


facebook[®] and Your School!


Why this tool is so important!


1. Constant Contact– Managing a school today is as difficult as ever. With state-mandated testing, extracurricular activities, fundraising pressures, academic concerns, and so on, effective communication is particularly important. But, finding ways to effectively communicate with parents and students is certainly not an easy task. Today's digital world is noisy, complex, and often times disorienting. The result often means school communication gets muddled and with it the intended message is often lost in translation. With all the other things going on, it's not easy getting the parents' attention, let alone the students. This is why frequent contact with parents and students is vital to successful school communication. If schools can find a reliable conduit to communicate to parents and students on a regular basis, school administrators are able to share important information that will not only improve student achievement but help build a productive and healthy school culture.


Facebook's social networking tools can help build the sort of communication structure that enables school administrators to communicate with students and parents on a regular basis. Because most parents and students are comfortable using Facebook to communicate, utilizing the following applications can really help improve school-related communication.

 **Group Feature**– Creating targeted communication groups, such as for parents, students, specific grade levels, or extracurricular activities, allow administrators to easily share information in a way that is specifically tailored for the recipient.

 **Event Schedule Feature**– Because most schools need to communicate information related to numerous school-related events, Facebook's event scheduling feature can really facilitate effective communication. Scheduling an event is very simple and its broadcast feature allows school administrators to not only reach a large audience but easily remind parents and students of important events (For the busy parent, this is certainly a plus!).

 **Send Message Feature**– This feature enables school administrators to send messages directly to parents and students. Administrators can create a variety of groups based on communication needs. What makes this application so appealing is, much like e-mail, administrators can pinpoint communication to specific parents or students.

 **Multimedia Feature**– School administrators can share multimedia with parents and students. The ability to easily share multimedia with parents and students can greatly enhance the way schools communicate.

 **Announcement Feature**– School administrators can easily broadcast announcements and reminders to help parents and students stay on top of important school-related events.

 **Blogging Feature**– By using the "What's on your mind?" feature or the "Notes" feature, administrators can provide daily updates, blog about important events and issues, and provide valuable information for parents.

2. Back-to-school– One of the most powerful ways school administrators can use Facebook is to provide parents with a unique inside view of the daily operations of the school. Administrators can take pictures of daily events, record interviews with teachers and students, film student projects or particular parts of a teacher's lesson and share this information with parents. If designed properly (and in accordance with student privacy rights), these "snapshots" can provide a powerful insight into the school's community. Because today's parents really want to be involved in the day-to-day activities of their students, utilizing Facebook can be a very effective way to create this meaningful connection for busy parents. Besides, by emphasizing certain aspects of the school's community, administrators can have a powerful hand in shaping it.

3. Digital Discussions– By using the discussion feature, school administrators can create a safe and effective way for parents to share ideas with school administrators. As long as the discussion items are properly designed and managed, they can present a wonderful way for parents to participate in the school's decision making process.

4. Alumni Communication– One of the most popular ways school administrators use Facebook is to help former students connect with their classmates after graduation.

Facebook is a powerful tool for school administrators because its social networking structure can be used to facilitate communication and build a dynamic online community. Most parents and students have Facebook accounts, and they update them on a regular basis. This means school administrators have a powerful communication tool at their finger tips, one that can be used to share all kinds of information– blogs, event updates, photographs, and video. This information can easily be tailored to meet the personal needs of the school's community.

With this in mind, it's important for educators to rethink how they communicate with parents and students. This new communication transformation must involve the sorts of social media tools normally associated with Web 2.0. These tools present an exciting opportunity to improve the way educators communicate.

