



York Region District School Board



Human Rights Commissioner's Office (HRCO)

Annual Report 2019-2020

Statement of Accessibility

The Human Rights Commissioner's Office (HRCO) Annual Report 2019-2020 is available in the following ways:

- **Online to the public:** Under [HRCO Annual Reports](#) from the new YRDSB website.
- **By email:** human.rights@yrdsb.ca;
- **By telephone:** Call the Human Rights Commissioner's Office at 905-884-2046 ext. 255; or
- **In an alternate format upon request.**

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Message from the Human Rights Commissioner

Any culture that places value in the inherent dignity and worth of every individual is one that demonstrates the centrality of human rights. Within education, this is particularly important because our understanding of power, privilege, identity and social position is very often informed by our educationally journey and by those who play a vital role in our experience of it. Human rights is about constructing systems and structures free of discrimination and harassment. It certainly extends beyond that which law that demands for compliance. Human rights is about relationships. It is about how we choose to treat each other. It is about respecting that our social, cultural and individual identities are unique, and for ensuring a rich diversity that is inherent to building a welcoming and inclusive society. It is about equity, because our individual path reflects different needs, considerations and requirements. It is about accessibility because though access, we are empowered to have voice and participate in meaningful social change.

As Human Rights Commissioner of York Region District School Board, I am particularly aware of the weighty responsibility of our role and the high expectations accorded to our work by members of the greater YRDSB community. An internal office that requires the system to be accountable and commit to fostering a learning and working culture free of discrimination and harassment remains at the core of our work. This has been never more apparent than in changed circumstances of our everyday reality because of COVID-19. The 2019-2020 school year started out like most previous school years without any indication that at a midpoint, school would be closed with students and staff working and learning remotely. It created unique and ongoing challenges for our work, and the final determination is yet unknown.

During the 2019-2020 Reporting Year, we were regarded by those who engaged with us, as a safe place for confidential consultation and for providing human rights education. While complaint files decreased markedly from the previous periods, likely due to COVID-19, we remained committed to addressing Code-related matters whenever called upon. We also sought to ensure that a human rights lens was foremost in highlighting and confronting unconscious bias, anti-Black racism, and intersectional components of Code-based discrimination and harassment concerns.

This Annual Report will provide an important snapshot on the vital an ongoing role that the HRCO plays in addressing human rights complaints under [Policy #240](#) and ensuring that YRDSB meets its legal obligations under Ontario's Human Rights Code.

About the Human Rights Commissioner's Office

1.1 Introduction

At the end of August 2020, The Human Rights Commissioner's Office (HRCO or "the Office") completed its third year in operation. Established by York Region District School Board (YRDSB or "the Board") in fall 2017, the HRCO continues to have a vital role in leading and ensuring that an independent, confidential and credible process is available internally so that any member of the Board community who experience discrimination and harassment in the workplace, classroom or in any other aspect of engagement. In addition, through ongoing human rights education and engagement, the HRCO works to build a culture of inclusion that fully compliments and aligns with the following four (4) core principles in the [Director's Action Plan](#) ("the DAP") and the [Multi-year Strategic Plan](#) ("the MYSP") for advancing student success, which are to:

- **Foster Well-Being and Mental Health** in order to create safe, healthy and inclusive learning and working environments.
- **Champion Equity and Inclusivity** toward developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes to remove barriers in support of all learners.
- **Build Collaborative Relationships** which involves building trusting relationships based on respectful and responsive communication.
- **Empower Ethical Leadership** because it is critical to lead ethically by focusing on students and upholding our values.

The HRCO is guided by ensuring there is an understanding and appreciation of building a working and learning environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. This is critical to realizing student success for all learners.

The work of the HRCO is also guided by ensuring the Board's commitment and compliance with its legal obligations to address issues of Code-based discrimination and harassment under the [Human Rights Code](#) ("the Code"). The HRCO does so through:

1. **Human Rights Case Management** which entails having a clearly defined process for receiving and acting upon complaints brought forward by YRDSB stakeholders in a confidentially, fairly and in a timely manner; and
2. **Human Rights Education and Training** which includes preventative actions through designing human rights and accessibility education, training workshops, as well as

professional coaching and advising with the goal of building internal capacity in creating respectful, inclusive and accessible learning and working environments for all.

This is the third Annual Report submitted by the HRCO since its inception in 2017. The HRCO Annual Report serves as an outline of key activities deemed relevant and within an annual reporting period from September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020 (“the reporting year”). As the Annual Report represents summary statement, it is not definitive of all HRCO activities.

1.2 Background

Having a small yet highly trained staff, the HRCO has been unwavering in its commitment to fostering and anti-discrimination culture at YRDSB. From its inception, it has operated relatively autonomously from other administrative units at the Board, in order to ensure that it remain a safe, welcoming and confidential space to address internal complaint Code matters brought to it by members of Board community.

At its inception, there was only one other Ontario School Board with a Human Rights Office among the Ontario School Boards. However, the HRCO remains unique in its both mandate and orientation when compared to the Boards. At the end of the reporting year, there were sixteen (16) other school boards that that had offices tasked with addressing human rights matters, although not all are involved in investigation of Code complaints.

While principles of equity govern all HRCO interactions, matters specific to equity engagement within schools are addressed through Inclusive Schools and Community Service (“ISCS”) which is guided under [Policy #261, Equity and Inclusivity](#). The HRCO mandate is centred on human rights compliance as an internal office for addressing complaints of harassment and discrimination reported by staff, students and parents. While for administrative purposes, the Human Rights Commissioner reports directly to the Director of Education, confidential complaint matters reside solely and entirely within the HRCO itself. The HRCO consists of a Human Rights Commissioner who heads a small staff of Human Rights Officers with demonstrated expertise in human rights law and practice, with responsibility of overseeing all matters that fall under Policy 240.

Anthony Anirud is the Human Rights Commissioner for YRDSB during this reporting year. He has served in this role since the inception of the HRCO at the start of the 2017-18 school year.

I.3 HRCO Mandate

In carrying out this mandate, the HRCO is guided by:

- [Board Policy and Procedure #240; Human Rights Code-Related Harassment and Discrimination](#) (Policy #240); and
- [Board Policy and Procedures #407, Accessibility](#) (Accessibility Policy #407).

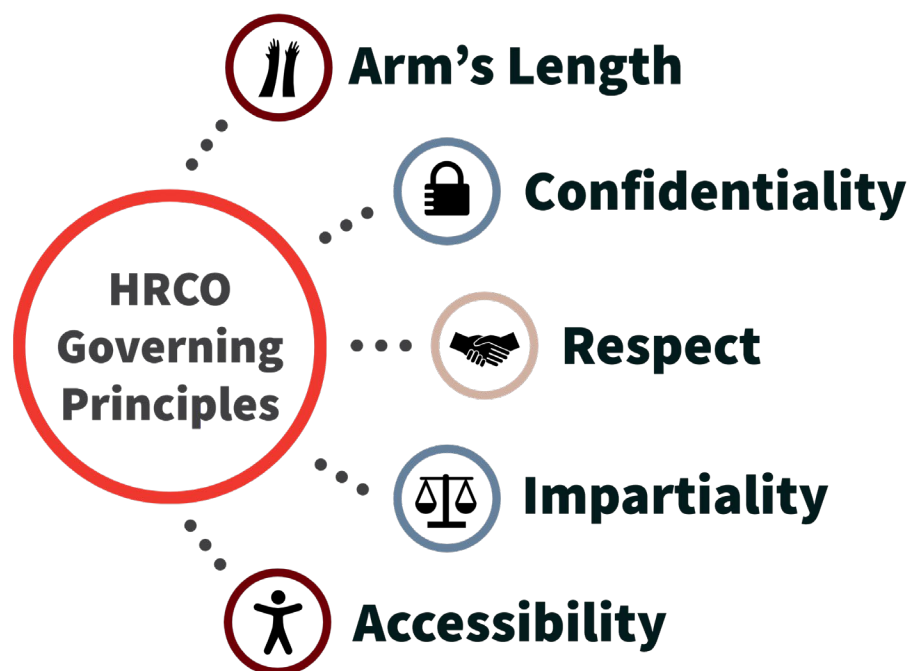
The HRCO mandate is to lead the Board community in fostering inclusive and respectful learning and working environments for its students, staff, trustees and other Board community members by:

1. Assisting members of the YRDSB community through its confidential consultation process for addressing complaints of harassment, discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence and failure to accommodate with the goal of bringing greater understanding to the range of options available for responding to and resolving complaints.
2. Providing information, guidance and training to the YRDSB community to increase awareness about the importance of embedding human rights in alignment with the [Mission, Vision and Values](#) of YRDSB.
3. Rendering timely advice and training to staff to increase awareness of issues specific to compliance with the Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
4. Conducting Site Visit Reviews, as deemed necessary to address matters that suggest the necessity to enquiry on systemic discrimination or a poisoned work environment.
5. Undertaking ongoing audits of the board's compliance with the AODA and provide updates the Board Multi-year Accessibility Plan by leading the AODA Accessibility Committee.
6. Reviewing its processes for receiving and investigating complaints of racism or any other prohibited Code-ground(s) of discrimination that engenders confidence of an internal review process by the greater YRDSB Community.
7. Demonstrating that a safe space exists for disputing parties to explore resolution options.

1.4 HRCO Governing Principles

During the reporting year, the HRCO governing principles underwent a revision to include five (5) from the previous three (3): 1) Arm's Length, 2) Confidentiality; and 3) Referral.

It was decided that referrals should be dropped because it represented an important process in case management, rather than core principles. Also, while the original intent was for matters to be elevated to the HRCO by way of referral from other administrative units, unions, trustees and superintendents, this has not been the usual practice. Most matters come to the HRCO at first instance instead of through referral. With the removal of “referral” as a core principle, the following were deemed as the governing principles:



1. **Arm's Length:** While the Human Rights Commissioner reports to the Director of Education, the role is independent from the formal administrative structure and all other areas of YRDSB. This ensures that any matters brought to the attention of the Human Rights Commissioner are dealt with in an impartial and independent manner. HRCO staff are mindful of engaging in only professional interactions with limited social engagements, which could be seen to compromise the independence of the office.
2. **Confidentiality:** All dealings with the HRCO are deemed private and confidential. Confidentiality is important to ensure that members of the YRDSB community can discuss concerns without fear of repercussions, and this confidentiality is protected to the full extent of the law. At the discretion of the Human Rights Commissioner, exceptions to confidentiality may occur to address imminent risk of serious harm.

Consent from a party to a matter is always required before another matter is discussed with any other Board unit. All HRCO staff are required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

3. **Respect:** Treating people with respect is paramount to approaching all issues from a human rights lens in which the dignity and worth of everyone permeates all actions. This means being mindful of any sign of disrespect that could be perceived or received as an indication of a lack of objectivity and impartiality, possible pre-judgement or even bias. Respect and dignity are two different, but closely related, concepts. The actions of the HRCO is aligned with the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (proclaimed in 1948) which emphasizes the importance of recognizing the inherent dignity of an individual in the following terms:

“...recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world...”

4. **Impartiality:** Being relatively independent of the Board’s formal administrative structure ensures that any matters brought to the attention of the HRCO are dealt with impartiality. This means that the HRCO engages in an objective review of all facts and circumstances and it acts neither as an advocate for individuals, nor as a defender of the Board, but rather as a seeker of procedural fairness and reasonable outcomes.
5. **Accessibility:** Accessibility is premised on confronting and removing barrier. Barriers to access are conditions or obstacles that prevent individuals (such as those with disabilities) from accessing knowledge and resources specific to HRCO complaint’s processes and in receipt of human rights education and training. Barrier removal is about access to HRCO dispute resolution processes, including early resolutions and investigations. This expanded conception of accessibility insists that we take into account the structural inequities that exist in our system and that we support the full and fair access to certain members of the greater YRDSB community.

I.5 HRCO Budget and Staff

The budgetary allocation to the HRCO for its third year of operation was \$453,000. This was the total allocation for the full staff compliment in operating the HRCO. The HRCO’s budget for AODA accessibility training of \$10,000 remained unchanged from the previous reporting year which is managed though the accessibility portfolio.

Organization and Staffing Change

The Reporting Period commenced with a full staffing compliment of five (5) employees, as illustrated in the organizational chart below:



In September 2019 following a posting and competition, a new Human Rights Officer was hired in November 2019. In February 2020, a renaming of job titles to “Human Rights Officer” commenced in order to align more closely with overlap and complimentary roles of the Early Resolutions Officer and Investigations Officer. This retitling did not change existing salary levels for either role. However, it provided consistency with similar roles at other educational institutions and school boards. It also represented a more accurate reflection of the multiple aspects of human rights work and our current focus on human rights training and advisory work. Following discussion and formal approval from Human Resources Services in March 2020, the new renamed job titles were as follows:

- Human Rights Officer (Early Resolutions)
- Human Rights Officer (Investigations)

In March 2020, an Investigation Officer (Investigations) left the HRCO. Interviews for a new Human Rights Officer (Investigations) were schedule to take place during the week of March 16, 2020. However, because of the initial COVID-19 shutdown announcement by the provincial government on March 13, 2020 interviews were postponed temporarily to reopening. With several subsequent shutdown extensions that went to the end of the 2019-2020 school year, the Human Rights Commissioner cancelled interviews and hiring of a Human Rights Officer (Investigations) until the 2020-21 school year.

1.6 HRCO Webpages

The HRCO has its own presence on the YRDSB website. On the [HRCO webpages](#), information is provided for all YRDSB community members who seek information on the work of the HRCO, as well as how to contact the office for the purpose of reporting a matter. Given

the arms-length position of the HRCO, the HRCO has a separate logo to signify its autonomy from the corporate website and logo.

During the reporting year, several announcements and letters from the Human Rights Commissioner specific to COVID-19 were posted on the HRCO website. All prior HRCO Annual Reports are also located on the HRCO webpages.

HRCO Case Management

A core mandate of the HRCO is to address complaints or concerns where a person experiences negative treatment related to protected grounds identified in the Code. These are known as Code-based complaints because they are based on one or more of the 17 Code grounds in which an individual believes that conduct/behaviour has occurred which are contrary to Policy #240. The HRCO is also able to review matters that suggest a wider application such as a “poisoned work environment” or in which discrimination of a systemic nature is present.

A human rights complaint under Policy #240 is usually submitted by way of the confidential [HRCO Reporting Form](#) before it is reviewed and assessed by a Human Rights Officer. Individual complainants can be any member of the YRDSB community. Depending on the nature of the concern or complaint and what type of assistance or engagement is being sought, the HRCO case management process is categorized as follow:

1. **Complaint:** Matters requiring formal consultation and assessment to determine jurisdiction and whether or not the matter should be addressed under Policy #240.
2. **Advisory:** Matter requiring guidance on addressing a general human rights concern or question. The HRCO may provide informal consultation on advisory matters, or refer the matter to the appropriate department or unit within the Board.

A matter may begin as Advisory in nature but, due to facts and circumstances, may turn into a bona fide human rights complaint. Complaint matters are brought forward to the HRCO in one of the following two ways:

1. **First Instance:** Situations in which the HRCO is the first. The matter has not been addressed by any other unit at YRDSB.
2. **Referral:** Matters which have been first reviewed at another unit within YRDSB (e.g., Superintendent, Union, Human Resources) and, with consent of the complainant, is referred to the HRCO.

Consistent with principles of fairness and due process, the HRCO does not attend to anonymous complaints. All complaints are also categorized based on whether and/or how they connect to one or more of the 17 prohibited grounds under the Human Rights Code (i.e.,

Code grounds) and a determination is made as follows:

1. **Code (or Code-based):** Complaints of discrimination or harassment where the negative treatment is directly linked to one or more Code grounds.
2. **Non-Code:** Complaints of discrimination or harassment that do not relate to any Code ground and are deemed to be more appropriately addressed under another Board policy, or through the grievance process.
3. **Other:** Complaints that has already been concluded under another process; or a parallel complaint process is underway through another Board policy or through a process external to YRDSB (e.g., lawsuit or formal application to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario).

During the 2019-2020 reporting period, HRCO received a total of 213 intake files from September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020. Overall, this was a 24% decrease compared to the previous reporting year. A breakdown of the total HRCO files by month and category is presented in the following table with a comparison to the previous reporting period.

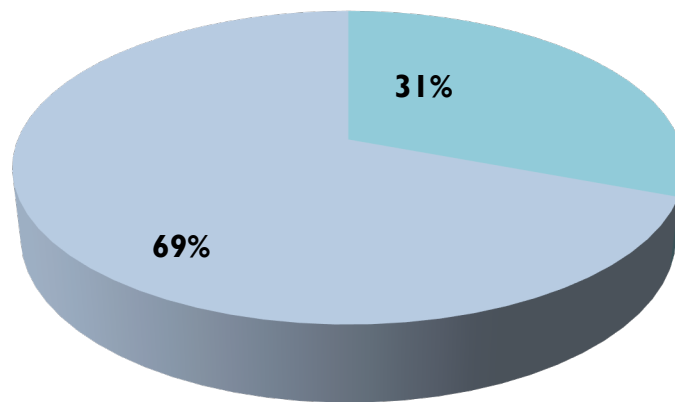
Month	Complaint	First Instance	Referral	Advisory	Code	Non-Code	Other	Informal Process	Formal Process
Sept	5	3	2	10	8	7	1	4	0
Oct	2	2	0	8	6	4	0	2	0
Nov	5	5	0	7	4	8	1	3	1
Dec	4	3	1	5	3	6	0	4	0
Jan	6	6	0	15	14	7	0	6	0
Feb	3	2	1	8	4	7	0	3	0
Mar	3	3	0	2	4	1	0	3	0
Apr	1	1	0	5	4	2	0	1	0
May	1	1	0	2	1	2	0	1	0
June	2	2	0	10	4	8	0	2	0
July	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
Aug	4	3	1	7	6	5	1	3	0
2019-20 Totals	36	31	5	81	58	59	3	32	1
2018-19 Totals*	82	69	13	131	57	25	6	72	4
Change	-56.1%	-55.1%	61.5%	-38.2%	1.8%	8.5%	50%	-55.6%	-75%

*The full case management data chart from the previous 2018-2019 reporting year is available in the [HRCO Annual Report 2018-2019](#).

The majority of the 2019-2020 intake files were Advisory in nature (81 total). By comparison, 36 of the 117 intake forms (31%) were determined to be Complaint matters requiring assessment through the HRCO complaints resolution process. The proportion of HRCO Complaint versus Advisory files continued a trend toward Advisory matters in 2019-2020 (69%), up from both the previous 2018-2019 (62%) and 2017-2018 (60%) reporting periods.

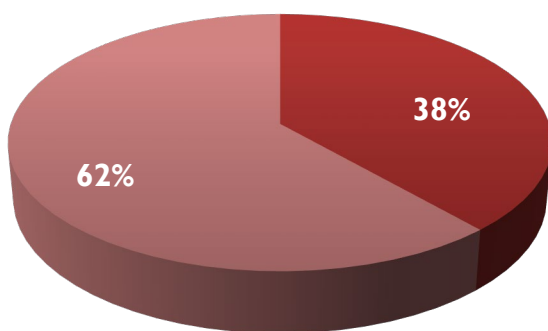
2.1 Complaint vs. Advisory Files

HRCO Complaint vs. Advisory Files (Sept. 2019 - Aug. 2020)



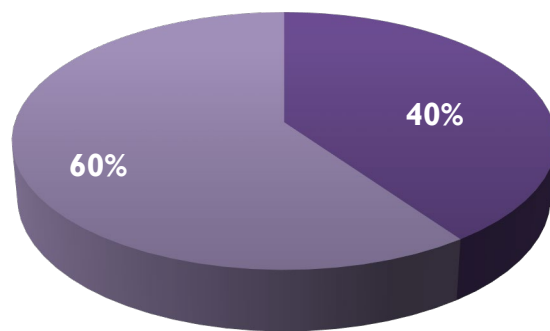
■ Complaint Files ■ Advisory

HRCO Complaint vs. Advisory Files (Sept. 2018 - Aug. 2019)



■ Complaint Files ■ Advisory

HRCO Complaint vs. Advisory Files (Sept. 2017 - Aug. 2018)



■ Complaint Files ■ Advisory

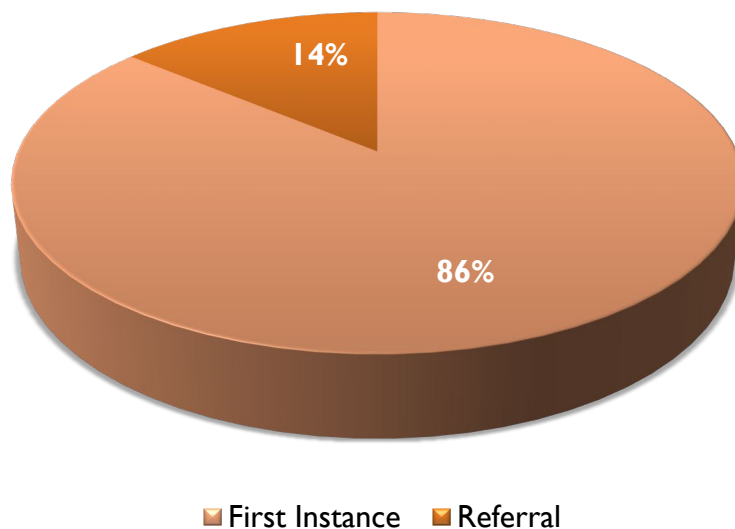
The increased proportion of Advisory to Complaint files (69:31) suggests that the HRCO's work continues orientating towards providing more advisory services for other units within the Board in addressing human rights matters. As with previous reporting years, the increasing proportion of Advisory files may also speak to the ongoing engagement with managers and other Board staff about the remit and jurisdiction accorded to the HRCO under Policy #240. This finding may also be supported by the fact that almost half of HRCO intake files were deemed non-Code and outside its jurisdiction.

From the 36 Complaint files, 31 files came to the HRCO at First Instance (86%) while 5 files come through Referral (14%). These percentages are also consistent with the previous reporting year where 84% of Complaint files received at First Instance and 16% came to the HRCO by way of Referral from another Board unit.

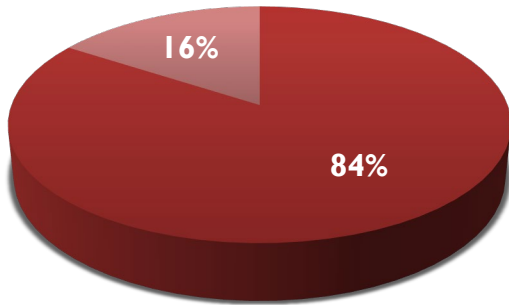
Advisory Files

Matters requiring formal consultation and assessment to determine jurisdiction and whether or not the matter should be addressed under Policy #240.

HRCO File Type (Sept 2019 -Aug. 2020)

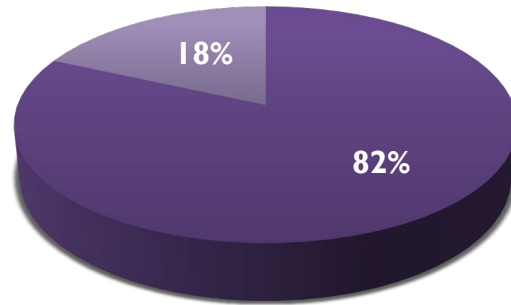


**Complaint File Type
(Sept. 2018 - Aug. 2019)**



■ First Instance ■ Referral

**Complaint File Type
(Sept. 2017 - Aug. 2018)**

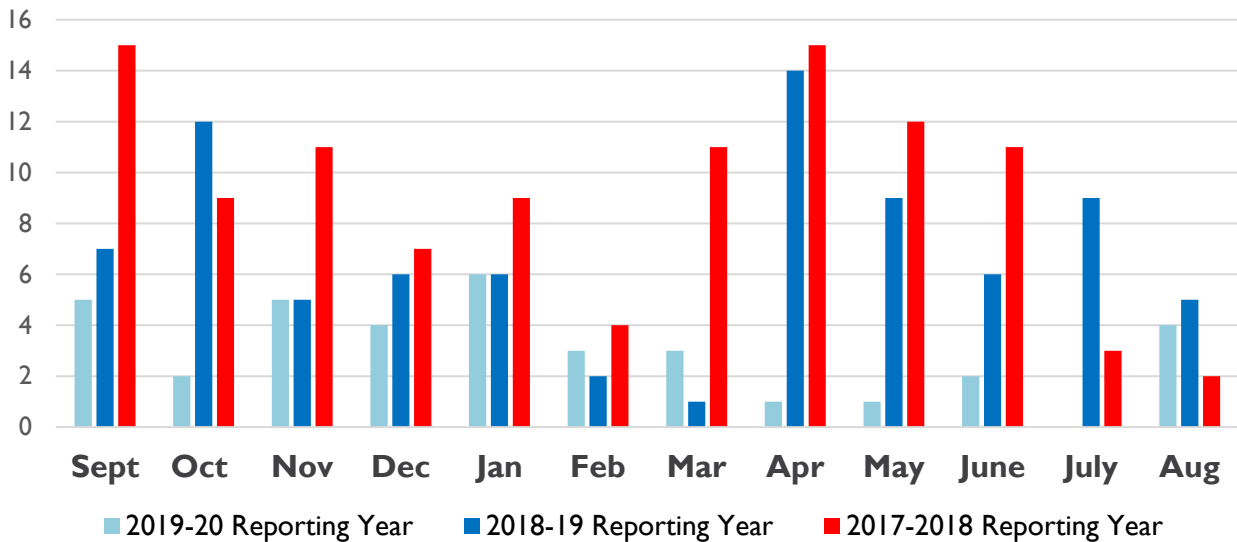


■ First Instance ■ Referral

Once again, during the 2019-2020 reporting year, the 80:20 of intake files received at first instance versus through referral is similar to the past two reporting years. This may suggest an ongoing reluctance, unwillingness and/or lack of awareness within the system to refer human rights matters to the HRCO. It may also suggest that schools and other administrative areas prefer to address Code-based concerns at the immediate point of incident and/or occurrence and are able to resolve issues without referral to the HRCO.

Regarding monthly intake of complaint files, the HRCO received an average of 3.0 complaint files per month during the 2019-2020 reporting year.

HRCO Complaint Files by Month



By comparison, an average of 6.8 complaint files per month were received during the previous 2018-2019 reporting year. During the first 2017-2018 reporting year, 9.1 complaint files were

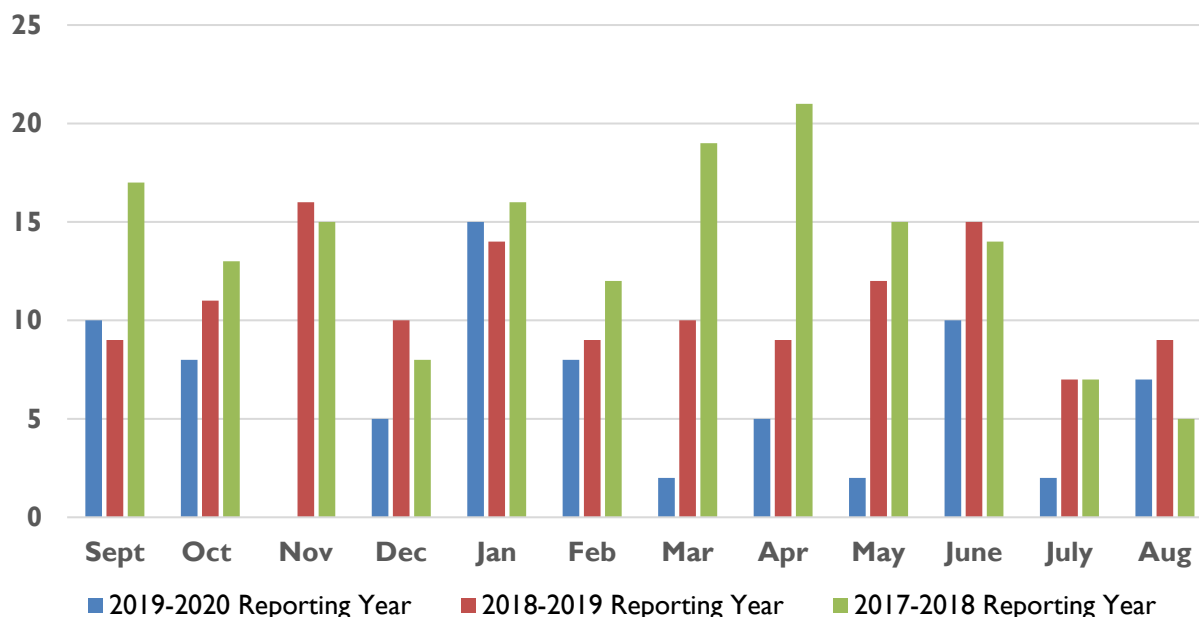
received per month. The continued reduction in compliant files over the past three years has been accompanied with a greater proportion of matters being deemed advisory in nature. In addition, the notable reduction in complaint files received after March 2020 is likely directly a direct result of COVID-19 provincewide shutdown with staff and students working and learning remotely. As a result, only 3 complaint files were received from April 2020 to the end of the school year in June 2020.

The highest number of HRCO files received during were in months of September 2019 and January 2020 and September 2019 with five and six intake files received, respectively. Both were prior to the COVID-19 shutdown. In the months following the COVID-19 shutdown, a total of four intake were received. This was likely attributable the fallout from COVID-19 and closure of Board buildings and schools.

Advisory Files

Matter requiring guidance on addressing a general human rights concern or question. The HRCO may provide informal consultation on advisory matters, or refer the matter to the appropriate department or unit within the Board.

HRCO Advisory Files by Month

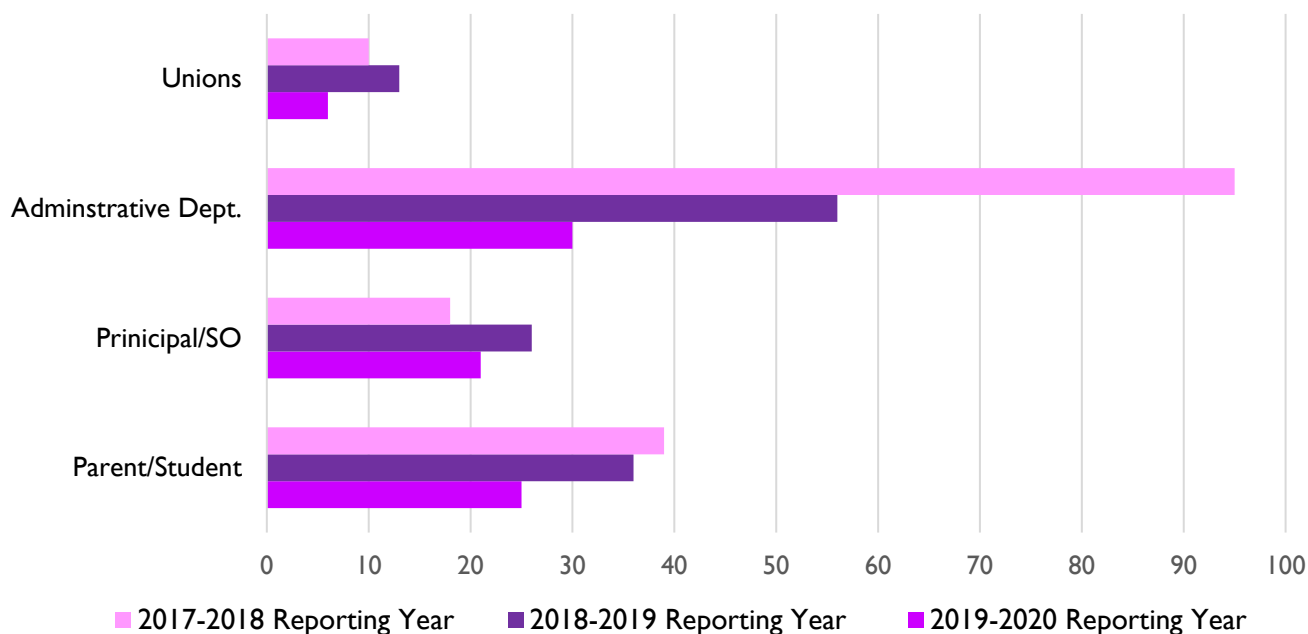


An average of 6.8 HRCO Advisory files were received per month during the 2019-2020 reporting year. This represents a marked decrease from the average of 10.9 HRCO Advisory files were received per month during the 2018-2019 reporting year, which was also a 24%

decrease from the average of 13.5 during the 2017-18 reporting year. The ongoing decrease in advisory files is consistent with similar decrease noted in complaint files received, which again may likely be the result of the COVID-19 shutdown.

During the reporting year, the number of Advisory files were highest in the months of September (10), January (15) and June (10). The increase in Advisory files in June 2020 was due to a number of matters brought forward by external community members related to the wearing of masks and whether this directive was in contravention of human rights. By contrast, the lowest number of Advisory files were received in the month of March (2), May (2) and July (2).

HRCO Advisory Files by YRDSB Constituency

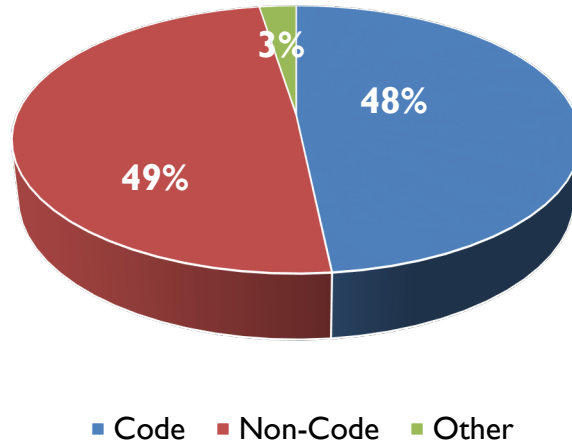


In terms of the source of Advisory inquiries, 30 of the 81 Advisory files came from Board Administrative department, which constituted 37% of the total Advisory files receive during the 2019-2020 reporting year. This was slightly lower than the 43% of Advisory files received during the 2018-2019 reporting year that derived from Board administrative department.

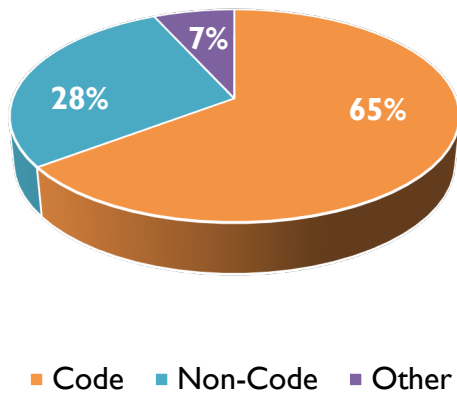
During the reporting period, there were 25 Advisory files from parents/students, which is a 26% reduction from the 2018-2019 reporting year. Principal/Superintendents accounted for 21 Advisory files, which is a 19% reduction from the previous reporting year. As with previous reporting periods, the lowest number of Advisory files came from Unions (6 total).

2.2 Code vs. Non-Code

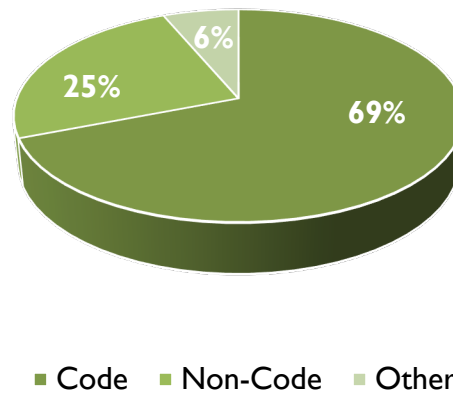
**Code vs. Non-Code Files
(Sept. 2019 - Aug. 2020)**



**Code vs. Non-Code Files
(Sept. 2018 - Aug. 2019)**



**Code vs. Non-Code Files
(Sept. 2017- Aug. 2018)**



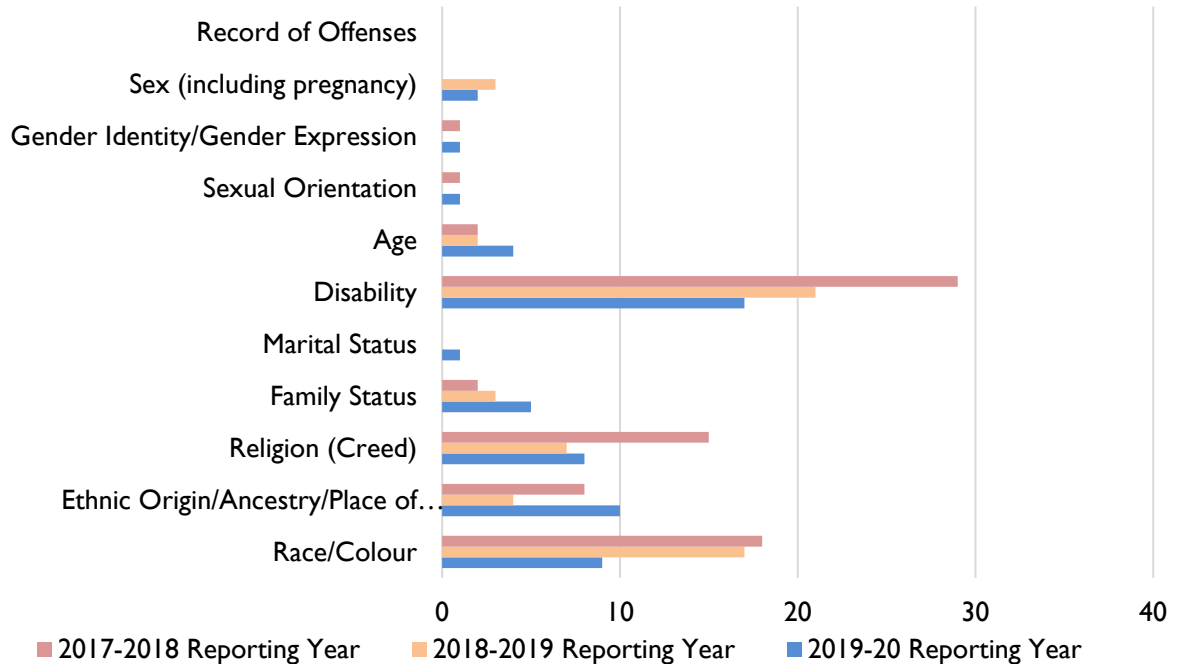
During the reporting period, there was an almost equal amount of Code (48%) and non-Code (49%) files. This is a marked change from previous reporting years where the majority of files received were Code-based (65% and 69% in the previous two reporting periods, respectively). A small percentage (3%) of files were categorized as “other”. Ongoing learning will assist and support the work in understanding the distinction between Code and non-Code matters, as well as the scope of the HRCO’s jurisdiction solely on Code-related harassment and discrimination matters.

Code (or Code-based)

Complaints of discrimination or harassment where the negative treatment is directly linked to one or more Code grounds.

Similar Code grounds are grouped together for the reporting purposes in the table below.

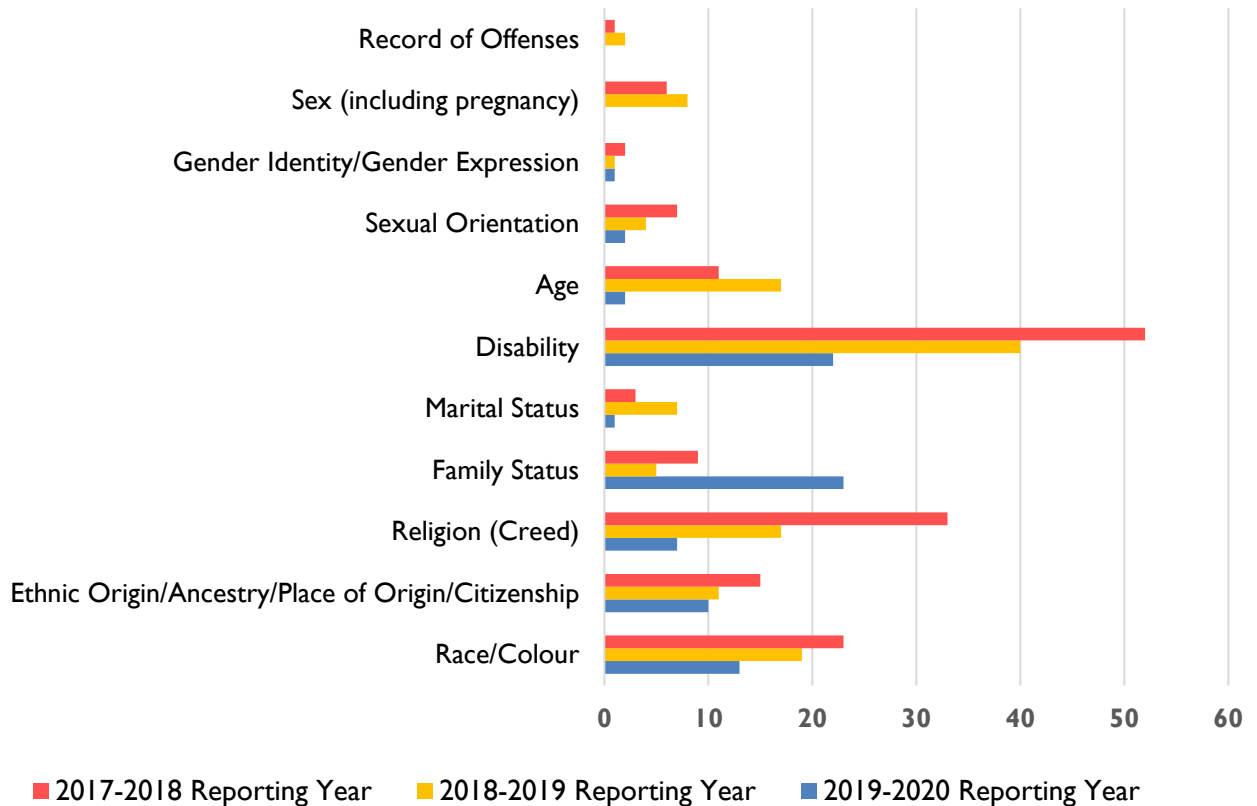
HRCO Code-Based Complaint Files by Code Ground



From the 58 HRCO files that were determined to be Code-based, the highest number (17) of files related again to the Code ground of Disability. However, the 29% of all Code-based Complaint files related to Disability was an 8% decrease from the previous 2018-2019 reporting year. Files pertaining to Religion or Creed increased slightly to 14% compared to 12% in 2018-2019. A more notable increase was the percentage of complaints pertaining to Ethnic Origin/Ancestry/Place of Origin/Citizenship - 17% compared to 10% in the 2018-2019 reporting year.

In terms of Advisory files, the most notable difference was Family Status being the highest number of files received at 39%, replacing Disability which represented 38%. This has been the direct result of more queries on Family Status and accommodation requests related to COVID-19.

HRCO Code-Based Advisory Files by Code Ground



2.3 Analysis and Interpretation

During the 2019-2020 reporting period, the HRCO received 36 total Complaint files, a 56% decrease from the 82 received during the previous 2018-2019 reporting year. This decrease is a continual trend from the 109 Complaint files received during the first 2017-2018 reporting year of the HRCO. The continued decline in Complaint files received may likely be due to greater confidence in addressing and resolving human rights concerns at the point of occurrence and thus fewer matters are elevated to the HRCO. Further evidence-based review and analysis must be considered if the decline continues into the next reporting period. This may involve conducting an extensive survey to determine level of understanding about the role of the HRCO that exists by the various constituencies within the Board community.

The 2018-2019 case management data indicates that the overall proportions between Complaint and Advisory, First Instance and Referral, as well as Code and Non-Code remained consistent in comparison to the previous reporting period. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the filing of complaint matters during the 2019-2020 reporting year.

The current HRCO trajectory continues towards human rights education, learning and training

with a focus on preventative approaches to conflict resolution. The next section of this report will outline the wealth of human rights education and engagement carried out over the course of the 2019-2020 reporting year.

Human Rights Education and Engagement

During the reporting period of September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020, the HRCO conducted human rights education, engagement and/or training to the following departments or units of YRDSB:

3.1 Executive Council

- October 30, 2019: Annual Accessibility Report 2018-2019 presentation to EC
- February 12, 2020: HRCO Annual Report 2018-2019 presentation to EC
- August 12, 2020: Review of Peel DSB Analysis
- August 12, 2020: Human Rights Training Program for Senior Leaders

3.2 Senior Leadership Team

Investigations Toolkit

- September 16, 2019 Introducing a Guide to Internal Investigations: A Toolkit for YRDSB Senior Leaders (Part 1)
- December 9, 2019: Investigations Toolkit Scenario Workshop (Part 2)
- January 13, 2020: Conducting Investigations: Interview Styles (Part 3)

Introduction to Human Rights Module

- October 28, 2019: Human Rights training module presented to Sr. Leadership Team

3.3 Trustees

- January 14, 2020: Bias-Free Interviewing Training (Student Trustees)

3.4 Principals, Vice Principals, Managers

- January 10, 2020: Unconscious Bias / Bias-Free Training for VP Selection Committee

3.5 YRDSB Committees (SEAC, EIAC PEAC, CMPS, JAM etc.)

- November 8, 2019: Accessibility Awareness presentation to C3

- November 19, 2019: Annual Accessibility Report 2018-2019 presentation to Board Standing Committee
- December 6, 2019: Accessibility Awareness presentation to e-PROF
- December 12, 2019: Revised Accessibility Policy presentation to joint EIAC/PEAC
- February 4, 2020: Accessibility Policy #407 Second Review approval by Policy and By-Law Committee
- March 5, 2020: Revised Accessibility Policy and Plain Language Guide presentation to SEAC

3.6 Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee

- July 17, 2019: Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee (inaugural)
- October 8, 2019: Planning for the development of the Strategy
- October 29, 2019: Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee meeting
- October 30, 2019: Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee meeting
- November 7, 2019: Anti-Black Racism Strategy Development and Monitoring (Coordinator Group)
- January 20, 2020: Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee meeting
- January 29, 2020: Anti-Black Racism Strategy Development and Monitoring (Coordinator Group)
- March 4, 2020: Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee meeting

3.7 External Engagements

- October 3, 2019: York / Toronto / Peel School Boards Human Rights Group
- November 26, 2019: Advancing Human Rights Education presentation to York University
- February 4-5,, 2020: Blackness in Canada Policy Networking Conference
- March 30, 2020: Human Rights & Equity Leaders Meeting

Accessibility Portfolio

The Board's commitment to accessibility and compliance with the AODA are overseen by the Human Rights Commissioner's Office (HRCO). A position dedicated to accessibility (Accessibility Officer) resides within the HRCO and is responsible for managing the accessibility portfolio for YRDSB. Accessibility at YRDSB is guided through the shared responsibilities and collaborative commitments of the [AODA Advisory Committee](#), which is co-chaired by the Accessibility Officer and the Human Rights Commissioner. For additional information about the mandate and achievements of the various subcommittee and working group for the 2019-2020 reporting period, refer to the [Annual Accessibility Report 2019-2020](#).

YRDSB is further committed to providing accessible learning and working environments that support the four core principles of the AODA: integration, equality of opportunity, dignity and independence. These core principles are aligned with the four priorities of the Board of Trustees' Multi-Year Strategic Plan and the Director's Action Plan. Four new multi-year accessibility goals were developed to correspond to the four Board priorities.

4.1 Multi-Year Accessibility Goals



Provide Accessible Customer Service

Provide customer service excellence by promoting accessibility best practices that give meaningful access to all students and staff, including those with disabilities.



Understand Accessibility as a Process

Provide accessibility training, education and outreach to build awareness, knowledge and attitudes to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.



Engage the AODA Advisory Committee

Engage the AODA Advisory Committee that operates through shared responsibilities and inter-departmental collaboration, while also engaging people with disabilities.



Publish an Annual Accessibility Report

Complete and publish an Annual Accessibility Report to demonstrate accountability for the Board's progress in implementing the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

4.2 Accessibility Policy

[Board Policy #407, Accessibility](#) and its related procedures were renewed and adopted as a working document for six school months following approval by Board Standing Committee in July 2019. During this period, the policy was circulated across the system for comments and feedback.

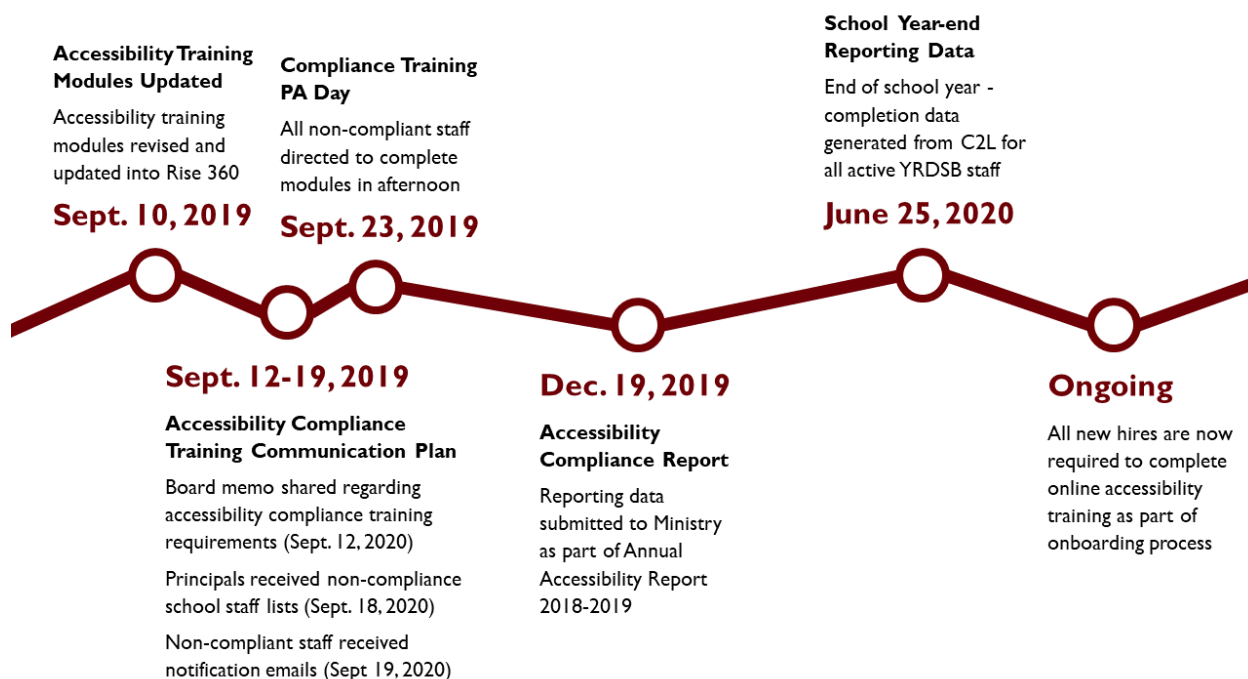
Accessibility Policy #407 was approved as the official policy of the Board in March 2019, and presented to various departments and units across the system, including to:

- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) on March 5, 2020; and
- Joint Equity and Inclusivity Advisory Committee (EIAC) and Parent, Family and Community Engagement Advisory Committees (PEAC) on December 12, 2019.

Additionally, a [Plain Language Guide to Policy #407, Accessibility](#) was finalized as a more reader- and user-friendly version of the full policy document. The plain language guide meets the AODA requirement for organizations “to prepare one or more documents describing its accessibility policy” (O. Reg. 191/11, s. 3).

4.3 Accessibility Compliance Training

The Board’s three accessibility training modules were revised and introduced for the 2019-2020 school year with the Board’s new Rise 360 e-learning and training suite. The timeline below outlines the process.



Details about each of the accessibility training modules is outlined on the next page.

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

The Customer Service Standards established under the AODA require all employees to complete training in order to comply with AODA legislation. This online training module will outline the provision of accessible and quality customer service, including best practices for how to communicate and interact with people with various types of disabilities, as well as specific Board policies and procedures related to the AODA Customer Service Standards.

Approximate time to complete: 20 minutes

Total staff completions (as of June 25, 2020): 15,468

Accessibility and Human Rights: Working Together

The AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code (the Code) are key provincial laws that work together towards promoting greater accessibility and equity for people with disabilities. The module outlines how the accessibility standards under the AODA build on the rights and responsibilities under the Code, and how they affect the learning and working environments of YRDSB. The module consists of a YRDSB Introduction video followed by a 5-part video series developed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC).

Approximate time to complete: 25 minutes

Total staff completions (as of June 25, 2020): 15,242

Accessibility Awareness for Educators

Under the AODA, school boards are required to provide “educators with accessibility training related to accessible program or course delivery and instruction.” (Ontario Regulation 191/11, s. 16). In order to support this work, the Board has developed an online training module specifically designed for YRDSB educators, which includes all Board staff who are involved in program or course design, delivery and instruction (i.e., administrators, teachers, DECEs, EAs, and all other classroom-based support staff).

Approximate time to complete: 15 minutes

Total educator completions (as of June 25, 2020): 12,511