Using Google Sites for Chapter Web Sites

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Do you have a chapter web site?

Why have chapter web sites? A web site can provide two important functions:

- Marketing of the program to prospective students, their parents, and the community.
- Provide a source of information for current students and their parents.

Common web site content

Determining what to put on your site can be a challenge. Consider how often you need to up date each page and your level of commitment to do so. Some ideas are:

- Information about the program and classes. What classes do you offer? Provide a short description. If they can be taken for graduation or UC credit. (fairly static)
- Information about FFA Activities (a general description of what your chapter does) (frequent updating)
- FFA Officers (annual update)
- Advisory Committee (infrequent update)
- Photos of your facilities (static)
- Awards (CDE, Project Competition, Fairs, etc.) (regular update)

- Activity Calendar (regular update)
- SAE Projects
- Forms like permission slips
- CDE Practice materials
- Video (this is a bit tricky, but exciting content if done well)

Common issues with chapter web sites

- You have registered a domain ($) and don't know how to manage it.
- Site really out of date.
- The student that maintained the site has graduated.
- Don't have the knowledge or software to maintain the site.
- School or district site is hard to access or get updated.

In CaAgEd only 66 of 307 Chapters have a valid link to a web site. Of the 66 less than half of the links display an FFA Page, most simply link to the school site. Is your site listed?

Using Google Sites

What is Google Sites?

Google sites is a free service of Google that allows you to create a simple web site with minimal knowledge of web site creation using only a web browser. Google Sites provides some powerful built in tools like calendars and announcement postings.

See Overview at: http://www.google.com/sites/overview.html (includes sample sites)

Limitations of Google Sites

Google sites are not highly flexible and have limited design capability. The format is structured.

Features

- A personalized URL (ex. sites.google.com/site/ParadiseFFA)
- Automatic menu navigation
- Embedded tools (called gadgets) such as a calendar, announcements, etc.
- Ability to import photos and resample for the web (makes the images smaller). This fixes a common problem with web sites is the posting of large photos which download slowly and have a poor quality.
- Ability to control who can maintain the site allowing you to delegate maintenance (for example to your Reporter).

Getting Started

Go to http://sites.google.com

If you have not registered at Google then register for a Google Account. Once you are registered login to Google Sites. Note that once registered at Google you can use the same registration for all the Google tools.

Create a new site. For example: http://sites.google.com/site/paradiseffa/ (note this is an actual sample site).

Select the new site and you are ready to start making pages.

Google Page Options

Web Page	Blank web page. See the Insert menu for options.
Dashboard	Use to insert a "Google Gadget" this includes a variety of options including a calendar. YouTube videos, PicesaWeb Photo Albums, etc.
Announcements	This style of page allows posting of "announcements. A good way to communicate.
File Cabinet	A page that allows uploading of documents.
List	Create To Do lists, etc. Allows list columns to be sorted and customized.

Photo Albums

Google allows creation of PhotoAlbums that can be linked in to a Dashboard page or inserted as a gadget. See: http://picasaweb.google.com/. This is a free service and you can use your Google login to access.

Calendar

Google also has a calendar application (http://calendar.google.com) that allows you to maintain an event calendar that can be view by the public or selected users. The calendar can be embedded into a web page (user the dashboard page type of "insert" into a regular web page. You can even sync the calendar with your blackberry or iphone!

Additional Page Features

Colors and fonts can also be customized. See More Actions | Manage Site

Any page can have comments and or attachments. For most pages you will probably want to omit these features. However these are only usable by registered users that you have given permission to collaborate – sort of limiting. See option under More Actions | Page Settings. See help if you want to set up a real Blog.

RSS feeds are also possible using a third part vendor. Enter RSS on the help page for how to do this.

Site Management Tips

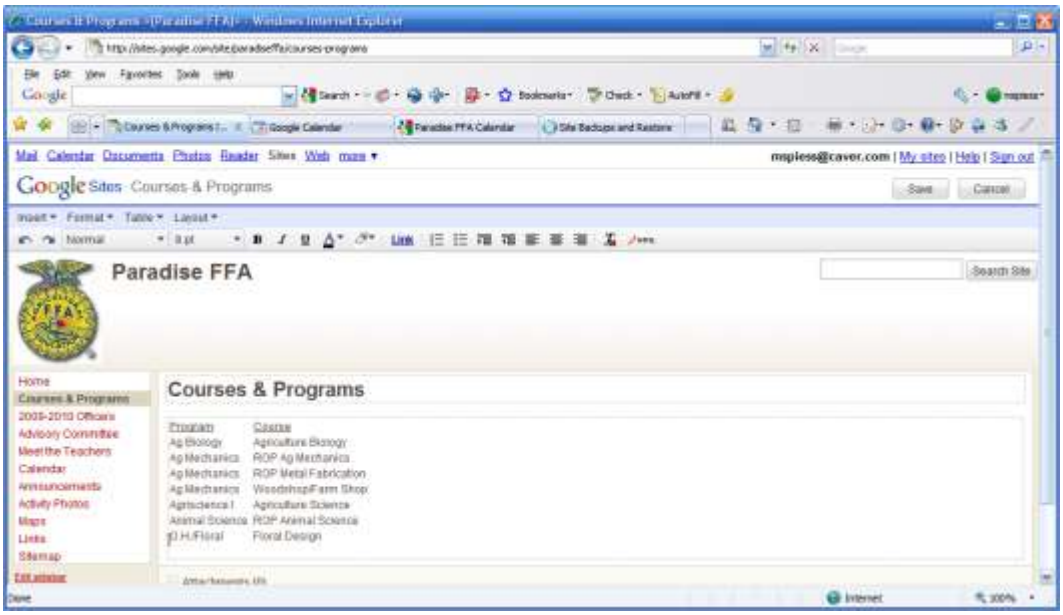
- The teacher should be the site owner. This way you don't loose control when a student leaves.
- Plan the site with your chapter officers. Decide what is appropriate to place on the site before creating the site.
- Assign one or more students to maintain the parts of the site that will need regular updating (e.g. calendar). A good job for the chapter reporter.
- Keep it simple. 6-10 pages can provide a lot of good information for students, the parents, and the community.
- Remember that your site is very public -- post only appropriate materials.
- Date materials such as photos (e.g. "State Convention – 2009"). Remove old materials or make history pages. Users like to see past events, just label clearly.

Page Change Notification

A handy feature to help keep track of changes when you allow others to do the editing is the page subscription feature. If you subscribe to this feature then you will get an email every time the page is saved. See More Actions | Subscribe to page changes.

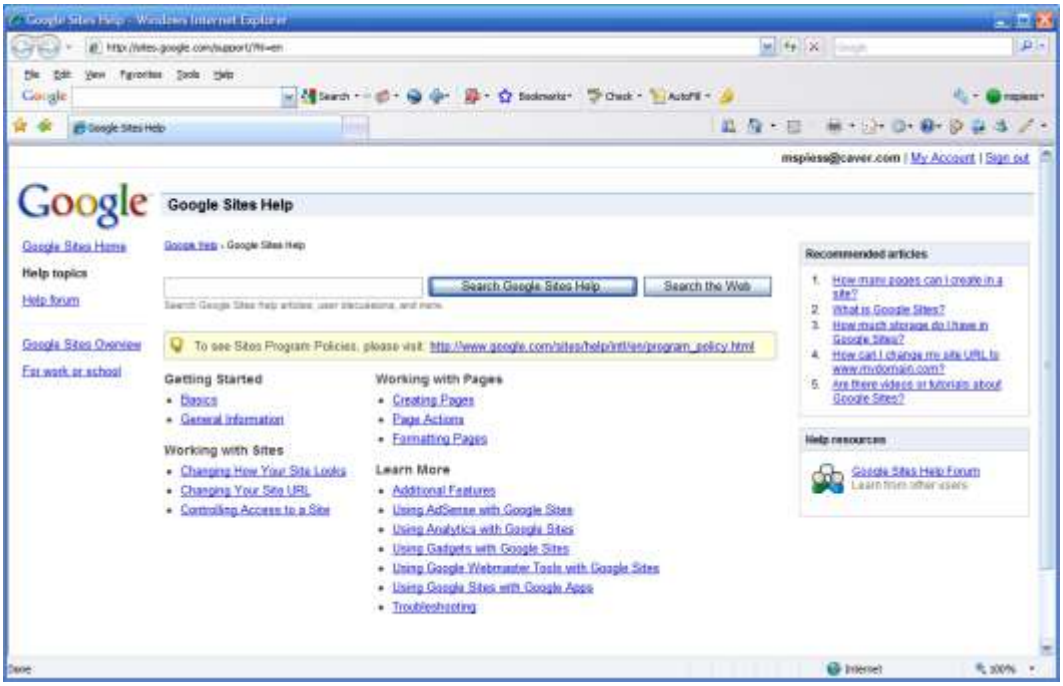
Sample Page Editing Screen

Google sites provides a simple to use HTML editor that allows common formatting of the web page.



Google Sites Help

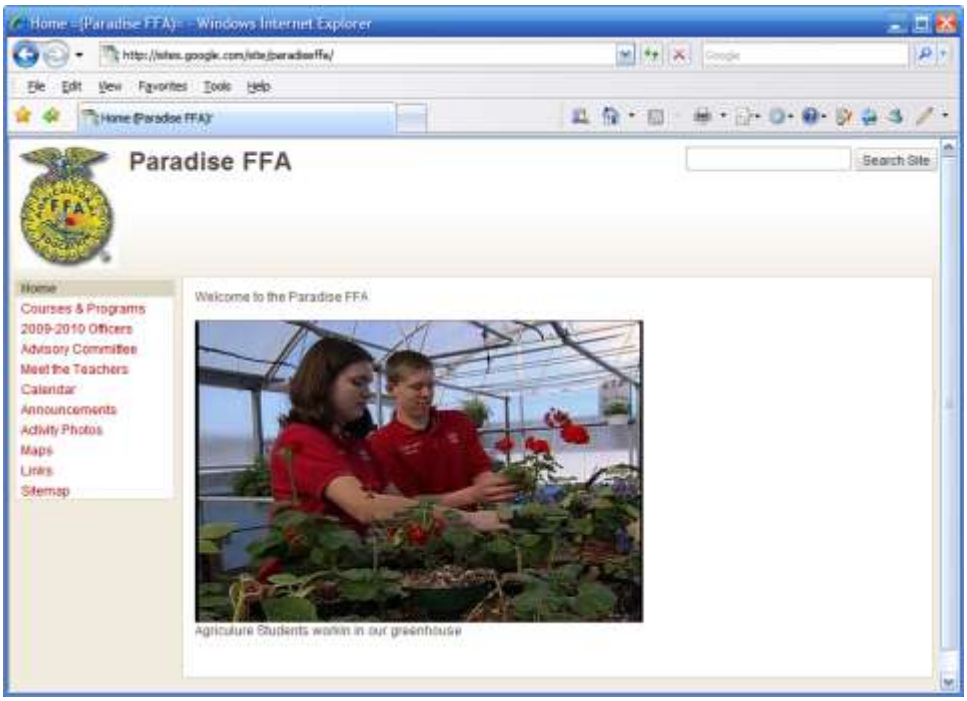
The help link in the upper right hand of the screen provides basic information on how Google Sites is used.



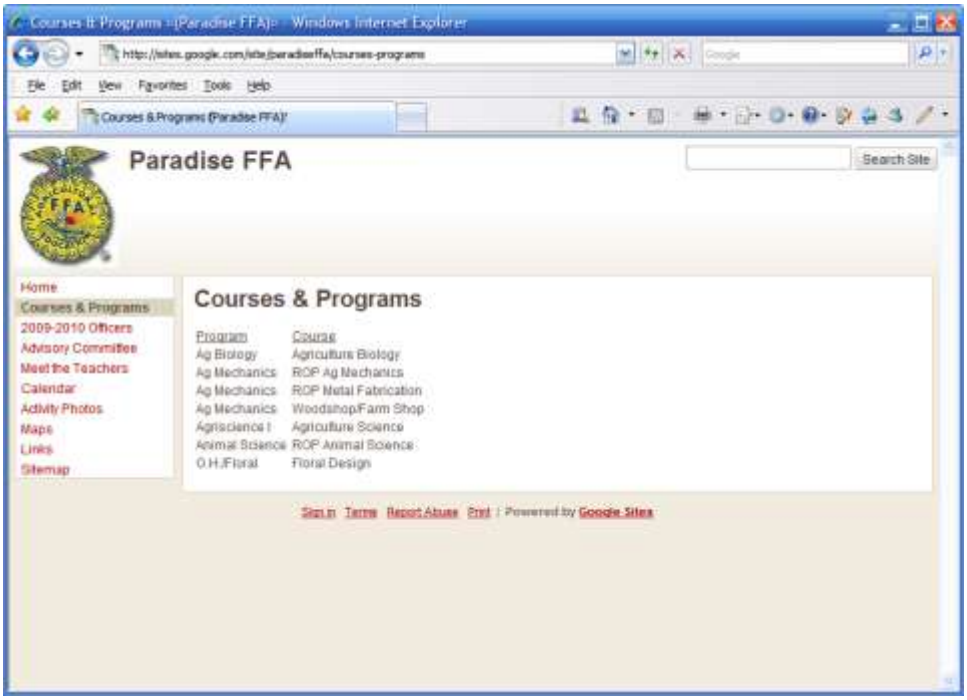
Google has provided some video tutorials. These can be found by entering “video tutorial” in the help search box.

Sample Site Pages

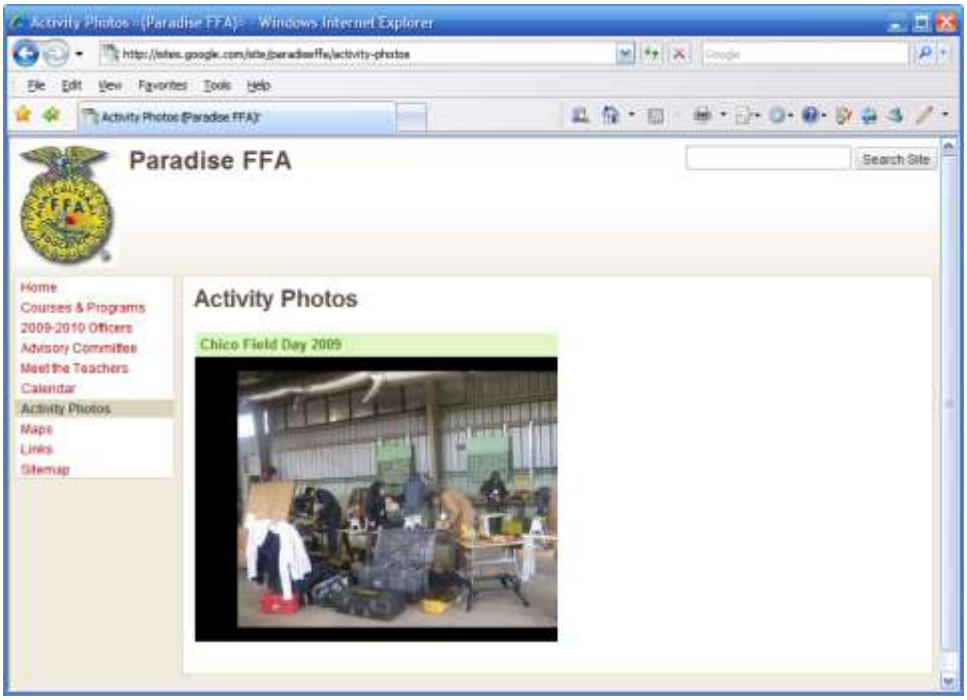
See the sample site at: http://sites.google.com/site/paradiseffa/



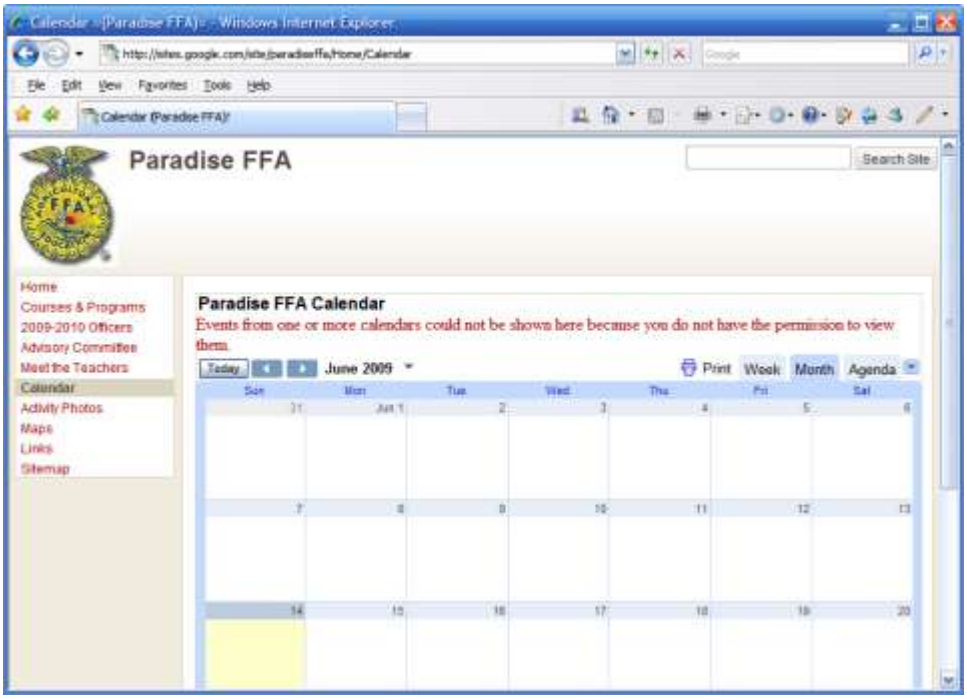
The basic look of the site.



Simple listing of courses using an HTML Table.



Activity Photo Page with embedded Slide Show.



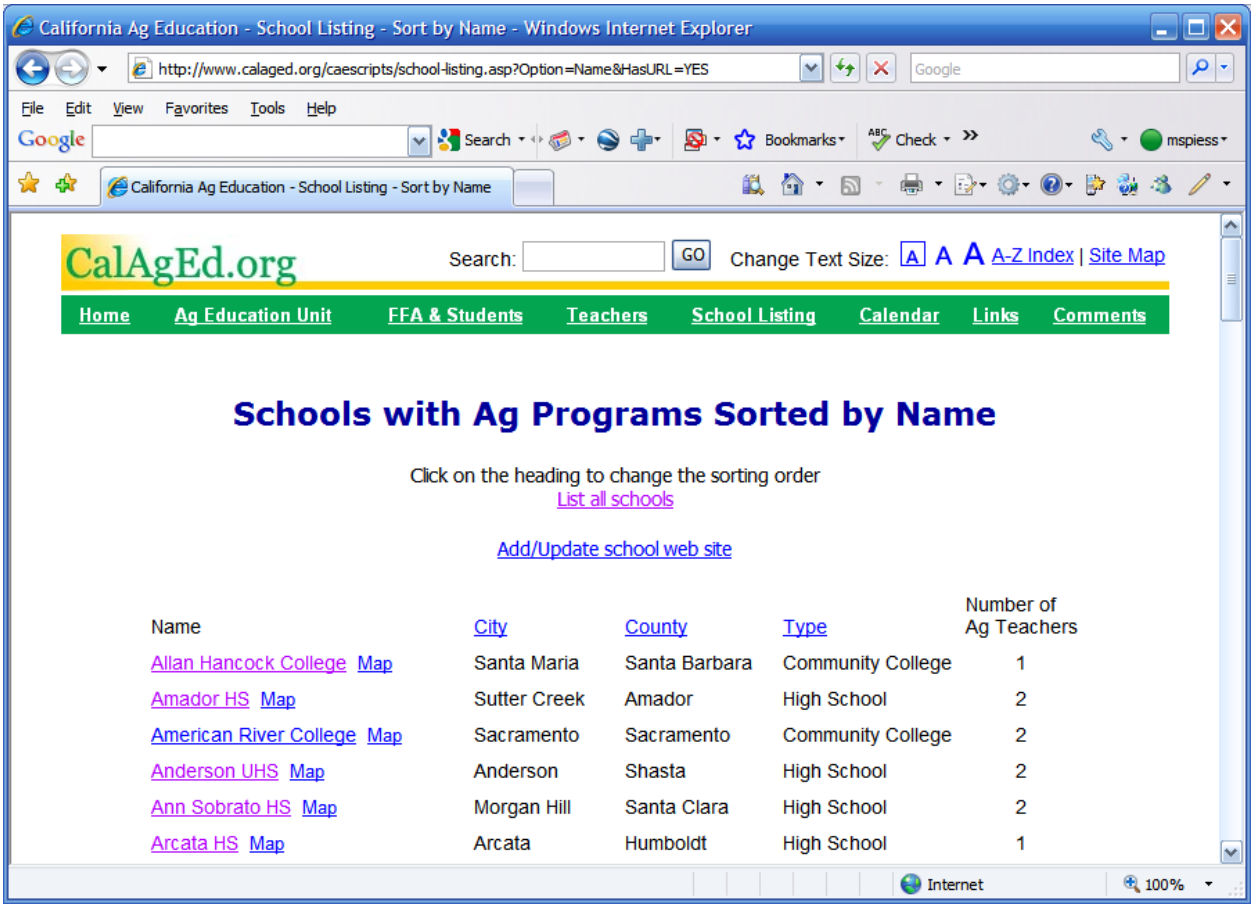
Google Calendar embedded in the site.

Appendix – CalAgEd Listing:

Current sites listed in a CalAgEd (6/2009)

Name	City	Name	City
Amador HS	Sutter Creek	Littlerock HS	Littlerock
Anderson UHS	Anderson	Live Oak HS	Live Oak
Ann Sobrato HS	Morgan Hill	Live Oak HS	Morgan Hill
Arcata HS	Arcata	Lucerne Valley HS	Lucerne Valley
Atascadero HS	Atascadero	McFarland HS	McFarland
Atwater HS	Atwater	Mendota HS	Mendota
Beyer HS	Modesto	Merrill West HS	Tracy
Biggs HS	Biggs	Middletown HS	Middletown
Blaker/Kinser Jr. HS	Ceres	Mt. Whitney HS	Visalia
Bret Harte UHS	Altaville	Orestimba HS	Newman
Calexico HS	Calexico	Orland HS	Orland
Caruthers HS	Caruthers	Pleasant Grove HS	Elk Grove
Central Valley HS	Ceres	Ponderosa HS	Shingle Springs
Chowchilla HS	Chowchilla	Princeton HS	Princeton
Clovis East HS	Clovis	Ridgeview HS	Bakersfield
Colusa HS	Colusa	Righetti HS	Santa Maria
Corning UHS	Corning	Rio Vista HS	Rio Vista
Davis Sr. HS	Davis	Riverbank HS	Riverbank
Del Oro HS	Loomis	Salinas HS	Salinas
Denair HS	Denair	Santa Maria HS Map	Santa Maria
Dos Palos HS	Dos Palos	Santa Rosa HS Map	Santa Rosa
Elk Grove HS	Elk Grove	Shandon HS Map	Shandon
Farmersville HS	Farmersville	Sheldon HS Map	Sacramento
Florin HS	Sacramento	Soquel HS Map	Soquel
Golden West HS	Visalia	Surprise Valley HS Map	Cedarville
Grace M. Davis HS	Modesto	Turlock HS Map	Turlock
Gustine HS	Gustine	Upper Lake Union HS Map	Upper Lake
Hanford HS	Hanford	Vista HS Map	Vista
Heritage HS	Romoland	Wasco HS Map	Wasco
James C. Enochs	Modesto	Watsonville HS Map	Watsonville
John H. Pitman HS	Turlock	Willows HS Map	Willows
Lassen HS	Susanville	Winters HS Map	Winters
Le Grand UHS	Le Grand	Woodland Sr. HS Map	Woodland
Lindhurst HS	Olivehurst		

To update your listing go to CalAgEd, choose school listing on the home page. In the school listing select the link: Add/Update school web site.


California Ag Education - School Listing - Sort by Name - Windows Internet Explorer
http://www.calaged.org/caescripts/school-listing.asp?Option=Name&HasURL=YES
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
California Ag Education - School Listing - Sort by Name
CalAgEd.org
Search: GO
Change Text Size: A A A A-Z Index | Site Map
Home Ag Education Unit FFA & Students Teachers School Listing Calendar Links Comments
Schools with Ag Programs Sorted by Name
Click on the heading to change the sorting order
List all schools
Add/Update school web site
Name City County Type Number of Ag Teachers
Allan Hancock College Map Santa Maria Santa Barbara Community College 1
Amador HS Map Sutter Creek Amador High School 2
American River College Map Sacramento Sacramento Community College 2
Anderson UHS Map Anderson Shasta High School 2
Ann Sobrato HS Map Morgan Hill Santa Clara High School 2
Arcata HS Map Arcata Humboldt High School 1
Internet
100%