ONE-PAGE SUMMARY FROM HAVEN SMITH & COMPANY

Every file was tagged. Almost none of them worked.

A Bay Area school district had done what many districts do: it ran its PDFs through an automatic tagging tool. We checked whether the tags actually work for a student or parent who uses a screen reader.

CLIENT	TYPE	SCOPE	RESULT
A Bay Area school district	Public document review	22 recent public PDFs	21 of 22 had barriers

The numbers

How many of the 22 files passed each check

Check	Result
Tagged	22 of 22
Named its language	22 of 22
Had a title	22 of 22
Had headings	3 of 22
Described every image	1 of 22

The tags were there. The parts a parent actually hears were missing.

What we found

- The good news: all 22 files were tagged, which means the district cares and already has a process.
- 21 of the 22 had images with no description, so a screen reader says nothing or reads a file name.
- 19 of the 22 had no headings, so a parent hears one long wall of text with no way to jump ahead.
- The pattern points to automatic tagging that nobody reviewed afterward.

The path to good

- Review each tagged file by hand: add headings, describe meaningful images, mark decorative ones, and check tables.
- Train the staff who make these files to build headings and descriptions in Word, so the export starts out right.
- Use a monthly retainer so every new file is reviewed before it goes up.

The full report, with the files we checked, is at havensmith.company/case-studies. Names are changed to keep them private. Every number is real. © Haven Smith, LLC.