Introducing the new OPS.org to the Omaha Public Schools Community

2023 Gold Medallion Entry
Special Communication Project/Campaign

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OMAH A+ Public Schools

www.ops.org

→ **Large, Urban District**
→ **52,000 Students**
→ **Nine Team Members**
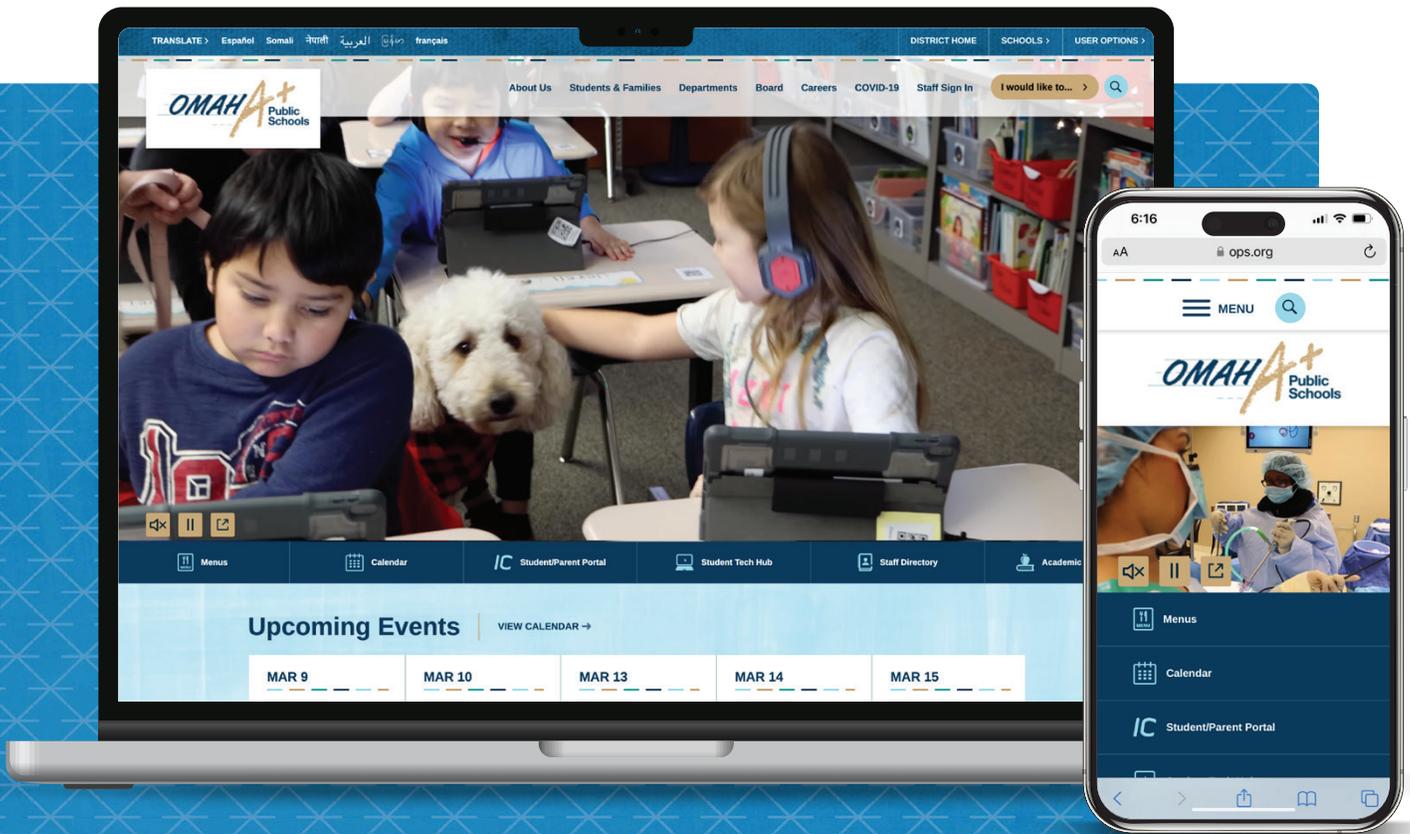
Synopsis

It was a portal back to 2004.

Dated, cluttered and clunky to update, the Omaha Public Schools (OPS) website did not meet stakeholder needs or represent the best of OPS.

District websites are an essential digital entrance for current and prospective staff and families. It's often the first interaction families may have with us. Digital assets drive perception about our quality as an employer and educator.

For a decade, stakeholders said the OPS website must be updated and easier to navigate. The district's organizational chart drove website navigation with obscure names. The site lacked photos of students and staff. Pages were outdated. Content was challenging to find, sometimes taking six-plus clicks to reach.

Staff complained it took too much work to update content, and District Communications (DC) was not part of the website management team.

Two previous communication audits recommended website overhauls and in January 2020, the new OPS Strategic Plan of Action officially called for a much-needed website upgrade.

As the pandemic hit in March 2020, more people visited the site than ever. Although there were many priorities, it was clear the website must remain a high priority to better serve families and staff. OPS developed a strategic communication plan and process to tackle organizational change management and launch a new stakeholder-focused digital platform.

Earning a seat at the website management table and leading

organizational change, DC engaged our community and launched all 100+ school and district sites from Oct. 2021 to Dec. 2022. The team used RPIE methods to ensure a research-based, goal and objective-oriented process to transition seamlessly.

Pageviews on the new site are up 25% and average 4.6 million yearly. The new site includes the first-ever staff intranet. By March 2023, 84% of staff logged in and actively used it. Staff and families shared positive feedback. The previous site was not a primary source of information. By spring 2022, 63% of survey respondents saw the new site as a trusted, reliable source, second only to district emails. Ninety percent of family visitors rate the site is average or better quality. The new website even garnered **positive news coverage**.

Research

Since 2014, Omaha Public Schools received feedback that its website needed an overhaul. Stakeholder concerns demanded a reimagined website design, fresh navigation and content approach. It would be essential to involve key leaders and stakeholders for buy-in.

Developing both the overhaul and launch, District Communications (DC) turned to primary and secondary research. Staff scoured nearly 100 professional articles and case studies. Topics included website best practices, designing website navigation, accessibility, trends and using data to deliver what audiences want. The team researched migration processes, timelines and user engagement. In 2017, the district launched a brand refresh using extensive research, which was instrumental in this process. That foundation ensured the Omaha Public Schools digital presence represented their brand identity.

Website Analytics

Looking at current website trends and analytics was a critical step. DC examined the most frequently visited pages on school and district sites, top searches and what search terms drove visitors to the site from Google.

That data informed the new site's design and what content was no longer needed. DC identified thousands of pages with fewer than 20 visits a year to discard. A team member reviewed pages with 50-100 hits to determine if they should remain. Thoughtful, data-driven conversations helped site managers understand the need to trim.

Using research articles and analytics, the DC team put together the following lists:

- **Top features needed on the new website**
- Top 20 content items for families
- Top 20 content items for staff

These lists drove website design, navigation, features and content.

NSPRA Communication Audits (2013 and 2017)

Omaha Public Schools engaged NSPRA for audits in **2013** and **2017**. In both, families, staff and community members shared their frustration with the current site. Participants called it "cluttered" with outdated information. It had minimal multi-lingual capabilities and limited accessibility for those using assistive technology. Stakeholders did not see the website as a source of news or information.

2017 Omaha Public Schools Communications Audit

Frustration with the current district website:

"Staff, parents and community members in the focus groups all consistently expressed frustration with the OPS district and school websites. With the exception of a few internal 'super users,' all audiences described the sites as difficult to navigate, inconsistent and containing out-of-date information."

District website not viewed as a source for news and information:

"No district publication or the website emerged as a primary source of information for either the internal or external focus groups."

Need for increased multi-lingual outreach:

"A consistent theme among non-English speaking families, as well as staff who work with diverse groups, was the need to increase the capacity for translation and interpretation services. Parents want to be involved and supportive in their children's education, but often find their access to information is limited…"

Access to Technology

In 2018, most families in Omaha Public Schools reported having access to technology (2018 Technology Survey), but their primary device was mobile. The team had to think in a mobile-first mindset.

Accessibility

Through research, the team identified accessibility as a key focus of the new website. Not only those using assistive technology but stakeholders who may speak a language other than English would benefit. Families in Omaha Public Schools speak more than 108 languages and engaging all families is a priority. The website must follow all accessibility best practices and be auto-translatable into multiple languages.

Interviews

The team interviewed colleagues at five school districts and one university who recently revamped their websites. Colleagues shared insights on their process and content management structures for large organizations with many locations.

Strategic Plan of Action

In January 2020, Omaha Public Schools finalized its **Strategic Plan of Action**. Students, families and staff shared input through surveys, emails, data walks and focus groups. One goal centered on upgrading district digital platforms, and ensuring accessible communication.

Planning

As a large, urban school district, Omaha Public Schools could not simultaneously transition the district and 100 school/program sites. Visioning, goal setting, preparation and messaging needed to take place to accomplish such a large task. The team developed a strategic communications plan that included a phased rollout of school/program sites.

The phases were:

1 District website

2 High school websites

3 Middle school websites

4 Elementary school websites (rolled out in five mini phases)

DC planned strategies and tactics for each phase of the rollout, tailored to meet the needs of each group. With a phased approach, the team could gather feedback and apply lessons learned to future phases.

Business Case

Early on, the team developed a **business case** to earn buy-in from key district leaders. Research revealed the district's reputation for not involving stakeholders in all decision-making. DC understood success depended on broad participation. The business case shared the importance of a digital presence, best practices for K-12 school websites and the evolution of website content priorities.

Internal Shift of Management

Information Management Services (IMS) staff previously oversaw the website. District Communications proposed shifting the design, navigation, content, permissions and training to their department as part of the website redevelopment process. IMS would then manage the back-end setup and data integration of the site. The two departments agreed on how to move forward. This shift meant less day-to-day management for IMS.

Goals

The plan's goals were specific to the website project, aligned with the Strategic Plan of Action.

1 Develop family-focused district and school websites that are a trusted, primary source for news and information.

2 Create an internal one-stop-shop information hub for employees to access the information they need for their daily work.

3 Develop a website that extends a welcoming environment from our schools to our digital presence.

4 Deliver an accessible website.

Objectives

The goals would be met through the following measurable objectives:

- By May 2023, launch a district website and an individual site for each school/program (total 101).

- By Oct. 2022, 60% of Omaha Public Schools staff will demonstrate awareness and use of the district intranet, later named OneOPS, by logging in.

- By Oct. 2022, 60% of visitors (families and staff) who complete a survey will rate our district website as a trusted, reliable source of information.

- By Oct. 2022, Omaha Public Schools accessibility score will be above 80%.

- By Oct. 2022, 60% of Omaha Public Schools staff and families will share the new ops.org is average or better quality.

- By March 2022, 60% of Omaha Public Schools staff and families will rate that they can easily find what they are looking for on a feedback survey.

- By Oct. 2022, Omaha Public Schools website will increase website traffic by 15% from Oct. 2019 (before the pandemic).

Audiences

Research-backed target audiences for plan strategies and tactics were:

- Board of Education

- District leadership, including school principals/program directors

- Current families

- Current staff

- Prospective families

- Prospective staff

- Community members

Key Messages

The communications team developed four key messages used throughout the implementation and launch.

→ **The new ops.org delivers all the information you need in one place.**
  - The top information families look for can all be accessed from the website's main page.
  - All other content can be found within two clicks.

→ **We designed the new ops.org with you in mind.**
  - Information is organized based on how families may look for it, with the most relevant information in the students/families section.
  - Staff has a dedicated section that creates a one-stop-shop for the necessary information.

- **The new ops.org is your source for good news in our district.**
  - Positive stories from across our district are shared on the district website and all school websites.

- **Accessibility was at the forefront of the design and navigation process of the Omaha Public Schools website.**
  - The website features translation to more than 60 languages, is mobile friendly and focuses on accessibility best practices.

Budget

Although the previous site was outdated and lacked thoughtful organization, it was inexpensive at less than $35,000 a year. Information Management Services staff supported the website as one of many job duties. The cost of their time, specific to more than one job duty, is challenging to capture.

Going to another website platform would be a significant budget increase. Omaha Public Schools received a local philanthropic grant of $345,000 to cover migration and first-year costs. At adoption time, the district didn't know total costs but understood that this shift would increase expenses. The team worked with the Budget Office to ensure needs would be covered if approved by the Board of Education.

In addition to the website planning, design and implementation, DC budgeted $8,000 for implementation and launch tactics.

Implementation

Research demonstrated that it was essential to gather staff and family feedback and bring them along. Understanding why Omaha Public Schools needed a new website was important. Not all content made the move, and new content may be displayed or organized differently. While an adjustment, these changes would benefit families.

Many people believe that a website launch is the primary event with a redevelopment campaign. However, before our launch, many steps won buy-in, built anticipation and ensured the website's continued success.

Request for Proposals

The district put out a request for proposals in May 2020 for website development.

Website Committee

In August 2020, a strategically formed committee of 20 reviewed proposals. Many would be part of ongoing project management. The committee included DC and Information Management Services, principals from each level and the Board of Education President. Members narrowed vendor proposals to two, who then demonstrated their products.

Board Approval

On **Oct. 5, 2020, DC and the district Chief of Staff presented to the Board of Education**. The presentation included information from the research conducted, the project goals and a recommendation from the website committee on the next steps. The Board unanimously approved entering into a contract with the selected vendor.

Design

DC worked with the vendor's design consultants to outline a concept for the new website. With DC research and the design consultant's expertise, work followed best practices and centered the needs of target audiences. Design refinement lasted four months, strategically gathering input from key district leaders and the committee. School sites mirrored the district site design with school-specific branding.

Working Across Departments

Simultaneous with the design work, DC met regularly with representatives from each district department. The team used its business case and research to teach best practices. Moving from a catch-all site to one that delivers precise, clear content was a significant adjustment. In collaboration with DC, leaders adapted to consider only the most appropriate content.

Home Page and District Navigation

DC worked to deliver content for users within two clicks. Top 20 lists created during the research phase benefitted this work. It guided the **location of the content**. The most important information is under the "Students and Families" heading. All content is organized with end-users in mind.

School Navigation Engagement

Earlier research and an analytics review helped the team develop school navigation. Before moving forward with each phase, the team met with school leaders to review draft structures and get their feedback.

The new navigation created consistency across the district. In a high-mobility district, families would see similar headings as they moved from one building to another (due to a move or as they moved up in grade).

Content Migration

For each phase of the process, a team member **mapped out the migration of old content to the new site** based on the new navigation. The vendor then moved the content. DC partnered with the vendor to ensure content placement accuracy. Departments refined their content before launch, using training on best practices. Departments maintained content in two places, the existing and forthcoming sites, until launch day.

Training

After school leaders signed off on navigation for each phase, DC reviewed the transition process with each department and school's web content managers. They talked about the next steps and reviewed best practices. Each group trained on the new platform. Due to health and safety guidelines and with respect for staff schedules, DC leveraged virtual training. The trainings were recorded to be shared with others in the future. Staff received a recorded training, training document and website style guide.

Each group had three to four months from their training to their site launch to get websites ready. Since the vendor had already migrated content, school staff reviewed each page, ensured accuracy, added newly identified content and ensured site accessibility.

Website Style Guide

The **website style guide** supported content managers through refinement and future development. It creates consistency with Omaha Public Schools digital platforms for staff and families. It ensures web content managers keep a mobile-first mentality, speak on brand, create skimmable, relevant content and keep accessibility at the forefront.

Office Hours for Web Content Managers

Each week, DC held virtual office hours for website content managers. Any site manager could come to ask questions, review content and get one-on-one support. Site manager feedback on office hours was positive.

Reviewing Sites

Three weeks before each phase launch, a member of the DC team reviewed each department and school website. Staff looked for missing content, broken links and accessibility concerns. Notes and recommendations flowed back to site managers.

Pre-Launch Focus Groups

Bringing families and staff along in the process was crucial. Before the district site launch, Omaha Public Schools held student, staff and family focus groups. Facilitated by another department, key communicators got a sneak peek of the website, looked for pre-identified content and gave feedback. DC used the feedback to make final refinements before launch.

New Website Pre-Launch Focus Groups Feedback from Families, Students and Staff

" I like the cleaner design. I really like the new navigation. Found what I was looking for on every [item]."

" Clean navigation to important information. The quick links at the bottom [of the homepage] are really helpful."

" Intuitive. Less clunky. Information where [I] expected [it]."

Building Launch Excitement

Before launching the new district website, DC employed the RPIE model to build excitement among target audiences. The team sent pre-launch emails to staff and families, held pre-launch demonstrations for key leaders and included information in district **publications** like Inside OPS (district-wide newsletter). **Social media** featured updates, as did posters in each school, a FAQ **video** and digital and radio advertisements. The current district homepage featured a countdown to launch. **DC and the Chief of Staff presented publicly to the Board of Education ahead of the launch**.

Intranet Naming Contest

To create buzz around the new intranet, DC sought suggestions for the intranet's name. Staff submitted 377 recommendations. OneOPS was selected. As a large district, OneOPS speaks to the interconnected community. It aligns with DC's comprehensive strategic communications plan.

Launch Day Gift Bags

To show appreciation for the website committee and site managers' work, each received a gift bag on launch day.

Website Phased Approach Launches

With more than 100+ schools/programs, sites launched in phases.

Omaha Public Schools new website debuted on Oct. 1, 2021. On launch day, District Communications worked closely with IMS and the vendor to ensure a successful backend systems and URLs transition. The team also created single-sign-on permissions for web content managers and the intranet (OneOPS). District Communications followed

similar tactics leading up to each phase launch. The approach allowed DC to train, collaborate, and support departments and schools effectively.

High schools launched on Dec.17, 2021. Middle schools launched on April 1, 2022. Feeling the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on staff morale, principals recommended elementary phases begin in the fall of 2022. Due to the volume of elementary schools (65), DC launched them in four phases (Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. 2022).

Feedback Survey

A feedback survey was available on the homepage for the first month of the new district website. Visitors provided immediate feedback: what they liked, what was challenging to find and other comments. A link to provide input remains on the bottom of the home page.
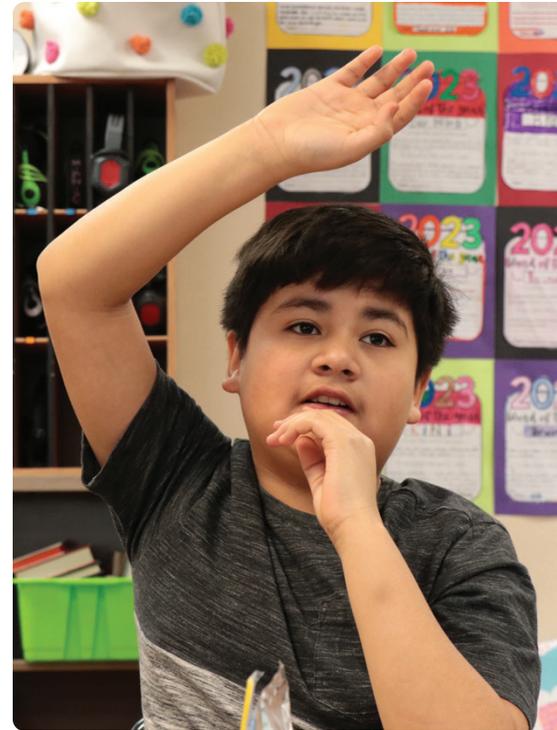
Timeline

RFP Committee Review	Aug. - Sept. 2020
Board of Education Presentation	Oct. 5, 2020
Website Vendor Contract Approved	Nov. 16, 2020
District Level Admin Training	Jan. 5 - 7, 2021
Weekly Meetings with Vendor	Jan. 2021 - current
Conversations with Dept. Heads and Content Managers	Feb. 2021
Training Department Staff	Feb. 2021
Design Finalized	Spring 2021
Website Engagement Sessions (Focus Groups)	Aug. - Sept. 2021
Website Launch Build-up	Sept. 1 - 30, 2021
Presentation to Board of Education	Sept. 20, 2021
High School Website Training	Sept. 2021
District Website Launch	Oct. 1, 2021
Intranet Naming Contest	Oct. 1 - 31, 2021
Intranet Named OneOPS	Nov. 25, 2021
Launch of High School Sites	Dec. 17, 2021
Middle School Website Training	Jan. 2022
Launch of Middle School Sites	April 1, 2022
Elementary School Training	April 2022
Elementary Websites Launch	Sept. 2022 Oct. 2022 Nov. 2022 Dec. 2022

Evaluation

A quality website is an ongoing endeavor. Content must continuously be monitored and reviewed. Adding new content keeps a site fresh and drives regular visits. The website is a 24/7 window into an organization.

Omaha Public Schools website redevelopment and launch profoundly impacted families, staff and the community. While some impacts are measurable, others are not. Using the RPIE model, DC used quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate the campaign against pre-identified goals and objectives.

Although most shared positive feedback, the transition to a new website wasn't smooth for everyone. Change is hard. Users get comfortable with how to find something. Even if it is challenging, changing the process can be difficult too. Some users shared this sentiment.

Omaha Public Schools captured feedback from the community through the website feedback survey and a spring 2022 communication survey. The results and website analytics are outlined in correlation to the identified measurable objectives.

Why Work at Omaha Public Schools?

Our mission at Omaha Public Schools is to prepare all students for success in college, career and life. Our educational offerings are just as diverse as the students we serve. We offer employees a professional workforce dedicated and committed to the success of all students. Every person who works for Omaha Public

Objectives & Results

By May 2023, launch a district website and an individual site for each school/program (total 101).

✓ **Results: All sites were launched by Dec. 1, 2022.**

By Oct. 2022, 60% of Omaha Public Schools staff will demonstrate awareness and use of the district intranet, later named OneOPS, by logging in.

✓ **Results: In the first 30 days after the website launch, nearly 50% of staff had logged into OneOPS. On a communication survey in March 2022, 69% of staff reported they had logged in. By March 1, 2023, 84% of staff had logged in and are using OneOPS.**

By Oct. 2022, 60% of visitors (families and staff) who complete a survey will rate our district website as a trusted, reliable source of information.

✓ **Results: Sixty-three percent (63%) of Omaha Public Schools families and 62% of staff rated OPS.org announcements and district news as having some or extreme value on the communication survey 2022. The only item that was higher was district emails for both groups.**

By Oct. 2022, Omaha Public Schools accessibility score will be above 80%.

✓ **Results: The accessibility score of the Omaha Public Schools website in October 2022 was 82.5%. Content and design accessibility scores were 100%, while files have room for improvement. The team continues to focus on improving this number each month. By March of 2023, it was 83.3%.**

By Oct. 2022, 60% of Omaha Public Schools staff and families will share the new ops.org is average or better quality.

✓ **Results: On a March 2022 communication survey, nearly 90% of parents and 84% of staff rated the site as average or better quality.**

By March 2022, 60% of Omaha Public Schools staff and families will rate that they can easily find what they are looking for on a feedback survey.

✓ **Results: In a March 2022 communication survey, 64% of staff and 76% of families could find what they were looking for on the website.**

By Oct. 2022, Omaha Public Schools website will increase website traffic by 15% from Oct. 2019 (before the pandemic).

✓ **Results: Pageviews for the 2021-22 school year jumped to 4.5 million, up 25% from the 2019-20 school year. In addition, visitors spent an average of 2:04 on the site, up an average of 34 seconds from the 2019-20 school year.**

Intangible sentiment is important, but data supporting the communication plan is even more important. It brings value to the work and measures the success evaluated through the lens of identified objectives.
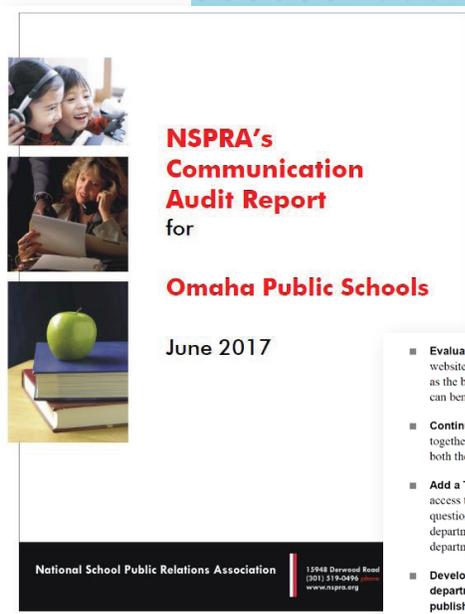
The new website also generated a **positive news story from the Omaha World-Herald**.

NSPRA Communication Audits and SCoPE Surveys

Omaha Public Schools engaged NSPRA for communication audits in 2013 and 2017. Auditors reviewed current communication efforts, completed 19 focus groups that represented a variety of internal and external audiences and held interviews with Omaha Public Schools leaders, including the superintendent, board leaders and union representatives.

Website frustrations from families, staff and the community surfaced in both audits. Omaha Public Schools updated the look and feel of its previous site, but the overall structure was overwhelming. Auditors recommended that site management shift from Information Management Services (IMS) to District Communications (DC), a navigation overhaul, and regular content updates.

The findings were **presented to the Omaha Public Schools Board of Education.**

NSPRA's **Communication Audit Report** for

Omaha Public Schools

June 2017

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- Evaluate all pages for consistency with the OPS brand. As OPS' virtual front door, the website is the prime opportunity to clearly communicate the recently defined OPS brand as well as the brand promise. Because different users migrate to different sites across the district, OPS can benefit from ensuring consistency across all pages with the brand guide.

- Continue to track site analytics. Tracking analytics of most the frequently visited pages together with input from representative users can help inform more user-friendly navigation of both the district and school pages.

- Add a TAC directory to the website. Employees and parents expressed a strong desire to have access to a comprehensive staff directory in order to contact the appropriate OPS personnel with questions or concerns. The OPS website search engine will pull up directories for specific departments, but there is no single directory and it takes several steps to locate directories in the departments.

- Develop standard templates and guidelines on web publishing and management for department pages, school sites, teacher pages, and any pages maintained by staff publishers. Provide training and support to ensure compliance. Consistency in formatting, nomenclature and navigation breeds familiarity and supports user-friendliness for parents as their children progress through the district as well as for other visitors to the site. It is critical that department and school webmasters are informed of the OPS guidelines on content and best practices for web management and are trained in the skills required to effect those guidelines. This will ensure that all department and school webmasters have the knowledge to post consistent content throughout OPS so they don't unknowingly violate rules.

- Expand the online district calendar to include all events and meetings happening within the district, filterable to school and department. Currently, calendars on the website are limited to a district-wide scroll on the homepage that includes only high level events and a page of two-page (in English and Spanish) pdf documents of annual calendars dating back to 1999-

Some specific feedback included:

- In the SCoPE Surveys, none of the staff, parents or community members rated the OPS website as among their most relied upon sources for information. In fact, parents rated "teacher webpages" as their second least relied upon source from teachers (1.9 average rating out of 5.0) and "school websites" as their second least relied upon source from their child's school (2.6 out of 5.0).

- Auditors' review of the site revealed significant inconsistencies in page formats, menu listings, and links opening to new vs. same window. Some links appear to be misnamed or misrouted, taking the visitor to a place other than what the link implies, and the navigation in some places appears illogical, e.g., "Map Resources" is placed under the "Assessment and Statistics" page and not the "District Maps" page. A number of pages are outdated and the auditors experienced freezing of the calendar pages when clicking the link for more details on an event.

- Most focus group participants expressed extreme dissatisfaction with the OPS website. They described it as extremely cumbersome and frustrating to find information. One participant noted how she writes down how she finds something each time so she can refer to it when she revisits the site, noting, "It needs a major overhaul by someone from this century."

- Participants in the support staff and some teacher focus g[...] others with the website. Because they spend significant t[...] with the content and how to find it.

Communication Vehicles

Websites

- Platform has not been updated in years. Principals have to find a team in their schools to do the updates, but they don't have the time or training.
- It's not engaging, too text heavy. We don't live in that society any longer.
- Hard to navigate, hard to search.
- It is not user-friendly. They are overwhelmed with what's on there.
- Sometimes it's impossible to find things; can search forever and still not find the information you need.

NSPRA Communication Audit

Key Findings

- **No district publication or website cited as a primary source of information**
  - **Parents: School newsletters**
  - **Staff: Email, principals, meetings**
  - **Staff and Parents: Word of mouth, *Omaha World Record***
- **District and school websites platforms are outdated, difficult to navigate, inconsistent, and content is not current**

NSPRA Communication Audit

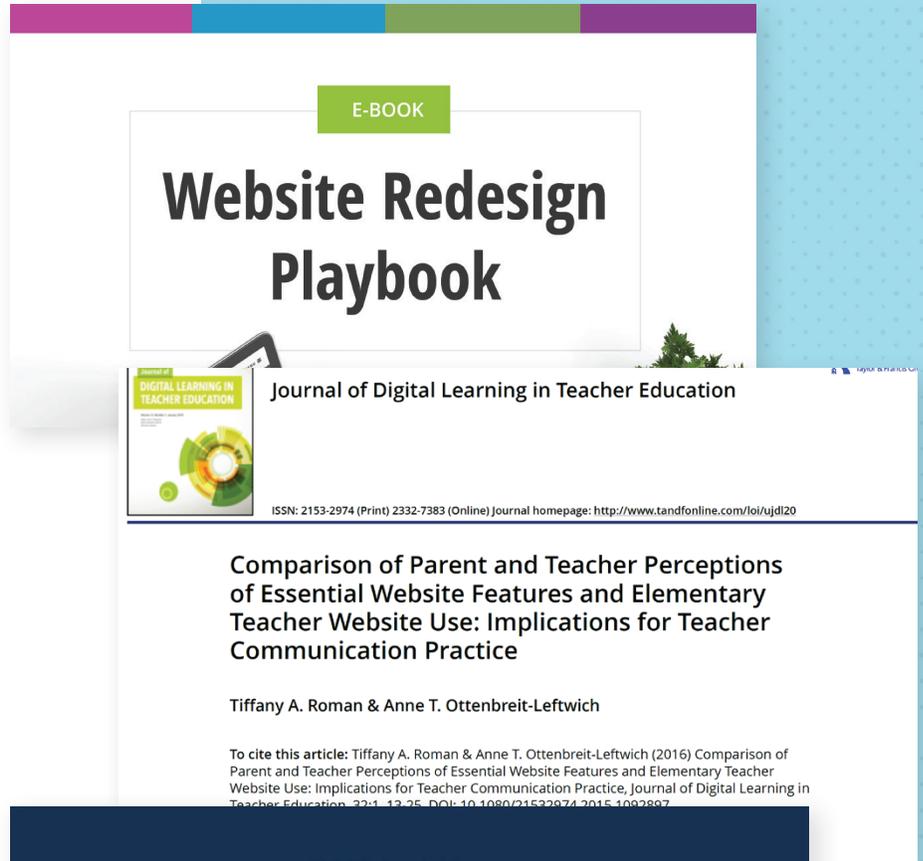### Website and Digital Communications

- **Plan for transitioning the OPS website to a CMS platform to improve navigability, relevance and expand capabilities**

Review of Articles, Case Studies, Award Winners and Professional Research

The District Communications team scoured more than 100 articles focused on website best practices, how to engage families with a school website, how to deliver an accessible website and more.

The team looked at articles under five years old and put the highest value on the newest articles. Technology changes quickly, and they wanted to ensure they made decisions based on current information.

The team also reviewed NSPRA website award winners for the last three years to see their focus on content, tools and accessibility.

Note: We are not linking to the articles for three reasons. 1) Reprinting articles without permission could lead to copyright issues. 2) We also cannot control if the links stay active. 3) Companies routinely update articles, and the article may no longer reflect the information used by the team.

E-BOOK

Website Redesign Playbook

Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education

ISSN: 2153-2974 (Print) 2332-7383 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ujdl20

Comparison of Parent and Teacher Perceptions of Essential Website Features and Elementary Teacher Website Use: Implications for Teacher Communication Practice

Tiffany A. Roman & Anne T. Ottenbreit-Leftwich

To cite this article: Tiffany A. Roman & Anne T. Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2016) Comparison of Parent and Teacher Perceptions of Essential Website Features and Elementary Teacher Website Use: Implications for Teacher Communication Practice, Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education, 32:1, 13-25, DOI: 10.1080/21532974.2015.1092897

NSPRA 2019
Marketing Your District Matters: Tips for A Compelling Digital Marketing Communication Plan

Presenters:
John Clarkin, Finalsite
Coley Fehringer, Spring Lake Park Schools

◆ Finalsite   SLP SPRING LAKE PARK SCHOOLS   www.Finalsite.com
www.SpringLakeParkSchools.com

Using school websites to support *parent engagement*

This school website supports community outreach and helps families establish home environments to support their children as students.

A middle school of 1,000 students is a busy place. With dwindling resources and increased ac-

challenges identified by Epstein is to provide information to all families who want it. A recent survey showed that 87 percent

2. Communicating: Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication about

Strategic Plan of Action

In January 2020, Omaha Public Schools finalized a **Strategic Plan of Action**. During that process, more than 680 hours of stakeholder input was collected through surveys, emails, data walks and focus groups of students, families and staff. This information helped to guide the work done on the new website.

The Strategic Plan of Action primary focus was to outline the four priorities through 2025. They are Academics, Staff, Financial Accountability and Ethic of Care.

Strategic Priority 4 directs an update for district digital platforms. Then, it guides staff to communicate with the community through authentic and accessible content. Early website work began before adopting the Strategic Plan of Action based on other data sources. Inclusion in the Strategic Plan signified to the community that the website update was a focus.

In addition to priorities and goals, the Strategic Plan of Action outlined the district values: Equity, Results, Leadership, Accountability and Joy. Each should be present through Omaha Public Schools daily work. The values and corresponding norms were top of mind as District Communications made decisions regarding the website.

Strategic Plan of Action 2020 - 2025
Powered by Foresight
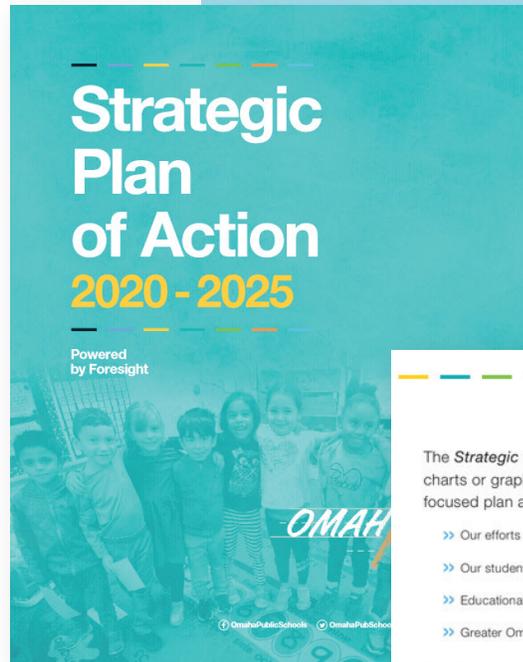
The *Strategic Plan of Action,* however, is not limited to checkboxes, charts or graphs. It is not a fixed point. Our plan is a fluid, future-focused plan and statement of intent that recognizes:

›› Our efforts must be focused on our core work.

›› Our student body is dynamic.

›› Educational technology and its effects on learning are evolving.

›› Greater Omaha's workforce needs are changing.

The *Strategic Plan of Action* was built from hours of analysis – both internally and externally – plus dedicated effort, discussion and foresight including:

›› 680 hours of input from stakeholders throughout the district.

›› Seven comprehensive reviews of data and results from every level of the K-12 system.

›› A thorough financial audit and budget projections by AlignK12.

›› A comprehensive review of literacy prepared by Children's Literacy Initiative.

›› An audit of current programs and practices prepared by Steele Dynamics.

Ethic of Care

what
By June of 2022, reflect an ethic of care for Omaha Public Schools stakeholders by communicating with authentic and accessible language, supporting staff in creating welcoming environments and empowering team members to serve as positive, knowledgeable ambassadors for the Omaha Public Schools.

how

›› Assess the voice and language used in district, school and program communications throughout Omaha Public Schools.

›› Measure the degree to which staff members feel prepared and school information to assist stakeholders.

›› Identify and develop district voice, updating both digital an reflect our ethic of care.

›› Educate and support staff in school communities on conve district voice, centralizing information that would be of use and celebrating the critical work they accomplish for stakel

success

›› communications assessment and surveys completed

›› develop district voice, shared language, and recommended communities

›› deployment of a centralized communications materials rep of communications training for school community leaders a

Ethic of Care

what
By January of 2025, upgrade digital platforms to reflect prevailing technology to provide two-way communication and promotion of Omaha Public Schools with stakeholders.

how

›› Assess, select and implement a webpage and mobile platform that will support promoting Omaha Public Schools and informing students, families, staff and other stakeholders while providing an opportunity for two-way communication.

›› Train webmasters within the central office and at each school on using the new digital platform to engage stakeholders and foster two-way communication using new technologies.

›› Review current digital resources for effectiveness and develop new tactics within the platform to support student success.

success

›› successful district-level website development and launch by June 2022

›› successful school-based website development and launch by June 2023

›› communications surveys for families reflect an awareness of information they deem useful in increasing school-family engagement and supporting their student's success
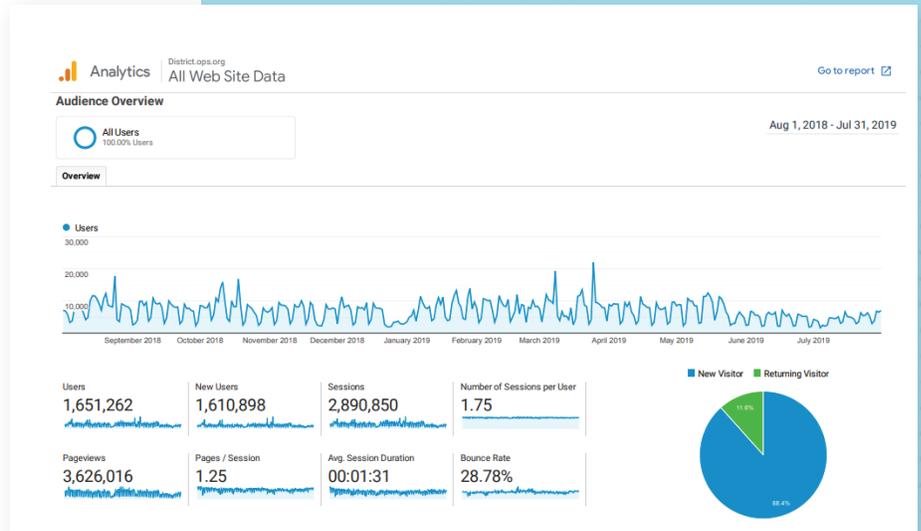
Old Website Analytics

In a school year (Aug.-July), the district's previous website averaged 3.7 million page views. A visitor typically spent about 1:30 on the site and the bounce rate was about 30%.
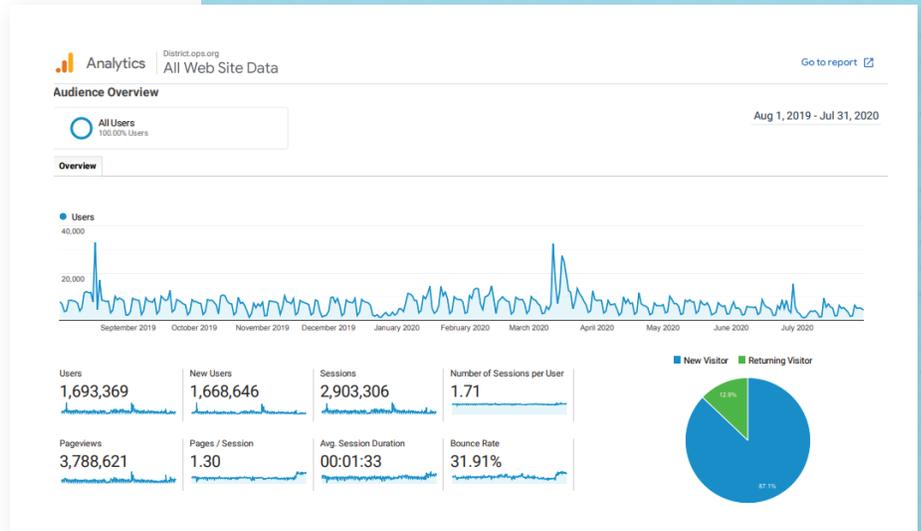
Old Website Design

Families, staff and the community called on Omaha Public Schools to update its digital presence. The past site was overloaded with information, and families couldn't find what they needed. The previous website organized information based primarily on department structure, versus how a family may look for information.

There were multiple navigation bars, repeating content in various locations.

The home page is typically prime real estate for websites. Still, there needed to be more functionality, and it was a missed opportunity to connect with website visitors.

Training on the platform was a complex, time-consuming endeavor. It was challenging to update content. Site managers were frustrated with the outdated system and failed to keep content current.
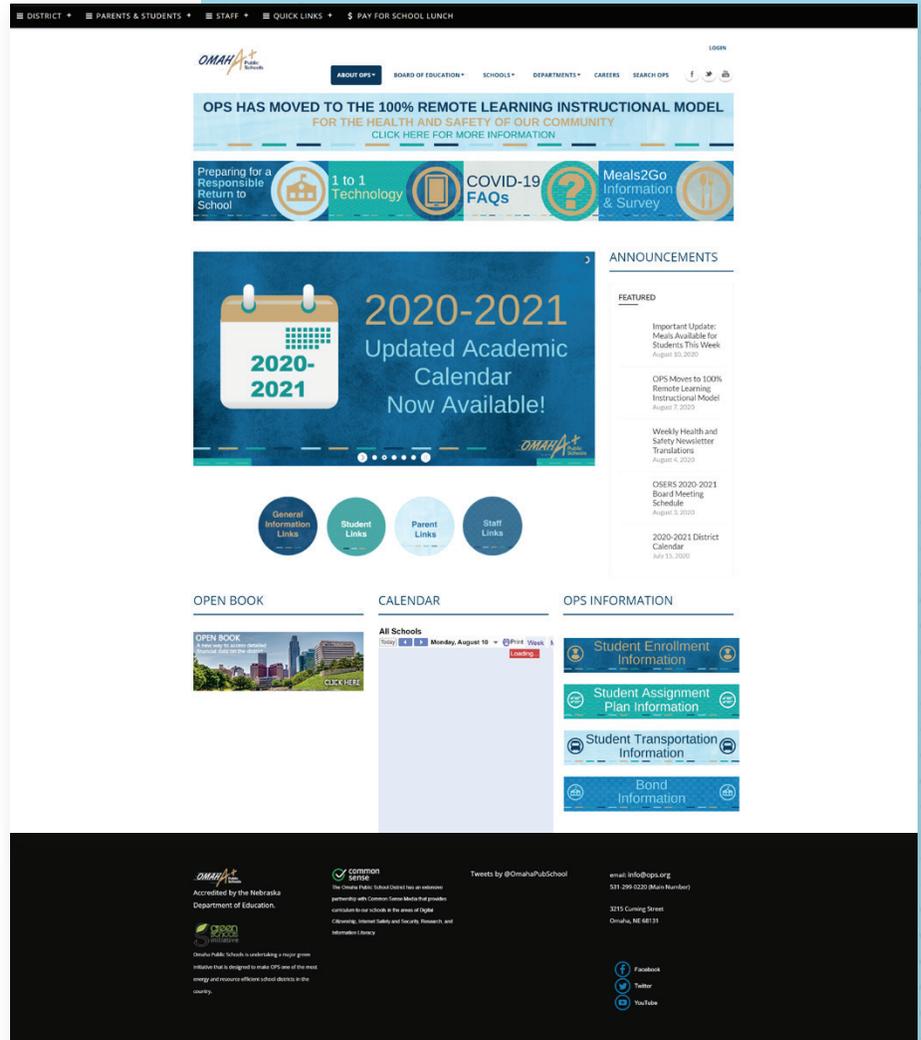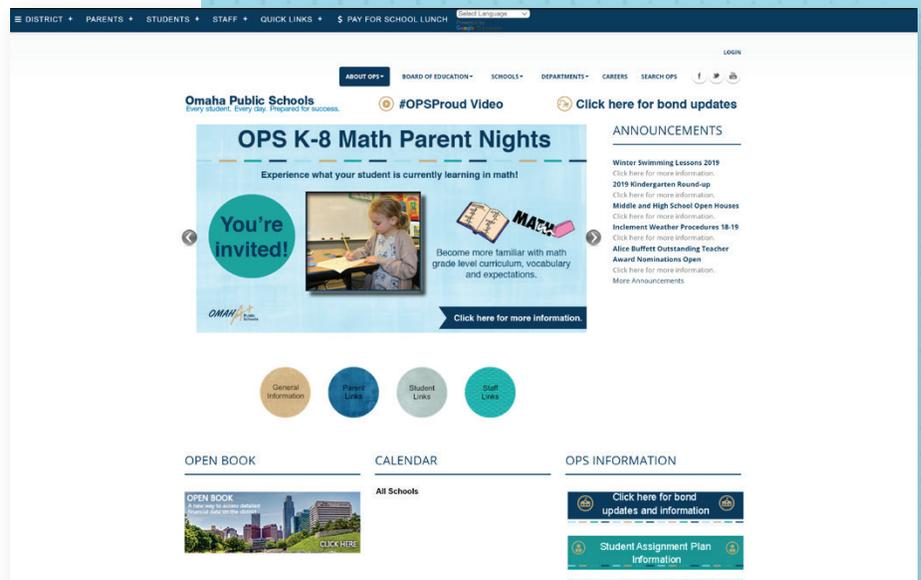
Business Case

Once the District Communications team gathered enough research to prove the need for a new website, staff developed a business case. The business case earned buy-in from key district leaders. Content included the importance of a new website, best practices for K-12 websites, consistency across sites, shifting to a mobile-first mentality and needed changes for accessibility.

OPS Website ReDesign Research

Story of OPS Website

- Last Update between 2012-2014
  - Design change
  - Little to no reorganization or structure and content

- Website is one of many digital faces of OPS
  - Open 24/7/365 whenever anyone wants to visit
  - First impression of OPS for new families[4]

- Uses dotnetnuke platform
  - open source web content management system based on Microsoft .NET

- Google currently indexing nearly 1 million pages on ops.org
  - Many pages have sat untouched for years
  - Pages built and then never deleted once updated or content changed

Top 10 Signs You need A new Website[20]

1. Your branding and messaging is outdated
2. You can't update your own website
3. Your website is slow
4. Your website is not generating new leads
5. Your design is outdated
6. Your website doesn't show up on Google
7. Your website is not responsive/does not work on mobile
8. Your website is not connected to your social media
9. You are ashamed of sharing your website
10. You think your competitor's website is better

Weaknesses

- Navigation difficult to follow[1]
  - Several layers of navigation – at times 3 layers of top navigation, tab navigation and flyouts

- Website doesn't currently tell OPS story effectively[1]
  - Not a primary source for audiences[1]

- Information in many areas out of date[1]

- Inconsistency in content and quality of school websites[1]

- Mobile friendly site (not fully responsive) but difficult to navigate on mobile devices
- Difficult for not-technical users to update content

- Does not integrate with mobile app well

- Minimal photos of students learning

- Difficult to add new functionality

- No annual clean up of content

- Minimal training for users

Phased Launch of District and School Websites

With more than 100 sites, the Omaha Public Schools team knew a phased approach was the best way to launch all sites effectively and give the needed support to each school.

For each phase, District Communications followed a similar process.

1 Outlined the navigation

2 Obtained principal sign-off on new navigation

3 Moved content

4 Met with web content managers for review and best practices

5 Trained web content managers

6 Supported web content managers in preparing sites

7 Created collateral to promote launch

8 Promoted through RPIE-based strategies and tactics (i.e. social media, district website, newsletters)

9 Launched sites

Timeline

District Website Launch	Oct. 1, 2021
High School Websites Launch	Dec. 17, 2021
Middle School Websites Launch	April 1, 2022
Elementary School Websites Launch	Sept. 2022 Oct. 2022 Nov. 2022 Dec. 2022

High School Launch Collateral

Omaha Public Schools
December 13, 2021 ·

We are nearing an exciting step in Omaha Public Schools' implementation of our new website. Later this month, our high school pages will receive the same improvements as our district page, debuting clean, crisp sites for students, families and staff. Find our school pages through the top navigation bar at www.ops.org. The launch date is set for Friday, Dec. 17! #OPSProud

Check out our NEW high school websites!

Launching Dec. 17th

Central High School

OPS.ORG
Omaha Public Schools / Homepage
Omaha Public Schools is the largest district in the state of Nebraska, serving...

29   7 co

High School Websites Launch Dec. 17

Our Strategic Plan of Action-aligned work to enhance our digital presence continues!

Following the successful launch of our all-new www.ops.org in October, new and improved high school sites will launch soon. Websites for Buena Vista and Westview High will be part of the update. The layout of our high school sites will mirror our district site, placing key points of information and good news on the homepage.

Our district will publish the new websites Friday afternoon, but it may take individual web browsers up to 48 hours to reflect the change.

Middle and elementary-level school websites will launch in groups through the coming year.

Check out our NEW high school websites!

Bryan High School

Launching Dec. 17th

Middle School Launch Collateral

New Middle School Websites Launch April 1

Our Strategic Plan of Action-aligned work to enhance our digital presence continues with the launch of our new middle school websites on April 1.

The layout of our middle school sites will mirror our district site, placing key points of information and good news on the homepage.

Our district will publish the new websites Friday afternoon, but it may take individual web browsers up to 48 hours to reflect the change.

New elementary school websites will launch later in the year.

Elementary School Launch Collateral

Omaha Public Schools
September 1, 2022 ·

The first group of Omaha Public Schools elementary websites launch today and we are so excited to share them with you! The enhanced websites are easier to navigate and have important district information right at your fingertips. Our remaining elementary websites will transition to the new design in the months ahead.

It's Launch Day!
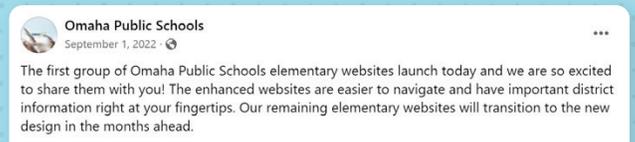
Omaha Public Schools Updating Elementary Websites

Over the last year, Omaha Public Schools launched a new district website, followed by high school and middle school websites. Now, it's time for our elementary schools!

Our district has already introduced the new look and easy-to-navigate design features for 27 elementary websites. The remaining sites will transition to the updated design in the months ahead.

The enhancements are family-focused, based on feedback, and full of district news and information for our students and families.

Staff and Family Engagement Sessions

Bringing individuals along in the process was essential for success. Although the website needed updates, change can still be challenging. The team wanted to ensure the community understood why the updates were important and felt they had a voice in the process.

Approximately six weeks before launch, Omaha Public Schools held engagement sessions with students, staff and families. School and community leaders (PTA boards) received mailed invitations to join in the sessions.

Another department hosted the sessions to ensure the validity of the process. Attendees saw a short **presentation** with background information and how the district reached this point. They were then given a **scavenger hunt** and had to find approximately 15 items on the new site. The 15 items were data-driven, based on top searches or pages visited by stakeholders. The attendees then answered questions on a survey, rating how easy it was to find each of the 15 items. They could also provide open-ended feedback. Sessions were available in English or Spanish.

Roughly 90 individuals submitted feedback surveys. Overall, staff and families liked the new site. Staff shared that they needed help adjusting to a first-ever intranet. Signing-in was a new routine and required a new mindset. DC staff made a final update based on the feedback. Focus groups also served as research for the District Communications launch plan. Responses refined which strategies and tactics would be most useful to achieve adoption of the staff intranet.

District Website Family Engagement Session

Aug. – Sept. 2021

Engagement Session Presentation

Website Goals

- Develop a site that was…
  - Family focused
  - Accessible by all (translation features and accessibility features)
  - Easy for all staff to maintain

- We also wanted…
  - To create a "staff-only" section.
  - Content that is reachable in two to three clicks.
  - Ability to share stories of students and staff through content, photos and videos.

How Did We Get Here?

- District site last updated 2012-2014

- Communication Audits

- District team researched best practices and current analytics

- RFP – August 2020
  - Committee selected Blackboard

- Board approved Oct. 2020

Family Engagement Invite

Dear Omaha Public Schools Family:

We have some exciting news to share with you. Over the last year, our district has been developing a new district website. We want our digital presence to speak to our values and be a window into the wonderful opportunities that families have in Omaha Public Schools.

A team of staff reviewed analytics of our current site, moved and reworked content to make sure it is family-focused while following best practices. Before we go live with the new site, it is important to us that we gather feedback. We hope you will help us!

We invite you to participate in a Parent Website Engagement Session. We will host two sessions at the Teacher Administrative Center, located at 3215 Cuming Street. During each session, participants will be given an overview of how we developed the new website and then time to explore the site and give specific feedback. Each session should take no more than one hour. A device will be provided for all participants.

Session dates and times:
- Tuesday, Aug. 24 from 6-7 p.m.
- Thursday, Sept. 2 from 9:30-10:30 a.m.

To register for a session, please click here.

We know this time of year is busy, but we appreciate your consideration of helping us with this important task. We look forward to sharing the new website with participants and getting their feedback.

If you have any questions, please reach out to District Communications at (531) 299-9421.

Intranet Naming Contest

Omaha Public Schools never used an intranet before 2021. Staff documents were in multiple places, including OneDrive, Sharepoint and posted on the public-facing website. One of the new website priorities was to differentiate content. It cleaned the site for families and ensured staff could get all the information they need in one place.

The team held a naming contest to publicize the new intranet. Whoever submitted the winning name would receive Omaha Public Schools branded apparel. District Communications received 377 suggestions.

DC shared the winning name, OneOPS, with staff in November 2021. The name reflects the unity as one district community and the fact that this is the online network for staff.

District Postings (Staff Newsletter) for Sept. 2021

Banner staff see when logging into Omaha Public Schools intranet, OneOPS

Building Launch Excitement

The team wanted to build excitement around the launch of the new website. Launch collateral used a space launch theme to reflect the new site's clean, crisp design and moved from **night to daylight tones** as launch day approached.

Strategies included paid digital advertising, **printed collateral**, virtual and in-person meetings, staff/family thought-leader activation, **video** and **social media**. Echoing our district's mission, vision and values, **video collateral included student voices**.

Collateral revealed only portions of the website (identified based on research) before the launch. Printed collateral targeted break rooms and time clocks to reach staff with limited technology proficiency across the large district.

Though external media was not a strategy in the plan, the interest generated by district-owned channels earned a positive, accurate **placement in Omaha's largest newspaper, Omaha World-Herald**.

Banners

Inside OPS article

Social media launch post

Family launch email

Staff launch email

OPS.org Design and Features

The new **OPS.org** features a clean, crisp look that follows brand standards and highlights photos and videos of students and staff. Both of which were not possible on the previous platform. Research and data drove the popular updates.

Working with their vendor, District Communications ensured that all the items on their Top 20 list of features are available on the new site. Many are found on the home page of each site, including:

- ✔ Announcement section
- ✔ News section
- ✔ Calendar
- ✔ School and department sites are easily accessible
- ✔ Language translation
- ✔ Emergency alerts
- ✔ Social media integration

As part of the visitor experience, the entire site is responsive and mobile-friendly; it exceeds accessibility requirements and features an easy-to-use site search.

The system's back-end allows for easy editing by users with permissions, the ability to set expiration dates on content and include shared content across sites. The site also has built-in SEO, reporting and analytics.

Most PDFs are now visible through document viewer content. This feature allows families to see the PDF content without downloading the information. It is especially beneficial for mobile users. An example is the Omaha Public Schools yearly **calendar**.

Shared content is a well-liked feature. Content is managed on one section of the website but then shared elsewhere. It looks native to each site, but there is no duplication of content or missing a page that needs to be updated. An example is the **Academic Support and Tutoring page**.

Another feature that has been well-liked is the new staff directory. The staff directory on the district website includes all staff at each school. Departments and schools are encouraged to add staff professional photos to help families identify staff.

Translations

Schools

← **Calendar**

← **Announcements**

← **Social**

← **News**
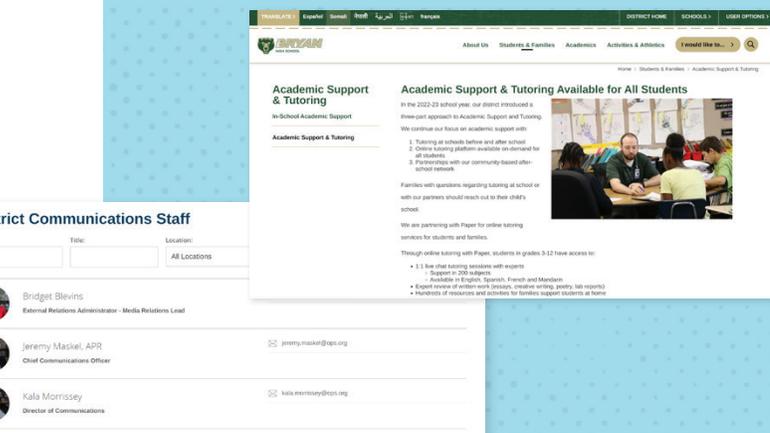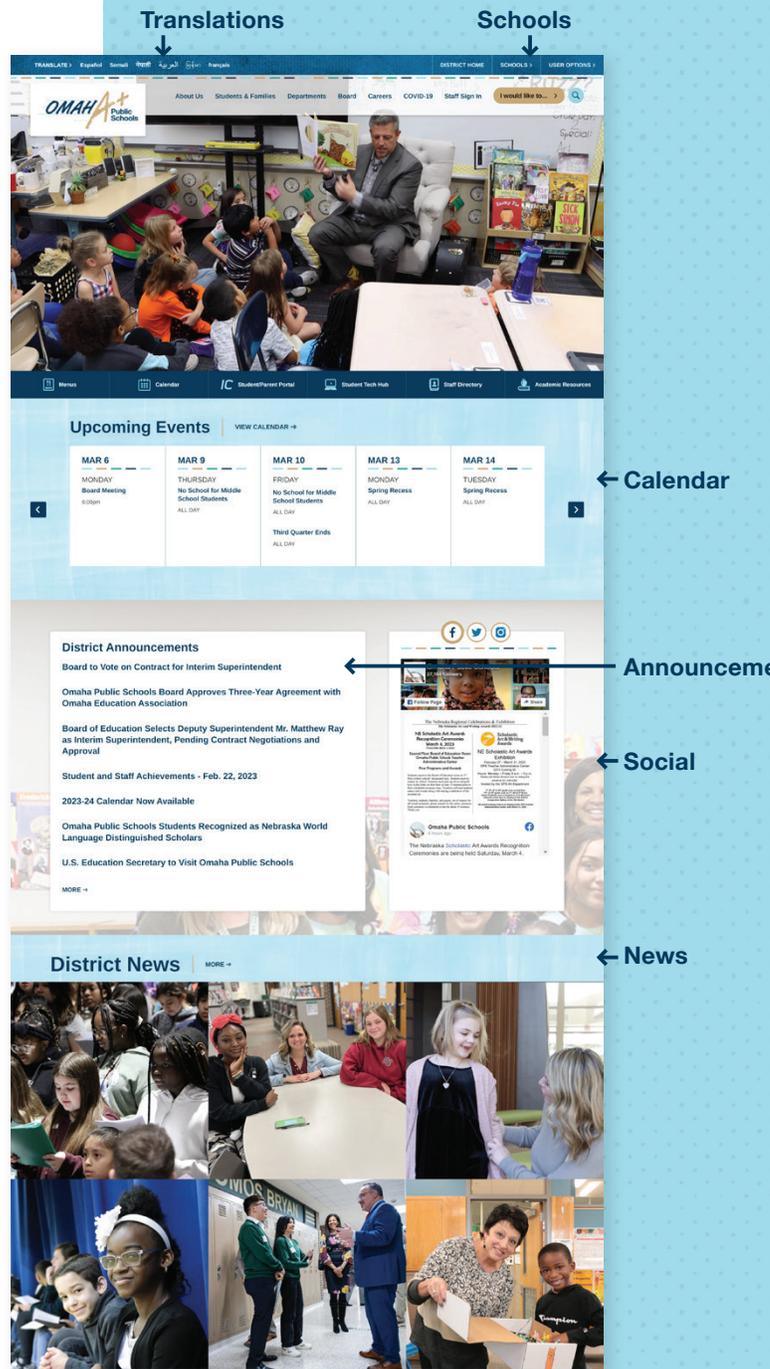
OneOPS Staff Intranet

The launch of OneOPS was a first for Omaha Public Schools. Information was previously found across multiple platforms, including Sharepoint, external websites, OneDrive, Google Docs and more.

Staff log in to OneOPS using a single-sign-on feature, which ensures staff members don't have another username and password to remember. Once staff log in, important external sites (student database, payroll etc.) are at the top, followed by headlines (important announcements), staff spotlights and shortcut links.

Content is organized by department. Each department has a landing page with overview information, quick links and a staff directory of department leaders.

District Communications built awareness around OneOPS by placing important documents in the platform and linking directly to them. In addition, key staff members were trained and could help spread the word. Staff newsletters highlighted how to access OneOPS and its content.
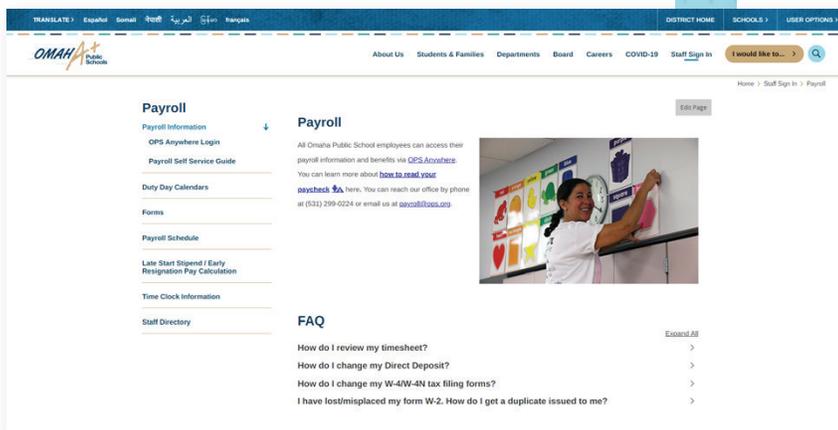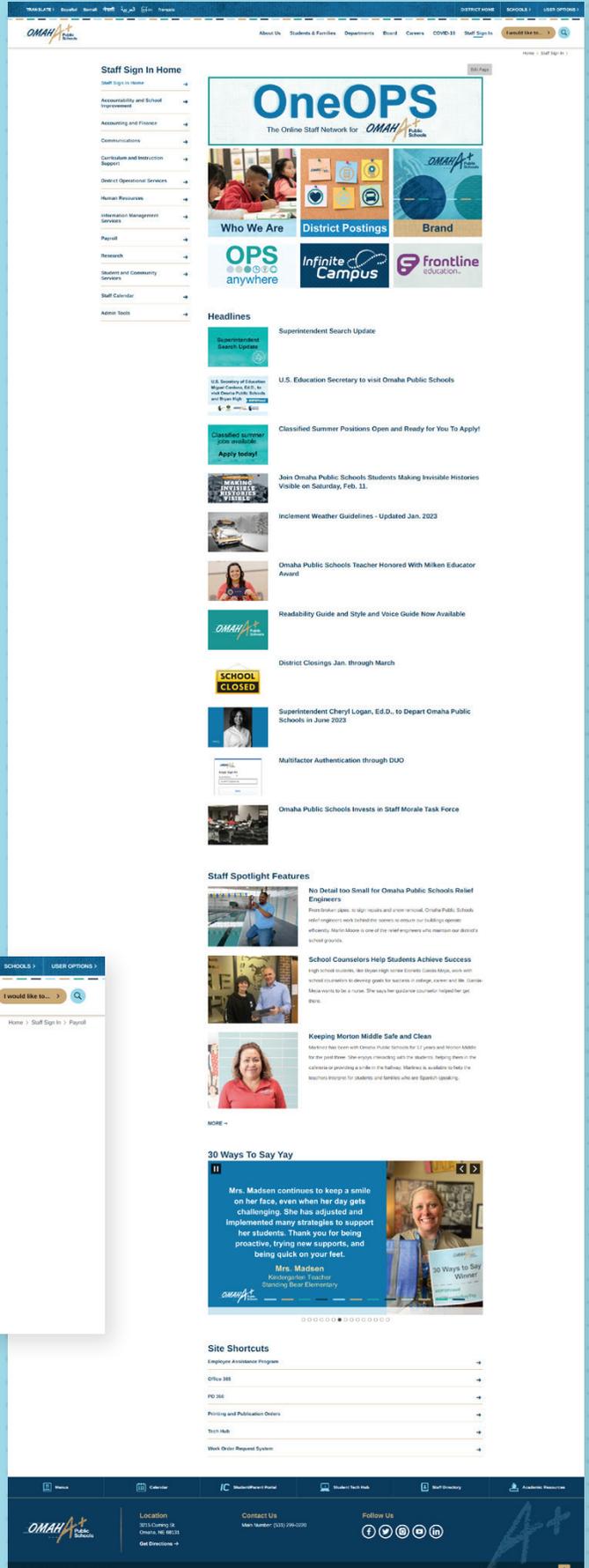
OneOPS department landing page

Spring Communications Survey

In spring 2022, District Communications asked staff and families to complete the first of what would become an annual survey. The survey asked about communication preferences, social media usage, and sentiment of the district's various communication channels. At the time of the survey, the district and high school sites had launched. Middle school and elementary schools were still in progress.

Results showed respondents are exponentially more likely to read a few sentences about a single topic than a full page of information on a single topic. This data is vital as it relates to digital presence.

Both staff and families shared that their most reliable sources of information from the district were direct emails, followed closely by OPS.org news and announcements. Sixty-three percent (63%) of Omaha Public Schools families and 62% of staff rated OPS.org announcements and district news as having some or extreme value on the 2022 communications survey. Previously, the website was not seen as a source of information. After this comprehensive update, it is now the second most reliable source.

As of March 2022, nearly 87% of staff and 78% of families had visited the new website. While some were still learning where information was now, the majority said they found what they were looking for. Sixty-four percent (64%) of staff and 76% of families could find what they were looking for on the website.

Both staff and families thought the quality of the site had improved. Nearly 90% of families said it was average or better quality, while 84% of staff thought so.

Quotes Regarding New Website from Staff and Family Surveys:

I like the school, student, and teacher highlights showcasing nice things going on in the district.

Aesthetically, it looks great and the various language options are fantastic!

It's been great- I like the public and staff facing aspect

Much better old one was terrible

New OPS.org 2021-22 Analytics Report

District Communications reviewed analytics for Oct. 1, 2021 (launch date) through July 31, 2022. The new website had 4.5 million pageviews, 25% more than in 2019-20. 2020-21 data was not included due to the pandemic. Analytics from the 2022-23 school year are on pace to exceed those numbers.
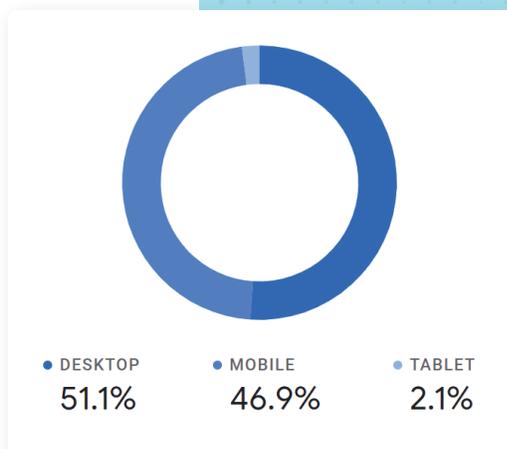
Visitors spent more time on the site per session after the launch. Visitor time on the website increased from 1:30 to 2:04.

The new site has more than 60 automatic language translations available. Visitors have accessed every language translation. The top ten align closely with the top languages spoken in Omaha Public Schools.

There was an almost even split in how visitors accessed the new website, mobile vs. desktop. As District Communications looks at data for the 2022-23 school year, mobile is slipping ahead of desktop access.

Pageviews 2021-22

Views
4.5M

Event count
12M
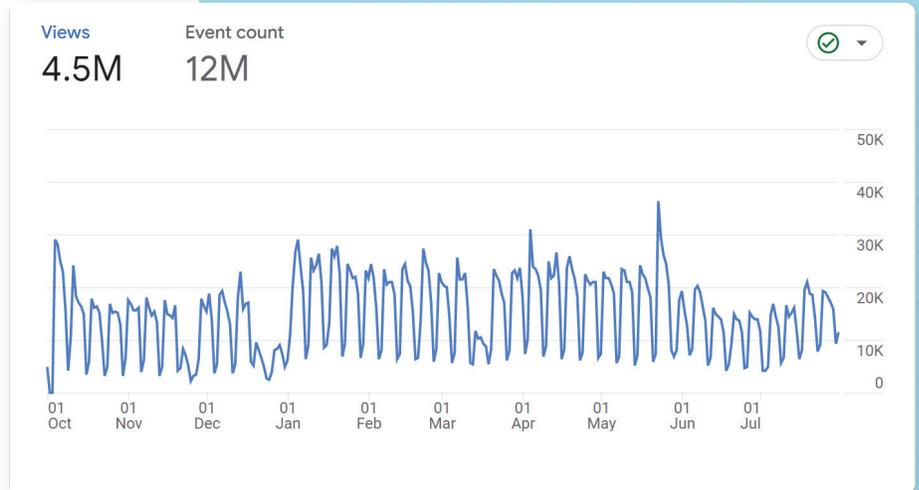
Mobile vs Desktop 2021-22

- DESKTOP **51.1%**
- MOBILE **46.9%**
- TABLET **2.1%**

Language Translation 2021-22

	Language	↓ Users
		726,160
		100% of total
1	English	714,392
2	Spanish	9,336
3	Arabic	1,065
4	Chinese	547
5	(other)	397
6	French	267
7	German	207
8	Russian	152
9	Portuguese	120
10	Italian	113

Average Session Length 2021-22

Average engagement time
2m 04s

Engaged sessions per user
1.2

Average
0m 5
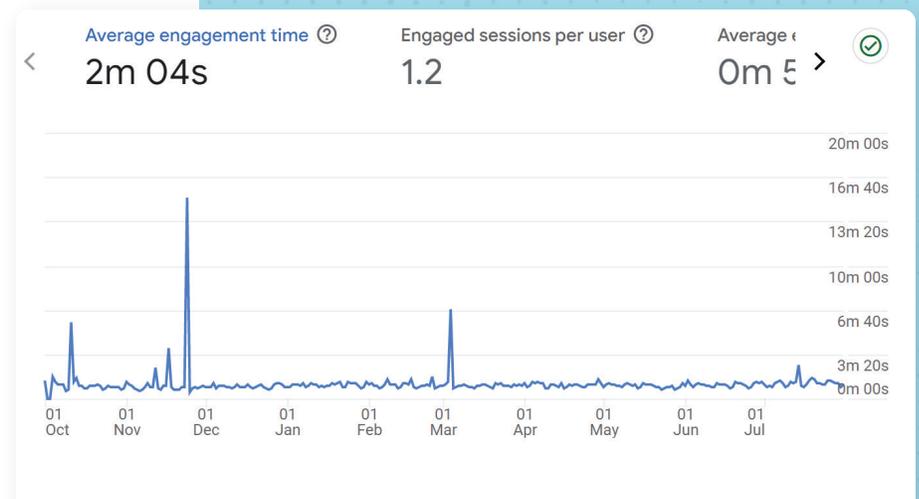
OneOPS Staff Intranet Analytics

When Omaha Public Schools launched its new website, it was the first intranet (OneOPS) for staff. Previously content was scattered across multiple locations (OneDrive, Sharepoint, external website and others). OneOPS brought content to one place.

In the first 30 days after the website launch, nearly 50% of staff had logged into OneOPS. On a communication survey in March 2022, 69% of staff reported logging in. By March 1, 2023, 84% of staff had logged in and used OneOPS.

District Communications spent time including information on the value of OneOPS in staff newsletters. They hosted training for school leaders and provided documents to walk staff through logging in and what to find on OneOPS. They also worked with key departments to ensure documents were placed on OneOPS and linked to help drive traffic.

During the 2021-22 school year, staff logged into OneOPS 516,678 times. Based on the 2021-22 figures, each staff member has logged in an average of 65 times, or more than once a week. Staff are on pace to beat that figure for the 2022-23 school year. The District Communications team sees this as a tremendous success.

OneOPS Analytics

10/1/21 – 7/31/22

	Page title and screen class	Views
		516,678 11.6% of total
1	Sign In	297,552
2	Staff Sign In Home / Staff Sign In Home	214,936
3	Staff Sign In Home / Staff Calendar	4,006

8/1/22 – 2/28/23

	Page title and screen class	Views
		423,409 10.08% of total
1	Sign In	241,175
2	Staff Sign In Home / Staff Sign In Home	178,440
3	Staff Sign In Home / Staff Calendar	3,680

Accessibility Report

Early in the process, Omaha Public Schools focused heavily on accessibility with the new website. They wanted to exceed what was required and ensure that all visitors would have a quality experience.

Midway through the transition, Omaha Public Schools received an Office of Civil Rights (OCR) complaint for the old website. District Communications worked with the OCR team to ensure the new site had no accessibility concerns.

One of the website goals is to have an accessible website. The team was striving for an accessibility score of 80% by Oct. 2022. The team met that goal and continues to push higher. In March 2023, the score was up to 83.3%. District Communications continues to work on flagged items and strives for 90%.

Ally Accessibility Report

Omaha Public Schools

Overview

Overall accessibility score: **83%**

| Overview | Sections | Usage | Export |

Accessibility score

By month

March 2023
Overall: 83.3%
Web Pages: 100.0%
Files: 69.9%

March 2023

Total sections

Total files