

Good Governance for School Boards: Trustee Professional Development Program

Module 18 – Social Media

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[Overview]

Welcome to this companion video to Module 18: Social Media for school board trustees.

In Module 18, you will review:

- An overview of popular social media platforms;
- The dangers and opportunities associated with participating in social media in a personal and professional capacity;
- How to craft a successful social media strategy, and
- Professional guidelines for effective communication on social media.

This video offers school board trustees an overview of the most useful social media platforms for engaging stakeholders.

Throughout this presentation we'll be referring to "apps", which is smartphone and tablet shorthand for web or desktop applications.

[Twitter]

Let's start with Twitter, one of the most effective social media apps for elected officials. Twitter refers to itself as the fastest, simplest way to stay close to everything you care about.

Filled with real-time information posted by hundreds of millions of users, Twitter can connect you to the latest stories, ideas, opinions and news about any topic of interest as a school board trustee.

At the heart of Twitter are small bursts of information called "Tweets".

These are essentially short messages you can send and receive from your Twitter Account.

Each Tweet is one hundred and forty characters long. Why? Initially, there was no limit to message length. When Twitter went public, the 140 character limit was adopted because 160 characters was the text message carrier limit and the founders wanted to leave room for a username.

Attached to some tweets, you can see photos, videos and conversations to get the whole story on an issue at a glance in one place.

It's a great way to connect directly with school board staff, parents, fellow trustees, media, and the community. Tweets can be hashtagged, which helps sort and identify messages on specific topics. For instance, Ontario's education hashtag is #OntEd. Check it out today at [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com).

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[Facebook]

Facebook: the world's largest social networking site, with more than a billion users around the world.

Facebook.com's easy-to-navigate website and mobile apps make it the network of choice for people of all skill levels to connect and share information with colleagues, family and friends online.

Originally designed for college students, Facebook was created in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg while he was enrolled at Harvard University. Many trustees, school boards, companies and government agencies use Facebook to connect directly with citizens or consumers.

Users sign up using their names and email addresses. Once a profile has been created, they are able to find friends, family and colleagues through searching Facebook's vast database, their own email address books or their friends' friend lists.

Popular aspects of Facebook include: the "like" button, photo and video albums, the newsfeed, brand pages, events and Facebook's Instant Messenger service.

Facebook is a very effective way of engaging in conversations with the people in your community.

[Instagram]

The Facebook-owned Instagram is an online mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service that can be used to share pictures of your life, your work and your advocacy with followers.

While users must have a smartphone or tablet to take and post photos, Instagram accounts can be accessed from any mobile device, tablet, laptop or desktop computer.

Photos are taken using the Instagram app, or other dedicated camera apps. Once you've snapped a photo, you can pick a filter, and captions and hashtags can be added, if applicable.

Many political personalities, school boards and governments are using Instagram to further reinforce their messaging through the power of photos.

Don't forget – each one is worth a thousand words!

[Pinterest]

Pinterest is a web and mobile app that offers a visual discovery, collection, sharing and storage tool.

Pinterest refers to itself as the place to discover ideas for all your projects and interests.

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Users can upload, save, sort, and manage images, known as pins, and other media content, like videos and images, through collections known as pinboards. This is like a virtual bulletin board – similar to the one you may have in your office where you pin up bits and pieces of information and ideas you want to display and keep handy.

Boards are created through a user selecting an item, page or website and pinning it to an existing or newly created board.

Pinterest can be particularly useful for school boards as a way to share suggested student reading material or even lesson plans.

Sign up at [Pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com).

[LinkedIn]

The business-oriented website LinkedIn can help you network and disseminate your messages.

With hundreds of millions of users, LinkedIn can be a critical digital connector between real-world professionals.

It's an effective way to position and brand yourself as someone who cares deeply about student success and well-being.

Users can brand their profiles, join appropriate groups and share interesting articles and status updates.

Many organizations also have corporate pages, which are updated much like a Facebook page.

Signing up for LinkedIn is easy at [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com).

[YouTube]

YouTube is a great way to connect with people and build your digital communications strategy.

Originally launched as a free site for sharing videos in 2005, the Google-owned YouTube.com is open to anyone and features functions for uploading, viewing, watching, sharing and commenting on videos on any topic imaginable.

Many Ontario school boards have corporate accounts featuring trustee and student initiatives.

While YouTube does have its fair share of controversial content, trustees may consider the posting of video blogs or event recaps a useful and important part of their communications toolbox.

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[Vine]

Launched in late 2012, the mobile and web app Vine is a relative newcomer to the social media stage, but it has made a big splash since being acquired by Twitter.

Like Twitter, it's all about short bursts of information, but instead of tweets, the information is presented in a six-second video format.

Vine is used heavily in the comedy and sports worlds, as it automatically loops videos, which is a great feature for jokes, pranks and sports highlights.

Trustees could consider using Vine to record very short statements on issues of interest to their communities.

Vine can be linked directly to Twitter and Facebook. You can download the app to your smartphone.

[Wrap-up]

Not all of these applications will be useful for everyone, and some may even seem irrelevant or unnecessary to you at this point.

The important thing to remember is, to communicate effectively as a trustee, it's wise to position yourself where your communities are.

If they're talking about you on Twitter, get acquainted with it and start using the platform regularly.

If parents are on Facebook, start conversations with them on a new Facebook page.

If your stakeholders would prefer to connect via video, try YouTube or Vine.

The web isn't one-sized-fits-all, but it does have something for everyone.

Your new digital strategy should be just as flexible.

The world of digital communications is yours to discover.