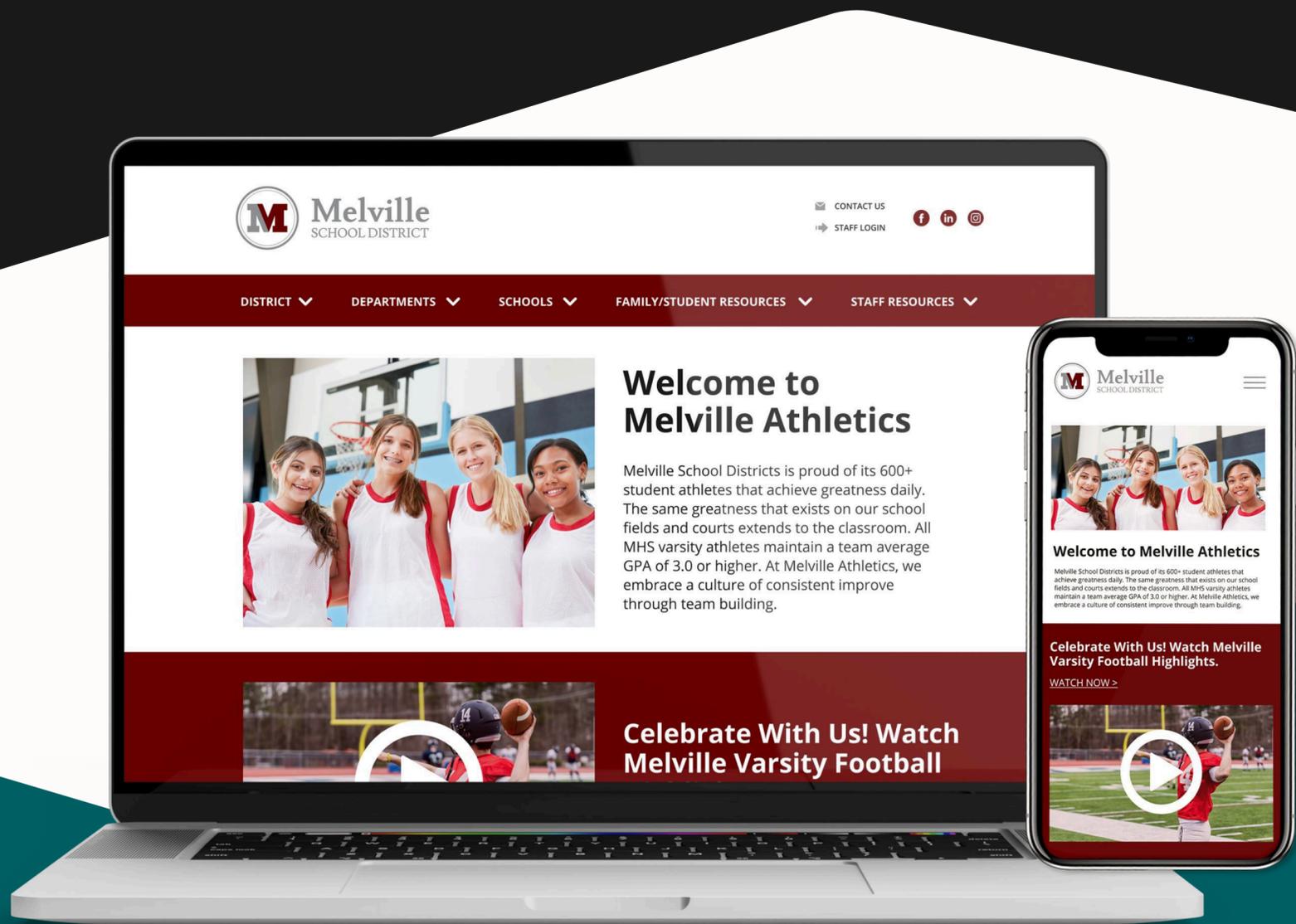# Why Branding Matters for K-12 Schools

SchoolStatus.

Clear, consistent communication is crucial to fostering strong connections between schools, students, families, and the broader community. But many schools and districts are held back by out-of-date systems, or a stack of unrelated software and apps that don't integrate and take more time than they save.

Even when educators and communications teams are doing their best to share information early and often, families may be stuck searching for information relevant to their students on websites that look like they're from the '90s. Without a streamlined system and consistent strategy, families either have too little information or they receive so many emails, texts, auto-calls, and mailings from their school that they lose track of important information. They may even stop engaging with messages from the school altogether—leading to delays, miscommunications, and less support for students.

The question for superintendents and communication directors is: How can we keep families engaged with their child's teachers, school, and district? One impactful approach for districts across the country is to treat family engagement like a business —and turn to the power of marketing.

Specifically, district leaders can take a page from traditional marketing and develop a clear, consistent brand and strategy for all district communications. A cohesive app for district communications ensures families know what to expect from all schools, buildings, grades, and classes—leading to greater transparency, and efficiency.

In this eBook, we'll explore the power of strategic school branding and how it can elevate your entire district's digital presence, streamline outreach, and ultimately lead to better outcomes for students.

You'll learn:

- The profound impact that branding consistency can have on your entire organization—and on student achievement
- The benefits and building blocks of a unified communications strategy
- Practical tips for building a consistent brand across your district

Let's get started!

What is School Branding?

And why is "marketing" important for schools?

It may seem like a strange idea that a school district should require marketing. But just as marketers help businesses connect with potential customers, school and district leaders need to think carefully about how to create connections and build relationships between schools, families, and the larger community. In order to achieve this connection, schools need to have a clear, recognizable school brand.

School branding is more than just football jerseys or school colors. A great brand experience shows your community that they're in the right place, they know who they're talking to, and that they're in good hands.

That's why brand names have such staying power. Iconic brands like Coca-Cola or Disney are immediately recognizable thanks to the colors, fonts, and iconography of their brand. Small businesses also work hard to make their unique brands stay with customers. When a company's visual identity becomes familiar, it establishes loyalty with customers—just think about your favorite coffee shop or shoes. That recognition makes it easier to trust that the brand is the real deal, especially online.

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For schools and districts, a consistent brand includes informative websites and clear, relevant communications that create pathways for families to feel engaged, understood, and an important part of the school community.

A strong district brand can help you achieve goals like:

- Building trust and credibility with your community
- Streamlining communications and improving efficiency
- Reflecting your district's values and commitment to students
- Fostering stronger, more engaged relationships with families, staff, and the community as a whole

Every interaction families have with their child's school—from websites to emails to social media—influences how they engage with teachers, coaches, councilors, and school leaders. The sooner you establish a sense of trust and familiarity, the more engaged those families will be throughout their student's academic journey.
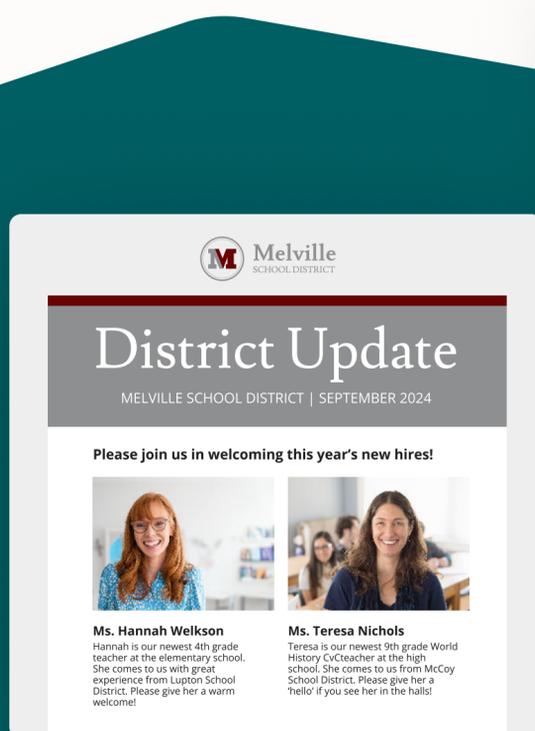
Consistency Builds Trust

Set a Consistent Visual Identity that Families Recognize

Any digital presence requires a certain level of consistency and polish. Your audience needs to feel confident that the information they receive from your school or district is genuine, accurate, and relevant to them. If information is disorganized or hard to find, they'll get frustrated and are likely to take the content less seriously.

Think about all of the different communications one family receives. Does the newsletter from the homeroom teacher look similar to district event announcements, attendance interventions, or updates from the basketball coach? If the answer is no, consider establishing consistent guidelines for commonly used school assets, such as:

- **Logos:** Pick a specific set of logos and apply them consistently across all school communications. Retired school logos are great for Spirit Day t-shirts, but inconsistent or outdated logos on your website give the impression the information is also outdated.

- **Colors:** If your school color is royal blue, then red or green will make visitors question whether they're in the right place. Establish specific school colors and share the hex codes with everyone working on websites, emails, social media, and other outreach.

- **Templates:** The layout of your websites, newsletters, announcements, and mailed letters has a big impact on how the content is received. Ensure that all templates used by educators and staff align with district brand guidelines. For example, keeping the layout consistent for newsletters from elementary to high school will continually reinforce a sense of security as a child progresses through each grade.

Many districts don't have brand guidelines to follow—and that means that families don't know what to expect in official communications either.
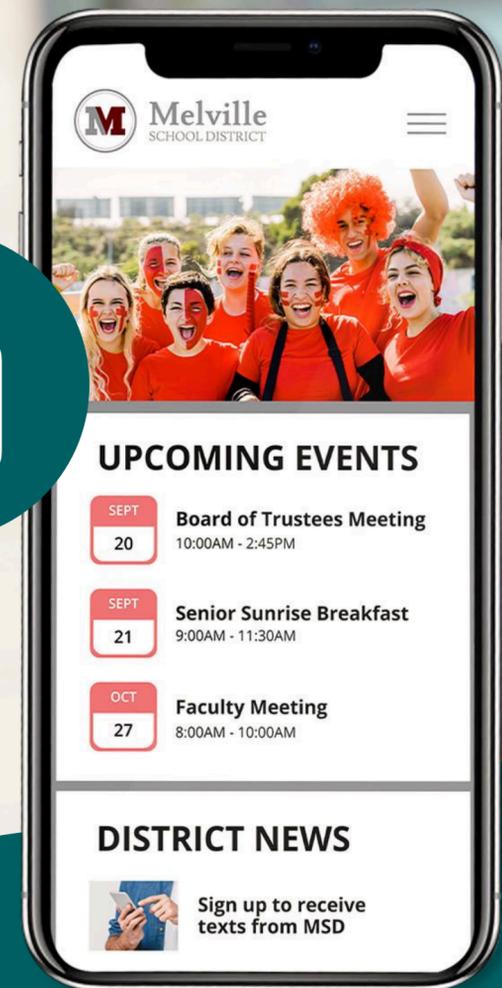
Build Trust with Secure Sites

Tales of identity theft, scams, and phishing have become part of our personal and professional lives. So naturally, many parents and guardians have developed a keen sense for when something seems "off" about a website. They may be reticent to enter information about their child on a website with out-of-date branding and a clunky user experience.

Consistent branding also helps families feel safe to take important website actions—like paying for uniforms or submitting important medical information—without the worry of getting scammed or having their child's information compromised. **A well-designed website doesn't just guide families to the information they're looking for, it helps them feel secure about sharing important, timely information with the school or district.** And that ultimately streamlines processes and saves staff time tracking down reticent parents and guardians.

That sense of security doesn't stop at the keyboard. When families can find information and take action on your site without worry or hesitation, they're more likely to feel positively about their child's school overall.

The Power of School Spirit

The Foundations for an Outstanding School Brand

Your schools already have a powerful brand—school spirit!

It's that pride you feel when a local figure wears a school mascot tee on the news, or when you're walking through a crowded hallway and all of the students are wearing the same color for Spirit Day. School spirit builds community, trust, and engagement—just like branding.

Capturing that same sense of enthusiasm in your digital presence makes it easier to get families, students, educators, and staff engaged. From the colors you use to the words you choose, you can help them see themselves as part of the school's story.

Show School Spirit (and Engage Families) on Your Website

Your website is the perfect opportunity to showcase your school spirit and demonstrate pride in your school community. Here are a few ideas:

- Highlight photos from recent events, like school rallies or sporting events
- Shine a spotlight on a student or educator who exemplifies a particular school value (like working hard, or going the extra mile)
- Celebrate student awards and recognitions, like perfect attendance
- Upload approved photos of teachers or staff wearing school gear
- Link out to the school's social media or YouTube accounts to give families more ways to get involved and feel engaged

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Beyond your website, there are plenty of other opportunities to keep everyone informed. Creating newsletters for your school, class, or club can provide a regular opportunity to check in and offer a touchpoint for your community. Holding events like family information nights provides an important way for parents and guardians to connect with one another and with the teachers and staff who see their children every day.

Use Data to Understand What's Working

Analyze Communication Data to Inform Your Outreach & Make Updates to Better Serve Your Community

In order to truly maximize the impact of your communications, you need to understand what's working—and what isn't.

Districts need a clear, accurate source of information about their district communications. Real-time data visibility can help district leaders answer critical questions like:

- Where are families most likely to seek information?

- Which channel do families engage with most?

- How many visits did a specific webpage receive—and how does that compare with other pages?

- Who is opening your emails and who needs extra outreach?

These insights can help you refine your approach, meet people where they are, and strengthen critical connections between school and home.

Maintaining clear data and records of school-family communication has additional advantages: digital communications logs and call recordings make it easier to work with families on student issues. When districts use a single solution across all grades and schools, conversation histories are readily available and will save everyone significant time—and headaches.

Communication histories can also show you what's working well for students in your school or district. Looking at trends for students with excellent attendance can provide valuable insight into the cadence and type of outreach that works both long- and short-term.

Data is one of the most powerful assets available to school and district leaders. Be sure that your communications solutions offer a clear picture of student data. And that everyone knows how to use the tools available to help to turn that information into insights
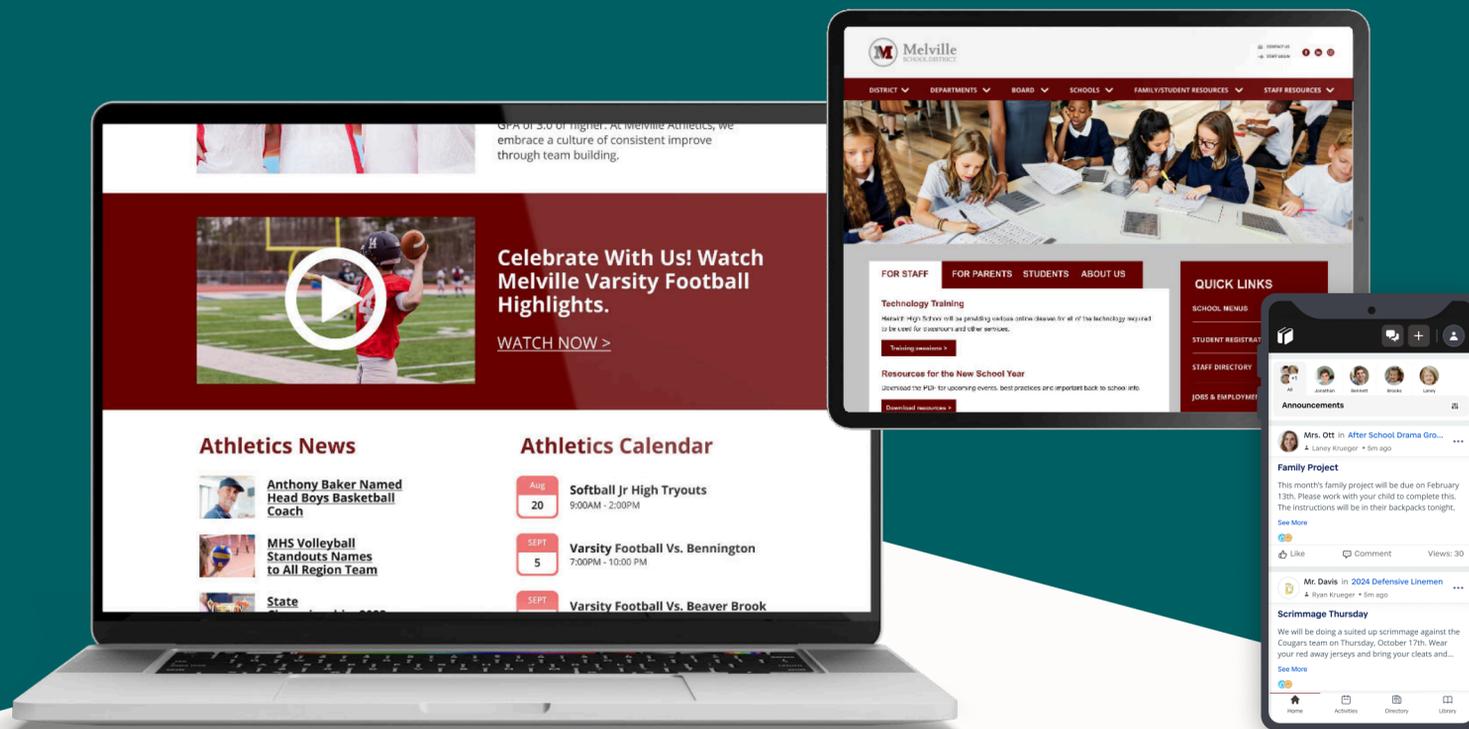
Unify Your School Communications

A Consistent Brand Requires a Unified Approach

An outstanding school brand is an achievable goal—most schools have everything they need for a strong brand already! Often, the biggest challenge is consistency. School communications need to be high-quality and stay on-brand across messages, websites, and beyond.

Using a single, comprehensive communications platform (like **SchoolStatus**) allows you to manage all your school-family communications from one streamlined interface. With a unified solution for K-12 communication needs, schools can align their:

- Websites for each school and department in the district
- Two-way messaging and mass announcements to keep everyone informed
- Newsletters that engage the community
- App or interactive feed for updates at the class, school, and district levels

When all communications come from one platform, it's easier to keep your visual brand consistent and build trust throughout the school community. And the benefits go beyond your brand—you'll be able to operate more efficiently and give families a better communication experience.

Try SchoolStatus and Take Your Communications to the Next Level

Let's chat about how SchoolStatus is helping schools and districts in all 50 states keep families, students, and staff engaged and informed.

- **Easy, Informative Websites:** Create beautiful, no-code-required websites and mobile apps for your district and schools. SchoolStatus provides ADA-accessible, responsive websites that can be auto-translated into over 100 languages so you can reach every family in your community.

- **Unified Communications:** SchoolStatus integrates with your district SIS for effortless outreach and crystal-clear data visibility. With one-to-one messaging, mass announcements, Smore newsletters, and more, SchoolStatus helps schools and districts build connections with families—and track their impact.

- **Digital Forms:** Streamline the way you manage everyday tasks with automated workflows and digital permission slips, waivers, payment requests, contact forms, and more. Keep track of everyone in the same platform that houses the rest of your student and family data so you can easily reach out to unresponsive families or check allergies or medical history at a glance.

Schedule a demo
to learn how we can help achieve your district's goals.