

#GISDAlwaysConnected Social Media Campaign

When Garland ISD learned its facilities would not reopen after Spring Break in March 2020, the district's Communications team began working on strategies to keep our community engaged and informed. Knowing that we would be social distancing, the team decided to launch a social media campaign to promote positivity and engagement. This medium's advantage is that it fosters connectivity among individuals without requiring them to be physically close. Hence, #GISDAlwaysConnected was born—a simple hashtag at the heart of a fun social media campaign.

The #GISDAlwaysConnected campaign included call-to-action challenges as well as intentional messaging. A #GISDAlwaysConnected Photo Challenge encouraged all to share experiences using daily themes. Students and staff were invited to take and post a photo, add a daily hashtag, and tag friends and teachers. A #GISDAlwaysConnected Video Contest asked students and staff to create and submit videos showcasing at-home learning or inspirational messages. This contest gave our community an opportunity to flaunt the district's homegrown online learning platform. Also, the team created #GISDAlwaysConnected graphics, a Facebook frame and informative messaging. To ensure our diverse community's inclusion and expand our campaign's reach, #GISDAlwaysConnected initiatives were shared in multiple languages.

This campaign incorporating fun contests, a staple slogan and a call for others to publicly show their support for one another was a success, helping engage stakeholders and spread positive news on social media and beyond. Our Twitter accounts earned more than 2.9 million impressions from mid-March to June 2020. The #GISDAlwaysConnected hashtag was included in tens of thousands of posts on Twitter and Facebook. The team received 60 submissions during the video contest's two-week run, resulting in six winners. Thousands of themed photos were posted daily on Twitter and Facebook. And, the campaign even led to media coverage. Fox, NBC, *The Garland Texan*, *Rowlett Lakeshore Times* and *Sachse News* all reported on the district's successful online learning platform. *Sachse News* also reported on the results of the #GISDAlwaysConnected Video Contest. NBC also showcased one of our innovative teachers, Mrs. Speed, for increasing engagement via digital videos.

The #GISDAlwaysConnected campaign gave our tri-cities a sense of unity and allowed the district to keep track of messaging and activities taking place during this historic time. Establishing a culture of sharing positivity and staying connected has genuinely taken off in Garland ISD. We are proud to report that students, parents and staff continue to use the hashtag to share great news.