



SUNNYVALE
SCHOOL DISTRICT

LEARN TODAY. LEAD TOMORROW.

WEB GUIDE



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Your website is the public face of your school.

Your website. Why it matters.

A tool to connect with your community

It's the public face of your school. Your website is the first thing that comes up in a search; it is often the public's first introduction to your school.

It aids recruitment. Your website is where parents of prospective students often look first for information about the school. The community uses it to learn more about your programs and successes.

It's a vital resource. While the website is not your only channel of communication, it is an important one. Parents and students can use it to keep track of important dates and announcements and link to school and district resources.



Keeping it fresh.

School website maintenance guidelines

As the public face and a vital resource of information for your school, your website must always be up-to-date and accurate.

The following steps have been outlined to help you maintain the key components of your website to keep it fresh, informative, and interesting.

Twice a week

- Tweet highlighting something cool at your school (this will automatically update the social media area on your homepage). *See the Social Media Guide for tips on what to post!*

Weekly

- When possible, try to post content directly onto a web page rather than uploading a PDF document. This helps ensure the content is accessible and easy to read on any device. *But if you do upload a PDF make sure when you export to choose 'Create Tagged PDF' and 'Use Structure for Tab Order' when you export the file. Ask District Communications Coordinator Alia Wilson for any assistance with this! Learn more about website accessibility at [digital.gov](https://www.digitallyaccessible.org/).*
- Link any news articles about your school to your school's news page.
- Post all-school announcements.
- Update school calendar with relevant events.
- *District-wide events such as holidays and in-service days will be posted by the District and will automatically flow to each school's calendar.*

Monthly

- If your school newsletter is monthly, post it on your site (PDF of hard copy and/or link to electronic version).
- Swap out/refresh a few photos on the site.
- Remove outdated information.
- As a webmaster, you should be receiving weekly SiteImprove website maintenance reports. Review the SiteImprove report and clean up broken links, fix typos, accessibility and readability issues, etc. If you are not receiving SiteImprove Reports please contact the District Communications Coordinator at alia.wilson@sesd.org.

Quarterly or as desired

- Update principal's message (not welcome message on home page, but principal's message located on the "Principal" page under "About Us").
- Can repurpose items from weekly or monthly newsletters, principal's coffees, and social media, as appropriate.

For Teacher Webpage Guidelines please go to <https://www.sesd.org/Page/4412>.

Any questions? Contact District Communications Coordinator Alia Wilson, alia.wilson@sesd.org or 408-522-8200, ext. 1084, if you need support on maintaining your website or would like to set up a training workshop.



Best in class.

Tips for an engaging website

Think like a parent. What do they need to know the most and is it easy to find and easy to understand. Keep it simple!

Introduce yourself. Provide a high-quality photo and a short bio of your school's principal, and make it easy to find on the homepage. This puts a face to your school.

Tout your school's programs. Make the information easy to find and comprehensive. The website is often the first place parents will look when they are choosing between schools, so make sure you are communicating what makes your school stand out.

Keep it fresh. Remove or hide out-of-date information, and:

- Be sure your contact information is accurate.
- Regularly update content on your school's front page.
- Frequently add your own events to the district calendar. *Always post events such as back-to-school nights, open houses, tours, early release days, and promotion ceremonies at least two weeks in advance.*
- Keep your staff directory up to date.
- Regularly add links to news and announcements.

Share your successes and special moments. Look for opportunities to create school news that you can share on your site. News doesn't have to be a written story — it can be a list, video, photo gallery or link to stories in the media that pertain to your school.

Write for the web. Users rarely read web pages the way they do books and other printed materials. Instead, they scan to search for individual phrases and keywords. So keep your content short and use bulleted lists to highlight important information and make it stand out from the rest of your text. See *“Writing for the Web” tips on our website:*
<https://www.sesd.org/Page/4410>.

Don’t bury the lead. Is your story about teachers taking part in a specialized training in New York? Then that information should be at the top of your post. Remember, readers want the meat of the story up front.

Use hyperlinks. Providing hyperlinks is an effective way to lead users to other content on your site.

Clean it up. Keep your site clutter-free and easy to navigate. Is information organized logically and easy to find? Are there broken links? Are you using prime real estate at the top of the page effectively?

Engage on the go. Many parents rely on their mobile phones and/or tablets to access the web and get information, including information about their children’s schools. SSD’s websites are designed to be mobile-friendly to ensure a quality experience, regardless of screen size.

In addition, the District has a mobile app. Remember that information about your school on the app comes directly from your website, so it is important that your website is up to date at all times so both your website and the app can be even more effective and engaging.

Any questions? Contact District Communications Coordinator Alia Wilson, alia.wilson@sesd.org or 408-522-8200, ext. 1084

If we build it, they will come.

Getting started

What is Blackboard?

Blackboard is a content management system that allows you to create a robust public site that not only represents your school professionally but also provides numerous tools to help maximize your web presence. Blackboard allows you to easily manage staff directories, create blogs, and efficiently maintain school calendars.

How do I get an account?

Send an email to Sunnyvale School District Communications Coordinator Alia Wilson alia.wilson@sesd.org with “Requesting a Blackboard Account” as your subject. If you are requesting full access to a school’s website please Cc the principal of that school to verify your request. If you need access to only a section of the website, please send Alia the URL of that page.

Managing your website

Using Site Manager

Site Manager is the interface you use to edit your website. If you have a Blackboard account and have access to any portion of an SSD website, you will see Site Manager at the top of the website once you login under My Account. What you see within Site Manager depends on your editing and/or administrative privileges.

What are apps?

Apps are the content building blocks of any Blackboard page. A Blackboard page may include one or more apps. You can create and edit apps for your own webpages, as well as share them with other users.

Apps are placed in Columns on a Page Layout.

What are shared apps?

Shared apps are apps that have been shared with other users. Anyone can create a shared app, but only the owner of a shared app can edit it or give editing privileges to others. The District has created and shared various apps with all schools. This helps keep certain content consistent and easily managed by the District.

Apps include, but are not limited to:

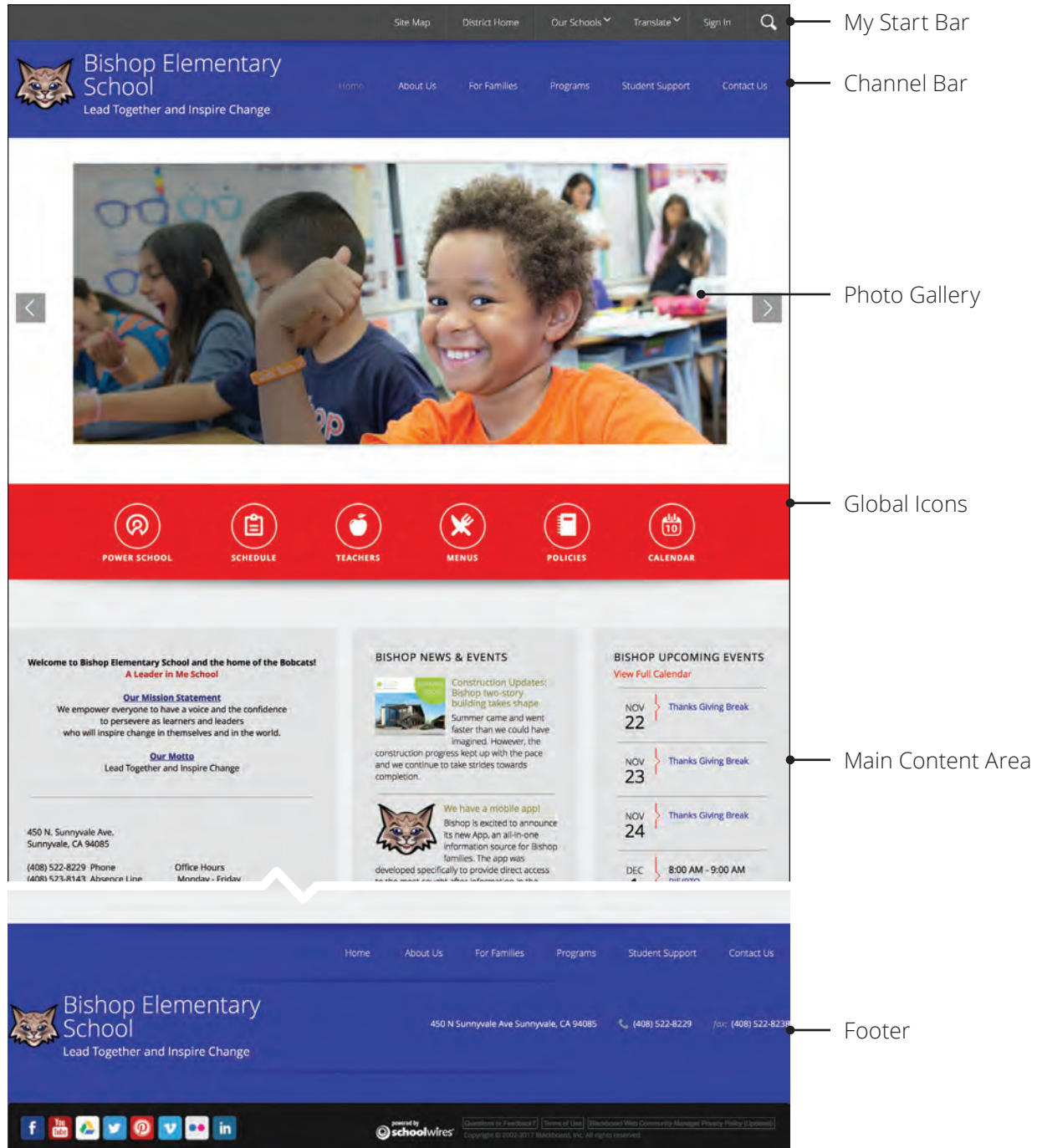
- **Content App** — for adding content; may include links, pictures, or files with your information.
- **Calendar App** — to show calendar of important dates.
- **Photo Gallery App** — to display photos.
- **Headlines & Features App** — to display articles. Features tend to be longer than announcements and remain on your website for a longer period.
- **Article Library App** — to show an index of available articles.
- **Link Library App** — to show an index of available links.
- **File Library App** — to show an index of available files.

Which are the best apps for homepages?

- **Announcements App** — use to post brief messages on your homepage, such as information about upcoming field trips, Board of Education meetings, testing schedules, or weather delays and cancellations. The Announcements App is for items displayed for a short period of time.
- **Content App** — most common use of the Content App on the homepage is to display a welcome message for visitors to your website. *When using the Content App on the homepage, keep the text brief.*
- **Headlines & Features App** — use on your homepage to link to articles. Features tend to be longer than announcements and remain on your website for a longer period. You might use the Headlines App to share a video of a school event.
- **Site Shortcuts App** — use to create shortcuts to other pages on your website or even to other websites or files. Possible Site Shortcuts on your homepage could be school lunch menus, sports schedules, or your student information system. *Find out what your visitors are calling about and searching for, and add it to your Site Shortcuts app.*
- **Upcoming Events App** — use the Upcoming Events App on your homepage to automatically display events from the associated calendar. The app allows you to set the number of events to display and the number of days of events in the future to display on the page.

Organizing content

Each school's homepage is organized in the following sections.



Anchored items: To maintain consistency across all sites, MyStart Bar, Channel Bar, and Global Icons must not be renamed, reordered, or altered.

Photo Gallery: Limit this gallery to five, horizontal photos. Each photo can link to more content, if necessary. Go to Homepage Rotator and edit the photo, add desired web address, click save. Size must be 999x430 pixels.

Main Content: The main content on the homepage consists of multiple Blackboard apps. The district will set up each school's website with the following apps. The school's subsite directors can add other apps as needed.

<p>Welcome: content app (managed by each school)</p> <p>Twitter: link your school's Twitter feed here or under the School News in the center column.</p>	<p>School News: headlines & features app (managed by each school)</p> <p>Twitter: link your school's Twitter feed here or under the Welcome in the left column.</p>	<p>Upcoming Events App (populated by events from the District & school calendars)</p> <p>Quick Links: site shortcuts app (shared app managed by the District)</p>
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Footer: The bottom portion of the website is the footer. The footer will have the same items as the header, along with additional information such as the school's address, main phone number, fax number, and social media icons. The social media icons will link to your school's social media pages or the District's social media pages.

Homepage Tips

- ☐ Create a positive first impression — go easy on the eyes
- ☐ Show major options/categories of information
- ☐ Communicate site's value and purpose
- ☐ Consider it a customer service tool
- ☐ Balance main content
- ☐ Limit text and length — shoot for no scrolling
- ☐ When you make changes to your homepage, announce them, especially internally; staff members may be referring to certain pages
- ☐ Pay attention to panel width, flexibility with different-sized screens
- ☐ Homepage space is valuable, fresh content is invaluable

General Layout Tips

- ☐ Maintain consistency in placement of important content
- ☐ Place important items “above the fold” (visible without scrolling) and centered
- ☐ White space is your friend — use appropriate line lengths
- ☐ Use chunking and subheads
- ☐ It is okay to repeat information in multiple places — different audiences use different ways to reach the same information



Best practices

- ☐ Use consistent image size for apps such as Headlines & Features.
For example: 90 pixels height x 70 pixels width.
- ☐ Hide or delete blank sections and pages
- ☐ Lorem Ipsum (dummy text) is never acceptable on a live page
- ☐ Broken links should be fixed
- ☐ Do your research
 - ☐ Your site search results: Most web site log analysis tools enable you to see the terms your web site visitors are searching for on your site. You can receive a listing for content that is either missing from your web site or too hard to find.
 - ☐ Front desk calls: Talk with the front office staff and find out what questions are most frequently asked. If they don't already know, ask them to track them. After you find out, place that content on the site, thus cutting down on front desk staff's workload.
 - ☐ Be sure to periodically scan your webpages to make sure things such as links, downloads and videos continue to work.
 - ☐ Make your website accessible to people with disabilities by including captions for all photos (in the Caption or Alt Text fields). See the Website Accessibility Checklist at <https://www.sesd.org/Page/4511> for more accessibility tips.

Resources

- Blackboard resources — https://help.blackboard.com/Web_Community_Manager/Administrator/Get_Started/Find_Your_Way_Around
- SSD photo archives — https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B5M_GnfOMog-WVZ4aXdXZnJVWjg

All the content that's fit to post.

Your website is a dynamic platform for displaying the best products of your school. Of course, it should start with the basic information that people need to have access to.

School home page

- Photo gallery of up to five photos, which must be horizontal images. Size must be 999x430 pixels.
- Important announcements (Do your websites have: first day of school date and start time, school supply list, conference dates, drop-off procedures, other important announcements)
- School news and link to school newsletter (if you have one)
- Welcome message from principal
- Helpful links
- Calendar updates for your school (add to district calendar)
- Social media
- Contact information that is always updated

"About Us" channel

"Who We Are" home page

- **Write a brief welcome** — it can be a slightly expanded version of the welcome message on your homepage; something like this: Welcome to Bishop Elementary School, home of the Bobcats! Our motto is "Lead Together and Inspire Change." Each day we strive to learn all that we can while being safe, respectful, and responsible.

Our mission is:

Our philosophy is:

“Principal/Assistant Principal” page

- Introduce your principal to the community; tell a bit about yourself and your background and philosophy.
- Include a photo of principal.
- You may also want to put in your preferred contact times/methods for parents.
- If your principal wants to do regular announcements throughout the year, you can link those to the Principal page. Or include updates from your Coffee with the Principal meetings.
- Sample of a Principal page <http://sesd.schoolwires.net/Page/586>
 - You may model your page after this one or create your own. If you like this format, it is based on the Teacher App.

“Teachers” home page

- Write a couple of sentences about your staff and staff philosophy (professional learning communities, collaboration, talented, experienced, caring, etc.)
- Include teacher listing with links to your school’s staff directory and each teacher’s classroom page.
 - Contact District Communications Coordinator Alia Wilson, alia.wilson@sesd.org or 408-522-8200, ext. 1084 for support setting this up.
- Teacher listings should connect to teachers’ individual classroom pages (see “Teacher Webpage” section below).
- To link teacher pages:
 1. Sign in to your Site Manager
 2. Go to your Staff channel in the left column
 3. Find the teacher and click on Options
 4. Click on Advanced tab
 5. Paste web address into Map Section to Web Address field and click Save!





Optional pages

- School history, if appropriate/desired.

“News and Events” home page

- **Link feed of any school-wide announcements sent** (same as feed on your school’s home page, but it can go back a bit farther; e.g. last five announcements instead of last three, or whatever you select).
- **Set up links to:**
 - Your school calendar
 - Your school newsletter or bulletin
- District web team has already set up links to
 - District Digest
 - SSD in the news

“Data and Accountability” page

- **Write a sentence or two explaining your school’s plan/philosophy regarding testing and describing any site-specific testing you do.**
- District web team has already set up the following links:
 - School site plan
 - SARCs
 - State assessments

“General Information” page

Include the following information and/or links to the pages showing this information:

- School address, phone number, general email
- School hours, including late start/early release days
- How to enroll
- Bell schedule
- Grading and Report Cards
- School-specific policies, e.g. uniforms/dress code, site-specific homework policy
- District web team has created links and navigation to these District policies:
 - Attendance policy
 - Attendance boundaries
 - Technology policy
 - Student wellness policy
 - Non-Discrimination, Title IX and Equity

“Contact Us” page

- Post a directory of complete staff of your school.
 - Contact District Communications Coordinator Alia Wilson, alia.wilson@sesd.org or 408-522-8200, ext. 1084 for support setting this up.

“For Families” channel

“Family Engagement” page

- **Write a brief welcome/introduction that describes why family engagement is important to your school;** could be something like this:
Students and their families are our VIPs! Your involvement makes all the difference in our students’ success! We hope that the resources and information in this section will help you to be informed and engaged in your children’s education. If you have any questions, please contact your child’s teacher or the school principal (link to principal’s page).
- **Include links to:**
 - **ELAC** — brief description of the English Learner Advisory Committee and its responsibilities; information, if appropriate, about your school’s ELAC, including meeting times and an invitation to get involved.
 - **PTA/PTO/PTSA** — brief description of your school’s PTO and primary programs, meeting dates and times, and contact information so folks can find out more.
 - **School Site Council** — brief description of the School Site Council and its purpose, and details about your school’s SSC, including meeting dates and where to find more information
 - **Support Your School/Fundraising** — for example, Box Tops for Education, eScrip, any special fundraising opportunities your school has.
 - **Volunteer** — invitation to volunteer and specific opportunities to volunteer at your school.

“Family Resources” page

- Include links to:
 - **Attendance** — District’s attendance policy (can link to District page or personalize yours).
 - **Counseling** — information about the counseling resources available at your school, including Community Health Awareness Council (CHAC) interns, and how to access the services.
 - **Health Requirements**
- The District has created and linked these pages:
 - SSD Parent-Student Handbook
 - District Communications
 - Community Activities
 - Kindergarten readiness
 - Middle school readiness
- Include links to resources you feel are important to your specific school community, for example:
 - Building Resilience
 - Bullying
 - Cafeteria
 - Supply lists
 - Homework
 - Grading policy
 - School-specific handbook & policies
 - Traffic and parking information
 - Helpful websites



“Registration” page

- District web team has linked this to the District’s registration page; if desired/appropriate, you may add a registration home page with a welcome and any site-specific registration instructions your school has.

“PowerSchool” page

- District web team has linked this to the District’s PowerSchool description and access portals page.

“Programs” channel

(Your site-specific program/Program of choice section, if applicable)

- **Describe your school’s special program** (Leader in Me, parent participation, Juntos, University Partnership Program, etc.), what the focus is, what makes it special, what the benefits for students are.
- **Include special registration instructions and link to open enrollment page, if applicable.**

“Academics” section

- District has linked these pages; you may choose to borrow from or add to the District pages and create your own site-specific section if you prefer.
 - Common Core
 - KLAS
 - Reading Partners
 - Transitional Kindergarten
 - Online Programs

After-School programs

- Post descriptions and information about after-school programs, for example, Kids Learning After School, musical theater, Math Olympiad, Girls on the Run, Young Rembrandts, Lego Robotics, Lego Engineering, sports, languages, choir, band, public speaking, debate, chess club. *The District has created pages for programs used by all or most schools; please feel free to link to the relevant pages and add new pages specific to your site. Contact District Communications Coordinator Alia Wilson, alia.wilson@sesd.org or 408-522-8200, ext. 1084 for support using these pages.*

“Enrichment” section

- Write information about any school-specific enrichment programs you have, such as garden, Starting Arts, technology, Playworks. *Middle schools may want to include sports, band, dances, clubs here.*
- You may add these optional sections, if appropriate
 - Learning Resource Center
 - Library

“Student Support” channel

- If desired, you may create a landing page with a brief welcome, something like: Our students’ well-being is critically important to us. Every school in the Sunnyvale School District is committed to social-emotional learning, and here at San Miguel, we have been named an Ashoka Changemaker School due to our commitment to creating a caring environment for students, parents and staff ... (insert text links as appropriate)

“Safety” page

- Post information about how you keep your school safe
- Create links and content for
 - Campus safety — visitor sign-in, supervision, traffic and parking, etc.
 - Your school safety plan
 - Evacuation procedures
 - Other programs/activities as necessary
- District web team has linked
 - Safe Routes to School
 - Safety drills protocol

“Social Emotional” page

- On the landing page, summarize your site-specific SEL programs and support (counseling, etc.), creating links to additional content as appropriate
- District web team will link
 - Counseling
 - Project Cornerstone (if applicable)

“PBIS” page

- Use the District-created page, or personalize one for your school

“Contact Us” channel

- Create a searchable directory of complete staff of your school. Contact District Communications Coordinator Alia Wilson, alia.wilson@sesd.org or 408-522-8200, ext. 1084 for support setting this up.





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