# The Complete
# SOCIAL MEDIA
# Guide for Schools

The latest best practices to fuel your school's
social media strategy

FINALSITE

Social media is an important role in any school or district's communication strategy. Alongside emails, newsletters, and mass notifications, it serves as an essential component for sharing your message.

For the majority of these communications, the goal is to drive traffic back to your website, but for social media, it's also about creating a community that represents your school's brand and its mission.

Social media is one of the most visible aspects of your brand because it acts as a bridge between departments. Connecting aspects of parent communications, enrollment, development, and school life, your content needs to keep its authenticity and bring a personal touch. Moreover, it's a constantly evolving topic—which is why it's also one of the most frustrating efforts for staff.

Inside this guide, we'll break down the most popular channels and dish out all of our social media best practices as we share some of our own tips and tricks.

Follow us, and let's get started!

# Metrics that Matter

## Social Media Terms To Know

### LIKES
Faster than writing a comment or sharing, a "like" (or similar reaction) refers to users approving content on Facebook and Instagram.

### COMMENTS
Comments are included within engagement and can include text, hashtags, mentions, and emojis. They offer positive (hopefully!) feedback and contribute to the engagement with your content.

### SHARES
When social media users select content to redistribute to their own networks, followers, groups, or individuals. Shares can be a big indicator of success because they signal which content resonates with your audience the most.

### ENGAGEMENT
Interactions your audience has with your content, such as likes, comments, shares, and clicks. It reflects how actively your audience participates with your brand and content on social platforms.

### REACH
Reach refers to the total number of unique individuals who have seen your content. It measures the potential audience size your post has reached, counting each person only once, regardless of how many times they saw the content.

### IMPRESSION
The total number of times your content was displayed on users' screens. This includes multiple views by the same person, so impressions are typically higher than reach.

### ENGAGEMENT RATE
The level of interaction your audience has with your content as a percentage of your reach or impressions. It reflects how captivating and relevant your content is to your audience, indicating how effectively it resonates and prompts interaction.
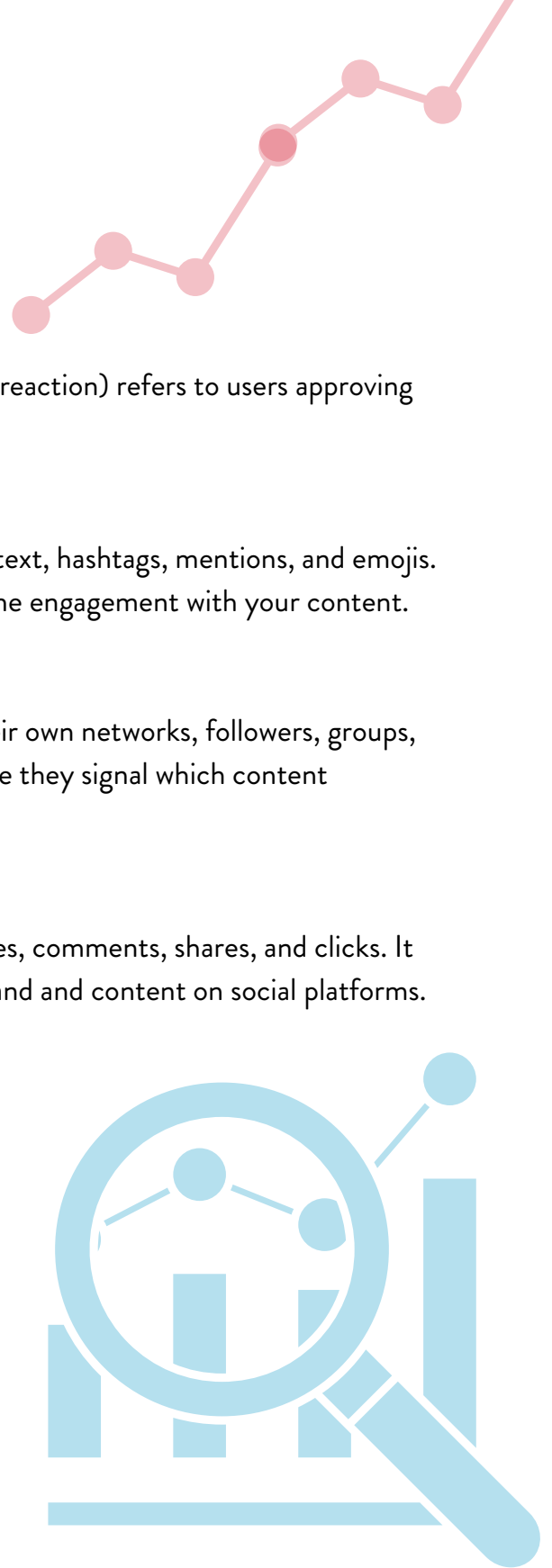
"Focus on stories and your students, and don't use social media as a calendar reminder for what's coming up—make it personal!"

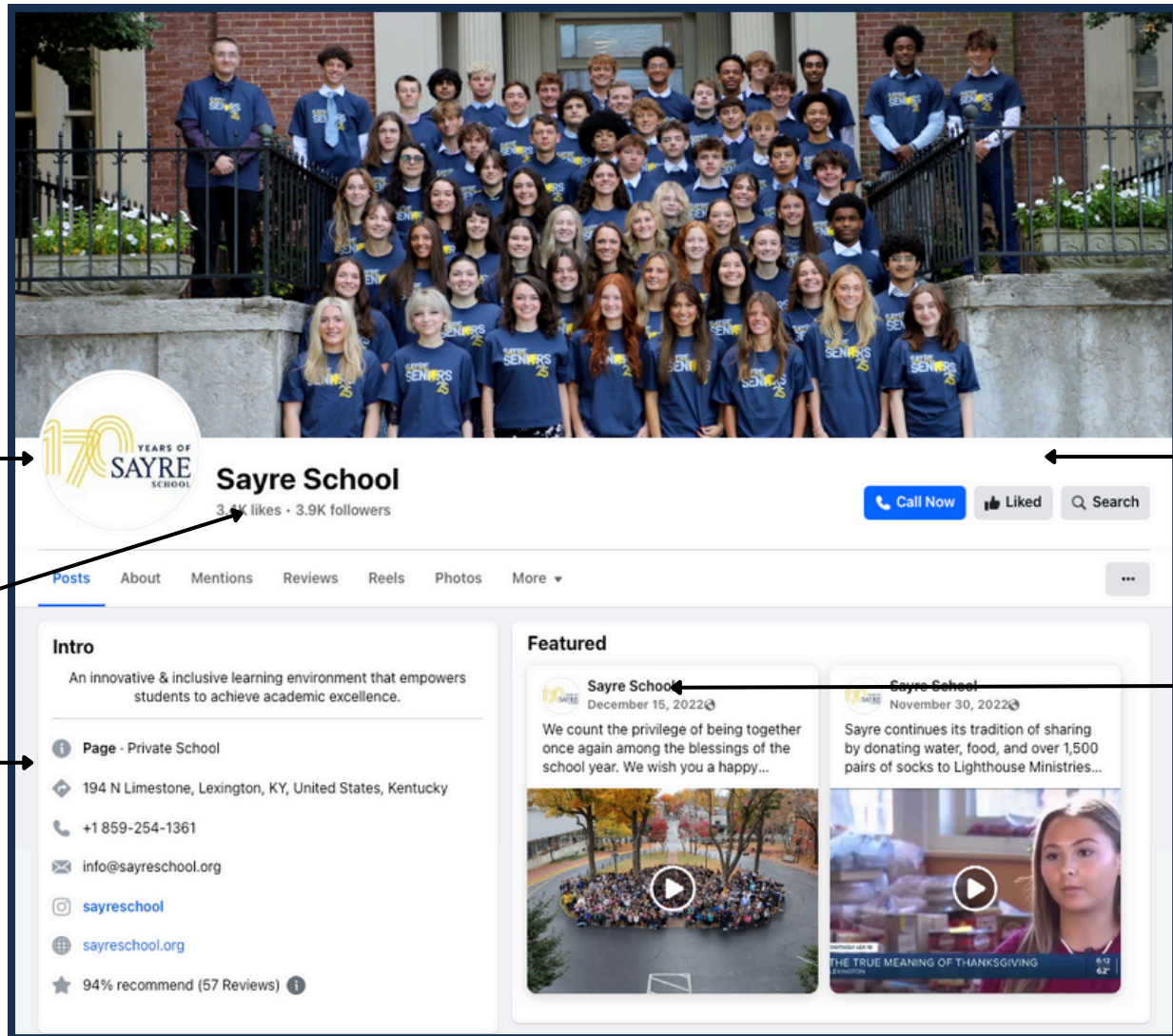-North Cobb Christian School
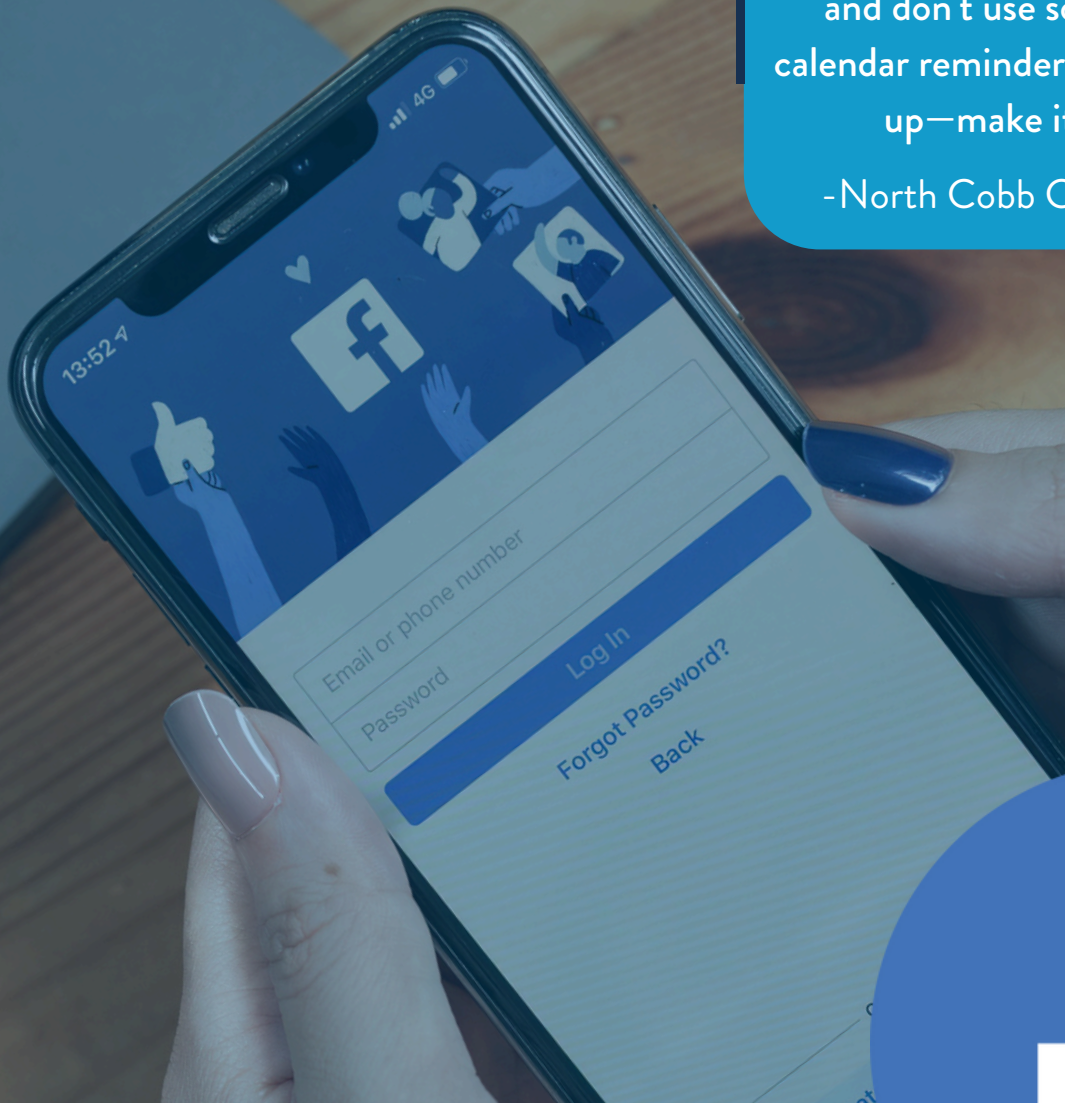
# FACEBOOK

# Anatomy of a Facebook Page



**1**

Logo profile picture for easy recognition.
Sized in a square ratio

**2**

School name,
with an easy-to-recognize @ handle

**3**

About section, detailing your school's address, phone number, and introductory content.

**4**

Cover image, which showcases your school or an appropriate promotion.

**5**

Call to action button, which can be customized based on the action you want visitors to take.

**6**

Featured posts, where you can pin important posts to the top of your page.

# Facebook Image Sizes

The following sizes are the most recommended for high-quality images on Facebook. These guidelines tend to change from time to time, so always check your posts and make sure everything looks as expected!
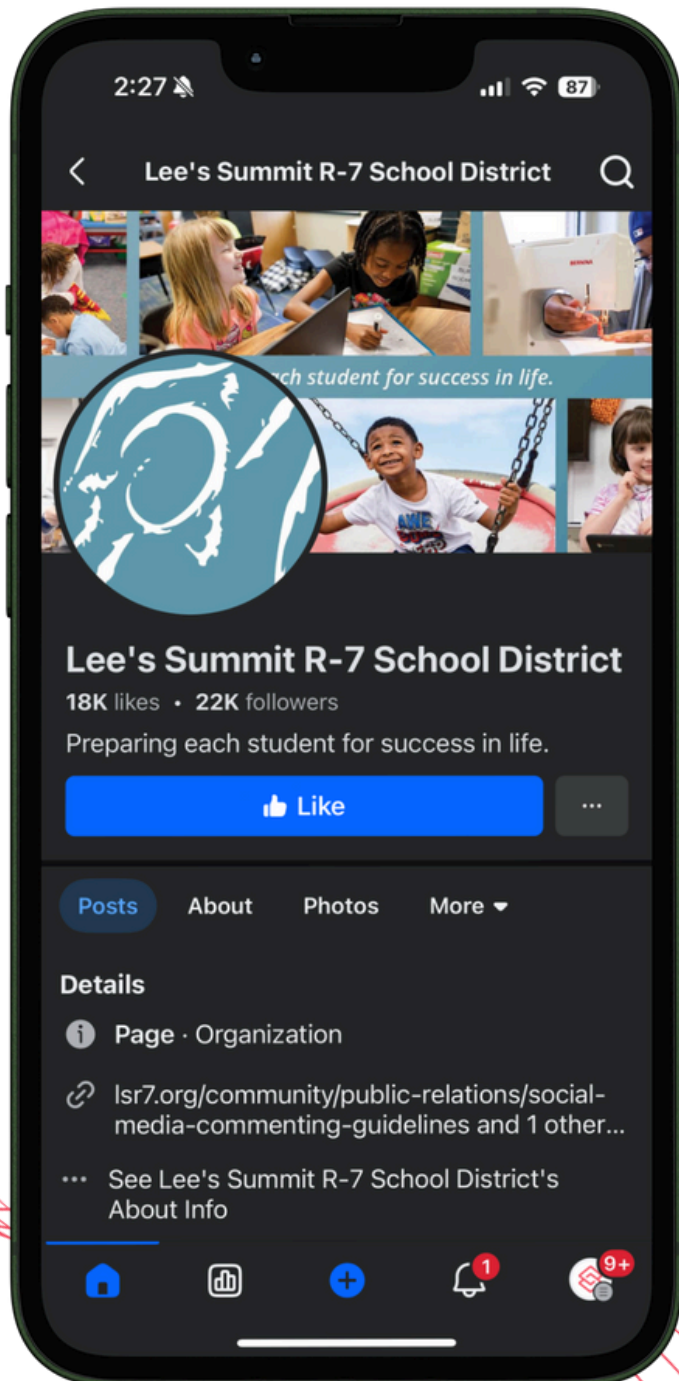


## COVER IMAGE
Desktop: 820 x 312 pixels
Smartphone: 640 x 360 pixels
Recommended: 851 x 315

## PROFILE IMAGE
Desktop: 170 x 170 px
Smartphone: 128 x 128 px

## PHOTO POST
Ideal image size is 720px, 960px, or 2048px wide, with flexibility in the corresponding height.

## VIDEOS
240 minutes max.

## STORIES
1080 X 1920 px

# Facebook Best Practices

A successful Facebook strategy will come down to how well you interact with your followers on your school's page. Long gone are the days of carefully curated, professional photos and videos. Today, your followers want to see candid photos and student stories, and get a real feel for your campus. Being authentic and encouraging conversations are the best ways to get ahead on Facebook.

## Quick Tips

Post at least once per day for a consistent presence — but don't post simply to meet that quota. Quality is better than quantity! Opt for engaging content more often than promotional content. Only 10% of your weekly posts should be reserved for admission messages or event promotions. The rest should be meant to make genuine connections with your school community. Have fun!

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF GROUPS

Want to offer more personal engagement with families and students? Facebook Groups are a great way to get in touch with your audience and increase your chances of visibility on the platform. Groups can be used for departments and sports teams, too — so you don't need to create individual pages for sports teams or activities. This simplifies communications, unifies your voice, and improves communications.

## ALWAYS RESPOND TO COMMENTS!

Comments are a huge piece of engagement on Facebook. Good or bad, showing your community that you hear them will go a long way when it comes to retaining current families and attracting new families.

# Facebook: Optimizing Content

Every Facebook post should contain a visual, whether that be a photo, photo slideshow, graphic, native video (video uploaded directly to the platform), or a live video.

## OPTIMAL TEXT LENGTH

Research indicates that Facebook posts that are 50 characters or less get the most engagement.

That said, Facebook is the platform for storytelling. Don't be afraid to say a little more when you have a story that warrants it!

## OPTIMAL VIDEO LENGTH

Facebook recommends keeping "fun moment" videos to about 1-minute long for the most engagement, and videos in your Stories should be 15 seconds or less. Videos that require some storytelling tend to do best at 3+ minutes long.

## OPTIMAL CONTENT TYPES

Facebook has made it clear that it prioritizes posts that encourage conversations and meaningful interactions among users. Posts that aren't seeing as much engagement will most likely see a drop in reach.

**Keep Reading: 8 Reasons No One is "Liking" Your School's Facebook Posts**

> "Instagram serves as the primary platform for engaging with current and prospective students. High-quality visual storytelling is central, with photos and videos capturing the vibrancy of school life."
>
> -Bancroft School

# INSTAGRAM

# Anatomy of a Instagram Page



**1**

Your school's handle, which users will use to find you and tag you in their posts.

**2**

Logo profile picture for easy recognition. This is also where you add to your "Story."

**3**

Bio Tabs allow users to customize their following preferences for your account, contact you via message or email, and view suggested accounts similar to yours.

**4**

Post grid, showing the full history of your school's published content.

**5**

Find various ways to share a profile by clicking this button.

**6**

You can tap these 3 dots to set user boundaries, view account history, and share their account on or off the platform.

**7**

Follower and post summary, for quick reference of performance.

**8**

Full name, bio and link, to give visitors a clear breadth of who you are.

**9**

Story Highlights, compiled from past stories to showcase for extended time.

**10**

Profile tabs, (to access your Posts, Reels, , and tagged posts above your post grid.)

# Image Sizes

The recommended post size shown below is for a standard square photo. Instagram does allow for landscape photos and vertical portraits, with a recommended height between 566 and 1350 pixels.

**PROFILE IMAGE**
360 X 360 px
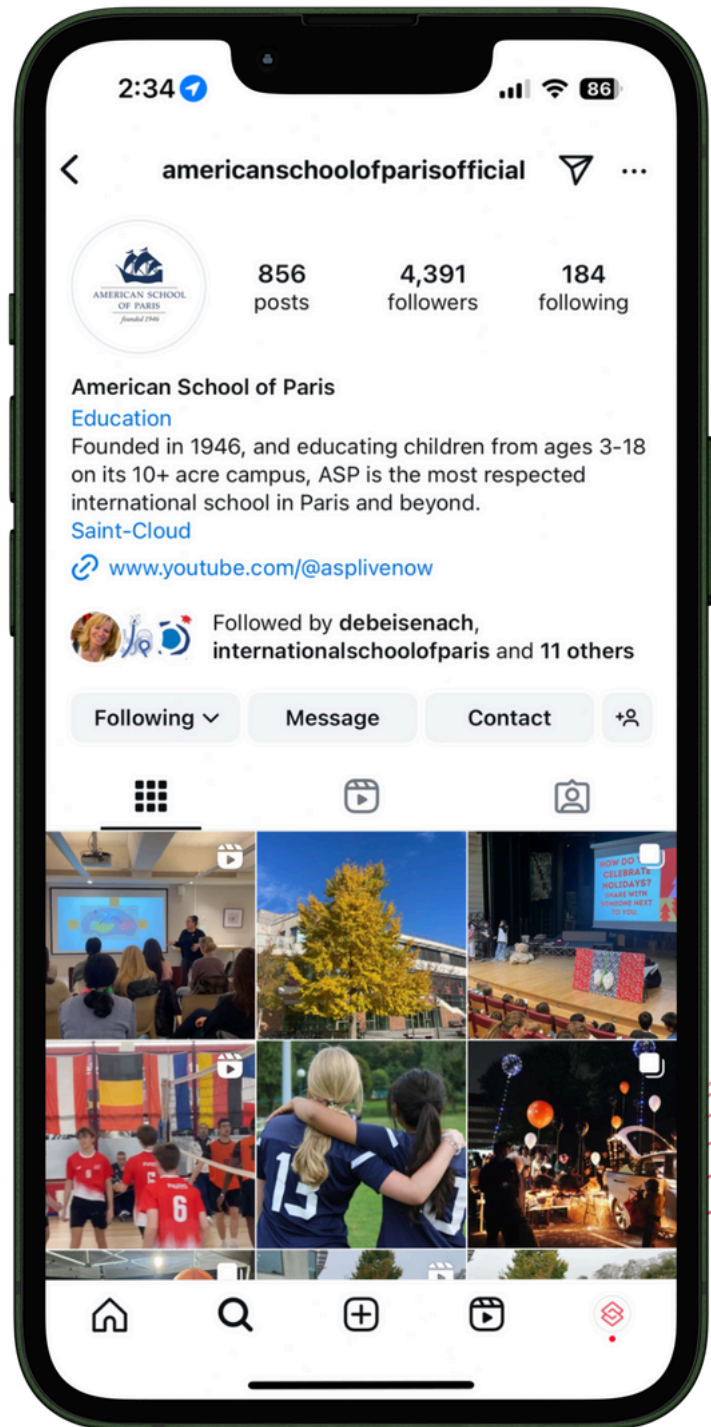
**VIDEO POST:**
1080 x 1920 px

**STORIES**
1080 X 1920 px

**PHOTO POST**
Square - 1080 X 1080 px
Landscape - 1080 X 566 px
Portrait - 1080 X 1350 px

# Instagram Best Practices

Eighty-four percent of social users have an Instagram profile—the most of all of the networks! To best engage with your families and potential students, Instagram is the place to post your most high-quality content. People are engaging with branded content more than ever, especially on Instagram. In fact, 44% of users wished brands used Instagram even more often, the highest of any network.

## WHAT TYPES OF CONTENT WORK BEST?

User interactions vary from person to person. From a user's Feed to their Explore Page, these major components of the platform inform the algorithm and essentially make or break your account's overall engagement. For example, the Explore Page shows new content to match a user's niche interests. Its main objective is to push new content that's heavily related to what a user engages with the most on Instagram. However, the majority of the content that's being pushed is from non-following accounts. So, what does this mean for your school's Instagram content?

**Quick Tip**

With the growing popularity of Stories and the boom of Reels, posting on your "normal" grid is becoming less important for your daily content.

In general, recommended weekly content for Instagram includes:
- Two to three posts for your feed,
- Two Reels, and
- Five or more Stories.

Authenticity is key. As long as the content informs, educates, and entertains your target audience, the results will serve your school. Don't be afraid to mix video and image content and increase your interactivity with your Posts, Stories, and Reels!

- Use carousels in your content's storytelling by telling your message over several slides in various formats (landscape, classic square, or portrait).
- Share in-the-moment content with Stories. Use hashtags to boost your reach on the Explore Page, and create a poll or ask your followers a question.
- Add a location, website link, or tag other accounts to boost external engagement.
- Create Reels to take a light-hearted approach for showcasing your students, your events, and more.
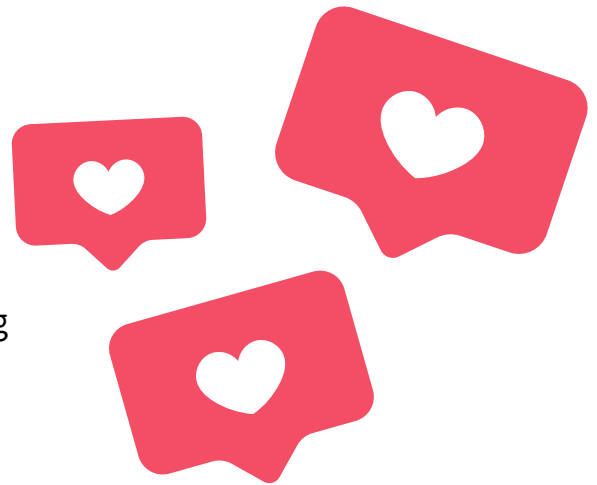
# Instagram's Algorithms

According to Instagram,"No one algorithm decides what you see, because each part of the app — Feed, Explore, Reels — has its own ranking system based on how you use it." Instagram uses signals to rank everything on the app, and how often people see your content is based on what they like, comment on, and even how you tag or format posts.

Try these tips to boost your content:
- Play to your audience and their niche
- Post in popular formats, like Reels
- Tag a location
- Invite people to engage
- Avoid back-to-back posts to get a better ranking

Understanding Instagram's algorithms can be challenging due to their constant updates. For now, remember that short Reels (under 30 seconds) tend to achieve the greatest reach. If sharing a photo, opt for a carousel format, and make sure your content is share-worthy to increase its engagement.

### EXPLORE PAGE

How often and how quickly are other people liking, commenting, sharing, and saving your posts? These signals influence the chances of your school's content showing up on the Explore Page, rather than in your Feed and Stories.

**Keep Reading: Social Media Power Hour: Manage Your School's Instagram in 60 Mins**

# How to Make the Instagram Algorithm Work for Your School

- <u>Add Reels into your Instagram strategy.</u>. These short-form videos are a great way to boost awareness and engage with your students and parents alike.

- <u>Post when your followers are the most active</u> to get the most engagement during the first moments after posting—often in the morning, at lunchtime, and in the evening.

- <u>Use your Stories to interact with your followers.</u> Use question stickers, polls, and emoji sliders to encourage engagement.

- <u>Encourage your followers to comment on your posts.</u> Ask questions, post trivia content, and even challenge your followers in games.

- <u>Use branded and relevant hashtags</u>. Hashtags are a great way to extend your reach and encourage engagement from your current followers.

- <u>Share real testimonials and stories.</u> Instagram is an important platform to showcase members of your school—from current students and faculty to alumni—and it's the type of content that we naturally gravitate toward.

> "We've used Instagram to build community and connect with our students. Engagement has gone up tremendously by implementing multiple 'student takeovers' and even 'school takeovers,' which give viewers an insider's look at the school culture and community."
>
> -Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District 191

# Reels and Stories

## HOW THE ALGORITHM RANKS REELS

Your Feed and Stories are designed to show content to your most engaged followers, whereas your Reels are most likely going to have the largest reach to non-followers.

## GETTING STARTED WITH REELS

If you have had any reservations about creating a presence on TikTok for your school or district, Instagram has provided a solution through the inception of Reels. This short-form video feature has quickly secured a subsection of its own, and Instagram is pulling for it to outweigh its competitor platforms. As such, it's becoming increasingly important for any Instagram profile to create Reels to organically reach its audiences.

So, what should you post as a Reel? This is a tough question because trends are constantly changing. However, taking a light-hearted approach to showcasing your students, your events, and more is a great start!

The best thing you can do to get inspiration for Reels is to head over to the platform and watch what's trending now. And, don't be afraid to use your students! Reels will surely evolve as its usage increases, so experimenting now can help your school or district get comfortable with this engagement powerhouse.
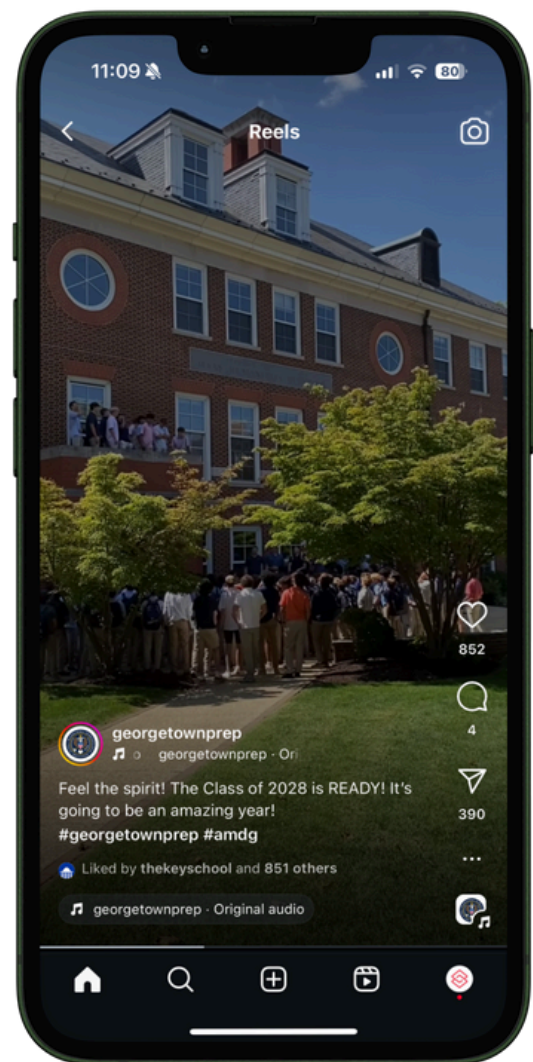
**Keep Reading: <u>Instagram Reel Ideas for Schools Who HATE to be on Camera</u>**

# Incorporating Stories and Highlights

Through Instagram Stories, schools can share in-the-moment content that's archived after 24 hours. This type of content is perfect for recapping events like open houses, athletic games, concerts, and more. Plus, if members of your school community can't attend but wish they could, they'll feel part of the event by watching your Stories.

For the Stories you want to keep and showcase to your community any time they visit your Instagram account, add them to your Highlights! You can organize the highlights by topic, event, department, and more. They will live right above your Instagram feed so that they are easily accessible to your visitors.

> " After we redesigned the website, the site became a great way for us to showcase student-generated content, as well as our educational posts, event highlights, and student and staff spotlights. "
>
> -Daegu International School

# X (FORMERLY KNOWN AS TWITTER)

# Anatomy of an X Profile



**1**
Logo profile picture for easy recognition. Sized at 400 x 400 px.

**2**
Handle, bio and school information that represents who you are.

**3**
Follower count, showing the accounts that you follow as well as who follows you.

**4**
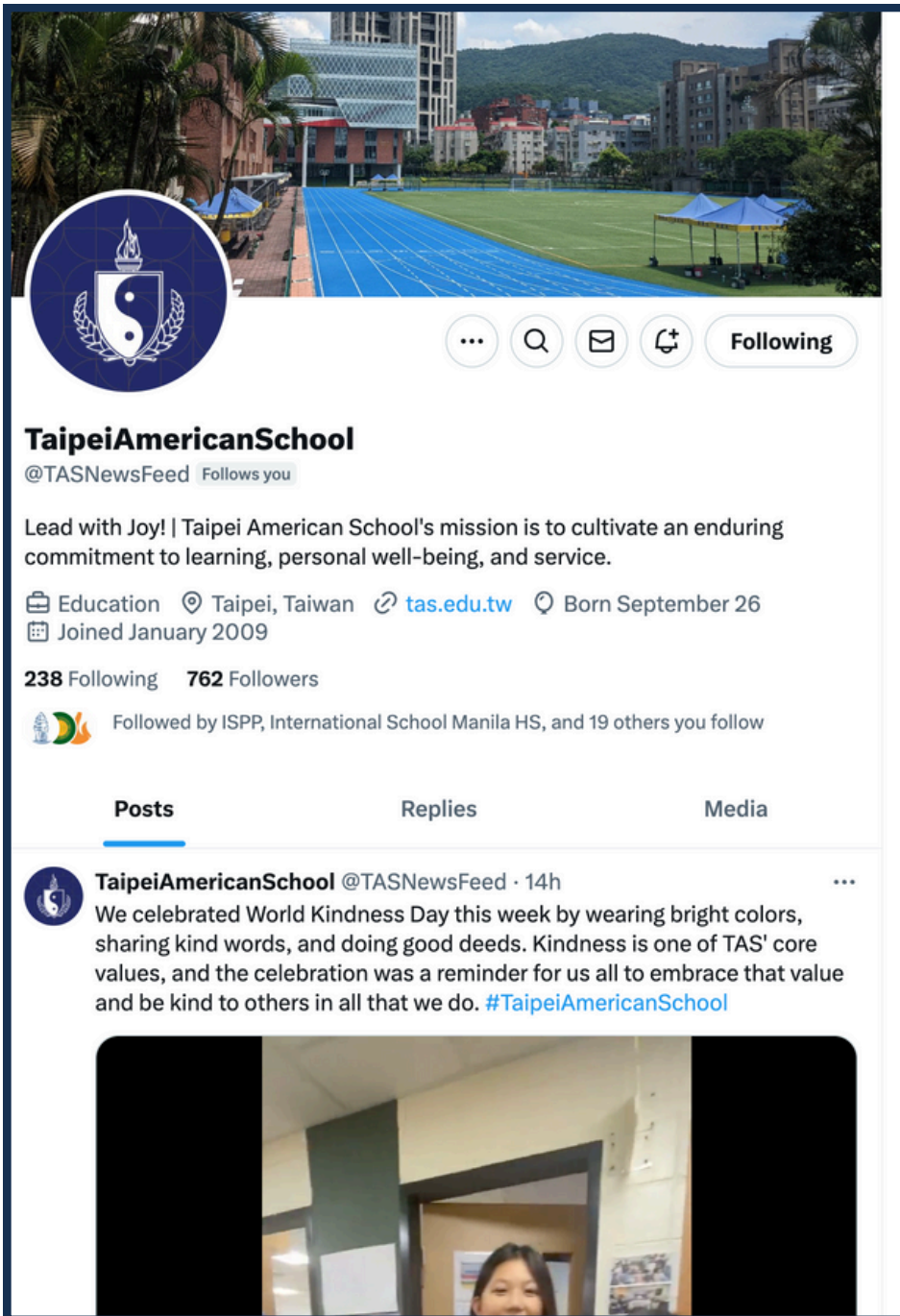Header image, sized at 1500 x 1500 px.

**5**
Account information, including location, your website, and when you joined X.

**6**
Feed of your posts, reposts and replies.

# Image Sizes

When posting a photo, X will accept most sizes. However, consistently sized photos can provide a nice look and feel to your posts.



**PROFILE IMAGE**
400 X 400 px

**HEADER IMAGE**
500 X 1500 px

**STORIES**
1080 X 1920 px

**PHOTO POST**
1024 X 512 px
(recommended)

# X Best Practices

Although many people have been skeptical of the social platform since it transitioned from Twitter to X in 2022, it isn't going anywhere just yet.

You can think of X as your newsroom. For the little moments that may not warrant a dedicated post on Instagram, you have X. And while X is helpful for those news-worthy moments, that doesn't mean it isn't social. Engaging with and responding to posts is the norm, and anything less is noticed. It's an excellent outlet for answering the questions of your students, families, and prospects.

## DON'T FORGET TO WATCH YOUR ANALYTICS

If you click the four little lines at the bottom right of your post you can see the post's analytics — including the number of impressions, profile visits, engagements, new followers, and link clicks. This offers insight into what content resonates with your audiences so that you can adjust your strategy accordingly. Keep an eye on your numbers and watch your engagement grow!



## CAN OUR SCHOOL HAVE MULTIPLE ACCOUNTS?

Only on X — and with caution. The rule of thumb here at Finalsite: One social media account per network, especially on Instagram and Facebook. Creating numerous accounts splits traffic and tells a disconnected story on these two platforms in particular.

X is an exception but not the rule. Seeing as X is used as a news platform, some schools greatly benefit by creating accounts for athletics to share game scores, athlete highlights, play-by-plays, etc. If you provide these departments with a set of guidelines to stay consistent with your school's brand, multiple accounts are OK. Just keep an eye on them!

# Optimizing Content for Engagement

One of the biggest mistakes we see schools make (in an effort to save time) is to post the same piece of content across every platform. While similar content works on Instagram and Facebook, the content that will perform well on X is vastly different.

**OPTIMAL TEXT LENGTH**

While X allows for up to 280 characters, research shows that posts that are between 70 and 100 characters get more engagement. You can (and should) rely on your video or photo content to make a user stop scrolling. And don't forget to add 1-2 hashtags per post to increase your reach!

**OPTIMAL VIDEO LENGTH**

The maximum length allowed is 2 minutes and 20 seconds, but aiming for videos closer to the 44-second or less mark will see more engagement.

**OPTIMIZING PHOTOS**

Like every channel, keeping your photos fun, bright, and on-brand is the best thing you can do. Try to keep all your photos the same size for consistency.



Xavier High School @XavierHighCT · 1h
**Experience a Day in the Life of a Falcon!**
Future Falcons, this is your chance to walk the halls, meet our dedicated teachers, and see firsthand what makes Xavier so special. Your journey starts here! Register now!

bit.ly/FalconForADay



📌 Pinned
**Newark City Schools** @Newark_Schools · Nov 6
Great job @LibertyJaguars on Good Day Columbus! Go Cats!

⏸ 1:47

> "Consistency is key! Our audience relies on us to post daily at 10:30 AM, providing them a steady stream of engaging content."
>
> -Singapore American School

# LINKEDIN

# Anatomy of a LinkedIn Page
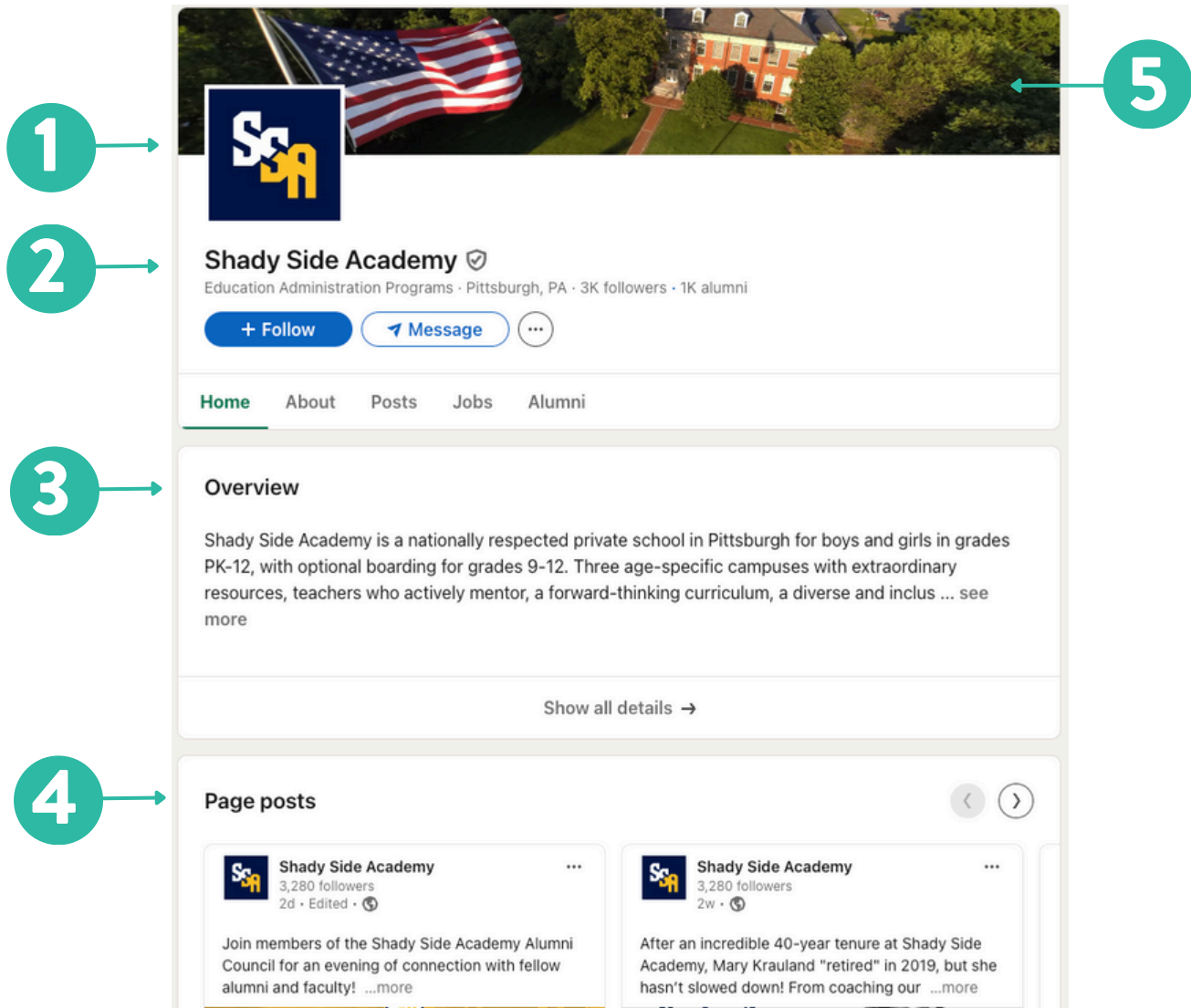


**1**
Logo profile picture.

**2**
Appropriate name for easy recognition.

**3**
Brief overview of your school such as where you're located, what students you serve, and what makes your school unique.

**4**
Posts feed, which showcases your recent content.

**5**
Cover image, sized at 1584 x 396 px. These will crop differently on mobile and desktop.

# Image Sizes

LinkedIn has become more visual in recent years. When possible, always accompany your updates with a photo or video.
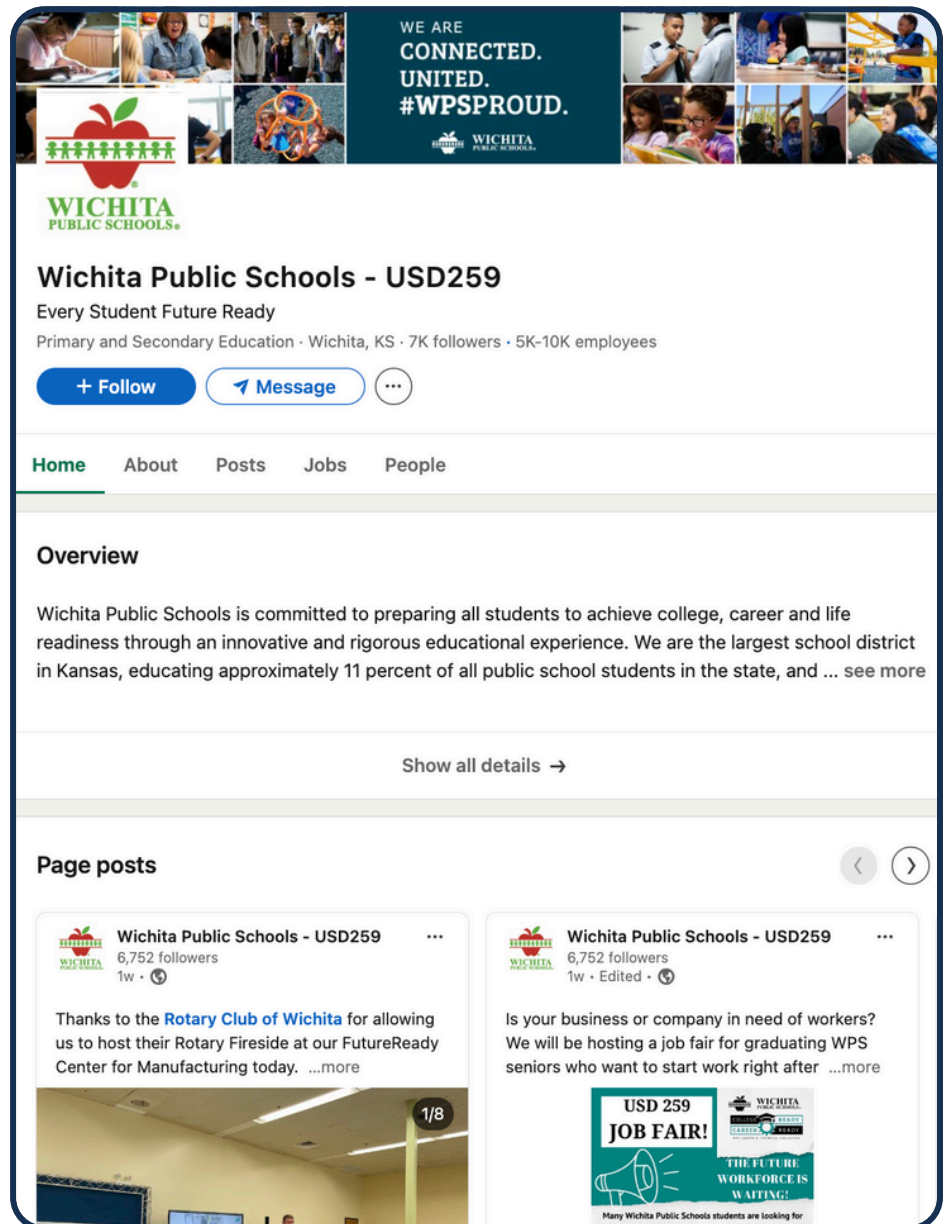
**PROFILE IMAGE**
300 X 300 px

**COVER IMAGE**
1128 X 191 px

**PHOTO POST**
1200 X 628 px
(recommended)

# LinkedIn Best Practices

LinkedIn has been known as the "professional social media platform," and while that's still true, it's seen a recent shift as users have begun sharing more personal updates and reflections. Everyone, from your faculty to your graduates, is on this professional channel, and it can be a great addition to your engagement strategy.

💡 **Quick Tip**

A notable difference between LinkedIn and other channels is its engagement algorithm. It's not uncommon for LinkedIn to push content that is 3+ months old to the top of your feed if it considers it engaging. So, your posting cadence can be less aggressive compared to your other channels. Aim for quality over quantity, and try to post at least once or twice per week to keep a solid presence.

## FEATURE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF: LINKEDIN GROUPS

Much like Facebook, LinkedIn has a Groups feature that is a fantastic way to engage with specific audiences. Want to engage with alumni? Invite them to an exclusive Group! Interested in supplying parents with school news and information? You guessed it—invite them to your LinkedIn Group!

## DON'T FORGET ABOUT FACULTY RECRUITMENT!

LinkedIn has become one of the top platforms for recruitment. You can promote openings at your school or district through LinkedIn Jobs, which can reach anyone looking for a new role. This is a paid option, so you have to set a budget and plan for a specific timeline to run your ad. Or, you can simply post about your openings for free to share with your followers.

# Optimizing Content for Engagement

LinkedIn is considered the "professional" social media outlet, and it is treated as such. You'll find that many of your school's target audiences, like students, parents, alumni, faculty, and staff, are all on LinkedIn, and you can easily build your community and awareness by engaging them on this platform.

## OPTIMAL TEXT LENGTH

LinkedIn is unique in that users visiting the platform are more accepting of long-form content. That said, keep in mind that your message will be cut off at the 140-character mark with a "See More" button. So, if you have something important to say, try to say it with less than 140 characters.

## OPTIMAL VIDEO LENGTH

Similar to the recommended video lengths for Facebook, your videos on LinkedIn should cater to the nature of your content. For brand awareness videos (like quick campus tours, admissions messages, etc.), short-form video does well at around the 30-90 second mark. For videos that tell a more complex story (like student profiles, etc.), you can go past that 90-second mark all the way up to 10 minutes, which is the maximum recommended length.



## OPTIMIZING PHOTOS

The recommended image size is 1200 x 628 pixels. and if you're posting a link to your website, this photo will get pulled directly from the thumbnail attached to that page on your website. Always be sure to optimize this thumbnail to appear clean and visually appealing before clicking "post!"
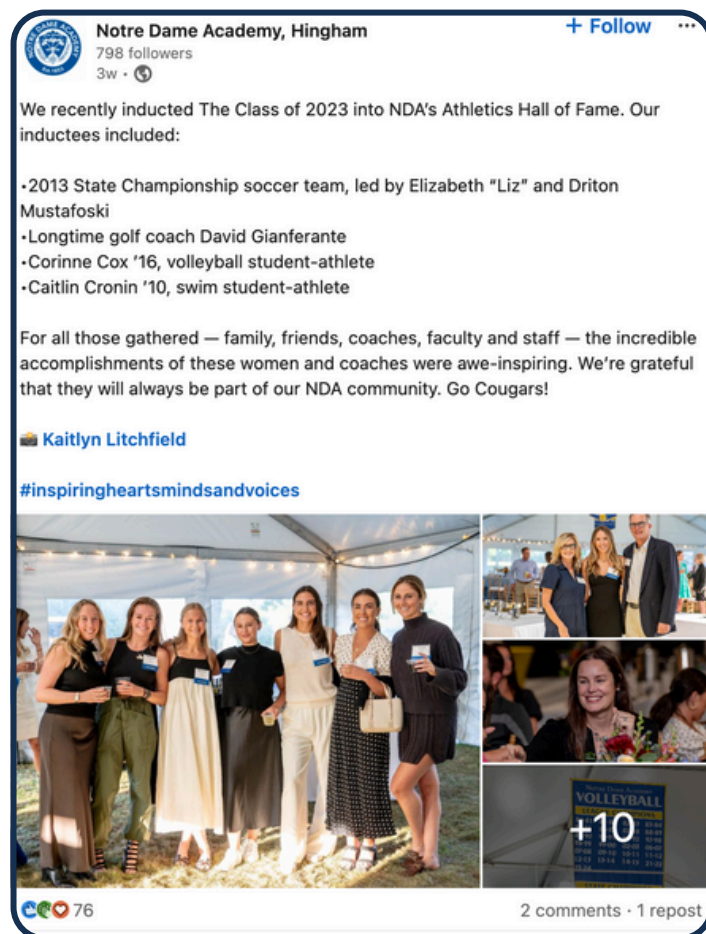
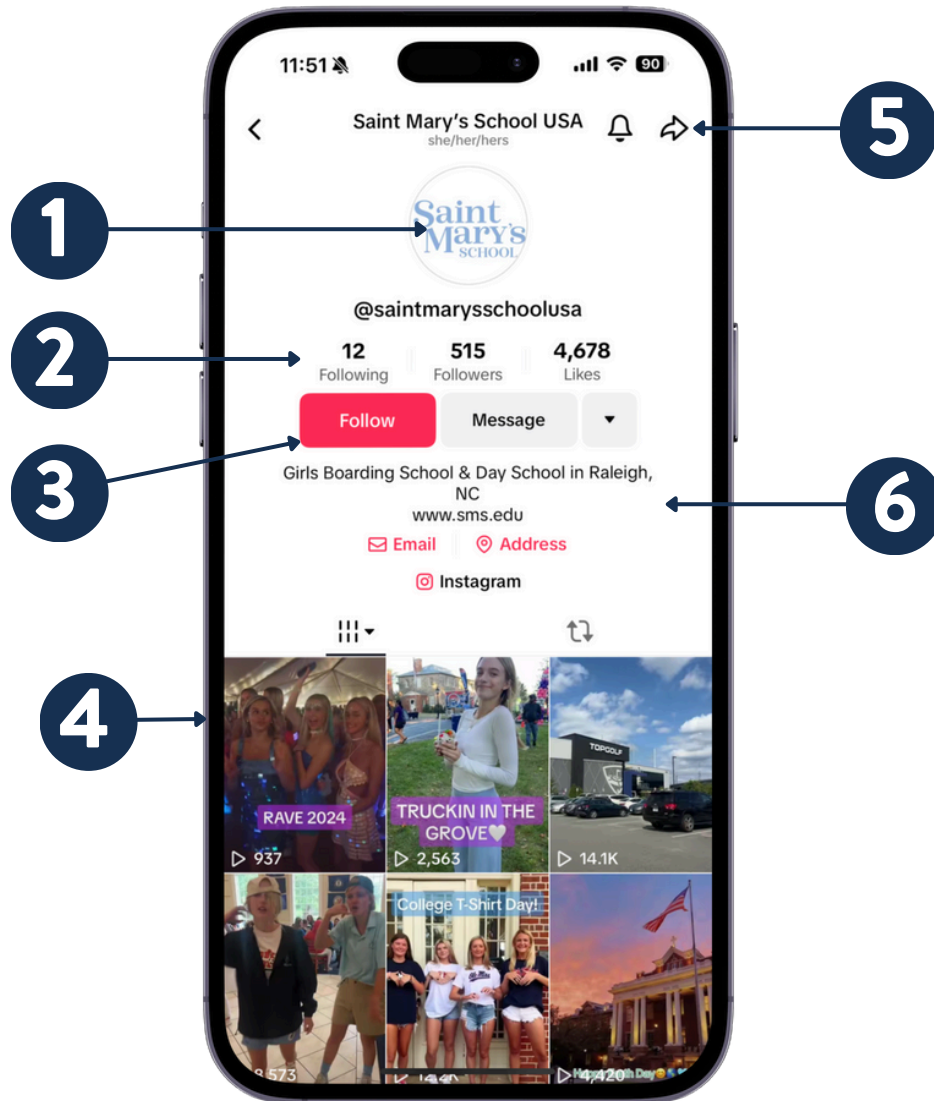**Keep Reading: <u>LinkedIn Strategies For Schools: Manage Your Account in 60 Mins</u>**

> "We understand that each of our social media platforms has slightly different audiences, and we try to capitalize on that understanding when selecting content and setting expectations."
>
> -Iowa City Community School District

# TIKTOK

# Anatomy of a TikTok Profile



**1**

Logo profile picture for easy recognition. This is also where you add to your "Story."

**2**

Follower, Likes, and Post Summary, for quick reference of performance.

**3**

Follow buttons, where you can follow a user from their profile, access their other provided social media, and suggested accounts.

**4**

Post grid, showing the full history of your school's published content.

**5**

Tap on the Bell Icon to receive notifications when a user posts their content. You can also tap the arrow to share an account.

**6**

Bio and link, to give visitors a clear idea of who you are.

# TikTok Best Practices

For Gen Z, TikTok functions as a search engine, a news source, a cultural hub, and even an online shopping mall. While it continues to engage users through its organic approach to building niche communities, it poses a question for schools and districts alike: "Should we add TikTok to our social media strategy?" It's a valid question, but it's not entirely "one size fits all." Even though TikTok seems to live under the category of "unnecessary," your school may have more capacity to take on the platform than you think.
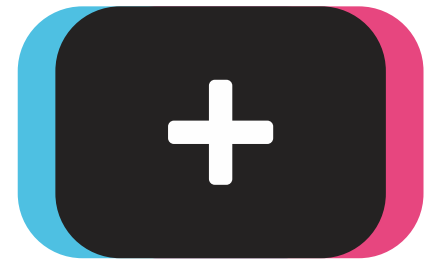
## TIK TOK 101

- **TikTok encourages users to craft short videos of up to three minutes. (The shorter, the better!)**

- **Users can create and upload videos that range from comedic skits to think pieces and dances, most often set to music.**

- **The FYP (For You Page) is a user's main source of new content, as it curates the type of content users engage with most.**

- **Search and follow hashtags to see what's currently trending. Head over to the Discover section to explore new content.**

## THE FUTURE OF TIK TOK

On January 10, 2025, a U.S. appeals court rejected TikTok's bid to block the government's forced sale of the app. Late on January 18, the app shut down for twelve hours, and on January 20, an executive order delayed the TikTok ban for 75 days "to determine the appropriate course forward in an orderly way."

While it's future in the U.S. remained unclear, it is still one of the most popular channels for engaging Gen Z.

# How Can Your School or District Use TikTok?

There are a number of questions to ask yourself before incorporating TikTok into your school's social media strategy.

- What are our goals for social media?
- Who do we need to engage with to meet these goals?
- Are we already active on Facebook, Instagram, X, and/or LinkedIn?
- Do we have the capacity for additional content creation?

If your school is already active on other social channels and has the capacity, TikTok might be the answer to engage Gen Z, effectively reaching both current and prospective students. Doing so might unlock a new way to drive awareness and demand for your school's programs and community in a light-hearted and authentic way.

If your school has the capacity and appropriate goals to have a presence on TikTok, be sure to get your students involved! They're the ones using the platform, so they can help you stay on top of these trends and will likely be excited to help generate ideas.
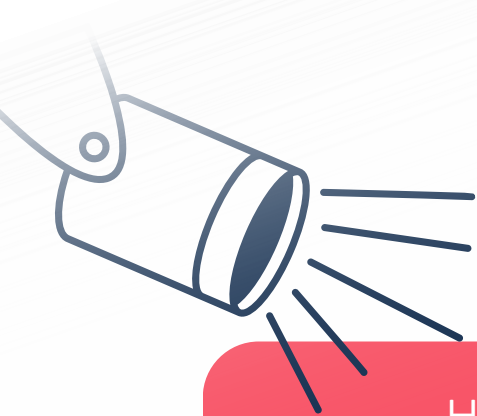
Here are some easy ways to spotlight your community:
- Highlight a student achievement
- Highlight a teacher anniversary
- Share photos or a video of the campus
- Share highlights from an athletics match
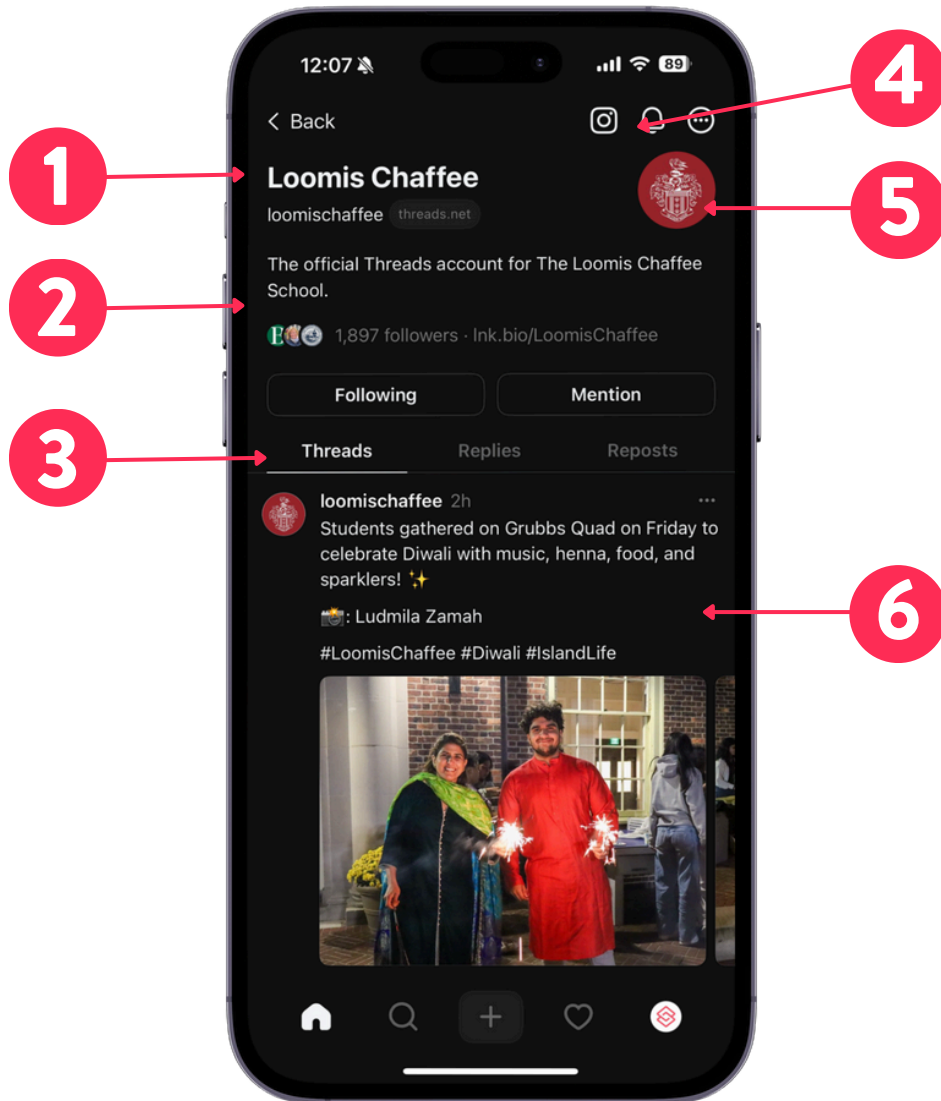- Showcase a club or student group event

> " Educate your stakeholders on social media's role within the broader communications strategy. And remember, you don't need to be on every channel—only where you can provide value (but DO grab the handle so no one else can take it!)
>
> -United World College of South East Asia

# THREADS

# Anatomy of a Threads Profile



**1**

Appropriate name for easy recognition.

**2**

Bio, link, and follower count to give visitors an understanding of who you are.

**3**

Posts are organized into three categories: Threads (posts), replies, and reposts.

**4**

Click the Instagram button to go to an account's Instagram page. Tap on the Bell Icon to receive notifications when a user posts content.

**5**

Logo profile picture.

**6**

Posts feed, which showcases your recent content.

# Image Sizes

When posting a photo, Threads will accept most sizes. However, consistently sized photos can provide a nice look and feel to your posts.



**PROFILE IMAGE**
320 x 320 px

**PHOTO POST**
1080 x 1920 px
(recommended)

**VIDEO POST**
1080 x 1920 px
(recommended)

# Threads Best Practices

Meta's Threads platform launched at the end of 2023 and experienced rapid growth. A record number of 30 million people joined the app on its first day. As of late 2024, the app has over 200 million active monthly users. While this is an impressive accomplishment, when you compare it to X's 611 million users, it becomes apparent that Meta has a long way to go before it dethrones X. The app has long-term potential and is consistently evolving and updating to provide features that its loyal fans want and need.

## Quick Tip

Tags are on Threads, but they're a bit different from traditional hashtags. Unlike X, Threads tags don't show the hash symbol, and you can even include spaces or use an emoji as a tag. However, there's one major limitation—you can only add one tag per post.

To create a tag, simply press the # button or type it manually, followed by your desired text.

Similar to other social platforms, many users turn to Threads for a break from boredom, while others use it to stay updated on news and real-time events.

You can use the app similarly to how you would use X, except you're able to write 500 characters, share up to 20 images, and create a thread of posts when drafting the post which you can't do in X (hence the name "Threads.")

# Optimizing Content for Engagement

## OPTIMAL VIDEO LENGTH

Threads allows for longer videos, but for higher engagement, keep your videos short—around 30-45 seconds. Quick, punchy videos will capture attention and encourage viewers to stick around.

## OPTIMAL TEXT LENGTH

You can write up to 500 characters in one Threads post, but shorter posts still tend to perform better. Aim for concise messages around 70-100 characters to increase engagement. Let your photos or videos do the heavy lifting to grab attention.

## OPTIMIZING PHOTOS

On Threads, bright, fun, and on-brand visuals are key. Keep your photos consistent in size and style to maintain a cohesive look on your feed. Staying true to your brand's color palette and aesthetic will help your posts stand out and feel more professional.

> "The key to success is to be proactive and to try different strategies. It's important to question the type of content that performs well, check the analytics, and react in real-time to data insights so as to adapt our strategy along the way."
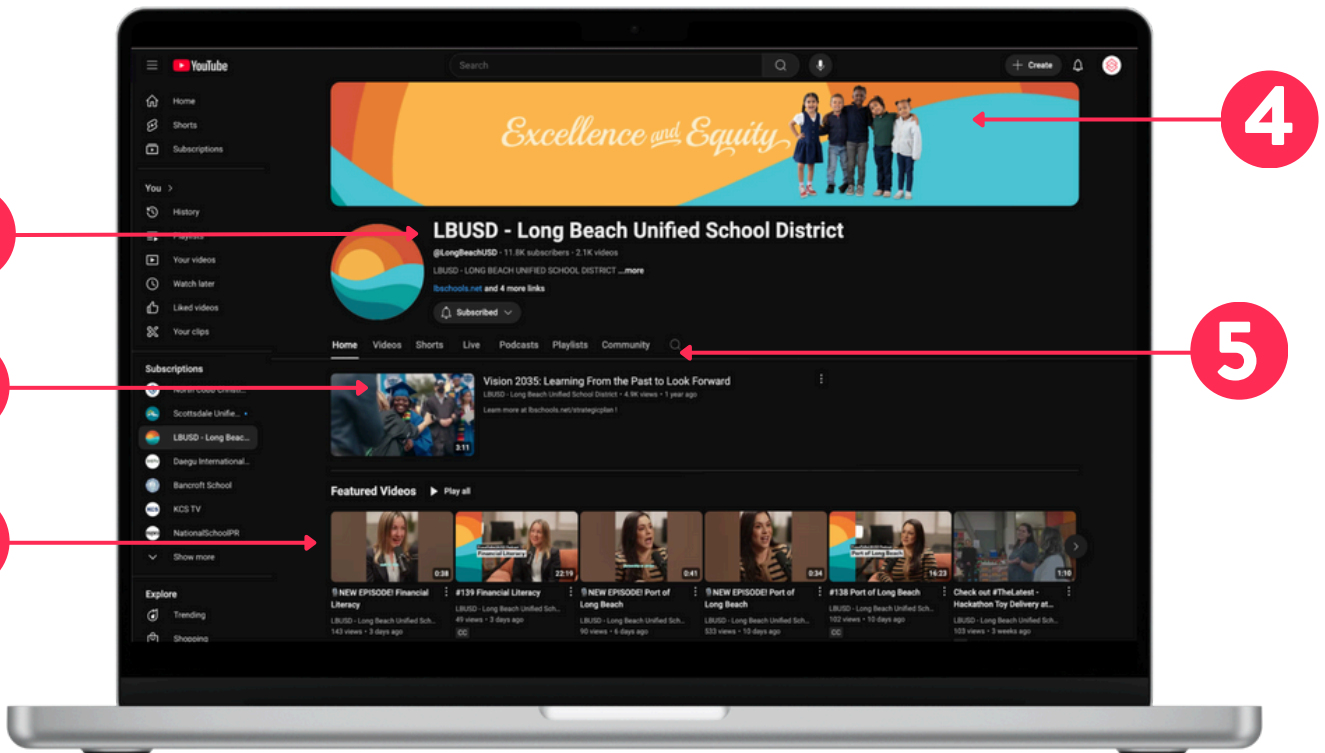>
> -International School of Paris

# YOUTUBE

# Anatomy of a YouTube Profile



## 1
Appropriate name for easy recognition.

## 2
Pinned Video. This should be an introduction to your school or district.

## 3
Featured videos, where you can pin important posts to the topof your page.
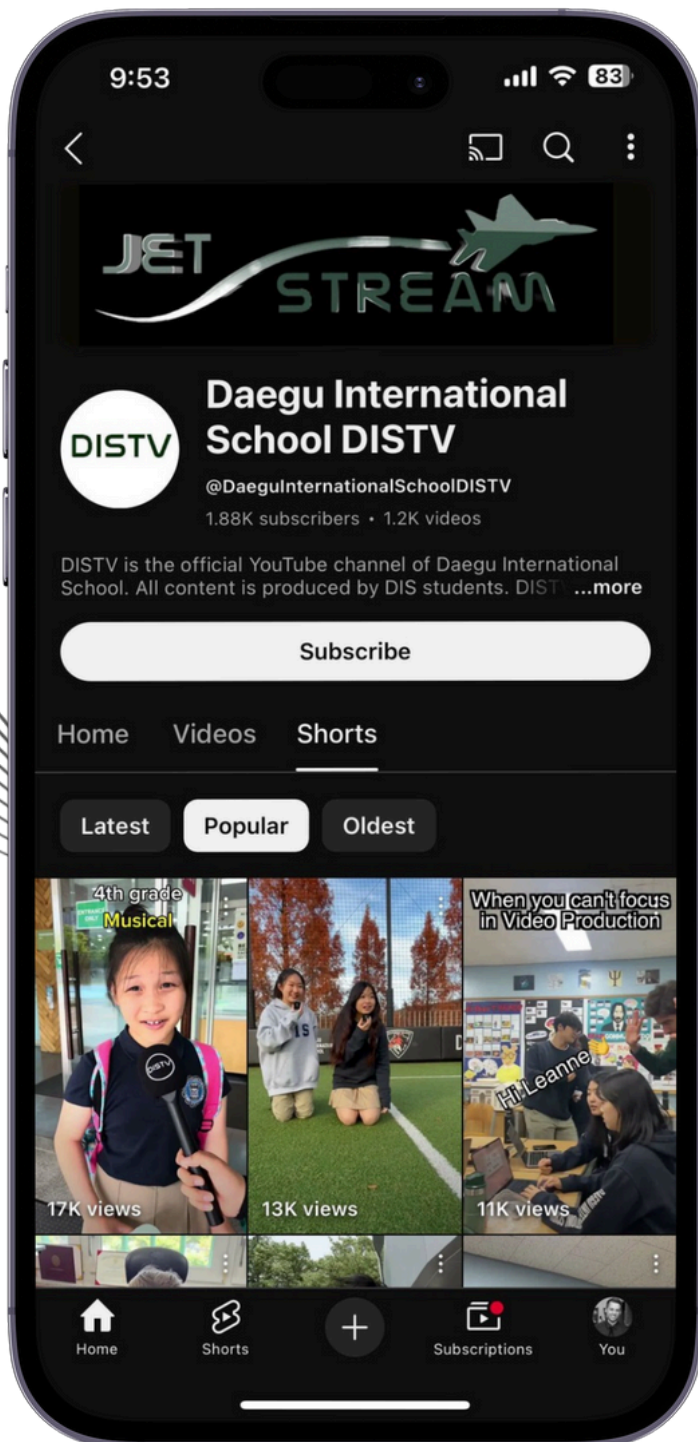
## 4
Banner image, which showcases your school or an appropriate promotion. 2560 x 1440 px.

## 5
Tabs where you can toggle to see all videos, shorts, podcasts, video playlists, and community.

# Video Sizes

Uploading your YouTube video in the right dimensions and resolution ensures it looks its best. Here are a few common YouTube video dimensions and resolutions:



426 x 240 px (Minimum requirement)

854 x 480 pixels (Standard)

1280 x 720 pixels (HD)

1920 x 1080 pixels (Full HD)

3840 x 2160 pixels (Ultra HD)

# YouTube Best Practices

YouTube is a social platform that often gets overlooked, but there are many great opportunities to take advantage of. You can showcase longer versions of Instagram Reels you create, start a podcast, or share board meetings for those who couldn't attend in person. These videos can also be embedded on your website for easy public access.

## CREATE ENGAGING THUMBNAILS

Your thumbnail is often the first thing viewers see, so it's essential to make it eye-catching and relevant. Use bold, contrasting colors and incorporate text to summarize the video's content. Thumbnails with people tend to perform better, especially when emotions or expressions are highlighted, just be sure the thumbnail matches the tone of the video to avoid misleading viewers.

About 85-90% of YouTube videos are watched without sound! Don't underestimate the importance of captions—viewers rely on them to understand your content.

## ADD CAPTIONS

Captions are essential for accessibility and can also boost your video's search ranking. YouTube automatically generates captions, but it's best to upload accurate ones or edit YouTube's auto-captions for precision. Captions help reach viewers who may be watching without sound and ensure that your content is accessible to all.

# YouTube Best Practices

### CREATE PLAYLISTS FOR CONSISTENCY

Organize your content into playlists to make it easier for viewers to find related videos. Playlists not only improve user experience but also encourage binge-watching, increasing your channel's total watch time.

### FOCUS ON QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY

While frequent uploads are important, prioritize the quality of your videos. Invest in good lighting, clear audio, and stable shots. High-quality content helps build credibility and encourages viewers to watch until the end. If resources are limited, even using a smartphone with good lighting can go a long way.

### OPTIMIZE TITLES AND DESCRIPTIONS

An effective title grabs attention and clearly conveys the video's topic. Keep it concise—under 60 characters—and include relevant keywords to improve searchability. In the video description, provide a brief summary (around 200 words) of the content, including key phrases viewers may search for. Also, add links to related videos or your school's website and social media channels.

### USE YOUTUBE SHORTS

YouTube Shorts, the platform's short-form video feature, is a great way to engage your audience quickly. Schools can use it to share quick updates, showcase highlights from events, or even provide tips for students and parents. Shorts are designed for mobile viewing and can help increase your visibility on the platform.

# ADDITIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES

# Social Media Content Creation

On nearly every major social network, users want brands to show up with content that entertains them. They're looking for a break from boredom, and the brands that can meet this need will see a boost in awareness and engagement. So, what makes content entertaining? According to 66% of social media users, "edutainment,"or content that both educates and entertains, is the most engaging type of brand content. It even outshines memes, series, and skits!

## Let's Break That Down ...

**THE 70-20-10 RULE**

70% of your content should be relevant and engaging, 20% should be shared from other sources, and only 10% of your content should be promotional.

Engaging Content includes the bulk of what you should be posting. This includes student highlights, fun trivia questions, throwbacks, and any content that encourages interaction.

Shared Content includes blogs from other industry experts, crowdsourced content from within the community, or even content from other leaders at your school.

Promotional Content is content that promotes your schools or an event. (Think annual fund, #GivingTuesday, open houses, admissions messages, etc.)



10% Promotional content

20% Shared content

70-20-10

70% Fun, educational content
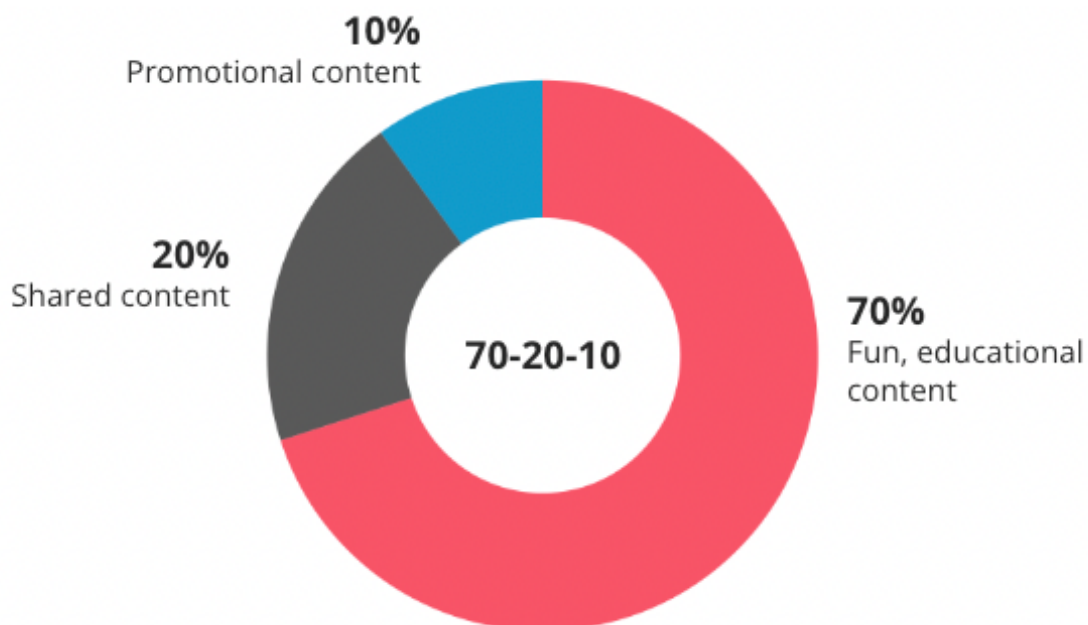
# Building a Social Media Calendar

Because social media isn't a siloed communications platform, your calendar shouldn't be created in a silo, either. To develop your calendar, work with your departments to:

- Decide which platforms you're going to use
- Pick a social media "rule" that works best
- Create social media content cadences
- Plan content together on a yearly, monthly, or weekly basis
- How you'll use social ads throughout the year to boost awareness and engagement

Then, use your agreed-upon cadence and engagement rule to build out your ideas for each day. Start with what you want to post, question if it's content created for your community or if you've already met your promotional quota, and then determine which channels work best for that content type. It may look something like:

| MON | TUES | WED | THURS | FRI |
|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|
| Upcoming Events | Project Spotlight | Student Takeover | Throwback Thursday | User-Generated Content |

> "Focus on what you can maintain—quality over quantity. Keep everything funneled through the main school account unless there's a compelling reason to have separate ones. Ensure every post tells a story; if it doesn't, skip it."
>
> -United World College of South East Asia

# #HashtagCheatSheet

What's the "right" number of hashtags? Hashtags have always been a topic of debate in social media. Should you use as many as possible or avoid them altogether?

Using an excessive number of hashtags in your social media captions can make your post appear cluttered and unprofessional, which can diminish the message you're trying to share.

It's important to be selective and strategic with hashtags, focusing on a few relevant tags that represent the content of your post and resonate with your audience. Also, using irrelevant or generic hashtags may attract the wrong audience and lead to poor engagement.

There are many ways to find quality hashtags, but we recommend starting with a competitor analysis—see what hashtags nearby schools are using! You can also use hashtag generators such as RiteTag, which lets you type in your caption and generates trending hashtags based on your content.

X: 1-2 hashtags per post. Add your hashtags anywhere in your posts.

Instagram: While Instagram allows up to 30 hashtags per post, Hootsuite reported that 3-5 relevant hashtags get the same results as using 30 hashtags! For the best performance in reels, stick with three strong hashtags and place them hashtags after your captions.

Facebook: 2-3 hashtags. Hashtags can be a part of your written Facebook post or in the comments.

LinkedIn: Aim for 1-5 hashtags per post. LinkedIn is more professional, so it's important to use hashtags relevant to the industry or topic of your post.

Threads: Currently, Threads only lets you use one hashtag, so choose wisely!

# Rogue Accounts

What happens when the art teacher, JV baseball team, or science department decide to create their social media accounts and start representing your school?

Suddenly, your school's brand is scattered across multiple platforms, each with different logos, messages, tones, and levels of activity. While the intention behind these accounts is good, these "rogue accounts" can quickly become a headache for maintaining a cohesive and professional online presence. The best approach is to consolidate efforts and focus on building a strong, unified social media presence under one account per channel.

## Steps to Consolidate Social Media Accounts

**1** Audit Existing Accounts Identify and list all social media accounts linked to your school, noting their activity levels.

**2** Establish Social Media Policy Create clear guidelines for account management, content, posting frequency, and branding, including an approval process for new accounts.

**3** Communicate with Staff: Share the guidelines with all staff, emphasizing the benefits of a unified social media presence and provide training for content contributors.

**4** Promote Official Channels: Share official social media accounts through newsletters and the school website, using clear branding to help audiences identify them.

**5** Centralize Login Information: Restrict access to trusted individuals and consider using tools like LastPass for account management.

**6** Monitor and Enforce Policies: Regularly check all social media activity linked to the school to ensure compliance.
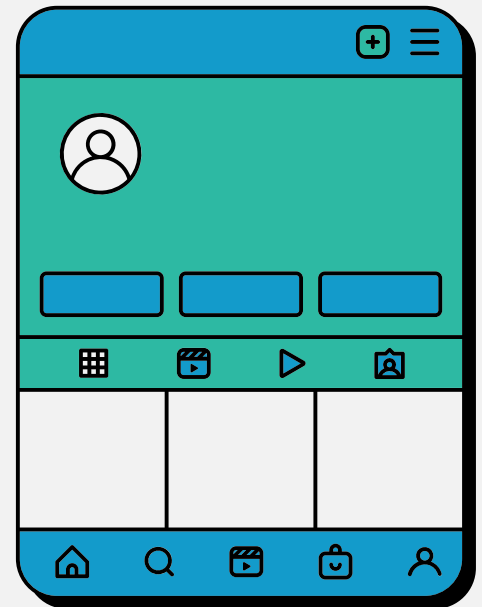
# Understanding Your Data:
## Identifying metrics that matter

Engagement refers to anything that indicates a user took action, which includes likes, comments, and shares. But no standalone number suggests the success of your social media post, and other metrics like impressions can also be important. Taking all metrics into consideration at once is ultimately the best way you can interpret your data and bring something valuable back to your strategy.

### VANITY METRICS
- Likes
- Comments
- Shares
- @Mentions

### AWARENESS METRICS
- Impressions/Reach
- Link Clicks
- Video Views

## HOW TO DETERMINE WHAT'S "WORKING"

Before deciding if a post underperformed, it's important to know what your goal for the post was. Identifying this goal can help you see a better story of how the post performed.

For example, having few likes and zero comments may look negative without context, but perhaps the post linked over to a page with a video on your website, which received multiple link clicks and resulted in more video views. In this case, the goal of the post was likely to drive traffic to the website and video, which it accomplished. On the other hand, if the goal of your post was to start a conversation in the comments section, but it received no comments, then you can take it as an opportunity to take another angle with your next post.

> **Key Takeaway:** **Look at your social media posts with a critical, but open mind.**
> Low engagement can be enough to get anyone down, but building your social presence is a mix of art and science that can take some time to perfect. The most important question you can ask yourself is if the post accomplished what you wanted!

# Social Media Ads

A common misconception when it comes to social media advertising is that you should put dollars behind every post for it to perform well. Advertising, just like organic posting, requires a set strategy with goals to be successful.

**First, take a look at your current social media metrics.**

Before knowing the state of your current social media efforts, it will be difficult to gauge how well your posts may perform in ads. The Finalsite team can offer an expert eye on it, provide sound recommendations, and assist you as you move forward with advertising.

[Get started with our consulting team >](#)

**Social ads are a great way to expand your reach.**
You will be able to target by demographic, location, interests, etc., to reach your ideal audience. Advertising is available on each platform in this guide, but Facebook is a great place to start.

You should have an action that you want users to take, and a landing page dedicated to that purpose. For example, if you want to drive families to your upcoming open house, create an ad that encourages registration and leads to a registration page with more info.

**Keep Reading:** [3 Mistakes Your School's Paid Digital Ads Can (Easily) Avoid](#)

**WHAT SHOULD MY AD BUDGET BE?**

Putting some ad dollars behind your strategy might be the tipping point for fueling your funnel. What's often not acknowledged, however, is that there are options for every budget, big or small.

BUDGET

**$**

### For Small Budgets ($10-300): Boosted Posts

With anywhere from $10-300 to work with, you can do a one-time or regular series of boosted Facebook posts to reach a wider audience than what your school's page can organically reach.

**$$**

### For Medium Budgets ($500-3,000): A Dedicated Campaign

Generally speaking, a $500/month budget is the minimum recommended amount to run a dedicated campaign on social media. At this lower end of the recommended monthly budget, you may need to focus on one area of your funnel, like awareness.

**$$$**

### For Large Budgets ($5,000+): An Integrated Campaign

If you're looking to reach potential families at every touchpoint, you're likely looking to run an integrated campaign, which is a campaign that spans multiple ad formats to achieve a single goal. This is ideal when you want to help follow someone through the use of ads to the point of enrollment at your school.

# Next Steps

Now that you are fully equipped with all the social media best practices, where do you go from here? It's time to set goals, create a content calendar, and track data and trends.

## GOALS

Goal setting is a crucial part of any social media strategy because it provides direction and helps measure success. Setting clear goals ensures your efforts align with your broader school or district's objectives, such as increasing engagement and retention, boosting enrollment, or improving community relations.

## CONTENT CALENDAR

After you've set your goals, it's time to start making content, but you can't just create content on a whim (OK, sometimes you can, but not all the time). You need to make a content calendar and plan out your posts in advance. Lucky for you, we've created The Complete Social Media Calendar For Schools and update it every season!
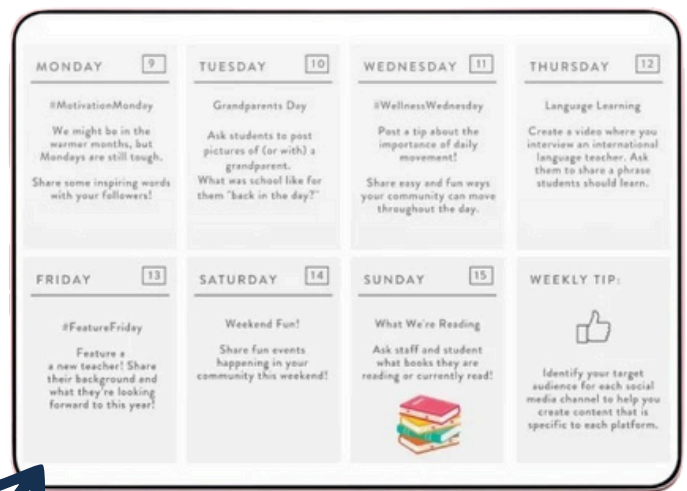
## ANALYTICS

Once you begin posting your content, it's key that you consistently track the data. We recommend taking a quick look at analytics every week, but once a month, complete a closer review and adjust your calendar and strategy based on your findings.

## TRENDS

Keeping up with social media and popular trends can really help to enhance your social media engagement and build a strong online community. Try your best to stay up to date, but if time is limited, you can always rely on the Social Media Trends for Schools guide to keep you up-to-date.

With these strategies, you're ready to take your school's social media to the next level and become a standout in your community!

# Better Tools. Stronger Schools.

Finalsite is the first community relationship management platform for K-12 schools, transforming how schools attract students, engage families, build community — and thrive.

More than 7,000 schools and districts worldwide trust Finalsite's integrated platform for their websites, communications, mobile apps, enrollment, and marketing services. Year over year, 96% of clients stay with Finalsite for our commitment to innovation, support, and partnership in managing the complex requirements around data privacy, accessibility, hosting, and security.

Clients enjoy unlimited support and training, extensive professional development, and opportunities to network with peers. Finalsite is headquartered in Glastonbury, Conn. with offices in Europe and Asia.

AWARD-WINNING WEBSITES

COMMUNICATION TOOLS

MOBILE APPS

MARKETING SERVICES

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT