Silsbee Independent School District
Web Accessibility Policy

STATEMENT OF POLICY
All new and Redesigned Web Pages published by Silsbee Independent School District on or after the effective date of this policy must conform to the United States Access Board's Electronic and Information Technologies Accessibility Standards and this policy. All Web Pages published prior to the effective date of this policy must conform to these accessibility standards no later than June, 30, 2016. The time frames for achieving compliance are included in the Procedures section of this policy. Progress toward achieving and maintaining fully accessible Web pages will be documented.

This policy applies to all official Web pages and associated Web-based services developed by Silsbee Independent School District. Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent the use of designs or technologies as alternatives to those prescribed in the standards, provided they result in substantially equivalent or greater access to and use of a Web site by people with disabilities.

REASON FOR THIS POLICY
The creation and dissemination of knowledge is a defining characteristic of schools and is fundamental to Silsbee ISD's mission to promote learning, discovery, and engagement. The use of digital and Web-based delivery of information is increasingly central to carrying out the District's mission. Acknowledging this fact, Silsbee ISD is committed to ensuring equal access to information for all its constituencies.

This policy establishes minimum standards for the accessibility of Web-based information and services considered necessary to meet the District's goals and ensure compliance with applicable law.

INDIVIDUALS AND ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY
The following individuals and entities are affected by this policy: any school, department, or program, that publishes a Web site or page. This includes individual faculty who publish Web pages for their classroom and school related business.

WHO SHOULD KNOW THIS POLICY
Webmaster
Principals
Assistant Principals
Department Heads/Chairs
Faculty
Staff
Students
Non-employee (third party) users of remote access to resources

EXCLUSIONS

Individual Web pages published by students, employees, or non-school organizations that are hosted by the District and do not conduct school related business are encouraged to adopt the District's policy and standards, but fall outside the jurisdiction of this policy.

Archived Web Pages do not have to be converted to the standard unless specifically requested by an individual with a disability. See the Procedures section of this policy for appropriate steps to take if a request is made.

Where compliance is not technically possible or may require extraordinary measures due to the nature of the information and the intent of the Web page, a request for exception must be made in writing to the Equal Opportunity Officer for the campus. Such requests must be based on issues other than cost alone.

WEB SITE ADDRESS FOR THIS POLICY
http://silsbeeisd.org/modules/cms/pages.phtml?pageid=322488&sessionid=960b3ce1104636a59b6cd21db0e8af8d

CONTACTS

Subject	Contact	Telephone	E-mail/Web Address
Policy Clarification	Webmaster	(409) 980-7800	support@silsbeeisd.org
Accessibility Concerns/Request for Exception	Webmaster	(409) 980-7800	support@silsbeeisd.org
	Special Education Director	(409) 980-7844	

DEFINITIONS

Archive Web Site or Page
A Web site or page no longer in use but subject to records retention plans

Equal Opportunity Officer
For purposes of this policy, this role is filled for each campus by the assistant principal

Legacy Web Page
A Web page published prior to the effective date of this policy

Silsbee Independent School District
Any campus, program, association, or entity of Silsbee Independent School District

Redesigned Web Page
A Web page where significant alteration or update is made to the visual design of a page or a major revision of the content of a page takes place

RESPONSIBILITIES

Webmaster
Initiate a review of and make necessary revisions to this policy at least once every two years
Respond to requests by disabled individuals for access any page including a Legacy or Archive Web Pages

Equal Opportunity Officer
Review campus status reports for compliance with this policy
Review requests for exception to this policy on a case-by-case basis

Campuses, departments, and programs of Silsbee Independent School District
Publish new or Redesigned Web Pages in compliance with this policy
Revise all Legacy Web Pages according to the time frames outlined in this policy

Campuses must submit annual status reports to the webmaster.

PROCEDURES
Compliance Requirements and Time Frames

1. All new and Redesigned Web Pages published on or after the effective date of this policy must be in compliance with the U.S. Access Board's Electronic and Information Technologies Accessibility Standards and must indicate in plain text a method of contact for users with disabilities having trouble accessing content within the site. The contact information is typically a phone number and/or e-mail address that puts the user in touch with the person(s) responsible for the content and function of the page who can usually reply within one business day

    Suggested language:

    Silsbee ISD is an equal access/equal opportunity school district. If you have trouble accessing this page because of a disability, please contact the webmaster at support@silsbeeisd.org.

2. By February 27, 2015, all Silsbee ISD Web Pages must indicate in plain text a method of contact for users with disabilities having trouble accessing content within the site as outlined in above.

3. In addition, all Legacy Web Pages must be revised to be in compliance with the U.S. Access Board's Electronic and Information Technologies Accessibility Standards. Priority must be given to creating accessible Web pages for core school district information pertaining to students, faculty, staff, alumni, retirees, and visitors. Legacy Web Pages containing core school district information must be prioritized in order to insure access to these pages based on time, sensitivity of function, and frequency of use. Decisions regarding the order in which Legacy Web Pages are revised are made by following the implementation priorities below. Each school, department, or program of the District is responsible for determining which of their Legacy Web Pages fall into the percentages listed.

1. The top 25% of Legacy Web Pages that are used most frequently (i.e., that get the largest number of hits) must be in compliance within one year of the effective date of this policy (March 20, 2015).

2. Pages required for participation, funding, disability-related services, and other key pages needed by individuals with disabilities not already in the top 25% must also be in compliance within one year of the effective date of this policy (March 20, 2015).

3. Remaining Legacy Web Pages must be in compliance according to the following schedule:

    -   Next 25% by April 17, 2015 (50% of Web pages in compliance)

    -   Next 25% by June 30, 2015 (75% of Web pages in compliance)

    -   Next 25% by June 30, 2016 (100% of Web pages in compliance)

In an attempt to correct some of the accessibility problems that are inherent in schoolfusion by Edline, Silsbee ISD is in the process of converting to schoolwires by Blackboard to build a more accessible site that will be complete in August of 2016.

Specific Requests for Access
Upon specific request for access by an individual with a disability, Legacy Web pages must be made accessible, or an equally effective alternative provided, within 10 business days of receiving the request. The staff member responsible for the creation and maintenance of the information on the Web page is responsible for making it accessible. Equally effective means that the alternative communicates the same information in as timely a fashion as does the original Web page. For interactive or service pages, equally effective means that the end result is accomplished in a comparable time and with comparable effort on the part of the requestor. If the context of the information or service the page provides cannot be made accessible within 10 business days, this timeframe may be extended.

Upon specific request for access by an individual with a disability, Archive Web Pages containing core administrative or academic information, official records, or similar information must be updated to be in compliance or the content of the Web page(s) must be made available by another means that is accessible to the individual. The staff member responsible for the creation of the information on the page(s) is responsible for providing that access within 10 business days of receiving the request. If the context of the information or service the page provides cannot be made accessible within 10 business days, this timeframe may be extended.

Reporting
Status reports must be submitted annually no later than April 1 by each school, department, or program of Silsbee ISD to their campus Equal Opportunity Officer beginning April 2015. The report must summarize the efforts toward achieving and maintaining fully accessible Web pages, as defined by this policy. Efforts and accomplishments over the previous year, as well as targets for the upcoming year, must be included in each report.

Policy Review
The Webmaster will initiate a review of and make necessary revisions to this policy at least once every two years with the input of a review group. The review group will include, but not be limited to, designees from the Special Education Department, the Information Technology Department, and campuses.

RELATED DOCUMENTS, FORMS, AND TOOLS

U.S. Access Board's Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards: www.access-board.gov/sec508/standards.htm

Section 508 Homepage: www.section508.gov/

Resources for designers and programmers in understanding and meeting the standards set by the U.S. Access Board:

- Web Accessibility in Mind (WebAIM): www.webaim.org
- World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines: www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/

Additional Information to assist individuals with disabilities can be found on our website accessibility page

http://silsbeeisd.org/modules/cms/pages.phtml?pageid=322488&sessionid=ebd05a22b45b13bd907d27af24203627

HISTORY AND UPDATES

January 27, 2015: This is the first such policy to address this issue.

Recommended Best Practices

Following these best practices will add functionality and usability for all users, including users of assistive technology.

Writing Style and Language

- Try to break up large blocks of information into smaller sections to aid in navigation and readability.

- Define the meaning of acronyms and abbreviations where they first occur in a document.

- Identify the primary natural language of a document. Any changes in the primary natural language of a document must be identified. For example, if the natural language of a document is English and a section of the document changes to French, the French text must be clearly identified as being French.

Layout and Presentation

- If color is used to convey information, make sure that the information is also available without color.

- Background colors and foreground colors should provide sufficient color contrast.

- Link text should be clear and meaningful. Avoid using "click here."

- Provide a site map or table of contents.

- Navigation features and style of presentation should be consistent throughout the site.

- Style sheets should be used to create layout and presentation instead of tables.

- Use relative units rather than absolute units in markup language attribute values and style sheet property values.

- Use Header (H1, H2 etc.) to indicate headers and sub-headers, and use them in the correct order. Do not use headers to embellish fonts.

- Use lists and list items properly and do not use them for layout or formatting purposes.

- Use quotation markup for quotations and not for formatting purposes such as indentations.

- Avoid the use of screen flicker and blinking at rates faster than 2 per second and slower than 55 per second. Flashing, flickering, and blinking of a document or document element can cause seizures in people with photosensitive epilepsy.

- Automatic refresh and auto-redirect of pages can be confusing and disorienting to some users. Instead, configure the server to perform redirects, and create a static page that provides the new URL to direct the user to the new Web location.

- Use W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported.
- Outdated elements of W3C technologies should be avoided and replaced with newer technologies. The FONT tag is an example of an outdated element that has been replaced through the use of style sheets. Refer to the W3C References for more information.

Additional Recommendations

- It is recommended that a variety of Web browsing software (including text-only and voice output browsers), workstations, and evaluation tools be used to test access to Web pages.

- Any school, department, or program should use this guidance when purchasing new forms of electronic and information technologies.

Definitions

These definitions are adopted from the Accessibility Forum's Quick Reference Guide to Section 508 Resource Documents, dated September 15, 2003, and available at: http://www.accessibilityforum.org/paper_tool.html

Applet

A program that is part of content and that the user agent executes.

Data Tables

Tables used to represent tabular information.

Documents

Named, structured units of text, images, or other elements; Web pages.

Equivalent Alternatives

Captioning provided for audio information, audio description of visual information, or other alternative presentations of information that fulfills the same function or purpose upon presentation to the user.

Field Element

A user interface element that appears within an electronic form field.

Flicker

An unintentional and undesirable cyclic variation in display of a screen image.

Functional Text

Text that when read conveys an accurate message as to what is being displayed by the script or that describes or what action the script will perform.

Hertz (Hz)
The international unit of frequency, equal to one cycle per second.
Multimedia Presentation
Any presentation of more than one type of media, typically both audio and visual information.
Non-Text Element
Any element that is not presented in electronically readable text and that conveys meaning that is required for comprehension of content or to facilitate navigation (e.g., an image, image of text, graphic, audio clip, or other element).
Plug-in
A program that runs as part of the user agent and that is not part of content. Users generally choose to include or exclude plug-ins from their user agent. Note: these add-on programs or "plug-ins" can be downloaded and installed on the user's computer that makes it possible for their Web browsers to display or play the content of the files with proprietary formats when these file(s) is (are) included as a part of the Web page.
Redundant Text Link
A link that points to the same location as the active image region, or to another location that is equivalent to that referenced by the active image region.
Repetitive Navigation Links
A set of routine navigation links that appear on the top or the side of a Web page.
Scripting Language
A programming language that is used to manipulate, customize, and automate the facilities of an existing system. Note: this provision only refers to the use of scripting languages for creating and displaying dynamic Web content.
Style Sheet
A collection of formatting instructions stored in a file that determines how the layout of the documents to which it is attached is presented (e.g., displayed on screens, printed, or pronounced).
Synchronized
Having common timing and coordination of execution.
Text Equivalent
Words added as (electronically readable) text to represent the purpose of a non-text element.

Appendix

Website Accessibility Under Title II of the ADA

- Which provisions of Title II of the ADA apply to websites?

- What technologies do people with disabilities use to access the Internet?

- How do poorly designed websites pose barriers to people with disabilities?

- What steps can state and local government agencies take to ensure website accessibility for people with disabilities?

A. Why Should Websites Be Accessible?

The Internet has dramatically changed the way state and local governments do business. Today, government agencies routinely make much more information about their programs, activities, and services available to the public by posting it on their websites. As a result, many people can easily access this information seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Many government services and activities are also provided on websites because the public is able to participate in them at any time of day and without the assistance of government personnel. Many government websites offer a low cost, quick, and convenient way of filing tax returns, paying bills, renewing licenses, signing up for programs, applying for permits or funding, submitting job applications, and performing a wide variety of other activities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and, if the government entities receive federal funding, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 generally require that state and local governments provide qualified individuals with disabilities equal access to their programs, services, or activities unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of their programs, services, or activities or would impose an undue burden.[2] One way to help meet these requirements is to ensure that government websites have accessible features for people with disabilities, using the simple steps described in this document. An agency with an inaccessible website may also meet its legal obligations by providing an alternative accessible way for citizens to use the programs or services,

such as a staffed telephone information line. These alternatives, however, are unlikely to provide an equal degree of access in terms of hours of operation and the range of options and programs available.

[1] In 2003, the Department of Justice issued a technical assistance document addressing website accessibility entitled, "Accessibility of State and Local Government Websites to People with Disabilities." This technical assistance document can be accessed on the ADA Home Page at www.ada.gov

[2] 28 C.F.R. §§ 35.149, 2 35.164.

Example: Accessing Online Tax Forms

If posted on an accessible website, tax forms need to be available to people with disabilities in an accessible format on the same terms that they are available to other members of the public – 24 hours a day, seven days a week, without cost, inconvenience, or delay. A staffed telephone line that sent copies of tax forms to callers through the mail would not provide equal access to people with disabilities because of the delay involved in mailing the forms.

As you will see, making a website accessible means following a few relatively simple steps.

A Few Basic Terms

To understand the basics of website accessibility, you need to know a few terms:

webpage – an Internet-based document, usually in HTML format, that can contain a wide variety of information and multimedia content.

website – a collection of webpages that is hierarchically organized around a homepage.

web browser – a computer program that downloads webpages. It is the program installed on your computer that you use to access webpages on the Internet.

HTML – short for "hypertext mark-up language," a common mark-up language used to present webpages. It tells the web browser how information should be structured and accessed.

screen reader – a computer program that speaks written text. It allows a person to listen to the written text on a webpage or in a computer program. Screen readers read only text; they cannot describe pictures or other images, even if the images are pictures of text.

HTML tags – specific instructions understood by a web browser or screen reader. One type of HTML tag, called an **"alt" tag** (short for "alternative text"), is used to provide brief text descriptions of images that screen readers can understand and speak. Another type of HTML tag, called a **"longdesc" tag** (short for "long description"), is used to provide long text descriptions that can be spoken by screen readers.

refreshable Braille display – an electronic device that translates standard text into Braille characters and uses devices such as rounded pins on a refreshable display to create Braille text that can be read by touch.

B. Online Barriers Faced by People with Disabilities

Many people with disabilities use assistive technology that enables them to use computers. Some assistive technology involves separate computer programs or devices, such as screen readers, text enlargement software, and computer programs that enable people to control the computer with their voice. Other assistive technology is built into computer operating systems. For example, basic accessibility features in computer operating systems enable some people with low vision to see computer displays by simply adjusting color schemes, contrast settings, and font sizes. Operating systems enable people with limited manual dexterity to move the mouse pointer using key strokes instead of a standard mouse. Many other types of assistive technology are available, and more are still being developed.

Poorly designed websites can create unnecessary barriers for people with disabilities, just as poorly designed buildings prevent some people with disabilities from entering. Access problems often occur because website designers mistakenly assume that everyone sees and accesses a webpage in the same way. This mistaken assumption can frustrate assistive technologies and their users. Accessible website design recognizes these differences and does not require people to see, hear, or use a standard mouse in order to access the information and services provided.

1. Common Problems and Solutions in Website Accessibility

Let's look at several common problems and solutions. This is a small sample of relatively basic problems with web design. Resources providing more detailed information on accessible website design are provided at the end of this Chapter.

a. Problem: Images Without Text Equivalents

Blind people, those with low vision, and people with other disabilities that affect their ability to read a computer display often use different technologies so they can access the information displayed on a webpage. Two commonly used technologies are screen readers and refreshable Braille displays. As discussed above, a screen reader is a computer program that speaks the text that appears on the computer display, beginning in the top-left corner. A refreshable Braille display is an electronic device that translates text into Braille characters that can be read by touch. These assistive technologies read text. They cannot translate images into speech or Braille, even if words appear in the images. For example, these technologies cannot interpret a photograph of a stop sign, even if the word "stop" appears in the image.

Because they only read text, screen readers and refreshable Braille displays cannot interpret photographs, charts, color-coded information, or other graphic elements on a webpage. For this reason, a photograph of a mayor on a city's website is inaccessible to people who use these assistive technologies, and a blind person visiting the website would be unable to tell if the image is a photo, a logo, a map, a chart, artwork, a link to another page, or even a blank page.

Solution: Add a Text Equivalent to Every Image

Adding a line of simple HTML code to provide text for each image and graphic will enable a user with a vision disability to understand what it is. Add a type of HTML tag, such as an "alt" tag for brief amounts of text or a "longdesc" tag for large amounts, to each image and graphic on your agency's website.

The words in the tag should be more than a description. They should provide a text equivalent of the image. In other words, the tag should include the same meaningful information that other users obtain by looking at the image. In the example of the mayor's picture, adding an "alt" tag with the words "Photograph of Mayor Jane Smith" provides a meaningful description.

In some circumstances, longer and more detailed text will be necessary to convey the same meaningful information that other visitors to the website can see. For example, a map showing the locations of neighborhood branches of

a city library needs a tag with much more information in text format. In that instance, where the map conveys the locations of several facilities, add a "longdesc" tag that includes a text equivalent description of each location shown on the map – e.g., "City Center Library, 433 N. Main Street, located on North Main Street between 4th Avenue and 5th Avenue."

b. Problem: Documents Are Not Posted In an Accessible Format

State and local governments will often post documents on their websites using Portable Document Format (PDF). But PDF documents, or those in other image based formats, are often not accessible to blind people who use screen readers and people with low vision who use text enlargement programs or different color and font settings to read computer displays.

Solution: Post Documents in a Text-Based Format

Always provide documents in an alternative text-based format, such as HTML or RTF (Rich Text Format), in addition to PDF. Text-based formats are the most compatible with assistive technologies.

c. Problem: Specifying Colors and Font Sizes

Webpage designers often have aesthetic preferences and may want everyone to see their webpages in exactly the same color, size and layout. But because of their disability, many people with low vision do not see webpages the same as other people. Some see only small portions of a computer display at one time. Others cannot see text or images that are too small. Still others can only see website content if it appears in specific colors. For these reasons, many people with low vision use specific color and font settings when they access the Internet – settings that are often very different from those most people use. For example, many people with low vision need to use high contrast settings, such as bold white or yellow letters on a black background. Others need just the opposite – bold black text on a white or yellow background. And, many must use softer, more subtle color combinations.

Users need to be able to manipulate color and font settings in their web browsers and operating systems in order to make pages readable. Some webpages, however, are designed so that changing the color and font settings is impossible.

Solution: Avoid Dictating Colors and Font Settings

Websites should be designed so they can be viewed with the color and font sizes set in users' web browsers and operating systems. Users with low vision must be able to specify the text and background colors as well as the font sizes needed to see webpage content.

d. Problem: Videos and Other Multimedia Lack Accessible Features

Due to increasing bandwidth and connection speeds, videos and other multimedia are becoming more common on the websites of state and local governments. Today, some government entities use their websites to post training videos for their employees, feature automated slide shows of recent public events, and offer video tours of local attractions.

These and other types of multimedia can present two distinct problems for people with different disabilities. People who are deaf or hard of hearing can generally see the information presented on webpages. But a deaf person or someone who is hard of hearing may not be able to hear the audio track of a video. On the other hand, persons who are blind or have low vision are frequently unable to see the video images but can hear the audio track.

Solution: Include Audio Descriptions and Captions

Videos need to incorporate features that make them accessible to everyone. Provide audio descriptions of images (including changes in setting, gestures, and other details) to make videos accessible to people who are blind or have low vision. Provide text captions synchronized with the video images to make videos and audio tracks accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

2. Other considerations when developing websites:

- include a "skip navigation" link at the top of webpages that allows people who use screen readers to ignore navigation links and skip directly to webpage content;

- minimize blinking, flashing, or other distracting features;

- if they must be included, ensure that moving, blinking, or auto-updating objects or pages may be paused or stopped;

- design online forms to include descriptive HTML tags that provide persons with disabilities the information they need to complete and submit the forms;

- include visual notification and transcripts if sounds automatically play;

- provide a second, static copy of pages that are auto-refreshing or that require a timed-response;

- use titles, context, and other heading structures to help users navigate complex pages or elements (such as webpages that use frames).

3. Identifying other barriers to access

Technology is changing, and many website designers are using creative and innovative ways to present web-based materials. These changes may involve new and different access problems and solutions for people with disabilities. This Chapter discusses just a few of the most common ways in which websites can pose barriers to access for people with disabilities. By using the resources listed at the end of this Chapter, you can learn to identify and address other barriers.

C. Developing an Action Plan For Providing Accessible Websites

Now you know that some types of content and format on webpages can pose barriers for people with disabilities. The next steps are to develop an action plan to fix web content that is currently inaccessible and implement procedures to ensure that all new and modified web content is accessible. The website accessibility checklist included in this section helps you assess what needs to be done.

A well-designed action plan would include the following steps:

I. **Establish, implement, and post online a policy that your webpages will be accessible and create a process for implementation.**

II. **Ensure that all new and modified webpages and content are accessible.**

- Check the HTML of all new webpages. Make sure that accessible coding is used.

- Make sure that websites are designed so they can be displayed using the color and font settings of each visitor's browser and operating system.

- If images are used, including photos, graphics, scanned images, or image maps, make sure to include a text equivalent, by adding "alt" tags or long descriptions, for each.

- If you use online forms and tables, make those elements accessible by labeling each control (including buttons, check boxes, drop-down menus, and text fields) with a descriptive HTML tag.

- When posting documents on the website, always provide them in HTML or a text-based format (even if you are also providing them in another format, such as PDF).

III. **Develop a plan for making your existing web content accessible. Describe your plan on an accessible webpage, and encourage input on how accessibility can be improved. Let visitors to your website know about the standards or guidelines that you are using to make your website accessible. When setting timeframes for accessibility modifications to your website, make more popular webpages a priority.**

IV. **When updating webpages, remember to ensure that updates are accessible. For example, when images change, the text equivalents in "alt" tags and long descriptions need to be changed so they match the new images.**

V. **Ensure that in-house staff and contractors responsible for webpage and content development are properly trained. Distribute the Department of Justice technical assistance document "Accessibility of State and Local Government Websites to People with Disabilities" to these in-house staff and contractors on an annual basis as a reminder. This technical assistance document is available on the ADA Home Page atwww.ada.gov.**

VI. **Provide a way for visitors to request accessible information or services by posting a telephone number or email address on your home page. Establish procedures that ensure a quick response to users with disabilities who are trying to obtain information or services in this way.**

VII. **Periodically enlist disability groups to test your pages for ease of use; use the feedback they provide to increase the accessibility of your website.**

VIII. **Ensure that there are alternative ways for people with disabilities to access the information and services that are provided on your website. Remember, some people may not have, or be able to use, a computer.**

D. Resources

Following are a few of the many resources available to assist state and local governments in making their websites accessible:

- "[Accessibility of State and Local Government Websites to People with Disabilities](#)," a technical assistance document released by the Department of Justice in 2003

- [www.access-board.gov](#), the website of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (known as "the Access Board"), which establishes the standards used by the federal government to ensure that its electronic and information technology is accessible to people with disabilities;

- [www.section508.gov](#), the website of the Federal Information Technology Accessibility Initiative;

- [www.ittatc.org](#), the website of the Information Technology and Technical Assistance Training Center;

- [www.cast.org](#), the website for the Center for Applied Special Technology, a nonprofit, educational organization working to expand educational opportunities for all, including individuals with disabilities, through technology;

- 1-800-949-4232 (voice and TTY), the ADA and IT Technical Assistance Centers ([www.dbtac.vcu.edu](#)).