



AODA Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 25, 2021
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
Zoom

In Attendance (20 members)

Hirosh	Teresa Estriga	Gilbert Luk	Scott West
Abeywardane	Amanda Halley	Stephanie Luong	Sue Hastings
Anthony Anirud	Shelly Khushal	Ralph Masciello	Paul Woods
Pam Beetlestone	Paul Lee	Derek Petri	Brandon Wu
Dale Brusselers	Gail Long	John Sellers	Nadia Zamzul
Cynthia Cordova			

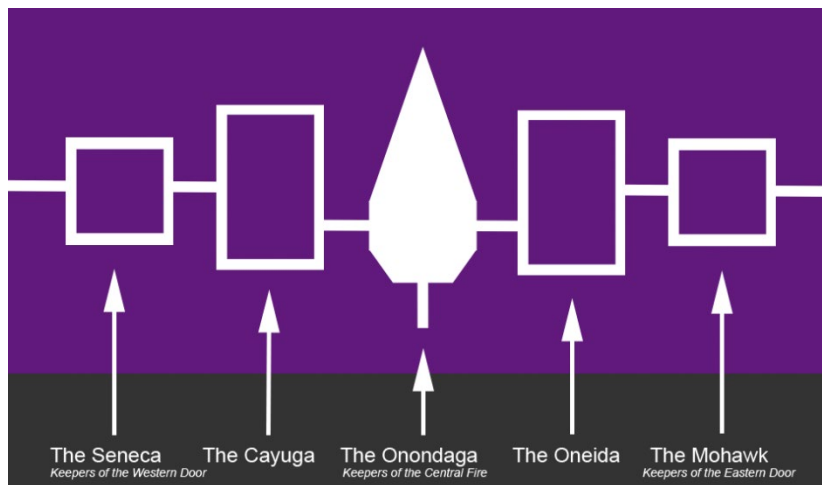
Regrets

Dawn Forsyth; Steve Hopkins; Susie Nunes; Steve Rutledge; Patrick Smith; Selena Tandon; Shane Taylor; George Vellathottam; Lynn Ziraldo.

1. Land Acknowledgement and Learning

Committee members asked to listen to part 3 of [As Long As The River Flows: Treaty Talks podcast](#) prior to meeting. A 5-minute clip (27:43-32:37) from the podcast was played regarding the Hiawatha (wampum) belt.

Committee engaged in collaborative learning session to explore and share learning about five original nations of the Haudenosaunee: Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida and Mohawk nations.



Action Item

Committee members encouraged to explore other nations of today's [Six Nations of the Grand River](#).

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

Minutes reviewed and motion carried to approve September 30, 2021 minutes. Minutes have been posted online and available to the public under [AODA Advisory Committee web page](#).

Action Item

Final request to review Terms of Reference 2021-2022 and provide feedback.

3. Professional Learning: The Cost of Accessibility Renovations and Retrofits

Derek and Sue led professional learning through “quiz style” Zoom poll questions and debrief about the cost of common accessibility work required to make school built environments more accessible.

- **Question 1:** Approximately how much does it cost to replace an elementary school's fire alarm system with the horn/strobe visual fire alarm systems? **Answer: \$150,000**
- **Question 2:** What is the approximate cost to install an automatic door opener? **Answer: \$6,000**
- **Question 3:** How much does it cost (on the low end) to upgrade elevators in a school? **Answer: \$70,000**
- **Question 4:** What is approximate cost to adding braille signage throughout a school? **Answer: \$10,000**

4. Annual Accessibility Report 2020-2021 Review + Subcommittee / Working Group Updates

Annual Accessibility Report 2020-2021 was presented to and approved by Board of Trustees at November 23, 2021 Board Standing Committee meeting. Report was presented and reviewed collectively by representative(s) from

each subcommittee, followed by their respective status updates and new developments on accessibility work for the current school year.

[Annual Accessibility Report 2020-2021](#) is now posted online and available to the public.

Barrier Buster and Built Environment Subcommittee Update

- **Braille Signage Project** – Wilshire PS and Maple HS are almost complete; and priority schools for 2023 have been identified by Student Services (refer to annual report for complete list). Plant Services waiting for more information about other schools (e.g., Beckett Farms PS), and continue to respond to needs as they arise.

Action Item

Plant Services to follow-up regarding whether portable were/are included as part of Braille signage installation process.

- **All Access Washroom Project** – Plant Services now working on Category 4 schools that require major renovations to install all access washrooms. All access washrooms have been installed across all Category 1 to 3 schools, which have one all access (or all gender) washroom per floor. How all access washrooms are accessed (unlocked or by card reader) differs by school and how principal identifies issues/needs.

Curriculum Working Group Update

- **Considerations for Development Online Content Guidelines** – resource outlining considerations for developing online content was created by Learning Design and Development (LD&D) and shared internally with educators to support EVS and SVS during the previous school year. Guideline also include equity and inclusivity, as well as copyright considerations.

Human Resources Subcommittee Update

- **Disability Management (DM) files** – notable increase in number of

staff DM files compared to last school year, with DM team approving 1,282 employees with virtual work placement accommodations. New assistive devices have been put through as majority of DM files have been pandemic-related.

- **Note:** DM accommodates employees by reviewing cognitive limitations, as outlined in functional ability report completed by treating specialist. DM not entitled to a diagnosis, just functional and/or cognitive limitations, which are used to accommodate employee.
- **Grief training** - DM team to engage in grief training with community organization; valuable learning because DM team will all interact with employees who have gone through some form of grief.
- **OSSTF update** - ongoing pandemic-related challenge for members has been request for virtual accommodations and access to sick leave; OSSTF trying to provide support where possible. Accommodation requests for use of N95 masks has been another key issues for members.

Student Services Subcommittee Update

- **New clear masks** - trialed by Education Audiologist and overall better than previous clear masks, but still fog and create condensation within the mask, so does require mask breaks and cleaning; some batches have come in, and are being prioritized for distribution.
- **DeafBlind learners** - some medically fragile learners who are DeafBlind have returned to their multiple exceptionality classes for first time in 18 months. Other DeafBlind students are still learning through a modified hybrid model; two DeafBlind Interveners go into homes weekly to provide modelling and support on tactile materials required for programming.
- **BLV learners** - enrollment is decreasing as BLV students are leaving for provincial schools (W Ross. MacDonald School for the Blind) due to pandemic and issues with accessing remote learning in a meaningful

way. However, W Ross consultants have been approved to provide in-school assessments for BLV students on waitlists.

- **DHH learners** - new program at Alexander Mackenzie High School supporting communication/access needs for new grade 9 DHH students. Four profoundly deaf learners are engaged in more credit bearing courses and interval assessments with consultants from EC Drury School for the Deaf. Consultants also providing direct instruction in ASL acquisition with profoundly deaf learners through weekly virtual sessions. Board DHH teachers are not qualified in ASL instruction and Sign language Interpreters only provide ASL interpretation.
- **SEA claims** - group purchase of 700 Boardmaker licences have been distributed and well-received across the Board. Refresh of hardware for SEA claims, including laptops still outstanding for refresh.
- **Accessible slide decks** - Student Services participating in detailed process for vetting slide decks to ensure AODA compliance; working with schools on importance of accessibility for online hybrid teaching.

Digital Media, Learning and Website Management Working Group Update

- **Accessible document training** - shifted to virtual training last school year through Google Meet; and will now be hosted via Microsoft Teams this year with monthly training sessions offered to students as well.
- **Accessibility compliance training** - approximately 22,400 active YRDSB staff in the system, which is basis for running completion numbers for each module:
 - 71% completion rate for Accessibility Standards for Customer Service module,
 - 75% completion rate for Accessibility and Human Rights: Working Together module, and
 - 57% completion rate for Accessibility Awareness for Educators module (notably lower because only educators are required to complete).

- Accessibility Awareness for Educators was updated this past summer to reflect current accessibility best practices and resources available to educators; and other two accessibility training modules are due for update in 2022.
- **Beyond compliance** - no longer focused on pushing towards 100% completion rate given that legislated training are only one-time requirements. Rather, focus has shifted towards accessibility acceptance, understanding and buy-in through more individualized learning sessions run for and by different departments (e.g., Student Services, LD&D, EAS, etc) specific to their area of work. Accessibility training is now a balancing act between compliance training and “beyond compliance” learning.
- **New website launch** - new YRDSB website is not “fully accessible” but does exceed accessibility of most other websites (e.g., keyboard navigation is above and beyond AODA). All content has been migrated over from old website and reviewed for AODA compliance and plain text language. Accessible content considerations are now included within content contributor training, and certain accessibility features (font type, size, spacing, etc.) are locked in through scripting to automatically meet AODA standards.
- **PDF challenges** - PDF documents need to be meta-tagged properly to be searchable on websites. Corporate Communications is actively working with content contributors to convert PDF into HTML web page content, which is more searchable and accessible on the website.

Action Item

Per suggestion, communication that goes through letterhead/emails to parents and students should have more plain language, including more videos and interactive engagement than just traditional newsletter communications.

5. Accessibility News Items and Member Q & A

A. K-12 Education Standards Development Committee Update

- Review of public feedback shows a very encouraging and strong consensus in support of the Initial Report.
- Responses highlighted need to embody human rights-based approach to advancing accessibility, inclusion and full participation.
- Feedback also highlighted intersectionality and interdependence of identified barriers to advancing anti-oppressive, anti-ableist and anti-discriminatory attitudes and practices.
- Next step is to approve final submission in December, which is then submitted to the Ministry for review and recommendation to Cabinet for a new regulation.

B. Unconscious Bias Online Design Team

- In process of developing baseline unconscious bias online training through inter-departmental collaboration.
- Upcoming working sessions to discuss methodologies and approaches to designing online learning to maximize engagement

C. Plain Language Guide to Board Policies

- Accessibility and Human Rights policies have accompanying plain language guides.
- Hope that they will serve as a standard for all other areas of the Board to foster more accessible Board policies.

6. Upcoming Meeting Dates and Adjournment

- Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 24, 2022.

Meeting adjourned.