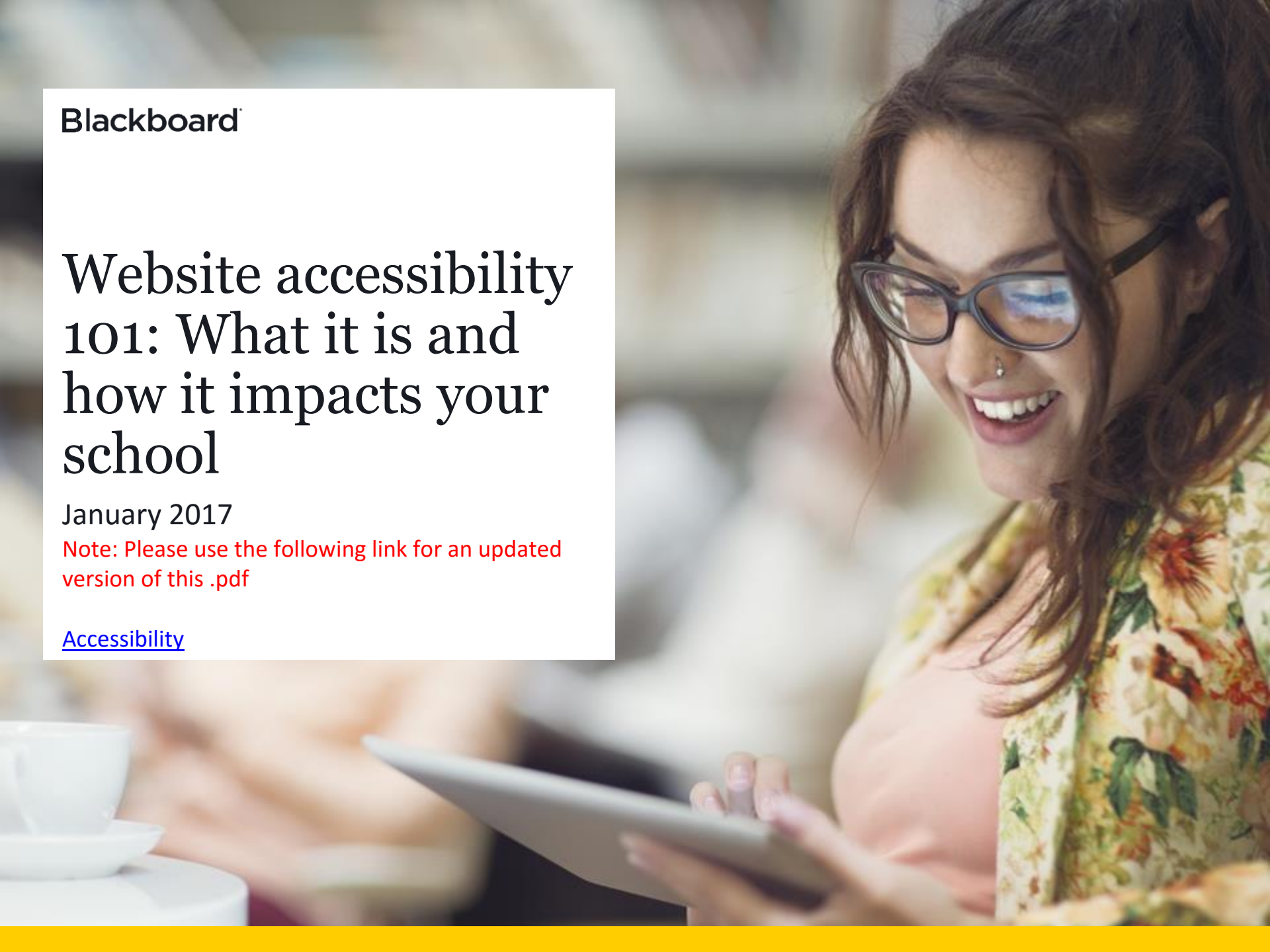**Blackboard**

Website accessibility 101: What it is and how it impacts your school

January 2017

Note: Please use the following link for an updated version of this .pdf

Accessibility

For a great viewing experience:

Turn off all other applications that are using bandwidth

For live audio captioning, to go: tinyurl.com/bblivecaption

Write your questions in the question box within your control panel

Tweet us @BlackboardK12

JoAnna Hunt

Accessibility Manager

Our Commitment

Blackboard is fully committed to delivering product experiences that conform to the highest levels of global accessibility standards. We believe that a mature digital accessibility program must establish a sustainable organizational culture and strong partnerships around accessibility.
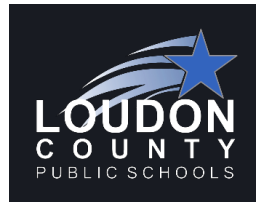
Core Beliefs

Blackboard's Accessibility program is being built on the following core beliefs, which provide guidance for achieving program goals and objectives

Accessibility is an imperative, not an afterthought.

As inclusive thinking spreads across the education landscape, we have a unique opportunity to positively impact the lives of people with disabilities. To do so we must deeply integrate accessibility thinking into all aspects of our organizational culture.

Understand, empathize, and act.

Teachers and students' fundamental goals remain the same, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities. We must endeavor to fully understand the needs of people with disabilities. However, awareness is not enough. We must act.

Deliver the promise.

The edu-tech industry's accessibility focus is rapidly increasing due to the tremendous promise technology offers to people with disabilities. We must focus on providing tools and services that deliver on this promise and inspire people of all abilities to learn.
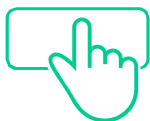
More direct advocacy for/by
the learner

Increasing number of complaints from
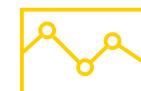Office of Civil Rights

Market Trends in Accessibility: K-12

Higher expectations for
product accessibility

Partnerships around
compliance

Proactively seeking
knowledge

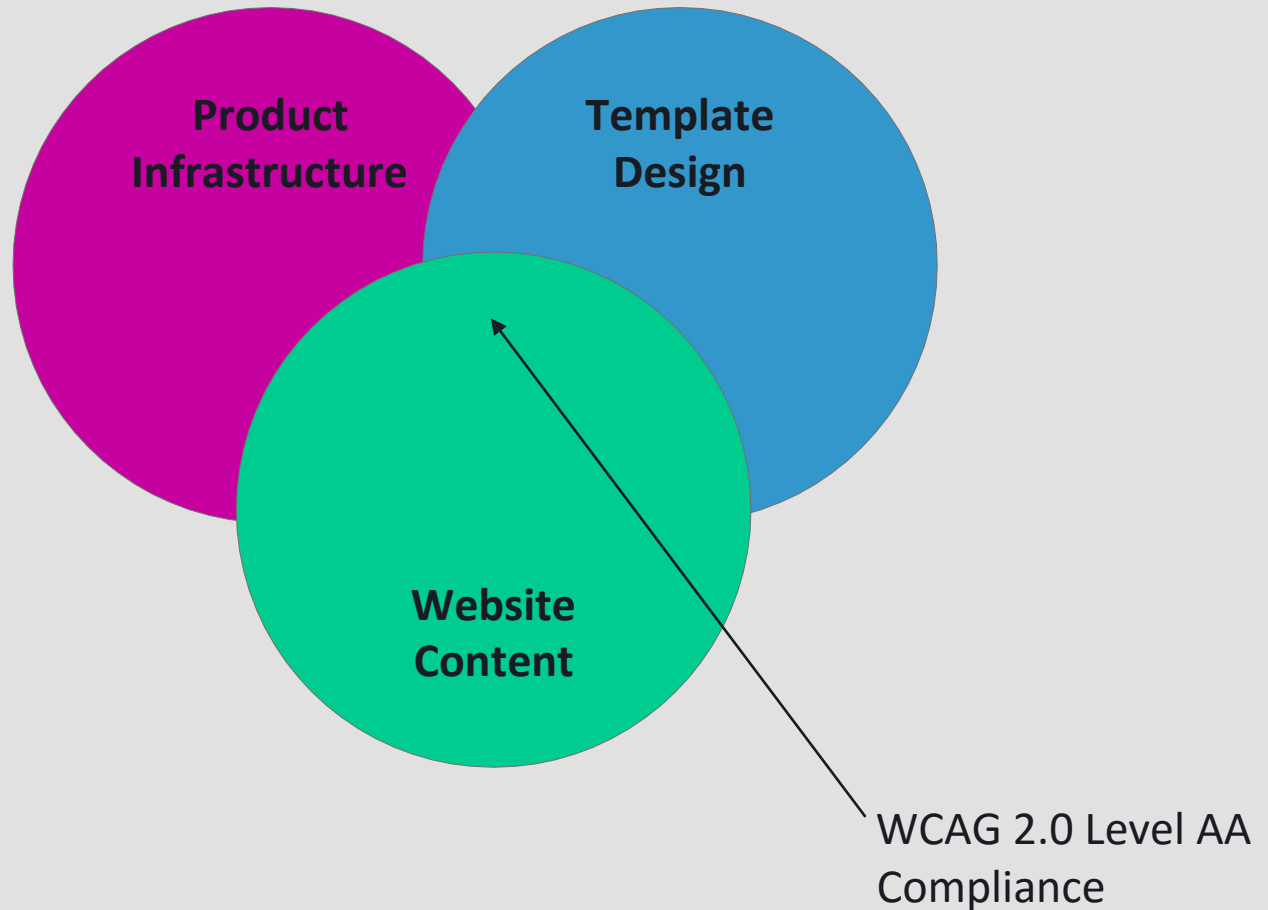# Moving forward with Blackboard

Web Community Manager (formerly Schoolwires) is the go forward website development platform where all accessibility effort will be placed.

? Wait! What does that mean for my website?

Accessibility in WCM (formerly Schoolwires)

Product Infrastructure

Template Design

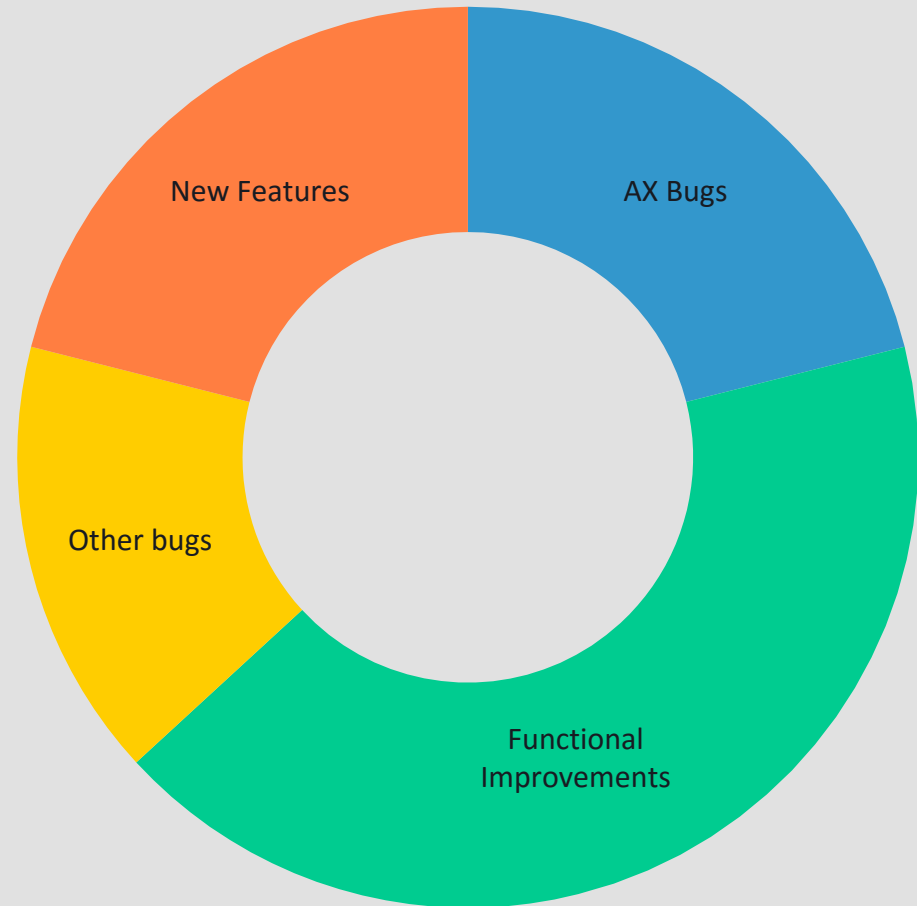**Website Content**

WCAG 2.0 Level AA Compliance

WCM AX Platform Cleanup

In every 2017 release of Web Community Manager a percentage of resources will be dedicated to resolving accessibility issues while still making functional improvements clients have requested.

Release Planning Estimates

- New Features
- AX Bugs
- Other bugs
- Functional Improvements

Minimum Accessibility Requirements

All features must meet the minimum accessibility requirements in order to be considered complete, and be released to customers.

Keyboard Access:

- All tasks can be created using only the keyboard

- The keyboard navigation flow is logical, and keyboard focus is never dropped.

- Visual focus is always present and meets contrast requirements

- Necessary custom keyboard shortcuts have been developed

Screen reader Access

- All tasks can be completed using a screen reader

- All elements and/or task flows make sense without seeing the screen.

- Custom keyboard shortcuts do not conflict with screen reader commands.

Technical Accessibility

1. The heading levels are semantically accurate and logical.

2. The reading order and visual styles make sense.

3. All form fields have logical and understandable labels.

4. All buttons are properly identified as buttons and not links.

5. Links are properly differentiated from surrounding text.

6. Links are self describing and not repetitive.

7. All images have appropriate alternative text or have been designated as decorative.

8. Appropriate ARIA landmarks are being used and have been applied correctly.

9. The color contrast of all elements meets the 4.5:1 ratio.

10. Color is not being used as the only means of conveying information.

Understanding diverse needs & the impact on content

Diverse Needs: Cognitive Challenges

Cognitive challenges can range from dyslexia and ADHD to Autism, Downs Syndrome, and other intellectual disabilities.

Impact on content

- May have difficulty receiving and processing information or have poor problem-solving skills.

- May be easily distracted and have trouble with memory, reading, writing, reasoning and understanding acceptable social behaviors.

- May have trouble concentrating and rely on assistive tools for reading and comprehension assistance.

Diverse Needs: Visual Challenges

Visual challenges can range from low vision and color blindness to a complete lack of sight.

Impact on content

- May have low vision and rely on assistive devices to help them participate in online activities.

- May be completely blind and rely on screen readers or textual equivalents to consume digital content.

- May struggle to see certain colors or read content independently.

Diverse Needs: Physical Challenges

Physical challenges can ranges from loss of limb and limited mobility to full paralysis and diminished muscle control.

Impact on content

- May not have control over gross or fine muscles required to use technology.

- May rely on alternative input devices to interact with digital content.

- May struggle to communicate effectively when problems arise.

Diverse Needs: Hearing Challenges

Hearing challenges can range from slight hearing loss to profound hearing loss or total deafness.

Impact on content

- May have limited hearing and rely on assistive devices to help them participate.

- May be completely deaf and rely on sign language or text based alternatives to audio content.

- May have difficulty taking notes while listening to lectures or watching videos.

Adjusting your approach to content selection and development

Inclusive Content

Thinking inclusively means revisiting content and ensuring it's set up for universal consumption. It also means choosing not to use content that doesn't meet expectations.

Quick Checklist: The Content

Evaluate all content for the following elements:

☐ Images have alternative text

☐ No images of text or blinking images and animations

☐ Word and PowerPoint documents are properly structured

☐ PDFs are tagged for accessibility

☐ Videos are captioned

☐ Instructions are clear and succinct

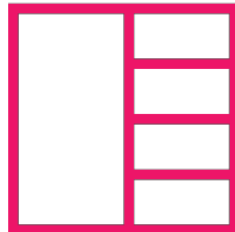☐ Color choices have proper contrast

☐ Tables are not used for layout
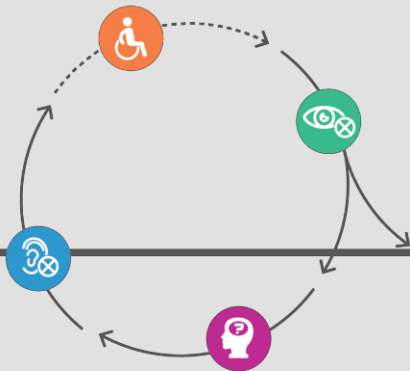
Formatting accessible documents
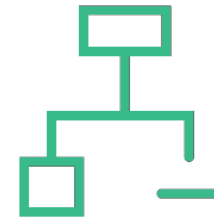
Structure & Formatting

Proper use of tables

Alt Text for Images

*Read full article about Formatting Accessible Documents on Blackboard Help

Principles of PowerPoint Accessibility

Slide Titles

Alt Text for Images

Self-describing links

*Read full article about the Principles of PowerPoint Accessibility on Blackboard Help

Building accessible PDFs

Start from a well formatted source file.	Include accessibility tags when saved to PDF.	Invest in Acrobat Pro and use it's accessibility tools

*Read full article about Formatting Accessible Documents (look for PDF section) on Blackboard Help

Captioning Videos

Find already captioned videos

St   rd

Upload to YouTube
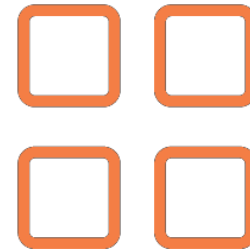
Edit automatic captions

*Read full article about Captioning Video on Blackboard Help

Testing your website

Blackboard recommends testing your webpages using the freely available WAVE toolbar from WebAIM.

Fix critical issues or report them to Blackboard.

Review all alerts. Many will need resolution.

Considering hiring a 3rd party auditor to help.

Proactive Accessibility

The best approach you can take to ensure success is to build a sustainable program around accessibility in your school or district.

Make a commitment

Report problems

Hire an expert auditor

Conduct expert audits regularly

Develop and implement policies

Tools and Resources

Helpful links to tools and articles for applying inclusive techniques to your work

Building Content

- Microsoft Office
- Adobe Acrobat
- Bb best practices for accessible content

Keyboard Navigation

- Firefox shortcuts
- Chrome shortcuts
- Google shortcuts

Evaluating Technology

- Firefox and Chrome developer toolbars
- Wave & Wave Toolbar
- AXE Extension
- Color contrast checker:
  - WebAIM Contrast Checker
  - Tanaguru Contrast Finder
- Your keyboard
- Browser magnification (CTRL +/- and CTRL 0)

Accessibility in K-12

- Comprehensive help and best practices.

Questions?

Additional Resources

PDF of presentation slides	Proactive accessibility guide	Webinar video recording coming to your email

Blackboard®