



TAKING ON GOLIATH

using drupal in schools and non-profits

Jason Pamental, Platform Architect



Who's This Guy

- Jason Pamental Web Strategist, Designer, Technologist
- Have been a strategist, designer, developer & cat-pixel-wrangler since roughly the launch of Netscape 1
- Can be found @jpamental in most places
- Post thoughts, work & pics from Instagr.am @ thinkinginpencil.com
- Helped restart Schoolyard by designing the platform, helping build the team, lead new R&D efforts



What We'll Cover

- A bit about Schoolyard – who we are, what we do
- But this is NOT a sales pitch: it's about showing what YOU can do with Drupal in education & non-profits
- A bit about design process: we work different
- A bit about structured, modular flexibility: finding the balance between rigor and relaxed
- A lot about using Drupal & Contributed modules in some unique and creative ways to build a sophisticated content management platform



Background/Marketplace

- The Independent School market has a few main players, all of whom developed proprietary systems
- Schoolyard used to be one of them: founded in 1995, the mainstay was a Cold Fusion-based CMS
- Platform sold to another school site vendor in 2007
- Reimagined and redesigned starting in January, 2010 as a Drupal-based platform
- Started from zero – and built up as a modern web design/development team with Open Source roots



Philosophy

- Schools should be able to have a good web platform without spending a faculty member's salary on it
- We CAN provide that platform using Open Source, letting the budget go for strategy and design, not to supporting dozens of developers and legacy code
- We DO use modern tools, web standards and great type to make sure that when you've seen one Schoolyard site – ***you've seen ONE Schoolyard site***
- What we do wouldn't be possible without the Drupal Community – so we want to support it in kind



Drupal's Open & So Are We

- We believe that smart use of Open Source should translate to open behavior
- Pricing is standardized in a small range:
 - \$14-18,000 to design/build
 - \$399/mo for hosting, updates & 1hr of support
- Our pricing is public (and roughly a third of our competition – though they likely won't admit that)
- When we add new features, everyone gets them – no extra charge (ok – unless it requires extra design time)



Really: Sites/All/Modules

accountmenu
admin_menu
advanced_help
ajax_load
anonymous_contact
authorizenet
auto_nodetitle
autoload
backup_migrate
backup_migrate_files
better_formats
browscap
calendar
captcha
cck
cmf
content_access
content_taxonomy
context
context_menu_block
ctools
custom_breadcrumbs
custom_pagers
date
demo
diff
draggableviews
email
emfield
extlink
fb
features
feeds
feeds_imagegrabber
filefield

filemaker
fivestar
force_password_change
formfilter
globalredirect
gmap
google_analytics
i18n
imageapi
imagecache
imagecache_profiles
imagefield
insert
job_scheduler
jquery_ui
jquery_update
ldap_integration
libraries
lightbox2
link
location
logintoboggan
media_vimeo
media_youtube
menu_block
menutrails
messaging
mimemail
mobile_tools
mollom
nice_menus
node_clone
node_gallery
nodewords
notifications

oauth
og
og_massadd
og_menu
page_title
parser_ical
password_policy
path_redirect
pathauto
pay
paypal
phone
plupload
pop_links
profile_taxonomy
quicktabs
restrict_password_change
roleassign
rules
securepages
securepages_prevent_hijack
semanticviews
services
shorturl
simplenews
simplenews_statistics
simplepie
site_map
site_verify
smtp
special_menu_items
strongarm
token
transliteration
twitter

typogrify
ubercart
uc_donation
uc_out_of_stock
uc_product_power_tools
uc_tablequote
uc_termsofservice
uc_varprice
uc_views
user_import
userplus
views
views_accordion
views_attach
views_bulk_operations
views_or
views_slideshow
votingapi
webform
webform_conditional
webform_pay
wysiwyg
wysiwyg_spellcheck
xmlsitemap

nmi_gateway
schoolology
sy_athletics
sy_dining_menu
sy_faq_content
sy_groups
sy_media_base
sy_media_gallery
sy_newsletters
sy_webforms_online_giving



Approach

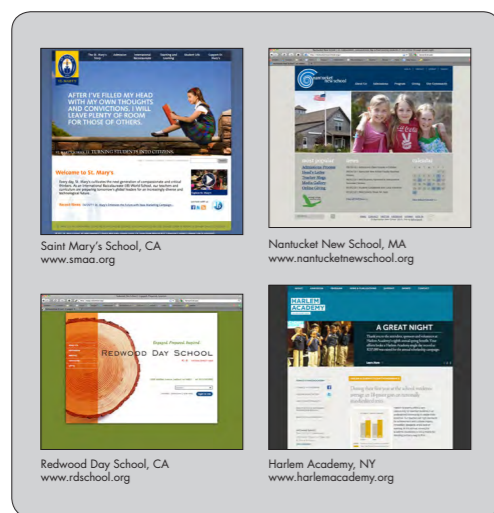
- Not your grandmother's web design shop
- We're a design and strategy company that makes smart use of Open Source – not a tech company that hired a couple of designers
- Projects begin with Discovery, IA, Sandbox prototype (full Drupal site w/minimal theme), Content — THEN design/theme integration
- Design process starts with style tiles* and then an interior page, revise (if needed) & then build (see Samantha Warren's excellent article here: <http://bit.ly/ITikNE>)



It's How We Roll



Schoolyard: Questions and Answers about Drupal



Recent Schoolyard sites, powered by Drupal

550 South Water Street | Providence, Rhode Island 02903 | 401.272.0079 | www.schoolyard.com



SCHOOLYARD WEB DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

There are numerous steps in our web design and development process, and the smooth transition from one to the next will ensure a successful outcome for your school. From gathering initial information, to the launch of your school's newly designed web site, we have outlined below the five phases of Schoolyard's design process, along with estimated timelines for each.

Generally, Schoolyard web design projects are completed within a twelve-fourteen week timeframe. This timeline is dependent on met deadlines, timely client feedback, and continual communications.

I. Discovery Phase:

This period serves to explore key questions surrounding the redesign and determines the scope of the design requirements for your school. Our objective is to facilitate strategic discussion about your school's needs, and uncover the shared vision, goals and expectations for the project. In order to do this, we must critically evaluate the school's current online identity - identifying both strengths and challenges before determining what particular changes are required.

Initial consultation will serve to explore key questions surrounding the re-design. Through a discovery phase questionnaire, Schoolyard's critical analysis of the current site and those of regional competitors and subsequent meetings and /discussions with school representatives, we will pinpoint the following elements:

- Current web site's strengths, limitations, deficiencies
- Web site mission statement development
- Perception and brand
- Primary and secondary site objectives
- Target audiences and their core tasks on the site

Estimated Timeline: 2-3 weeks

II. Information Architecture Phase:

Based upon the collected and evaluated findings in Phase I, Schoolyard will provide your school with a framework and strategy that best meets the agreed upon objectives. Before any visual design begins, the goal of the Information Architecture phase is to create a working skeleton, or blueprint that ensures all site navigation matches to the expectation of audience use and important messaging is prioritized in a clear, straightforward manner. Given that this phase focuses on user experience strategy it's the most critical in the design process.

Deliverables during this phase include:

- Site map: Detailed navigation listing all topics for the site, as well as sub-topics. The sitemap will ultimately dictate specificity of all site content.
- Wire frame: The visual manifestation of the Information Architecture phase. Essentially black and white mockups of a website page, the wireframe allows clients to focus on messaging, user flow and content before design elements are added.

Site map approval will result in the identification of content inventory for the project - to be provided by school representatives. Content requirements with regard to structure, format and delivery to be provided by Schoolyard at a later date.

Estimated Timeline: 3 weeks

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Schoolyard: initial development cost saving measures

Keeping Schoolyard initial development fees at the lower end of our price range

Our initial development fees are based solely on the amount of time we spend on a project from the signing of an agreement through site launch. At the request of schools interested in keeping these fees as low as possible, we have compiled this list of suggestions and considerations. We would note that each project is different; in some cases these recommendations are advisable, and in some they are not—or at least some of them may not be. In short, some schools require more time for site development for entirely sound reasons.

1. Know what you want. Some schools know exactly what they want, and others require considerable discovery and consultation. Most schools fall somewhere in between. There is no judgement involved here, as one of the benefits we bring to the project is professional experience and perspective. It's just that framing and delivering advice adds to the time required to complete the Discovery phase. There have been cases where stakeholders within the school have done considerable homework in advance, especially looking at the sites of other schools, and have said to us, "we want something with the structure and features of this school site, but we want it to look and feel like our school." These schools tend to spend less on preliminary development costs.

2. Have content ready. During the Prototype phase, the process can become bogged down if we are waiting on content, if the content is not cleanly formatted, or if it is not clearly organized. For every page in the site that is due to be live upon launch, there are content requirements. Knowing what these are and having the content ready in advance makes for a streamlined process.

3. Have good photography, and identify selections and placement in advance. Similar to the first item, having Schoolyard involved in photo selection and editing can certainly be beneficial as we have extensive experience in art direction and photo editing. Schools who make these decisions on their own, however, cut down on development time; in most cases Schoolyard decides which pictures are used and where they go. These decisions can make for a more visually compelling site, but they also take more time. Regardless, if the pictures are not of professional quality it costs the school more money as we spend time creating the best possible images from limited resources.

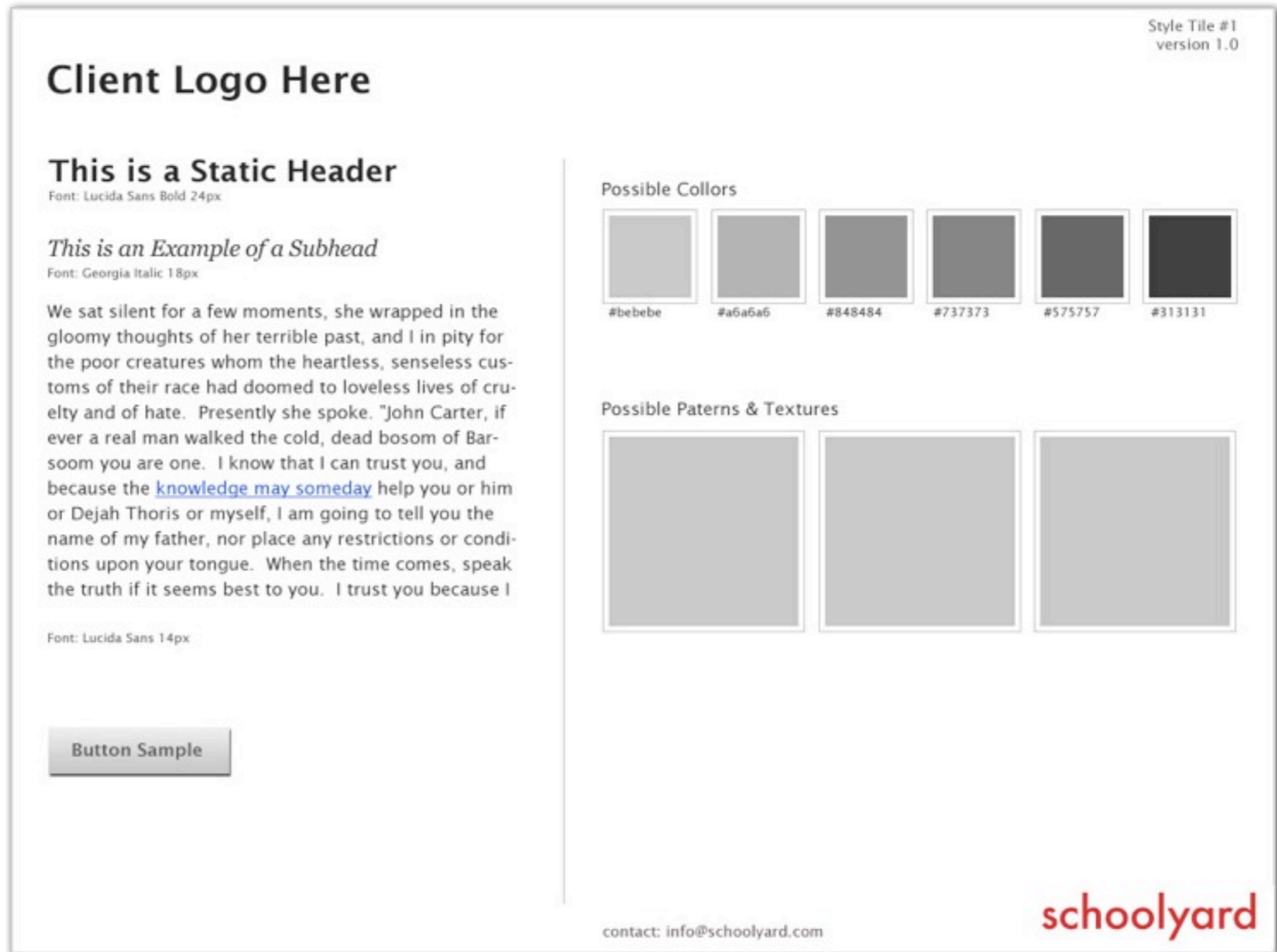
4. Keep the committee small; establish consensus on design quickly. This is a hard one because a school's website is the one communication vehicle that every department "owns" a part of. Insofar as schools are collaborative by nature, an inclusive web committee is a large web committee, and as a general rule, larger web committees result in higher initial development costs. Often this is because larger committees have a harder time reaching consensus on design approval, but also because larger committees simply generate more discourse. This discourse can make for a better project, it just takes more time and costs more money. In regard to establishing consensus on design, this is once again a matter of preparedness. A school with an established brand and message, with a list of other school sites that reflect similar structural and visual attributes, will spend less time on design approval.

5. Keep the initial launch profile manageable: One of our inaugural sites launched with over 700 pages of archived material ported from the previous site. We were able to automate much of this migration, but media had to be sorted manually. It was a huge job that could have been done internally, and more gradually, over the current school year with very few people taking notice. Insofar as the website is always evolving, confining initial launch content to that which is important, allowing additional content to be added over time, keeps the initial development costs down.

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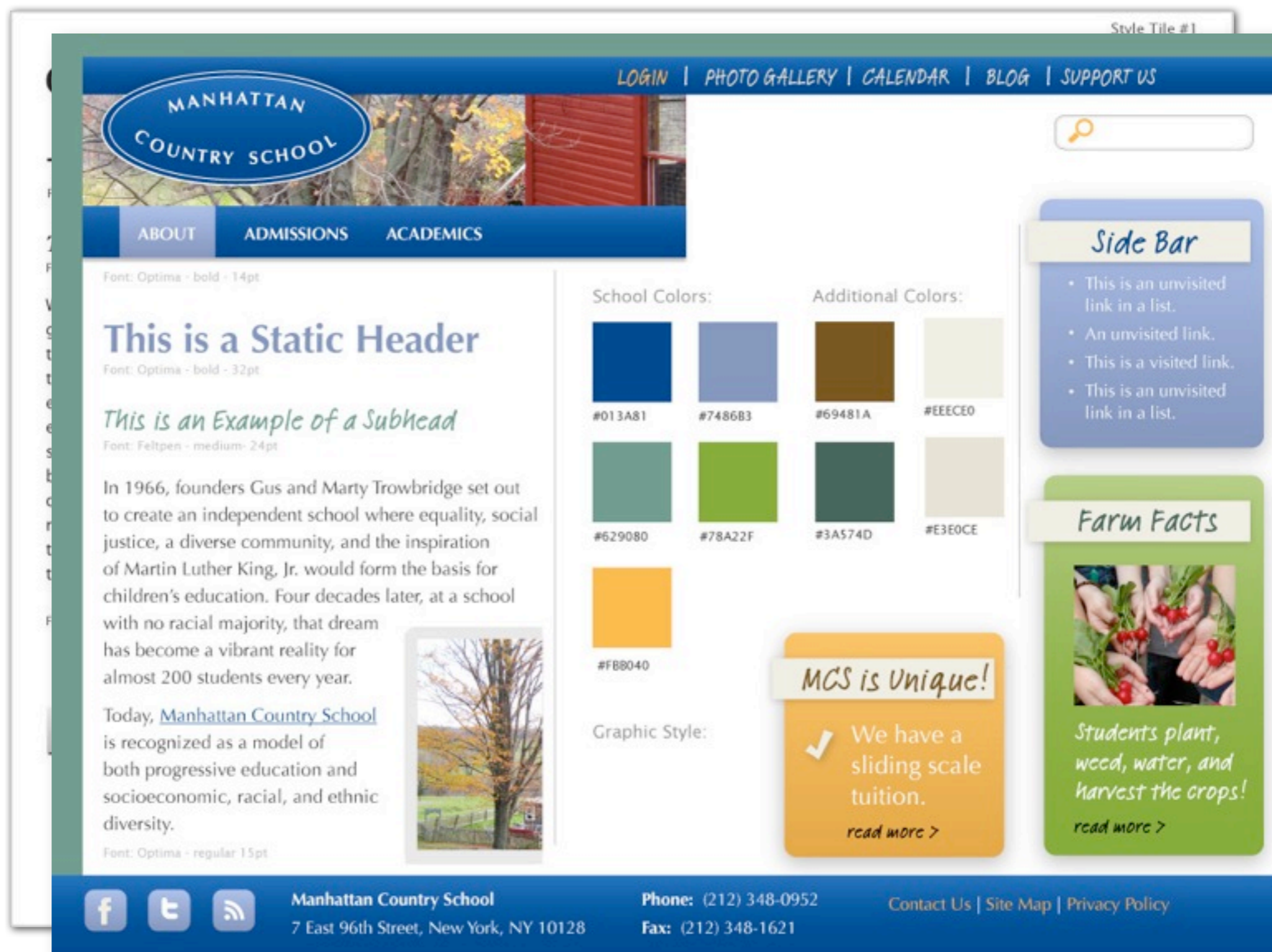


And How We Design





And How We Design





And How We Design





What We Built

- Full-fledged CMS with media management, workflow controls, social media ties, secured content areas, athletics, newsletters, calendars, online giving & more
- Almost all entirely stock modules set up with Features & Context to make system repeatable & updatable
- A fully Responsive starter theme with solid typography and LESS.css integration
- A server environment tuned for Drupal but still easily portable and maintainable – host almost anywhere (you'd be amazed at what a little MySQL tuning can do)



A Responsive Response

- Mobile traffic to websites is often more than you think (some of our schools see 25%+ mobile device use)
- In the US, 25% of web users do so ONLY from a mobile device – BUT
- Just because the device is 'mobile' – the user may not be
- This means that access to all content on all devices is critical (and with over 400 different Android devices alone, device-specific design is not an option)
- This requires a different approach to design/development



Responsive Web Design

- Responsive Web Design is comprised of:
 - Fluid page design based on percentages NOT fixed pixels (960px was always a pipe dream anyway)
 - Flexible images that scale with the design
 - Media Queries that help tailor CSS (styles) based on window width
- It's harder than fixed width – but WAY easier than multiple themes/sites/apps/widgets/voodoo
- There are several themes already (Omega, Fusion, Terrain); we made our own in a couple of days



LESS.css & Responsive Zen

- Built our own Responsive Zen Starter Theme
- Lets us quickly set overall widths, typography, colors, link colors & navigation styles
- Helps us develop Responsively faster, more reliably
- Short answer: LESS.css lets us put variables in our styles for faster development and more modular, reliable & consistent markup



Lets Us Go From This



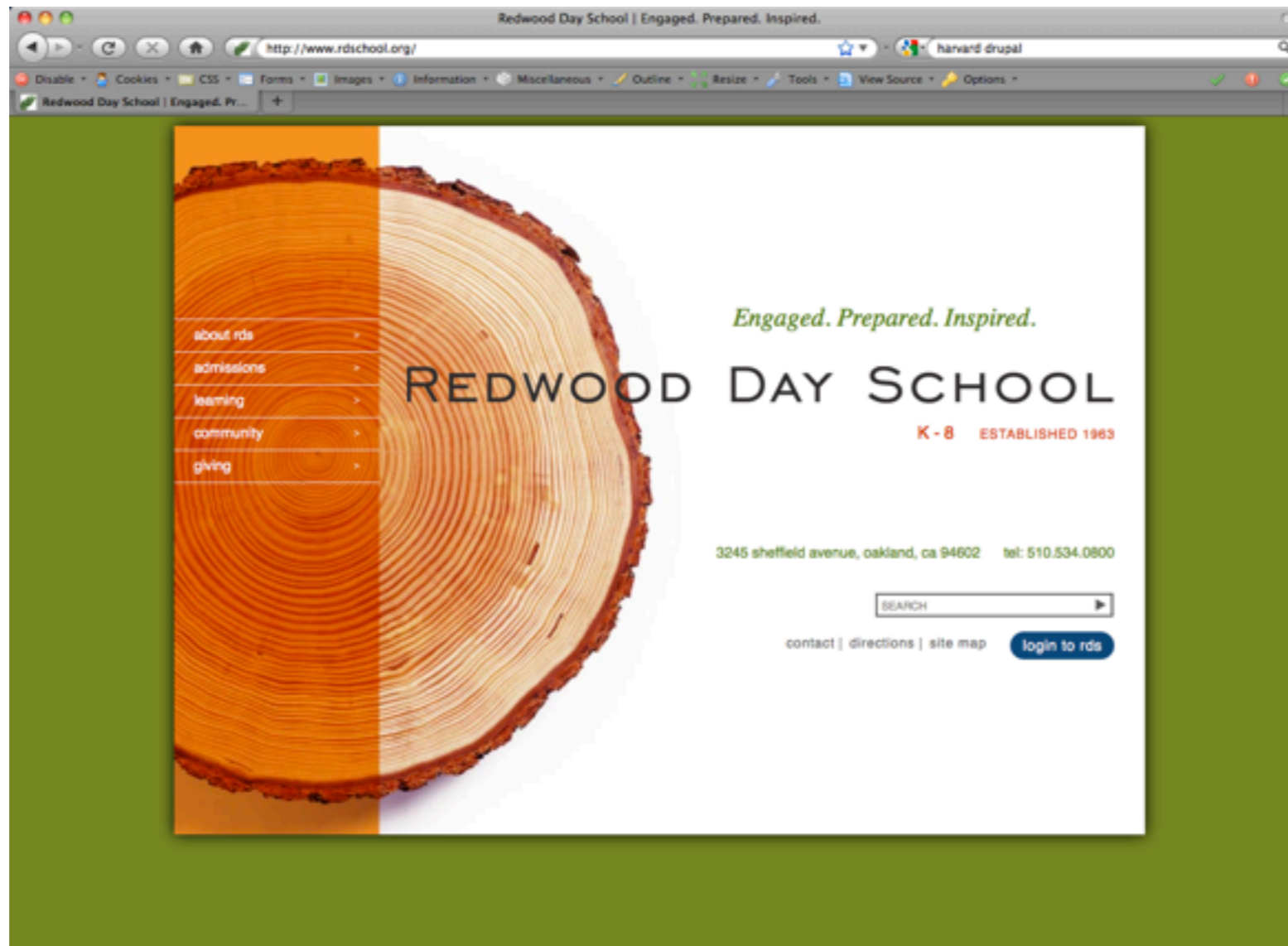


To This *(In A Day)*





What We've Launched



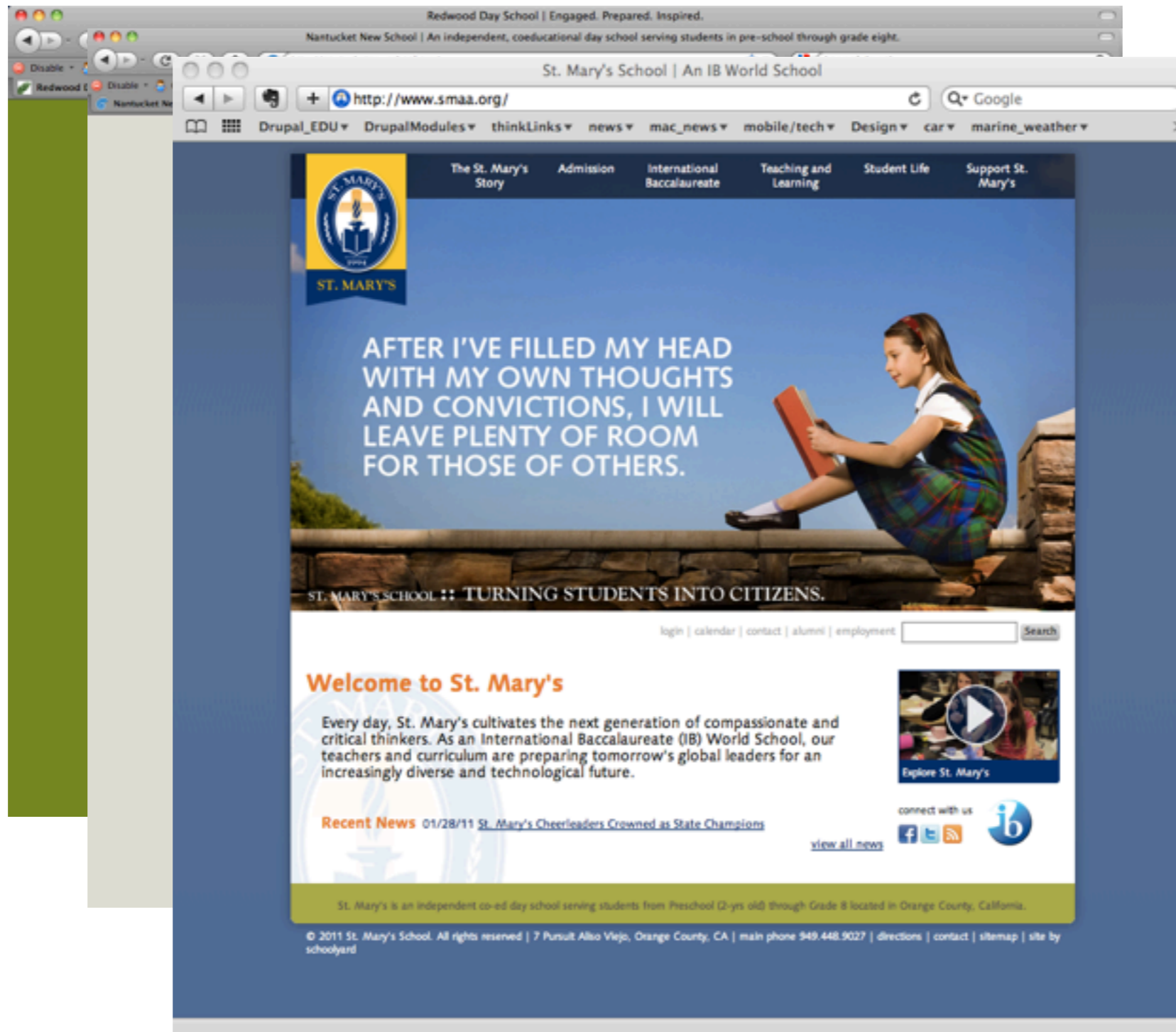


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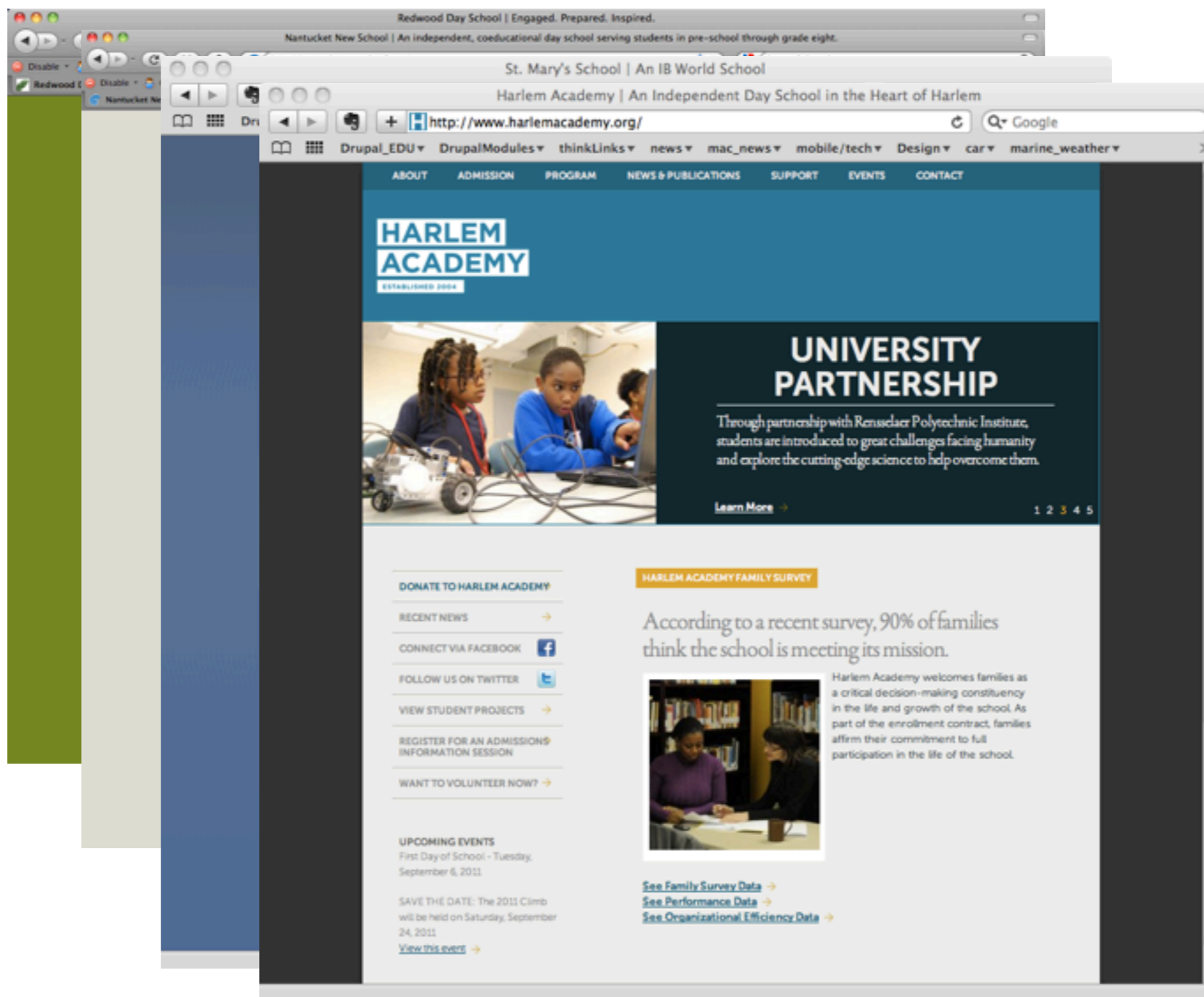


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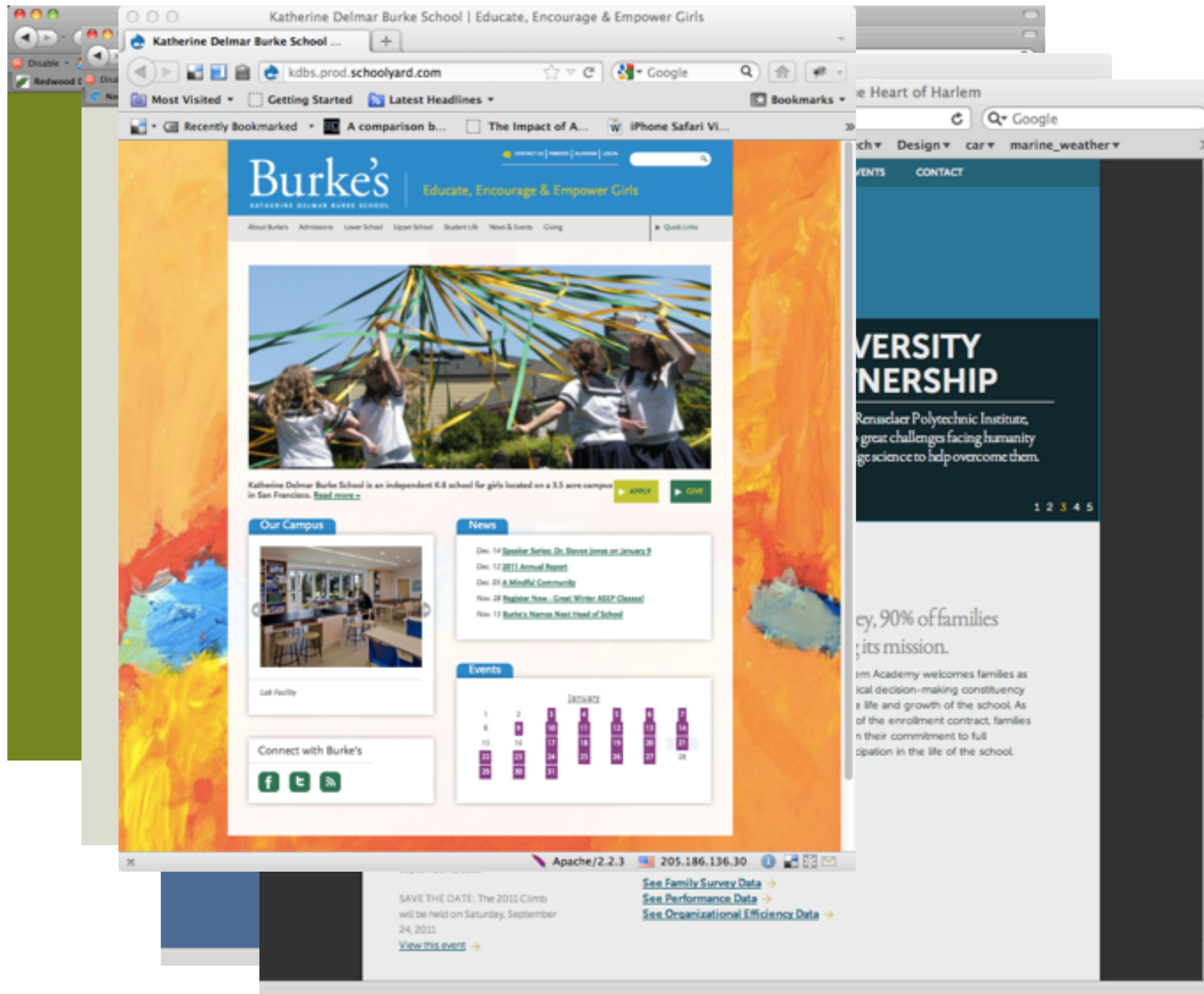


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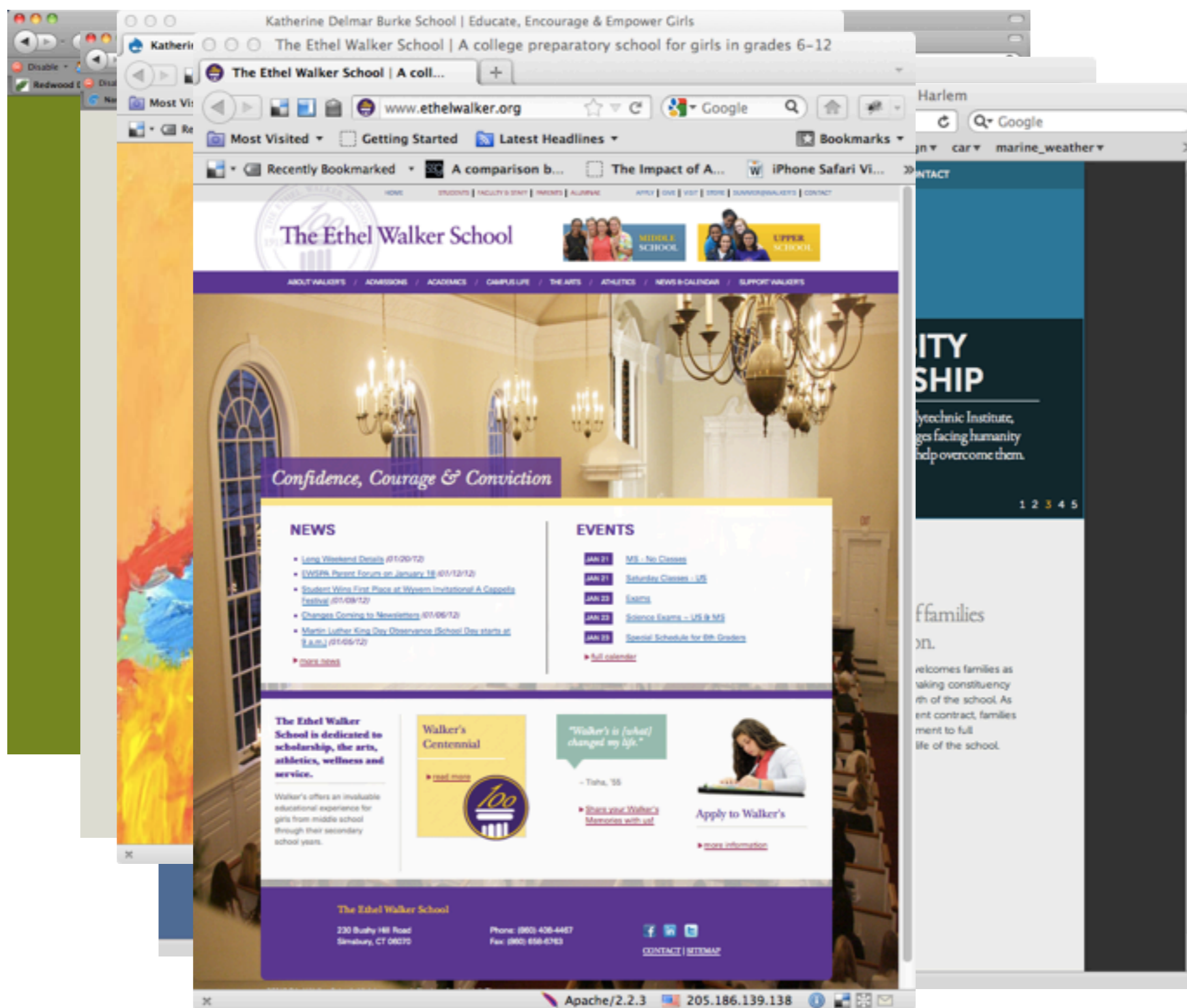


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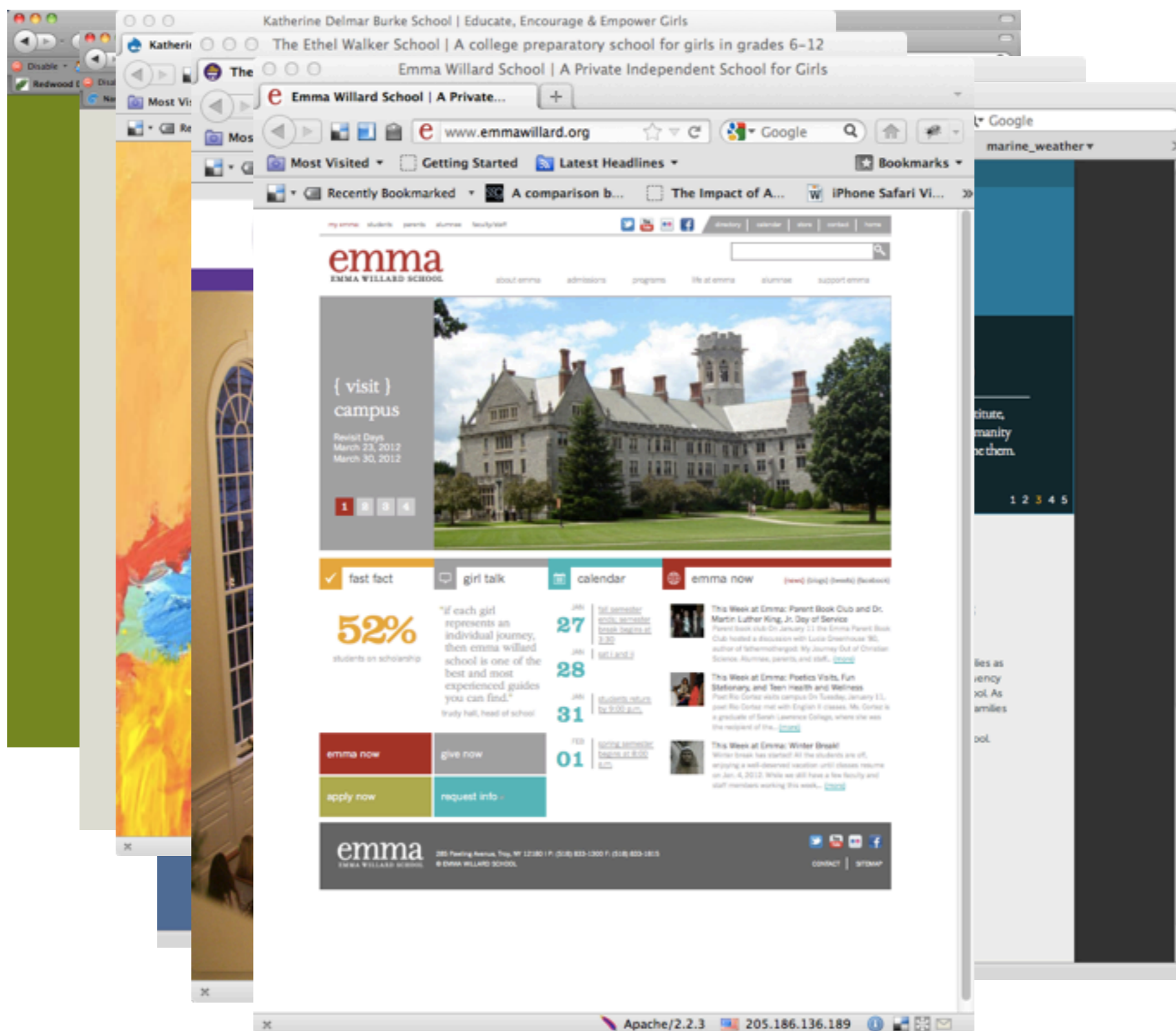


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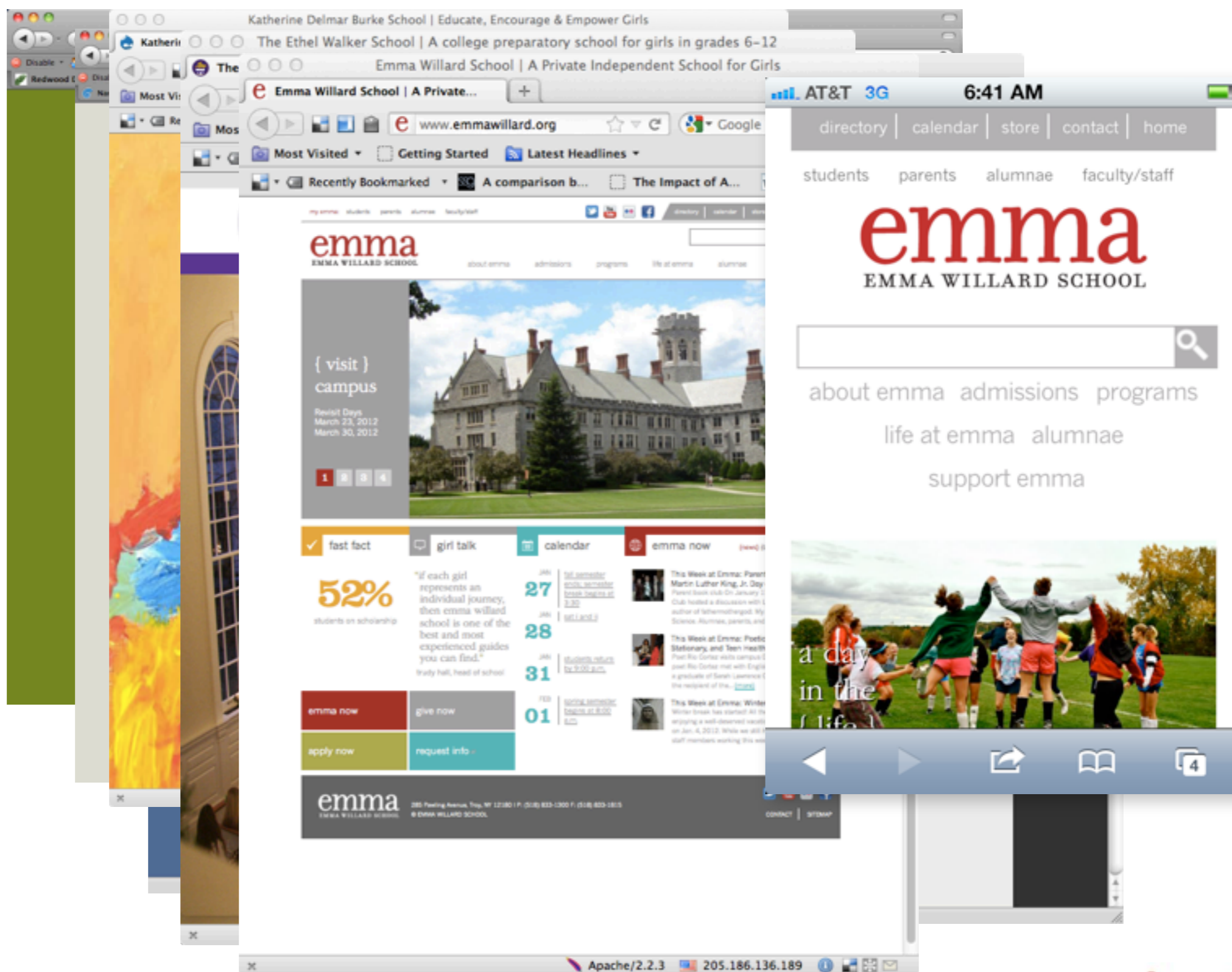


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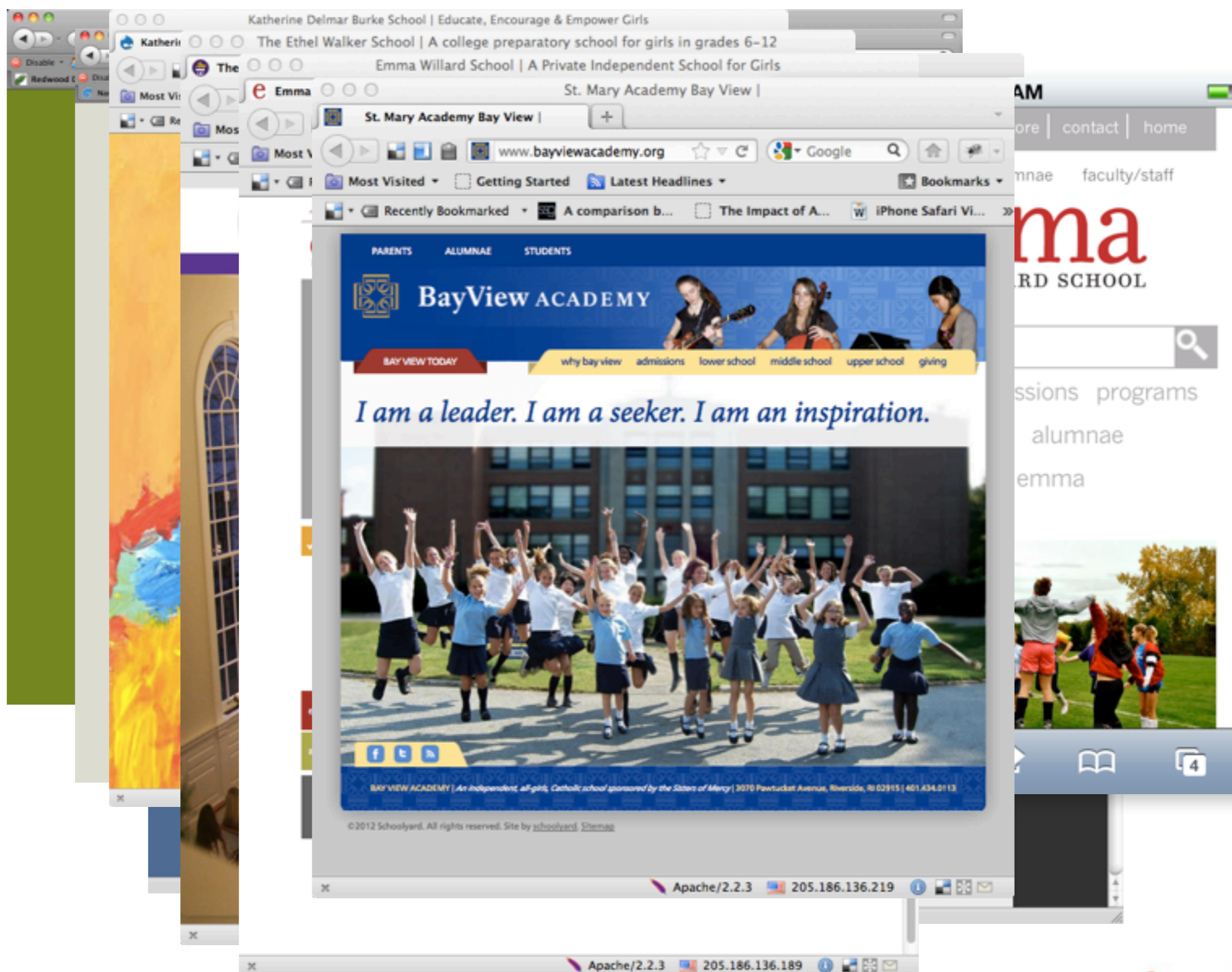


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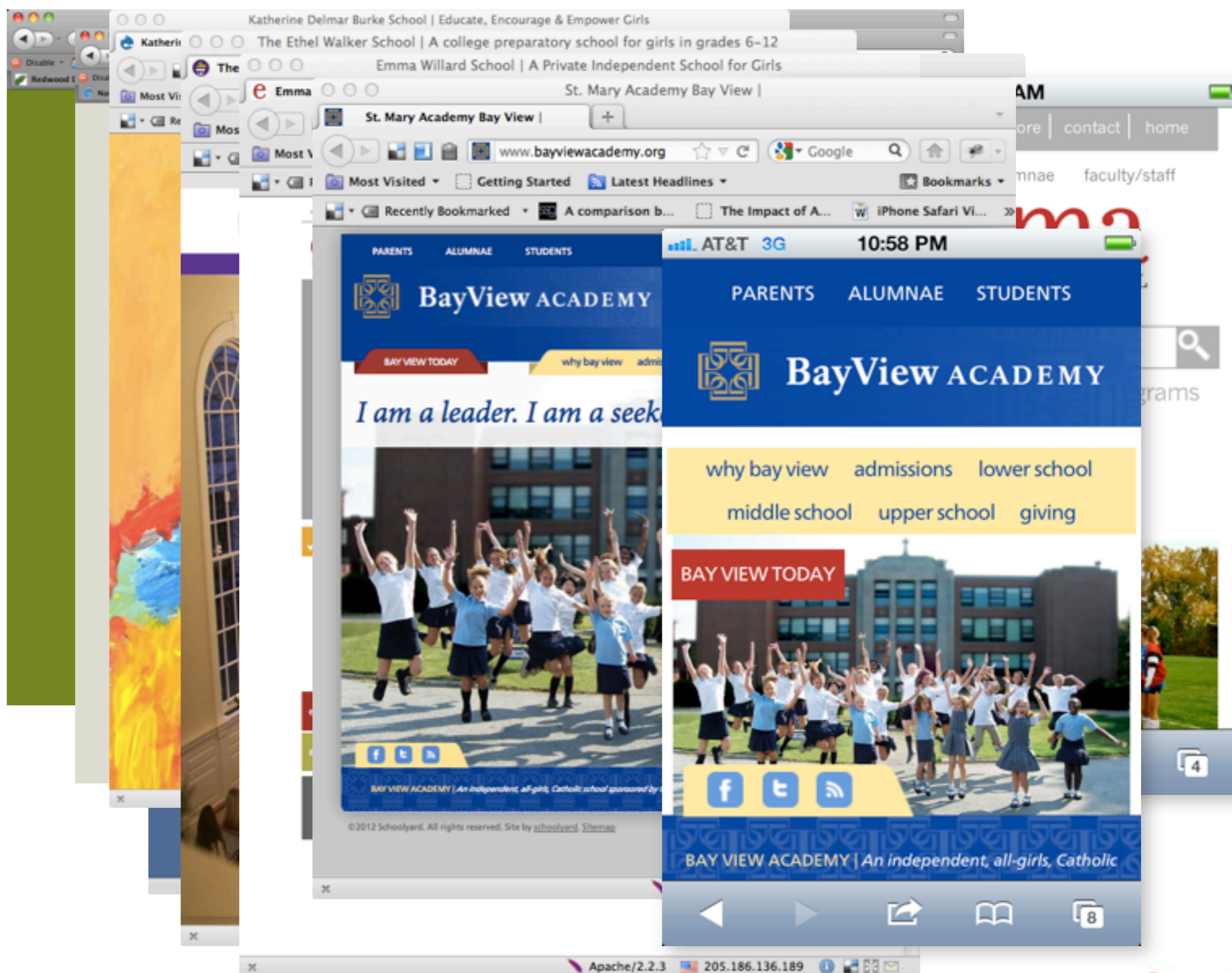


What We've Launched





What We've Launched





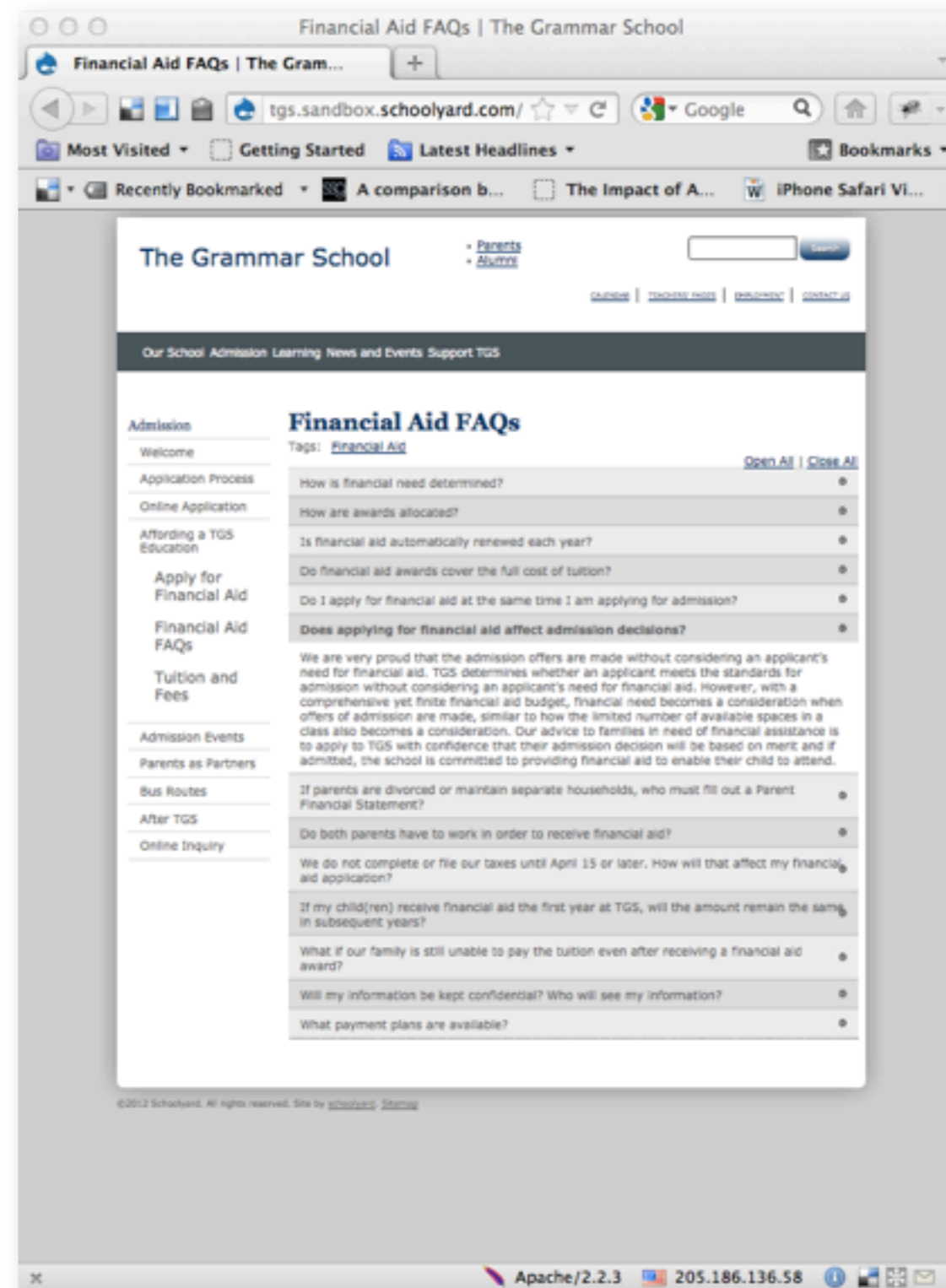
What We Feature

- Use the Features module to create super-flexible, robust collections of content types, views and more
- Simple: FAQs that are totally extensible w/taxonomy, 3 content types & attached view
- Fancy: Newsletters – multiple articles, announcements, flexible header images, column placement, statistics
- Complex but not Complicated: Athletics – teams, seasons, events, records, media, rosters, resources



FAQ In Progress

- Add FAQ Category
- Add FAQ 'Q/A' content
- Add FAQ List Page, select Category
- That's it!





Newsletter Sample

- Changeable header
- Left/Right sidebar
- Add articles
- Add announcements
- Select events
- Send it
- Archived dynamically





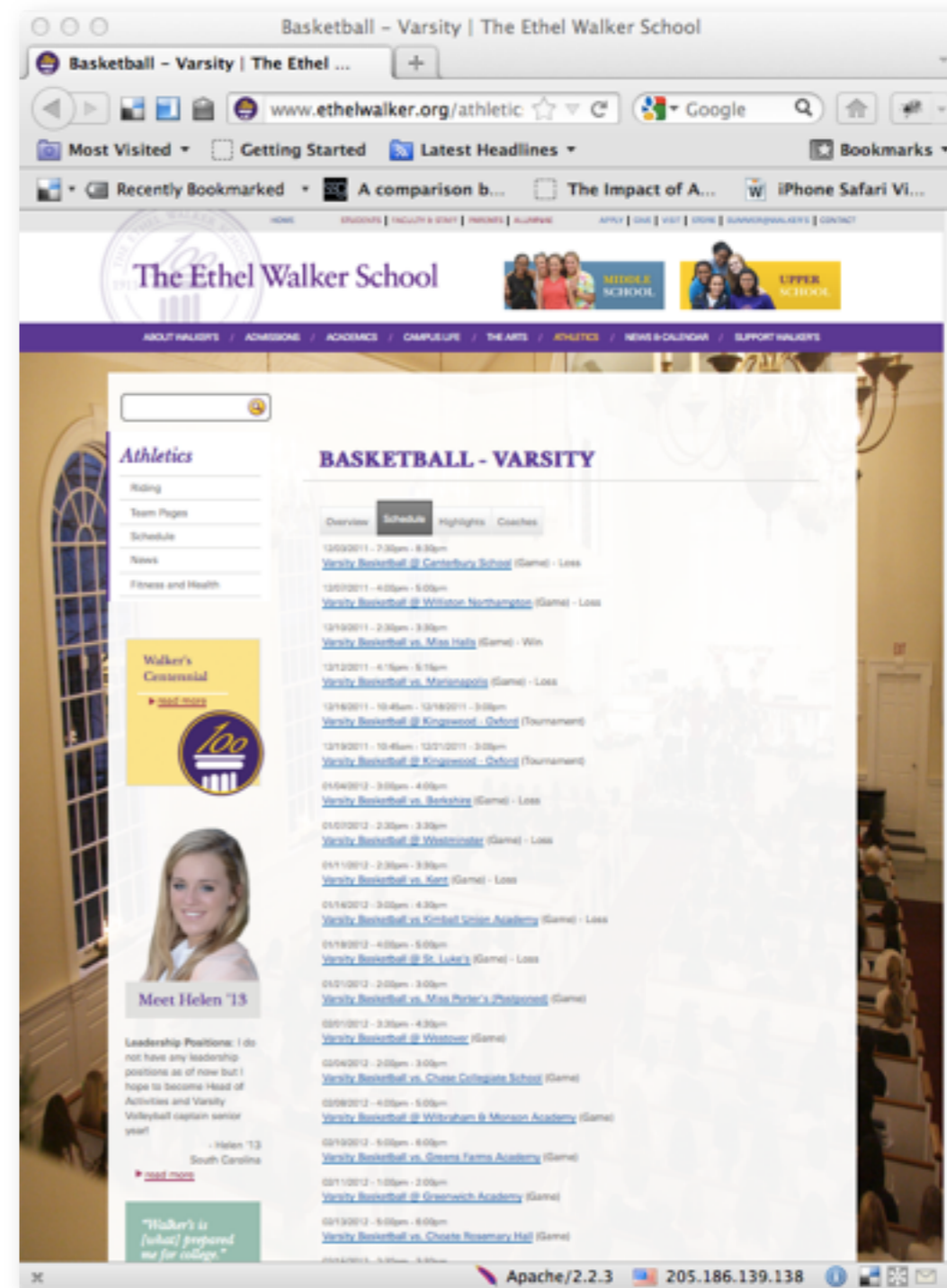
Feature: Athletics

- Athletics: need teams, events, scores, records, seasons, highlights, media galleries and more
- Use Quicktabs to gather content into an easy-to-use and view format
- Define basics in a flexible way so school can use year-on-year without losing data, history
- View template to calculate season record based on Events, which double as record and highlights
- Uses Context, Views Attach, Quicktabs, Node Gallery



Athletics In Action

- Schedule/Highlights built on Events w/extra details
- Now calc's record by season automatically
- Media Galleries
- Coaches (user selection)
- Rosters, Overview





What We Connect

- Sites with thousands of user accounts: teachers, staff, students, parents – even integrated w/LDAP
- Integrated with Google Calendars (push sync import)
- Integrated with Schoology (a social learning platform SAAS) with single sign on (SSO) & synchronized account creation
- Integrated directly with Filemaker databases
- Developed SSO with Blackbaud, Veracross, Infosnap & others



What We Give Back

- All updates, patches and new modules go back to the community
- Work actively on Filemaker, payment processing & web type modules
- Present, publish and share what we've built, how we've built it & why
- Sponsor local Drupal events like monthly DrupalPVD meetups & school technology conferences





It's A Win-Win-Win-(Win?)

- Schools: They get a great platform that continues to evolve and stay up-to-date for a fraction of the cost
- Drupal Community: We've created & contributed to a number of modules, sponsor local events & publish/present what we learn
- Schoolyard (it *is* a business after all...): We get paid to help schools, not build a platform
- You: What we've learned, built and shared works for schools, but also for other organizations



THANK YOU!

time for questions, answers & discussion