

Web Accessibility Essentials

Web Accessibility means that people with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with the Web. By federal law, all school websites must be ADA compliant.

Basic Text Editor

The content app is the basic text editor for the website. See the Content App Help Card for more information.

ADA reminders:

- Do not copy/paste pictures. Click the insert image icon on menu bar and be sure to enter alternative text about the picture.
- Do not use the heading icons (F icon or T icon) to format your text. Use the feather icon to change the size of your text.
- Use meaningful text for your hyperlinks. Do NOT use the actual URL address for the hyperlink text.

Use alt-text for Images

Assistive technology software is often used by people with disabilities (e.g., blindness) to navigate websites. The software reads the website text to the viewer, but when it reaches an image (e.g., could be a picture in an article, an icon serving as a link or button to a different page or application, etc.) it looks for the “alt attribute” or “alt text tag” to understand the purpose of the image. Thus, it is extremely important that the alt-text field is properly populated for the user:

- Meaningful – alt must describe the image if not used as an image link.
- Decorative - alt must be set to null/empty string (“”)
- Actionable - alt must describe the purpose of the element.

Special Note:

- Avoid using “picture of” or “image of” in your alt tags; it’s deemed redundant or inferred. Thus, use “Ms Doe accepting award” instead of “Picture of Ms Doe accepting award”.
- Avoid giving an image the exact same “alt text tag” as its “image title” as this results in an alert on many automated checkers. Any minor variance will avoid triggering this warning/alert.

Assistive technology cannot “read” a picture

Avoid using verbiage within images and/or using images to convey key information (such as graphical flyers, graphical announcements, charts, color-coded information). A picture that shows a child and has “Registration ends next Friday!” might be catchy, but that key information within the picture is not “readable” to assistive technology.

The answer is not necessarily to not use those type of images, but to ensure the key information is present outside of the image in an accessible text format.

Use meaningful link text

Link texts must be meaningful and describe the target of the link:

- Link text is meaningful when read out of context.
- Use descriptive link text (avoid using the phrase “click here” or “download here” or “learn more” when inserting/using hyperlinks; it’s deemed too general generates a warning on many checkers.)
- Avoid using the actual URL address as the hyperlink.
- Image links must have meaningful alt text.

Use appropriate color contrast

Review your site to ensure your fonts provide a solid contrast from the background color(s). This is to ensure your site(s) are easily read by those with limited vision.

- Colors/combinations to avoid: As a *general* rule (there are varying shades to colors), it is wise to avoid using white font on a background of yellow, gold, light green, light blue, orange. It is also wise to avoid bright red, yellow, gold, or bright green fonts.
- Use the WebAIM: Color Contrast website (<https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>) to check for appropriate color contrast.
- Avoid using colors to make key distinctions/decisions: If the viewer is color blind, he/she might not be able to perceive these distinctions. For example, listing classes required for the advanced diploma in green font and those required for an honors diploma in blue font would be an issue as a color blind viewer couldn't make those distinctions

PDF documents must be accessible

PDFs are the most common format of "document" posted to websites. It's important to ensure your PDFs (or other type documents) are accessible to those using assistive technology. The quickest way to determine if a PDF is accessible is to search (Ctrl+F) within it for a word you know is present. If it finds the word (i.e., can "read" the document), then the odds are that your PDF is accessible.

- **Create PDFs Properly:** Create PDFs from the electronic version of the original file via "Save As" and choose PDF. **DO NOT scan or take a picture of the hardcopy document as this only creates an image.**
- **Alternative Means to Get Key Information:** There will be instances where you don't have the electronic version of the file – only hardcopies – but you need to post the information. In this instance, if it cannot be avoided, you might consider including a statement within the readable portion of the document or website providing a phone number for assistance for anyone not able to read the file(s).
- **Image-Driven Docs:** Are the images within your documents conveying key information? Even though you might create the PDF properly, it could still pose an accessibility issue if it's full of images or charts (images) showing key data. This might require an alternate means of conveying that information such as a written explanation if practical (e.g., a description of what the chart depicts/shows).
- **Word documents:** majority of the PDF files on the web were probably created in Microsoft Word. Microsoft support has a great website showing the various tools available to make your Word document accessible visit the Office Accessibility: Word site (<https://tinyurl.com/word-accessibility2>)

Best Practices

1. Avoid underlining your text to "accent it" as it then appears to be a hyperlink.
2. Embedded flashing text or scrolling marquees are not deemed ADA compliant.
3. Slideshows should feature "general" or "achievement" photos and not list key information (e.g., "early closure times for the following schools..."; "Registration Dates are as follows:", etc.)
4. Be cautious when using images that contain text within them as this information can be inaccessible. Logos are an obvious exception where words are typically within images.
5. Make sure heading markups (H1 – H6) are not used for visual appearance only. Headings are texts that indicate a section beginning. To convey the visual structure to assistive technologies, headings must be implemented with H1-H6 HTML markup.

NOTE: Make sure headings are nested by their level/importance. Start with H1 for the title of the webpage; use H2 as the heading for each main section on the page; use H3 for subheadings under section headings. Do not skip a level such as using a H3 following a H1.