



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

1999 BRYAN ST., SUITE 1620
DALLAS, TX 75201-6810

REGION VI
ARKANSAS
LOUISIANA
MISSISSIPPI
TEXAS

May 22, 2017

Dr. Beau Rees, Superintendent
Montgomery Independent School District
13159 Walden Rd.
Montgomery, TX 77356

Re: Montgomery Independent School District
OCR Number: 06-17-1045

Dear Dr. Rees:

This letter is to inform you of the disposition of the above-referenced complaint filed against Montgomery Independent School District (MISD), in Montgomery, Texas, with the U.S. Department of Education (Department), Office for Civil Rights (OCR), alleging discrimination on the basis of disability. Specifically, the complainant alleged that certain of the MISD's web pages are not accessible to students and adults with disabilities, including vision impairments. These include, but are not limited to:

- a. Homepage, at <http://www.misd.org/>;
- b. Free and Reduced Lunch page, at <http://www.schoollunchapp.com/>;
- c. My School Bucks page, at <https://www.myschoolbucks.com/ver2/login/getmain?requestAction=home>;
- d. Technology Department page, at <http://www.misd.org/page/tech.homepage>;
- e. Fast Facts About MISD page, at http://www.misd.org/page/dis.fast_facts;
- f. Site Map page, at <http://www.misd.org/page/sitemap>;
- g. Homeless Services page, at <http://www.misd.org/page/curr.SS.homeless>; and
- h. Office 365 page, at https://sso.misd.org/adfs/ls/?client-request-id=c9f3e8fc-09b3-4e15-9a89-f71adf0c8117&username=&wa=wsignin1.0&wtrealm=urn%3afederation%3aMicrosoftOnline&wctx=estsredirect%3d2%26estsrequest%3drQIIAeNisNLJKCkpKLbS1y_ILypJzNHLzUwuyi_OTyvJz8vJzEvVS87P1csvSs9MAbGKhLgE_rz4fHzp6jfrM7vUvd5GsVnMXLkZhangBStYlQmbJr-BUbGF4yMt5gE_YvSPVPCi91SU1KLEksy8_MeMfGGFqcW-eflVIbkZ6fm7WJWsTBJNjNOSUzTTUs0S9Y1SbUw1E0yTjHRTTU3TU1KM7QwMbU0u8Ai8IqFx4DZioODTYBZgkGB4QcL4yJWoFudpVpTdwctc18SwvC2K-nF7lOs-in6WWZBkYZ-HskhrhUV2SaRxpWBaakpxq65plkmvvpuXnlZGY5hgYEFlq62FlaGE9iEJrAxHeBkBAA1.

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

OCR is responsible for enforcing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794, and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. Part 104, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability by recipients of Federal financial assistance. OCR is also responsible for enforcing Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12131 *et seq.*, and its implementing regulation at 28 C.F.R. Part 35, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability by public entities. As a recipient of Federal financial assistance and as a public entity, the MISD is subject to these laws. Accordingly, OCR had jurisdiction to investigate this complaint.

Based on the complaint allegations, OCR opened an investigation of the following issue:

Whether the MISD discriminates against individuals with disabilities on a systemic basis because certain of its web pages are not accessible to students and adults with disabilities including, but not limited to, vision impairments, print disabilities, and/or fine-motor disabilities. These inaccessible MISD web pages include:

1. Homepage, at <http://www.misd.org/>;
2. Free and Reduced Lunch page, at <http://www.schoollunchapp.com/>;
3. My School Bucks page, at <https://www.myschoolbucks.com/ver2/login/getmain?requestAction=home>;
4. Technology Department page, at <http://www.misd.org/page/tech.homepage>;
5. Fast Facts About MISD page, at http://www.misd.org/page/dis.fast_facts;
6. Site Map page, at <http://www.misd.org/page/sitemap>;
7. Homeless Services page, at <http://www.misd.org/page/curr.SS.homeless>; and
8. Office 365 page, at https://sso.misd.org/adfs/ls/?client-request-id=c9f3e8fc-09b3-4e15-9a89-f71adf0c8117&username=&wa=wsignin1.0&wtrealm=urn%3afederation%3aMicrosoftOnline&wctx=estsredirect%3d2%26estsrequest%3drQIIAeNisNLJKCkpKLbS1y_ILypJzNHLzUwuyi_OTyyJz8vJzEvVS87P1csvSs9MAbGKhLgE_rz4fHIzp6jfrM7vUvd5GsVnMXLkZhangBStYlQmbJr-BUBgF4yMt5gE_YvSPVPCj91SU1KLEksy8_MeMfGGFqcW-eflVlbkZ6fm7WJWsTBJNjNOSUzTTUs0S9Y1SbUw1E0yTjHRTTU3TU1KM7QwMbU0u8Ai8IqFx4DZioODTYBZgkGB4QcL4yJWoFudpVpTdwctc18SwvC2K-nF7lOs-in6WWZBkYZ-HskhrhUV2SaRxpWBaakpxq65plkmvvpuXnlZGY5hgYEFlq62FlaGE9iEJrAxHeBkBAA1.

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 recipients' 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:

To date, OCR has investigated this complaint by reviewing information provided by the complainant and conducting a preliminary assessment of the accessibility of several pages from the MISD website.

The complaint alleges that the MISD’s website is not in compliance with Section 504 and Title II because it is inaccessible to individuals with vision disabilities, print disabilities, physical impairments, and hearing impairments. The complainant used website accessibility checkers (PowerMapper and WAVE) and reported to OCR that the MISD’s pages (listed above) have accessibility issues for individuals with disabilities. The complainant then provided OCR with a list of errors copied and pasted from the website accessibility checker that the complainant used.

OCR conducted a preliminary examination of the web pages the complainant identified and found possible compliance concerns as to whether the MISD’s website is accessible to individuals with disabilities. For example, on the MISD’s Home page, Free and Reduced Lunch page, My School Bucks page, Technology Department page Fast Facts page, Site Map page, Homeless Services page, and Office 360 page OCR found, at the time of our review, concerns such as missing form labels, issues with the visual contrast, the inability to access content by using the keyboard, and linked images that lacked alternative text.

Prior to the completion of OCR’s investigation, the MISD asked to resolve this complaint pursuant to Section 302 of OCR’s *Case Processing Manual* (CPM). On May 19, 2017, the MISD submitted the enclosed signed resolution agreement (the Agreement) to OCR. When fully implemented, the Agreement will resolve the allegations in the complaint.

In light of the commitments the MISD has made in the Agreement, OCR finds that the complaint is resolved, and OCR is closing its investigation as of the date of this letter. OCR will monitor the MISD’s implementation of the Agreement to ensure that the commitments made are implemented timely and effectively. OCR may request additional information as

necessary to determine whether the MISD has fulfilled the terms of the Agreement and is in compliance with Section 504 and Title II with regard to the issues raised.

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

This concludes OCR's investigation of the complaint and should not be interpreted to address the MISD's compliance with any other regulatory provision or to address any issues other than those addressed in this letter.

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.

Please be advised that the MISD may not harass, coerce, intimidate, or discriminate against any individual because he or she has filed a complaint or participated in the complaint resolution process. If this happens, the harmed individual may file a complaint alleging such treatment.

The complainant may file a private suit in federal court, whether or not OCR finds a violation.

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

OCR looks forward to receiving the MISD's first monitoring report by June 22, 2017.

For questions about implementation of the Agreement, please contact OCR attorney, Jeff Coleman, who will be monitoring the MISD's implementation, by e-mail at jeffrey.coleman@ed.gov, or by telephone at 214.661.9686. For questions about this letter, please contact Paul Coxe, Team Leader, at paul.coxe@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

Paul Coxe
Team Leader/Supervisor

Enclosure