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Overview

The purpose of the Fort Bend ISD website is to promote the District’s mission, while serving as an educational and informative resource for our primary audiences: students, staff, parents, community and beyond. The reliance of our audiences on the website as a credible source of information for the District’s programs, services and activities means we must ensure our site is a timely and relevant communication tool.

This guide provides current web standards and best design practices essential to developing and maintaining a successful and effective website.

Training and Assistance

The Community Relations and Technology Departments work collaboratively to provide overall management of the Fort Bend ISD website. Technology manages the technical aspects of the site. Community Relations provides direction for the message, design and function of the site.

Each District department is responsible for the routine development and maintenance of its own webpage(s). Each department will assign a content editor(s) whose responsibilities include maintaining the page(s) on behalf of their department.

Each campus is responsible for the routine development and maintenance of its own webpages. Each campus will designate three campus site administrators whose responsibilities include maintaining the main pages on behalf of their campus. Teachers and additional campus staff are responsible for the maintenance of their respective webpages.

All website editors are required to attend a training prior to receiving editor privileges.

Upon completion of training, administration department editors may call the Help Desk at ext. 41300 for assistance with their pages. Each campus’ Digital Learning Specialist (DLS) will provide technical support, training and assistance at the school level.

General Web Guidelines

Content

The content on your website should provide visitors with accurate and timely information about your department. Most visitors are seeking quick access to information. They are not seeking entertainment or amusement, so be sure to prominently display contact information and timely documents appropriately.

Accessibility

In 1998, Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act to require Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities, including visual, nervous system and physical impairments. Inaccessible technology interferes with an individual's ability to obtain and use information quickly and easily. In 2005, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 2819, which extended this federal law to include state agencies, and other state-funded entities. Note: the ADA stipulates that federal and state funding may be withheld from institutions that fail to adhere to its rules.

Although there are many requirements, the easiest way to comply with Section 508 is to:

- Avoid text and images that blink, flash, scroll, or move in any way. Moving items may have adverse effects on people with visual disabilities and may also conflict with screen readers. Blinking images/text can trigger epileptic seizures. The Photo Gallery app provided through Schoolwires is acceptable.
- Include alternate text or descriptions on all images. This allows screen readers to read the description of the image to the user.
- Avoid low contrast text. Images and text must appear at a high contrast so that persons with color blindness and other visual impairments are able to view information. Example: do not place yellow text on a white background.
- Make link text descriptive. Make your links as descriptive as possible so your users know where they will go when they click. Avoid using phrases like "Click Here" as links. See "Links" below for further information.

Maintenance

Content maintenance is the responsibility of the individual teacher, department or campus. Often, the frequency of updates is determined by the information itself; some content may need to be updated yearly, while other information may require weekly or monthly updates. It is the content editor's responsibility to update the content as soon as a need is identified.

Safety

For the safety of all Fort Bend ISD staff and students, do not publish the following information on the web:

- Personal contact information of staff or students, including home address, phone numbers personal websites and social networking sites.
- Student's photo or school related work if a Photo Release Form has not been signed by a parent or guardian. If you are unsure, verify with the student's school if they have a form on file.

Appropriate Content

Fort Bend ISD is a public institution; therefore, content editors must be very careful to avoid including inappropriate content in their pages. Appropriate links are those that are relevant to the subject matter and enhance the users' experience.

Political Lobbying

The use of a web page for political lobbying activities is prohibited. Engaging in political fund-raising or other political activities is also prohibited. Web pages must not contain political or lobbying messages and should not link to sites with similar messages. This includes PTA and Booster Club pages when opinions by its members are expressed towards District policies, actions and/or personnel, including action items being considered by the Board of Trustees.

Commercial Use

Fort Bend ISD pages may not include advertisements or links to commercial websites or to non-profit websites containing advertisements. Avoid compiling and publishing lists of "helpful links" to any website outside of Fort Bend ISD (including non-profit) as the content on these pages may

be construed as an endorsement by our District. These sites may also contain links to commercial services. Visitors have access to a variety of search engines for this purpose.

Objectionable or Abusive Material

Web pages may not include access to or contain any objectionable, obscene, defamatory, abusive, profane, sexually-oriented, threatening, harassing, offensive or illegal material.

Copyright Issues

The purpose of copyright (Title 17, U.S. Code) is to protect the right of authors to control the reproduction of their work. Permission must be obtained from the owner of any work that exists in a tangible medium that can be reproduced, including video, PowerPoint presentations, images of art, audio recordings, and material found on the Internet. The following guidelines apply to written content, images and links published or intended for publication on the Fort Bend ISD website.

Criteria

- All copyrighted material requires written permission to be republished or must be used in accordance with the fair use code as provided in copyright law (see below).
- All cited material must be carefully documented on a citation page. Links to the citation page should be provided.
- Credit lines and bylines must be used for all copyrighted material where appropriate. If no guidelines are provided for credit lines, a standard credit line should be used (i.e., Courtesy John Doe).

The ease with which we are able to access information via the Internet, duplicate, and then disseminate that information makes it easy to inadvertently violate copyright law. Be careful to consider the following before using someone else's work:

- Who owns this work?
- Do I have/need permission to use this work? Can I use this work under the Fair Use provision?
- What limitations/restrictions are there on using this work?

File Naming

Broken links and missing images on the web are often due to misnamed files. When naming files, avoid using capital letters, spaces between words, and special characters. Underscores and dashes are acceptable characters and can help manage files with long names (e.g., example_filename.pdf or example-file.doc).

Page Formatting

Text and font usage

- The Fort Bend ISD main website uses a cascading style sheet – a set of instructions that helps manage the way text displays on a website – to ensure that all pages are created using similar fonts and styles. Font choices, sizes, styles and colors will be limited to maintain consistency throughout the website.
- Avoid all capital letters in sentences. Use initial caps or upper and lower case to avoid looking like a title. All caps is difficult to read due to the lack of letter height variations. All caps can be interpreted as yelling.
- Avoid centering your text. It is difficult to read in paragraph format. Set your text flush left.
- Avoid using the underline text formatting feature. Users will assume underlined text is a (broken) link.

Headings

Set your text and headings flush left. Use heading size and boldface to set off your headings from your body text.

Backgrounds

Background text is easier to read when it is black on a white background. Color backgrounds may not print well. Avoid placing text on patterned backgrounds. Use color sparingly to emphasize or highlight your material. Large documents or important information should be black on a white background. This will improve readability and works best for printing.

Links

Make your links as descriptive as possible so your users know where the link goes. Avoid using phrases like “Click Here” as links. This practice is not Section 508 compliant.

Examples - CORRECT: Registration form INCORRECT: Registration form click here

When possible, indicate to users:

- Whether links to other sites are provided for information only or constitute endorsements of those other sites.
- When they are leaving the website to go to a linked site.
- What information is available at the linked site?

Due to the high turnover of websites and pages, it is recommended that links be checked every quarter, but no less than once every six months. Content editors are responsible for periodically:

- Re-evaluating the appropriateness of links to other sites.
- Checking the functionality of links and removing or correcting “broken” links.

Document format types

When sharing documents with the public, save in .pdf format. PDF is a universal format and is available for free on all devices. PDF documents are generally smaller in size and will take less time to open. The public is unable to alter the content on .pdf documents. Avoid linking to documents in Word, Excel, Publisher, etc. as not everyone has devices with access to these programs.

Images and Graphics

Photographs used on web pages for Fort Bend ISD should reflect the district’s diverse, vibrant community and should integrate with text to provide an accurate representation of the institution or program. Images are an excellent way to manage your content, add visual interest to your document, and clarify concepts. The focus of your document should be your content, so use and select your images wisely. Remember, images should enhance your document. Photos of actual Fort Bend ISD students and staff are preferred.

Image Rotators are only located on the District and campus home pages and should contain three – five images at one time. These images may link to other pages within the website.

Avoid the use of clip art. They tend to detract from your credibility and do not always look professional.

When selecting images, consider using the following:

- A close up photograph of a teacher or student. (Make sure the subjects of photographs are wearing bright colors and are not wearing clothing that advertises a product or brand other than Fort Bend ISD.)
- A landscape shot that shows students studying or enjoying school.
- An image of a building or a close-up of a building feature, such as a distinctive window or architectural element.

Technical Specifications

To ensure continuity and efficient use of size, as they relate to images, the following guidelines are recommended:

- Image size: No image should contain a physical measurement greater than 450 pixels wide. All images should be optimized for the web with a resolution of 72 dpi (dots per inch), which is the accepted standard for web development.
- Image File Names: Image file names should be descriptive, such as “asstprincipal.jpg.” File names should not contain spaces. A dash (-) or underscore (_) should be used in place of a space. Note: ALT tags must be used on all images.
- Image File Format: All images used on the web should be either .gif or .jpg files. Generally, .jpg should be used for photographs and .gif for simple line art or graphics containing fewer colors such as logos.
- Landscape: Make sure the subject matter fits the shape of the photo. Do not try to fit a horizontal photo into a vertical shape or vice versa.

Fort Bend ISD Brand Manager Becky Walker is available to answer photography and/or image questions and to help with selection and placement. She may be reached at becky.walker@fortbendisd.com.

Releases & Permissions

Always make sure that a student's photo can be used on the website. Verify with front office staff at the student's school that a signed parental photo release form is on file allowing the District permission to publish a student's photo. Use only the student's first name when listing him or her on the website. Also, be sure to ask employees for permission before placing their photo online. (The Parent and Student Consent Checklist/Acknowledgement form may be found on page 89 of the *Student/Parent Handbook*.)

Writing for the Web

The Internet is accessible by people of all ages, reading levels and backgrounds. Because of this, it is important to write at a level that can be comprehended by the majority of readers. Content should be written at the eighth-grade reading level or lower. MS Word can be used to get a Readability Grade Level on content.

Writing not only affects the content, it also affects the user's experience. Reading online is different from reading on paper, so the following considerations should be made when writing for the web.

Organization

Ideally, you want to write a short conclusion as your first paragraph so your readers can get the main point of your page even if they don't read it all. Then infuse your page with additional detail, leaving the least important information for the end. Your reader should be able to stop reading without missing the most important pieces of information.

Length

Use a writing style that is brief and to the point. Keep your pages short. People are visiting your website to receive specific information quickly, not to browse. Make the content easy to scan. The majority of readers will skim your page instead of reading it. Break up the content into many sections by using effective headlines, short paragraphs and bulleted lists.

Other considerations:

- Avoid “Under Construction” pages. If your site isn’t ready to show to the public, don’t publish it.
- Avoid visitor counters. This is outdated technology and will make your site appear as such.

Employee Use of Electronic Media

Website editors are responsible for following the Acceptable Use and Digital Citizenship as defined in the [Fort Bend ISD Employee Handbook](#) [Page 53-54] as it applies to their webpages.

District & Department Web Guidelines (Public View)

All district level and department pages on *www.fortbendisd.com* constitute the main district website. The district website uses a template-based content management system (CMS) to produce consistent navigation and a uniform design. The CMS allows employees with little experience with HTML & CSS to produce well-designed communications while focusing on content. All department pages that are intended for public view are to be created and maintained on the district’s CMS. The creation of websites using outside sources such as Google Sites, Weebly, etc. are not accepted and will not be linked to from the District’s website.

Department Web Content Editors

All departments must manage their portion of the site by designating a web editor(s) to handle routine page updates. Web content editors must:

- Learn to use the template in the content management system.
- Create and maintain web pages that comply with the accepted web standards and policies.
- Ensure that content is up to date and does not violate district policies or federal, state or local laws.
- Attend periodic training sessions to keep current on software upgrades, template changes and accessibility techniques.
- Follow the Web Communications Guide.

The CMS allows Business Content Owners to moderate changes made by Web Content Editors. In this case, revisions will not appear on the website until a Business Content Owner has reviewed

the changes. In order to moderate a section, Business Content Owners should provide Web Services with the content area and user names they wish to moderate.

Template & Page Layout

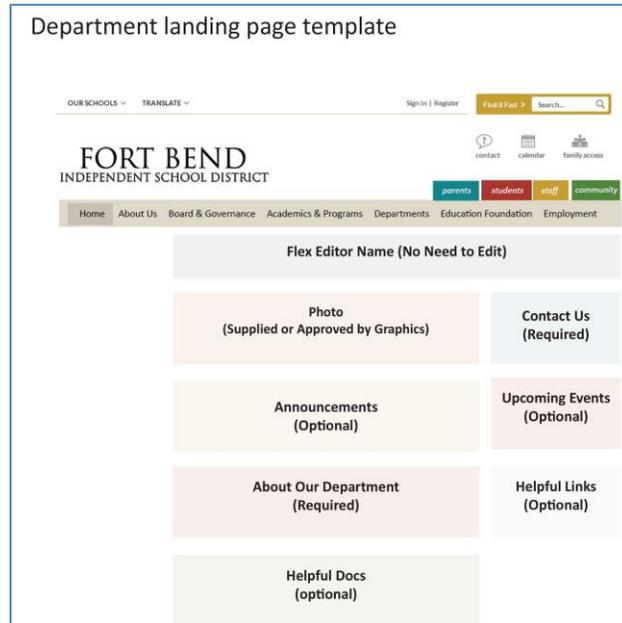
The district hosts and maintains a website that bears a consistent graphic identity (established look) in all of its district level pages. This means that all department pages must be created with the CMS. The Fort Bend ISD website uses a template that:

- Provides a consistent base for all pages
- Provides a consistent menu/navigation style
- Minimizes confusion for new visitors and maximizes the efficiency of future visits
- Eases updating

The template consists of four parts:

1. header
2. footer
3. navigation menu
4. content area

The header, footer and navigation menu are automatically managed by the CMS and are not editable regions. Within the content area you may include and arrange your material in ways that best suit your audience. Consider the needs of your audience when organizing your content to maintain consistency and easy accessibility for each page.



Campus & Teacher Web Guidelines

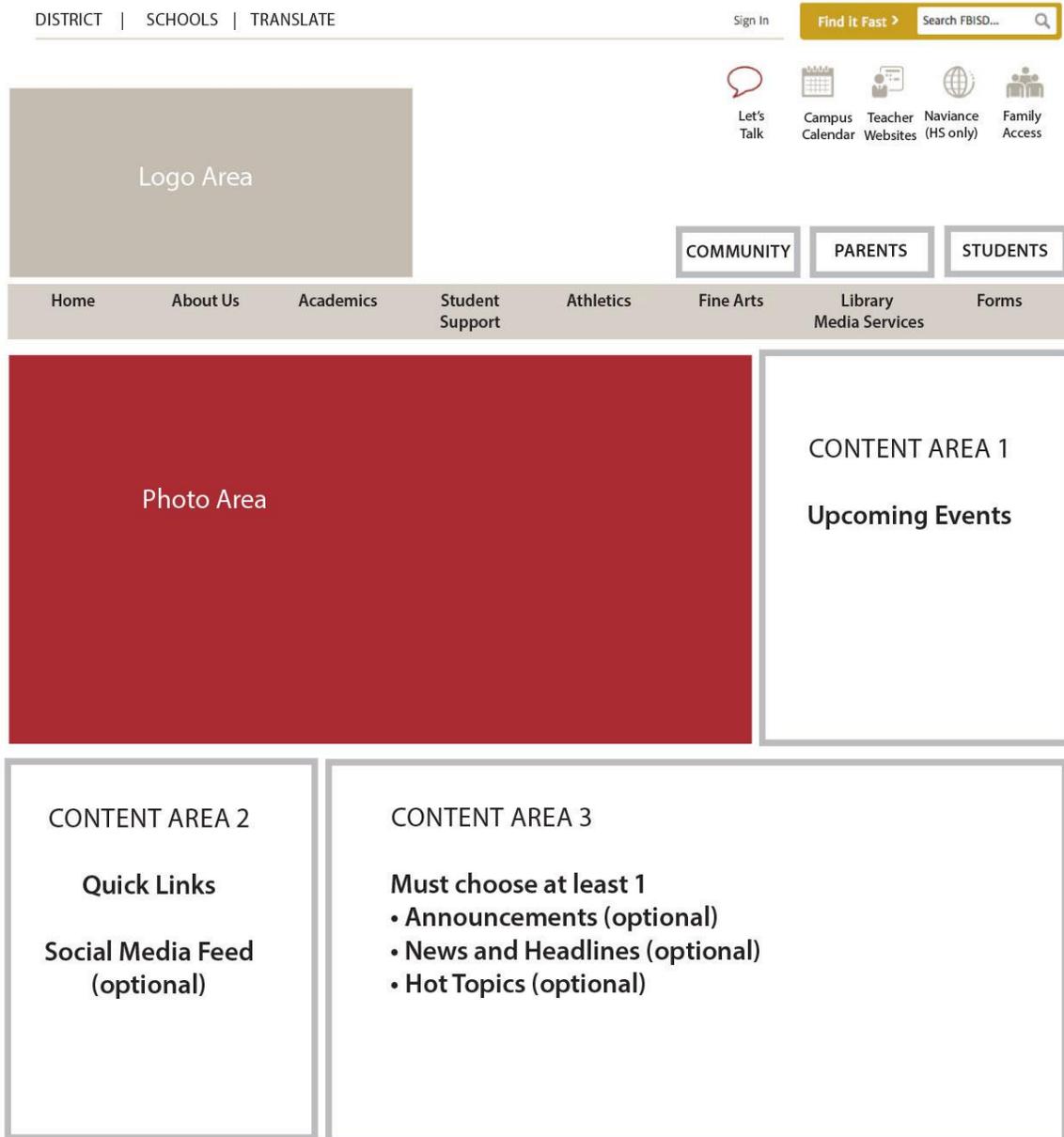
All campuses are required to maintain an official Fort Bend ISD website. Each campus website should be a source of information specific to that campus, including school news, events and staff information.

Each secondary campus must designate four campus website administrators (CWAs) who are responsible for the routine development and maintenance of the main campus webpages. Each elementary campus must designate a minimum of three CWAs. Each teacher is responsible for the maintenance of their respective webpages.

Content requirements for campus and teacher websites have been established to ensure that website visitors can locate standard information for every campus and/or teacher. The structure and location of required content has been established by the Department of School Leadership and should be maintained to ensure consistency across campus websites.

Campuses are required to follow the template on the following page for their campus website.

Campus Homepage Layout



Rotating Photo Area on Campus Home Page

Campus Website Administrators are responsible for maintaining the photo(s) on their respective campus home page. The Image App functions as a rotating image when you upload two or more photos. If you only upload one image, the image will remain constant.

Community Relations will provide each campus with an image that contains a photo of the front of their school. This image should always remain one of the images within the rotation. You may upload additional photos, but no more than five images are recommended to be in the rotation at one time.

All images should be high quality and an appropriate representation of your campus and its activities. Please see the section in Images and Graphics for additional information.

Emergency Announcements

Campus website administrators may utilize the Emergency Announcements app on their home page to communicate important and timely announcements. When an announcement is uploaded, a colored bar containing the important message will appear just below the home page image. The bar will not be visible unless there is an active announcement. These special announcements should be reserved to communicate timely updates/changes to the schools' schedule or activities and should not be used for day-to-day functions.

Teacher Webpages

Every teacher in the District is required to maintain a webpage that follows the official teacher page web template and provides the minimum requirements as established by the Department of School Leadership. Teacher webpages should be used as a communication tool for students and parents that provide basic contact information as well as information on resources to support learning, tests, as well as a calendar showing current major grades, quizzes, projects, etc.

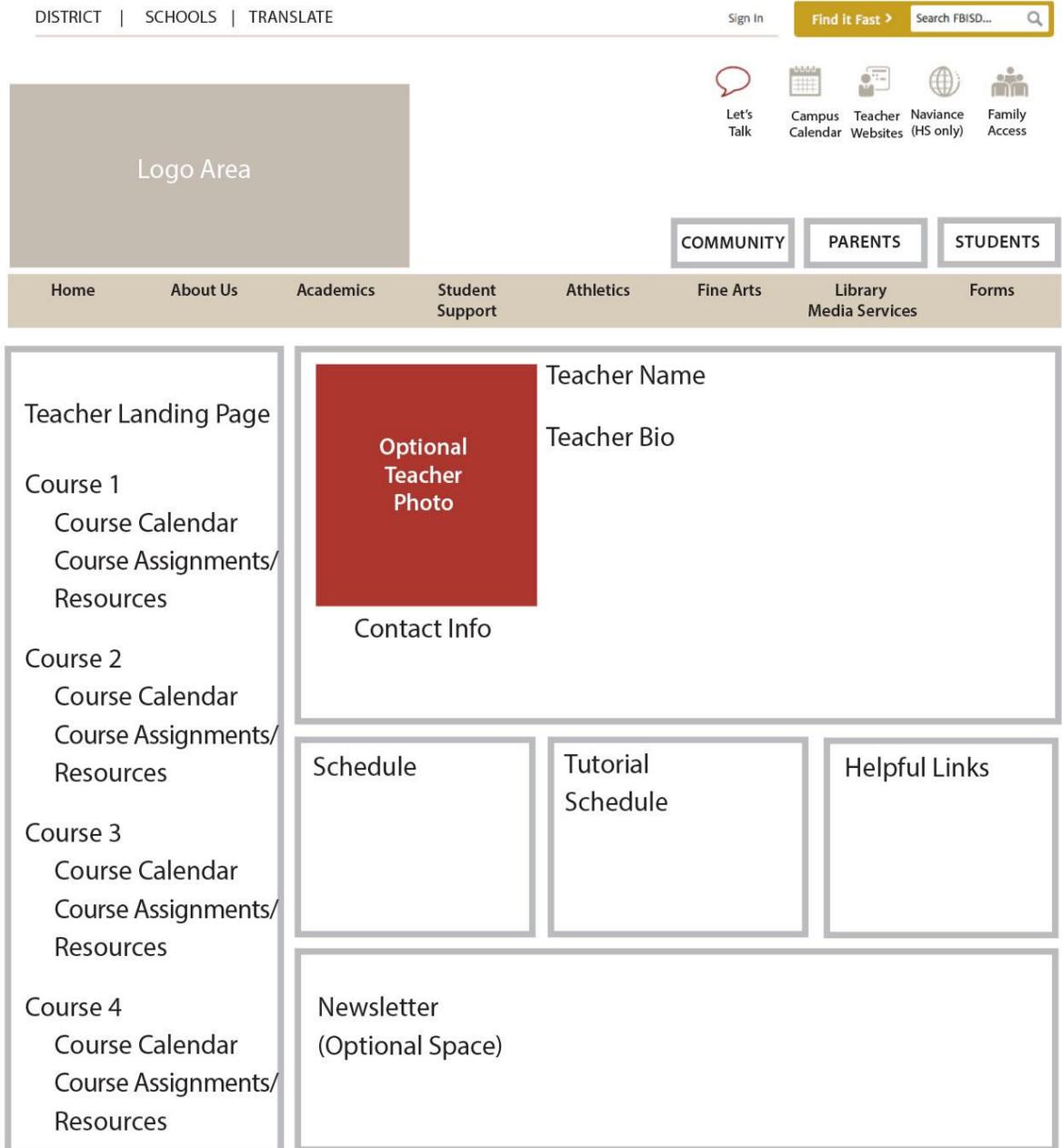
Teacher pages are required, but not limited, to the following elements:

- Teacher name
- Basic contact information (Reference the Editorial Guidelines on page 15-16 for correct formats for phone numbers, email addresses, etc.)
- Brief biography about the teacher
- Schedule

- Tutorial schedule
- Helpful Links
- Calendar
 - Elementary teachers should post all major assignments including tests and major projects at least two weeks in advance.
 - Secondary teachers should post all major assignments including tests, projects and quizzes.
 - Teachers do have the right to adjust the dates of assignments based on pacing and student progress.
- Resources should be kept current so parents have the opportunity to support their child's learning.

A photo is optional but should be professional and school-appropriate, if used.

Teacher Page Layout



Naming Course Pages

The official course name as it appears in Skyward Family Access should be used when naming a course page. Commonly-used abbreviations for course names are acceptable when adding content to your course page, but not when naming the page.

Editorial Style Guide

In an effort to maintain a consistent style and image throughout the website, please use the following best practices when writing your webpage. If you have a question that is not answered below, contact Natalie Rivera at natalie.rivera@fortbendis.com or reference *The Associated Press Stylebook*.

abbreviations/acronyms: If an abbreviation or acronym is widely known, such as SAT or ACT, it is acceptable on first reference.

academic degrees: Use an apostrophe in *bachelor's degree* and *master's degree*, etc. but there is no possessive in *Bachelor of Arts* or *Master of Science*. Abbreviations such as *B.A.*, *M.A.* and *Ph.D.* are also acceptable.

When listing more than one academic degree or certification, begin with the highest level of education completed and list in decreasing order. Certifications may be listed following academic degrees.

comma in a series: Use commas to separate elements in a series, but do not put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series. A, B and C, not A, B, and C.

campus names: When a school is named after a person, use only the person's last name. Campuses may use the full name of the person in the header on their campus home page. Always capitalize the name of a school. Acceptable uses:

- Clements High School
- Clements HS
- CHS

dates: Always use Arabic figures, without st, nd, rd or th.

days of the week: Always capitalize the days of the week. Do not abbreviate the days of the week.

months: Capitalize the names of the months in all cases. When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. Spell out when using alone or with a year alone. When a phrase lists only a month and a year, do not separate the year with commas. When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with commas. Examples: January 1972 was a cold month. Jan. 2 was the coldest day of the month. His birthday is May 8. He was born on Feb. 14, 1987.

departments: Capitalize the word “department” in the name of an office or department, i.e. Community Relations Department.

email: The “e” in email is lowercase and the word is not hyphenated.

email addresses: Use all lower case letters when writing an email address and always use the @fortbendis.com domain name, i.e. natalie.rivera@fortbendis.com.

Fort Bend Independent School District: The formal name is the Fort Bend Independent School District; however FBISD and Fort Bend ISD are acceptable. The Fort Independent School District may also be referred to as the “District,” but should be capitalized. For example: The purpose of the Fort Bend ISD website is to promote the District’s mission. Do not use Fort Bend I.S.D. or F.B.I.S.D.

numbers: Spell out numbers from one through nine and when a sentence begins with a number. Use figures for 10 and above: ninth-grade, 10th grade, 11th grade. But use all numbers in mixed situations (5 out of 10 students). Numbers over a million may be rounded off.

phone numbers: Use parentheses around the area code and a space after the close parentheses; use hyphens not periods to separate the digits, i.e. (281) 634-1000.

students: They are ninth-graders, not ninth graders. And it is “All ninth- and 10th-grade students...” Grades 10 and higher should use numbers.

times: Use figures except for noon and midnight. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes and put a space between the number and a.m. or p.m.: 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 9-11 a.m., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

website: Website is one word and begins with a lowercase, unless it appears at the beginning of a sentence.

years: "2013-2014 school year" Use a hyphen to separate the years.

An online version of this guide is available at www.fortbendisd.com/staff. This guide will be revised periodically as needed, and updates of the guide will be made as warranted. Last updated: August 2016.