NSPRA This Week – Tip of the Week
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Digital Snarking and the School Community

Let's start with a definition:

> According to the "Definitive Snark Guide" at www. snarking.com, a **snark** is an imaginary animal created by Lewis Carroll in his poem "The Hunting of the Snark." In current usage, the word **snark** can be considered a contraction of **snide** and **remark**. "To snark" is to say or write a snide remark about someone, the act of which is snarking.

"Snarking" about schools, teachers, principals, and students likely has occurred since the time of Plato. But "snarking" online creates a digital record. What's more, the remark may be libelous or lead to cyber-bullying.

Engage parents and students in a conversation about digital citizenship.

When students or adults, including parents, teachers, or school employees, "snark" on Facebook, MySpace, blogs, or news media sites, they may not realize the harmful repercussions or potential legal issues involved.

- Consider launching an educational campaign about "Digital Citizenship" (www.digitalcitizenship.net) to bring awareness about appropriate technology use to your school community.
- As part of the campaign, include articles about digital etiquette or digital rights and responsibilities in school newsletters, hold discussions at parent meetings, and develop digital guidelines for schools that are more specific and age appropriate than the district's "Acceptable Use of Technology" policy.
- Tie the discussion to existing character education programs, such as **Character Counts!** (http://charactercounts.org), that emphasize good citizenship.

Use available resources to address cyber-bullying and snarking.

Many media literacy and cyber-bullying resources are available online. Check out these sites to get started:

- "**Kitchen**" video clip developed by the **Ad Council** and the **National Crime Prevention Council**
  http://tinyurl.com/youtube-kitchen
- Cyber-bullying resources from the **National Crime Prevention Council**
  www.ncpc.org/newsroom/current-campaigns/cyberbullying
- **Stop Bullying Now** resources
  www.stopbullyingnow.com
- **Ms. Parry's Guide to Correct Online Etiquette (Netiquette)**
  www.stopcyberbullying.org/kids/msparrysguidetonetiquette.html
- **Netiquette for Kids** from the Boston (Mass.) Public Library
  http://www.bpl.org/kids/netiquette.htm

The bottom line? Never text, post or e-mail a snide remark about another person that you wouldn't be willing to say directly to that person.

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