



Karen Van de Water
Michigan Center Jr/Sr High School
400 S. State St.
Michigan Center, MI 49254

Phone: 517-764-1440 ext. 5855
Cell: 517-936-9172
E-mail: karen.vandewater@mccardinals.org

What is Web Design?

The Web Design course offered at MC covers more than the “how” of HTML and CSS, it also includes copyright instruction and looks at design as it impacts the user of a site. Throughout the course I encourage students to push themselves to learn more than what I cover in the class. What I cover is fairly simple to suit the range of students in the class. However, there is a wealth of information available on the internet dealing with web design, and the process is constantly changing, so they are encouraged to reach out and find the answers to questions they have if they want more. The class is also unique in that students are encouraged to use the internet throughout the class, as well as during the final exam. I tell my students each time I teach this class that they won't be designing without the internet so using it during the exam IS an option. They just need to know what they are looking for, and that's where this class comes in.

Students in the course begin by looking at where the web has been as far as website design and where it appears to be going. I do this so they start to understand that sometimes even the most attractive websites can contain worthless information and some of the most unattractive sites can be full of relevant content. As a designer they need to find that "sweet spot" where design and content meet.

Next we discuss copyright and how it will impact them as designers. Once this is done they are ready to get started creating. From that point on they will work through lessons on HTML and CSS completing projects and quizzes along the way to ensure that they can put to use what they are learning how to use those to design a quality product.

The class culminates in a final project where students show off what they can do with what they know through one last website.

But Wait There's More:

Because not every student strives to be a web master, but needed a course for the hour. Students spend every Friday working on a project of their choice as part of their 20% time/genius hour. The projects are ones that they choose and do not have to be academic in nature. This is their chance to research and pursue something they have always wanted time to do. They are not graded on whether they are successful with the project, instead their grade is based on their time management as they work through the project. Each week they are given a question that requires a response related to the project and their progress (for example: list 3 questions you have about the project that you need to research the answers to). This is not expected to be "free time" but a chance for the students to pursue something they have always wanted to explore. Projects culminate in a Ted talks type of video or a presentation that they can create on their own which is due at the end of the semester unless other arrangements are made.