



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

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

REGION VI  
ARKANSAS  
LOUISIANA  
MISSISSIPPI  
TEXAS

## RESOLUTION AGREEMENT

### Fort Smith Public Schools OCR Reference No. 06171202

The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), initiated an investigation into allegations that the Fort Smith Public Schools (“the recipient”) violated Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. Part 104, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and its implementing regulation at 28 C.F.R. Part 35. Specifically, the complainant alleged that the recipient’s website contained barriers to access for people with disabilities, thereby denying them an equal opportunity to participate in the recipient’s programs, services, and activities and denying them effective communication necessary for full participation in the recipient’s programs, services, and activities.

Prior to the completion of OCR’s investigation, the recipient agreed to resolve the issues of this investigation pursuant to Section 302 of OCR’s Case Processing Manual (CPM). This resolution has been entered into voluntarily between the parties and does not constitute an admission that the recipient is not in compliance with Section 504, Title II, and/or their implementing regulations. Accordingly, to ensure compliance with Section 504 and Title II and their implementing regulations and to resolve the issues of this investigation, the recipient voluntarily agrees to take the actions set forth below.

Assurances of Nondiscrimination. The recipient hereby reaffirms its commitment to ensure that people with disabilities have an opportunity equal to that of their nondisabled peers to participate in the recipient’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 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 for web content, which are incorporated by reference.

Adherence to these accessible technology standards is one way to ensure compliance with the recipient’s underlying legal obligations to ensure people 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 of the recipient

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programs, services, and activities delivered online, as required by Section 504 and Title II and their implementing regulations; and that they receive effective communication of the recipient’s programs, services, and activities delivered online.

### **Remedies and Reporting**

- 1) Proposed New Online Content and Functionality. By **November 30, 2017**, the recipient will submit to OCR for its review and approval a proposed plan for new online content and functionality (“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 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 recipient to provide equally effective alternative access. The Plan for New Content will require the recipient, 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 recipient’s online content and functionality developed by, maintained by, or offered through a third-party vendor or by using open sources.
  - c) Within ninety (90) days of receiving OCR’s approval of the Plan for New Content, the recipient will officially adopt, and fully implement the proposed plan for new online content and functionality.
- 2) Undue Burden and Fundamental Alteration. For any technology-related requirement in this Agreement for which the recipient asserts an undue burden or fundamental alteration defense, such assertion may only be made by the Superintendent of or by an individual designated by the Secretary of Education 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 recipient as their nondisabled peers.
- 3) Proposed Corrective Action Plan. The recipient will submit to OCR for its review and approval a proposed Corrective Action Plan to address all inaccessible content and functionality. The proposed Corrective Action Plan will set out a detailed schedule for: (1) addressing problems, taking into account identified priorities, with all corrective actions to be completed within 18 months of the date OCR approved the Corrective Action Plan; (2) setting up systems of accountability and verifying claims of accessibility by vendors or open sources; and setting up a system of testing and accountability to maintain the accessibility of all online content and functionality on an ongoing basis.
  - 4) Within 30 days of receiving OCR’s approval of the proposed Corrective Action Plan, the recipient will officially adopt and implement the Corrective Action Plan.
    - a) Reporting: Within 45 days of receiving OCR’s approval of the proposed Corrective Action Plan, the recipient 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 sixth months thereafter until the Corrective Action Plan has been completed.
  - 5) Notice. By **November 30, 2017**, the recipient will submit to OCR for review and approval a proposed Notice to persons with disabilities regarding how to request the webmaster or other appropriate person to provide access to (or notify the recipient 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 recipient will officially adopt and prominently post the approved Notice on its home page and throughout its website (including all subordinate pages and intranet sites).
    - a) Reporting. Within 15 days of receiving OCR’s approval of the recipient’s proposed Notice, the recipient will provide documentation to OCR regarding the locations and content of its published Notice.
  - 6) Training. Starting no later than 30 days prior to the commencement of the New Online Content and Functionality, and annually thereafter, the recipient will deliver website accessibility training to all appropriate personnel, including, but not limited to District employees who are responsible for: 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 recipient 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.
- 7) The recipient understands that OCR will not close the monitoring of this Agreement until OCR determines that the recipient 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), and Title II, at 28 C.F.R. §§ 35.130 and 35.160, which were at issue in this case.
- 8) The recipient 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 recipient understands that during the monitoring of this Agreement, if necessary, OCR may visit the recipient, interview staff, and request such additional reports or data, including simulated website accounts and passwords, as are necessary for OCR to determine whether the recipient 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), and Title II, at 28 C.F.R. §§ 35.130 and 35.160, which were at issue in this case.
- 9) The recipient 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 recipient written notice of the alleged breach and sixty (60) calendar days to cure the alleged breach.

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**Doug Brubaker**  
**Superintendent**  
**Fort Smith Public School District**

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Date