

Tell Your Story



10 schools share how to leverage social media and boost community engagement

Andrea Gribble

Real engagement is about meeting your community where they are. When looking around, it doesn't take long to see that most students, teachers and parents direct a lot of their attention to their smartphones. So how can your school compete for their attention?

We took a tour of Wisconsin and identified 10 districts that are leveraging social media to truly engage with their communities. We hope you find at least one idea that you can utilize to celebrate your students this school year.

▶ Mineral Point Unified School District

“Social media has literally put Mineral Point on the map,” said District Administrator Luke Francois. “As I travel the state from Milwaukee to Fall Creek, colleagues have awareness of the great happenings in Mineral Point. This awareness has grown exponentially to communities at large, but none has benefited more than our own community right here in Mineral Point.”

Every week, you can check out the incredible photos from Mineral

Point, but one highlight in particular that the school captured was its state championship in girls basketball. The district shared hundreds of photos from the historic season, culminating with a post that reached over 38,000 people and had Facebook fans dishing out the likes (3,751), the love (93) along with 225 comments and 347 shares.

▶ Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District

Recognizing outstanding seniors is something the #MightyCardinals

do each and every week on the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District Facebook page. And it isn't simply a quick post; the team does its homework in celebrating the amazing accomplishments, future plans, and family connections the students have.

The results? Thousands of community members have been reached with many comments, shares and of course, thumbs up given. It takes a little work to put this together, but the engagement level will help impact your entire social media presence.

▶ School District of Hillsboro

The Hillsboro School District has a unique twist on sharing its story. The school lets their students help! A few hand-selected upperclassmen help manage the Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube accounts.

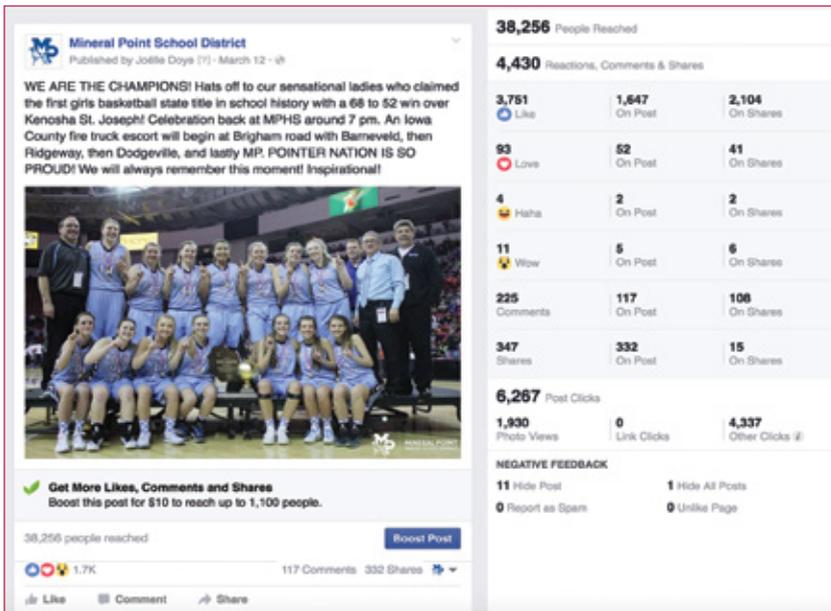
“Using social media interns has allowed our district to capitalize on the expertise of our students in the realm of social media to better inform our school community,” said Superintendent Curt Bisarek. “It has also allowed us to better connect



with our larger school community by connecting with our alumni.”

The school isn't the only one to benefit. The student interns have also learned about their school district. Student Amy Salisbury said, “Being a social media intern has opened my eyes to see everything our district has to offer.”

“I have learned how to be professional on social media sites - something I can apply to my personal accounts,” student Mackenzie Sullivan said. “The experience I have gained could possibly help me get a job some day. It has also been a lot of fun!”



▶ Waterloo School District

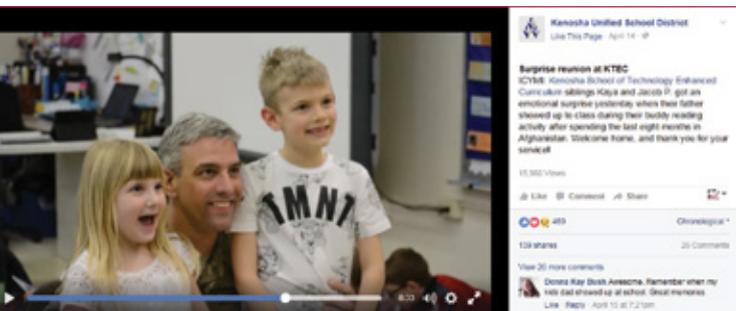
Want proof that social media can be used to tell your story around the world? Look no further than the Waterloo School District. With a large percentage of Spanish speaking students, the school posts on its Facebook page in both English and Spanish.

Waterloo District Administrator Brian Henning said, “2016 was the year we finally jumped into telling our story with social media. With



our unique need to post all of our updates in both English and Spanish, we teamed up with a trusted partner in #Social-School4EDU. We now reach thousands of people each week from dozens of countries, engaging families from around the world.”

their dad returning after eight months in Afghanistan. The post reached nearly 40,000 people on Facebook and then was picked up on the Today Show and Inside Edition.

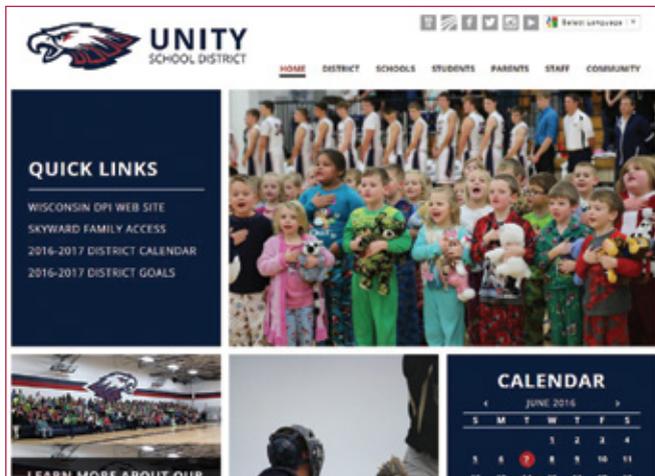


► Kenosha Unified School District

Heartwarming stories like the one Kenosha Unified School District shared last April have the potential to go viral. The short video showed two children being reunited with

much shakier than normal and nearly ruined the video for me. I had faith that people would latch onto it anyway, and it ended up going above and beyond my initial expectations.”

Lesson? Share the stories! Even if they aren't perfect, these pictures,



Jessica Tuttle, communication support specialist for the district, shared her behind-the-scenes hesitation on sharing the video, “I had my vibration-reduction setting off on my camera, which made my video

videos and student projects need to be shared.

► Unity School District

The hub of every school's communication should be its website. But who says you can't help promote your website through the use of social media?

Unity School District recently updated its website to better connect and communicate its story with the community. While people may not visit your website each and every day, they are on social media every day (sometimes every minute of every day). This means it is a great place to catch people's attention with posts that link back to the school website.

► School District of Amery

Instagram is an amazing platform to connect with students. Amery School District is using this to its full advantage, where it now has over 340 followers and almost daily posts when school is in session.





Amery has systematically focused its efforts on social media engagement. Last year, the school merged five separate school-related pages into one district Facebook page and now has nearly 1,300 followers. The school also utilizes a district mobile app that includes photos from its social media accounts. This means even non-social media users get to enjoy the most recent posts!

▶ School District of River Falls

On social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, there is prime real estate when it comes to catching the attention of your fans. It is called the cover image.

It is the large image across the top of your page that towers over the smaller profile image that is usually your logo.

To keep things fresh, the School District of River Falls has a schedule where the team changes the Facebook cover about once per week. Monique Squire, director of community education and communications, shares three reasons why. It gives “as much exposure as possible to our students and staff, and keeps things as equal as possible between our buildings.”

Second, this helps to keep things fresh and hopefully keeps visitors coming back. Squire said the third reason they change the cover often is, “This is just another opportunity to tell our story.”

▶ Edgar School District

It’s great to highlight students every day on your social media channels, but Edgar School District has found great success in also highlighting its teachers. The school does a weekly teacher feature. In May, for Teacher Appreciation Week, it partnered with AppleAwards.com to provide the first annual Wildcats #EdgarExcellence Award.



The post reached 2,000 people and had 16 awesome comments, like this one from one parent, “So very happy for you. So thankful my children are and will be in your classroom and so blessed to work with someone so amazing.”

▶ Shawano School District

Nothing says Wisconsin like driving your tractor to school! The post read, “Shawano Community High School students participated in FFA’s Drive Your Tractor to School Day today.” It reached 6,981 people with 303 reactions, comments and shares. After school, the SCHS students



took a detour past Hillcrest Primary and Olga Brener Intermediate schools. Teachers used the opportunity to talk to their students about the importance of the farmers in their community, and the students enjoyed seeing the tractor parade. What a great day!

■ Celebrate Your School

Your school has a story to tell. Let these 10 Wisconsin districts inspire you to tell your story on social media! It can be a great place for people to come together to learn, support and engage with one another, all in the spirit of celebrating your school. ■

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