

HDS enters the world of social media

Dina Shtull, special to the WJN

Within nanoseconds, ideas are shared and thoughts are documented for the world to see. Hebrew Day School is now posting blogs and tweets that are viewed by such national organizations as Partners for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE), the Avi Chai Foundation, and RAVSAK (umbrella organization for Jewish community day schools), as well as by interested individuals.

Writing blogs is like writing in a journal or in a diary. Sending a tweet is like sending a short message (140 characters or less). The tweets can link directly to the blog. “Tags” can be added to the blogs and tweets. Tags are key words or themes in the message, and are preceded by the symbol #. Friends of social media search for these key words or tags to find blogs or tweets that relate to their interests. For example, a recent blog post about our music program was noticed by an executive of a New York-based foundation that supports music education. She became a “follower” of Hebrew Day School; this means that our tweets now appear in her twitter inbox. In one of their tweets, PEJE recognized HDS as an “FF” — Friday Favorite, meaning that the school’s tweets were worth following. Confused? Here is an example of a tweet about our music program:

*“Hebrew Day School AA
HDS music education also incorporates
#CommonCoreStateStandards. Music teaches math
skills and language arts. #musiced #CCSS
#languagearts”*

This tweet shared HDS’s progress at integrating new Common Core academic state standards for math and language arts (see WJN, October issue) into their music education. Anyone interested in music education and its connection with teaching math, for example, might pick up this tweet and seek out more information from Hebrew Day School. All of the school’s tweets can be found at <http://twitter.com/#!/Hebrewdayschool>. All Hebrew Day School blog posts can be found at <http://hdsbulletinblog.blogspot.com/>. HDS blog posts are primarily about the challenges and opportunities of adopting the new Common Core State Standards.

Blogging and tweeting are ways that adults can model writing for children. Summarizing key ideas into concise phrases and sentences is a skill taught HDS children. They are also encouraged to write daily to practice their language arts skills. Knowing that adults continue to develop those same skills presents a powerful message to children. There is also digital etiquette in using social media, and participating in these platforms is a key to understanding and educating students on how to properly behave in these environments.

Blogging is a highly effective way to stay in touch with many, many people over time.

“When we think about the meaning of community today,” says Ali Reingold, HDS marketing and development associate, “we think beyond our school’s walls. By reaching out to people through social media sites, we grow our relationships

with individuals in ways that were previously impossible. We can share information instantaneously, keeping our virtual community engaged and connected to our school,” Reingold added. “Prior generations connected on the basketball court, over informal barbecues, on the phone, through a letter, or even a single email,” says Head of School Dina Shtull. “Now we maintain relationships with colleagues all over the world, at the same time. We share, collaborate, inquire, introduce ourselves, and network. We build a grander community around our shared connections and interests. Social media is a progression along the time line of communication. The strategies get quicker and the impact wider and greater,” Shtull added.

Hebrew Day School has plans to continue and widen its participation in social media as a vehicle for sharing its areas of expertise as well as learning from others. For more information about HDS, call 971-4633 or visit www.hdsaa.org. Prospective parents are invited to tour the school on Tuesday, November 15 and Thursday, January 12 at 9 a.m. Parents and children are invited to explore kindergarten on Sundays, December 5 and January 22. Private tours can also be arranged by calling the school.

