

2019-2020

Social Media Trends in Education Report



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Where schools stand on social media communications and practices.

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With so much noise in the world, getting the attention of students, staff, parents and the community can be tricky to say the least. From sharing major district announcements to student achievements, social media is another required layer in communicating and connecting with school communities. This report by Class Intercom dives into current district and school social media practices and policies and summarizes where they are at today and their direction for the 2019-2020 school year.

About the

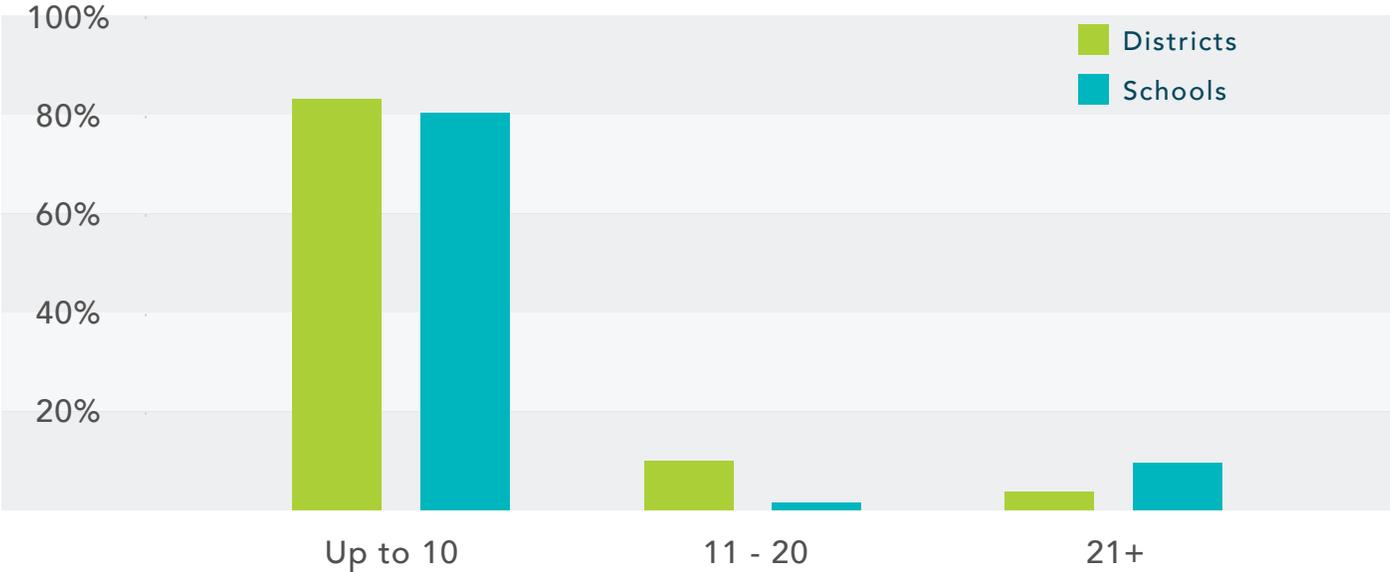
Respondants

- 85 Respondents
- Gathered in May 2019
- 78% Public Schools
- 22% Private Schools
- 60% Manage Multiple Schools
- 40% Manage a Single School

Managing Social

With so many messages to communicate to school communities, several social pages are needed to target the right individuals and interested parties. Social pages for school athletics, activities, grades and other segments help to tailor and target messaging. This allows schools and staff members to communicate and connect with the portions of the community that have interest in the information from their departments.

Average Number of Social Pages Districts or Schools are Managing



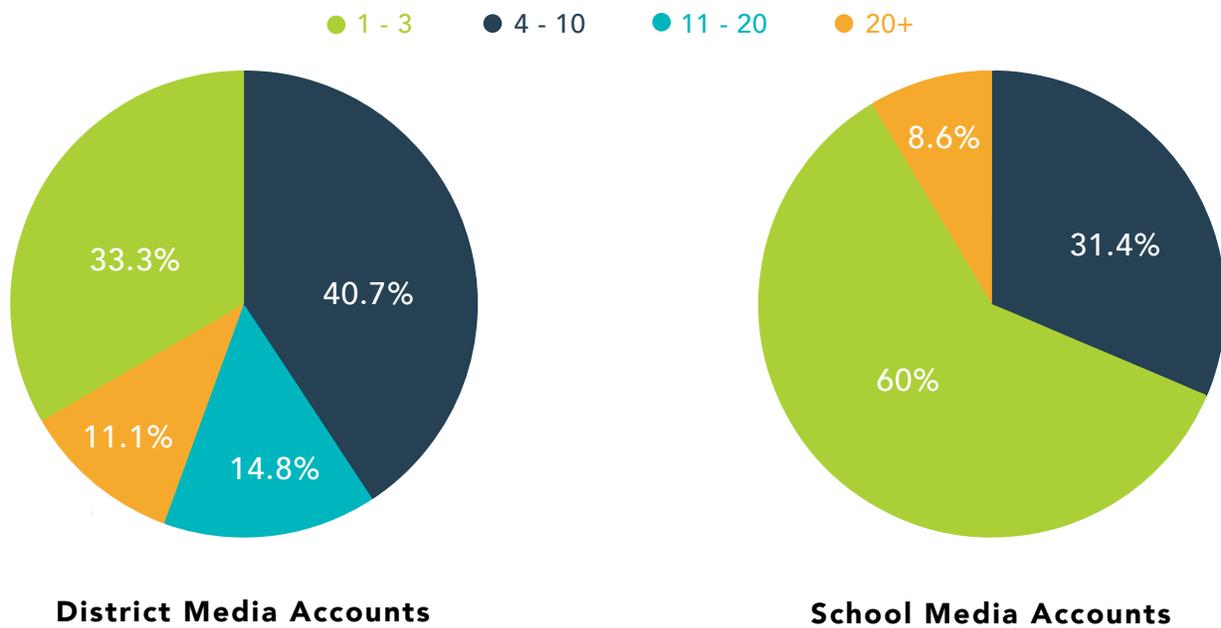
So, on average how many social pages are districts and schools managing? Ten or less seems to be the common trend. Nearly 85% reported having less than 10 official pages being officially managed. Only 8% of respondents reported having more than 20 social pages that were being overseen by staff or administration.

This leaves the question of unofficial social pages. As you look at the data on how many pages a school or district has, are they considering how many rogue pages are out there that they don't know about? From classroom pages hosted by teachers to club Facebook pages, many schools are unaware and unable to oversee the communications on their unofficial affiliated pages. With the appropriate policies and staff communication in place, these pages should be brought under the district's umbrella to provide messaging and protection for the students, staff and schools.

Managing Social

Maintaining control and being aware of all official (and semi-official) social pages is crucial to ensuring consistent messaging, as well as protecting students, staff and the district/school reputation. After completing an audit of all published pages out there (be sure you are claiming unofficial pages and reporting imposter pages), it is just as important to know who has access. While districts and schools reported having a similar number of social pages, 25% of districts shared that 11 or more individuals had access to their social pages. Only 8% of schools reported 11 or more individuals with access. Schools reported keeping an overall tighter hold on social page access overall with 60% limiting access to 1-3 individuals, while districts were half as likely to restrict access to that level.

Social Media Account(s) User Access



Having the right social media management tool, like Class Intercom, to consolidate oversight of social pages, content approvals, moderation and access management can significantly improve management capabilities and time investment in overseeing social profiles. However, only 35% of respondents are currently using a social media management tool. Another 19% reported that implementing a social media management tool was in their short term goals.

Reaching Your Audience

The right method of communication means everything when effectively getting your message across to your target audience. Most schools and districts recognize that you must spread your message across social channels to hit your entire audience or segment it to limited channels when targeting a specific audience. All respondents were on Facebook with Twitter close behind and nearly 70% on Instagram.

Breakdown of Social Channels

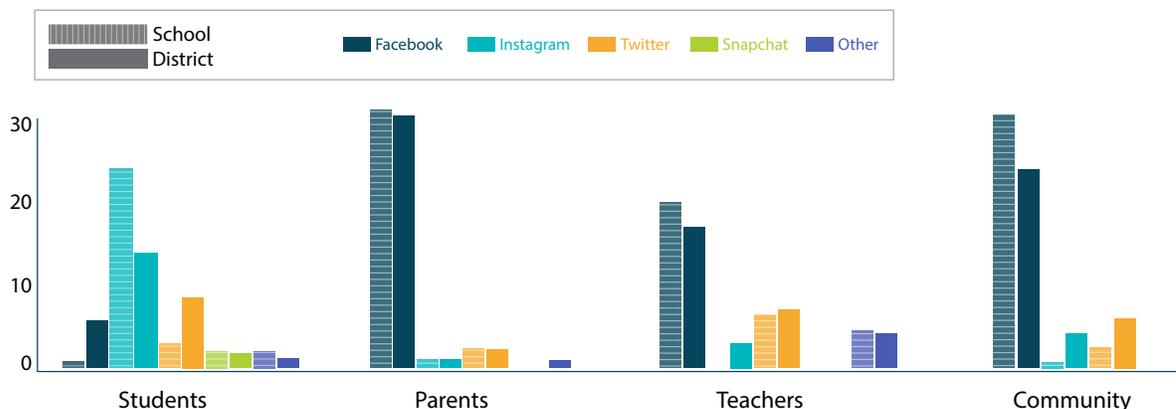


An interesting element of the survey results related to the channels schools and districts found most effective in reach and engagement for different audiences. When it came to communicating with parents, 88% of schools and districts felt that Facebook was the best means of communication. They also shared similar thoughts on teachers with Facebook carrying the most weight and approximately 20% stating that Twitter was effective.

When it came to the community however, schools and districts had different opinions on the most effective social channels. While 90% of districts feel that Facebook is the best way to connect with their community, only 70% of schools agreed. Nearly 30% of schools felt that Twitter or Instagram was more effective.

The largest difference was seen in the channels for reaching the student population. Schools placed the most weight on Instagram (75%) while only 44% of districts found it effective. Nearly 20% of districts felt that Facebook was effective for student connections while less than 2% of schools saw value. Twitter also showed a similar balance with 27% of districts and only 10% of schools seeing value for student communications.

Social Communication Effectiveness



Getting Your Message Across

With social algorithms limiting organic impressions, paying for a posts to be seen by a targeted audience can help ensure that important messaging is being seen by intended audiences. Paying to boost a post about school news or paying for an ad to encourage your audience to vote for an upcoming bond can provide a strong return on investment. Social advertising is highly targeted and significantly less expensive than a traditional mailer. Social advertising can help promote:

- A reminder and census for Kindergarten Roundup
- Districtwide announcements – New administration, district changes, etc.
- Sharing district accomplishments – District test scores, a new building, etc.
- Promoting a bond issue for consideration
- Foundation events and fundraisers
- Private and charter school recruitment

Social Advertising Platform Trends

24%

Facebook Ad

29%

Facebook Post Boost

4%

Twitter Ad

4%

Other Channels

While paid social is an investment that educational institutions, both public and private, should be considering, only 19% of respondents had invested in paid social. Interestingly, 50% of school respondents had participated in some level of paid social, while only 33% of districts had done the same.

Of the respondents that shared their 2018-2019 social ad spend, 52% spent less than \$100, 26% spent \$101-\$999 and 22% invested \$1,000 or more. All organizations investing over \$1,000 were private institutions. Facebook and Instagram post boosting or ads were the choice medium with 74% directing their ad spend to those channels. Twitter followed with 11% and other social channels individually comprised of 17%.

Social Advertising Investments

52% <\$100

26% \$100-\$999

22% \$1,000+

Who Has Student-Generated Social

37%

include students
in social media
content creation.

45%

are planning on
implementing it in
the near future.

18%

are holding
off on student
content creation.

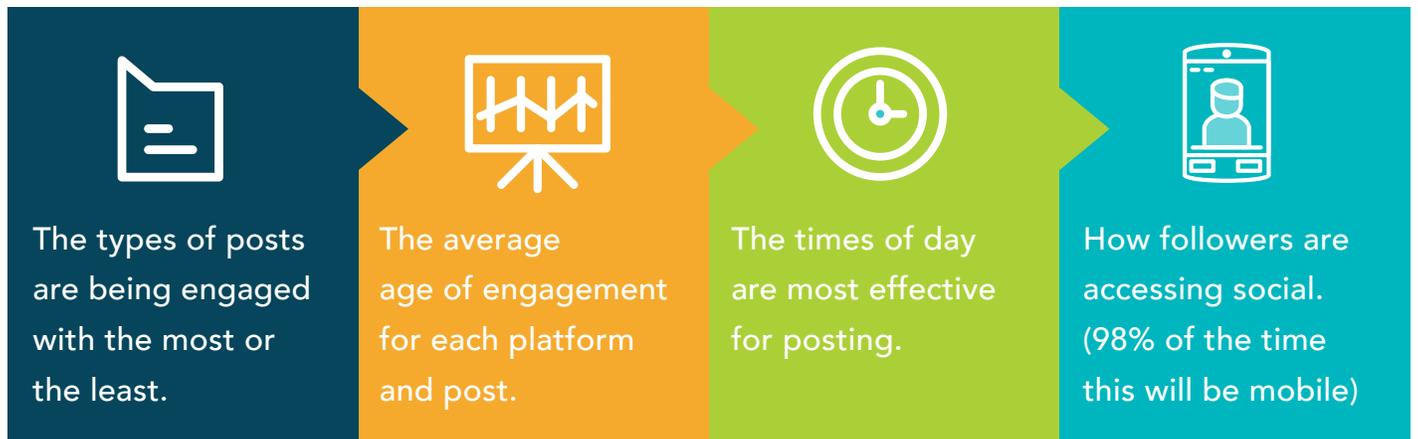
Student-Generated Social

Many schools and districts have begun including their students in social media content creation by integrating it into classes, internships and club programs. This gives students the educational opportunities to learn how to professionally create social content and become stronger digital citizens. Both schools and districts were closely aligned with 37% currently having student driven social and 45% planning on implementing it in the near future. The remaining 18% are putting student driven social off for the foreseeable future.

When it comes to student driven social, educators and administrators shared there were multiple concerns when it came to student generated content. The three primary areas of concern were; 1) the quality of student content, 2) the ability to manage the process effectively, and 3) fear of creating more work for staff. However, the schools who both involve students and use tools like Class Intercom, expressed less concern about involving students in social media content creation.

Social Reporting

While many of the schools reported which social channel they felt is the most effective form of communication (see above), less than 25% reported using social analytics and reporting tools. Without analytics, how can you really know what channels are working the best? Pulling regular detailed social reporting on page and post activity can help schools understand:



The data extracted from social reporting can help schools determine what types of posts make the biggest impact, when they should be posting, and what channels should be leveraged. As a result, content and posting schedules can be drafted to make targeted social communications considerably more effective

For many schools and district administrators, social reporting gives the impression of adding complexity to another form of communication. How it should be seen however, is as a learning opportunity. By building social analysis into educational programs, students are able to analyze social activity and data, and work with the administration to provide recommendations. This gives students the opportunity to understand the power and use of social media from a completely different perspective.

Schools Analyzing Social Activity



Moving Forward

This report was created by Class Intercom to help both public and private schools and districts compare their social media participation and processes to other schools and districts throughout the country. While each school has their own unique variables from size to geography to consider for their communication practices, a social media communication plan is one that every institution should have in place. As you evaluate your current processes and next steps for the 2019-2020 school year, here are some thoughts to consider:

- ▶ Are district/school wide policies in place to manage all of your social pages?
- ▶ Should you be investing in any additional social channels?
- ▶ Which posts may warrant boosted investments?
- ▶ How can you leverage reporting to improve your social communications?
- ▶ Can your school/district advance student learning by implementing student driven social pages?
- ▶ Is paid social worth considering for higher importance communications?





Class Intercom provides software tools to help schools manage their social media in one place. Our platform is built for administrators, public relation professionals, teachers and students to securely create, approve, monitor and archive social media content.

An annual subscription to Class Intercom includes unlimited users with access to create, schedule and moderate social media content allowing schools and districts to capture every story and connect with their communities.

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