TARGET AUDIENCE(S): The target audience for our website is school district personnel. Specifically, we want to connect with school district staff who are interested in learning more about our organization and offerings to attend our events or utilize the services of our professional staff.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: The goal for our website redesign was to create a modern, easy to navigate resource for school districts. We wanted to create a consistent look throughout the website that would provide users with all the resources they need.

RESEARCH: Analytics drove the decision making for the layout of the new website. We looked at user data and laid out the site to make the most frequented areas readily available. We identified our four key areas and used this as the center point of how we would construct the website. Additional data from a survey indicated that users liked to see “current event” type content, so we devised a plan to incorporate that feedback into a seamless look on the home page. We certainly looked at other sites and took note of features we liked and did not like.

PLANNING: The planning stage included deciding what we would take from the old site and what would be eliminated. The old site had too much content, and it needed to be paired down. We had broken links and dated content that was still available on our old website. The planning we did for the new website design helped us create new protocol moving forward to ensure we would no longer have broken links or dated information.

IMPLEMENTATION: We started by adding four buttons on the home page featuring the key analytics areas. The buttons would stand out and provide our users with an ease of access to find Agency Leadership, Event Registration, Licensing Help and Services. We then added a “news” section and “live feed” to address the need for “current events”. These were items survey users identified as wanting to see. Since our professional development events are a big revenue source for the organization, we added an additional events section to attract viewer’s eyes. The final element of the home page has quick links to our Learning Services program areas. Again, this was an analytics decision to place these items
on the home page. Our drop down menus fill in the gaps to give the user three clicks or less access to any product or service. All the individual pages have a consistent look with a snapshot of the individual offering. In some instances, we created an additional Google site that linked off our website and provided more in-depth content. In other cases, we embedded a video showcasing the service or product. Finally, we branded the content with our CESA color scheme throughout the website.

EVALUATION: We upgraded the look and functionality of our website dramatically, so to say this project was a success is an understatement. The old site had too much information, was clumsy to navigate, and was overwhelming for users. We tightened things up and produced what we feel is a clear, concise product with a great roadmap for the user. We have looked at analytics and have seen about a 250% spike in user traffic within the last six months, while our bounce rate has dropped 44%. The session durations have increased indicating the users are engaged in the content and the demographics indicate even use across all age groups.

An unintended consequence, which has been great is that individual service areas are receiving emails sent directly to them. This has not happened in the past. So, for us to receive direct points of contact from potential customers is extremely valuable.

Overall, from an aesthetic and functional view, the website has been a hit. Our app that mirrors our website also lays great and the feedback from our users has been extremely positive. It was a good use of staff time to bring our website up to date.

URL: http://www.cesa7.org

*Please note our website is not a school district website. We are an educational service agency, so our clients/users are the school district personnel.