

ACCESSIBILITY USER GUIDE

Web accessibility is the inclusive practice of removing barriers that prevent interaction with or access to websites and their content by persons with disabilities.

Under Section 508 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, K-12 school districts are required to make their web content accessible to users of assistive technology.

Fortunately, content standards for accessibility are fairly simple to understand and implement. As a website content contributor, the following guidelines must be followed:

Content images must have alternative text.

How to meet this criteria: Alternative text is a description of what the image portrays, for example, “A father hugging his daughter goodbye on the first day of school.” When uploading images to the Media Library, ensure that the “Alternative text” field is filled in before inserting the image on the page.

Headings must be used hierarchically.

How to meet this criteria: Headings must be thought of in terms of the overall page outline. Heading 1 is the document title, and there is only one of those so we don’t give the users the option of adding additional ones. Heading 2 is used for the immediate subheads, and heading 3 is used for subsections of the heading 2 sections. The bottom line is that you should never have a heading 3 without a heading 2, or a heading 4 without a heading 3. Headings should not be used decoratively, but as a way to organize information.

Tables must have proper header cells and column scopes.

How to meet this criteria: When creating a table in the content, ensure that the column headers (typically the first row) have been designated as header cells and that their “scope” has been specified (e.g. whether it is the heading for the column below or for the row across). You can do this by selecting a cell, clicking the Table icon in the formatting toolbar, selecting Cell and then Table cell properties. Choose “Heading” under Cell Type and either “Column” or “Row” under Scope. You should also avoid using tables for page layout purposes.

PDFs must be generated in a machine-readable and accessible format.

How to meet this criteria: When generating PDFs from Microsoft Word, Google Docs, or other equivalent systems, they should automatically have the proper level of machine readability. However, scanned documents generally do not. Scanned documents are treated as an image wrapped in a PDF file format. Avoid using scanned PDFs whenever possible.

Videos must have closed-captioning.

How to meet this criteria: If you are using YouTube, you may already be covered; they caption their videos automatically using speech recognition. However, in order to be strictly compliant, you should always go back in and edit the auto-generated captions for accuracy.

Link text must be descriptive.

How to meet this criteria: Make sure your text links do not say things like “Click here” and that they make sense out of context. Some screen readers will collect all of the text links on a page in order to save the user time in navigating between them. A link that says “Click here” is not very helpful.