

Own Your School's Messaging with Twitter



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"Twitter?" I'll never use it. Can't see anyone in my community actually entering the Twitterverse."

When thinking about the myriad avenues available to communicate information to school communities, Twitter seemed the least likely to grace my phone or computer six years ago.

Monthly newsletters (digital and online), automated phone callers, our school homepage, and with some hesitation, Facebook (*gasp*), were the places we guided anyone who hoped to glean information on Mt. Spokane High School. While these formats were — and are — effective ways to communicate, I found myself wanting to celebrate the great things happening within our school in a more timely manner. After watching a student tweet during lunch in 2012, I talked to her about what she liked about Twitter and I decided to take the leap.

Now, six years, 5,907 tweets, and 1,394 followers later, Twitter is part of my daily routine.

The ability to push positive, inspiring, celebratory and sometimes urgent information is now just 280

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Engaging Communities

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characters away. As parents and students reply, tag our school, like or re-tweet these messages, the narrative of our school community as a positive place only increases. Add local media, other schools, universities and educational professionals to the Twitter mix, and the value of having Mt. Spokane High School in this arena far outweighs any hesitations I once had in my mind.

For those looking to introduce their school to the world of Twitter, here are my four recommendations:

1. If you make the choice to add Twitter to your communication portfolio, stay committed to the platform. This means checking your page each day, refreshing the imagery and tweeting each week.
2. Although it's not best practice, our Twitter feed populates our

Facebook page. This is simply a matter of consistency and time-management.

3. Empower other staff in the building to add content, but keep your circle small and trusted. Too many hands on one account may lead to inconsistency and unwanted messaging.
4. Go for it! If after a few months, Twitter just isn't for you or your school community, simply disable the Twitter handle you created. You have little to lose!

While we still are refining our use of all social media platforms, it's become clear our school must enter the world our students and parents are using daily. This is where information is being received and shared.

Remember, if you don't create your own message on social media, somebody else will do it for you. Twitter is a great place to start! ■

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