CENTRAL KITSAP SCHOOL DISTRICT WEB DESIGN GUIDELINES

Revised January 2016

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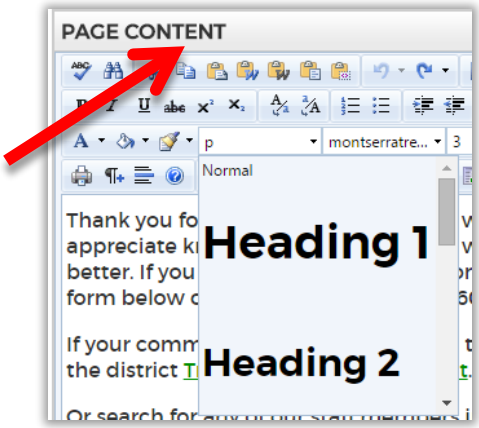
WEB DESIGN GUIDE

This contains the basic components of our websites.

FONTS

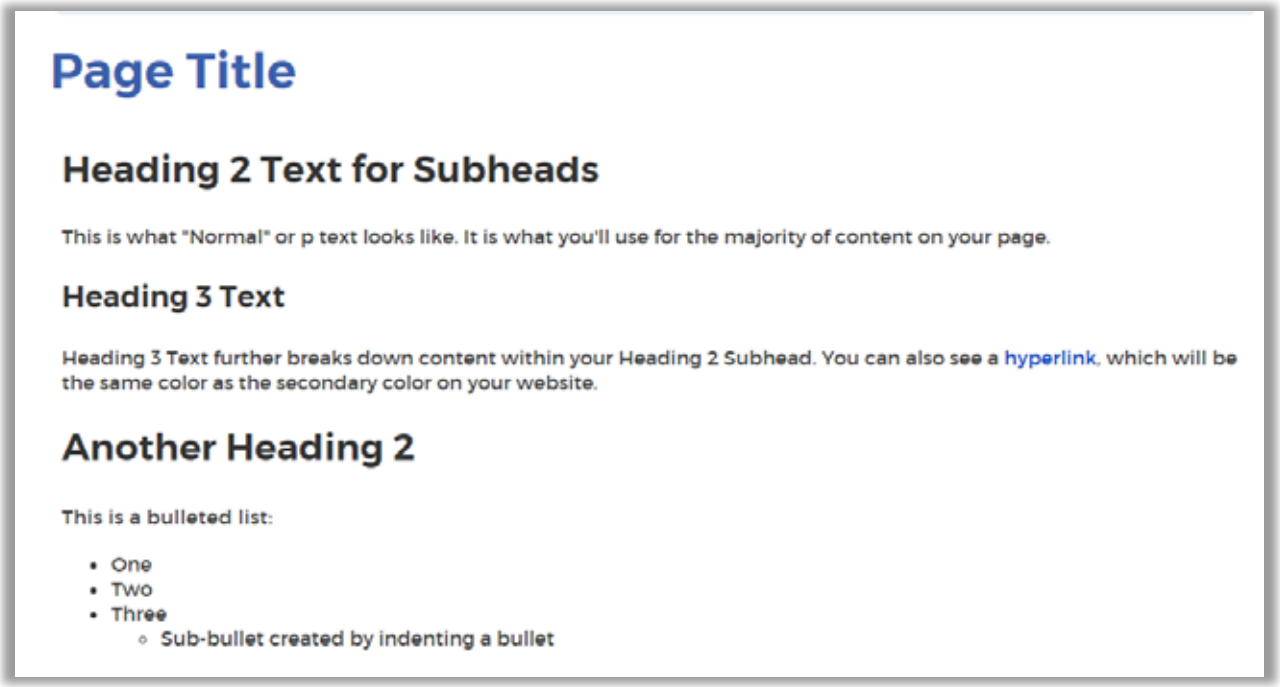
Our sites use Montserrat Regular and Montserrat Bold. Using consistent fonts throughout your site helps it maintain a professional look and feel.

If you paste as plain text, the site will automatically put it into body text. You can also paste from Word, but be aware that it may incorrectly translate the font and formatting. Use the Pasting from Word tip sheet. You can add styles using the Paragraph Style tool. For most text, you'll use the p or Normal style.



See the page content section of the web writing guidelines for more on how to use subheads.

Here as an example of how these look on one of our sites:



WEBSITE NAVIGATION AND PAGE GUIDLEINES

When we surveyed parents about our old websites, a prominent complaint was a lack of consistency between sites and difficulty finding content when trying to navigate more than one school's site. Because of this, all of our websites have been set up with consistent navigation labels and categories. The top-level navigation areas are:

- **About** – Contains basic information about the school and school processes. This is where parents can get a feel for the school's personality, get news and the details of daily operations.
- **Learning** — this connects students and families closer to the classroom with information about checking grades, expectations for learning and maintaining a positive learning environment and available learning programs.
- **Activities** (on elementary) or Activities & Athletics (on secondary) — This connects students and families with the activities that support the learning that goes on in the main classrooms and helps students become more connected with their schools
- **Services** — these link students and families to information about support services, such as Food, Transportation, Health, etc.

Below the top-level navigation are Level 2 child pages that are organized by category. Category names and placement must also be consistent between sites. While elementary and secondary sites differ slightly, they are largely similar.

ELEMENTARY SITE CATEGORIES

Under About

- Explore: where people go to find out what your school is like and what's going on
- School Business: Where people go to get their kids into and settled in school
- Safety & Emergencies: Information and tips on keeping students safe

Under Learning

- Class Resources: Find grades, teacher pages, library and homework resources
- Expectations: Expectations for how students and what they're expected to learn.
- Programs

Under Activities

- Academic: Offered as classes during the school day
- Clubs
- ASB

Under Services

- Food Services
- Transportation
- Health
- Services for Homeless Students

SECONDARY SITE NAVIGATION CATEGORIES

Under About

- Explore: where people go to find out what your school is like and what's going on there
- School Business: Where people go to get their kids into and settled in school
- Get Involved: Links to parent organizations directly related to the school, info on how to volunteer.
- Safety & Emergencies: Information and tips on keeping students safe

Under Learning

- Class Resources: Find grades, teacher pages, library and homework resources
- Expectations: Expectations for how students behave to create a positive learning environment and what they're expected to learn.
- Career & Counseling:
- Programs

Under Activities

- Academic: Offered as classes during the school day
- Clubs
- ASB
- Events: Student-led events

Under Services

- Food Services
- Transportation
- Health
- Services for Homeless Students
- Records

HOMEPAGE

On a regular basis, homepages contain the following features:

Banner

- Banner images must be 1800px X 800 px
- You must have caption text
- You should have a link
- You can add up to five images, but most readers won't look past the first three

For more information on updating the banner, see the Adding a Banner tip sheet.

Upcoming Events

Automatically pulls upcoming dates from your website's calendar.

Quick Links

Share direct links to frequently asked-for or used content. Each school can change these based on their own needs. Community Relations can update this for you. You can update it yourselves, but it requires some knowledge of HTML.

School News and District News

Automatically pulls content from your school news feed and from the district's news feed.

ABOUT PAGE

The "About" page should give current and future parents an idea of why your school is great, as well as provide basic information and links to information that prospective parents and students will likely want to find.

Although content has been provided for these pages, we encourage schools to edit the text and give readers a sense of your school's personality or add information. However, the page **must contain** the following type of content:

- Address and map of school location
- Main office phone number
- Principal and assistant principal names
- Links to any schoolwide community social media accounts

INSIDE PAGES OWNED BY THE DISTRICT

Although you can update many pages on your site, certain pages are owned by the district and contain "global portlets," which are pieces of code that pull in content directly from the district website. This spares each school from having to update the content, while allowing your parents and students to remain on their own school's website for information and hopefully continue staying on your website for more information.

You'll be able to tell you're on a district content page when you select Design Mode on the page. Instead of seeing a content portlet where you would expect to see content, you'll see a portlet labeled Data Summary.

Our district pages are, by navigation label and category:

About

- School Business > Legal Notices > all notices
- Safety & Emergencies
  - Safety & Emergency Response
  - School Closures & Delays
  - Incidents on School Campuses (on secondary sites only)

Learning

- Explore > Online Grades/PowerSchool
- Expectations > Rules & Conduct > Student Rights & Responsibilities
- Career & Counseling > Mental Health Resources
- Programs >
    - ELD
    - Native American Education
    - Highly Capable (Gifted) (district content on elementary sites only)

Activities & Athletics

- Athletics >
    - Athletic Eligibility
    - Pay Athletic Fees
- ASB > ASB Financial Reports

Services

- Food Services
    - All pages under Food Services
- Transportation
    - All pages under Transportation
- Health Services
    - Almost all pages, except School Nurse under Health Services
- Services for Homeless Students

CREATING NEW PAGES

Pages are often created when you have some information that needs to be on the web. Great!

However, before you decide to add a page, there are a few questions to ask:

- Is this an event or news item? Events are anything with a specific time and date. News items contain information that is timely and likely to be of only temporary use for readers. If it could be an event or news item, it likely should not be a page, it should be entered into the system as a calendar item and/or news article. \

- Is this information (or a class of information) that should exist in one place on the site and won't change frequently? If the answer yes, then it might be worthy of a page. The next question must also be answered yes.
- Does this information exist elsewhere on the site? And related, is there someone else in the school or district office directly in charge of this information that I should be coordinating with? If the answer is yes, then briefly mention the information and link to

the existing page. This extra step helps cut down on redundant and out-of-date information throughout the site. And in the end, it's less work for everyone.

Find the most logical place in the architecture for the one page. The "owner" of this page should be the one who has access to the most up-to-date information for it.

Use Consistent Writing Style

TROUBLESHOOTING

You can find tip sheets and guides for the most common editing tasks on your website on the district website. Go to ckschools.org > Career & Staff > Staff Resources > Website Editing.

If you would like additional tip sheets or guides, please contact Community Relations. You can also get help by signing up for SharpSchool's CustomerNet, where you can get 24-hour phone or chat customer support.

WEB WRITING AND PAGE CONTENT GUIDELINES

PAGE CONTENT

Use a heading and an opening paragraph to summarize page content.

Readers should be able to quickly scan a page to determine whether it's useful. It takes 25 percent more time to read content online than on paper.
On primary/section pages (that is, all pages one click away from the home page), the text should be written with a first-time visitor/parent in mind. Opening paragraphs of other pages can simply summarize, link to and/or contextualize the page's content.

Make use of meaningful subheadings to guide readers through the page content.

Along with short paragraphs, breaking up a page with subheadings allows web readers to quickly see what information is most important to them. This is a good general principle for all content pages of a site. The more text is on the page, the more subheadings are essential.

White space is encouraged. As a rule-of-thumb, have a subhead for every 150-200 words of web content. Organize your text so that the hierarchy is no deeper than three levels. Lower-level subheads are hard to distinguish and disorienting to online readers.

For example:

Subhead Level 1

Text

Subhead Level 2

Text

Subhead Level 3

Text

Use text formatting such as bulleted lists, pull quotes or paragraph breaks to quickly convey information.

However, on most basic content pages there shouldn't be more than one or two bulleted or numbered lists. If you have a page with many of lists, you may want to consider alternative ways of presenting that content.

The text should guide readers around the site.

Links within the text help limit duplicate information and direct visitors to key content elsewhere on the site. Links to external sites are OK, but should be carefully considered. Be judicious: Too many links within a paragraph also diminishes their effectiveness.

Avoid telling readers to "click here," or "more info." The text of a hyperlink stands out and should provide readers with clear information about what information they will get when they click the link. You can often use the title of the page or document that you are linking to as the text for your hyperlink.

FILES (PDFS, IMAGES)

NAMING CONVENTIONS

Before you upload the file, ensure that you give it a web-friendly name. The name should descriptive using terms that a person would likely use to search for this information. For example, a pdf titled, "2015 CKSD Website User's Manual" could be called central-kitsap-2015-website-manual.pdf. Or, a photo of a teacher reading with a student could be called, **teacher-reads-with-student.jpg** is a lot more informative than **IMG00023.JPG**.

Other tops you should follow:

-
- don't use abbreviations such as you're or aren't in your file name
- avoid dates in your file name unless they're date-specific
- separate words with a hyphen, do not leave spaces

HYPERLINKS

A page without hyperlinks is like a room with no doors. Readers have no way out, especially if they haven't found what they're looking for yet.

That doesn't mean you need to litter every other word with links. They should add necessary context to your writing or guide readers to important places on your website. For example, if you mention a policy, you should link to that policy.

What to Link

Use brief but descriptive words for your link text. Avoid phrases like "click here." Readers should have a good idea about what they'll get when they click on a link.

PDFS

You should **only sparingly** use pdfs or other downloadable documents to provide information to reduce website visitor frustration. Online text loads quickly into a browser, is easier for mobile devices to read, it's easier to make simple text edits and html better supports assistive technologies such as screen readers. Additionally, a visitor may find the pdf through a search engine, but cannot easily reach other pages on the site (which means we lose an opportunity to tell them about other great information about our schools).

Even if you love the tri-fold brochure you've made, remember that it doesn't look so good online. Don't make your readers do mental origami to figure (which is the front page and the back page?). You'll get your message across much better if you organize it on web pages.

Is it ever OK to use a pdf?

Before even considering using a pdf, first ask yourself if the information *could* be presented as a web page. If the answer is yes, you *should* use a web page. That said, there are a few cases in which PDFs are appropriate:

- Documents that *must* be printed
- Documents with complicated formatting, especially when that formatting is essential to understanding the information
- Documents with dozens of pages of content, such as users manuals, that would be too complex to place online

If you do … Use web-friendly standards. http://www.lunametrics.com/blog/2013/01/10/seo-pdfs/

- **Keep file sizes small.** Ensure the file size is as small as you can make it to ensure quick downloading.
- **Give readers warning.** Indicate to readers that they're about to open a file, and what kind of file to expect as well as the size. For example, "the 2015 Website User's Manual (2 MB, pdf)
-

USE OF IMAGES AND GRAPHICS

Photos and other graphics help to draw users in and make content more engaging. Images are more than decoration. They should help tell a story. Choose images that are directly related to the content on the page.

Here are some tips to make the best use of your photos:

Make sure student photos are OK.

If using a photo of students, double check that his/her parent did not request restricted directory information.

Don't violate copyright restrictions

Beware of images you find online. Don't assume that because you can Google it, it's OK, even if you use the "Labeled for Reuse" filter. Some "copyright free" photos were stolen from other places.

Photo sizes:

- Banner Images: Must be 1800 px X 800 px
- Inside pages: For photos to appear the full width of a page, they should be 1400 px wide.

Most newer smartphones can take photos this large (be sure to send it to yourself as the "original" file size. You can also find generic stock images and photos that Community Relations has taken of your school here:
https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0BwwRSMdCWh1sekhPMnZ4TDctV28&usp=sharing

Use good-quality photos.

Use photos that have a crisp, sharp focus (that kid's smile may be great, but the fuzzy focus detracts from it). Edit your photos, adjusting the brightness, contrast, and color until it looks as close to real life as you can get it and crop it to perfect the photo's composition. You can use Microsoft Picture Manager or other application for this. Some tips that can help you take good photos:

- Get close to your subject – don't just use the zoom, get the camera itself closer to your subject
- Place the camera at your subject's eye level
- Move so that the background is as simple as possible
- Place your subject off center
- More tips:
    - Composing photos: http://www.digitalcameraworld.com/2012/04/12/10-rules-of-photo-composition-and-why-they-work/

- Getting good kid smiles (hint: don't say "cheese"): http://www.iheartfaces.com/2011/07/dont-say-cheese-5-tips-for-getting-natural-smiles/

Place images close to relevant text.

Ideally, having an image high on a page will ensure that it's seen. Search engines look at the text surrounding an image to gather additional information about the subject matter of your image and the page.

Photos that engage viewers:

Generally, photos that clearly show people's faces draw people into your content. Even better when you get close to the subject of your photo, ensure that your main subject is in focus, hand you have taken the time to adjust your exposure and color. You can make adjustments to your photos using photo editing tools such as Photo Gallery on your computer, tools in your smartphone or online tools such as Pixlr.

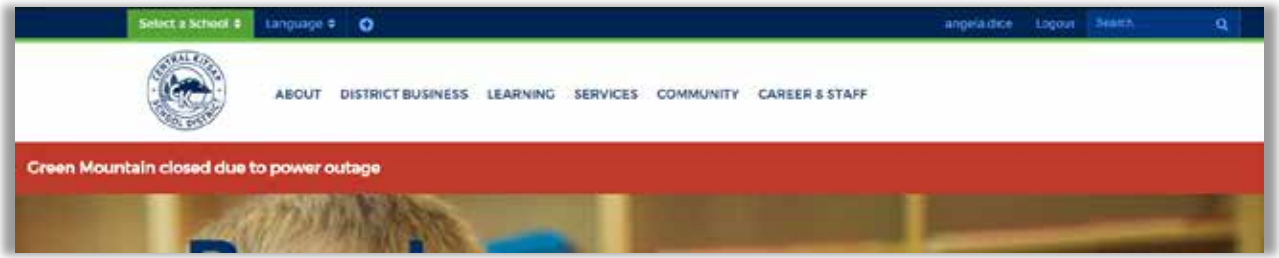
Ensure accessibility.

Fill in the "alt text" field with a brief description of the image or graphic. People with visual impairments rely on products, such as screen readers, to translate what's on screen into audible content. Search engines also use this information when helping users find content. It should be a natural language description of the image, less than a sentence in length, usually between 5 and 10 words

ALERTS

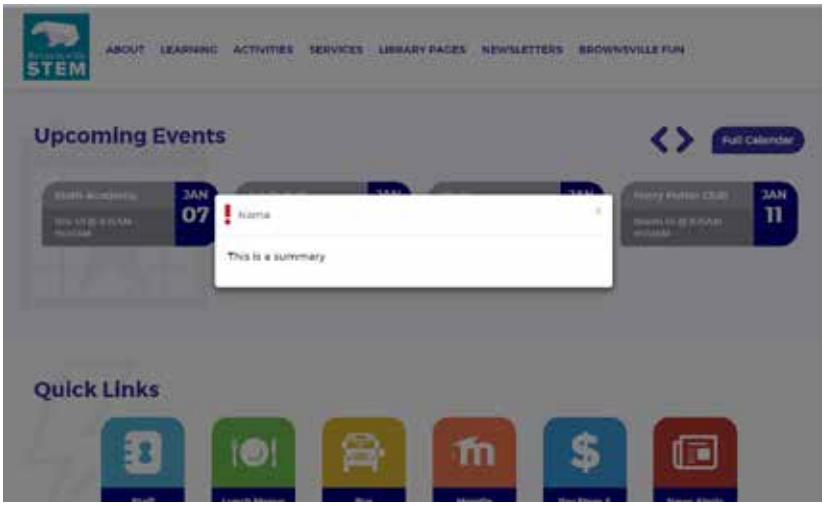
We have the ability to post alerts districtwide or by school. In the case events that affect all or multiple schools, such as snow days or natural disasters, etc. red alert banners can be added by Community Relations. Red alerts tell parents about disruptions to the school day or address temporary concerns:

- Bus accident or breakdown that would cause 10 or more minute delays
- School-specific delay or emergency early release (such as for power outage, etc.)



Please note that if your school also uses social media, you should post both an alert on your website and a notice on your social media account. It may be helpful to link your social media readers to an article or page with more information about the alert.

Each school also has the ability to create a pop-up alert that covers a user's web page. Users must close the pop-up before they can do anything else on the website:



See the Emergency Pop-up tip sheet to learn how to add one to your site.