ADA Compliance Reference Sheet

1) **The words "Click Here" are not compliant.** It may seem counterintuitive, but instead of saying "Click Here" the name of the document or website should simply be hyperlinked. Examples:

   To view the Board of Education Agenda, [Click Here](#). - incorrect
   View the [Board of Education Agenda](#) on our website. - correct

   Click here to view this week's E-Notices. - incorrect
   View this week's E-Notices. - Correct

2) Do not use italics or highlighted text. You **can use bold and underline,** but try to use underline only for hyperlinks unless necessary. Examples:

   Author of *George Gets Slimed; Seesaw Saturday*. - incorrect
   Author of George Gets Slimed; Seesaw Saturday. - correct

   Please pay your HSA Dues today. - incorrect
   Please pay your HSA Dues today. – correct

3) All capital letters should only be used if the word is an acronym or if the word or sentence is labeled as a header within the program used to create the document. It is safest to use sentence or title structure (capitalize the first letter of each word) if the program does not allow you to or you do not know how to assign the header label.

4) **Only some fonts can be read by a digital or manual screen reader.** Digital screen readers work with our computers to read what is on the screen. Manual screen readers are table top devices that look like old overhead projectors and read out loud the content of what is placed on the machine. And, the wrong fonts don't just affect those living with disabilities either, even those with learning difficulties such as dyslexia struggle with certain text.

a. Do not use fonts that have any fancy curly cues, simulate script handwriting, are in all capital letters, or are condensed or overly expanded. Stick with fonts that do not have serifs (the little lines at the end of the letters), use accurate letter formation, and are basically easy to read.

b. So, what are some **great font** choices?
   1. **Poppins** (adopted as district font in 2024)
   2. **Verdana**
   3. **Montserrat**
   4. **Tahoma**
   5. **Calibri**
   6. **Helvetica**
   7. **Arial**
   8. **Other sans serif fonts** like Arvo Museo Slab and Rockwell are also accessible. Please note that **Google Docs do not have all accessible fonts and some of their fonts are not ADA-compliant**. The same is true for all Google or Microsoft programs, so please check your fonts. The District moved to Poppins, then Montserrat, and Verdana for primary communications.

c. Want to know some **terrible font choices**? OK, since you asked: Comic Sans, Book Antigua, and avoid fonts featuring "imposter letter shapes" that are designed to be very similar to other letter shapes as part of their visual style. Always avoid any font that is not a True Type Font as it will not translate on screen readers or screens in general in the same way.

d. Want to use a font that is not listed, but want it for impact or design? Make the words into a graphic and use alternative text to identify what the word-image says. For example:

Image:

Alternative Text:

Ridgewood High School

5) Point Size Matters - **Never use a point size smaller than 12px (or less than 10pt).** And although 12px is the minimum, 14 to 16pxs improves readability. Note that the minimum can vary though, depending on which font and the associated contrast. See the next bullet.

   a. To a screen reader, **all caps equal acronym**. Screen readers will read a word in all capital letters one letter at a time, assuming that it is an acronym. Avoid all-caps unless it is on a document in a software that allows you to specify it is a heading. Do not use all caps within a sentence to emphasize a word, use bold or color change.

6) **Contrast is key** - There are actual contrast ratios that are ADA-approved. Color contrast is one of the most referred to aspects of ensuring your digital documents meet accessibility criteria, and there are many great tools available to check the WCAG 2.0 criteria for color contrast ratios. My favorite is the WebAIM Contrast Checker. However, it is not always convenient to check contrast every time you are creating a document, so there are some easy guidelines to follow.

   a. **Black on white is always best**. Pure black on white is the highest contrast that you can achieve. However, remember that point size and font are also key when the black is text.

   b. **The darker the color, the higher the contrast**. This seems like common sense, but certain colors may appear dark to you and don't meet the ratio. Stick with black, dark green, dark blue, dark grey, dark red, or dark purple on white or white on these colors. These colors meet the ADA compliance rules for contrast. Note: Be careful with red and green combinations as this is the most common color vision deficiency combination. We are lucky as our Maroon is a high-contrast color (hex code is #76232f), which means it can be used for text or for background color under white text.

   c. **The color difference of text and its background should have a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1.** This also applies to images of text. Exceptions are: When using large text (18 points or larger), a ratio is 3:1 is sufficient.

7) **Pictures** – all images must contain Alt Text. This is what screen readers tell the "reader" is on the screen when it comes to the image. This can easily be done for any Word, Adobe, or other document.

a. **Images behind text are not ADA Compliant**. If you are using an image as a background, the text must be inserted into a text boxed that is color-filled to allow for a high contrast with the text. The image in the background must have alt txt associated with it, and the text box also must have alt txt to identify it as a colored text box.

Important: scanning a document may seem like it creates a pdf, but it creates an image. For a scanned document to be ADA compliant, the entire text of the document would have to be written in the Alt Text box. Instead of scanning, do a "Save As" from Word or a "Download" as pdf in Google Docs. If signatures are needed on the document, add them in AFTER you create the pdf and be sure to include the Alt Txt.

8) **Color** can be tricky - Related to contrast is color. **Not every color is ADA-compliant for text**, but can often be used for background colors or decorative lines/images (see above). Many of us can intuitively point toward a pleasing, engaging color combination. However, people with certain vision impairments cannot. While they may seem cool in the design stage, color combinations that are close in hue, saturation, or brightness will prove very challenging to people with vision impairments. Additionally, color combinations that are too bright or too saturated can overwhelm certain website visitors and leave them incapable of properly engaging with a web page.

There are certain color combinations that tend to be problematic, as they often do not contrast sufficiently. **Problematic Color Combinations** include, but are not limited to:
Green and red
Green and blue
Blue and black
Yellow and orange
Yellow and red
Yellow and green
Purple and black
Red and brown
Blue and purple

The district light gray should never be used for text.

ADA and Other Pointers for Social Media Posts

- Hash tags should have initial caps for each word within the tag, i.e., #TeamRidgewood
  - Did you know that the purpose of hashtags is for searches? All District posts are hash tagged with #TeamRidgewood for searches.
- A picture is worth a thousand words – if you don't have a good picture, don't post. It is better to miss a post than post something that does not evoke the sentiment for which you are striving.
  - Emojis or other shapes covering a student face are not in line with District quality guidelines. Have a student in a photo that can't be in it? Don't use the photo, use your phone photo editor to remove the student, or crop the photo if possible.
- Photos with more than 8 to 10 students (depending on how closeup the photo is taken) can have students without media permission as long as no names are mentioned.
  - Student names should **only** be used when it references an award, honor, or leadership position.
- Brevity is important. No one wants to read a social media post with three paragraphs of text. Social Media is photo-centric. Use the photo to tell the story and just a sentence or two to complement it. Have more to say? Provide a link to the district website where the information should be stored.
- Posts should be unique. If you have three photos from the same event, use them within a single post. Do not create separate posts with the same data.
- Tag @rps_district – this ensures that the district account can see and share your posts.