Case Study: St. Helena Unified School District

Collaboration Produces a Fresh, User-Friendly Web Site in Just 65 Days
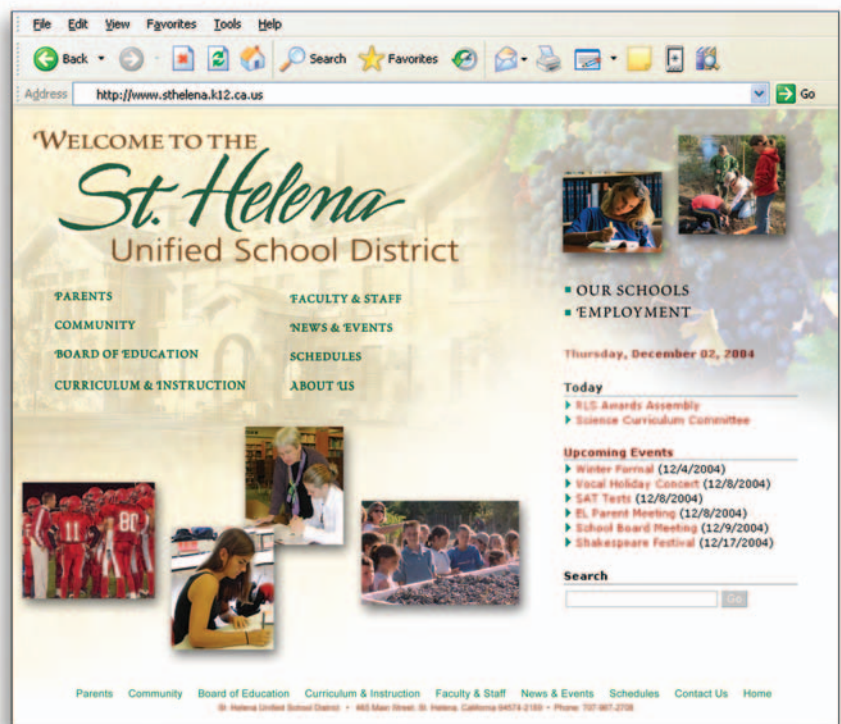
URL: http://www.sthelena.k12.ca.us

When the parents and community members of St. Helena, California, wanted a better Web site from the St. Helena Unified School District (SHUSD), the district responded by bringing in School Web Services (SWS) for a full Web site package – design, development, and training – plus the powerful SWS Campus Platform engine.

The district needed the site completed as soon as possible, and SWS got right to work. Building a team, the SHUSD and SWS organized a series of planning meetings, where they distilled the vision and goals of the Web site and defined the image and message visitors should receive from the district. Teachers, staff, principals, administrators, and board members participated in the meetings, steered by Jon Cornelison of SWS.

Taking the feedback from the initial meetings, within two weeks, SWS came up with five Web site designs to match the group's vision. From the many options SWS presented, the group provided feedback and narrowed to a single design that merged elements from the five together. In the next ten days, SWS successfully integrated the ideas and comments, producing a final version of the Web site design.

With the design approved, SWS went directly into production of the new site, beginning with installation of the SWS Campus Platform on the SHUSD Web server. SWS worked with the district to synchronize its Microsoft Active Directory with the SWS engine so that employees could log into the Campus Platform with a single network account, as well as publish contact information from the Active Directory to the Web-based faculty and staff directory. SWS transferred most of the SHUSD's existing Web site content and created Web site "shells" that individual schools and district departments could

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>
> **Rob Haley**, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, St. Helena Unified School District

populate with campus-specific information. Further, all of the site content could be produced and published in Spanish, an important service to the St. Helena community. The "beta" version of the site was released for testing 45 days after the project start date.
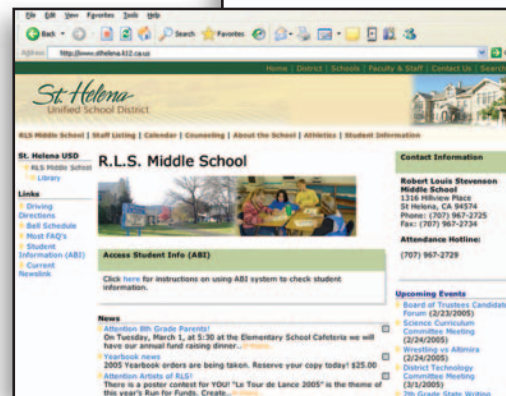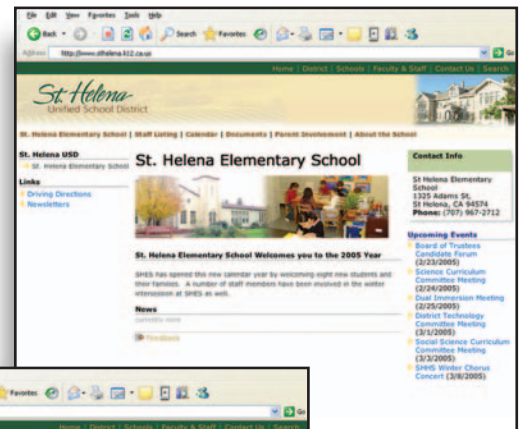
SWS continued to work closely with the district office in training school and district staff, publishing additional content, and making requested changes, and the Web site was launched to the community on January 21, 2005, after just 65 days of project work. Feedback from the community, parents, board members, faculty, and staff was positive and continues to be so:

"The St. Helena Unified School District is very pleased with the Web site design, implementation and training provided by School Web Services. **Our district needed an improved Web site to serve our community and we needed it 'yesterday.' School Web Services delivered – and delivered on time and within budget.**

Through the School Web Services Campus Platform product, we gave our departments, schools, and teachers the power to take responsibility for their own information authoring – and they love it. **Now each district department and school site has their own feature-rich Web site, which can be maintained by non-technical staff.**

We have received a lot of positive feedback from Board Members, parents and community members that say our new Web site is great. **School Web Services is a great company that provides a truly out-of-the-box Web site solution for K-12 school districts."** (Rob Haley, Director of Curriculum and Instruction)

The St. Helena Unified School District needed a fresh, flexible Web site that could fulfill the community's needs and could be produced in a short time. SWS was pleased to partner with the district to meet this challenge. With the **tools and expertise provided by SWS**, the planning process was completed thoroughly and efficiently, allowing the district to move quickly to implement a customized Web site powered by the SWS Campus Platform. This Platform provided the **adaptability** to accommodate technology already in place, as well as the easy **functionality** to encourage individualized, district-wide use. The result is the dynamic, collaborative creation of a Web site that more than fulfills everyone's needs.