



How Should Educators Use Social Media?

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After teaching English for eight years, I transitioned into another role. I became an elementary English language learner teacher. I also switched school districts and went from Wayne Township to Washington Township, where I live. Once I joined the district, it was suggested that we share student successes and happenings regarding teaching and learning on social media. This was the school year when I joined Twitter, January 2015, to be exact. Before this, I only had a private Facebook account and a LinkedIn page. After learning the rules of Twitter: limited characters, how to make a thread, and knowing you could only post four pictures at a time, I started consistently using the platform. During the pandemic in April 2022, after

suggestions from many, I started my public [Educator Barnes Facebook page](#). The more I posted, the more people learned who I was, and the more I realized the impact of my social media as an educator ... and the consequences.

With some parents still concerned about indoctrination in schools, many have decided to search for their children's teachers online in an attempt to expose them. It does not stop with parents; colleagues look up each other as well as administrators. This begs the question: How should educators use social media?

Social media is a tool, and as my husband, who is a database administrator, always tells me, "Nothing really disappears once you post it." One post could lead to threats or even job termination. The bigger issue is not social media; it is the mental health of teachers who use it. Some educators use it to become Instagram famous. They get caught up in how many likes, shares, and comments they receive. Their self-esteem revolves around external validation.

Others, like me, use social media as a tool to share academic excellence and educational tools and to push back on false narratives, especially when it comes to Black children. I also called out hypocrisy and questioned the motives of people involved in education. This led to my tweets being shared in group chats, my writing at Indy K12 and elsewhere being submitted to the human resources department of where I was working at the time, and the end of friendships.

My validation is not rooted in social media. My block hand stays strong, and I don't have to interact with people online who annoy me or post content where I see no value. Being different from me does not mean I will block you. I have enjoyed having conversations with people of different backgrounds and viewpoints and have learned from many people with beliefs that are different from mine.

I am well aware that consequences may come, and I have accepted that risk. For educators who do not want these risks, I suggest staying off of social media or only using social media to talk about the happenings in your classroom.

I am not scared of what people may find out about me online. I welcome people to learn about me. Educators should not be mad when people look them up on social media, and if they are, block people, stay off of social media, or limit the content posted. It is really that simple.