



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS  
THE WANAMAKER BUILDING, SUITE 515  
100 PENN SQUARE EAST  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19107-3323

REGION III  
DELAWARE  
KENTUCKY  
MARYLAND  
PENNSYLVANIA  
WEST VIRGINIA

December 1, 2016

**IN RESPONSE, PLEASE REFER TO: 03161840**

Trista Parsons  
Interim Principal  
Kentucky School for the Blind  
1867 Frankfort Avenue  
Louisville, KY 40206

Dear Ms. Parsons:

This is to advise you of the resolution of the above-referenced complaint investigation of the Kentucky School for the Blind (the School) by the United States Department of Education (Department), Office for Civil Rights (OCR). The complaint, which was received on September 21, 2016, alleged that the Department is discriminating, on the basis of disability, because certain pages on its website are not accessible to persons with disabilities.

OCR is responsible for enforcing section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Section 504), 29 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 794, *et seq.*, and its implementing regulations at 34 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Part 104, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities of recipients of federal financial assistance. OCR also is responsible for enforcing title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (Title II), 42 U.S.C. § 12131, *et seq.*, and its implementing regulations at 28 C.F.R. Part 35, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in programs, services, and activities of public entities. As a recipient of federal financial assistance from the Department and as a public entity, the School is subject to OCR's jurisdiction under Section 504 and Title II.

This letter summarizes the applicable legal standards, the information gathered during the investigation, and how the investigation was resolved.

Legal Authority:

Section 504 and Title II prohibit people, on the basis of disability, from being excluded from participation in, being denied the benefits of, or otherwise being subjected to discrimination by recipients of federal financial assistance or by public entities. 34 C.F.R. § 104.4 and 28 C.F.R. § 35.130. People with disabilities must have equal access to the programs, services, or activities unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the programs, services, or activities, or would impose an undue burden. 28 C.F.R. § 35.164. Both Section 504 and Title II prohibit affording individuals with disabilities an opportunity to participate in or benefit from aids, benefits, and services that is unequal to the opportunity afforded others. 34 C.F.R. § 104.4(b)(1)(ii); 28 C.F.R. § 35.130(b)(1)(ii). Similarly, individuals with disabilities must be provided with aids, benefits, or services that provide an equal opportunity to achieve the same result or the same level of achievement as others. 34 C.F.R. § 104.4(b)(2); 28 C.F.R. § 35.130(b)(1)(iii). An individual with a disability, or a class of individuals with disabilities, may

be provided with a different or separate aid, benefit, or service only if doing so is necessary to ensure that the aid, benefit, or service is as effective as that provided to others. 34 C.F.R. § 104.4(b)(1)(iv); 28 C.F.R. § 35.130(b)(1)(iv). Title II also requires public entities to take steps to ensure that communications with people with disabilities are as effective as communications with others, subject to the fundamental alteration and undue burden defenses. 28 C.F.R. § 35.160(a)(1). In sum, programs, services, and activities—whether in a “brick and mortar,” on-line, or other “virtual” context—must be operated in ways that comply with Section 504 and Title II.

#### Investigation to Date:

During the course of the investigation OCR examined a number of pages on the School’s website to determine whether they are accessible to persons with disabilities and identified the following barriers to access for individuals with vision and print disabilities, for each of the pages identified by the Complainant:

- The School’s homepage (<http://www.ksb.k12.ky.us>)
  - Site content inaccessible through keyboard controls
  - Page labels do not match with the page tabs
- Instructional Materials Resource Center (KIMAC) webpage (<http://kimrc.ksb.kyschools.us>)
  - Missing form label for User Name and Password
- About Us webpage (<http://www.ksb.k12.ky.us/Content/76>)
  - Site content inaccessible through keyboard controls
  - Page labels do not match with the page tabs
- Center Based K-12 Program webpage (<http://www.ksb.k12.ky.us/Content/14>)
  - Site content inaccessible through keyboard controls
  - Page labels do not match with the page tabs
- Library webpage (<https://ksb.follettdestiny.com/cataloging/servlet/presentadvancedsearchredirectorform.do?l2m=Library%20Search&tm=TopLevelCatalog>)
  - Missing alternative text
  - Spacer image missing alternative text
  - Missing form label
  - Document language missing
- Food Services webpage (<http://www.ksb.k12.ky.us/Content/38>)
  - Site content inaccessible through keyboard controls
  - Page labels do not match with the page tabs
- Photo Galleries webpage (<http://www.ksb.k12.ky.us/Gallery>)
  - Broken skip to main content link
  - Site content inaccessible through keyboard controls
  - Page labels do not match with the page tabs
- Wildcat Monthly webpage (<http://www.ksb.k12.ky.us/userfiles/11/my%20files/monthly%20wildcat%20april%202016.pdf?id=2054>)
  - Unable to search content in PDF
- Short Term Program (<http://www.ksb.k12.ky.us/Content/22>)
  - Empty link
  - Site content inaccessible through keyboard controls
  - Page labels do not match with the page tabs

- Special Education Programs webpage (<http://www.ksb.k12.ky.us/olc/page.aspx?id=973&s=99>)
  - Broken skip to main content link
  - Site content inaccessible through keyboard controls
  - Page labels do not match with the page tabs
- Outreach webpage (<http://www.ksb.k12.ky.us/Content/36>)
  - Site content inaccessible through keyboard controls
  - Page labels do not match with the page tabs

OCR evaluated the above-listed pages and determined that these barriers deny persons with disabilities access to programs, services, and activities offered on the website and may impede the School's communications with persons with disabilities.

Prior to the conclusion of OCR's investigation, the School expressed an interest in voluntarily resolving this case. In order to conclude OCR's investigation of this complaint, OCR would have had to conduct interviews, review documents, and examine a broader range of pages on the School's website; OCR would have sought to learn, for example, whether the School had received previous complaints of inaccessible website content or functionality, and how those complaints were resolved; and whether its information technology staff members and people responsible for uploading content or maintaining web pages had received training in website accessibility. In light of the School's willingness to address its website comprehensively without further investigation, OCR determined entering into a voluntary resolution agreement would be appropriate.

#### Resolution Agreement:

The School submitted a signed resolution agreement (Agreement) to OCR on November 22, 2016. The Agreement is aligned with the allegations by requiring the School to:

- Affirm its commitment to ensure that people with disabilities have an opportunity equal to that of their nondisabled peers to enjoy the State's programs, benefits and services, including those delivered through electronic and information technology;
- Submit for OCR review and approval proposed policies and procedures (the Plan for New Content) to ensure that all new, newly-added or modified online content and functionality will be accessible to people with disabilities except where doing so would impose a fundamental alteration or undue burden;
- When fundamental alteration or undue burden defenses apply, the Plan for New Content will require the School to provide equally effective alternative access, and the Agreement requires that the Principal submit a written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion;
- Submit for OCR review and approval the identity and bona fides of an Auditor to audit all content and functionality on its website, and develop a Proposed Corrective Action Plan;
- Submit for OCR review and approval, and subsequently adopt and implement, a proposed Corrective Action Plan to address all inaccessible content and functionality identified during the audit;
- Submit for OCR review and approval, and subsequently adopt and post, a proposed Notice to persons with disabilities regarding how to request the webmaster or other appropriate person to provide access to online information or functionality that is currently inaccessible; and
- Provide website accessibility training to all appropriate personnel.

This concludes OCR's investigation of the complaint. These findings should not be interpreted to address the School's compliance with any other regulatory provision or to address any issues other than those addressed in this letter. OCR will monitor the School's implementation of the Agreement. When OCR concludes the School has fully implemented the terms of the Agreement and is in compliance with the statutes and regulations at issue in the case, OCR will terminate its monitoring and close the case. If the School fails to implement the Agreement, OCR may seek compliance with the federal civil rights laws through any means authorized by law, including to enforce the specific terms of the Agreement.

This letter sets forth OCR's determination in an individual OCR case. This letter is not a formal statement of OCR policy and should not be relied upon, cited, or construed as such. OCR's formal policy statements are approved by a duly authorized OCR official and made available to the public. The complainant may have the right to file a private suit in federal court whether or not OCR finds a violation. Please be advised that the School may not harass, coerce, intimidate, discriminate or otherwise retaliate against any individual because he or she asserted a right or privilege under a law enforced by OCR or filed a complaint, testified, or participated in the complaint resolution process. If this happens, the individual may file a retaliation complaint with OCR.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, it may be necessary to release this document and related correspondence and records upon request. In the event that OCR receives such a request, OCR will seek to protect, to the extent provided by law, personally identifiable information that could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy if released.

Thank you for the assistance the School and its Assistant General Counsel, Amy Peabody, extended to OCR in resolving this complaint. We look forward to receiving the School's first reports about its implementation of the Agreement by December 30, 2016. If you have any questions, please contact me at (215) 656-6935, or by email at [beth.gellman-beer@ed.gov](mailto:beth.gellman-beer@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

/s/

Beth Gellman-Beer  
Team Leader

Enclosure: Resolution Agreement

cc: Amy Peabody, Assistant General Counsel