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# ONcall

ready-to-use NEWS

## How and why to use Twitter as a school leader

Do you tweet? Many school leaders started using Twitter, some for the first time, to engage with students and families during the pandemic. School meetings were online, and face-to-face conversations were limited due to physical distancing requirements. Twitter offered a way to connect, inspire and show appreciation despite school closures.

While schools and school districts shared important news and pandemic-related guidance on Facebook, superintendents used Twitter to promote a positive school culture. In addition to giving everyone a glimpse into your job and district, having a separate social media account expands your school or district's reach. Using Twitter and, importantly, your district hashtag, helps create a sense of community and offers an opportunity to share what makes your district special.

### Content ideas

**Share your day-to-day activities to build trust and transparency.** Tweet when you attend a conference, meet with stakeholders, visit a school, have a team meeting, etc.

**Share your passion.** Tweet articles, photos and quotes that convey your values and beliefs. Let your personality shine through.

**Say thank you.** People are overwhelmed and under stress. Thank families for their commitment to their children's education and thank staff for their flexibility and resilience.

**Acknowledge partner agencies.** Give a shout-out to bus drivers, after-school programs, nutrition services, etc.

**Share progress.** Share a picture of a construction project or a playground upgrade. Let people know that work is still going on despite the pandemic.

**Celebrate students and staff.** Share news of a sports win, a teacher's award, a student's volunteer work, etc. This is especially important if normal in-person recognition events aren't allowed.

**Say something.** Tweet even when there isn't anything to report from your district. A quick "have a great day" or "thinking of our students today" tweet sends a clear message that you care about your community.

**Share others' successes.** If your schools have their own Twitter pages, retweet their positive stories to your broader audience. Or share projects other superintendents have accomplished.

**Ask your followers to share.** Ask staff and students to share what they love about their school or what they missed most during remote learning.

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### **Look at how your peers are communicating to get more ideas:**

Superintendent Michelle Reid, Northshore School District (Wash.), and the 2021 National Superintendent of the Year, has 3,646 Twitter followers. She shares new instructional practices, acknowledges staff and highlights student achievements. She also shares news with parents through a blog and a weekly Facebook live video where she often features special guests such as a student, a principal, a community representative or a local physician.  
[https://twitter.com/Northshore\\_Supt](https://twitter.com/Northshore_Supt)

Superintendent Gustavo Balderas, Edmonds School District (Wash.), shares school stories and news, but he also uses Twitter to build his professional online presence. He congratulates fellow education leaders and shares conferences and professional events he attends or moderates.  
[https://twitter.com/supt\\_balderas?lang=en](https://twitter.com/supt_balderas?lang=en)

Superintendent Curtis Jones, Bibb County School District (Ga.), shares more personal information that gives his Twitter feed a human component and makes him more relatable. From sharing pictures of homemade pizza to spending time with his family to celebrating his favorite sports team's victory, he lets his followers see a more personal side of him.  
<https://twitter.com/COLDR01>

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*Contributed by Erin Good, communications consultant*