

The background of the slide is a dense collage of numerous small, semi-transparent photographs showing diverse groups of students in various classroom and school settings. The overall color palette is a monochromatic blue, with the text and a footer bar in orange.

What your community  
really wants to see on  
your social media  
pages!

**CHOICESCHOOLS**  
ASSOCIATES

August 17, 2021

# Agenda

- Who is in the audience?
- Introductions
- Uncovering your story
- Creating strategies to share your story
- Hands-on ideas to implement the strategies
- Q&A

# INTRODUCTION

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**SARA  
MOONEY**

*Chief Communications  
and Development  
Officer,  
Choice Schools  
Associates*



**HOLLY  
ORIAN**

*Environmental Science  
Teacher,  
West Michigan  
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**KERRI  
BARRETT**

*Area Superintendent  
and Former Elementary  
Principal,  
West Michigan  
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Uncovering your story

Stop # 1

After many  
conversations and  
sleepless nights,  
we realized we  
were doing social  
media all wrong...





## Board Meeting



# UNIFORM POLICY

**Social media become a box to check off our to do list.**

**Did I post on Facebook today?**

**Okay, done.**

**Our impatience lead us to tell the wrong story.**

**Our messaging was blunt and lacking connection to our true purpose.**



**So we stopped  
trying to post  
anything and  
everything and  
focused on our  
why.**

**And realized  
something big...**



Parents don't want to be \*sold.\*

They don't want something  
*different.*

They want something that  
created a difference...

**Adventure time!**

**Walk you through an exercise to  
uncover your story**

# Step #1 - Uncovering your why

- Find the handout on your table and think about at the core of our school why you exist.

Things to consider:

- Why this learning mode? Why now?
- What do you believe in as school community?
- What purpose do you serve in your community?

# WMAES - our why

West Michigan Academy of Environmental Science exists to educate the next generation of curious thinkers and changemakers who will become teachers, scientists, doctors, environmentalists, and researchers.

## Step #2 - Identify who you serve

- Who do you serve? What type of family is attracted to your school? What do they value?

*Think beyond “330 kids who live in Lansing, MI who come from poverty.”*

Example: Our parents love hands on learning who care about the planet. They love a tight knit community. They believe in experience learning and long for raising curious kids. They want a school that teaches them HOW to learn and not WHAT to learn.

## Step #3 - Your promise

- What do you do that makes a difference?
- How do we create value in their lives?
- Are you fulfilling your promise?

## Step #4 - Your path

- How are you going to deliver on your promise?
- What do you do to keep people accountable?
- What markers do you need to know you are on the right path?



## Step #5 - Define your difference makers

- **Difference maker #1:** Students leave WMAES as curious thinkers who know how to problem solve in all subjects and areas of life.
- **Difference maker #2:** WMAES equips learners with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to make a difference in the world.
- **Difference maker #3:** Students have a dynamic and interactive educational experience that they will remember for years.

# What are your difference maker statements?


You don't earn trust with parents with more facts, new programs, billboards, or options.

You can earn their trust by showcasing the difference you make in their child's life.

# Refocuses your mindset

Your job is to do more than just inform, it is to build trust.

Inspires you to focus on the difference you are making in your community.

A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a light-colored polo shirt and a blue wristband, is sitting at a desk in a classroom. He is looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. The background is a blurred classroom setting with a whiteboard and other students.

# Creating strategies to share your story

Stop #2

# Move strategy to action

- Have the vision/the difference, now what?
  - Build a team
  - Make a plan
  - Monitor the progress

# Move strategy to action

- Build a team
  - Leader has to be on board
  - Staff member to support
    - Inner circle of the great things

# Now that we have defined our story...

- Make a schedule
  - ◆ Consistent
  - ◆ Innovative



# Monitor the story....

- Review/Modify
  - What is getting traction?
  - What is getting engagement?



# Empower our storytellers

- Continually bring up your difference makers
- Encourage staff to share their uniqueness
- Leadership team must prioritize
  - Your story in the community-make sure it matches who you are

# More about social media reporters

- Professional job
- Job description & requirements
- Stipend
- Leader within the school
  - Able to communicate with the entire team to get stories to the community
- Trusting to put your story into the world.



# This has to cost a lot to have all of those people telling your story!

- Nope!
- Culture of storytelling
- Inspiring your team to know how special they have made the school
  - Increase staff retention with pride in their school



Hands-on ideas to  
implement the  
strategies

# My first tool...

- A blackberry cellphone.

**Aha!**

## Our story

We provide a space for students to **learn with their hands** and explore outdoors on our 62-acre campus to **learn beyond the traditional walls** of a classroom and **allow their minds to feel, smell, and experience their learning.**

# Look mom!



westmichiganacademyofenvirosci



“Look Mom! I made a habitat diorama in science today that I researched myself!”



14 likes

westmichiganacademyofenvirosci Mrs. Glick's class has been learning about habitats! As a fun end of the year project, some of the students chose to make... more

June 7



# How we use social media at WMAES

1. Use Facebook for more than just snow days and pop can drives. Remember people love faces and places!
1. Create a classroom Twitter account for a class message board-since Twitter only allows 280 characters it will require students to be concise in their interactions. Hashtags that are classroom related.
1. Use instagram for digital storytelling in the classroom. Seeing things through the lens of your students can really be eye-opening and allow them to share their viewpoints with the other students and your school community can be magical.
1. Create a class specific Pinterest board

# Experience the page as a parent

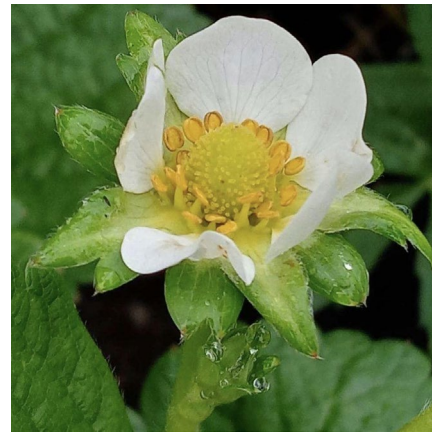
- What are their students seeing and learning today?



19 likes

westmichiganacademyofenvirosoci Here are some beautiful flowers of the @westmichiganacademyofenvirosoci gardens. These were taken by a talented high school student. It's always amazing to see the natural world through the lens of our students#envirokid#gardenflowers#nofilter

August 3



# Facebook and Instagram

## Photo post highlights:

- Field trips
- Monthly themes
- Special Events
- Classroom highlights
- Celebrations
- Annual event photos
- Group projects
- Contests

<https://www.instagram.com/westmichiganacademyofenvirosci/>

# Twitter

Twitter highlights:

- Quick reminders
- Photos with small explanations
- Student involvement
- Same content as Instagram only in short form

<https://twitter.com/WMAES>

# Twitter Highlights



 West Michigan Acade...  
@WMAES

Planting native plants today with 1st grade led to some cool discoveries...a dead snake & a dead opossum! Students were able to learn about an animals' vertebrate by picking up bones and observing the smelly snake. That kind of learning makes [@WMAES special#charterschoolsweek](#)



West Michigan Acade...  
@WMAES

It's amazing to think that in 6 short months the [@WMAES](#) prairie will be green! Until then enjoy some more snowshoeing pics#envirokid#@snowshoers



 West Michigan Acade...  
@WMAES

[@WMAES](#) students are immersed in learning outdoors and today that means writing/drawing our observations in the different ecosystems. It can be difficult to focus, but students are going above and beyond#envirokid#focus2020#learnoutdoors#natureisourclassroom



West Michigan Acade...  
@WMAES

[@WMAES](#) art can be found outdoors on most days using nature as a teacher. 4th graders made tree stump prints based on Bryan Nash art work, while 3rd grade created leaf and prairie grass relief each#bryannashart



# Twitter Highlights



**West Michigan Academy of Environmental Science**  
@WMAES

...

Learning about composting can be FUN when you can do it yourself. @WMAES 2nd graders learned the science behind soil making and got some exercise in as well #envirokid#learnfromnature#handsonscience



# Instagram Highlights



55 likes

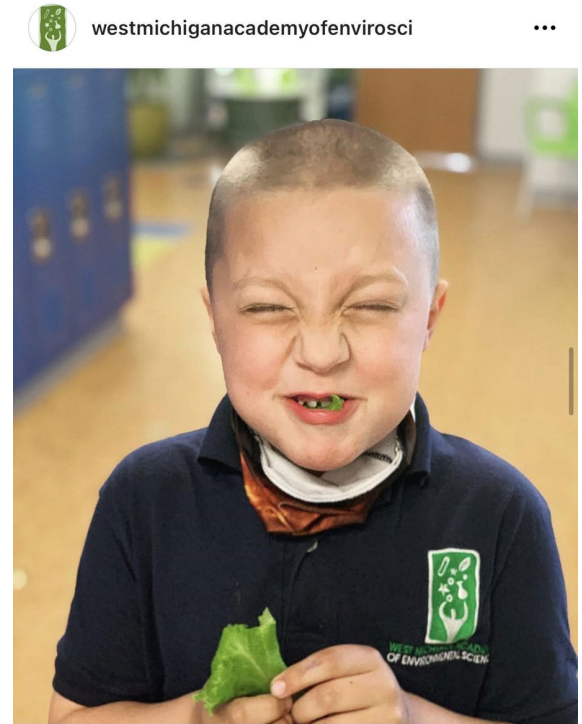
westmichiganacademyofenvirosci Mr. Shawn is both silly and serious when it comes to hands on education. Middle school students @westmichiganacademyofenvirosci learned to make models of elements using natural materials showing the number of protons and electrons in our school forest. Their knowledge is super impressive#envirokid#chemistryoutside#elements

View all 2 comments



66 likes


westmichiganacademyofenvirosci 1st graders @westmichiganacademyofenvirosci tasted 3 different lettuces in our tower gardens today for some... more towergardenofficial We love those 🥬 faces!



66 likes

westmichiganacademyofenvirosci 1st graders @westmichiganacademyofenvirosci tasted 3 different lettuces in our tower gardens today for some... more towergardenofficial We love those 🥬 faces!

# Instagram Highlights

 westmichiganacademyofenvirosoci  
West Michigan Academy of Environmental Science




👍 🗨️ 📍

Liked by choiceschools and 53 others

westmichiganacademyofenvirosoci The school garden at WMAES is continuing to give us beautiful produce for our students to learn from and eat!! Big thanks to @wholekidsfoundation for their support in creating this new learning space!

#envirokid #growinghealthykids

View 1 comment

 westmichiganacademyofenvirosoci




👍 🗨️ 📍

35 likes

westmichiganacademyofenvirosoci @westmichiganacademyofenvirosoci school garden is a team effort. So thankful for our garden helpers, big and small who weed, water and discover. It wouldn't be possible without our partners like The Whole Kids' Foundation @wholekidsfoundation and our Power Parent team-thank you for your continued support#envirokid#adventurecamp#highschoolhelpers#schoolgardens

rachel.lfontop This is so beautiful. 🌱🥰

July 28

 westmichiganacademyofenvirosoci



👍 🗨️ 📍

16 likes

westmichiganacademyofenvirosoci 1st morel ever found at WMAES, by a 1st grader. Nice work!



# Your parents

If you really want to move your parents to action...

**Focus on feelings not facts.**



**Questions?**

**Thoughts?**

**Suggestions?**