consistent.

Many of our educators also have their own professional social media profiles. While these accounts should not be used when wanting to communicate on behalf of the district or school, they are valuable ways to share resources and knowledge between educators. As part of survey of internal stakeholders (referenced in previous section), the Communications Department, in collaboration with the Technology Department, will determine the most widely used platforms. From there, we can further apply this social media strategy to further optimize our social media conversation but through an internal lens. This will not only be a wonderful way to connect our staff, but it is a great demonstration to our students of how to have a positive digital footprint.

What do we post?

Participation on social media involves creating and sharing content our followers are either looking for information about or want to engage with. It is also about actively pushing out information we have determined is critical to share with our stakeholders. The following includes information on how we determine what to post and how often to do so.

The types of content we will post will primarily fall into the following categories:

- Events
 - Photos, videos, or a brief summary recapping an event that has occurred at one of our schools (i.e. classroom project, author visit, RED Day celebration, etc.).
- Decisions
 - Brief summaries related to decisions we are exploring as a district or bringing to the Board of Education for consideration and approval (i.e. changes to math program, budget being approved, new administrators hired, etc.).
- Reminders
 - Brief summaries about an upcoming deadline, important date or call to action (registration dates, school being closed, parent survey opportunity, etc.).
- Crisis
 - Posts about a current crisis situation in the district. The post can provide real time updates or also drive followers to the district or schools websites, newsletters or other relevant communications.
- Curated Content

- A re-post or “share” of content posted to another account we think is relevant to our community. We will share content from another social media profile within district or if it is from another government entity such as Glenbrook High School District 225, the Village of Glenview, Glenview Police, Glenview Library or the Glenview Park District.
- Sharing of Resources
 - Upload a document or provide a link to another resource to help provide understanding or further context about an issue.

It is important to note that although these are the most common types of categories our posts fall into, what ultimately drives our content is message. The overall goals of our social media presence are to provide information without being prompted, ensure transparency and be vulnerable and available to collecting honest feedback. By doing so, this will continue to build trust.

What have we found to work with our current followers?

Digging in deeper, it is important to analyze the types of posts we have found great success with in terms of positive engagement and find ways to continue to leverage those opportunities.

When analyzing our current accounts, we have found the following trends:

- **Our followers are photo driven.** Any post that is accompanied by a photo, video or series of photos captures more engagements, meaning likes, re-shares and comments.
- **Our followers like when we showcase students, regardless of the activity.** Posts that are specific to student work or student engagement receive the highest number of engagements.
- **Cause based posts do well.** When we showcase a specific student-driven initiative, it seems to capture the interest of all of our followers, not just parents. These also have a history of going viral, with high-profile accounts often picking them up.
- **Posts about teacher’s accomplishments also do well.** These types of post again capture multiple audience members who make up our followers. Parents like to celebrate teachers they know, and teachers like to celebrate teachers they know!

Participating in the conversation

As a district, we are committed to having two-way conversation with our stakeholders. Social media should be considered another tool to do so, and the following section includes information about how we will ensure proper use to support effective communication.

Overall our goal is to encourage conversation. This does not mean that we will respond to every comment or question. What it does mean is that we want our posts to encourage positive or informative conversation in the community, and often this may just be between our followers without any response from the district. With that said, there may be times where it is appropriate or necessary for the district to participate in the conversation. The following outlines the process the Communications Department will follow when in engaging in conversation on social media. Please know that these processes are in alignment with our administrative procedures and district policy. They also assume that any social media account is monitored at least twice daily during school days. Please see the attached flowchart for more specific information on engagement.

- We will not engage in a private conversation with any stakeholder. Instead, that person will be asked to contact us directly with their question.
- We will not “tag” the parent of a child in any post to encourage re-sharing that item or photo. It is our district policy to never use the first and last name of a child with a photograph; therefore all social media activity will follow this policy.
- We will not respond to any comment or question more than once. The goal is to respond appropriately to comments, not have an ongoing, public dialogue. If further conversation is warranted, that person will be asked to contact us directly.
- We will not respond to any comments or questions from media. Any requests should be directed to the Director of Communications.
- We will not delete comments unless they are determined to be inappropriate by the Communications and Technology Departments. Specifically, comments that are abusive, obscene, vulgar, easily identify students in a negative way, violate copyrights and fair use laws, or are repetitive in nature.
- We will “tag” other organizations, including our own parent organizations, involved in something at our schools.
- We will answer questions from our followers if there an additional resource we can provide or if there is an appropriate place to find more information. (Remember the goal is to respond, but not engage in ongoing dialogue)
- We will be available and agreeable to sharing challenges and collecting honest feedback, all with the overarching goal of continuous improvement.

It should also be noted that at the conception of this plan, the district has not explored other tools available within social media profiles that allow us to answer questions, facilitate discussions or participate in conversations to a deeper degree. On the contrary, some of our schools have independently explored these tools. Therefore, with the supportive of these schools, we will collectively learn and further explore tools such as Twitter Chats, Facebook

Live and hashtag campaigns and determine whether they are supportive tool to building community understanding and positive connections to our district.

Summary of formal recommendations in further support of reaching social media objectives

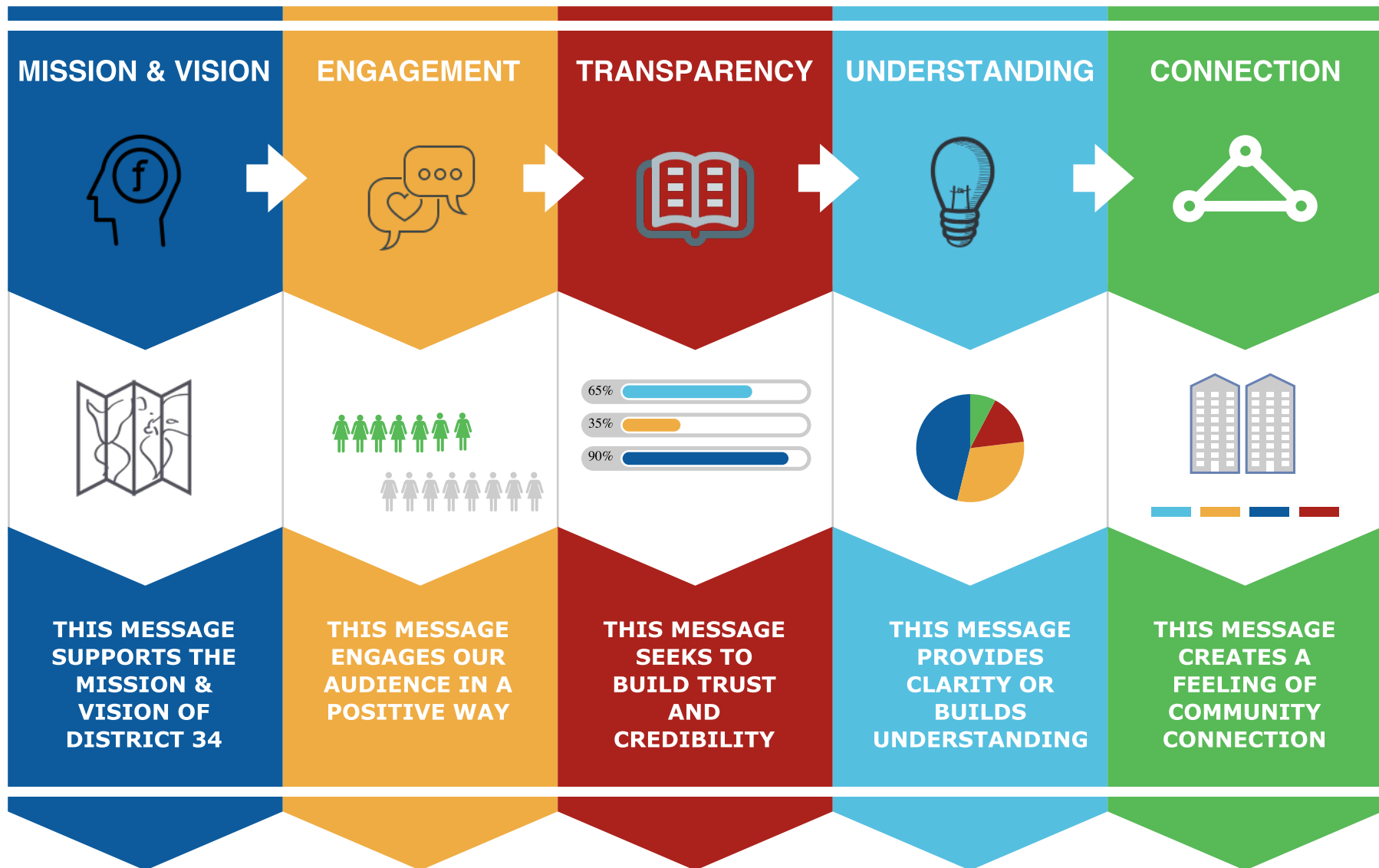
1. Conduct training with staff and ongoing workshop opportunities to establish expectations and model effective communication strategies.
2. Review district policy and related administrative procedures to ensure continued alignment and support with current social media use.
3. Develop social media calendar to guide content development and posting.
4. Upon the completion of external and internal surveys, evaluate current social media tools and determine the future for those accounts as well as the potential for utilizing other platforms.
5. Upon review of current social media tools and decision on other platforms, develop specific guidelines for each account to ensure optimal use.
6. Explore specific engagement tools within different active platforms such as twitter chats, hashtags and Facebook live.

Measurement of Social Media Objectives

How we will measure the ongoing success of our social media use is through the utilization of parent and staff surveys, which will be administered annually. We will begin incorporating specific questions as they relate to these goals and, overall, our social media activity beginning with surveys administered in the 2017-18 school year.

We also will seek annual feedback from our Communications Council, which will begin meeting next school year and include representation from all district stakeholders (parents, staff, non-parents, D225, etc.). Lastly, we also will continue to monitor all engagements on our social media accounts and track which posts resonated positively with our audiences as well as monitor optimal posting times.

WHAT DRIVES OUR SOCIAL MEDIA EFFORTS?



What do we post?



Events



Photos, videos, or a brief summary recapping an event that has occurred at one of our schools (i.e. classroom projects, author visit, RED Day celebration, etc.)

Decisions

Brief summaries related to decisions we are exploring as a district or bringing to the Board of Education for consideration and approval.



Reminders



Brief summaries about an upcoming deadline, important date or call to action.

Crisis

Post about a current crisis situation in the district. The post can provide real time updates or also drive followers to the district or schools websites, newsletters or other relevant communications.



Curated Content



A re-post or "share" of content posted to another account we think is relevant to our community. We will share content from another social media profile within our district or from another government entity.

Sharing of Resources

Upload a document or provide a link to another resource to help provide understanding or further context about an issue.



Guide to Responding on Social Media

Discover

You have discovered a post about your district on social media. Is it positive/balanced?

YES

NO

Evaluate

Concurrence
You can let the post stand, or you can positively respond in support. Do you want to respond?

NO

Let it stand
Leave the post alone without a response

YES

Share a positive response
Do you wish to engage in the post to share your point of view? Follow the [District 34 Social Media Plan](#).

Is the site credible with many viewers?

NO

Monitor & Report
Avoid responding to specific posts, but monitor site and notify your supervisor

YES

Is the site known for bashing or degrading others?

YES

NO

Is this posting a rant, rage, joke or satirical in nature?

NO

Does the post contain misinformation or blatant lies or errors?

NO

YES

Fix the facts
Do you wish to respond with factual information directly on the comment thread?

NO

YES

Talk to your supervisor; possibly contact person directly. Consider posting your own clarification

Follow [District 34 Social Media Plan](#) for responding to posts

Write a response for current circumstances only, using [District 34 Social Media Plan](#) for responding to posts

NO

Is the post the result of a negative experience?

YES