Every Student – Every Day

Communications & Community Relations
Strategic Plan 2018 – 19
DRAFT June 7, 2018

Situation Overview

- Now it its second year, the school district's brand is not consistently used.
  - Without an official trademark, maintaining equity and value for the brand and associated content is problematic.
  - Logo adoption by the district and departments is not universal.
  - The current logo does not easily transfer across multiple digital platforms.
  - There isn't an official tone-of-voice or graphic used with schools.
- Although one of the top-scoring communications categories among administrators, there's a need to improve crisis communications strategies to meet the needs of the Department of Public Safety.
  - With the tragedy in Parkland, there was a greater need to field inquiries from the public about key safety initiatives and school-based incidences.
  - Public forums suggest a greater need for transparency and follow-up communications.
- Staffing changes have made it difficult to actively pitch news media on stories from the school district.
  - Reactive media relations and PR.
  - Readers and viewers of media partners are only getting one side to the story.
  - Not all school-based PR and event support was realized this year.

Situation Overview

- With more than 25,000 pieces of content on the school district website, navigation and user experience continues to be cumbersome.
  - Users can't easily find pertinent information.
  - The website now serves as a document warehouse.
  - The website doesn't easily navigate cross-platform.
- Social media use and messaging apps continue to rise, affecting traditional marketing and content consumption.
  - Growth of the district's official social media pages show that audiences are eager for more content, engagement and conversation.
  - Schools are reluctant to implement official social media pages – open comments and resources are barriers for adoption.
  - BHS Live Facebook graduation event was a huge success and an example of the positive outcomes for official school social media pages.
  - Not all social media channels are alike – we need to identify where our audiences participate in social media to improve listening and engagement opportunities where they are.

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Situation Overview

- Declines in cable viewership in favor of Video on Demand and live streaming may affect public access networks such as the Ed Channel.
  - Consumers want to watch what they want, when they want, on devices of their choosing.
  - Most marketers take a cross-platform approach to programming and content distribution.
  - Because of the size of the Ed Channel, it's hard to quantify use among viewers.
- The existing partnership structure with TeamUp makes it difficult to expand the district's community partnerships in support of volunteer efforts
  - Co-branding is confusing to potential volunteers and supporters.
  - Volunteers are uncertain if the program is affiliated with the school district or TeamUp.
  - Additional partners don't achieve recognition for their efforts in support of the volunteer program.
  - The TeamUp organization has provided a great level of support, but more is needed going forward.

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SWOT Analysis

STRENGHTS
- Dedicated staff
- District leadership and openness to change
- Strong visual brand
- Creative storytelling
- Volume of volunteers
- Strong community partnerships

OPPORTUNITIES
- Brand integration
- Innovative program promotion
- Instant communications
- Enhanced social media visibility
- Licensed content
- Access to new systems to track and measure
- Enhanced community and business partnerships
- Messaging hierarchy and key messages for all staff

WEAKNESSES
- Outdated information/systems
- Compliance
- Inability to track & measure
- Brand use and integration
- Multi-platform storytelling
- Crisis communications – timing and process
- Staffing gaps to meet the needs of today's communications
- Ed Channel content
- Inability to market to our volunteers
- Unified share of voice

THREATS
- School threats and crisis
- Natural disasters
- Political disruptors
- Volume of public records requests
- Compliance
- Changing media landscape
- Negative public perception

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Sarasota County Schools Mission Statement

- Sarasota County Schools prepares students to achieve the highest learning standards by engaging a high-quality staff, involved parents and a supportive community.

- Three pillars for success include:
  - Maintain the district's tradition of excellence
  - Ensure that tradition extends to all students
  - Broaden our commitment to students beyond graduation to make sure they not only graduate on time, but do so college and career ready

- Tagline: *Every Student – Every Day*

Department Goals

- Communications:
  - To inform, engage and inspire all audiences to learn about and take part in the academic, athletic and artistic accomplishments of the school district, while helping individual schools, administrators and staff further promote student success.

- Community Relations:
  - To build public understanding, trust and support for Sarasota County Schools, and encourage active participation to improve student outcomes.

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2018 – 2019 Measurable Department Objectives

- Create a brand style guide and messaging hierarchy no later than August 1, 2018 for implementation across the district.

- Use the coming school year to establish a benchmark to measure impressions and media value across all integrated communications channels by June 30, 2019.

- Design a comprehensive crisis communications plan to support the Campus Safety Initiative by August 1, 2018.

- Redesign the district website by February 28 and school sites by June 30 to promote current events and pertinent information of the school district.

- Grow Facebook, Twitter and Instagram friends and followers to amplify district messaging by 15% by June 30, 2019.

- Assess and evaluate the volume, timing and process for Public Records Requests by December 31, 2018 to determine what additional resources may be needed.

- Broadcast a minimum of 400 hours of original and licensed programming on the Education Channel throughout the year. (contingent upon Safari Live content licensing)

- Recruit and train a minimum of 1,000 new volunteers by the end of the 2018-19 school year.

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Key Strategies

- Employ a multi-platform approach to brand strategy to strengthen the district's intellectual property and ensure consistency across all communications channels.

- Leverage new and existing communications platforms to inform, engage and inspire audiences.

- Maximize opportunities to listen and engage the community in dialogue and discussion and meet them where they are.

- Amplify strategic initiatives to positively position Sarasota County Schools as an innovative and dynamic school district.

- Celebrate the academic, athletic and artistic endeavors of our schools to engage and build audiences.

- Reimagine the school district's social and digital channels to maximize reach and information sharing.

- Lift up our community and business partners to showcase their support for schools.

- Evaluate systems to ensure the team is operating as effectively and efficiently as possible.

- Analyze and measure results to improve ROI.

Audience Profiles

- Establishing an audience profile allows the school district to maintain a consistent voice, and establish a position and tone to all that we do

- Primary: Mom – Elisha
  – 34 years old
  – Multi-ethnic background
  – Earns $46K but has a two-income HH
  – Proud single mom of two boys – Nicholas (8 years) and Kyle (6 years) – both of whom attend Sarasota County Schools
  – Elisha has a huge support group and extended family
  – She's tech savvy and likes to text – she is a social media user and often posts photos of her children to friends
  – She cares about the well-being of her boys and although she is pressed for time, will have dinners together, do homework together and attend parent/teacher meetings

- Secondary:
  – Grandparents 65+ with grandchildren attending a Sarasota County School

- Tertiary:
  – Staff and students of Sarasota County Schools

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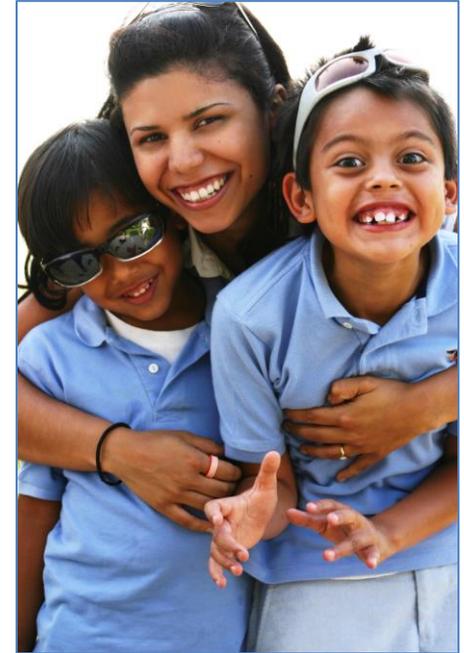
Communications & Community Relations
2018-19 Priorities

- Department:
  - Multi-platform brand management
  - Crisis communications
  - Social and digital communications
  - Student-led content and engagement
  - Public Records Requests process
  - Measurement & reporting
- School District:
  - School safety & security (new)
  - Mental and behavioral health (new)
  - Superintendent, School Board and senior staff visibility
  - Social media awareness campaign (new)
  - This is Your Teacher/Custodian/Bus Driver, etc. campaign (new)
  - Graduation/college and career readiness
- Academics, Athletics & the Arts
  - School-based events, activities & achievements
  - Closing the achievement gap
  - Visible learning (new)
  - Civility Squad (new)
  - Reading Recovery programs
  - Summer feeding programs
  - Strive for 5 (new)
- Community Relations:
  - Digital Town Hall meetings and in-person listening tours
  - Business and individual volunteers and community partners
  - EdExplore SRQ

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Key Messages

- Sarasota County Schools is one of two Florida school districts to consistently earn an A-grade every year since 2004.

- Sarasota County Schools adopts a culture of high expectations throughout the school district.

- Sarasota County Schools supports all children in pursuit of their academic, athletic and artistic endeavors.

- Sarasota County Schools is an inclusive school district and invites students from all backgrounds and points-of-view to study and thrive here.

- Sarasota County Schools boasts some of the most passionate and dedicated staff in the state of Florida who help our students achieve success.

- Sarasota County Schools enriches the minds and lives of students through caring and compassionate instruction.

- Sarasota County Schools teachers empower students to take charge of their academic and personal success.

- Sarasota County Schools drives innovation and the use of technology in the classroom.

- Sarasota County Schools believes the safety and security of our students and staff is paramount to all that we do.

- Sarasota County Schools boasts more than 12,000 volunteers and partners who support the achievements of our students every day.

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Tactical Plan: Brand Management

- Intellectual Property:
  - File for a trademark for the logo and wordmark for Sarasota County Schools (SCS) to safeguard intellectual property and owned content
- Messaging and Brand Consistency:
  - Establish and adopt new brand guidelines district-wide
  - Over time, establish a co-branding strategy with departments and schools to reinforce the system as a whole
    - Refresh Ed Channel brand and identify to incorporate SCS
    - Refresh the Volunteer & Partnership Office brad to remove TeamUp name and establish a closer tie to the school district
    - Develop co-brand graphics and guidelines for departments and where possible, individual schools
  - Adopt SCS into police department branding
- Vision, Mission & Core Values:
  - Over time, review the school district's vision and mission statement to ensure it meets the needs of today's school district
  - Consider establishing a set of core values to be annually adopted by students, staff and Board Members

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Tactical Plan: Content Development

- Editorial:
  - Establish an editorial calendar to ensure content is placed across all news, social and digital channels
- Graphic Design:
  - Revised the SCS logo to ensure consistency across all channels
  - Integrate the logo into individual pieces of content to attribute it back to SCS
  - Establish a look and feel for infographics and stylized text for impact statements
  - Create a step-and-repeat or banner to be used for interviews, events, photo shoots, etc.
- Storytelling:
  - Utilize long and short-form videos across platforms to convey the strong, positive attributes of the school district
  - Adopt a storytelling strategy across multiple digital and social media platforms, including newsletters, to highlight student success and student-led content
- Senior Leadership Messaging:
  - Superintendent in-person, digital and social media messaging strategy & events calendar
  - Board Member integration
  - Messaging from executive directors and principals to engage and inform audiences

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Tactical Plan: Public Relations

- Hire a media relations specialist to better serve media partners and further establish meaningful partnerships
- Proactively pitch stories to emphasize the good works and key personnel of the school district
- Conduct a desk-top media tour to introduce the new communications team and explore collaboration opportunities
- Highlight students and their success to promote the district's college and career ready mantra
- Develop a national media approach to promote the school district
  - Senior leadership focus
  - News articles
  - Guest blogging
  - National conferences and speaking engagements
- Op-ed strategy
  - Superintendent
  - Principals and teachers
  - Students

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Tactical Plan: Crisis Communications

- Research best-practices among admirable school districts for new ideas and adoption
- Develop a comprehensive proactive crisis communications plan
  - Scenario planning
  - Chain-of-command notification
  - Messaging
    - Parents, students, staff and the community at-large
    - Follow-up messaging strategies
    - Digital and social media platforms for information-sharing
  - What to Expect in an Emergency resources for parents, students and staff
- Collaborate with Public Safety to integrate new technologies and systems in crisis communications
- Establish a crisis toolkit for administrators and principals
- Collaborate with the county to adopt and implement joint Hurricane and Emergency Management Systems, messaging, FAQs, etc.

Tactical Plan: Web Communications

- Immediate:
  - Establish a crisis communications corner on the home page to notify audiences of critical situations

- Long-term:
  - Move SCS.net to a cloud-based solution to improve cyber-security and alleviate stress on IT systems
  - Collaborate with IT to explore and implement a new SCS website to highlight district impact
  - Develop an effective web messaging hierarchy and site architecture to improve usability and search functionality
  - Establish a plan for improving school-based and department websites
  - Leverage unified authoring (COPE) to integrate multi-platform strategies and one-stop messaging

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Tactical Plan: Digital Media

- ConnectEd Messaging:
  - Use Blackboard to integrate ConnectEd messages to include email, social media and text messaging
  - Collaborate with the Registrar's Office to promote mobile phones and text messaging to reach greater audiences
    - Explore separate crisis text messaging notification list
- District Newsletters:
  - Resurrect the Highlighter newsletter for monthly distribution
    - Market the highlighter to increase subscribership
    - Establish monthly content priorities
    - Emphasize student-led content, storytelling and school highlights
    - Develop Superintendent Corner – monthly blog post
    - Collaborate with community partners for content integration where possible
  - Develop a newsletter for our volunteers and partners to market service opportunities in the school district

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Tactical Plan: Social Media

- Hire a social media strategist to listen 24/7/365
- Adopt a multiple-approach strategy for maximizing social media over time
  - Listening
  - Engaging
  - Responding
- Establish a tonality and messaging hierarchy for each channel that's indicative of the SCS brand and audience
- Develop an acquisition strategy to increase friends and followers to improve message distribution
- Improve engagement by using live feeds and interactions where possible
- Utilize video storytelling to engage users and improve shares
- Develop a crisis communications plan that employs social media to get the word out quickly
- Establish an official volunteer and partnership presence
- Over time, establish a two-way communications policy and practice to leverage social platforms

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Tactical Plan: Education Channel

- Conduct best-practices study with other school districts to explore opportunities and ideas to enhance viewership of content
- Explore multiple platforms to broadcast content live and on-demand beyond the cable channel
- Develop content strategy for 24/7 channel
- Produce long-form videos to tell the story of the school district on-air and online
- License content from 3rd party partners to increase educational value
- Invite 3rd party partners to create content and utilize the studio space
- Where possible, partner with STC and other schools to invite students in and learn

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Tactical Plan: Communications Measurement & Reporting

- Measurement:
  - Contract with Meltwater to establish daily analytics for PR, web and social media impact
    - Messaging sentiment (negative, neutral, positive reporting)
    - Media impressions; ad equivalency
    - Social media engagement growth and trends
- Reporting:
  - Continue twice-a-week media news reporting
  - Develop quarterly communications highlights to showcase major news stories, op-ed pieces, digital and social media engagement, spotlights on senior leadership, etc.
  - Establish an annual communications review from which to establish on-going communications objectives

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Tactical Plan: Community Relations

- Board and Superintendent
  - Community town hall meetings and listening tour forums at multiple sites throughout the year
  - Community engagement in support of key district-wide initiatives (e.g. security, etc.)
- Superintendent
  - Morning Joe with Todd – weekly meetings with school district staff and/or parent groups
  - Conferences and speaking engagements to focus messaging efforts
- Cause marketing initiatives
  - Explore opportunities to collaborate with Ed Foundation to raise funds through cause engagement
  - Business partner focus to support the school district's efforts

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Tactical Plan: Volunteer & Partnerships Program

- Advance student achievement through engagement with community and business partners
- Adopt school district co-branding
- Utilize technology to improve security and confidentiality
  - Streamline safety & security procedures with new technology
  - Implement a new database to market volunteer opportunities to audiences and encourage others to sign up
- Establish an Advisory Council
  - Offer TeamUp a seat at the table
  - Recruit other organizations and businesses to take part
- Establish a broad digital and social media presence
- Strengthen and improve recruitment and retention of volunteers
- Fully implement the annual volunteer recognition program in accordance with the Florida Department of Education
- Evaluate the effectiveness of VPO programs (e.g. reading) to align with academic priorities
- Develop an annual report and score card – tie to employee and department head evaluations
- Assess the need for staff to be 12-months to recruit volunteers during the summer months

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Messaging Calendar (evolving)

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Summer Feeding	Summer Feeding	Civility Squad	Screenagers	Civility Squad	Civility Squad
	BTS	TIYSCS – Food Service	Cyber Awareness	TIYSCS – Bus Driver	TIYSCS – SRO
	Civility Squad		Civility Squad	Digital Town Hall	
	TIYSCS – Police Chief		TIYSCS - Administrator		
	Digital Town Hall		South County In-Person Forum		

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Civility Squad	Civility Squad	Civility Squad	Civility Squad	Teacher/Staff Appreciation	Hurricane Preparedness
TIYSCS - Principal	TIYSCS – Custodian	TIYSCS – SRO	TIYSCS – Sergeant	Graduation	Summer Feeding
Mid County In-Person Forum		Digital Town Hall	North County In-Person Forum	Civility Squad	
				TIYSCS - Teacher	
				SREOY	

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APPENDIX

Marketing Trends

Research & Stakeholder Feedback

Trends in Social and Digital Media

- In 2017, digital ad spending surpassed traditional TV advertising.*

- Traditional TV watching is on the decline – customers consume content when they want, where they want and on devices they prefer.

- Social media grew 20% in 2017 – the average person spends one hour and 46 minutes on social media per day.+

- For most companies, social media continues to be an important part of a comprehensive earned, owned and paid media strategy.

- Companies are now using social and digital media to deepen their relationship with customers.'

  - More than 65% of companies use social media to engage their customers.

  - The rise of social media apps has led brands to engage with customers online and establish virtual relationships and two-way dialogue.

* Mediakix, 2018
+ Pew Research, 2018
' Ad Week, 2017

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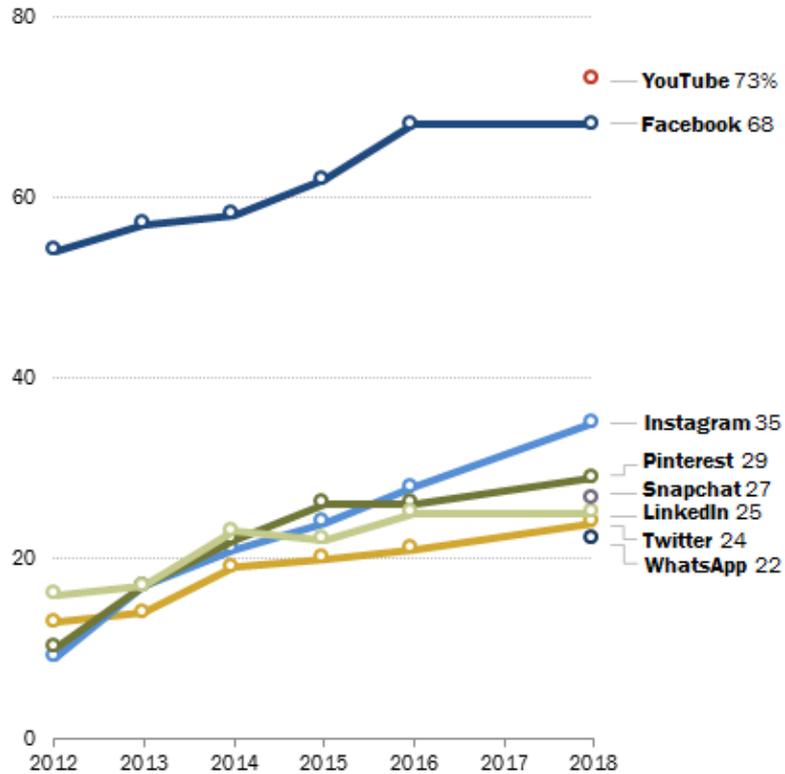County Schools

Trends in Social and Digital Media

- Social media provides an interactive form of entertainment – it's how most video content is consumed today.'
  - 95% of Americans own a cell phone
  - 77% own a smart phone
  - Children as young as eight years old have a cell phone
- Cable viewership is down as customers favor on-demand and streaming services.*
  - Among customers 45 and under, watching a downloaded or streamed video is more popular than watching TV
  - Netflix, Hulu, Amazon and YouTube are preferred viewing channels for consumers 16-24

* Mediakix, 2018
' Ad Week, 2017

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Trends in Social and Digital Media

Majority of Americans now use Facebook, YouTube

% of U.S. adults who say they use the following social media sites online or on their cellphone

YouTube 73%
Facebook 68
Instagram 35
Pinterest 29
Snapchat 27
LinkedIn 25
Twitter 24
WhatsApp 22

Note: Pre-2018 telephone poll data is not available for YouTube, Snapchat or WhatsApp. Source: Survey conducted Jan. 3-10, 2018. Trend data from previous Pew Research Center surveys.
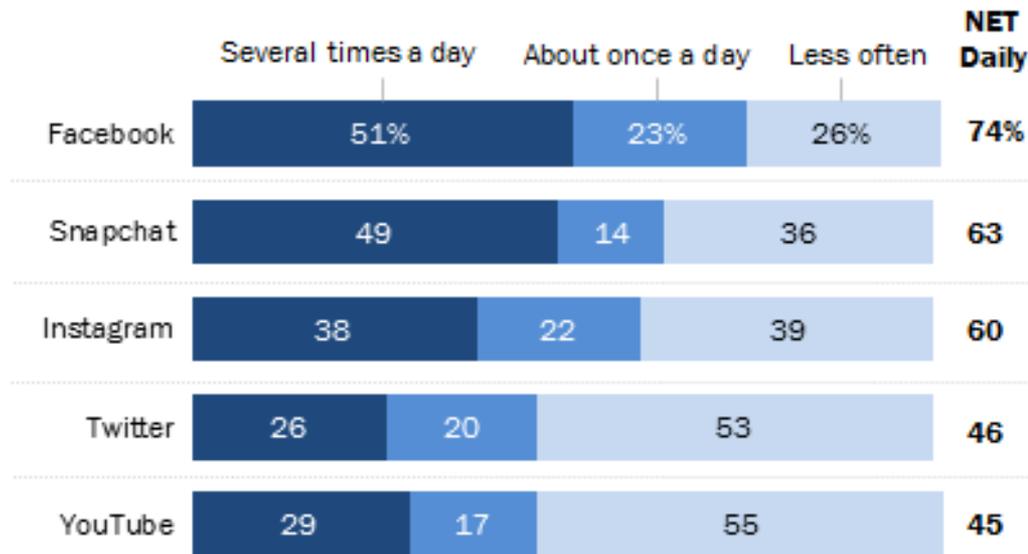"Social Media Use in 2018"

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Trends in Social and Digital Media

A majority of Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram users visit these platforms on a daily basis

Among U.S. adults who say they use ___, the % who use each site ...

	Several times a day	About once a day	Less often	NET Daily
Facebook	51%	23%	26%	74%
Snapchat	49	14	36	63
Instagram	38	22	39	60
Twitter	26	20	53	46
YouTube	29	17	55	45

Note: Respondents who did not give answer are not shown. "Less often" category includes users who visit these sites a few times a week, every few weeks or less often.
Source: Survey conducted Jan. 3-10, 2018.
"Social Media Use in 2018"

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Trends in Social and Digital Media

Use of different online platforms by demographic groups

% of U.S. adults who say they use ...

	Facebook	YouTube	Pinterest	Instagram	Snapchat	LinkedIn	Twitter	WhatsApp
Total	68%	73%	29%	35%	27%	25%	24%	22%
Men	62	75	16	30	23	25	23	20
Women	74	72	41	39	31	25	24	24
White	67	71	32	32	24	26	24	14
Black	70	76	23	43	36	28	26	21
Hispanic	73	78	23	38	31	13	20	49
Ages 18-29	81	91	34	64	68	29	40	27
18-24	80	94	31	71	78	25	45	25
25-29	82	88	39	54	54	34	33	31
30-49	78	85	34	40	26	33	27	32
50-64	65	68	26	21	10	24	19	17
65+	41	40	16	10	3	9	8	6
<$30,000	66	68	20	30	23	13	20	20
$30,000-$49,999	74	78	32	42	33	20	21	19
$50,000-$74,999	70	77	34	32	26	24	26	21
$75,000+	75	84	39	42	30	45	32	25
High school or less	60	65	18	29	24	9	18	20
Some college	71	74	32	36	31	22	25	18
College+	77	85	40	42	26	50	32	29
Urban	75	80	29	42	32	30	29	28
Suburban	67	74	31	34	26	27	23	19
Rural	58	59	28	25	18	13	17	9

Note: Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race.
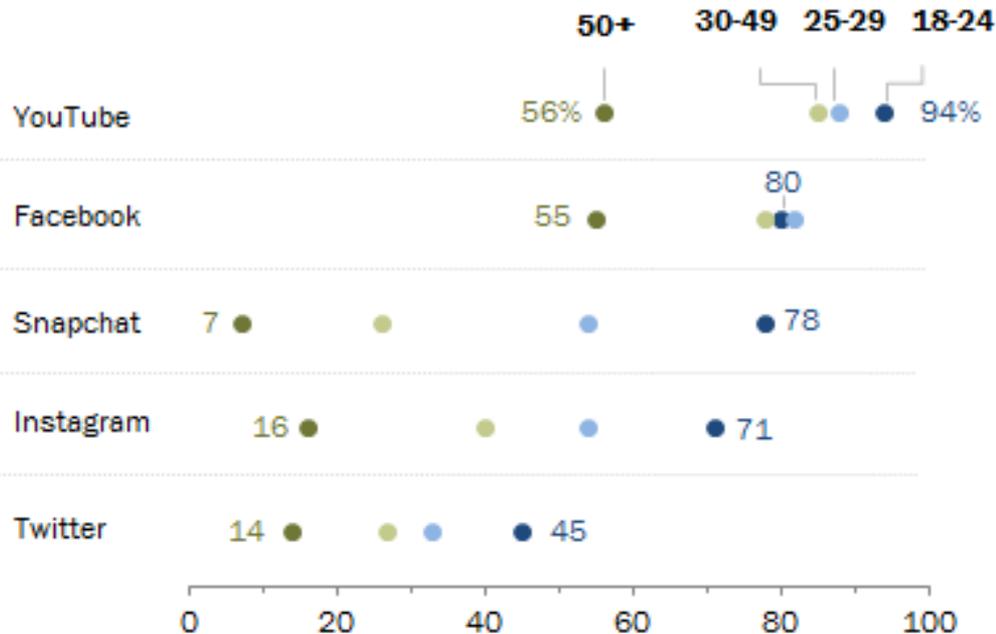Source: Survey conducted Jan. 3-10. 2018
"Social Media Use in 2018"

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Trends in Social and Digital Media

Social platforms like Snapchat and Instagram are especially popular among those ages 18 to 24

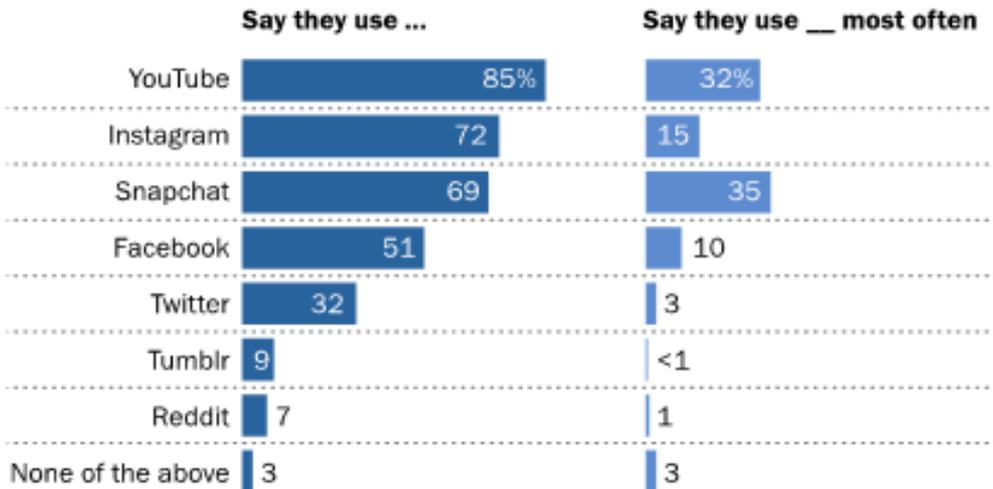*% of U.S. adults in each age group who say they use …*

	50+	30-49	25-29	18-24
YouTube	56%			94%
Facebook	55		80	
Snapchat	7			78
Instagram	16			71
Twitter	14			45

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Trends in Social and Digital Media

YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat are the most popular online platforms among teens

% of U.S. teens who ...

	Say they use ...	Say they use ___ most often
YouTube	85%	32%
Instagram	72	15
Snapchat	69	35
Facebook	51	10
Twitter	32	3
Tumblr	9	<1
Reddit	7	1
None of the above	3	3

Note: Figures in first column add to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed. Question about most-used site was asked only of respondents who use multiple sites; results have been recalculated to include those who use only one site. Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 10, 2018.
"Teens, Social Media & Technology 2018"

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Stakeholder Feedback

- An informal survey about school district communications was submitted to principals in May to assess and identify opportunities for improvement.

- A total of 13 elementary and 4 secondary principals participated.

- The majority of respondents cited crisis communications and the school district's website and social media pages were listed as "excellent" whereas school-based websites and internal communications were listed as needing improvement. (see attached study for more information)