Making the Most of Your School's Template Website

Exploring Finalsite Theme Designs and Composer Platform

Kelly Wilson

As Director of Creative Services, Kelly leads Finalsite's design team; overseeing the creative process and guiding the team to create beautiful, user-centered websites.

In the 13 years that Kelly has been with Finalsite, she has designed 100+ websites for schools around the world and won over 30 industry design awards. In her spare time she is usually running after her daughters, spending time with her husband and family or upcycling furniture.

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Lisa Willsey

In her ten years with Finalsite. Lisa has worked in a number of roles, ranging from Project Manager to Manager of Client Enablement and, most recently, as a Principal Consultant. Common across these roles is her passion for helping clients successfully implement their websites and embrace Composer to make their websites shine.

When she's not working with clients, Lisa can be be found enjoying the great outdoors, a great book, or a great glass of wine.

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Your Website's Design is Important

- A well-designed website is crucial to helping you:
  - Attract prospective families, faculty & staff.
  - Strengthen communications within school life.
  - Connect with and engage your wider community.
- It plays a central role in how your target audience perceives and interacts with your school.
- Behind every great website is a high quality design.
- Bad design is obvious, but good design is often invisible.

Common Website Challenges

1

Poor User Experience (UX)

2

Lack of Engagement

3

Outdated Design
and Branding

4

Limited Accessibility
and Inclusivity

5

Inconsistent or
Outdated Content

6

Ineffective
Calls-to-Action (CTAs)

Using Storytelling and Real-life Imagery

Bringing Your School's Story to Life

- Storytelling creates emotional connections with your audience, making your school's message more memorable.
- Real-life imagery builds authenticity and trust by showcasing your community's genuine moments.

Pro Tips

- Keep stories concise and focused on emotion-driven outcomes.
- Ensure visuals align with your school's branding and tone.
- Update content regularly to reflect current events and accomplishments.

Whitefield Academy

Whitefield Academy is a Christ-centered community of classical learning. We are located near the state line, drawing 230 students from across the metro area.

Design Highlights

- Purposeful storytelling and persistent calls to action.
- Bold photography that brings the community to life online.
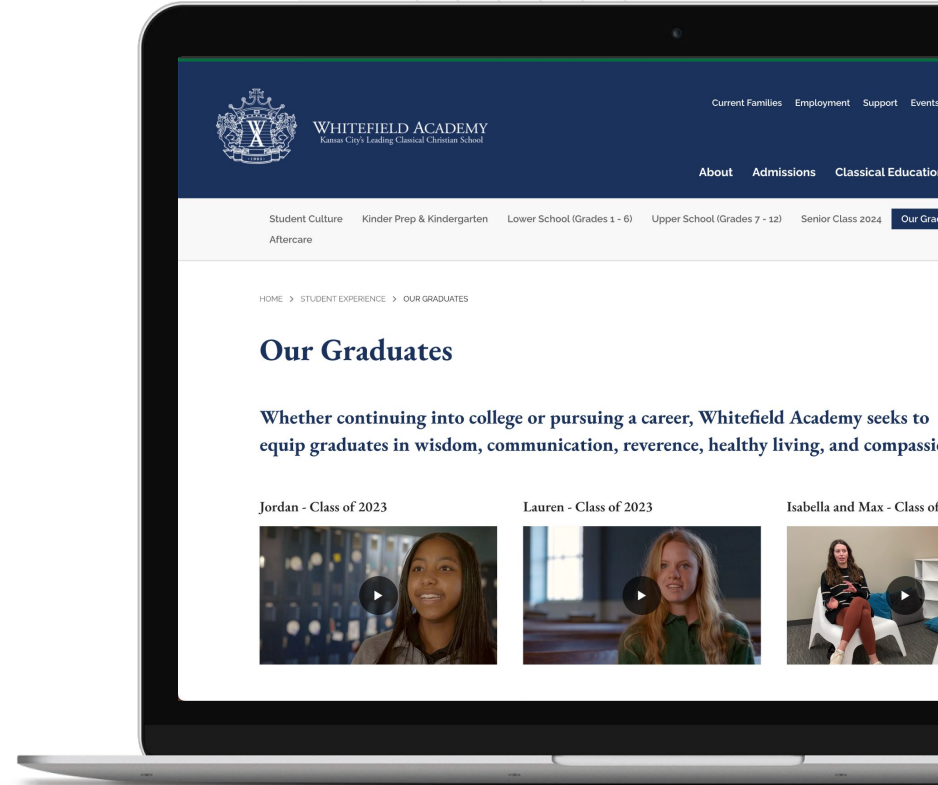
⇒ whitefieldacademykc.org (Canton Theme)

Leverage the Power of your Style Guide

Featured Styles and Elements

- Lead In Text
- Layout and Resource Elements
- Quote Style
- Buttons as Calls To Action

⇨ whitefieldacademykc.org/student-experience/our-graduates

Leveraging Your Color Palette and Visuals

Maximizing Impact with Color and Visuals

- Consistent and thoughtful visual design strengthens your school's brand identity.
- Color and visuals guide user attention and evoke emotion, enhancing the overall user experience.

Pro Tips

- Stick to 3-5 primary colors to maintain visual harmony.
- Use bold accent colors for calls-to-action and important content.
- Ensure color contrast meets accessibility guidelines for readability.
- Regularly audit visuals to ensure they align with the site's design goals.

Shady Side Summer Programs

At Shady Side Summer Programs, every day is an adventure where learning and fun come to life! From immersive camps to dynamic courses, our programs are designed to spark curiosity and build confidence.

Design Highlights

- Playful summer vibe balanced with intuitive navigation.
- Engaging high-quality visuals capture the camp experience.
- Bright, cheerful colors convey energy and excitement.

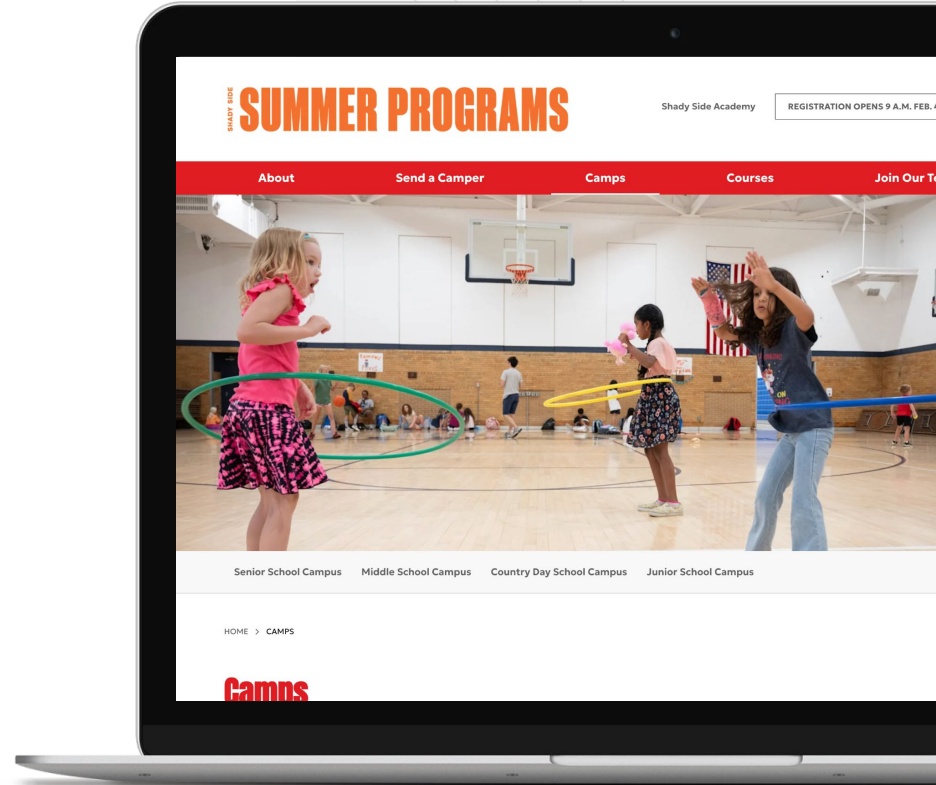➡️ summer.shadysideacademy.org (Salisbury Theme)
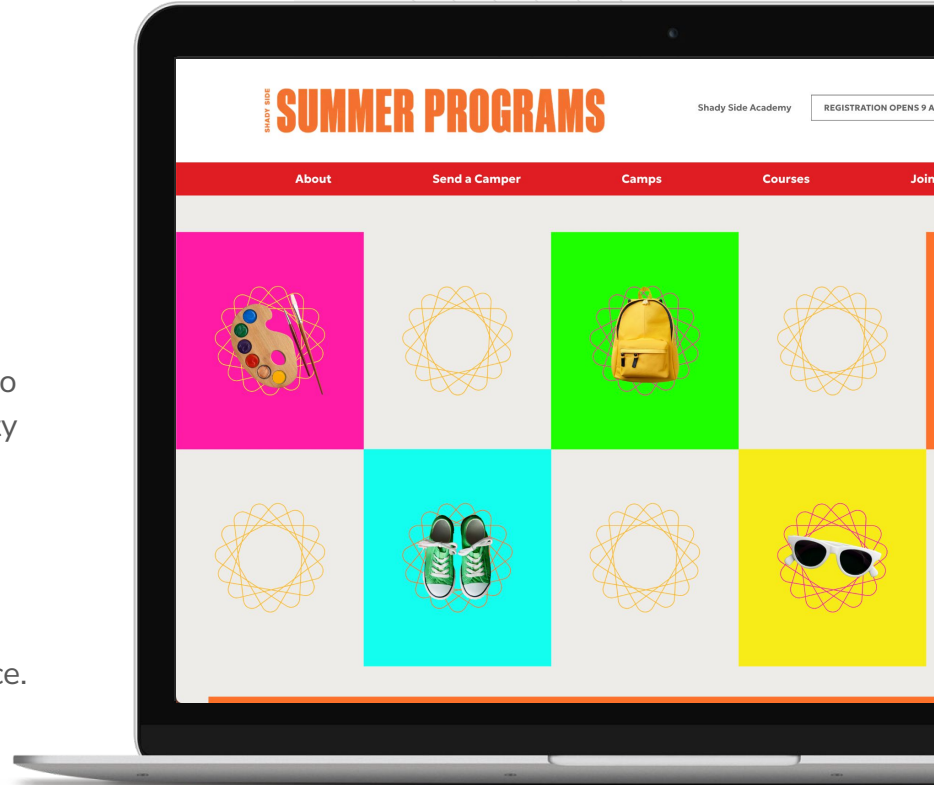
Leverage the Power of your Style Guide

Featured Styles and Elements

- Hero image
- Resource elements using Single and Slideshow formats
- Accordion Element
- Bulleted List
- Inline Callout

⇨ summer.shadysideacademy.org/camps

Positive User Experience

Creating a Smooth User Experience

- A well-structured and intuitive website keeps visitors engaged and encourages them to explore more.
- Positive user experiences increase satisfaction and support key goals like enrollment and community engagement.

Pro Tips

- Regularly analyze website analytics to track user behavior and identify navigation pain points.
- Include breadcrumbs and search functions to improve user navigation.
- Keep text concise and scannable for a faster reading experience.

Hillside School

Since its founding, Hillside School has committed to offering an all-boys educational experience in a structured, inclusive, supportive environment.

Design Highlights

- Engaging and succinct content with a clear user journey
- Expansive use of well-optimised photography.
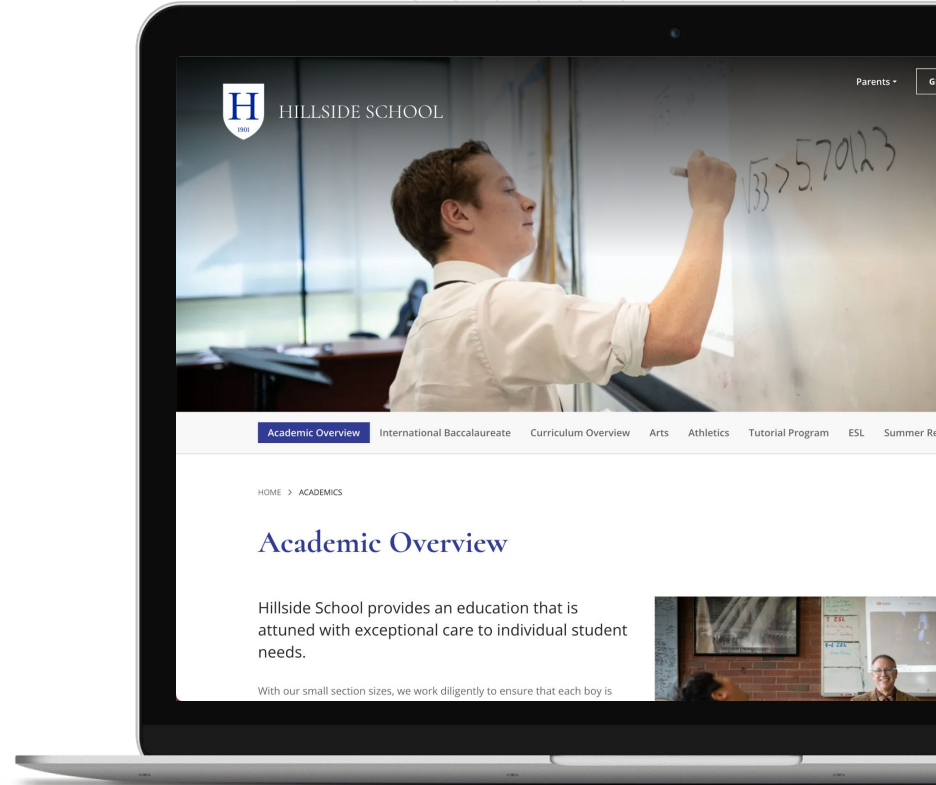
⇨ hillsideschool.net (Westbourough Theme)

Leverage the Power   of your Style Guide

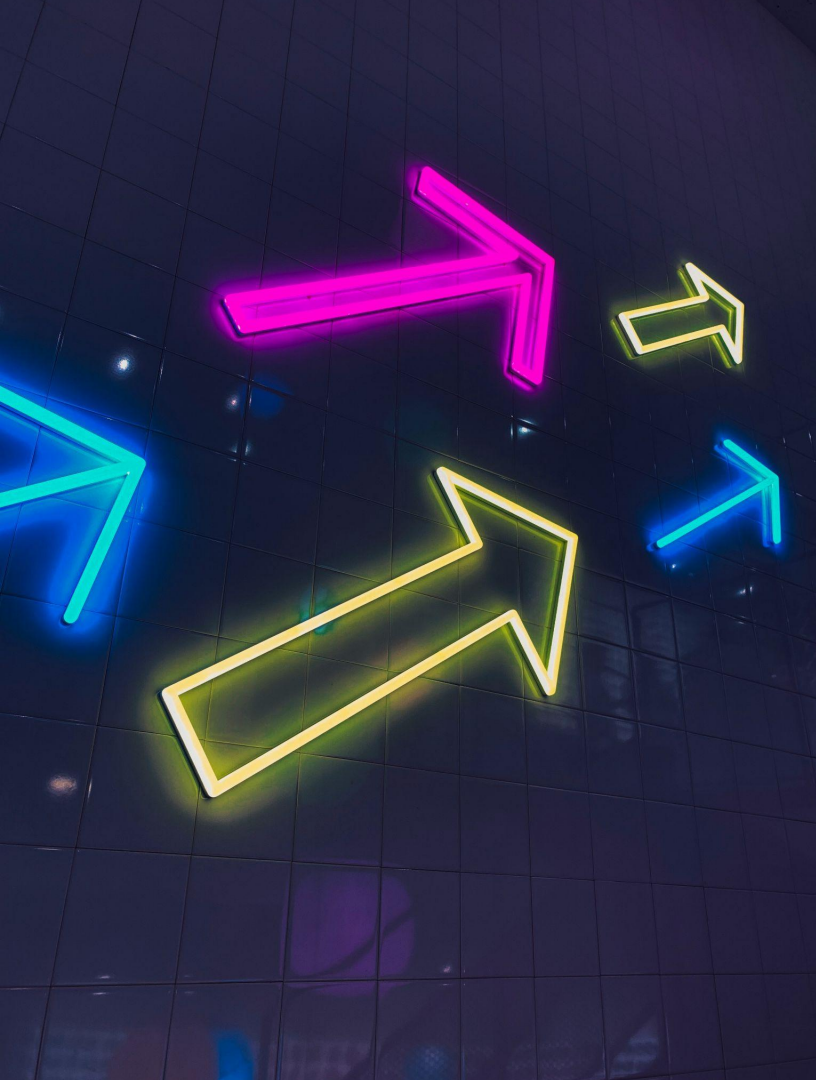## Featured Styles and Elements

- Hero Image
- Lead In Text
- Layout Element
- Resource Element
- Content Cards

hillsideschool.net/academics

CTAs that Connect

Crafting CTAs That Drive Engagement

- Clear and compelling calls-to-action (CTAs) guide visitors to take meaningful steps, such as scheduling tours or accessing important resources.
- Well-designed CTAs improve user engagement and support school goals like enrollment and community involvement.

Pro Tips

- A/B test different CTA designs and language to find the most effective approach for your audience.
- Use time-sensitive language like "Register Today" or "Limited Spots Available" to prompt immediate action.
- Add supportive text near CTAs to clarify the value (e.g., "Get a Free Info Packet — No Obligation").

Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES

BOCES is part of a NY state-wide system of Board of Cooperative Educational Services and serves its districts by offering a variety of educationally-focused programs, services, and support systems.

Design Highlights

- Clear calls to action to informative admissions content
- Thoughtful application of interior page design elements

⇨   oneida-boces.org (East Hartford Theme)

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Case Study

Napa Valley School District

Napa Valley Unified School District serves the communities of Napa and American Canyon. Over 16,500 students attend our 27 schools in grades TK-12.

Design Highlights

- Clear calls to action to informative admissions content
- Thoughtful application of interior page design elements
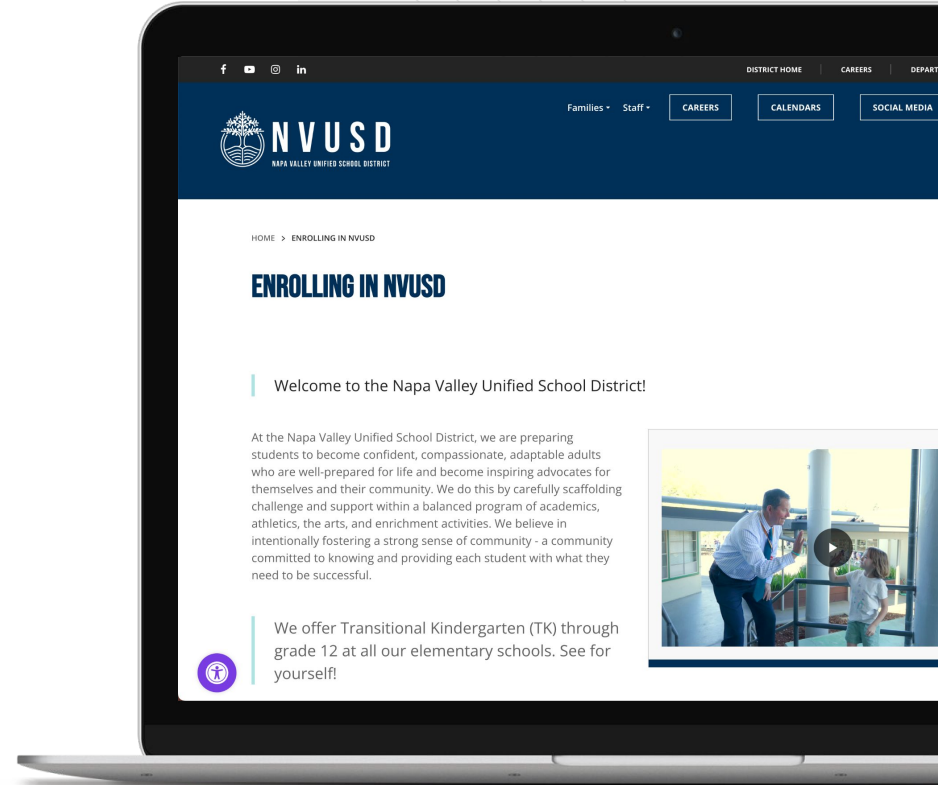
⇨ nvusd.org (Westbourough Theme)

Leverage the Power of your Style Guide

Featured Styles

- Layout Element
- Cards
- Buttons
- Callout

⇨ nvusd.org/enrolling-in-nvusd

Master your Toolkit

- Your style guide is a critical reference for the styles available to use on your pages
- Images added to pages engage end users, even with the most mundane content
- Brand colors incorporated into your site capture your school's brand and culture authentically.
- Enhance the user experience by formatting content using appropriate styles
- Calls to action guide end users through your website by ensuring they know where to go and what to do next

Discover Further Website Examples

- mayfieldsenior.org
- stepsmia.org
- sanjuan.edu
- nvusd.org
- ccusd93.org
- oneida-boces.org
- summer.shadysideacademy.org

Thank You!

Do you have any questions?