

## A modern move: Beulah transitions to new, refreshed website

Beulah School District 27 | [www.beulah.k12.nd.us](http://www.beulah.k12.nd.us) | Beulah, ND | 700 students | 3 schools



Beulah School District 27 (ND) has seen it's fair share of websites over the past two decades. Their online presence started with a clunky and unmanageable D.I.Y. website that relied on someone in the district having web development skills. As online popularity and demand for easily accessible information grew, the district was driven to move to a professionally designed website, and moved away from their home-built system.

In 2013, Beulah realized they needed to bring their website up to modern day standards. They refreshed their look with a new design and thought they finally had an optimized website.

That is, until the opportunity to move to the Blackboard Web Community Manager platform presented itself. They knew this was their chance to completely overhaul their online presence and district brand.

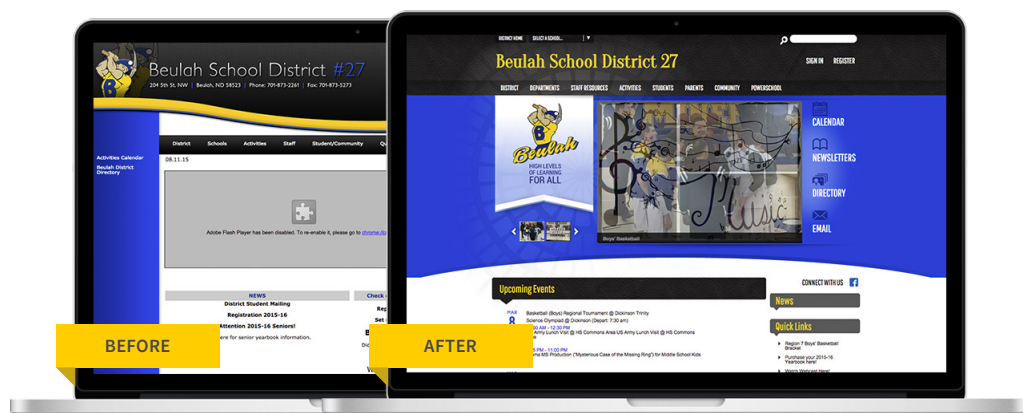
One of Beulah's biggest concerns about transitioning to a new website was timing. The move would take place right in the middle of the school year, and over the winter holiday season. But, by working closely with the Blackboard team the district established a plan to move the website and gave the green light to get started.

Eight short weeks later they completed their transition with the launch of new stunning school and district websites.

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*Once I saw our old site next to our new Blackboard Schoolwires site, it's hard to believe I ever thought our old one was fine,”*

**Deb Schields**  
Technology Director,  
Beulah School District



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*It might seem daunting, and the short timeline seemed like it was going to happen so fast, but Blackboard did such a good job of stepping us right through it and before we knew it we were finished.”*

**Sarah Becker**

Curriculum Technology Partner

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**Deb Schields**

Technology Director,  
Beulah School District

## Timing

Beulah's Technology Director, Deb Shields, teamed up with Curriculum Technology Partner, Sarah Becker, to manage and oversee the website transition. The duo wanted to accomplish the following goals during the move:

- Ensure a smooth process for end users
- Maintain data and content integrity
- Adhere to the project timeline
- Create a new online presence without completely rebuilding their website from scratch

The Blackboard team was up for the challenge. Weekly meetings were established to present updates and share next steps, while friendly reminders kept Deb and Sarah aware of the items they needed to take action on.

“It might seem daunting and the short timeline seemed like it was going to happen so fast, but Blackboard did such a good job of stepping us right through it and before we knew it we were finished,” said Sarah.

And their key goals to ensure a smooth process for end users and maintain data integrity were met with just as much enthusiasm.

“I was so impressed with the content and user migration and the permission settings. Everything moved over so well that we didn't have to go in and redo anything,” said Deb.

## Design

Blackboard's variety of design options and templates opened the door for Deb and Sarah to reimagine what their district's online presence could become.

Their previous website had poor navigation capabilities and didn't adapt the content to fit smartphone and tablet screens. After much consideration, and polling of additional staff members, the stunning [Noble Fusion template](#) was chosen.

“The design process posed the biggest challenge because we loved so many of the templates and couldn't make a final decision! So, we took an internal poll among staff to come up with the design. In the end, honestly, I love this new website,” said Deb.

## Training

One of the last steps of the transition process was to introduce the new website to the teachers. They overwhelmingly felt that it was very intuitive and easy to use. The Google integration was also a big hit because it allowed district users to connect their files and folders. And they are seeing a spike in engagement among teachers and their classroom pages.

“When you stick 60+ teachers on one project and you don't hear anything negative, you know you have something good,” shared Deb.

## Advice

What would the technology duo at Beulah say to other districts who are maintaining an outdated website and have the opportunity to transition to Blackboard Web Community Manager?

In Sarah's words, “Absolutely do it!”

Regular progress updates, effortless content and user migration, outstanding design options, and positive teacher feedback all rounded out their successful transition experience. Deb summed it up by saying, “Overall it was a positive and great choice to upgrade our site. We're so glad we had the opportunity to do it.”

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