



SOCIAL MEDIA CHAMPIONS

2025 NSPRA Communications Contest
Category: Golden Achievement Award

TEAM MEMBERS

Kayla Choate, Executive Director of Communications
Kelly Jellings, Communications Manager
Haley Turnis, Communications Specialist

Waukee Community School District
waukeeschools.org

Research

Strategic Goal Alignment

The Waukeee Community School District 2024-25 Strategic Plan includes the goal of fostering positive, collaborative relationships with parents and students. A key objective is to “enhance and unify our social media strategy district-wide to reach target audiences” with a measurable goal of increasing total followers across all District and school social media accounts by 5% by July 1, 2025. While our Communications Team has focused on strengthening the District’s social media presence, the accounts for our schools showed a critical need for consistency, accountability, and coordination.

Challenges

Waukeee CSD comprises 19 schools, which were each managing their own social media accounts with varying degrees of success. Some were managed by a principal or secretary, while others had 5+ managers with no true ownership. All were doing so voluntarily. We looked at each account’s metrics and pages and identified the following issues:

- Infrequent posting
- Inconsistent branding and messaging district-wide
- No accountability for responding to comments or direct messages
- A lack of coordination between schools and the District
- Little adherence to social media best practices and accessibility guidelines

We were missing opportunities to engage our audiences and market our schools. We also noted multiple situations where we needed to share important information on social media, but we lacked a one-point contact for each school. Our anecdotal research shows many parents, staff, and students feel more connected with their school than the District, and are therefore more likely to follow and seek out information on the school’s social media accounts than the District’s — making it even more essential that those accounts are frequently monitored, kept up-to-date, and showcase high-quality posts. Our goal was to implement a program that would support a cohesive social media strategy and create a stronger online presence district-wide.

Planning

Creating “Social Media Champions”

After discussions and brainstorming, we developed the Social Media Champions (SMC) program, which appoints one staff member at each school to manage social media. To compensate for the additional time and responsibilities — and ensure accountability — we proposed that each SMC should receive a stipend (\$1,000 per school year).

The Executive Director of Communications drafted a job description and brought the proposal to the HR Director, then to the District’s Senior Leadership Team. After securing leadership approval, we introduced the program to principals, emphasizing the need for dedicated social media management across the District. Our team supported the hiring process by crafting messages to encourage staff applications, drafting interview questions, and sitting in interviews to help principals select the right candidate.

Implementation

Launching the Program

In January 2024, all schools had hired a SMC, and we granted them access to their buildings' Facebook and Instagram accounts. Our team held a kick-off meeting to create alignment, explain our expectations, reinforce the District's social media guidelines, and offer support. We also created a Google Chat with our team and all SMCs, so we could post quick updates and resources, and the SMCs had a place to ask questions, share tips, discuss issues, and more.

A Stronger Social Media Presence

With accountability, direction, and collaboration, the SMCs began creating content that was both tailored to their school's community and aligned with the District's brand.

Examples from some of our schools include:

- A "Week at a Glance" graphic listing events and lunch menus
- A "Question of the Week" video featuring students
- A monthly staff spotlight feature

In addition to more frequent posting that is both informative and engaging, the SMCs are responsible for responding to their pages' messages and comments, asking our team for advice when needed. The program has also centralized content collection between schools and the District. For instance, during events like the first day of school, field days, and Homecoming, we create shared Google Drive folders for SMCs to upload photos. This allows us to post photos from all our buildings on the District's accounts without having to visit each one.

While the SMCs mostly have the autonomy to manage their accounts with minimal oversight, there are times when we request specific content. When kindergarten enrollment opened, we asked all elementary SMCs to post a reel showcasing their kindergarteners, which we then shared across the District's accounts. The program has proven invaluable during emergency situations as well. SMCs know the Comms Team will post a graphic on all accounts for snow days, so we can avoid duplicate posting. In other crisis situations, our team can send quick instructions to SMCs via the Chat.

Our team holds quarterly meetings with the SMCs to discuss topics such as new algorithm insights, incorporating diversity in content, and pinning posts. We also encourage all SMCs to "like" each other's posts, driving engagement and creating a sense of unity.

Evaluation

A Successful First Year

In the program's first full year, we saw the school social media accounts come alive with creative and informative content that promotes our schools and engages our audiences. The metrics support the success of this program — schools increased followers by 34.5% (surpassing our strategic goal of 5%) and posted 75% more times than the previous year. We've received positive feedback, including from our School Board. We are continuing to refine our efforts to achieve our goals and support the SMCs, such as creating alignment for national recognition days and using the collaboration feature on Instagram.

Social Media Champions

Job Description

Criteria:

- Current staff member in their current building
- Knowledge of social media platforms
- Excellent writing/editing skills
- Detail- and customer-oriented
- Interested in telling your school's story, celebrating staff/student successes, and engaging with the community

Expectations:

- Serve as the primary social media contact for your school building
- Manage all social media accounts for the school
- Dedicate 1-2 hours per week during the school year to plan and post content
- Attend or collect photos/videos from school events
- Post 2-3 times per week on all accounts
- Monitor comments, respond to questions, and hide/delete inappropriate content based on the [District's social media rules of engagement](#)
- Respond to direct messages within 48 hours
- Ensure content is accurate, follows District guidelines and best practices, and does not include students on FERPA list
- Work closely with Communications Team as well as resources such as the Activities office, yearbook staff, student publications, etc. to gather and share content
- Attend 30-minute virtual social media meetings once every term led by the Communications Team, which will occur before or after school hours

The Communications Team will:

- Provide best practices and guidelines to the Social Media Champion
- Assist in troubleshooting issues on social media accounts
- Manage the school's social media in emergency situations (weather closures, threats, etc.)
- Manage the school's social media during the summer months

Social Media Metrics

All schools combined

	2024 (With Social Media Champions)	2023 (Without Social Media Champions)	% Difference
Followers	41,329	30,717	+34.5%
Number of posts	6,075	3,480	+75%
Impressions	6,562,642	4,757,072	+38%
Engagement	581,231	551,424	+5.5%
Video views	1,075,289	110,839	+870%

Waukee Elementary School
December 18, 2024

♻️ 4th Grade Sustainability Projects ♻️

Mr. Linnett's class just completed a big project for their Sustainability Unit. They created sustainable fish out of recyclable materials and trash, and the incredible results speak for themselves! Great work 4th graders and Mr. Linnett!

#WEare50263 #WEareWaukee #ChooseWaukee

easonelem
Original audio (may include a...)

Shuler Elementary School
November 1, 2024

🌟 SHULER SPOTLIGHT 🌟
Featuring: Mrs. Poland's 1st Graders' Pumpkin Carving! 🎃

Mrs. Poland's class participated in a pumpkin carving activity this week! Students took "dash notes" while carving pumpkins with parent volunteers. These dash notes were later turned into personal narratives! 📖 Looks like fun, 1st graders!! Keep up the awesome work! 🌟

SHULER SPOTLIGHT
Featuring: Mrs. Poland's 1st Grade

waukeenw
Original audio

Waukee Northwest
Intro to Engineering
Automata Project 2024

301 2 44

Prairieview School is 🥳 feeling excited.
August 23, 2024

The first day back-to-school is complete! Students spent the day reconnecting with friends, figuring out schedules and meeting new teachers! It was a success!

Do you have any First Day photos?? Share them with us below in the comments! We'd love to see them!
(Be mindful of identifying info; i.e. house numbers/addresses! Crop them out!)

We can't wait to return on Monday! 🥳🥳

South Middle School
September 25, 2024 · 🌐

It's been a great spirit week at SMS. Today, staff and students wore gold in support of those impacted by pediatric cancer.



waukeehs



👍 104 💬 8 📌

waukeehs WHS iJag students exploring the skilled trades today at Central Iowa Skilled Trades Apprenticeship Expo #wearewaukee

sugarcreekel



👍 12 💬 📌

👍 Liked by waukeecsd and others

sugarcreekel The last, but certainly not least, SC teachers that we get to celebrate to round out Teacher Appreciation Week are the Special Ed Teachers, our Specialty Teachers, and our Related Arts Teachers! 🥰🥰

Brookview Elementary School
December 15, 2024 · 🌐

We have some fun things happening around BV + can't wait to spend the last week before Winter Break with you! 🎉🧊

BV'S BUZZ OF THE WEEK

	CYCLE DAY	HOT LUNCH MENU	EVENTS OF THE WEEK
MON 12/16	DAY 5	MAC AND CHEESE W/ DINNER ROLL STEAMED PEAS RED PEPPER STRIPS FRESH APPLE SLICES	WEAR BROWN OR WHITE! 5TH GRADE TO DRAKE BASKETBALL
TUES 12/17	DAY 6	CHICKEN TENDERS W/ DINNER ROLL BAKED BEANS ASSORTED FRESH VEGETABLES PEACHES	
WED 12/18	DAY 1	FRENCH TOAST STICKS SWEET POTATO CRINKLE FRIES WANGO MANGO JUICE PINEAPPLE	PJ/COMFY DAY
THUR 12/19	DAY 2	TANGERINE CHICKEN W/ STEAMED RICE STEAMED BROCCOLI FRESH CARROTS FRESH KIMI	
FRI 12/20	DAY 3	STUFFED CRUST CHEESE PIZZA GREEN BEANS ROMANE SALAD STRAWBERRY SLUSHE	5TH GRADE BAND + CHOR CONCERT! WINTER PARTY

Waukee CSD Preschool
May 5, 2024 · 🌐

🦋🐛🐜 Friday was a beautiful day for an insect hunt with Ms. Abbie S's class! They have been learning all about caterpillars and insects and had lots of fun looking for some around our school!

