Jeffco Public Schools Comprehensive Website Redesign

Entry Category: Golden Achievement Award

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About Jeffco Public Schools

Jeffco Public Schools (Jeffco) is located in Jefferson County, Colorado within Metro Denver. It is the second largest school district in Colorado serving 69,000 students across 157 schools. With 14,000 employees, the district is the largest employer in Jefferson County and has provided educational excellence for more than 70 years.

Synopsis of the Website Redesign Project

In January 2023, Jeffco launched a comprehensive redesign of our district website, #TeamJeffco intranet and 133 school websites to connect staff, students and families with resources from the district and their schools in support of delivering a world-class education.

The charge for this project was to find a robust web solution that adequately served our diverse schools and community and to provide users with long-term sustainability, growth and compliance.

Through project and communications plans built on extensive research, planning, implementation and evaluation, we have achieved our goals of delivering a solution that provides:

- Focused content through an intuitive user experience via a modern, user-friendly website platform;
- A mobile-first, responsive design for a seamless user experience across digital devices;
- A platform that allows Jeffco to champion digital equity and accessibility in service of our diverse school communities;
- An easy-to-use website platform for school staff;
- An intranet that employees can trust to be the single source of truth for district knowledge.

Research

Research has guided Jeffco's website redesign project from the start. Initial research was conducted to provide the foundation for our website redesign goals and system requirements.

Research tactics

Initial research tactics included surveys, a web accessibility audit and general information gathering on website best practices and accessibility requirements.

Community and staff surveys

To kick off the website redesign project, two surveys were conducted in January 2023 to gain feedback from staff, families, students and community members on their experiences with Jeffco's current websites, including the district website, school website and intranet for staff.

The surveys covered all aspects of web experience, from what devices are most commonly used to what's important for users to find on the district website vs. a school website. The community survey, which was offered in English and Spanish, yielded 540 responses. The staff survey yielded 612 responses.

Web accessibility audit

The web accessibility audit was conducted in January 2023 and covered the district website, the intranet and a range of school websites from each grade level. The scope of this audit included:

- Overall web accessibility status
- Reviewing the current information architecture
- List of broken links
- List of high and low-ranking pages

Information gathering

Tactics for information gathering on website best practices and accessibility requirements included:

- Membership to the International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP)
- Attendance at the M-Enabling Summit
- Regular attendance to COSPRA Hot Topic sessions focused on accessibility
- Reading articles, journals and books on the topic of website best practices

Research-backed solutions

The information gained from initial research methods provided the roadmap for research-backed solutions for the navigation, sitemap and functionality of the district website, the intranet and the school websites. Please review the Website User Research Report for an outline of the specific, research-backed solutions.

Supporting materials

- Website User Research Report

Planning and Implementation

Using research as the foundation, our project plan focused on collaboration, ownership and change management tactics, while our comprehensive communications plan leveraged internal and external vehicles to share action items, progress updates, opportunities to participate and overall excitement.

Project plan, timeline and implementation

The project plan for Jeffco's website redesign managed all components of the project, starting with the creation of the RFP to planning, content, design, production, development, testing, training and launch.

Internal stakeholders and roles by RACI (responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed)

- Information Technology department (R, A, C, I)
    - Role: Technical support, project lead
- Communications Services department (R, A, C, I)
    - Role: Functional support, project lead
- Department and school leadership (C, I)
    - Role: Support their teams in completing the content update process
- Department and school content owners and web editors (R, A)
    - Role: Complete the content update process for their school or department
- Web Governance Committee (C, I)
    - Role: Review RFP submissions and make recommendations

Additional resourcing

In addition to the project leads, the following resources were identified as needed support for this project to meet our project goals:

- **Four contracted web designers**: To support the design and development of 133 school websites, one district website and one intranet.
- **Six contracted web copyeditors:** To support department and school content owners with creating clear and accurate content designed for the web.
- **Third-party usability testing firm:** To conduct unbiased usability testing sessions with Jeffco staff, families, students and community members and analyze post-launch survey data.

High-Level Project Timeline

January-February 2023

- Conduct research and surveys
- Start RFP process
- Complete an audit of current websites
- Develop a research-backed information architecture and sitemap
- Identify department and school project leads

March 2023

- Consolidate and match existing webpages to the new district website sitemap and intranet sitemap.
    - Original number of intranet pages: 897, number of new intranet pages: 441
    - *District page data not available at this time*
- Develop the content update process
    - The content update process is the system that departments and schools used to evaluate, update and track the content for their new webpages and websites. This process used Google Folders and Docs to organize the material, which allowed department and school teams to review and update their content outside of a web platform space.
    - The folder and document structure for the district and intranet website pages was organized in a dynamic spreadsheet that contained the master sitemap of pages and separate tabs organized by department that dynamically pulled in the pages each department was responsible for.

April 2023

- Launch content update process with schools and departments
- Schools self-select deadlines for their content update process, organized by monthly cohorts ranging from September 2023-March 2024
- Design website mockups

May-July 2023

- Award RFP
- Vendor kickoff
- Hire contractors
- Support schools and departments with content update process

August-November 2023

- Design websites
- Build out and configure website templates
- Support schools and departments with content update process

January-February 2024

- Support schools with content update process
- Implement direct migration option for schools
- Department review of district website and intranet pages
- Conduct website usability testing sessions

March 2024

- Complete revisions for district website, intranet and pilot schools
- Create training materials and launch on-demand training modules
- Launch district website, intranet and pilot school websites

April 2024-July 2024

- Develop and launch 131 school websites on a rolling basis
- Provide on-demand and in-person training

Supporting materials

- Project Plan with Timeline (Abbreviated)
- Website Redesign High-Level Progress Update - March 2024

Communications plan, timeline and implementation

Monthly internal and external communications plans were implemented to align with the overall project plan.

- The goals of the internal communications plan were to:
    - Communicate action items needed by each department and school lead
    - Communicate progress updates to leadership and Jeffco staff
    - Share opportunities to participate and provide feedback during the process
    - Prepare and equip Jeffco staff to successfully manage the website platform change
- The goals of the external communications plan were to:
    - Share progress updates
    - Promote opportunities for feedback
    - Garner excitement

Overall communications themes by month for internal audiences

Channels: Direct email, intranet news posts, intranet webpage, Schoology Web Editors group posts, staff newsletters, meetings and office hours.

- **January-February 2023:** Website redesign is coming; take the staff feedback survey; RFP process starting.
- **March-April 2023:** Introducing web content update process for schools and departments; support options are available.
- **May-June 2023:** RFP awarded; first round of content updates due for departments.
- **July-August 2023:** Content update support for schools and departments.
- **September-October 2023:** Website design is underway; content update support for schools and departments.
- **November-December 2023:** Website development is underway; content update support for schools and departments; usability testing opportunities for staff.
- **January-February 2024:** District and intranet webpage review; usability testing opportunities for staff.
- **March 2024:** Website launch announcement; how to prepare for successful transition; training process announcement.

Overall communications themes by month for external audiences

Channels: Facebook, Instagram, community newsletter, district website news posts, district webpage, website popups and school toolkits.

- **January-February 2023:** Announcing Jeffco's comprehensive website redesign; take the community feedback survey.
- **March-April 2023:** Results from community feedback survey and planned solutions.
- **May-June 2023:** RFP awarded; progress update.

- **July-August 2023:** progress update; call for testing participation.
- **September-October 2023:** progress update; call for testing participation.
- **November-December 2023:** progress update; call for testing participation.
- **January-February 2024:** Usability testing opportunities available to families, students and community members.
- **March 2024:** Website launch announcement.

Supporting materials

- Phase 1 Website Redesign Communication Timeline (January-April 2023)

Final Products

- District website before and after
    - Check out jeffcopublicschools.org starting March 29, 2024
- Intranet before and after
- School website before and after
    - Check out lasley.jeffcopublicschools.org starting March 29, 2024

Evaluation

Evaluation has been weaved into the website redesign project from start to finish.

January 2023: Initial surveys to guide project goals

- Please view the Research section and Website User Research Report for additional details on initial surveys.

January 2024: Usability testing to evaluate user experience

- 26 usability testing sessions were conducted with 31 Jeffco staff, families, students and community members to test and provide feedback on their experience using Jeffco's new websites. Participants included Spanish-speaking families, families using assistive technology, Jeffco cabinet and staff members, and Jeffco students and parents. The promotion of these sessions was included in the internal and external communications plans.
- Findings from these sessions helped improve the navigation menu, translation functions, homepage design and information density. Please review the Usability Testing Report for an outline of the specific feedback and planned solutions.

March 2024: Website launch surveys for continuous improvement

- Upon the launch of the district website, intranet and pilot school websites, a survey will be shared using internal and external channels to gather feedback on user experience. This feedback will be measured against the original project goals to demonstrate evidence of project effectiveness, as well as used to identify future improvements.

Supporting materials

- Website User Research Report
- Usability Testing Report