

Nashua School District
Proposal for Website Upgrade: Content Strategy

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I. Executive Summary

Presented is an analysis of current website content and proposal for changes for the Nashua School District website. The purpose of the analysis is to evaluate what is currently effective on the Nashua School District site and to revise and improve areas of online communication that need to be more effective.

This analysis looks at Search Engine Optimization (SEO) elements (like headings and metadata), images, and page content and organization. It also proposes changes to the site that will make the experience more user-friendly for the community.

Our analysis has found that the current branding and organization is workable, and will require minor tweaks in design, content, and organization. However, SEO elements, such as meta description and keywords are non-existent on the site and will have to be added.

Our conclusion is that search engine optimization is hindered by the lack of meta description, resulting in the community not finding information from or about Nashua School district when conducting an online search. Once the audience reaches the page – through external links or directly typing in the URL – their search becomes more fruitful. The site itself is low on images on all pages, and the images it does include do not have alt text included. Finally, the site relies heavily on user familiarity with the district, which can be confusing for new visitors to the site. Therefore, we recommend revisiting the content strategy and adding meta description to the webpages and images and reorganizing information already on the site, allowing for the audience to find the information it is searching for more effectively.

II. Introduction

Nashua School District is located in southern New Hampshire, just north of Boston, Massachusetts. Although Nashua is a city of over 90,000, it is a close-knit community offering a wonderful quality of life to its residents. Foremost of those offering is a strong public education system to the approximately 11,500 students it serves in grades K-12.

The District is composed of 12 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and two high schools. A comprehensive website is the most efficient way for the district to connect with this widespread and diverse community. As such, it is looking for a to unify the district online with a central brand, theme, and message on the district's website, while also providing an easy way for the community to gain information (both immediate – in the form of emergency closing and other important updates – and archived) about district offerings.

A. Scope

Using appropriate analytic tools, we have crawled through the museum’s webpages to find areas of deficiency identified by the district. We focused on the site’s responsiveness to keyword searches, organization of information on the site, and easy access to district accountability and strategic planning measures.

B. Terminology

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

The art and science of making web pages attractive to search engines. More narrowly, SEO seeks to tweak particular factors known to affect search engine standing to make certain pages more attractive to search engines using keywords or keyword phrases.

Source: Ward, Susan. “SEO Definition – What Is Search Engine Optimization?” The Balance-Small Business, thebalancesmb.com, 14 Dec. 2018.

Meta Description

A meta description is an HTML attribute that provides a brief summary of a web page. Meta descriptions are typically up to 160 characters long. Search engines such as Google often display the meta description in search results where they can highly influence user click-through rates.

Source: “Meta Description.” Moz.com.

Alt Text

Alt text (alternative text), also known as "alt attributes", "alt descriptions," and technically incorrectly as "alt tags," are used within an HTML code to describe the appearance and function of an image on a page. One purpose of alt tags is to provide better image context/descriptions to search engine crawlers, helping them to index an image properly.

Source: “Alt Text.” Moz.com.

H1 Tag (Header Tag)

header tags typically make text bigger, bolder, and easier to read, and are used on text that comes before longer blocks of copy. There are SEO benefits to using the H1 tag as a way to include keywords most relevant to the content of the page—and as descriptive as possible.

Source: Can a H1 Tag Improve My Website’s SEO?.” WebFX, webfx.com.

III. Analysis

A. Methodology

A crawl through the Nashua School District website compiled information about the site in a number of categories. This proposal focuses on the key areas of responsiveness to keyword

searches (titles, meta description, images and alt text), organization of information, and easy access to district strategic planning information.

Visiting the district webpage and viewing the sitemap, we looking

B. Findings: Responsiveness to Keyword Searches

Titles and Headings

The district website contains 4470 html pages, and 51 images. The crawl revealed that all (100%) of the webpages that could have titles do have titles. However, 99% of those titles are missing an H1 tag.

Almost all of the page titles are listed as “duplicate,” which seems to be in repetition of the same category with different subdivisions (Budget Minutes, BOE Recordings, Policy Minutes, etc.).

Meta Description

The crawl of the Nashua School District website reveals that 100% of the meta description and meta keywords are missing from the site.

Images and Alt Text

The Nashua School District website contains 55 images, 51 of which are missing alt text.

C. Findings: Organization of information

Quick Links

The header of the district webpage contains the district branding and slogan, and widgets for quick links for students, educators, and parents. A banner menu helps visitors narrow their search, as does a search tool and drop-down “Quick Link” menu. Finally, below a banner carousel of images, the page posts News & Announcements, Upcoming Events, and Stay Connected. Stay Connected gives quick access to social media, district budget, and signing up for eNews.

D. Findings: Accessibility to District Strategic Planning Information

The Strategic Planning Information is currently found under the About Us menu from the homepage toolbar, then by using the appropriate link in the left menu.

IV. Comparison

Comparing the Nashua School District site (*Naturalhistory.si.edu*) with another K-12 district site, The Monroe Township Public Schools (MTPS) (*monroetwp.k12.nj.us*), looking specifically at how

that site utilizes SEO terms and organization of information. MTPS uses H1 tags for over 95% of its titles. Moreover, MTPS has 86 images, 75% of which have alt text.

Common themes for both districts include having consistent branding on all pages, including search tools for the site, displaying prominent “quick links” for frequent visitors, and organizing information in menus accessible in a homepage menu toolbar.

V. Recommendations

A. Writing Style Guidelines

Knowing the audience is current and potential school community members, the web text should be written in a style that is easily understood by that audience. The tone of the writing should remain positive, personal, and respectful. In all aspects of reporting information, the district should use first- and second-person point of view, when possible. The language should be avoid jargon, choosing instead “plain English” for best user understanding.

The articles and descriptions need to remain clear and concise. 300 to 700 words is a reasonable average length for web content, and Nashua School District should strive for that standard. Moreover, shorter words, sentences, and paragraphs encourage more user engagement and understanding. These guidelines will allow the district to focus on what users want to know, and tell them why the material is important to them.

Sources:

“Best Practices for Web Writing.” *UMB Website Manual*, University of Maryland-Baltimore, <https://www.umaryland.edu/cpa/toolbox/website-manual/prepare/web-writing/>.

“Plain Language Guidelines.” *Plainlanguage.gov*, An Official Website of the United States Government, <https://plainlanguage.gov>.

“Writing Style.” *GOV.AU Content Guide*, Commonwealth of Australia, <https://guides.service.gov.au/content-guide/writing-style/>.

B. Prioritization: Content Matrix (see Appendix A)

Each business goal of the District has a corresponding core page to reach that goal.

C. Organization (see Appendix B)

The sitemap references the grouping, labeling, and relating content so that users can easily find what matters to them.

D. Presentation (see Appendix C)

Samples of pieces of content, including consistent branding and toolbar links, in the form of wireframes.

VI. Conclusion

The client's current webpage is lacking important SEO elements that, when added, will aid users in having a successful interaction with the Nashua School District website. Keeping current content, but reorganizing information and menus for a more logical and user-friendly outcome will benefit all parties. Finally, ensuring that the district's mission is clear on the homepage and in the branding of subordinate pages will reinforce the district's position as a unifying entity in the community and a positive exponent for education.

Appendix A: Content Matrix

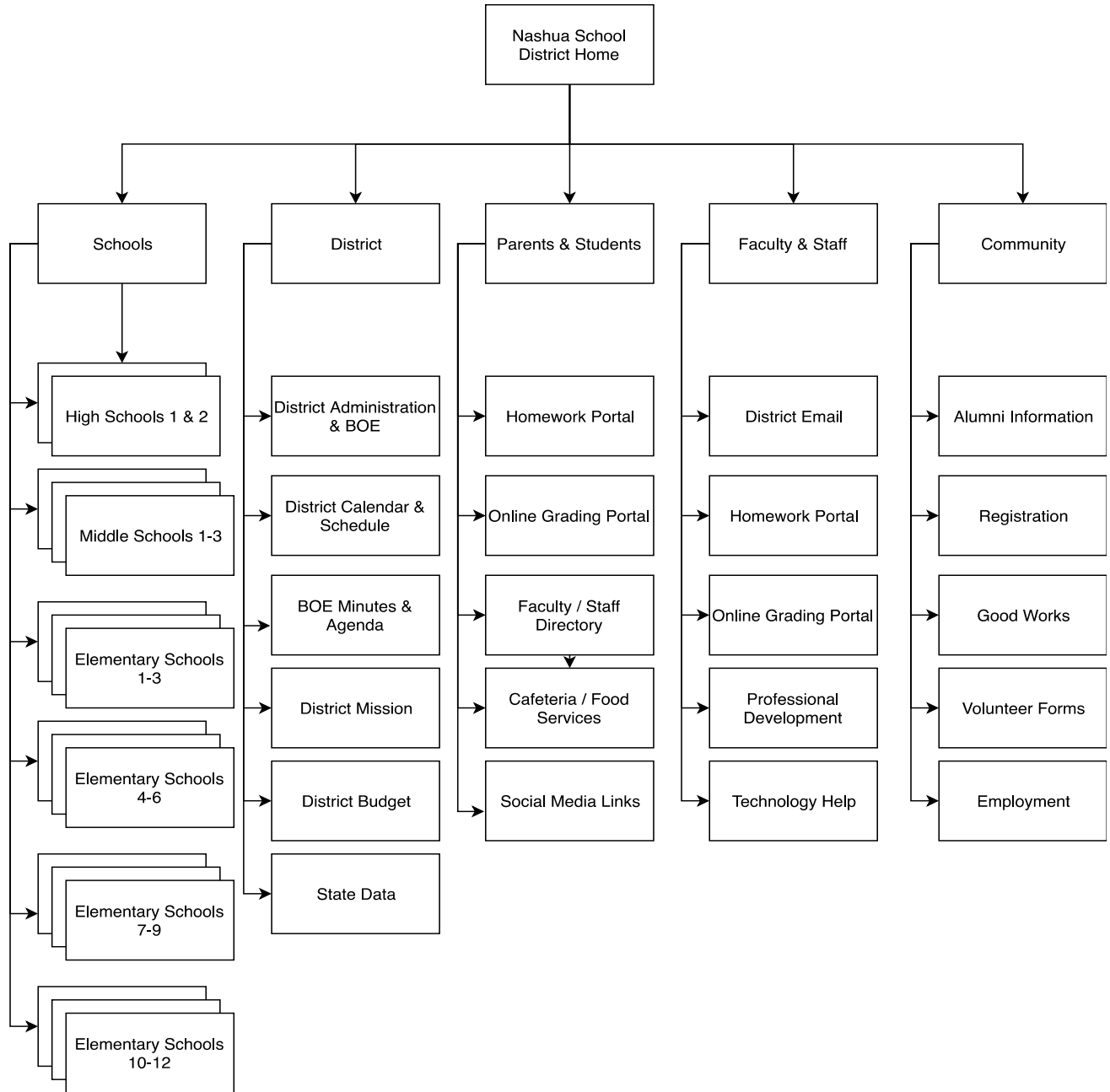
Business Goal	Core Page	Content Objects	Taxonomy	Taxonomy Sample
<p>District accountability and strategic planning measures, such as state test scores or attendance rates, should be displayed in a straightforward format</p>	<p>State Data</p>	<p>Links to current test results (per school, per test)</p> <p>Links to current attendance data (per school, per grade)</p> <p>Link to searchable database of test results</p> <p>Link to searchable database of attendance and accountability records</p>	<p>School Name</p> <p>Attendance</p> <p>State Test Results</p> <p>Accountability</p>	
<p>Conveying public transparency in accessing public documents, such as budgets and minutes of public meetings</p>	<p>Budget</p>	<p>Link to Current District Budget (full and user-friendly)</p> <p>Link to searchable database of district budget</p>	<p>[year] budget</p> <p>District budget</p>	
<p>Conveying public transparency in accessing public documents, such as budgets and minutes of public meetings</p>	<p>BOE Minutes and Agendas</p>	<p>Link to Current BOE Agenda</p> <p>Link to latest BOE minutes</p> <p>Link to searchable database of district BOE agendas</p> <p>Link to searchable database of district BOE minutes</p>	<p>[month, year]</p> <p>Latest agenda</p> <p>BOE</p> <p>BOE minutes</p> <p>BOE agenda</p> <p>[year] agenda</p> <p>[year] minutes</p>	

Marketing the good work of the District	Good Works	Photos with captions Articles on Student Involvement / Achievement	Community Student involvement [specific event]	
Providing a point of access to a variety of links and portals for parents & students	Homework portal	Opens to web-based homework portal		
Providing a point of access to a variety of links and portals for parents & students	Online Grading Portal	Opens to web-based grading portal		
Providing a point of access to a variety of links and portals for parents & students	Cafeteria / Food Services	School Payment Portal Free/Reduced Lunch Application Nutrition Newsletter Contact Link Links to schools' menus District Statement on Nutrition	Today's lunch Lunch menu Free or Reduced Lunch Application School payment portal Lunch money portal Cafeteria Cafeteria services	

Providing a point of access to a variety of links and portals for faculty / staff	District Email	Opens to web-based email service		
Providing a point of access to a variety of links and portals for faculty / staff	Homework portal	Opens to web-based homework portal		
Providing a point of access to a variety of links and portals for faculty / staff	Grading Portal	Opens to web-based grading portal		
Providing a point of access to a variety of links and portals for faculty / staff	Professional Development	Opens to web-based professional development program		

<p>Providing a point of access to a variety of links and portals for faculty / staff</p>	<p>Technology Help</p>	<p>Opens to web-based Help Desk Request form</p>		
<p>The District must begin to integrate other social media such as Twitter into the public information strategies, including links from the website</p>	<p>Parents & Students</p> <p>Also, will be buttons in header</p>	<p>Facebook link</p> <p>Twitter link</p> <p>YouTube link</p> <p>Instagram link</p> <p>Running Social Media Feed (also featured on home page)</p>	<p>[district] Facebook</p> <p>[school] Facebook</p> <p>[district] Twitter</p> <p>[school] Twitter</p> <p>[district] YouTube</p> <p>[school] YouTube</p> <p>[district] Instagram</p> <p>[school] Instagram</p> <p>Social Media</p>	

Appendix B: Site Map



Appendix C: Wireframes

District Template for All District Schools

The wireframe is structured as follows:

- Header:** A gray bar at the top containing the text "Core Page: Schools".
- Navigation Bar:** A white bar below the header. On the left is a circular "District Logo". To its right is a rectangular box for the "School Name".
- Toolbar:** A thin white bar below the navigation bar labeled "School Toolbar".
- Photo Area:** A large blue rectangular area below the toolbar, labeled "Photo".
- Quick Links:** A gray horizontal bar containing six white circular buttons labeled "Quick Link 1" through "Quick Link 6".
- Content Columns:** Two columns below the quick links:
 - News and Announcements:** A gray-bordered box with a white interior, labeled "News and Announcements".
 - Social Media Feed:** A gray-bordered box with a white interior, labeled "Social Media Feed". It contains placeholder text: "Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna.".

Core Page: State Data

District Logo

Page Title

District Toobar

Link to Current District Test Results

Links to Current Attendance Rates

Searchable Database: District Test Results

Searchable Database: Attendance and Accountability

District Logo

Page Title

District Toobar



Superintendent: Name & message



Assistant Superintendent: Name & message



Assistant Superintendent: Name & message



Business Administrator: Name & message



BOE Members



[Link to Current District Budget](#)

Searchable Database: District Budget



Page Title

District Toobar

Statement of District Mission





Link to Current BOE Agenda

Links to Latest BOE Minutes

Searchable Database: BOE Agendas

Searchable Database: BOE Minutes

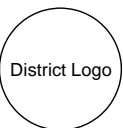


Page Title

District Toolbar

Pdf of School Year Calendar

School Schedules
Link to: High School Bell Schedules
Link to Middle School Bell Schedules
Link to Elementary School Bell Schedules



Page Title

District Toolbar



Current Reunion Information

[Link to Reunion Information](#)



Class Notes

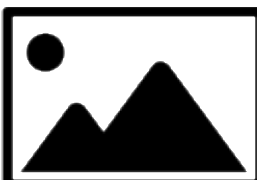
[Link to Blog with Current Updates](#)

[Link to online form to submit updates](#)



Alumni Associations

[Link to High Schools' Alumni Associations registration information](#)



Giving Back

[Link to Volunteer Forms page](#)

District Logo

Page Title

District Toobar

District Statement on employment, compliance with State and Federal Employment Laws

Send Application Materials and/or Resumes to:

District Address

Job Title

Brief Job Description (click for more, if necessary)

Link to PDF of full posting, application procedures

Job Title

Brief Job Description (click for more, if necessary)

Link to PDF of full posting, application procedures

Job Title

Brief Job Description (click for more, if necessary)

Link to PDF of full posting, application procedures

Core Page: Registration

District Logo

Page Title

District Toobar

District Statement on Registration

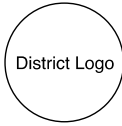
Deadlines

Address



[Link to PDF of Registration](#)

[Link to email questions](#)



Page Title

District Toobar

Contact Us

School
Payment
Portal

Free/Reduced
Lunch
Application

Nutrition
Newsletter

High School Menu

Middle School Menu

Elementary School Menu

Translated Free/Reduced Lunch Application

District Statement on Nutrition

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna.



Page Title

District Toobar



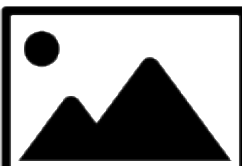
Headline: Blog / Article Entry
Starts with excerpt, ends with link to read more



Headline: Blog / Article Entry
Starts with excerpt, ends with link to read more



Headline: Blog / Article Entry
Starts with excerpt, ends with link to read more



Headline: Blog / Article Entry
Starts with excerpt, ends with link to read more



Page Title

District Toobar

Facebook

Twitter

Instagram

YouTube



Social Media Feed

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna.



Page Title

District Toobar



Community Volunteer Information

District Statement

[Link to Schools](#)

[Link to Online Form](#)



Alumni Volunteer Information

District Statement

[Link to Schools](#)

[Link to Online Form](#)



Community Donation Information

District Statement

[Link to Schools](#)

[Link to Online Form](#)