A District Approach to Social Media
Jennifer Caracciolo, Forsyth County Schools
jcaracciolo@forsyth.k12.ga.us

- **Decide as a district how you want to use social media**
    - Employee Acceptable Use Guidelines (included)

- **Standardize Communication**
    - Decide what social media sites your district and schools will be using
        - FCS District: Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn
        - FC Schools: Facebook and Twitter
    - Set-up Facebook and Twitter accounts for schools to reserve name/presence
        - Standardize urls on both (i.e. www.facebook.com/bigcreekes, www.twitter.com/bigcreekes)
        - Link facebook accounts to twitter (only have to post one place)
        - Have a minimum of three people be page administrators
        - As district social media manager, use HootSuite to manage multiple social media profiles, schedule messages and tweets, track brand mentions and analyze social media traffic.

- **Education administrators on social media (presentation with social media glossary) - once they receive the information, offer to "publish" their Facebook and Twitter pages, and train them (details included).**
    - At meeting, walk through "edit page" features on facebook
    - Have school staff make first facebook post
    - Go to twitter site – see if post carried over
    - Cover usage on smart phones
    - Show them two examples of schools using social media effectively
        - http://www.facebook.com/PineyGroveMS
        - http://www.facebook.com/forsythcentralhs
    - Communicate internally and externally district and school social media sites using a variety of methods/tools (i.e. signatures on emails, icons on websites and apps for iPhones and Androids http://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/Page/32572)

- **Monitor social media usage for schools, and share new resources/information about social media with school contacts.**

Chattahoochee Elementary School

Facebook: Chattahoochee Elementary
Custom url when you have 25 likes: www.facebook.com/ChattahoocheeES

Use your personal fb login and password to access page

To email photos to your wall send to abc; subject line write the photo caption

Likes: You are currently set up to "like" FCS and the other active fb pages of schools within the district. You can do add more likes by choosing "Use Facebook As Page" under Account, and then liking other pages that relate to your page. These liked pages are shown on the left of your page, and you can specify which of these always rotate there by selecting them as featured. Please maintain www.facebook.com/FCSchools as a featured like (go to "edit page" > "featured").

Twitter: www.twitter.com/ChattahoocheeES
        Username - ChattahoocheeES
        Password – abc

Your facebook page has been linked to your twitter page, so your facebook status updates, photos, video, links, notes and events will also post on your twitter page.

If you are posting links to your school website or other sites that have long urls, please use www.tinyurl.com to shorten the address prior to posting on facebook and twitter.

Below is the county social media procedure:

Social Media (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn)

The Public Information and Communications Department has selected three social media vehicles to communicate with stakeholders: Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. District departments will not establish separate social media sites, but will instead be trained and utilize the district's social media sites.

The Public Information and Communications Department has created Facebook and Twitter pages for all Forsyth County schools. Pages will be activated ("live") at the direction of the school principal.

For branding consistency, Public Information and Communications has created the pages with:
- An established name and shortened url
- The school logo as the profile picture
- Basic school information (address, phone number, website address, etc.)
- Disabled others from posting to your wall, posting photos or videos, or tagging in your photos
- Comments policy

School-level page administrators may not modify these items.

School principals may manage the Facebook and Twitter pages and/or they can designate other staff members to lead and/or share this responsibility. Schools may not remove pre-established administrative rights of Public Information and Communications staff members to their pages.

When posting information on Facebook or Twitter, schools staff are encouraged to post notes, photos, links, videos, etc. that highlight or showcase your students, staff and schools. A good rule of thumb is if the information is posted on the school website, and included in school newsletters or announcements, then it can replicated on social media sites.

Staff Expectations for Communicating Electronically

Forsyth County Schools (FCS) recognizes that today's students and parents engage in electronic forms of communication for their daily interactions with friends, family, and their larger social networks. FCS too has turned to e-mail, websites, blogs, text messaging, and use of public social media networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and others to communicate with similar groups. Whereas these forms of communications are dynamic, mobile, and quickly reach their audience through technologies that have become an integral part of our online lives, they may, in some circumstances, not meet the public and professional standards for communicating with students and parents.

FCS realizes that part of 21st century learning is adapting to the changing methods of communication. The importance of staff, students and parents engaging, collaborating, learning, and sharing in these digital environments is a part of 21st century learning. To this aim, FCS has developed the Expectations for Communicating Electronically to provide direction for employees when participating in online social media activities. It is important to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability, keeping in mind that information produced by FCS employees is a reflection on the entire district. By accessing, creating or contributing to any blogs, wikis, or other social media for classroom or district use, you agree to abide by these expectations. Please read them carefully before posting or commenting on any blog or creating any classroom blog, wiki and/or podcast.

FCS will maintain an official social media presence using sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Linked In for each school in the district. These official pages will be designated with logos and language to maintain the branding of the schools and the system.

All employees must adhere to the **Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators** as stated in FCS Board Policy.

The expectations outlined in this document are designed for the purpose of
1. Protecting the students, staff, and the District;
2. Raising awareness of acceptable ways to use electronic communication tools when communicating with students and parents; and
3. Raising awareness of the positive and negative outcomes that may result in using these tools with students and parents.

The following is a set of expectations that all members of the FCS professional community will adhere to when communicating with students and parents electronically.

Does the communication pass the TAP Test?
Electronic communication with students and parents should always be **T**ransparent, **A**ccessible and **P**rofessional as defined below

1. **The communication is <u>transparent</u>.** – ALL electronic communication between staff, students, and parents should be transparent. As a public school district, we are expected to maintain openness, visibility, and accountability with regard to all communications.
2. **The communication is <u>accessible</u>.** - ALL electronic communication between staff, students and parents are a matter of public record and/or may be accessible by others.
3. **The communication is <u>professional</u>.** – ALL electronic communication from staff to student or parent should be written as a professional representing FCS. This includes word choices, tone, grammar and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a FCS professional. Always choose words that are courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike in manner.

If communication meets all three of the criteria above, then it is very likely that the methods of communicating with students and parents that you are choosing are very appropriate; moreover, encouraged.

<u>**Acceptable Communications Methods**</u>
ANGEL – Within ANGEL, staff can communicate directly with students and parents regarding information related to grades, attendance, comments, assignments, and much more. In ANGEL staff can provide some of the same types of communication that public social media networks provide while also offering access to curriculum and learning resources beyond the classroom walls. ANGEL allows for effective online learning by supporting online discussions, secure chat rooms, online delivery of assessments, and the sharing of documents, images and other media, all in a secure, password protected environment.

District Email and Phone - Use of District email and phone is always a very appropriate way to communicate directly with students and parents. District email provides the staff member with a record of the communication. For this reason, district-provided email system (your @forsyth.k12.ga.us address) and district-provided phone numbers and extensions should be used. Please refer to the **<u>Acceptable Use Policy</u>** for best practice guidelines in its use. It is recommended that phone and email messages be returned within two business days.

Schoolwires Websites and EduVision Video – Within Schoolwires, individual staff web pages are available to all elementary school teachers. Middle and high school teachers are provided subject or curriculum team, and school-sponsored activities pages available to share information with students and parents. The website also has the ability to **post** blogs, surveys, calendar items, and news.

Social Media for Instructional Purposes – Any content staff members publish, pictures they post, or dialogue they maintain, whether in Facebook, Twitter, a blog, a discussion thread or other website should never compromise the professionalism, integrity and ethics in their role as a FCS professional. A good question that staff members should ask themselves before posting or emailing a message is, "Would I mind if that information appeared on the front page of the local newspaper?" If the answer is "yes," then do not post it. Email and social networking sites are very public places.

Less Acceptable Communications Methods

Text Messaging - Nearly every student has a cell phone today and use of text messaging is rising sharply. This form of communication is typically between individuals and highly personal. Because texting is such a quick and convenient way of communication, a simple message may lead to an extended texting conversation that can get "off topic." Therefore staff members should be aware that text messaging between a staff member and an individual student can easily be misinterpreted by a parent. If a staff member plans to use texting for immediate and urgent contact with students/team members, they must be transparent about such use. He/she must make parents aware at the beginning of the school year or season that he/she may use texting. A variety of instructional tools are available which take advantage of texting capabilities. Staff should always communicate with parents ahead of time regarding the use of such tools.

Unacceptable Communications Methods

Non-District Email, Instant Messaging and Phone Numbers – FCS employees should never use personal email accounts to communicate with students about school matters.

Important Reminders: Social Media Sites for Personal Purposes

Staff members presently using social media sites, such as Facebook, to communicate with friends, family and their personal networks should ensure that their privacy settings are set to "Only Friends." If the "Friends of Friends" or "Networks and Friends" settings are used, staff members open their content to a much larger group of people, including students and parents. Employees should not use their District email address or phone number for communications on social media networks for personal accounts. The wall between the role of a public educator and personal friendships with students should always be visible and strongly communicated.