Engaging Parents TO SUPPORT DIGITAL DETECTIVES

One reason Developing Digital Detectives can be so challenging is because many adults are lacking essential information literacy skills, too. Increased polarization throughout our communities has made this task even more complicated while also highlighting its importance. Here are some tips for creating partnerships with parents in order to tackle this urgent work.

1

FIND COMMON GROUND

Frame the work ahead around common goals. This might include:

- screen time
- device management
- digital citizenship

Important information literacy skills can be woven into this work without touching on potentially triggering topics.

FOCUS ON SKILLS

We all have opinions on the issues of the day. These opinions can make conversations that challenge those beliefs challenging. Rather than focusing on evaluating specific content for credibility, engage your community in skill based learning. This could include:

- Recognizing when information triggers us
- How to manage device settings to control how often and how much information we consume
- How to ask the kinds of questions that lead to meaningful information investigations

2

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DE-EMPHASIZE SOURCE

It's true, we can learn a lot about the purpose of and potential biases in the content we consume by investigating sources. We may even come to believe that some sources are more trustworthy than others. However, in a polarized society, conversation around specific sources can be triggering. By focusing on the content itself, regardless of the source, we have a better chance of:

- Establishing and maintaining the trust of our community
- Keeping our community engaged in positive and productive conversations
- Creating sticky learning experiences for all involved

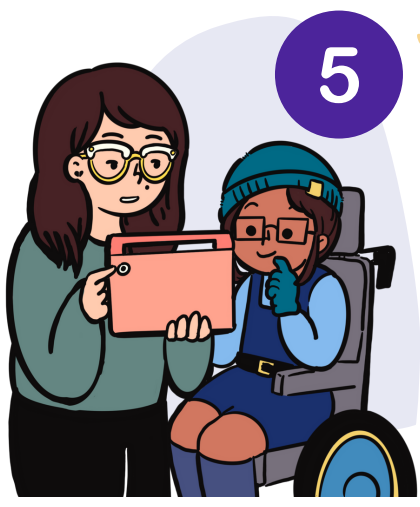
TEACH AND EMPOWER

Although supporting students is the ultimate goal, when we teach our communities how to apply these skills to their own information feeds, we:

- Empower them as partners in this work
- Affect information literacy outcomes beyond the walls of our classrooms/libraries

4

5



CREATE A SAFE SPACE FOR EVERYONE

Admitting what we don't know or to past missteps requires us to be vulnerable. Creating a space where everyone feels safe and valued is an important part of this work. This may include:

- Involving school administration to be part of this work
- Establishing group norms or a code of contact
- Practicing ways to disagree with ideas without attacking others

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

As we evaluate the success of these efforts it's important to remember:

- This is a marathon, not a sprint. True success will be realized over time.
- While we should invite everyone to join us, some members of our community may not be ready for this conversation.

6