



Association of Metropolitan School Districts

FACEBOOK AND TWITTER SOCIAL MEDIA ADVOCACY GUIDE

GUIDELINES & OVERVIEW

For the legislative session, AMSD will focus on primarily two social media channels: Facebook and Twitter. While there are multiple social media platforms through which to convey the AMSD platform and messages, we are strategically concentrating our efforts on the platforms with the best reach to our audiences. We also will post videos on YouTube occasionally as well.

QUICK TIPS

- > Know the difference between the mediums: Twitter is much faster-paced and about immediacy. Facebook has shelf-life —and allows discussion and commenting that can resonate and be more thoughtful.
- > If you really want your voice to be heard, write a post or leave a comment on a post. But be prepared that someone may disagree with you. Don't argue on social media — it's rarely productive. Keep your messaging positive.
- > Always read your posts out loud to yourself before you publish them.
- > Post photos. Engagement can more than double when a social media post has an image.
- > Shares=views. If someone likes or shares your post with their social media followers, that can bring more attention to your message. Make the effort to build digital relationships with influential brands or people you align with — like and share their posts. Doing so will associate you with their brand —and they may even return the favor when you have a post to share.
- > Tag, tag, tag. Use the @ sign and make sure you tag every person you mention. That shares your post or comment with their followers and will increase your reach as well.



FACEBOOK BEST PRACTICES

Follow legislators, organizations and news media professional pages (make sure your School District page follows them as well)

How to advocate using Facebook:

- > Like a post.
- > Leave a positive comment.
- > Post a photo, message, question, sentiment, event or article on their wall.
- > Share their photo/post.
- > Tag legislators in photos or posts.
- > Hashtags can also be used on Facebook: #mnleg.

TWITTER BEST PRACTICES



Follow your legislators and persons of interest; they usually will follow you back (same with District handle)

How to advocate using Twitter:

- > Retweet: This is simple, low-touch engagement.
- > Favorite: Easy engagement.
- > Take a photo with a legislator and tag them.
- > At the Capitol or discussing a legislative issue use the hashtag: #mnleg
- > Take photos when you are at the Capitol.
- > Reply to a Tweet.
- > Send a direct Tweet to a legislator, note a sentiment, or thank them for their policy stance.



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SOCIAL MEDIA **ETIQUETTE AND REPUTATION**

- “Free speech” doesn’t protect your job or reputation. Social media missteps can follow you for years.
- Avoid negativity. As the saying goes: “You catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar.” Respect and humility are the currency of good social media dialogue.
- There’s no distinguishing your public self vs. private citizen self. Even if you are commenting from your personal accounts, the Internet rarely differentiates your private actions from your public persona. Even saying “Tweets are my own” on your official accounts may not distance you from a message being perceived as an official statement or endorsement.
- Your words are not your own. Everything you post becomes property of the platform on which you posted it — the data, the words, everything. Once it’s out there, even if you delete it, it’s still out there somewhere.

DO'S AND DON'TS

- **Be careful how you respond.** Don’t argue with people.
- **Public awareness.** Remember everything you do is public — even if you are posting in a private group.
- **Don’t JOKE.** Humor, especially about politics, doesn’t translate well onto social media—not even for professional comedians. Be careful.
- **Don’t exaggerate.** Being overdramatic may achieve short-term gains, but hyperbole can just as easily tarnish your reputation. Don’t confuse brand awareness with credibility.

ENGAGEMENT, FOLLOWING & MORE

- **Photos are worth a thousand characters.** Photos and galleries — especially closeups on faces — are always the most engaging types of status updates.
- **Permissions and copyright.** Especially when posting photos of students/minors, get permission from the subject before posting their image. And don’t post others’ material/images without permission or proper attribution.
- **YouTube, Facebook Live and other video.** YouTube is arguably the largest search engine in the world, but to be effective, videos need to be short and well produced, or be “viral.” Don’t dilute your brand with long, bad video.
- **Hyperlinks.** We don’t own Facebook or Twitter, but we do own amsd.org. Use social media to drive followers back to our website and platform for additional resources and messaging.
- **Know who your friends are.** Be mindful that who you friend, engage with or follow can reflect on you or organization. Take the time to read a stranger’s profile before liking or sharing something they post.
- **Calls to action.** If used sparingly, a call-to-action can mobilize followers to a goal — “Rally at the Capitol!” — but use these sparingly or you risk burning out your followers.
- **Stay focused.** AMSD is a non-partisan association and advocacy organization for public education and students. So what we communicate should advance facts for those priorities.

