



## ***Social Media Handbook***

Adapted from Bethlehem Central  
School District and other sources  
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# WSWHE BOCES Social Media Handbook

**Introduction** Social media has changed the way we communicate, both as a BOCES and as individuals. With such tools as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram, anyone with an Internet connection now has the ability to create a dynamic web presence, update it from wherever they want and share their content instantly with friends and followers around the world.

**WSWHE BOCES Goal:** Social media has given WSWHE BOCES the opportunity to engage in ongoing “conversations” with our students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, colleagues, and friends about what is most important to them. It has also given us the ability to integrate new learning technologies into our classrooms and engage in a 21st century learning environment.

WSWHE BOCES supports the use of social media by members of our organization to connect with students, faculty, alumni and community members and to aid classroom learning. This handbook provides guidance on how to do so effectively, safely and within BOCES guidelines.

**Who to Contact:** Social media is constantly changing. As a result, this handbook will be reviewed and continue to evolve on a consistent basis. If you have suggestions, please contact Maribeth Macica, Senior Public Information Specialist, at [mmacica@wswebooces.org](mailto:mmacica@wswebooces.org) or (518) 581-3743.

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# What is Social Media?

As an educational organization, the Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES recognizes the value of teacher and professional staff inquiry, investigation and communication using new technology tools to enhance student learning, experiences and promote BOCES mission. Further, the BOCES understands the importance of an open exchange between the BOCES and its many constituents and that access to technology in school gives students, teachers and others greater opportunities to learn, engage, communicate, and develop 21st-century technology and global communication skills. To this end, the BOCES recognizes social media tools, including social networking sites (SNS) and exploration of new and emerging technologies as an important arena for encouraging this interaction and collaboration.

The BOCES further realizes its obligation to ensure responsible and safe use of these technologies. As an employee of the Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES, staff are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate, professional manner inside and outside of school, including professional and personal social networking activities and electronic communications. All staff are expected to serve as positive ambassadors for the BOCES and as appropriate adult role models for students.

BOCES Policy 5700 establishes professional expectations and staff responsibility for professional-use social media accounts created to represent BOCES groups, departments, programs, and/or activities, and the BOCES as a whole. This Social Media Handbook provides further guidelines and procedures to assist staff in setting up professional-use accounts and utilizing social media in a responsible manner.

## **Popular social media services include:**

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Pinterest
- Google+
- LinkedIn
- Blogs
- YouTube

# How WSWHE BOCES Is Using Social Media

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As an educational institution, WSWHE BOCES has been an adopter of social media, as these tools enable the organization to share what is happening in our programs and school communities and allows us to engage and create a dialogue with students, faculty, staff, parents, friends and other stakeholders about what is important to them.

## **WSWHE BOCES goals:**

The goal for WSWHE BOCES on social media is to share news about what goes on in our organization, provide information about events and showcase the opportunities our programs provide. At the BOCES-wide level, we use social media to engage with members of our communities, whether they are parents, students, districts, agencies, community groups and new or existing staff members. We seek to highlight the collaborative work we do with our component school districts to ensure students have access to high quality programs so that they are prepared for bright futures and great careers. Additionally, we want to acknowledge the important support we provide to school districts with staff professional development, instructional technology, school library services, communications services, financial planning, budgeting and staffing. We believe that what makes our great organization run are the people behind it and also the people we serve. Social media can bring all of this to life and collaboration is key.

## **WSWHE BOCES official social media accounts:**

 <https://www.facebook.com/WSWHEBOCES>

 <https://twitter.com/WSWHEBOCES>

 <https://www.instagram.com/wswheboces/>

**Branding and BOCES Social Media Accounts** All of WSWHE BOCES official profiles use the same or similar treatment of the BOCES logo, to communicate with students, parents, districts, agencies and other viewers that the content found in these locations is official information.

In addition to the sites mentioned above, many of WSWHE BOCES departments and programs have launched professional social media presences. These sites should be similarly branded to BOCES level social media pages in order to communicate that the information they are presenting is professional and reliable. BOCES branding should be used for registered professional accounts only. In addition to the WSWHE BOCES logo, several division logos are currently being used and are recognized by students and the public. The appropriate logo to use will be determined by the program administration in consultation with the Communications Department. The Communications Department will provide guidance on how to set up professional accounts with appropriate branding.

To obtain a logo that can be used or adapted for your professional account to represent your BOCES program, classroom, service or event, please contact Maribeth Macica, Senior Public Information Specialist, at [mmacica@wswhiboces.org](mailto:mmacica@wswhiboces.org) or (518) 581-3743 for assistance.

## **How WSWHE BOCES Defines Social Media & Use**

**Social Media:** Includes any and all forms of public social media network online platforms where individuals engage in multiple methods of online interaction, not limited to conversation and posting user generated and distributed content including, but not limited to, websites, blogs, wikis, podcasts, on-line forums, video sites, virtual worlds, messaging sites and social networking sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Vine, Snapchat, Instagram, Pinterest, Wikipedia, LinkedIn, YouTube, and others). This list is by no means comprehensive or exhaustive; new social media platforms are continually introduced to the marketplace. The same set of professional expectations applies regardless of the choice of social media.

**Professional/Instructional Use:** Refers to the use of social media for official purposes to advance a program or function of the BOCES or represent the BOCES on social media as part of an employee's job responsibilities. Content is representative of the BOCES or group within/governed by the BOCES. The definition of BOCES approved password-protected social media tools are those that fall within the BOCES electronic technology network, otherwise known as the District's Computer System (DCS) or which the BOCES has approved for educational use. Within these internal forums, the BOCES has greater authority and ability to protect minors from inappropriate content and can limit public access.

**Personal Use:** Refers to the use of social media that is not related to the employee's job duties or work for the BOCES, rather, use on a personal level to advance one's self or communicate with family and friends. Content reflects the personal opinion of the account holder.

# Important Policies

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Social media usage in WSWHE BOCES is governed by the same policies governing use for all other electronic communications or technology. Read the policies below before engaging in any social media use or campaign for any BOCES purpose or as part of your official duties at WSWHE BOCES. If you use social media for personal purposes, remember that even if you aren't operating social media on BOCES time or even for BOCES purposes, you represent the BOCES as an employee, student or organization.

**WSWHE BOCES Internet Safety Policy: Board of Education Policy 7100**  
<https://www.wswheboces.org/Board Policy 7100 Internet Safety Policy>

**WSWHE BOCES Social Media Policy: Board of Education Policy 5700**  
<https://www.wswheboces.org/Board Policy 5700 Social Media Use>

**Administrative Regulation 2080 Staff Technology Use**  
<https://www.wswheboces.org/Admin Reg 2080 Staff Technology Use>

**Administrative Regulation 7090 Classroom Technology Use (Internet Acceptable Use)**  
<https://www.wswheboces.org/Admin Reg 7090 Student and Classroom Tech Use, Internet Acceptable Use>

**Requirements for setting up accounts:** WSWHE BOCES Board of Education's Social Media Policy states that a student or employee requires prior approval from the District Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee before setting up any social media sites that are for educational purposes, that represent the BOCES in any way or require student use of social media. Please use the Registration form on the next page and submit to your immediate supervisor. Wait for a response before setting up the account, with the communications department.

**Social Network Policies and Terms of Service** Please note that all social media sites have policies and terms of service relating to how they will or will not use your content, what is or isn't allowed on the social network, etc. Be sure to familiarize yourself with any of these policies before you launch your profiles/pages.

**Questions/Help** If you have questions about social media best practices, or need guidance when problems or issues of concern arise, contact Maribeth Macica, Senior Public Information Specialist, at [mmacica@wswheboces.org](mailto:mmacica@wswheboces.org) or (518) 581-3743. We are available to assist you with any social media concern, large or small.

# Best Practices for Success in using Social Media

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## **When Posting:**

**Use good judgment**– *We expect you to use good judgment in all situations*

- You must know and follow the BOCES [Code of Conduct](#), the [Social Media Use Policy 5700](#) and applicable policies and regulations.
- Think before you post! Regardless of your privacy settings, assume that all of the information you have shared on your social network is public information. Don't post anything online you wouldn't feel comfortable seeing on the front page of a newspaper or on the CNN website.

**Be respectful, responsible and ethical**– *We expect you to uphold BOCES professional standards and staff expectations online and offline. All communications should be written as a professional.*

- Always treat others in a respectful, positive and considerate manner.
- Choose carefully the words you use, the tone, grammar and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a professional.
- Even though you are approved to represent the BOCES, unless you are specifically authorized to speak on behalf of the BOCES as a spokesperson, you should state that the views expressed in your postings, etc. are your own. Only discuss BOCES-related matters that are within your area of responsibility.
- Be open about your affiliation with the BOCES and the role/position you hold.
- Do not engage in debates on your site, make personal attacks or derogatory comments.

## **Be factual**

- Check the facts before you post and be sure the information is accurate. Libelous or false information should be avoided, and could be damaging to the BOCES and to you personally.

## **Be a good listener**

- Keep in mind that one of the biggest benefits of social media is that it gives others another way to talk to you, ask questions directly, and to share feedback.
- Be responsive to others when conversing online. Provide answers, thank people for their comments, and ask for further feedback, etc.
- Always be doing at least as much listening and responding as you do "talking."

## **Be active**

- Social media presences require diligent care and feeding. If you do not have the time or resources to check in on the sites you develop at least a few minutes every other day, and to post fresh content on a weekly basis, reconsider jumping into social media at this time.
- Your site is only as interesting as your last post—keep the information current to maintain followers.



### **Be a valued community member**

- Don't just talk about your program or department— share the best information you find from other areas of the BOCES, our school district communities or world from trusted sources. This will increase the value of your site and also ensure you are a valued, relevant member of the BOCES educational community.

### **Protect Confidential information**— *We expect you to protect our staff and students' personal information.*

- Do not publish, post or release information that is considered confidential or not public. If it seems confidential, it probably is. Online “conversations” are never private. Do not use your birth date, address and cell phone number or those of others, especially the names of students, on any public website.
- To ensure your safety, be careful about the type and amount of personal information you provide. Avoid talking about personal schedules or situations.
- **NEVER** give out or transmit personal information of students, parents or employees.
- Don't take information you may receive through social networking (such as e-mail addresses, customer names or telephone numbers) and assume it's the most up-to-date or correct.
- Always respect the privacy of our BOCES educational community members.

### **Consider Images**

- Respect brand, trademark, copyright information and/or images of the BOCES.
- You may use photos and video (products, etc.) that are available on the BOCES website.
- **It is not acceptable to post pictures of student if the parent(s) or guardian has/have submitted a written request to opt-out** - please check with your immediate supervisor for this information.
- Do not post pictures of others without their permission unless it is from a public event. There is a difference between posting a picture of someone with their family at home and posting a picture of them at a BOCES event.

### **Linking to Other sites**

- A significant part of the interaction on blogs, Twitter, Facebook and other social networks involves passing on interesting content or linking to helpful resources. However, the BOCES is ultimately responsible for any content that is shared. **Don't blindly repost a link without looking at the content first.**
- Pay attention to the security warnings that pop up on your computer before clicking on unfamiliar links. They actually serve a purpose and protect you and the BOCES.
- When using Twitter, Facebook and other tools, be sure to follow their terms and conditions.

### **AND IF YOU DON'T GET IT RIGHT...**

- Be sure to correct any mistake you make immediately, and make it clear what you've done to fix it.
- Apologize for the mistake if the situation warrants it.
- If it's a mistake violating the social media policy in any way, contact your immediate supervisor immediately, so the proper steps can be taken to minimize the impact it may

# Tell Us About It!

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WSWHE BOCES has a broad audience of students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, districts and more, keeping in touch with us via social media. Let the BOCES know what you are doing so we can help expand your reach by sharing your updates with these individuals, and also to make sure we are aware of the news and developments you are sharing with your audiences.

Contact Maribeth Macica, WSWHE BOCES Communications Department at [mmacica@wswebooces.org](mailto:mmacica@wswebooces.org) or (518) 581-3743.

**\*Note:**

WSWHE BOCES Board of Education's Social Media Policy 5700 states that a student or employee requires prior approval from the District Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee before setting up any professional social media sites that are for educational purposes, that represent the BOCES in any way or require student use of social media. Please use the Registration form on page 14, and then, wait for Administrative confirmation. Contact Maribeth Macica, WSWHE BOCES Communications Department at [mmacica@wswebooces.org](mailto:mmacica@wswebooces.org) or (518) 581-3743 for assistance.

# Getting Started

## 1. Secure the appropriate approval.

If you wish to create a social media page/profile for your department, class, or student group, secure approval from your immediate supervisor by completing a registration form. ***Please see page 14.***

## 2. Define your goals.

Before jumping into social media, spend time determining what you want to accomplish. Understanding this will help you choose the appropriate tool or tools, create relevant content and understand the best way to reach your target audience.

## 3. Identify a Primary Account Holder.

Determine who will be the primary person responsible for updating and monitoring your site or profile. Ensure the coordinator has the time to check your sites at least once every couple of days. This does not need to take up a significant amount of time, but successful social media sites are updated frequently, enable easy engagement with viewers and adjust in response to timely events and problems.

## 4. Create a strategy.

The more work you do on the front end, the more likely you are to create a successful social media presence. Define what you hope to accomplish, with whom you wish to engage and what content you wish to share. Then begin exploring social media tools. **Use the worksheet provided in this handbook to create your social media strategy.**

## 5. Listen.

All social media platforms have their own standards, styles and expectations. By becoming a consumer of social media before you become a producer, you will learn how these communities work, what content is of most interest, what other organizations are saying about your topic, etc. Spending a good amount of time on this step will help you better plan what contributions your voice can have.

## 6. Choose your tool.

After listening, you may find the short, 140-character bursts of Twitter, or the single photo or short video approach of Instagram are a good fit for your goals. Don't try to do it all at once – choose a tool that best meets your goals and focus on building there.

## 7. Name yourself.

**a. Profile Name** – create a profile name that clearly and concisely identifies your program or service. Do not simply identify yourself as WSWHE BOCES, as that implies you are speaking for the entire organization.

**b. Branding** – work with the WSWHE BOCES Communications Department on how to utilize BOCES branding appropriately.

## 8. Experiment.

Build out your Twitter stream, Instagram feed, Facebook page or whatever you choose and spend time populating it for several weeks, sharing it with a small group who can provide comments. Have the site up and running well before you plan to launch it so you can become comfortable maintaining it and ensure that the plan you set in place works appropriately.

## 9. Launch.

You're ready to communicate! Notify the [WSWHE BOCES Communications Department](#) to get suggestions on how to reach potential audiences and let them know you are on social media. Or, if you're using it for a classroom project/assignment, e-mail a link to the parents of the students in the class, for example.

## 10. Adjust.

Once your site is up and running, you will find some content is popular, some is ignored and some is too in-depth. All social media tools come with tracking tools, so you can see which posts are viewed and shared most, with generate comments, etc. Be prepared to re-align your strategy in response to who is viewing your site and how they are doing so.

### **Some Tools of Note for Popular Networks:**

- Facebook Insights is included in the admin portal of your page.
- Twitter Analytics (*analytics.twitter.com*) & Advanced Search (*twitter.com/search-advanced*)

### Facebook Resources

Facebook Help Center - Facebook has amazing resources to answer every question you have. Use the link below and search whatever question you have.

[https://www.facebook.com/help/?helpref=hc\\_global\\_nav](https://www.facebook.com/help/?helpref=hc_global_nav)

How to create a Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/help/364458366957655/>

To convert a Facebook profile to a Facebook page, ie: a dedicated page for your classroom, please click on the link below to start the conversion process.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/create/migrate>

### How do I turn Recommendations on or off for my business Page?

You can choose to turn Recommendations on or off in your Page's settings

How do I hide or delete a comment from a post on my

Page?<https://www.facebook.com/help/297845860255949?helpref=search&sr=1&query=did%20comment>

# Developing a Strategy for Social Media Use

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Use this worksheet to guide you in developing your social media strategy.

- 1. Team:** If you share an account with other staff, identify the staff member who will have primary responsibility for populating, maintaining and monitoring your site. Ensure they have the time and enthusiasm to devote to this project. *List the team members.*
  
- 2. Primary Goals:** Are you trying to communicate about a project, generally promote your department or program, communicate with parents, attract future students, celebrate student success, etc.? *Define your goal for your social media presence.*
  
- 3. Measuring Success:** Determine how you will measure the success, or lack of success, of your site/profile. Increase in school event attendance? Increase program recognition? Better communication with students or parents? A new network of interaction? *List how you plan to measure the success of your efforts and the tools you'll use to track that success.*
  
- 4. Audiences:** Identifying your audiences will help you tailor your content and also choose the right networks. *List your primary audiences.*

5. **Content:** Identify the content you have to share. Is it primarily news updates, conversation or networking information? Photographs? Video? *List the content you will be sharing.*
  
6. **Name and Design:** *Identify a simple and descriptive name for your profile that clearly identifies your affiliation with BOCES.* Contact the WSWHE BOCES Communications Department for assistance in what logo or other graphics to use for your social media accounts.
  
7. **Evaluation:** Set a timeline for when you will evaluate your site's success, using the goals and measures you identified above. At that time, be prepared to rethink your content. Ongoing reflective review should be part of your strategy. Feel free to share what you've learned about the process with your immediate supervisor. *Define your timeline.*



# REGISTRATION FOR PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT

**Staff who wish to set up a social media account for official BOCES use to represent a classroom, program, service, or BOCES activity will need to complete this registration for new or pre-existing accounts as specified in Board Policy 5700.**

**Complete and return this registration to your immediate supervisor.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position Title: \_\_\_\_\_

BOCES Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Media Network:	Proposed Account Name:	Proposed Account Handle:	Account Type:
			Individual      Shared

Facebook

Twitter

Instagram

YouTube

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If more than one individual will be posting to this account, please provide the staff members names, and the primary account holder:

\_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of account: \_\_\_\_\_

**Your signature below indicates that you have read Board Policy 5700 and agree to the provisions of the policy and all other policies and Administrative Regulations so referenced in Policy 5700. You will need to wait for confirmation from Administration before setting up a professional social media account.**

Staff Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Immediate Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorizing Administrator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Received by Communication Department \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_