WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY TRAINING:
ENSURING THAT DIGITAL CONTENT IS ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL

Website accessibility continues to be a priority for many school districts. Superintendents and CTOs understand that a commitment to providing an excellent education requires a commitment to website accessibility. More than 56 million people in the U.S. (about one in five people in our country) live with a disability of some sort. Hearing, visual, cognitive, and motor disabilities impact an individual's ability to use and interact with websites, and the information and digital content. Website accessibility is more than just the right thing to do, it is also a legal requirement for any public school that receives federal funding.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Sections 508 and 504 require that people with disabilities not be discriminated against. Specifically, these sections require that communications with people with disabilities be as effective as communications to those without disabilities. As of January, the U.S. Access Board requires that websites at any federally funded organizations comply with the updated Section 508 standards. School districts must make reasonable modifications to technology tools and websites to ensure equal opportunities and access to content, software, and equipment for people with disabilities. School districts have taken steps to become more accessible, but still might overlook some of the difficulties that people with vision, hearing, motor, or learning disabilities might encounter when navigating and using district websites.

On May 23, SDCOE's Integrated Technology Services division is hosting a free web-accessibility training. WebAIM's accessibility experts will teach everything from basic web-accessibility principles to advanced accessibility techniques. Some of the principles that will be taught include: principles of web accessibility, web accessibility guidelines and laws, understanding how users with disabilities access and use the web, evaluating site accessibility, policy creation and implementation, assistive technologies, and accessibility requirements for HTML, Acrobat, PDF, Microsoft PowerPoint, and Word. This trainer-of-trainers model will provide resources for districts to ensure that their website meets legal guidelines and international standards. Participants will receive electronic resources and training materials to empower and support school district staff members to meet future accessibility needs.

Participants can register at http://bit.ly/SDWebAccessible or contact Dr. Staci Block in SDCOE ITS Professional Learning and Technology Research team.