

Resolution Agreement
Monroe County School District
OCR Reference No. 04-16-7097

The U.S. Department of Education's (Department) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) initiated an investigation into an allegation that the Monroe County School District ("the District") violated Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. Part 104, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (Title II), 42 U.S.C. §§ 12131, *et seq.*, and its implementing regulations at 28 C.F.R. Part 35. Specifically, the complainant alleged that the District's public website contains barriers to access for individuals with disabilities, thereby denying them an equal opportunity to participate in the District's programs, services, and activities, and denying them effective communication necessary for full participation in the District's programs, services, and activities.

To ensure compliance with Section 504 and Title II and their implementing regulations and to resolve the issues of this investigation, the District voluntarily agrees to take the actions set forth below.

Assurances of Nondiscrimination. The District hereby reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that individuals with disabilities have an opportunity equal to that of their nondisabled peers to participate in the District's programs, benefits, and services, including those delivered through electronic and information technology, except where doing so would impose an undue burden or create a fundamental alteration.

Benchmarks for Measuring Accessibility. For the purposes of this Agreement, the accessibility of online content and functionality will be measured according to the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C's) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA and the Web Accessibility Initiative Accessible Rich Internet Applications Suite (WAI-ARIA) 1.0 techniques for web content, which are incorporated by reference.

Adherence to these accessible technology standards is one way to ensure compliance with the District's underlying legal obligations to ensure individuals with disabilities are able to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same benefits and services within the same timeframe as their nondisabled peers, with substantially equivalent ease of use; that they are not excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in any District programs, services, and activities delivered online, as required by Section 504 and Title II and their implementing regulations; and that they receive effective communications with the District's programs, services, and activities delivered online.

The District voluntarily agrees to take the actions set forth below.

Remedies and Reporting

- 1) Proposed Corrective Action Plan. By **June 30, 2017**, the District will submit to OCR for its review and approval vendor specifications or other documentation demonstrating that the new external District website scheduled for launch on **September 1, 2017**, will be accessible to people with disabilities as measured by conformance to the Benchmarks for Measuring Accessibility set forth above, except where doing so would impose a fundamental alteration or undue burden. This documentation will include a schedule and procedure for:
 - a. setting up systems of accountability and verifying claims of accessibility by the vendor and any open sources; and
 - b. setting up a system of testing and accountability to maintain the accessibility of all online content and functionality on an ongoing basis.

- 2) Within 30 calendar days of receiving OCR’s approval of the proposed Corrective Action Plan, the District will officially adopt and implement the Corrective Action Plan.
 - a. Reporting: Within 45 calendar days of receiving OCR’s approval of the proposed Corrective Action Plan, the District will submit to OCR the approved Corrective Action Plan, and documentation establishing that the approved Corrective Action Plan is being implemented according to the approved schedule. Reports will be due every six months thereafter until the Corrective Action Plan has been completed.

- 3) Proposed Policies and Procedures Regarding New Online Content and Functionality. By **June 30, 2017**, the District will submit to OCR for its 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 individuals with disabilities as measured by conformance to the Benchmarks for Measuring Accessibility set forth above, except where doing so would impose a fundamental alteration or undue burden.
 - a) When fundamental alteration or undue burden defenses apply, the Plan for New Content will require the District to provide equally effective alternative access. The Plan for New Content will require the District, in providing equally effective alternate access, to take any actions that do not result in a fundamental alteration or undue financial and administrative burdens, but nevertheless ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, individuals with disabilities receive the same benefits or services as their nondisabled peers. To provide equally effective alternate access, alternates are not required to produce the identical result or level of achievement for persons with and without disabilities, but must afford persons with disabilities equal opportunity to obtain the same result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement, in the most integrated setting appropriate to the person’s needs.

- b) The Plan for New Content must include sufficient quality assurance procedures, backed by adequate personnel and financial resources, for full implementation. This provision also applies to the District's online content and functionality developed by, maintained by, or offered through a third-party vendor or by using open sources.
 - c) Policy Adoption: Within sixty (60) days of receiving OCR's approval of the Plan for New Content, the District will officially adopt, and fully implement the amended policies and procedures.
 - d) Reporting: Within 15 days after formal adoption of new or modified policies, the District will submit to OCR the new policies, evidence of their adoption and distribution, and a description of how they are being implemented.
4. Undue Burden and Fundamental Alteration. For any technology-related requirement in this Agreement for which the District asserts an undue burden or fundamental alteration defense, such assertion may only be made by the Superintendent, or by an individual designated by the Superintendent who has budgetary authority, after considering all resources available for use in the funding and operation of the service, program, or activity, and must be accompanied by a written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion, including the cost of meeting the requirement and the available funding and other resources. The written statement will be certified by the determining official. If such a determination is made, the certifying official will describe in the written statement how it will provide equally effective alternate access, *i.e.*, other action that would not result in such an alteration or such burdens but would nevertheless ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, individuals with disabilities receive the same benefits or services provided by the District as their nondisabled peers.
5. Notice. Within 30 days of the date of this Agreement, the District will submit to OCR for review and approval a proposed Notice to individuals with disabilities regarding how to request the webmaster or other appropriate person to provide access to (or notify the District regarding) online information or functionality that is currently inaccessible. The proposed notice will also include information or an accessible link to information instructing people how to file formal grievances under Section 504 and Title II. Within 10 days of receiving OCR's approval of the proposed Notice, the District will officially adopt and prominently post the approved Notice on its home page and throughout its website (including all subordinate pages).
- a. Reporting. Within fifteen (15) days of receiving OCR's approval of the District's proposed Notice, the District will provide documentation to OCR regarding the locations and content of its published Notice.
6. Training. Starting no later than 90 days from the date of this Agreement, and annually thereafter, the District will deliver website accessibility training to all appropriate personnel, including, but not limited to: content developers, webmasters,

procurement officials, and all others responsible for developing, loading, maintaining, or auditing web content and functionality.

- a. Reporting: For each training session required by this Agreement, until such time as OCR closes the monitoring of this Agreement, the District will submit to OCR documentation that it has been delivered. The documentation will include a list of invitees and attendees, including titles; a description of the delivered training content; and the presenters' credentials for giving such training.

The District understands that OCR will not close the monitoring of this Agreement until OCR determines that the District has fulfilled the terms of this Agreement and is in compliance with the regulations implementing Section 504, at 34 C.F.R. §§ 104.4 (a) and (b), 104.8, and 104.21, and Title II, at 28 C.F.R. §§ 35.130, 35.149, and 35.160, which were at issue in this case.

The District also understands that by signing this Agreement, it agrees to provide data and other information in a timely manner in accordance with the reporting requirements of this Agreement. Further, the District understands that during the monitoring of this Agreement, if necessary, OCR may visit the District, interview staff, and request such additional reports or data, including simulated website accounts and passwords, as are necessary for OCR to determine whether the District has fulfilled the terms of this Agreement and is in compliance with the regulations implementing Section 504, at 34 C.F.R. §§ 104.4 (a) and (b), 104.8, and 104.21, and Title II, at 28 C.F.R. §§ 35.130, 35.149, and 35.160, which were at issue in this case.

The District understands and acknowledges that OCR may initiate administrative enforcement or judicial proceedings to enforce the specific terms and obligations of this Agreement. Before initiating administrative enforcement (34 C.F.R. §§ 100.9, 100.10), or judicial proceedings to enforce this Agreement, OCR shall give the District written notice of the alleged breach and sixty (60) calendar days to cure the alleged breach.

John Dick
Monroe County School Board, Chairman

Date

Clerk