

Sprint 2 Report

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Survey Findings

From our AACMS Website Survey—[AACMS Website Feedback \(Responses\)](#)—we collected the following data.

Current Website Usage:

- Most parents use the website for checking school calendars and events.
- A few parents also use it for accessing specific information like lunch schedules, homework, and teacher contact information.
- Some parents do not use the website at all, relying on other sources like PowerSchool or direct communication from teachers.

Ease of Finding Information:

- A few parents find it hard to locate specific information on the website. The most commonly mentioned issue is difficulty finding lunch schedules.

Desired Information:

- Many parents expressed a desire for more detailed information on teachers, including contact information and bios.
- Some parents wanted more information on arts programs and extracurricular activities.
- A few parents mentioned wanting information on costs, annual calendar, required coursework, and accreditations.

Pre-enrollment Information:

- Parents were interested in knowing about costs, annual calendar, required coursework, extracurricular activities available, and accreditations before enrolling their children.
- Some parents wanted more information about the curriculum, grading system, and specifics about arts classes.

Additional Feedback:

- Some parents mentioned the need for better organization on the website.
- One parent suggested having clickable links to calendar events.
- There was a request for a splash page with important school closings, events, and contact info.
- Some parents expressed frustration with outdated information on the website.

Specific Concerns:

- One parent mentioned an issue with the calendar not displaying properly on mobile devices.
- Another parent mentioned that art supplies information was not updated, leading to unnecessary purchases.

Other Comments:

- Some parents expressed gratitude for certain aspects of the school's communication, like weekly newsletters.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Parents generally wanted the website to be more informative, user-friendly, and visually appealing.
- There was a request for more comprehensive information on teachers, curriculum, and extracurricular activities.

Survey Takeaways:

For Current Students:

The survey made it quite apparent that current students infrequently, if at all, use the website. They mostly use PowerSchool for their coursework. That being said, it is important to make a clear and accessible link to PowerSchool for the students.


For Current Parents:

Current parents of students at the Arts Academy Charter Middle School emphasized the need for a more user-friendly and organized website. They particularly mentioned easier access to information like school calendars, events, and teacher contact details. Additionally, parents express a strong desire for comprehensive teacher profiles, including bios and contact information, to facilitate communication with the faculty. Parents stress that the reworked website should serve as a reliable hub for monitoring their child's activities, lessons, performances, and meeting schedules.


For Prospective Parents:

Current parents stated that when they were prospective parents, they were looking for a website with clear, informative layout that offers comprehensive details about the school's curriculum, extracurricular activities, and art programs. Prospective parents also value access to important information such as costs, annual calendars, required coursework, and accreditations before making enrollment decisions. This survey confirmed our thoughts that a visually appealing and informative website is crucial for prospective parents to gain confidence in the school's offerings and make informed enrollment choices.

Initial Designs

Cam's Designs:  Cam's AACMS Design's.pdf

Katie's Designs:  Katie's AACMS Designs.pdf

Sebs's Designs:  Sebs's AACMS Designs.pdf

Home Page:

Cam's Designs:

For the homepage, I chose to break it up into two distinct pages, the Prospective Family homepage and Current Family homepage. The reason this was done is because of the distinct needs of current parents vs prospective parents. Though when discussing the design with Katie and Sebs, it was apparent that the current apartment homepage could just be turned into a "Parent" page.

The designs for the Prospective Family homepage (pg 4, 5, and 6) are made for attracting potential families to the AACMS, showing off the creativity of the school and what differentiates them from others. The header is very generic because our organization of the navigation menu was still being determined. Points made about the differences between AACMS and regular public school are implemented in an accordion menu such that summary of differentiations are minimalistic and not overwhelming but in depth descriptions are still easily accessible. Additionally, important statistics of the school (number of performances, arts classes offered, and academic performances on state standardized tests) are blatantly displayed below the "What Sets Us Apart" section so that potential parents don't need to go searching for that information.

The designs for the Current Family homepage (pg 2, 3) is extremely minimalistic and mainly consists of buttons to important information. The Calendar, Supply List, Menus, Newsletter, PowerSchool, and Schoology buttons were chosen specifically because these pieces of information were frequently mentioned on the survey we sent out. The popup alert is meant to serve as a way for the school to easily send out information regarding school closures and important announcements.

Katie's Designs:

For the homepage, I wanted to balance the utility between prospective and current families. I kept the summarizing information of the middle school; how to apply to the school front and center, with links (pg 1) or buttons (pg 6) to frequently used pages; and a slideshow of pictures flanking each side. I felt this was a good balance without becoming too overwhelming for the homepage. Below that, I put the weekly newsletter and calendar side-by-side, seeing as how many of our survey responses stressed the importance of the calendar and the upcoming events (pg 2). Our client said that she felt the header was formatted well with the upcoming event and the search bar, but I redesigned it with the newest logo and a brighter, more welcoming color scheme (pg 1, 6).

Sebs's Designs:

The design for the homepage (AACMS Homepage - Page 1) is meant to service prospective and current families at the same time. However, the primary goal is to attract new students so I chose to have the main elements of the page be a slideshow to display student photos as well as a section to provide some basic information about the school and the opportunity to learn more or apply right there. The "AACMS Info" section (as I've labeled it)

would contain a small blurb about what makes the school special and then have links to further information below the text blurb such as curriculum, arts, and other pertinent information like costs while the very bottom of this section has the “Apply Now” button. Scrolling down on the homepage then brings you to the portion of the page which is suited more towards current parents. The primary aspect of this section is the calendar to allow quick access to upcoming events. The other part of this section is a block of “Quick Links” to give any users easy access to important parts of the website such as the parent or student portal, PowerSchool, Schoology, or the weekly newsletter.

The AACMS Parent Portal (AACMS Parent Portal - Page 2) is also meant to be a homepage of sorts but specifically for current parents to have access to everything they could need. The calendar of events is the main focus but there are also a series of buttons on the side for important links like PowerSchool, Schoology, the weekly newsletter, and others.

Content Pages:

Cam’s Designs:

The template I designed for the content page (pg. 1) was very broad in its scope to allow for multiple different types of media to be displayed. I did not want to make specific layouts for picture and text as it seems like the need/number of pictures and length of text varied dramatically depending on what information is on the page. Susan mentioned that she liked designing flyers on Canva and doing design herself so I felt it’d be better to leave the content of the article to be blank so she could design the content area as she chooses.

Katie’s Designs:

Trying to create a template for the content pages was difficult because of the large amount of information on each page. I found my designs to be more repetitive than I hoped and somewhat in-line with what the website already features. Some elements that I tried to implement were limited amounts of text (pg 3, 4), a page directory display (pg 3), and more interactive features for each page (pg 5). I added more buttons to each page in an attempt to replace the multitude of links (pg 3, 5) which I highly preferred the look of. I kept the idea of the sidebar consistent in each design, but varied the location and collapsibility. One of my designs (pg 4), included frequent use of photos which I found enticing but might not be productive in practice.

Sebs’s Designs:

The template I chose to design for the site (AACMS Content Page - Page 3) was inspired by the content pages on Lafayette’s website. Some of the most important aspects I wanted to include were the chain of links that showed which pages the user had come from in order to help make the website more easily navigable. The other important part of the page is the link menu on the right side. Since there is a lot of information that is already present on the current site, I thought that it would be a good idea to allow users the ability to quickly access topics which are related to the topic they are currently looking at.

Menu Organization:

Cam's Designs:

The menu organization that I created was meant to have a good mixture between simplistic and informative design such that viewers would have enough information to know where things were but not too complex that they lost track of the categories. I also took inspiration from Katie's old schools website (<https://www.collegiate-va.org/>), because I thought displaying all categories and subcategories at once made it easier for website users to find the content they were looking for. I also cleaned up the categories and subcategories of the menu as shown on the design (pg 7).

Katie's Designs:


The menu organization was the most challenging part of these initial designs for me. For inspiration, I decided to browse through other middle schools' websites in hopes to imitate good categorical organization. I decided to imitate my own school's website (<https://www.collegiate-va.org/>) category headers which dropped down into sections with different columns (pg 8). Overall, I think this could be a great addition to our design to handle the problem of having so many pages to categorize.

Sebs's Designs:

The menu organization I chose to design (AACMS Content Organization - Page 4) also took inspiration from the menus of Katie's school's website while also taking into consideration the multitude of information that is currently on the AACMS site. Given that there are so many different links under the categories of the navigation bar on the site, I felt that it was important to be able to condense them into a smaller number of categories while still allowing each category to have a broad depth of information. This could also allow for some information to be repeated across sections as it would make sense to have teacher contact info available under an Academics menu but many parents talked about wanting easy access to said info so it could also be useful to include a Contact submenu in the Parents menu which this design would allow for.

Combined Initial Designs

[Final Design Link](#) (Note: Designs are separated on different pages of the Figma file.)

For our combined designs, we used Figma as our platform. We decided on Katie's designs for our final choice out of the designs we all generated with some small refinements. For the website, we aimed to keep a consistent branding across all pages. We've chosen to work with the main colors of our client's logo  AACMS_Header1.png – dark blue (4434A6), light blue (A1DAFD) – as well as a secondary pink (F590C1). We felt this was a good balance for staying consistent throughout the website, and being able to highlight certain important information such as the "Apply Now!" button. We've chosen to work with select fonts that match closely with the client's logo, specifically Lobster Two and League Spartan. The specific fonts may be subject to change based on implementation feasibility, but ideally, these header and body fonts should match well with the logo.

Home Page:

The home page mostly follows Katie's design with some key differences. Starting with the header, we chose to remove some of the bulk of the original to a more modern and sleek design in addition to better fitting the sizing of a website. We had to use the header

■ AACMS_Header1.png provided by our client instead of the circular logo

■ AACMS_Logo.png as the website's logo because it worked better format-wise; we initially wanted to extend the colors on the first logo, but couldn't find a clean-looking solution to extend them like in our initial designs. We moved the social media links to the dropdown header area because it fit more cohesively.

We put more emphasis on the slideshow of photos on the left and the summary of the website, leaving the quick navigation as a smaller section with buttons instead of links. Additionally, we added a footer to the bottom of the home page to include important items such as contact information and school hours. Finally, the calendar on the home page is currently missing some functionality as ideally the user would be able to hover over a date and see what events occur on said day.

Content Pages:

The content page is based off of Katie's sketches but we decided that the navigation bar would be placed on the left hand side of the screen for consistency between every content page. It seemed more intuitive to implement this way as western readers read from left to right so their attention would first be drawn to that navigation bar. The color scheme was made to match that of our Home Page, keeping a consistent style and look for the website. The idea for this page is that the navigation bar on the left hand side, header, footer, and styling for text would be the same but the content types (pictures, text, etc) and placement of content on the page would be up to Susan to decide based on new page needs. This allows for flexibility in her improvement of the website while also giving well formatted templates to save time. The Program Overview design demonstrates how the Content Page can be easily adapted and used when creating new pages.

Menu Organization:

We decided to have two different dropdown menu display options of which we will later evaluate the usability.

One approach shows all the different categories and subcategories at once when any of the categories are hovered over. The idea behind this approach is that users could get a holistic view of all options, helping to pinpoint the most relevant subcategories. The downside to this approach is that it could be overwhelming and reading all the information could make the user experience tiring.

The second approach shows only the subcategories of the current category hovered over. The idea here is that only the relevant subcategories are shown, allowing for faster navigation and less information overload in comparison to the design mentioned above.