

The Effectiveness of Closed Classroom Facebook Pages in Keeping Parents Connected to Their  
Children's School Life

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this mixed-methods research study was to evaluate the effectiveness of using a closed, classroom Facebook page in keeping parents connected to their children's school-day lives. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected during a pilot of three first grade homeroom classes. Using purposeful sampling, data were collected by using a survey questionnaire administered to parents and teachers. Open ended responses allowed participants to speak freely about how effective Facebook was for them. In addition, the researcher performed observations and recorded data from each of the three Facebook pages. Data were analyzed and evaluated based on how well parents and teachers benefited from the Facebook pages according to positive comments made by participants. Results revealed a very positive response from parents toward the group page. Teachers expressed a desire to continue connecting with families using the classroom Facebook page, as well. The study propagated recommendations to expand the closed classroom Facebook pages to additional grade levels within the school.

## INTRODUCTION

Few would dispute the benefits of good connections between parents and their child's life at school. Teachers have long endeavored to keep their classroom parents abreast of the goings on in the classroom. Historically, traditional weekly update letters were composed by teachers and sent home in paper form. Overtime, many teachers changed these straight letters into more of a newspaper style using newsletter layout templates to add color and design to their communication. These hard copy updates sometimes wound up crumpled and unread in the bottom of a backpack. Paper copies have now been all but replaced by digital communications. Initially these digital newsletters were delivered in email format, sometimes as attachments, which still went unread by a certain percentage of parents. The advent of the digital camera made it easier add photos to the updates, giving parents the bonus of a visual snapshot of school events. Additionally, pictures taken at special events could be uploaded to photo sites such as Shutterfly, Snapfish, or Smug Mug in yet another attempt to share with parents details of the lives of their children at school. More recently, teachers have moved to creating class websites and using social media to keep their class parents "in the loop" regarding student activities, events, and accomplishments—all in the effort to communicate and share school moments with the parents of their students.

At Legacy Christian Academy, a private tuition funded school, one marketing boast we make is that, second to instruction, one of our most influential practices is relationship building—relationships between not only student and teacher, but between family and school. We speak of the partnership between parents and faculty in the education of the students, inviting

parent connections in as many ways as possible. Toward that end, some grade level teams have created closed classroom Facebook pages in order to keep parents informed of daily activities and keep them feeling a part of the school day action. Arreaza (2014), *Parents Together* blogger states, “We are experimenting with private Facebook groups to help build community among classroom parents. In these groups, parents can share homework updates, plan get-togethers and connect about ways to support their classroom and school” (para. 3). It is said a picture is worth a thousand words. With the easy and almost instantaneous ability to post photos and videos, a closed classroom Facebook page seems to be a simple and inviting way to help parents share in the moments of their child’s school day.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study was conducted to determine if a closed classroom Facebook page is an effective means of keeping parents connected to their children’s school life. Keeping parents informed regarding the activities of the instructional day is an ongoing goal and challenge.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Since its inception in 2004, the social media site, Facebook, has grown astronomically, with an estimated 1.86 billion monthly users (statista.com, 2016). Though educators have been slow to jump on the Facebook bandwagon when it comes to school use, they are beginning to see the advantages of utilizing this, already in place, communication medium as a way to connect with the parents of their students.

Baule and Lewis (2012), authors of *Social Networking for Schools* state, “Why some educators continue to ignore the true potential of technology in education is frustrating and

shortsighted. There is no large industry besides education that isn't embracing technology to improve itself" (p. 4). Jessica Kirkwood (n.d.), VP of Interactive Strategy at the National Points of Light Foundation shared, "In using even one of the numerous social media platforms, schools have the ability to bring parents, teachers, administrators, and community members even closer together..." (p. 1).

Understandable concerns over safety, privacy, and even liability explain why some school districts have been slow to embrace the use of Facebook as a communication and connection tool (Howard, 2013, p. 39). Some endorse the practice, but with reservations and admonitions. Rambo Levin (2015) with eLearning Industry said, "Facebook is a widely popular social network, but more often than not it is wrongly used by teachers" (p.1). There is no shortage of opinions when it comes to the wisdom (or lack thereof) of utilizing Facebook in conjunction with the classroom as is expressed by the range of literature on the topic in books, blogposts, and articles.

### **Ease of Connection**

It is hard to argue against the ease of connecting to classroom parents through Facebook. The great majority have existing accounts already. One historically frustrating part of a teachers' responsibility is finding an effective communication method that truly reaches the great majority of their class parents. The backpack mail system works to some degree as long as the student makes it home with the hard-copy communique and it is fished out of the pack. Email can be effective and yet it still requires opening and reading on the part of the parent. Facebook, on the other hand, is readily available, often in the palm of a parent's hand via smart phone and for many is a site they stay logged in to. Levine (2015) comments:

Let's remind ourselves that the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner is encouraged to communicate and collaborate with others; so why not use the tools that are already here?... Facebook is free and used by *everybody*. ... *If you need to reach out to students, colleagues, or parents, the message will be in their pocket within seconds, no matter where they are trying to hide* (p. 2).

Because most parents already have an online presence with Facebook, it makes sense to meet them where they are (Gomez, 2010). Many schools, including my own, utilize a school management system featuring a parent portal that is often confusing, especially if parents do not log in often, as is the case with parents of younger students, since there is not yet the draw of gradebook scores to check. It is frequent a struggle to motivate parents to log in. On the other hand, parents are already checking Facebook multiple times per day and are quite familiar with how to navigate its features. Arreaza (2014) points out, "We know that parents already spend a ton of time on Facebook, and for many of us, it has become the best way to stay informed about everything, from world news to the birth of our college roommate's baby. Why not also use this to stay in-the-loop about what's happening in our kids' classrooms?" (para. 4).

In his book, *Social Media for School Leaders*, Dixon (2012) gives four reasons to use Facebook to connect school and parents. He says Facebook is "easy to use, accessible, ubiquitous, and manageable." (Kindle edition, location 717 of 5179).

### **Privacy and Safety Concerns**

There is enough literature on the topic of Facebook use for educators to see there exists real concern regarding threats to privacy and safety, as well as liability risks. Some districts have regulations restricting its use altogether. "In 2011, the state of Missouri tried to prevent all use of social media by school employees," stated O'Donovan (2012) in his article entitled *Social*

*Media: Guidelines for School Administrators* (Trial by Fire in Missouri, para. 1). Educator enthusiasm for utilizing social media sites, such as Facebook is often tempered by the cautionary tales being repeated from many sources. Howard (2013) states:

Even though many teachers and administrators see potential benefit in incorporating social networking sites into classroom instruction, administrators have to balance their enthusiasm with the potential safety and liability issues that might arise. With litigation always a concern in today's educational environment, some principals and school districts choose to steer clear of anything that presents risks to student safety or that may prove damaging to teacher reputations and livelihood (p. 41).

O'Donovan (2012), further says:

Schools need to provide training to their employees about social media for professional and private use. This is especially important for new employees who have grown up with social media and who work directly with students. Schools must devise a policy first to guide this training. While grounding practice in policy makes sense, however, developing a policy is fraught with potential obstacles (Protection from Predators, para. 2).

Many districts now have social media use policies. Dixon (2012), issues a sober reminder on privacy with this statement:

Nothing you do on a computer today is private.....once something is typed on a computer or sent over the internet there are ways for that information to get out. If you work at a public school, there are legalities surrounding what you send and post using a

state owned computer....Privacy is in many ways a thing of the past when it comes to the internet (Kindle edition, location 898 of 5179).

### **Effective Teacher Use of Facebook**

Within the guidelines of their school or district policies on social media use, many teachers are choosing to make effective use of closed classroom Facebook group pages to communicate and connect with their class parents. Using the tightest level of security, which is a closed group, teachers are giving their class parents a sneak peek into the everyday happenings of the classroom. Group members may only join by invitation or approved request. In her article entitled *Five Ways to Make Facebook Work for Teachers*, Steph (2010) states, "If your school's policy permits it, use Facebook to share pertinent classroom information with the parents of your students. You can create a parents' group for your class and share information only with those parents. Share field trip details, school closings, classroom parties, or even pictures of students' projects" (p. 2). Byrne (2010), former teacher and author of *Freetech4teachers* blogsite, admits, "...if I was looking to make an academic presence on Facebook today, I'd probably go with a group instead of a fan page. A group...gives you more privacy controls..." (p.1-2). Other teachers are sharing student photos, videos, birthday wishes, and even a private message from a child to his mom sharing the loss of a tooth in class (Nielsen, 2010, p.3).

When asked what types of postings were most popular with her class parents and which received the most reaction, Des Moines kindergarten teacher, Songer (2012) said, "I posted, pictures, reminders, videos, events, kids quotes or stories, volunteer opportunities, guest visitors, and pictures of staff members" (p.3). She went on to say, "I found myself wanting to share a lot more" (p. 4).

### **Summary**



The literature shows us that the story regarding Facebook use in the classroom is an evolving one—one which reflects cautious steps forward. With district guidelines and safety in mind, teachers are communicating and connecting with parents efficiently, safely, and enjoyably through closed group Facebook pages which guard privacy. This medium is allowing parents and families a window into the classroom in a way that, heretofore, has not been possible (Nielsen, 2010, p. 2).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Questions**

This study was a mixed-methods study. In addition, the researcher collected data from the Facebook pages through observations. The research question to answer was, Is a closed, classroom Facebook page effective in keeping parents connected to their children's school day lives? However, the questions that also guided the study were as follows:

1. What percentage of parents engage in viewing, responding to, and sharing posts from the closed classroom Facebook page and if so, with what frequency?
2. Do parents find the Facebook page to be a convenient and enjoyable means of staying informed and connected to their child's school day?
3. Do the teachers see these homeroom Facebook groups as beneficial enough to justify the time spent maintaining them?
4. And finally, Can we conclude this method of parent connection is worthy of expanding to additional grade levels within the school?

### **Sample**

Purposeful sampling was used in this study. The sample for this study included the parents from 3 classes of 1<sup>st</sup> grade at Legacy Christian Academy, all of whom had been invited to become a member of the closed Facebook page group from their 1<sup>st</sup> grader's homeroom class. These invitations went out in August of 2016 at the start of school. This includes a total of 87 parents and 3 teachers who are the creator/managers of their closed homeroom Facebook pages. Out of 87 parents invited (via email) to complete the survey, two bounced back as undeliverable, and 37 out of 45 households responded to the survey. Two of the three 1<sup>st</sup> grade classes had 93.3% of households represented as Facebook Homeroom page members and the other class boasted 100% membership. That does not always mean both parents were members. Because I chose to make their responses anonymous, it is impossible to determine how many respondents were dads and how many were moms. In hindsight I would have included a question with that identifier. Nevertheless, it did not impact the validity of the survey since the research questions reference a "parent" in general, not specifying "mom" or "dad" and can, therefore, still be fully answered. Additionally, the teachers agreed to complete a 12 item questionnaire regarding the maintenance of their classroom pages and expressed great interest in learning from the results of the parent survey, since they each invest weekly time in updating their homeroom Facebook pages.

### **Materials**

The data collection materials used in this study consisted of a Google Forms digital survey of 19 questions, 18 of which were required multiple choice questions and one of which was an optional open-ended comment question (see survey in Appendix A). The survey consisted of one "frequency of access question." Three questions pertained to "group page membership." Two questions asked about "method of page access." Four questions related to

“user feelings” about the page in terms of likeability. Questions determining “levels of engagement” with the Facebook page were the predominate type of inquiry in the survey. As mentioned above, item #19 was an optional, open-ended comment type question.

Additionally, the three 1<sup>st</sup> grade homeroom teachers completed written, short answer questionnaires, consisting of both single word and open-ended questions (See appendix B). Teacher questions centered around time spent in maintaining the page, any difficulties or abuses encountered in the management of it, as well as their own personal feelings about the success of their homeroom Facebook group. As Glanz (2014) states, “Interviews enable the researcher to learn the complexities of participants’ experiences from their point of view” (p.127). The teachers have a vested interest in these Facebook group pages since they have put much time, effort, and heart into creating and maintaining them.

Finally, I recorded some of my own observations as a third source of data. Glanz (2014) also says, “Written descriptions are most often employed by educational leaders when collecting data” (p.127). The description of what I observed from the three class pages may be seen later in this paper listed under the heading Author Observations.

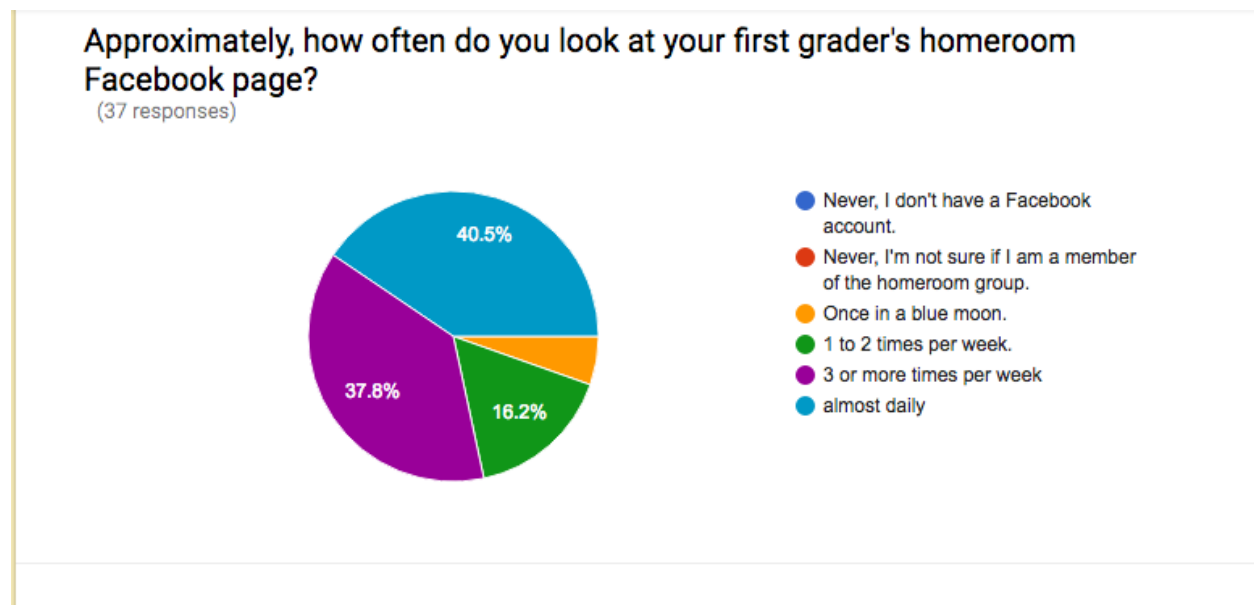
### **Analysis of the Data**

Upon collection of the parent survey, teacher questionnaires, and observations, I categorized the data into four different themes:

- 1) frequency, ease, and method of page access
- 2) who among the family is a member of the group page
- 3) likeability factor of the page
- 4) levels and types of engagement with the page

Patterns emerging from the results each of these themes were the determining factors in my conclusions about the effectiveness of our 1<sup>st</sup> grade homeroom Facebook pages. The data is illustrated in colored pie charts showing the percentage break downs for each question totaling 100% (\*Note: the pie chart configurator leaves percentages less than 10% to the mathematical difference calculations of the reader-much to the consternation of this author. I shall, however, report the statistic in my commentary as a work-around).

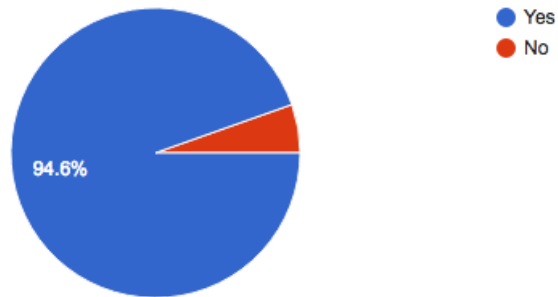
Pictured below are the results from the *frequency, ease, and method of access* questions on the survey.



As illustrated above, 40.5% of respondents said they look at the homeroom Facebook page almost daily. Thirty-seven point eight percent look at the page three or more times per week with 16.2% looking once or twice per week. Five-point four percent of respondents described their frequency of accessing the page as “once in a blue moon.” It is telling to note that none of the respondents said they *never* look at the page.

### Did you have a Facebook account prior to the creation of your child's 1st grade homeroom Facebook page?

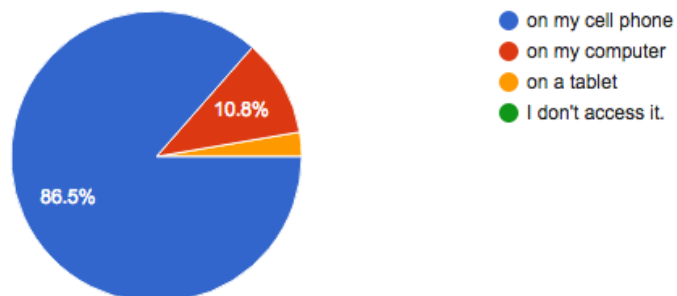
(37 responses)



Nearly 95% of respondents had Facebook accounts prior to the creation of these class pages, making for easy access once they received a membership invitation. A mere 5.4% of group members had to create a new account in order to access the page.

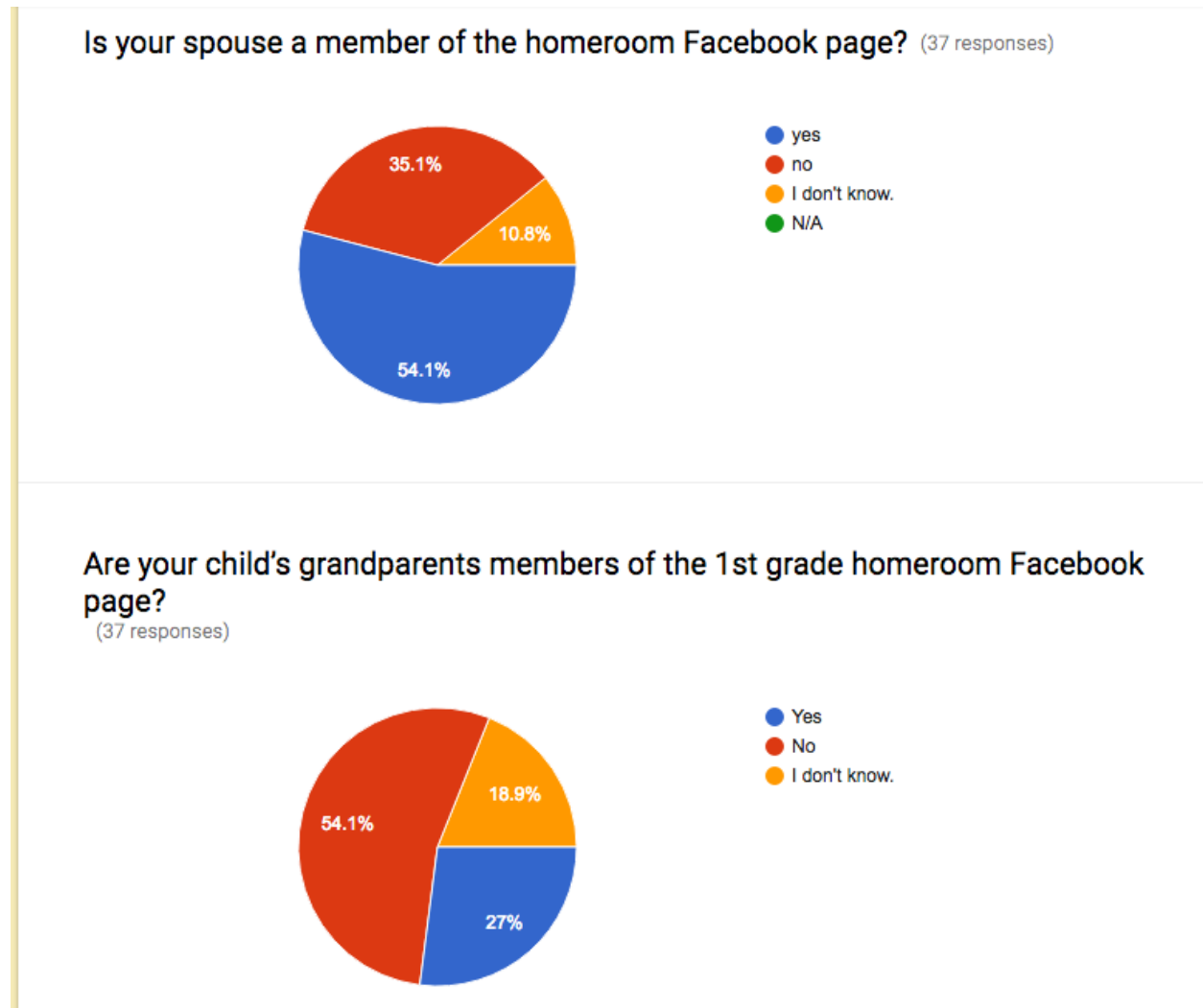
### How do you most often access your 1st grade homeroom Facebook page?

(37 responses)



Most all members (86.5%) most often access the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Facebook Page using their cell phones. For 10.8% computers are the device of choice, while 2.7% access the page via tablet.

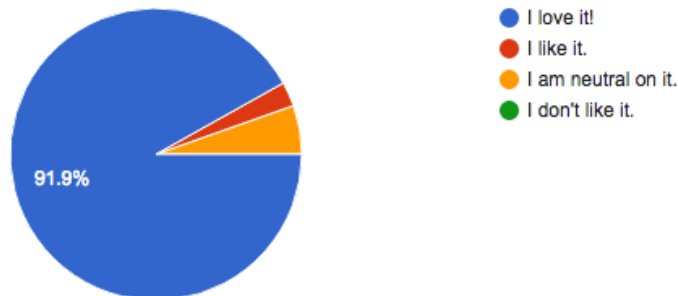
The next two illustrations reflect the theme of *who among the family* is a group page member.



It is interesting to note that respondents did not always know whether their spouse or parents were members of the 1<sup>st</sup> grade homeroom pages. In over half of cases both husband and wife belonged to the group, with 10.8% not being sure if their spouse was a group member. A definite 27% of respondents are sure their child's grandparents are members with 18.9% not sure, meaning grandparent membership could be even higher than reflected by the blue colored slice of this pie chart.

The next four illustrations belong in, what I am calling, the likeability factor of the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Facebook pages. They reflect responses to questions on feelings of enjoyment, connectedness, and desired continuation of the page. The overwhelming majority of respondents claimed to love the page. One respondent came back with a ‘likes it’ rating, while two people reported feeling neutral about the page. It is important to note that no one expressed dislike.

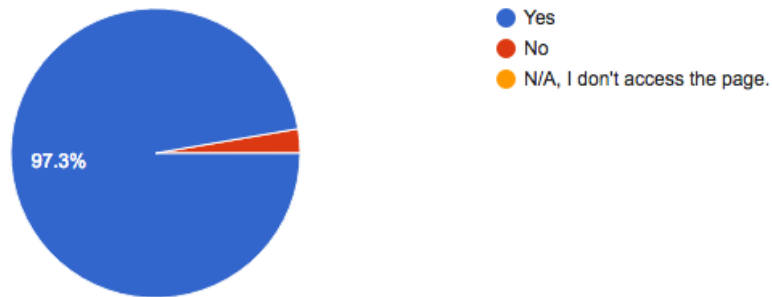
### How much would you say you enjoy the homeroom Facebook page? (37 responses)



When asked if the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Facebook page made respondents feel more “in the loop” about their child’s school day and if they would miss the page were it gone, 97.3% of respondents responded with “yes.” Only one person (who comprises 2.7% of the responding group) came back with a “no.”

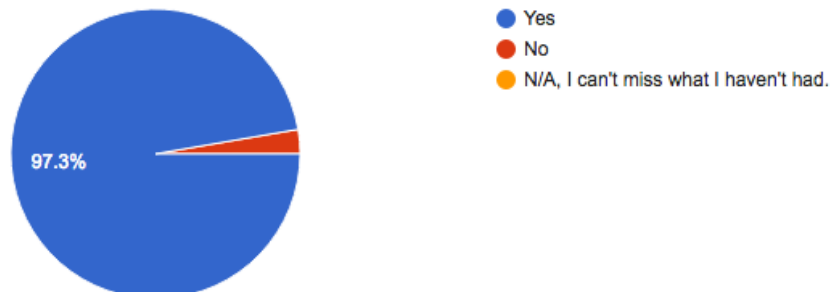
Would you say the class page makes you feel more "in the loop" about your child's school day life?

(37 responses)



If your child's first grade homeroom Facebook page were gone, would you miss it?

(37 responses)

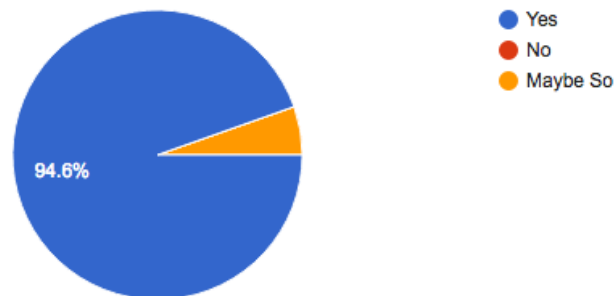


When asked about the idea of having a closed group Facebook page for their child's second grade year, 94.6% of parents said they like that idea with 5.4% saying "maybe so" to the possibility.



Do you like the idea of having a 2nd grade Facebook page for next year's homeroom?

(37 responses)

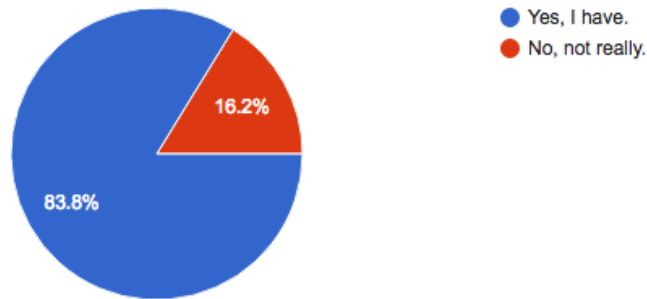


The remainder of the survey questions fall under the theme I have called *levels of engagement* with the presumption that engagement with the page was an indicator of the users' perceptions of its value. Why spend voluntary time interacting with a page you feel is not worthwhile? For the sake of space, I will not include an illustration for every question, but I will report on each.

When parents were asked if they had ever learned something new about their own child from something they saw on the class page, 83.8% said yes with 16.2% saying no.

Have you ever learned something about your child, from looking at the homeroom Facebook page, that surprised you (such as friend associations, level of participation, demeanor, etc)?

(37 responses)

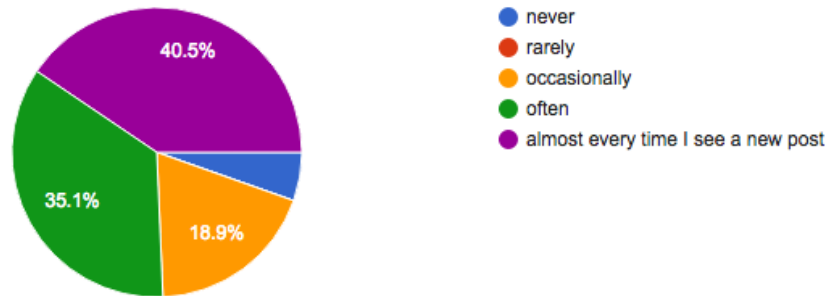


In regard to frequency with which respondents saved photos that had been posted on the classroom page, 64.9% said they had done so more than three times, while 18.9% said they had done so between one and three times. Sixteen point two percent reported never having saved a posted photo. Ratios were similar for the same type question being asked about the saving of videos.

As illustrated below, one can see the percentage of group member who reported having “reacted to” or “commenting upon” a 1<sup>st</sup> grade group page posting. It is interesting to note that 10.8% of members, see, but never comment and 5.4% see, but never *react* to or *like* to a post. They do not engage, but rather just view. On the other hand, 75.6% of respondents *like* or *react* often or almost every time they see a new post.

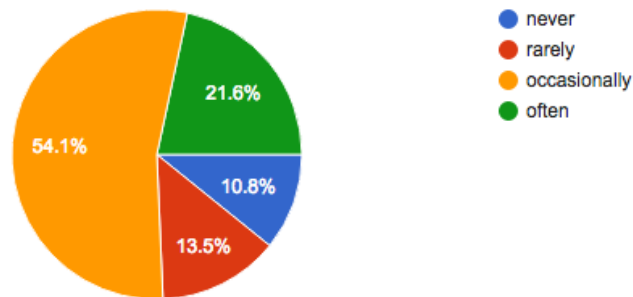
### How often do you "like" or "react to" a post or photo on the class Facebook page?

(37 responses)



### How frequently do you comment on a post from your child's homeroom Facebook page?

(37 responses)

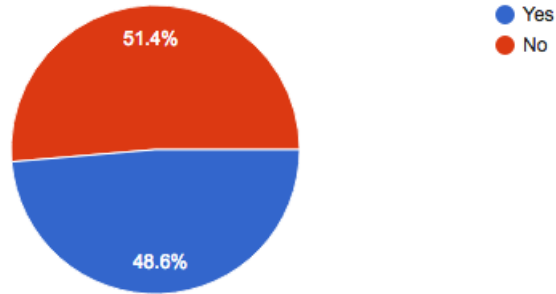


Almost a third of respondents reported they had shared a post from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade page, meaning they had sent it someone else, such as a friend or family member outside the member group.

The last two illustrations indicated the frequency of instances where the group Facebook page served as a medium for homework information or as an impetus to socialize outside of school. Responses indicated it was not the major source for such inquiries, though just under half said “yes” on the homework question and just under a third said “yes” to the “play date” question, so the impact in those areas was not insignificant.

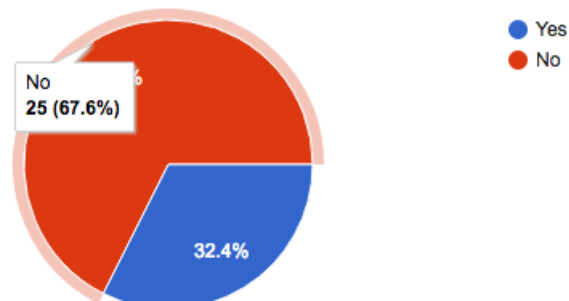
Have you ever used the first grade class Facebook page to post a question regarding regarding homework or something related to a class event?

(37 responses)



Have you ever initiated a "play date" for your child and a classmate because of something you noticed on the homeroom Facebook page?

(37 responses)



At the end of the survey, respondents had the option to include comments about their 1<sup>st</sup> grader's homeroom Facebook page. I have included a representative sampling of these comments below.

Please use the space below to leave a comment or suggestion if you wish.  
We value your input.

(15 responses)

I love having the facebook page. Love seeing the pictures and videos. I like seeing other parents' comments and requests get posted there. I would even appreciate seeing occasional reminders get posted to the page. Thank you for maintaining it and posting to it.

Our First Grade FB page has been invaluable to my family. Although we are separated by many miles, my child's grandparents feel connected in a way they never have before. I am so grateful that my child's teacher takes time out of her busy schedule to capture and post special moments that we would not otherwise have access to!

Grateful for the extra time and effort the teachers put in to creating this valuable resource. It builds community and allows us to get a much wanted peek into the school day!

I cherish these peeks into my daughter's day. I am hopeful to have a similar setup next year

We feel so much more connected with the page and enjoy seeing the day to day activities. We enjoy knowing what's happening during the school day so we can talk about them at home - we LOVE this and it makes us feel much more involved:)

My family loves it!!! We would love to have for the other grades!!

I love the Fb page. Makes me feel connected as a working mom

I LOVE the Facebook pages! I feel it is such a valuable parenting tool. I'm able to start conversations with my child about their day based on information I find on the page.

This is such a great way to be a part of all the amazing things that happen during my child's day. Mrs Snider never misses a beat. She includes all the kiddos and always shares a story and her heartfelt comments about each of the children in her class. I hope this continues for years to come:)

The Facebook page allows me to interact with my child's educational life in ways that I would not be able to without it. We are able to discuss and the events of the day in a more in depth conversation.

I have loved the FB page. I love seeing Brooks smiling at school-who he sits with-what he is working on- I would definitely be disappointed if we did not have a class FB page next year. Mrs Snider has done a great job uploading pics and videos. She celebrates the children all of the time and it's a joy to see!

I love the facebook page because it gives me a glimpse of what my child does while at school.

Love the page. I never thought to add grandparents but would since they love to see what the kids do.

### Teacher Questionnaires

The three 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers (creator/managers of their homeroom Facebook pages) each completed a questionnaire answering questions on the maintenance end of keeping the Facebook group page for their classes (See appendix B). When asked about the minutes per week required to maintain the page, each said about 20 minutes. The percentage of class households that were

page members ranged from 93.3 % to 100%. One teacher reported that her group page membership included “some” grandparents as well. When asked about problems with privacy or the need to delete posts or comments, none were reported. To the following question: “On a scale from 1 – 10 (with 10 being “super effective” and 1 being “not at all effective,”) how would you rank your FB page as a communication/connection tool?” all 3 teachers answered “10!” Two teachers replied with “none” when asked about the negatives associated with the closed group Facebook page. One replied with, “I would say that it is the self-imposed stress of making sure that I’m fair in posting the same amount of pics of each child. Saying the same amount of warm fuzzies about each one... If we go on a Field Trip or for instance, the Dr. Seuss breakfast we just recently had, I absolutely hate when I get back to my room or I’m at home and I realize that I missed getting a picture of one them. I never want a parent to think that I left their child out, but with 15 squirmy, active first graders - I can easily miss them if we are out and about and not in our usual classroom setting.” Please refer to appendix B to see the “positives” each teacher associated with her homeroom Facebook page. Each of the three teachers expressed a desire to continue this form of parental connection by making a page for next year. Teacher #2 said, “I count the FB page as the BEST idea I have ever borrowed from a teacher blog-hands down-top one.”

### **Author Observations**

My own observations from each homeroom Facebook page included a listing of the types of posts I saw over a 3-week period of time. Some types of posts are recurring such as birthday recognitions, chapel services, and science lab activities because they are part of the weekly schedule. I observed:

- student autobiographies

- field trip photos
- science lab activity on digestion
- chapel worship video
- upper school buddy visits
- “Star of the Week” highlights
- birthday celebrations including “7 things we love about \_\_\_\_.” (the birthday child’s name goes in the blank.
- special events such as The Doctor Seuss breakfast
- art display photos
- favorite book photos
- math rotation group photos
- math fact level completion celebrations
- lost tooth recognitions
- a class mom posting of the month’s birthdays in a list
- science lab experiments with simple machines

Each posting included a “seen by” number indication. Every posting included member “likes,” comments, and reactions. I noted several verbal expressions of gratitude from parents for photos taken of their child.

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

Returning to the first of the research questions posed in this study which asked: what percentage of parents engage in viewing, responding to, and sharing posts from the closed classroom Facebook page and if so, with what frequency; according to the teacher questionnaires the answer to this question was 95.5 %. This matched the responses from the parent survey which came to 95.5 % saying they accessed the page at least two times per week, with 40.5 % of those reporting they accessed it daily and responded to the various posts they see at a level of 94.5%. Given the ongoing challenge teachers face of staying connected with the parents of their students, these statistics translate into an “A” grade in regard to meeting that challenge.

We wondered if parents find the Facebook page to be a convenient and enjoyable means of staying informed and connected to their child’s school day. It appears they most definitely do with a report that they are accessing a Facebook account they already possessed (94.6%) from

the palm of their hand (86.5%). These statistics make the case for convenience. In terms of enjoyability, parents overwhelmingly expressed their love of the page at the level of 91.9% with 97.3% saying they would miss it if it were gone. Ninety-seven point three percent of parent respondents stated the closed homeroom Facebook page keeps them informed of their child's daily activities saying they felt "in the loop." This high percentage response indicated a high level of effectiveness in terms of connecting with classroom parents. From the view point of the teachers we wondered if they viewed the pages as beneficial enough to justify the time spent maintaining them. Their responses were extremely positive in this regard (see appendix B) and each expressed the desire to continue the communication with future classes.

### **Limitations of the Study**

One limitation to this study may have been that only 37 out of 45 invited households responded to the survey, but the responses of those who participated were overwhelmingly similar to each other, lending validity to the results. It would be interesting to see if results would be similar with a different demographic—the demographic in this group being upper-middle class and primarily college educated parents.

### **Implications for Educational Leadership**

The overwhelmingly positive response tells me it is safe to conclude that the closed group Facebook page method of parent connection is worthy of expanding to additional grade levels within the school. Ninety-four point six percent of first grade parent respondents indicated they would like to have a similar page created by their child's second grade teacher. I will take this as a green light to continue the practice in my own school. Likewise, other educators, may wish to consider utilizing this social media medium as one positive option for meeting the ongoing goal



of connecting with the parents of the students in their charge. Principals may wish to pilot these closed group Facebook pages in a grade level of their school as we have in mine.

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## Appendix A

I've invited you to fill out a form:

### Homeroom Class Facebook Page Survey

This is a survey to measure the effectiveness of our first grade closed classroom Facebook page when it comes to keeping you, our class parents, connected to the activities and events of your child's school week. Thank you for your participation in completing it. We have built the survey to be anonymous, so you may respond freely.

**Approximately, how often do you look at your first grader's homeroom Facebook page? \***

Never, I don't have a Facebook account. Never, I'm not sure if I am a member of the homeroom group. Once in a blue moon. 1 to 2 times per week. 3 or more times per week almost daily

**Did you have a Facebook account prior to the creation of your child's 1st grade homeroom Facebook page? \***

- Yes
- No

**Is your spouse a member of the homeroom Facebook page? \***

- yes
- no
- I don't know.
- N/A

**Are your child's grandparents members of the 1st grade homeroom Facebook page? \***

- Yes
- No
- I don't know.

**How do you most often access your 1st grade homeroom Facebook page? \***

- on my cell phone
- on my computer
- on a tablet
- I don't access it.

**How much would you say you enjoy the homeroom Facebook page? \***

- I love it!
- I like it.
- I am neutral on it.
- I don't like it.

**Have you ever learned something about your child, from looking at the homeroom Facebook page, that surprised you (such as friend associations, level of participation, demeanor, etc)? \***

- Yes, I have.
- No, not really.

**How many times have you saved a photo from the class Facebook page? \***

- Never
- 1-3 times
- more than 3 times

**How many times have you saved a video from the class Facebook page? \***

- Never
- 1-3 times
- more than 3 times

**How often do you "like" or "react to" a post or photo on the class Facebook page? \***

- never
  - rarely
  - occasionally
  - often
  - almost every time I see a new post
- How frequently do you comment on a post from your child's homeroom Facebook page? \***
- never
  - rarely
  - occasionally
  - often
- Have you ever shared a post (with family or friends) from the class Facebook page? \***
- Yes
  - No
- Would you say the class page makes you feel more “in the loop” about your child’s school day life? \***
- Yes
  - No
  - N/A, I don't access the page.
- If your child's first grade homeroom Facebook page were gone, would you miss it? \***
- Yes
  - No
  - N/A, I can't miss what I haven't had.
- Have you ever used the first grade class Facebook page to post a question regarding regarding homework or something related to a class event? \***
- Yes
  - No
- Have you ever initiated a “play date” for your child and a classmate because of something you noticed on the homeroom Facebook page? \***
- Yes
  - No
- Do you receive notifications when new posts appear on your child’s homeroom Facebook page? \***
- Yes, I receive notifications.
  - No, I just come across them in the newsfeed?
  - N/A, like I said, I don't see this homeroom Facebook page.
- Do you like the idea of having a 2nd grade Facebook page for next year's homeroom? \***
- Yes
  - No
  - Maybe So
- 
- Please use the space below to leave a comment or suggestion if you wish. We value your input.**

**Teacher 1 Response**

1. Approximately, how many minutes per week do you spend working on your homeroom Facebook page? I spend about 3-5 minutes per day, so 20-25 minutes per week at most.
  - a. Approximately, what percentage of your homeroom households are members of the page? I only have one parent who is not on FB at all, but every other parent (and even some grandparents) are members.
2. Can/Do parents ever post on your homeroom FB profile page by tagging you? Parents do have access/permission to post in our class page. The only thing parents post are the photos they took at a class event (Field Trip, Class Party, Etc).
3. Are your privacy settings fixed such that you have to approve any posts in which you are tagged before they appear on the profile page? Yes they are. I must approve posts before they are visible to the group.
4. Have you ever considered changing the privacy settings on your page? If so, how? I have not had any trouble with the privacy settings in our class. We discuss our FB groups at the beginning of the year with parents at Curriculum Night and answer any questions they have, and haven't had any problems so far.
5. Have you ever had to delete a post? If so, why? No I have not.
6. Have you ever had any problems with your classroom Facebook page? If so, what? No, I have not.
7. What do you consider to be the positives of maintaining a homeroom Facebook page? - This is something that is quick and easy to do on a daily basis. -I can do this from my phone. I do not need a computer, a special program, or even to be sitting at my desk. -

Parents are already on FB, so this is something that they are already checking on a daily basis. Emails are not always read or received in time and other parents won't/don't want to subscribe to a new program/software.

8. What do you consider to be the negatives of maintaining a homeroom Facebook page?

Nothing! I love being able to communicate and share memories with parents.

9. If it were completely up to you, would you create a page for next year's class?

Absolutely!

10. On a scale from 1 – 10 (with 10 being “super effective” and 1 being “not at all effective,”) how would you rank your FB page as a communication/connection tool? 10!

Parents have had nothing but positive things to say about our FB page, and they love seeing into the world their child spends 90% of their time in. I am able to post little reminders to parents and I can see who all has seen it (via notification setting) to make sure everyone is “in the loop”.

11. Please make any other comments in the space below, if any.

Other Positives -Parents get a “sneak peek” into the daily lives of their children. -Pictures give parents a spring board when it comes to asking children about their day. - Grandparents who do not live close by feel connected to their grandchildren. -Parents see who their children gravitate towards in group activities and this is a natural way to encourage play dates outside of school. -Pictures help working parents see how “special days” went and help them feel connected even when they cannot attend.

**Teacher 2 Response**

1. Approximately, how many minutes per week do you spend working on your homeroom Facebook page? Minimum of 10 minutes to a maximum of 20 minutes. 20 minutes total for the week-only if we have had numerous activities and I am explaining on each post.
2. Approximately, what percentage of your homeroom households are members of the page? 93.3 %-----14 out of the 15 students have at least 1 parent on there. 7 out of the 15 have two parents on there. The 15<sup>th</sup> student does not have mom or dad on there because they are not on any social media.
3. Can/Do parents ever post on your homeroom FB profile page by tagging you?  
No, but I have had parents post helpful info like Spirit Night, Teacher Favorites Google Doc, pictures from activities, and info about camps their child will be attending.
4. Are your privacy settings fixed such that you have to approve any posts in which you are tagged before they appear on the profile page? Yes
5. Have you ever considered changing the privacy settings on your page? If so, how? No I have not considered that because it works well as it is for parents and myself.
6. Have you ever had to delete a post? If so, why? No I have not had to delete any posts.
7. Have you ever had any problems with your classroom Facebook page? If so, what? No
8. What do you consider to be the positives of maintaining a homeroom Facebook page?  
The parents are always telling me how much they enjoy feeling like they get to peek into their child's day and also to share in our special moments and traditions. It has sparked many dinnertime conversations because it gives the parents a "talking point" with their 6 and 7 year olds to get them sharing about that part of their day. I have had an abundance



of positive feedback from grandparents that do not live close by - that feel like they get to watch their grandchild go through first grade, and all of the special moments that they have at school. It is a connection that they have with their grandchild and they all seem to really cherish that.

9. What do you consider to be the negatives of maintaining a homeroom Facebook page? I would say that it is the self-imposed stress of making sure that I'm fair in posting the same amount of pics of each child. Saying the same amount of warm fuzzies about each one... If we go on a Field Trip or for instance, the Dr. Seuss breakfast we just recently had, I absolutely hate when I get back to my room or I'm at home and I realize that I missed getting a picture of one them. I never want a parent to think that I left their child out, but with 15 squirmy, active first graders- I can easily miss them if we are out and about and not in our usual classroom setting.

10. If it were completely up to you, would you create a page for next year's class?

Definitely!!!

11. On a scale from 1 – 10 (with 10 being “super effective” and 1 being “not at all effective,”) how would you rank your FB page as a communication/connection tool?

Absolute 10!

12. Please make any other comments in the space below, if any.

I count the FB page as the BEST idea I have ever borrowed from a teacher blog- hands down- top one. For multiple reasons... I have always taken pics of my students but didn't have anywhere to easily put them to share with parents. It knits together a community of parents AND grandparents with our 1<sup>st</sup> grade family. They can see and feel a part of what we do in Math, Music class, Science Lab, reading, worship songs,

Chapel...

I don't close the page down at the end of the schoolyear. I just start a new one each year so that those grandparents and parents and I- can go back and revisit the wonderful memories we made throughout the magical first grade year.

**Teacher 3 Response**

1. Approximately, how many minutes per week do you spend working on your homeroom Facebook page? 15-20 minutes.
2. Approximately, what percentage of your homeroom households are members of the page? 100%
3. Can/Do parents ever post on your homeroom FB profile page by tagging you? They do, but they don't usually tag me.
4. Are your privacy settings fixed such that you have to approve any posts in which you are tagged before they appear on the profile page? No
5. Have you ever considered changing the privacy settings on your page? If so, how? No, it is a closed group so I feel it is safe.
6. Have you ever had to delete a post? If so, why? Yes, to edit it. 😊
7. Have you ever had any problems with your classroom Facebook page? If so, what? No.
8. What do you consider to be the positives of maintaining a homeroom Facebook page?  
I love that parents and families get a glimpse of what is going on at the school and save pictures if they want to.
9. What do you consider to be the negatives of maintaining a homeroom Facebook page?  
None.
10. If it were completely up to you, would you create a page for next year's class? Yes.
11. On a scale from 1 – 10 (with 10 being "super effective" and 1 being "not at all effective,") how would you rank your FB page as a communication/connection tool? 10
12. Please make any other comments in the space below, if any. I think it's a great way to connect with parents and family members.

## Appendix C

### Consent Letter

Dear Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_,

I am currently pursuing my Educational Administration MEd Degree with Principal Certification through the University of Texas at Tyler. An important step in the completion of my program is to conduct an original educational research study. My research is focused on evaluating the effectiveness of a closed, classroom Facebook page on parent feelings of connectedness to their children's school day life. My hope is that this research will lead to improved parental connectedness in all levels of Legacy's Lower School.

This study will be conducted by means of written survey, teacher questionnaires, and personal observation of the Facebook page itself counting likes, comments, views, and shares. Analyzing these data will hopefully allow me to draw a conclusion as to the degree of effectiveness of such a medium in keeping our parents connected to the school day activities of their children.

Attached you will find a consent form regarding your participation in the teacher survey. Please indicate your response. Teachers without consent forms on file will not participate in the survey.

All personal information and responses to surveys will be kept strictly confidential. I will be the only person at Legacy with access to the survey and interview results until such a time as I make the study available for review. All names will be changed in the written reports.

Thank you for your support in this process. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at 469-633-1330 or email at [kerri.rhodes@legacyca.com](mailto:kerri.rhodes@legacyca.com)

Sincerely,

Kerri Rhodes

**Consent for Closed Classroom Facebook Page interview**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark whether or not you grant your consent to participate in the survey and/or interview and sign below.

**I give my consent to participate in the survey and/or interview. My survey responses will be used in an action research project, but my responses will remain anonymous.**

**Yes** \_\_\_ **No** \_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher Daytime Contact Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher Email

Questions or Concerns?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_