TO TWEET OR NOT TO TWEET: A GUIDE FOR USING TWITTER EFFECTIVELY FOR SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

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Mr. John Riley (Mini Bio)

John Riley is a freelance writer and editor. He has written for the Denver Post, the Boulder Daily Camera, and other local publications. He is also the author of several books on education and technology. He was formerly a teacher and administrator in the Denver Public Schools.
THREE COMPONENTS:
PLN, CHATS, HASHTAGS

- The importance of your Professional Learning Network
- The importance of being a lifelong learner Twitter Chat
- The importance of using Twitter in order to give stakeholders a pulse on each school day #hashtags

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING NETWORKS (PLN)
ON TWITTER

- Today, more and more school leaders and educators are creating Twitter accounts in order to access the overwhelming amount of professional development that Twitter has to offer.
- Additionally, Twitter is a great tool for school leaders and educators to collaborate and communicate. Many of the things that are happening throughout the school day, as well as during extracurricular activities in real time with all stakeholders including students, staff members, and community members. In many ways, it allows the very stakeholders you strive to have a pulse on each school day.
- However, for this presentation, we are going to focus on using Twitter for professional development.

WHY TWITTER?

- "For school leaders and educators, Twitter is an excellent way to access thousands of individuals around the world with rich backgrounds and experiences that can contribute to your professional growth." [Mills, 2013]

- Professional development on Twitter often comes in the form of interactions with your PLN within a Twitter chat. Before going into greater detail describing a Twitter chat, let's first look at what a PLN is on Twitter:
WHAT IS A PLN?

- A PLN is essentially the individuals that you choose to follow and the individuals who choose to follow you on Twitter.
- In the most simple terms, this is your PLN. After signing up for a free account on Twitter, the first thing you want to do is to build your PLN.
- There are two basic principles when building your PLN:
  1. If you only follow 10 individuals on Twitter, you will only see the tweets of those 10 individuals.
  2. If only 10 individuals follow you on Twitter, only those 10 individuals will see your tweets.
- Please note: You must have at least 10 followers on Twitter before you can chat. This is a way that Twitter protects against spam.

BUILDING YOUR PLN

- A good way to start building your PLN is to search keywords of interest. You can do this by searching in the Twitter search box.
- A key point to remember is that the keywords might be a good place to start, but you need to engage with the accounts you find. Check out their profiles and see if you can start a conversation with them.
- By engaging with others, you can find new accounts to follow. You can also use hashtags to find new conversations and accounts.

TWITTER CHATS (FREE PD)

- Once you build your PLN, you can start participating in professional development on Twitter via Twitter chats.
- This is an excellent way to learn and interact with your PLN on Twitter. Most high-quality Twitter chats have a list of the questions that will be posed, and participants can join at any time to answer the questions.
- Twitter chats are a great way to engage with others in your field and learn new things.
TWITTER CHATS

- An important component of participating in Twitter chats is knowing when they are regularly held. Twitter chats are often held at the same time on the same day of the week, for example. The Twitter chat (hashtag) for Assistant Principals is held every Sunday at 8pm ET.
- Again, you will need to do some research on the Twitter chat topics you are interested in and research the regularly scheduled days and times of the chat (please refer to the provided earlier in this presentation to aid you with this).
- "There are many benefits to participating in Twitter chats. Stephanie Lehman, a Social Media Strategist at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, lists four benefits of joining a Twitter chat on "Increasing Networking, Visibility, and Reputation." (Lehman, 2012)."

TWITTER CHATS

- Usually before a Twitter chat begins, you will see a post like the example provided here. Such tweets will usually promote the chat as well as introduce the person moderating the chat.

TWITTER CHATS

- Here is an example of a moderator starting a Twitter chat. Here, the moderator is asking participants to introduce themselves before the start of the chat.
TWITTER CHAT

- Here is an example of the moderator introducing the topic for the Twitter chat just before the chat starts.

TWITTER CHAT

- Here is an example of the moderator asking the first question during the Twitter chat.

TWITTER CHAT

- Here is an example of someone answering a question during a Twitter Chat.
TWITTER CHAT

- I usually stay in the Twitter Search Box throughout the Twitter chat. This allows me to view all responses as I participate in the chat.

TWITTER CHAT / STORIFY

- The moderator will end the chat much the same way he/she started it (via a tweet) and most moderators will create an archive of the chat in case you missed it or want to review it. In the example below, the moderator created an archive of the chat using Storify.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wGhiP0t9ks
"THE MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE THAT ALL PRINCIPALS HAVE IS EACH OTHER. WITHOUT COLLABORATION OUR GROWTH IS LIMITED TO OUR OWN PERSPECTIVES"

For your teachers too...

Check it out!

SUP TWITTER CHATS

- AASA Sponsored Twitter Chat
- Once a month (or so it seems) #AASASuperAcademy Twitter chat
- Follow @AASAHQ
- More superintendent chats at
  - https://www.aasa.org/leadership/exchanges/sup Twitter chats
PUBLICATON

TWITTER AND THE HASHTAG
- Create district and/or superintendent Twitter account
- Decide on a district-wide hashtag (ex. @MississippiPublicSchools could be #MSPS)
- Tweet and celebrate everything: School-related student/teacher/principal accomplishments, news, snow days, etc.
- Use the hashtag with each tweet so that your stakeholders can easily access the tweets and have a pulse on each school day.
- Create a district-wide Twitter chat in which all stakeholders can join and participate.

Thank you!
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