It is the first week of the spring semester, and teachers and students are greeted with a mandatory assembly. The event feels unplanned, and they scramble to drop backpacks off in classrooms and move toward the auditorium. The speaker delivers a message—of hope, encouragement, and motivation—while school personnel and students listen intently or intermittently, checking in on Snapchat or texts from friends.

But what happens after the speaker leaves? In most instances, the school community returns to the regular rhythms of the school day without acknowledging the speaker or his or her message. Occasionally, the talk will touch a nerve or make an impression on students or their teachers, bridging the assembly to learning happening in or outside the classroom. There might be disparate impressions or a critique, and a desire to respond to the speaker. What can happen when students are given the opportunity to engage?

Rationale
In this article, we document just such an event with an eye on critical media literacy and the ways in which media, both traditional press and social media, offer students greater opportunities to raise their voices and be heard. In today’s heated social media climate, where tools such as Twitter spread praise or shame widely and quickly, we believe it is important to help students employ these tools judiciously, to consider their potential intended and unintended consequences, and to document these practices as clearly as possible to inform other teachers and researchers to better understand their effects.

As educators and researchers alike are learning to adapt and respond to the often hidden rules of the virtual social spaces where humans gather and interact, we think that this article offers a cautionary tale of these kinds of engagements. Jane (first author) and Gwynne (second author) are university faculty and researchers at a large public university in Texas with a reputation for producing effective and knowledgeable teachers. Isabelle (third author) is an experienced teacher and graduate student in the Reading Education program at our university. We also have five student authors joining us who were actively engaged in the story.

A Look at the Research
Research has called for concrete examples of how students use Web 2.0 tools in and out of schools (Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009) and the ways that the tools
support greater participation in our larger culture (Jenkins, 2009). This call is complicated, however, by school settings that limit students’ engagement with the world outside of the classroom either through written restrictions and browser blockers, or the intense focus on standards, scripted curricula, and regimes of testing in the classroom. From a practical standpoint, it is also difficult to create the conditions for critical media literacy projects in classrooms, because what might capture a teacher’s attention may fall flat when presented to students. Critical media literacy (Alvermann, Moon, & Hagood, 1999)

- Includes the use of print and nonprint materials to construct knowledge of the world
- Employs the creation of communities of readers who are active and exercise agency
- Is representative of cultural practice
- Can be related to power and popular culture

Kellner and Share (2005) acknowledged the challenge of developing critical media literacy, because it is not a pedagogy in the traditional sense with firmly established principles, a canon of texts, and tried-and-true teaching procedures. It requires a democratic pedagogy, which involves teachers sharing power with students as they join together in the process of unveiling myths [and] challenging hegemony. (p. 373)

Indeed, it is often in these power-sharing situations that students begin to realize that information is “never neutral and always mediated by sociocultural, political, and historical contexts of when, where, why, and by whom they were created” (Gainer, 2013, p. 18). Our students are immersed in a media-rich world that requires a sophisticated set of tools to unpack what is supported by fact and what is infected by misinformation (Burnett & Merchant, 2011; Lewandowsky, Ecker, Seifert, Schwarz, & Cook, 2012). It is only by “demystifying media messages through critical inquiry” (Kellner & Share, 2005, p. 374) that students can develop the tools needed to engage effectively and participate in our larger, socially mediated, and connected culture.

Because this story is multilayered and multivoiced and played out over the course of several months in 2015, we chose to use publicly available data—essays, blog posts, news stories, Reddit posts, and tweets—to guide readers through the chronology of what transpired. Some of the Web links have changed or been removed since data collection occurred. To view these, readers can employ the Internet archive website Wayback Machine (https://archive.org/web) to view older versions of particular websites. This is a valuable tool for both teachers and students following changing Internet sites or posts that have been deleted.

At the time the incident transpired, Gwynne and Jane saw this as an authentic example of critical media literacy and sought approval from the Institutional Review Board at their university to use publicly available data for research purposes. This permission was granted from the institution, and we invited Isabelle and some of her newspaper editors to work with us on this piece. Because news related to this event was discussed by media outlets as close as our local newspaper and as far away as BBC News, we believe it is impossible, if not inappropriate, to attempt to mask the identities of those involved, including the speaker (who has a wide online presence), those who responded to blog and Reddit posts (which are public spaces), tweets (also public), the student newspaper (which is published online), and the students authoring alongside us.

We divided up what follows into two main parts: the narrative (an object lesson of the events) and implications (an unpacking of that object lesson where we consider what we learned and how this might guide teachers).

The Narrative

The Context

Isabelle has spent eight years in her school district, first as an English teacher and more recently as a journalism/yearbook instructor. She has worked tirelessly with students to capture the vastly different experiences of the school community through news and special-interest stories that their news magazine, The Maroon, published both in print and online. She consistently tells students how important it is to get personal stories out, while reminding them that news organizations—even The Maroon—are publicly available spaces. So, although many students want to tell their story, they recognize that “once it’s out, you never know where it goes.” Students are reminded frequently that their news magazine’s reach extends beyond the school community; alumni, community members, and professionals regularly read and comment on published stories.

The Message

Student author Ellie Breed remembered, “Everyone in the building was required to be there. And there wasn’t
really any information at all. We didn’t know what we were walking into.” They encountered a presentation by local entrepreneur Kash Shaikh, who spoke of the importance of identifying and going after your dreams. The message was a truncated version of the TEDxUWMilwaukee talk that Shaikh (2014) gave, to “call everyone out” for being all talk and not following through on their passions. In both speeches—the TEDx talk and at Breed’s school—Shaikh employed sensational phrases like “having no balls” and “calling bullshit” and current business-speak like “going all in” and the “sharing economy” to undergird his message.

He told the story of becoming disillusioned with his work as a marketing executive for Proctor & Gamble and GoPro and wanting to pursue an idea that he had been harboring: to create a “motivational movement” and platform that allowed people to “do what they love” and “make a living at it.” This movement, called #besomebody (see Figure 1), has relied on a blog, app, and the Internet to disseminate its goals. For example, a musician might offer one-on-one classes to a novice wanting to learn to play guitar.

Shaikh urged listeners to set fire to the wooden bridge behind them: “No turning back and no plan B. If you have a plan B, you will never execute plan A.” He called students up to the stage to state their passions publicly, to end the event. Although there were those who initially questioned parts of the message, reporters and student authors Breed and Daniel Wallach acknowledged many in the assembly who seemed positively affected by what Shaikh had to say. Upon returning to class, they discussed covering the assembly in an upcoming edition of The Maroon News with other reporters. In most instances, these might seem like innocuous events in the life of a school: A motivational speaker offers a message of inspiration, students receive the message, and then the community goes back to teaching and learning. What happened instead was a social media storm that extended long past Shaikh’s speech.

The Critique

A prominent responsibility of literacy educators is to help students participate in productive critiquing, both as readers and writers, while engaging with their world. This reinforces research by the New London Group (1996) that envisioned a literacy pedagogy “ensur[ing] that all students benefit from learning in ways that allow them to participate fully in public, community, and economic life” (p. 60). Teachers must also be mindful that this participation can leverage an unanticipated reaction. Given the rapid-fire response that many have experienced after posting to social media, commenting on Web stories, or creating a cogent editorial, they may worry about the fallout that could result from such voices rising up. In terms of critiquing Shaikh’s presentation publicly, this worry was warranted.

While Isabelle’s students dug deeper into the #besomebody organization and discussed writing a story for The Maroon News about the presentation, critiques developed among the school community and news writers, coalescing around three fronts:

1. Bro culture: The profane language that Shaikh used at the assembly and the physical nature of his employee’s interactions with others, including fist-bumping, high-fiving, and using bro as a familiar in conversations

2. Disingenuousness of the message: Whereas the assembly focused on Shaikh’s journey from marketing guru to #besomebody start-up founder, it omitted the reality that he was selling an app, which charged a fee.

3. Branding over substance: The #besomebody movement relies on heavy marketing in person and online but posed a potentially dangerous message for students to drop fallback plans and focus solely on their passions to realize success.
One Austin High teacher, Mr. Gillion, posted a letter to the “Contact us” section of the #besomebody blog that questioned the speaker’s use of language. He called out Shaikh’s reliance on profanity and the impact that his word choices, such as “balls,” “bullshit,” and “bro,” had on female students in the audience, writing “by invoking ‘balls’ as a metaphor for courage, you are telling my female students that there is an anatomical requirement for bravery that they lack.” Mr. Gillion questioned the speaker’s depiction of suffering, “after boasting of the corporate exuberance you gave up” in front of a student body whose numbers included nearly a third who were eligible for free/reduced, and a room full of teachers who had “not gotten a substantive raise in at least eight years.” This letter did not immediately reach daylight on the #besomebody blog, however, and was only widely read after Mr. Gillion reposted it after other critiques became public.

In the school media arts classroom, students learned about broadcast journalism, short-form narrative, documentary, and studio news production. The news station KAHS (pronounced “chaos”) affiliated with the media arts program aired several times a week (for information about this program, go to https://ahsmedia.org/kahs/). These students saw an instant opportunity for parody after experiencing Shaikh’s presentation and created a #bekahs spoof (viewable at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUDhJ-KiGLg&t=34) that they tweeted out to #besomebody. This started a dialogue on Twitter between KAHS and #besomebody.

Meanwhile, student author Sean Saldana (2015) wrote an op-ed about the presentation included in The Maroon News that went live on January 23, 2015 (print) and February 16, 2015 (online). Unaware at this point of Mr. Gillion’s letter to the #besomebody blog (it was not viewable publicly on their site until March 2015), Saldana’s critique drew on some of the same themes. Among these was Shaikh’s message of giving everything up for passion to realize one’s dream, which seemed disingenuous to students not “in the same boat as him” with a college degree, venture capital, stock options, and years of highly competitive corporate experience.

In his essay, Saldana (2015) continued, “For every Kash Shaikh, there are hundreds and hundreds of minimum wage retail workers who couldn’t find a sustainable way to practice their passions” (para. 2). Saldana acknowledged that the message of #besomebody held promise, “but when you read between the lines, things get a little questionable” (para. 1), particularly for high school students still forming their identities and aspirations. Finally, he critiqued the intent of the presentation, which appeared to serve as a message of motivation but in the end was really a pitch for students to explore and spread the message of the #besomebody app, a money-making endeavor. He wrote,

Sure #BeSomebody has a feel-good message meant to inspire the youth, but at its heart, #BeSomebody is a company. Companies have a mission to make money, as much money as possible. And there’s just something inherently wrong about a company coming to a public school, wasting government resources (time that could be spent in class and money that’s paying a staff that isn’t working), to half advertise to people who have no choice about whether or not they want to hear. The whole thing is just kinda gross. (para. 4)

Were it not for the power and reach of social media, student author Saldana’s editorial would likely have been read by his immediate community and quickly forgotten as the next big story came to light. But after KAHS tweeted, “Shout-out to our friends over at The Maroon News,” along with a photograph of the editorial to Shaikh and #besomebody, the story of the speaking event, the critique, and the fallout from the critique spread quickly through social and traditional media.

The Fallout

The authors of the MacArthur Foundation report on media education for the 21st century (Jenkins, 2009) called on educators to help students cultivate new literacy skills to engage and participate as active citizens in an increasingly complex world made manifest by the increasing availability of information, technology, and connectedness through media. The following are some of the key skills salient to this discussion:

**Collective intelligence** The ability to pool knowledge and compare notes with others toward a common goal.

**Judgment** The ability to evaluate the reliability and credibility of different information sources.

**Transmedia navigation** The ability to follow the flow of stories and information across multiple modalities.

**Networking** The ability to search for, synthesize, and disseminate information.

**Negotiation** The ability to travel across diverse communities, discerning and respecting multiple perspectives, and grasping and following alternative norms. (p. xiv)

Although this report does not mention Twitter, which was in development but did not gain widespread attention and use until the annual SXSW (South by Southwest) interactive media conference in March 2007, its pre-scientific ideology about the role that social media would play in connecting citizens to one another and to a larger world outside of their proximal communities was remarkable and telling of the world that has developed since then.
After the “Shout-out to our friends over at The Maroon News” tweet was sent by KAHS, there was initially no response from Shaikh or the #besomebody community. Then, under the heading “You Have No Idea What PASSION Means,” a blog response that would fuel a larger storm made its way into the Austin High School community through Twitter (see Figure 2).

Through the interconnectedness of social media, Shaikh’s lengthy post made its way through a variety of hosts—Twitter, Facebook, and the #besomebody blog—and served two purposes. First, the blog post allowed Shaikh to speak directly to the editorial and to the parody that critiqued his presentation; second, the post served as an additional tool for branding the #besomebody movement. The blog began with attacks on his critics as “fear-driven, weak-minded” people who didn’t understand the role that passion played in shaping individuals’ success. It included a lengthy explication of the word passion (see Figure 3).

Shaikh relied again on profanity and fairly standard metaphor (e.g., the use of passion as a flame erupting into an inferno). He also attempted to bolster his message with a dictionary definition, explaining that passion came from the Latin word passionem meaning suffering, although a quick check on the Merriam-Webster website (“Passion,” n.d.) showed that this use was obsolete unless speaking of the Passion of the Christ and employing a capital P. Perhaps the most interesting messaging choice was the call to action that Shaikh included: “All I ask, is that you DECIDE to find YOURS [passion], and then use it for good… Gift it to the world…while healing yourself…” (see Figure 4).

Students found this notion of sharing—and offering a gift—counterintuitive to the #besomebody business and brand. Shaikh suggested that people who followed their aspirations and dreams lived more passionate, self-actualized lives, and student Saldana (2015) acknowledged as much in his editorial: “The message of doing things out of passion and love is beautiful” (para. 2). Where the argument fell down was in the notion of offering a gift. After all, #besomebody is not a philanthropic endeavor; it is a business built to fortify its founder and employees. Given the hashtag inclusion of the media and news programs at the school, the response to the blog spread through its community and then extended exponentially outward.

The Maroon News reporters suggested that Shaikh had a limited perspective of their audience and its reach. In conversation, student author Rowan Pruitt said,
I don't think he realized how big his audience was when he tweeted that blog at us. He didn't realize the following we had—support from the student body. He thought it would be a dialogue between him and our publication and his organization. But then all of the students that were behind us started getting in on it.

The immediate response to the blog posting came from Alex, who worked for #besomebody. He followed up on Shaikh's suggestion that teachers are the root of the problem (see Figure 5).

Yet, the three teachers who were engaged (or had students engaged) in this critique did not appear to be putting a ceiling on students’ communications. Rather, they seemed supportive of students’ expression and willing to stand behind an argument that found fault with such a rudimentary definition of following one’s passion. Over the course of roughly three weeks (February 16–March 5, 2015), the three main authors collected responses to Shaikh's blog on the “Uninspired” students of the school. Although most wrote favorably of #besomebody’s message, it was in these comments that Mr. Gillion's letter to Shaikh finally made its way to a public viewing. Having posted earlier to the blog without success, on February 16, Mr. Gillion reposted his letter as a comment to the conversation heating up online (see Figure 6).

Mr. Gillion was repaid with what students viewed as defensiveness and name-calling, toward both education as a system and the teachers at the school in particular. Shaikh’s specific criticism was the teachers’ and students’ production and sharing of “negative energy,” focused on “finding the bad in things instead of unearthing and embracing the good” (see Figure 7).
Perhaps to fortify the “Uninspired” blog and critique of teachers, commenter Michael Maldonado wrote a lengthy response to Mr. Gillion on February 17 about his passion for fitness and the lack of support that he experienced from his high school teachers in this regard. He reinforced Shaikh’s blog post with “Passion separates your average person from the extraordinary one,” and then looped back to the notion that schools squelched students’ dreams. He wrote, “Why bash students into believing that they can’t follow their passion?” and ended his comment with the #besomebody imprimatur.

This led us to dig around a bit among the commenters; although many just posted first names or monikers such as Dreamer or Anonymous, a quick googling of full names of several commenters and “#besomebody” surfaced a regular trend. Many of the responders to Shaikh’s blog post were working as “passionaries” and benefiting financially from the app. Mr. Gillion was drawn in a second time before disappearing from the conversation, mainly to remind the #besomebody team that it took more than branding and a motivational speaker to inspire students (see Figure 8).
Additional students jumped into the comments section of the blog post, but perhaps one of the most cogent came from the original editorial writer, Saldana. After verifying his bona fides, he wrote, “My article is about finding a balance between reaching for the stars and being reasonable, cause rarely are they the same thing” (see Figure 9).

With this response, Saldana was done with the conversation. When Jane asked him to reflect on the critique and fallout a month later, he said he would let the original editorial speak his thoughts.

**The Media**

In their examination of new literacies, Lankshear and Knobel (2011) spoke of the role that social learning plays in promoting deep learning. Drawing on Gee’s (2007) assertion that learners need to be “willing and able to take on a new identity in the world, to see the world and act on it in new ways” (p. 172), Lankshear and Knobel differentiated surface learning from deep learning by “the materiality and situatedness of deep learning, where ideas and ‘content’ are grounded in specific tasks, interactions, purposes, actions, outcomes, and the like” (p. 219). This type of engagement requires a context and action; in the case of The Maroon News students, that context played out in publicly negotiated spaces, including the Internet and traditional press outlets.

Roughly a week following the appearance of the “Uninspired” blog, a Reddit post from space_manatee (2015) appeared with the title “#besomebody founder at-
tacks Austin HS students and staff online.” In trying to make sense of #besomebody billboards that he or she had seen around town, the author began a conversation with the Reddit community about the assembly at the school, the fallout following Saldana’s editorial, and the post on the #besomebody blog. In stark contrast to the comments to Shaikh’s “Uninspired” blog, theredditors were supportive of the students’ critique, and at times the conversation devolved into making sport of the bro demographic that they believed #besomebody was targeting.

Honest_arbiter compared #besomebody with The Emperor’s New Clothes by Hans Christian Andersen, pointing out that “the innocence of youth uncovered the scam on the Emperor.” Redditor spiritofdunkey, a senior at Austin High School, thanked the community “for noticing this little incident that went down,” and noted that he or she had posted a comment to the #besomebody blog that was taken down after critiquing Shaikh’s message (see Figure 10). Spiritofdunkey thanked the Reddit community for adding to the conversation and defending the school community’s response to Shaikh’s message. Spiritofdunkey acknowledged the value of following your passion and not giving up, but found Shaikh’s reaction to critics unfortunate.

The most up-voted comment (author unknown) suggested that the school was fulfilling its job of preparing students to listen and read critically (see Figure 11). Space_manatee concurred, thanking spiritofdunkey and the other high school students:

Figure 10
Post Captured From Reddit, March 9, 2015

![Post Captured From Reddit, March 9, 2015](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/)

Note. We (this article’s authors) added the highlighting. The color figure can be viewed in the online version of this article at http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/.

Figure 11
Conversation Captured From Reddit, March 9, 2015

![Conversation Captured From Reddit, March 9, 2015](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/)

Note. The color figure can be viewed in the online version of this article at http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/.
It was really inspiring to see such critical thought from young people. Despite Kash stating that he’s scared for the future of the youth because of the kids at your school, I found it to have the exact opposite effect on myself.

This might have been the end of the story and the back-and-forth in social media were it not for an education journalist at Austin’s NPR station KUT (McGee, 2015) who noticed the Reddit conversation about #besomebody trending and investigated the story. Several other news organizations, such as Texas Monthly (Solomon, 2015), BBC News (BBC Trending, 2015), and the PBS Newshour (Segal, 2015), followed suit by offering quotes from participants and commentary.

In the Texas Monthly article, newswriter Dan Solomon (2015) recommended that if “students are interested in being inspired by people who’ve followed their passions, there are closer-to-home role models” (para. 15) at the upcoming SXSW conference. Interestingly enough, several of The Maroon News authors and Isabelle had already secured press passes to the multimedia portion of the conference and had the opportunity to meet briefly with Shaikh to talk through what had transpired. He told Isabelle that although he had laughed at the video parody that the multimedia KAHS students had produced, Sean’s “opinion piece really hurt him personally. He felt that we had attacked him.” This point reminded the students that words have power and that they matter.

The Implications
This immediate and delayed impact of online writing was confirmed by Jenkins (2009), who acknowledged the challenges of a participatory culture in an increasingly connected world, where writing is much more open to the public and can have more far-reaching consequences....The ethical implications of these emerging practices are fuzzy and ill-defined. Young people are discovering that information they put online to share with their friends can bring unwelcome attention from strangers. (p. 25)

This was certainly the case with The Maroon News students, but the experience also provided a valuable learning experience for all involved. In his interview with KUT (McGee, 2015), Shaikh conceded, “I probably got into the debate too quickly and that’s some things I would do differently, probably not get into the back and forth too much” (para. 31).

Teachers can reinforce this message that writing online is both more long-lasting and more personal than we might ever intend. Student author Wallach believed that the reason Shaikh reacted so negatively to the students’ critiques was because “he can’t really untangle his personal life and what he’s doing on the app now.” Student author Breed concurred: “He made [the presentation] a really personal thing...presented to you like it’s this grassroots ‘my story’ kind of thing” as opposed to a business trying to sell an idea.

Student author Ana Szachacz saw the #besomebody assembly as building on students’ frustration with having “been told to do this stuff so much” (e.g., doing well in school, going to college, getting a job) that they were an easy target for his message of “don’t do mainstream stuff. Come and have more fun.” Szachacz noted, “We definitely did learn what not to do. We owe it to the person who did the work to actually read what they say, and critically think about it. Because otherwise, they put it out there for nothing.” Breed agreed: “He should’ve appreciated the way that we didn’t just take everything he had to say without thinking about it. Like we were the only audience that really thought about what he was saying.” Isabelle revealed,

You know, I don’t know how many times in education the things that we are teaching actually get to be applied and authentic. I’ve been telling [journalism students] over the past four years how important their voice is. How important to focus on social justice and equity and all those things. I wonder how many teachers really get to have that authentic application.

In our experience, very few teachers do.

In terms of how to support students experiencing “authentic application” in today’s world of anonymous posting to blogs, less than civil discourse, and other skills reflective of the MacArthur Foundation report (Jenkins, 2009), such as pooling knowledge and making judgments about what one reads, Isabelle often had students discuss current events, share memes, and critique one another’s written work during news production cycles. Jane noted that spending any amount of time with The Maroon News writers offered evidence of how well equipped they were in transmedia navigation, or the ability to follow the flow of information across multiple modalities. They tracked down information across platforms and devices, grabbed screenshots of tweets, cached different versions of Shaikh’s passion blog, and constructed pithy responses, most of which stayed within the classroom walls.

We have found that an adapted Tea Party activity (Christensen, 2015), which presents messages from a variety of different platforms (e.g., tweets, Facebook posts, Snapchat images, a blog) about a current event can help students see how they have such transmedia navigation.
Students are placed in small groups, and each student is given a different message. Then, the group works cooperatively to infer what is happening across the different messages to tell a coherent story (Ash, Saunders, & Salazar, 2016).

**Conclusion**

As we consider the critical media literacy skills that students bring with them to school and how to develop those that still need refining, we cannot overemphasize the importance of documenting these practices. To normalize these kinds of practices, it might help if teachers engaging with students using social media, Twitter, blogging, and the like as literacy practices would make their experiences more public—warts and all.

We have tried to share with you an incident of social media literacy in real life. We hope that examples like this will better inform not only the research but also practicing teachers interested in dipping their toes into the murky waters of social media and other multimedia spaces. For example, when writing this piece, we found very little research advising teachers on how to withstand a media maelstrom, and we believe that we have uncovered why: Due to many constraints, it is virtually impossible to capture these moments and bring them to print. Were our data not already in the public domain, and the student authors not 18 years old, we would not have been able to construct this article.

Alvermann (2008) asked researchers to consider whether “adolescents’ online literacies have implications for the research and teaching of literacy” (p. 9). Perhaps fittingly, she reminded readers to go directly to the source and ask students about ways that their online literacies might be useful in a classroom setting; more important, she reminded readers to carefully listen to students’ responses. The student authors’ perceptions and feedback were central to this piece.

Our student authors have graduated from high school and gone on to college and their new lived experiences. We end this with what we learned about students, social media, and writing for an audience that extends beyond our local community: It is important and empowering for students to engage. Student author Pruitt summed up the *The Maroon News* critique and ensuing fallout:

> I think it reflects our school in a really positive way. And does show we’re not just naive high schoolers—we are all very intelligent. And aren’t just sheep for the education system. Like we’re all going places. We’re already somebody.

**TAKE ACTION!**

*Supporting student voice in public critique: Are your students ready to speak up about something? How can you help them have their voices be heard?*

1. **Follow school/district guidelines for parental permission.**

2. **Discuss tone and how it affects how messages are received.** Have students evaluate the tone of their messages with one another before they are shared.

3. **If you are planning to have students publish in a public space, prepare for a constructive conversation with them about digital footprints and the potential implications of exposure.**

4. **Consider ways to shape the message, because students are representing the school and themselves.** What gets posted on the Internet is difficult to take down (see the Wayback Machine website).

5. **If there is potential for a negative response to students’ writing,** then discuss ways that students can constructively speak with media outlets ahead of time so they are not defensive or angry.

6. **Engage in regular conversations with students about the real-life impact of their words and the way that social media and online spaces can exponentially disseminate their message.**

7. **Keep your administrators informed of a situation in which student work is spreading publicly, so they can help manage the flow of information from the school.**

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