



TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

A Parent's Guide to Twitter and Education

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As more and more people join the world of Twitter (460,000 signups per day), school parents and teachers are more commonplace on this global social media tool. According to a recent Pew Internet Study, 84% of all Twitter users are between the ages of 18-49 **(1)**. Why is this important to school officials? The age range includes the majority of our school parents.

As an educator, there are tons of great **hashtags** available **(2)** to find the resources I'm looking for. Hashtags are usually found at the end of a 140 character tweet. I think of them like television channels, only there are many more to choose from and you can even create your own for your organization or team. Today, the most widely used educational hashtag on Twitter is called **#edchat** **(3)**. On Tuesdays at 12pm (Eastern) and 7pm (Eastern), you can join hundreds of educators around the world discussing a topic chosen by a public poll during the days leading up to the chat. For more information on **#edchat** check out a recent piece by educational technology guru Steven Anderson (**@web20classroom** **(4)**).

For parents on Twitter, there are hashtags that offer support in raising children and supporting the work of schools. Two highly used hashtags for parents include **#parents** **(5)** and **#parenting** **(6)**. **#PTchat** **(7)** or Parent-Teacher Chat is a hashtag used by parents and educators around the world to partner together on a wide range of topics.

Like other educational chats, **#PTchat** has a weekly time where educators come together to discuss a certain topic - Wednesday nights at 9pm (Eastern). During the one-hour chat, five-seven questions are posed and answered from the unique perspectives of the parents and teachers participating. It's important that both parents and teachers harness these multiple perspectives, as they relate directly to our family engagement goals in schools.

The four "tweets" below were pulled from the **#PTchat** that took place back in February on the topic "When Parents & Teachers Disagree."

You can see a question posed, followed by perspectives of parents and teachers. Now add to those 300

more tweets and you have a wealth of new information and ideas to bring back to your own home-school setting. When the chat ends, it's archived and posted for others to refer back to later.

Last 5 #PTchats Archived

- 4/11/12 District Leadership's Role in Building Home-School Partnerships with Dr. Steve Constantino **(8)**
- 4/4/12 "Building a Comprehensive Parent/Community Volunteer Program at your School" **(9)**
- 3/28/12 "Sharing Your New Learning w/ Parents" **(10)**
- 3/21/12 "Creating a Family Resource Center in your School Lobby" **(11)**
- 3/14/12 "Meaningful Report Card Comments to Engage Parents" **(12)**

Next Steps for Parents & Schools

Using a public social media tool like Twitter, parents and teachers have the opportunity to collaborate transparently in the best interests of kids. Those participating may or may not be your school parents or your school teachers, but their collective presence and perspectives as people committed to developing partnerships between home and school makes #PTchat one of the top resources available on the Internet for parents and teachers.

Schools must offer Twitter professional development for parents and teachers to build the capacity necessary to role model effective use of social media for collaboration and learning online. To support those efforts, parents learning Twitter can use this printable [Parents Guide to Twitter \(PDF\)](#) **(13)**.

Tonight's #PTChat is "Taking you through all the best education hashtags & hashtag chats" - a great primer for parents and educators, alike. Hope to see you there! And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to post in the comments below.

Source: www.edutopia.org/blog/twitter-education-parents-joe-mazza

Links

- 1 pewinternet.org/Commentary/2012/March/Pew-Internet-Social-Networking-full-detail.aspx
- 2 twitter.pbworks.com/w/page/1779812/Hashtags
- 3 tweetchat.com/room/edchat
- 4 www.twitter.com/web20classroom
- 5 tweetchat.com/room/parents
- 6 tweetchat.com/room/parenting
- 7 tweetchat.com/room/ptchat
- 8 storify.com/Joe_Mazza/ptchat-archive-4-11-12
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- 11 storify.com/Joe_Mazza/ptchat-archive-3-21-12
- 12 storify.com/Joe_Mazza/ptchat-archive-3-14-12-16
- 13 www.edutopia.org/pdfs/blogs/mazza-ptchat-guide.pdf

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