



Brand + Identity

# Table of Contents

3	Contacts
4	Introduction
5	Who We Are
6	Logo Basics
8	Color
9	Typography
10	Logo Use
11	Incorrect Logo Use
12	Board of Education Seal
13	Department Logos
14	Stationery
15	Visual Style
16	Copywriting
18	Promotional Items
19	Examples
20	PowerPoint Templates
23	Email Signature

# Contacts

## **For any questions about Communications or branding in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools contact:**

Patrick Smith  
Chief Communications Officer  
980-344-0009  
patrick1.smith@cms.k12.nc.us

## **Please contact the Graphic Production Center for professional design and print services including letterhead or business card orders for your department:**

Graphic Production Center  
980-343-3880

## **To find an electronic copy of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Brand + Identity, templates and logos:**

Go to the CMS Employee Intranet site, click on Resources at the top of the page, click on Brand + Identity Toolkit or visit the Communications page on [wearecms.com](http://wearecms.com).

# Introduction

July 2019

CMS colleagues,

The 2019 CMS brand guidelines were created to empower and inspire our students, families, staff and community.

**Simple designs make information more accessible and easier to understand.**

**Bright colors invite curiosity and reflect our district's diversity.**

**Consistent standards create a shared CMS identity and culture.**

Our new brand guidelines are a part of our ongoing efforts to help build equity in our schools through the power of communications.

Thank you,

Tracy Russ  
Chief Communications Officer



# Who We Are

## CMS attributes:

honest  
approachable  
safe  
transparent  
forward-thinking  
flexible  
diverse

## CMS voice:

simple language  
conversation tone  
friendly  
direct language

**Our brand** is committed to support the vision of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Our brand leads the community in educational excellence, inspires intellectual curiosity, creativity, and achievements so that all students reach their full potentials.

**Our brand** refresh was built with intention and careful consideration. In a market as large and competitive as Charlotte-Mecklenburg School district, it is important to maintain a visual connection to our previous brand. The strongest part of the district's brand equity, the lowercase cms, has been retained in the refresh. As the district moves forward with work like our 2024 Strategic Plan, *What Matters Most*, we strive to build a brand for the next generation.

**Our brand** is underpinned with a color palette designed to be fresh, modern and distinctive. These guidelines have been created to help our staff, teachers, students, partners, outside vendors, and other third parties understand how to use CMS brand features correctly, including the CMS logo.

# Logo Basics

**Remember:**

There is only one approved rendering of the CMS logo.

The CMS logo is the primary visual element of the district.

The logo has been carefully crafted; no part of the logo is to be removed, changed, or recreated in any way. It is legible, direct, and clear.



The official color for the CMS logo is CMS blue (Pantone 638C). This is the preferred and approved use of the CMS logo for majority of applications.



The logo may be used in all black when necessary.



The red logo is used for urgent alerts, crisis and emergency communications.



The logo may be used in all white when reversed out of colors included in the district's color palette.



When placing the logo on an image, use the CMS blue logo if it remains legible and maintains the integrity of its form.



Use the white logo on dark images or when the blue logo doesn't provide enough contrast from the background image.



For images with a light background, apply a 10-20% black tint to the entire image to maintain legibility of the white logo.

# Color

Different combinations of colors can dramatically change the tone and appearance of a document so it's important to consider how colors work together. To help achieve greater brand recognition it is essential that our color palette is applied consistently and thoughtfully.

**Primary  
CMS Blue**      HEX #00AFD7      CMYK 86 0 9 0  
RGB 0 175 215      PANTONE 638C

**Counts Green**      HEX #D0DF00      CMYK 21 0 85 0  
RGB 208 223 0      PANTONE 389C

**Equity Blue**      HEX #003C71      CMYK 100 58 9 46  
RGB 0 60 113      PANTONE 541C

**Pineville Orange**      HEX #F2A900      CMYK 0 32 100 0  
RGB 242 169 0      PANTONE 130C

**Matthews Grey**      HEX #54585A      CMYK 48 29 26 76  
RGB 84 88 90      PANTONE 425C

**Cornelius Yellow**      HEX #FFCD00      CMYK 0 14 100 0  
RGB 255 205 0      PANTONE 116C

**McCray Red**      HEX #C8102E      CMYK 2 100 85 6  
RGB 200 16 46      PANTONE 186C

**Davidson Grey**      HEX #A2AAAD      CMYK 21 11 9 23  
RGB 162 170 173      PANTONE 429C

**Huntersville Purple**      HEX #702F8A      CMYK 73 100 0 0  
RGB 112 47 138      PANTONE 526C

**Mint Hill Green**      HEX #84BD00      CMYK 54 0 100 0  
RGB 132 189 0      PANTONE 376C

# Typography

Avenir is our primary typeface.

Avenir conveys simplicity, friendliness, honesty and transparency.

**Avenir provides a number of font choices ranging from light to black, italics, and small caps. When Avenir is unavailable, use Arial.**

## Avenir Book

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
1234567890 @#\$%&!(!,;)

## Avenir Roman

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
1234567890 @#\$%&!(!,;)

## Avenir Medium

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
1234567890 @#\$%&!(!,;)

## Avenir Heavy

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
1234567890 @#\$%&!(!,;)

## Avenir Heavy

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
1234567890 @#\$%&!(!,;)

Minion Pro is our secondary typeface. A warm and balanced typeface intended for quotes, body copy, and extended reading. Times New Roman may be used as a substitute.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPS  
1234567890@#&!(!,;)

# Logo Use

When using the logo, it is important to maintain enough clear space around it for maximum impact and clarity. The diagram below indicates how to determine that space. The size of the clear space increases or decreases proportionately to the size of the logo. Allow for more space whenever possible.



The minimum clear space required on all sides of the logo is half the height of the CMS letters. Do not place graphics, text, headlines or other information within the protected area.



To ensure legibility, do not use the logo smaller than 1" wide.



A version of the logo without the name spelled out is used when reproduction is smaller than 1" for items such as pens, lapel pins, or lanyards.

# Incorrect Logo Use

Use the approved CMS logo at all times.



Do not change the proportions of the logo vertically or horizontally. When sizing the logo in any application (Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Google Docs) drag from any corner to size proportionally without distorting the logo.



Do not rotate, alter, or modify the logo.



Do not add unnecessary adornments or distractions.



Do not enclose the logo inside a shape.

# Board of Education Seal

## Remember:

Similar to the CMS logo, allow ample clear space on all sides of the Board of Education Seal, size proportionally and always use the approved Seal without alterations.

For Board of Education use only. The official Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education Seal was revised July 2019.

This seal is used for official Board documents including diplomas, certificates, certified financial documents, ground breaking ceremonies, building dedications, etc. The seal may only be used on official Board documents with the approval of the Board Services department. (CMS charters should include the Board Seal.)

All other publications, banners, trade show items and district property should use the CMS district logo.





# Department Logos

**Remember:**

Similar to the CMS logo, allow ample clear space on all sides of the department logo, size proportionally and always use the approved logo without alterations.

CMS department names are set in a consistent type treatment with the CMS logo. Department names are set on one, two or three lines, depending on the length of the name.

Department logos can be used on banners, posters and other information related to the initiative. Department logos must be created using the format and specifications show in the examples.



# Stationery

**Remember:**

Letterhead templates can be downloaded via the CMS Employee Intranet by clicking on Resources at the top of the page, click Brand + Identity Toolkit.

Stationery designs are standardized throughout the district. Business cards, letterhead, and envelopes feature the district logo, not individual department or school logos. Stationery designs, including the logo, may not be altered.

The image displays several stationery design templates for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS). At the top left is a large blue header bar. Below it, on the left, is a letterhead template with fields for School/Department Name, Address Line, City, NC 00000, and phone/fax numbers (980.343.0000). To the right is a business card template with a blue background on the left containing the 'cms' logo and 'wearecms.com'. The right side of the card is white and contains fields for First Name Last Name, Post-Nominal Letters, Job Title, School or Building or Department, Street Address, City, NC 00000, Courier # 000, and phone/fax numbers, along with an email address field (firstname.lastname@cms.k12.nc.us). Below the letterhead is another letterhead template with the 'cms' logo and fields for School/Department Name, Address Line, and City, NC 00000. To the right of this is a large blue social media graphic with the 'cms' logo, 'Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools', and social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, with the text 'CharMeckSchools'. At the bottom is a blue footer bar with the 'cms' logo, 'CharMeckSchools' text, social media icons, and 'wearecms.com'.

# Visual Style

## Remember:

Keep publications simple

Use photographs of CMS students, staff and facilities when possible

Use approved district colors

Use no more than two different fonts in one publication

Use ample white space

When creating brand materials try to follow the spirit of these guidelines. Keep it simple. Simple means clear, concise, easy to understand and without unnecessary clutter. Less is more.

All printed and electronic brand materials represent and promote CMS. Placing the CMS logo prominently on a cover or on a single page with ample white space around it gives CMS instant recognition. All collateral and marketing materials (brochures, handouts, pamphlets, banners, and displays) must be reviewed and approved by CMS Communications.

CMS has an extensive photo library containing high quality images to support in the creation of genuine and authentic CMS communications. For maximum impact, use one large image rather than several smaller photographs.

## Compliance Statements

The following compliance statement, in its entirety, should be included in all publications that are distributed to the general public:

*In compliance with federal law, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools administers all educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination against any person on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, national origin, age or disability.*

Invitations released to the public for plays, presentations, graduations and other events should include the following Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility statement:

*Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility: If auxiliary aids for communication are necessary for participation in a CMS program or service, participants are encouraged to notify the ADA coordinator at least one week prior to program commencement at 980-343-6661 (voice) or [accessibility@cms.k12.nc.us](mailto:accessibility@cms.k12.nc.us).*



# Copywriting

## Remember:

If you must use an acronym, be sure to spell it out first with acronym in parentheses immediately behind it (e.g. Career and Technical Education (CTE) will add three programs...).

**Stuck or confused? Communications can help. Call 980-343-7450 with your questions.**

Write clearly, avoiding jargon and acronyms. Accuracy is important. Check names of schools, persons and programs before you hit send or print.

## Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

On first reference, use the complete name: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

A hyphen is used between the words Charlotte and Mecklenburg.

The acronym CMS is used only after the complete name has been used first.

Do not use: Char-Meck Schools, C.M.S., CMS System, etc.

## Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

On first reference, use the complete name: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education.

“Board of Education” or “the Board” may be used only after the complete name has been used first.

Each title or reference should always be capitalized.

When referring to the Board leaders, use the terms “Chairperson” and “Vice-Chairperson.”

When referring to members of the Board, use full names and titles. Contact the Board of Education at 980-343-5139 to receive correct spellings and titles for each board member, or consult the Board section of the website.

## Employee Titles

All employees should be identified with a full, formal title in the first reference.

Capitalize titles if they occur before the person’s name, but do not set the title off with a comma (e.g. Superintendent First Name Last Name).

Exceptions: Generic titles that apply to a large number of staff (e.g., teacher, teacher assistant, custodian, bus driver and administrative assistant) are not capitalized before a person’s name (e.g. Briarwood Elementary teacher Mary Jones).

Do not capitalize titles if they appear after the person’s name. However, the title should be set off with commas (e.g. John Doe, principal of ABC Elementary, said...).

Do not use abbreviations of formal titles. However, generic forms of the title may be used in subsequent references (e.g. *Communications Director Susie Que announced that a new program will be implemented in the fall of 2024. According to the director, this program will...*).

## School Names

For first references of any school, use the formal, complete name with appropriate capitalization.

*Examples: Nathaniel Alexander Elementary School, James Martin Middle School or E.E. Waddell High School*

**Referring to CMS departments or offices**

Department names should be capitalized when using the formal name of the department. When referring to a department or office, it is not necessary to use the word "department" or "office" in the reference.

*Example: Contact Communications at 980-343-7450 for additional information.*

**Programs**

When referring to a program within a school or department, refer to the specific school or department (by its formal name) on the first reference. The full title of the program should be capitalized.

*Example: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools became one of the first public school districts in North Carolina to offer the International Baccalaureate Program.*

# Promotional Items

All products should be produced in the approved district colors. Other colors are not permitted.

## **Uniform Patch, Shirt and Cap Embroidery/Printing**

Shirts, uniforms, coats, etc. that include the logo are important identifiers and therefore should be easy to read.

The logo must conform to the district standards in the use of the logo, fonts and colors. The manufacturer must be able to match CMS blue (Pantone 638C).

The embroidery or printing should display the official CMS logo.

The minimum size of the logo printed on a uniform, cap or shirt should be 2.5" in width.

## **Specialty Items**

Specialty items require care in assuring that the proper spatial relations is maintained and the correct colors are used.

Since specialty items use different printing techniques and may not use Pantone colors, the vendor must be able to match the required colors.

A vector file (EPS or AI) is the standard file format used by printers. Contact Graphic Production Center at 980-343-3880 to request the CMS logo in this file format.

## **Mugs/Drink Containers**

The logo should be centered vertically on the mug and aligned parallel with the handle axis.

Mugs and drink containers commemorating special events may print event graphics on the opposite side of the cup from the logo.

## **Pencils/Pens**

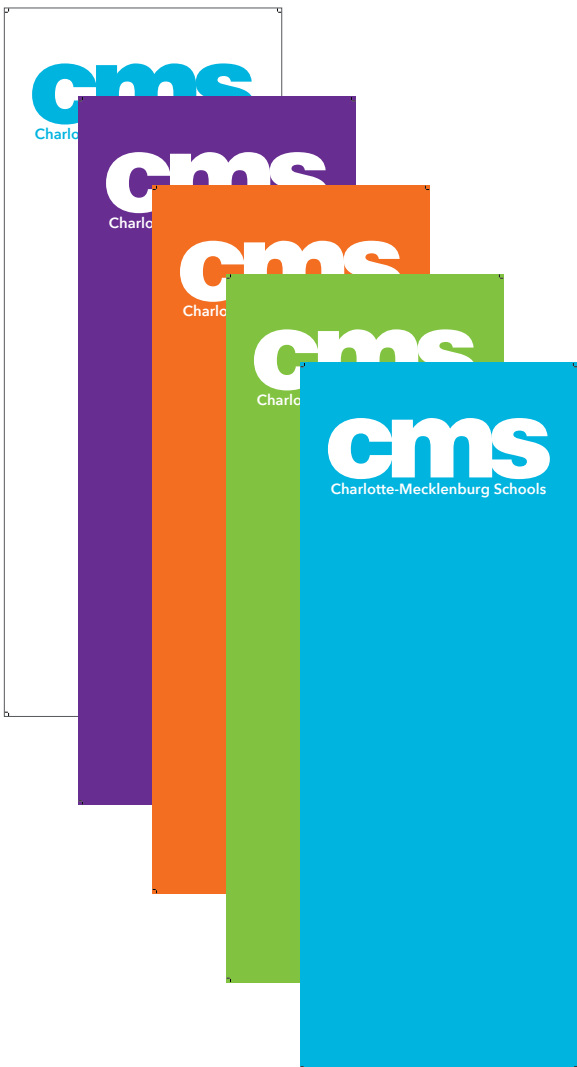
Pencils and/or pens should contain the CMS logo and name of the district in standard district fonts and colors.

## **Vehicular Identification**

Logo placement varies according to the vehicle type, make and model, as well as doors, trim and body style. The logo should be placed on both the driver's and passenger's doors of the vehicle.

On a white vehicle, the color version of the logo should be used. The manufacturer must be able to match CMS blue (Pantone 638C).

# Examples



# PowerPoint Templates

## Remember:

Templates can be downloaded via the CMS Employee Intranet site, click on Resources at the top of the page, click on Brand + Identity Toolkit or visit the Communications page on [wearecms.com](http://wearecms.com).

All presentations produced by schools and departments must conform to district standards in the use of the logo, fonts and colors.

These examples are required templates for slides and presentations made by any school or department.



Example of cover slide. Fonts and recommended placement included in the template download.



Alternative cover slide.





Example of section header slide.



An alternative section header slide.



Alternative section header slide with subheadline.

## Word

Your presentation is for the benefit of the audience. But boring an audience with bullet point after bullet point is of little benefit to them. The best slides may have no text at all! This may sound insane given the dependency of text slides today, but the best PowerPoint slides will be virtually meaningless with out the narration (that is you). **Remember, the slides are meant to support the narration of the speaker, not make the speaker superfluous.**

- Minimize the use of bullet points.
- Minimize words, ideally limiting copy to one line; complete sentences are unnecessary
- Use photographs whenever possible
- Use only simple charts and graphs
- Make charts and graphs as large as possible, even occupying the entire slide

Example of content page.

### Page Title Avenir Black 36 pt.

Body Text Avenir Roman 20 pt.

**Body Text Avenir Heavy Alternative 20 pt.**

Body Text Avenir Light Alternative 20 pt.

Body Text Avenir Roman 20 pt.

**Body Text Avenir Heavy Alternative 20 pt.**

Body Text Avenir Light Alternative 20 pt.

- Minimize the use of bullet points.
- Minimize words, ideally limiting copy to one line; complete sentences are unnecessary
- Use photographs whenever possible
- Use only simple charts and graphs
- Make charts and graphs as large as possible, even occupying the entire slide

Text heavy page with suggested font sizes and suggestions for presenting a clear and effective presentation.

### Page Title Avenir Black 36 pt.

Your presentation is for the benefit of the audience. But boring an audience with bullet point after bullet point is of little benefit to them. The best slides may have no text at all! This may sound insane given the dependency of text slides today, but the best PowerPoint slides will be virtually meaningless with out the narration (that is you). **Remember, the slides are meant to support the narration of the speaker, not make the speaker superfluous.**

- Minimize the use of bullet points.
- Minimize words, ideally limiting copy to one line; complete sentences are unnecessary
- Use photographs whenever possible
- Use only simple charts and graphs
- Make charts and graphs as large as possible, even occupying the entire slide

Example of content page with title, body and bullet points.

# Email Signature

## Remember:

*Email Guidelines* can be downloaded via the CMS Employee Intranet by clicking on Resources at the top of the page, click Brand + Identity Toolkit.

In an effort to remain consistent in our correspondence across all forms of communication throughout the district, all employees must format their email signature per *Email Guidelines*. This publication can be found on the Intranet under Resources, CMS Brand + Identity Toolkit, *Email Guidelines*.

CMS emails should not include inspirational quotes, religious quotes or departmental specific tag lines.

CMS email signatures must be in black font.

CMS email signatures must use Avenir Book, 11 pt. font size. If Avenir is unavailable, use Arial.

CMS email signatures should not be italicized.

Kind Regards,

First Name, Last Name

Job Title

Department

Street Address

City, State Zip

980-343-0000 office

704-000-0000 cell

wearecms.com



CharMeckSchools     wearecms.com