

## StateWeb

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**From:** Linda DeSantis  
**Sent:** Friday, July 01, 2016 4:27 PM  
**To:** StateWeb  
**Subject:** FW: ED/OCR Website Accessibility Press Release

Would you PDF this Email for me and send it back. Thanks.  
Title: Email-GBortolin-6.29.16 – ED/OCR Website Accessibility Press Release.  
Thanks.

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**Web site updates | Monday - Friday, 8-5**  
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**From:** Greg Bortolin  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 29, 2016 9:57 AM  
**To:** Steve Canavero; Brett Barley; Greg D. Ott; Roxanne Starbuck; Linda DeSantis  
**Subject:** FW: ED/OCR Website Accessibility Press Release

FYI



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**From:** Honeysett, Adam [<mailto:Adam.Honeysett@ed.gov>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 29, 2016 9:31 AM  
**Subject:** ED/OCR Website Accessibility Press Release

Dear Intergovernmental stakeholders,

The U.S. Department of Education will issue the following press release on Office for Civil Rights (OCR) website accessibility agreements at 1 PM Eastern Time. Because either your state or school district is referenced, we wanted to provide you advance notice of the release. Please note that the links for the letters and the agreements will go live about 12:45 PM ET.

Best,

Adam Honeysett  
Managing Director,  
State and Local Engagement  
Office of Communications and Outreach  
U.S. Department of Education

**U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Communications & Outreach, Press Office  
400 Maryland Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 29, 2016

Contact: Press Office

(202) 401-1576 or [press@ed.gov](mailto:press@ed.gov)

**Settlements Reached in Seven States, One Territory to Ensure Website Accessibility for People with Disabilities**

The U.S. Department of Education's [Office for Civil Rights](#) (OCR) today announced that it has reached settlements with education organizations in seven states and one territory to ensure website accessibility for people with disabilities.

OCR had received complaints involving each of the organizations, resulting in investigations. But before OCR had completed its probes, each of the 11 parties expressed interest in resolving their cases voluntarily, resulting in the agreements announced today. The settlements involved: Juneau, Alaska, School District; the Guam Department of Education; Montana School for the Deaf and Blind; Santa Fe, New Mexico, Public Schools; Washoe County, Nevada, School District; The Davidson Academy of Nevada; Nevada Department of Education; Oregon Department of Education; Granite, Utah, School District; Bellingham, Washington, School District; and the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

“As schools, school districts, states, and territories turn to the internet as a way to provide relevant and up-to-date information to their audiences in a cost-effective manner, they must make sure they are not inadvertently excluding people with disabilities from their online programs, services, and activities,” said Catherine E. Lhamon, assistant secretary for civil rights. “I applaud each of these signatories who have committed to ensuring that their websites are accessible to people with disabilities.”

The agreements cover issues raised under [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#) and [Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#) to online services and programs.

OCR investigations found that on all 11 websites important images were missing text descriptions, called “alt tags,” that describe the images to blind and low-vision users who use special software. Common problems affecting many of the websites included:

- Some important content of the website could only be accessed by people who can use a computer mouse, which meant that content was not available to those who are blind, many who have low-vision, and those with disabilities affecting fine motor control;
- Parts of the website used color combinations that made text difficult or impossible for people with low vision to see; and
- Videos were not accurately captioned, so they were inaccessible to people who are deaf.

The 11 education groups voluntarily committed to make their websites accessible through a range of actions, which require OCR review and approval at key stages, including:

- Affirming their commitment to ensuring that people with disabilities have opportunities equal to those of others to enjoy the recipients’ programs, services, and activities, including those delivered online.
- Selecting an auditor who has the requisite knowledge and experience to audit content and functionality and identify barriers to access on the existing website for people with disabilities;
- Conducting a thorough audit of existing online content and functionality;
- Adopting policies and procedures to ensure that all new, newly added or modified online content and functionality will be accessible to people with disabilities;
- Making all new website content and functionality accessible to people with disabilities;
- Developing a corrective action plan to prioritize the removal of online barriers;
- Posting a notice to persons with disabilities about how to request access to online information or functionality that is currently inaccessible; and
- Providing website accessibility training to all appropriate personnel.

Following are links to the resolution letters and resolution agreements for each organization.

- AK - Juneau School District (case 10-16-1109), [Juneau Letter](#) | [Juneau Agreement](#)
- GU - Guam Department of Education (10-16-1098), [Guam Department of Education Letter](#) | [Guam Department of Education Agreement](#)
- MT - Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (10-16-1160), [Montana Letter](#) | [Montana Agreement](#)
- NM - Santa Fe Public Schools (08-16-1189), [Santa Fe Letter](#) | [Santa Fe Agreement](#)
- NV - Washoe County School District (10-16-1134), [Washoe Letter](#) | [Washoe Agreement](#)
- NV - The Davidson Academy of Nevada (10-16-1133), [Davidson Letter](#) | [Davidson Agreement](#)
- NV - Nevada Department of Education (10-16-1101), [Nevada Department of Education Letter](#) | [Nevada Department of Education Agreement](#)
- OR - Oregon Department of Education (10-16-1102), [Oregon Department of Education Letter](#) | [Oregon Department of Education Agreement](#)
- UT - Granite School District (08-16-1232), [Granite Letter](#) | [Granite Agreement](#)
- WA - Bellingham School District (10-16-1108), [Bellingham Letter](#) | [Bellingham Agreement](#)
- WA - Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (10-16-1103), [Washington Superintendent Letter](#) | [Washington Superintendent Agreement](#)

OCR's mission is to ensure equal access to education and promote educational excellence throughout the nation through the vigorous enforcement of civil rights. OCR is responsible for enforcing federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination by educational institutions on the bases of disability, race, color, national origin, sex, and age, as well as the *Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act of 2001*.

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