

## SCHOOL WEBSITE TIPS



### **Why is a school website important?**

- ❖ It's your school's face to the world.
- ❖ High-tech, 21st century schools require a good website.
- ❖ **Use your website as a reward.** Place student artwork, written and photographed projects on the website with brief captions.

### **Food for thought:**

- ❖ **Know your audience.** Students, parents, extended families, community, prospective parents and students, prospective partners in education, grant funders.
- ❖ A pretty website isn't necessarily a good website.
- ❖ **It should be unique to your school, relevant to your target audiences, up-to-date**
- ❖ **You own it:** Everything you put on your school's website is endorsed by the school. Read it before you put it online.
- ❖ **Check your site regularly:** Put it on your calendar to review your website every week.

### **At Minimum:**

- ❖ Describe your school. Use SARC or Budget Book statement.
- ❖ Principal's message (What makes your school stand out among the rest?)
- ❖ Events calendar
- ❖ Photos of school activities, always identified with captions.
- ❖ Adopt a "zero tolerance" rule for clip art. Student faces make the strongest statement.
- ❖ Follow writing standards using the Associated Press (AP) Style Guide.

### **General Facts about Websites:**

- ❖ Users don't read websites. They scan.
- ❖ Word count for web version should be about  $\frac{1}{2}$  the word count when writing for print.
- ❖ Users find it painful to read too much text on a screen. Reading from computer screens is 25% slower than from paper.
- ❖ Users don't like to scroll through long blocks of text. Place most important info. at top.
- ❖ Create a clear visual hierarchy. Most important information is most prominent.
- ❖ The Web is an informal and immediate medium, compared to print, so users appreciate a somewhat informal writing style.
- ❖ Use simple sentence structure: Convolute writing and complex words are even harder to understand online. Avoid "eduspeak" and acronyms.
- ❖ Use bullet points whenever possible.
- ❖ Avoid animation.
- ❖ The Web is a fluid medium. Update pages to reflect changes and current information.
- ❖ Avoid excessive use of .pdf documents. Printable web pages are preferable.

### **Using Photos:**

- ❖ Close-up shots with 2-3 people (watch for inappropriate gestures/facial expressions).
- ❖ High resolution – minimum 480 x 230 pixels
- ❖ All students photographed must have a media release on file with the school. The form is included in [Facts for Parents](#); the individual form is available for download in [English](#) | [Espanol](#) | [Somali](#)