Leveraging Social Media for Educator Engagement and Growth

There are a variety of social media tools that can enhance and deepen educators' professional learning and support the implementation of micro-credentials. This guide helps states and districts determine how best to use each tool to maximize their engagement with educators throughout the micro-credential pilot. Below are various tips and use-cases for each social media platform.

Twitter

Overview: Twitter is an online social networking platform where registered users post messages restricted to 140 characters, referred to as "tweets." Users interact with tweets posted by other users by "liking" and/or retweeting through their own Twitter account.

Users can also use a "hashtag," a word or phrase marked by "#," to connect and engage with specific conversations. For example, a person interested in exchanges about the 2016 summer olympics could use #rio2016 to plug into those conversations.

Recommended Use: Through the use of a dedicated hashtag, Twitter can be leveraged to create a space for discussing a topic pertinent to the micro-credential pilot. For example, if Baltimore County Public Schools' math teachers expressed a need to engage with their colleagues across the district about certain micro-credentials, the district can host a Twitter chat using "#BCmathMCs" to facilitate a discussion. Similarly, Twitter chats can be used to check in with participating educators at regular intervals during a pilot through "virtual office hours.". Educators can also be encouraged to utilize Twitter on their own to chat with colleagues informally throughout the pilot. Check out this sample Twitter chat script for ideas on structuring your own.

Blogging

Overview: Blogging is a form of online publishing where users write posts, also referred to as "blogs," with the opportunity to publish and share them immediately. Traditionally, these posts are written in a narrative style with a focus on a particular moment important to the writer.

There are a variety of blogging platforms available, including tumblr, WordPress, or Medium, each with different features to support the writing, publishing, and sharing of blog posts. Also, there is a community component to blogging that separates it from other modes of writing and publishing. Registered users can share and comment on blogs and engage with their authors.

Recommended Use: Within the context of micro-credential implementation, states and districts can establish a blog as a platform for educators to share their stories and experiences engaging with micro-credentials. A blog can also offer educators the opportunity to comment on their colleagues' blog entries, which can support a culture of community and collaborative learning among educators.

Facebook

Overview: [Facebook](#) is a social networking website that provides its users the opportunity to create a profile, upload media, send messages to "friends," and stay abreast of local events and opportunities that are of interest.

Recommended Use: States and districts can choose to create a Facebook organizational account and design their page to function as a "community board" for educators participating in the micro-credential pilot. Possible posts on the page could be links to relevant instructional resources for content explored by the micro-credentials selected for the pilot, or a flyer promoting an upcoming webinar of interest to educators. Take a look at the Facebook page for [Kettle Moraine School District](#), a partner district, to see how they've designed and use theirs.

Pinterest

Overview: [Pinterest](#) is a content collection website that allows users to "pin" various media from the Internet to "boards" they've created. Users are also able to select topics of interest to them when registering to have relevant pins recommended as they use the site. Users can also follow other users with similar interests as theirs, and get notified when they pin new content.

Recommended Use: User [research](#) consistently shows that educators are highly engaged with Pinterest. Because of its content-rich approach to Internet browsing, Pinterest can connect educators with one another over resources – from a printable concept map of long division to a PDF of a sample student exit ticket – to enrich and possibly supplement their professional learning. States and districts leading micro-credential pilots can create several Pinterest [boards](#) that collect PD resources aligned to the content of selected micro-credentials.

Google+

Overview: [Google Plus](#) is an online social networking platform that allows users to create profiles, communicate with groups of friends in "circles," upload photos and videos, and video and text chat through its "Hangouts" feature.

Users can also identify interests and have relevant articles and content from the web provided to them in the "Discover" tab of their Google+ home page.

Recommended Use: States and districts implementing micro-credentials can leverage Google+ to manage and convene "circles" of educators as they engage in micro-credentials. Once these circles are established, educators who are a part of a specific circle can communicate with each other through Hangouts, as well as through the [G Suite](), for example [Google Docs](), to manage the various components and workflows associated with earning micro-credentials.