Social Media and Professionalism: Notes:

Slide II: Of course, every school board has policy in place to guide teachers if/as they choose to engage in social media

However, these policies cannot match the rate of change of technology and, thus, the professionalism of the teacher is most vital

There is not a “best” type of social media, in the same way that there is not a “best” instructional strategy. Backwards-planning is most vital, meaning that the teacher should have a clear, specific goal/objective that is enhanced by the Social Media Strategy. The strategy should not feel forced.

Slide III: Plan carefully regarding “who you want to be” on Social Media; this may involve the culling of an existing account or, ideally, the creation of a new, professionally focused social media account.

Nick Lewis, a British “Social Media Branding Expert”, is of the opinion that, in general, professional social media accounts are more effective with a genuine image of a real teacher, as opposed to something like a Bit Moji. The rationale behind this idea is it presents a genuine, vulnerable nature. This allows relationship building in a sincerer way.

Think of a “brand” for yourself on Social Media. This should be clear, precise, and inform all your decisions moving forward. For me, this “brand” is “progressive educator (occasionally) cool dad”.

My “brand” informs my tweets, retweets, likes, and follows. I am careful to consider that a “Social Media Deep Dive” may, at any time, take place.

Slide IV: For example, when we took our students to Europe, my Twitter was vital to keep parents, our Board, and our stakeholders involved with our journey.

As you look at these tweets, there is strong information present. But, also, certain information is missing, which is very important too.

Slide V: Obviously, something like an exam schedule is hugely helpful to post on Social Media. I like to use social media as a tool to ensure that no one can legitimately say “I didn’t know” in regards to something I consider vital.

Something like a Twitter chat is a fun and helpful way to network, share, and explore ideas. We plan on hosting a few over the course of the school year, and we’d love to have teacher-candidates join us, even if all you choose to do is observe and look in.

Things like Twitter chats are wonderful because, even after the chat has ended, the ideas last following, and can be shared, explored, and reconsidered in the days and weeks to come.

Slide VI: For me, any time I can use social media to thank, appreciate, or spread good news, I always do. Not only does this build positive culture overall, but I find it helps me to stay above a lot of the negativity that pervades on Social Media generally.

Slide VII-VIII: Of course, when students are doing exciting things, social media is a great place to celebrate them, and give colleagues a chance to consider and explore some of the cool things you are doing in your classroom. Again, in this slide, a lot of information is given, but some key information is withheld.

Slide IX: All school boards will have policies regarding student privacy. Generally, it never hurts to be on the careful side. I typically avoid full names and faces of students. Within this, I also avoid the “happy face emoji” over the face of a student in the image. For me, I find that it takes away from the story I’m trying to tell and the professional I’m trying to be on-line.

Slide X: As with anything on-line, including the teaching of an eLearning course, a human connection is essential to student success. I like people on social media to have a genuine sense of me as a person, and I like to sprinkle that into my tweets to create something more relational and authentic.

Slide XI: Education is a wonderful profession, and if you’re not having fun, something isn’t right. Often, the emotions we model become part of the core of our classroom culture. I know that it is possible to take our work seriously, but not ourselves too seriously, to the improved success of our students.