AODA Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

In Attendance (20 members, 1 guest)

Pam Beetlestone	Steve Hopkins	Gilbert Luk	Scott West
Dale Brusselers	Valerie Kitazaki (guest speaker)	Stephanie Luong	Paul Woods
Cynthia Cordova		Derek Petri	Brandon Wu
Teresa Estriga	Shelly Khushal	John Sellers	Lynn Ziraldo
Amanda Halley	Paul Lee	Gabriella Simo	
Osaka Harrison	Gail Long	Shane Taylor	

Regrets

Hirosh Abeywardane; Dawn Forsyth; Ralph Masciello; Susie Nunes; Steve Rutledge; Patrick Smith; Selena Tandon; George Vellathottam.

1. Welcome and HRCO update

Committee members notified that HRCO is currently short-staffed due to departure of Human Rights Commissioner as well as Human Rights Officer (Investigations) vacancy. Recruitment of new Human Rights Officer in process.

2. Land Acknowledgement and Reflection

Brief discussion based on two guiding questions: "what is a Land Acknowledgment?" and "what is the significant of why we say it?" Concept of "Two" Land Acknowledgements presented: 1) as recitation and 2) as a reflection.

Land Acknowledgement Checklist shared with committee, who were asked to self-reflect on a 1-2 checklist items.

Action Item

Committee members asked to keep Land Acknowledgement Checklist in mind beyond meeting and in other spaces.

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3. Approval of Previous Minutes

Minutes reviewed and motion carried to approve February 24, 2022 minutes. Approved by CR; seconded by DB. Minutes have been posted online and made available to the public under [AODA Advisory Committee web page](#).

4. Professional Learning: Exploring the Proposed K-12 Education Standards - 2022 Final Recommendations Report

Brief update and overview of the [2022 Final Recommendation Report](#) (published March 1, 2022). Public consultations and feedback were substantial, all positive, and resulted in changes and additions to final recommendations. K-12 SDC Chair has since met with both Minister for Seniors and Accessibility and Minister of Education to present and discuss the final report. Government is currently reviewing the final report.

Professional learning to engage committee in a preliminary review of the final report and recommendations, beginning with a focus on TVI-related recommendations 10-14.

4a. Guest Speaker: Valerie Kitazaki

Coordinator of Blind and Low Vision (BLV) Services introduced to discuss experience and training as a Mobility and Orientation (O&M) Specialist, working in BLV services and how barriers identified in recommendations 10 to 14 relate to YRDSB working and learning environments.

BLV Services has a team of highly specialized staff including Teachers of

Students with Visual Impairments (TSVIs), Braillists, and Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialists. Agreed on the need to increase qualifications and training for these positions due to specialization requirements. Noted some concerns with current qualifications (e.g., AQ courses), but recognized lack of training programs in Ontario. Out-of-province/country programs are cost-prohibitive, but fully funding such programs can have strengths and weaknesses.

Comment about recommendation 11 that requiring a qualified TSVI "to successfully complete a one-year graduate program" can pose as a barrier to entry from union/hiring perspective.

Action Item

K-12 SDC Chair recommended reaching out directly to Assistant Deputy Minister to provide YRDSB-specific feedback about what is working well and/or needs improvement regarding these recommendations.

Ministry funding opportunity: [Applications for Supporting Students with Disabilities](#) are currently being accepted until **June 3, 2022** for school boards to implement initiatives to prevent and remove accessibility barriers experienced by students with disabilities in the 2022-2023 school year.

4b. Exploring the K-12 Education Standards Committee - 2022 Final Recommendations Report

Committee members engaged in breakout room discussions about select recommendations from Final Report, using guiding questions as needed:

- What supports or resources would be needed to implement a given recommendation?
- What are the current barriers to implementing a given recommendation?
- Whose responsibility is it to implement a given recommendation?

Each group recorded comments or questions about recommendations, and were asked to determine a "feasibility rating" for how feasible it would be, at this time, to implement each recommendation within the given timeline.

Action Item

Accessibility Officer to follow-up with subcommittees and working groups, as needed, to continue discussing proactive implementation of relevant recommendations.

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5. Subcommittee / Working Group Updates

Student Services Subcommittee Update

- **K-12 final recommendations report** - appreciation for K-12 standards exploration on TSVI and O&M qualifications review and considerations; Student Services is actively reviewing the final recommendations.

- [**Right to Read inquiry report**](#) - being reviewed by Student Services in collaboration with Curriculum and Instructional Services to implement recommendations; report lacks how early vision and hearing loss impacts language and reading for BLV and DHH students

- **Professional learning** - Surrey Place have offered to assist with professional learning in the areas of literacy and language for students with Binocular Dysfunction and Cortical Vision Impairments; developing workshops for Special Education Resource Teachers and Consultants as well as for parents/guardians

6. Accessibility News Items

A. Annual Accessibility Report 2021-2022

Annual Accessibility Report work, including contributions and input requests to subcommittee and working group, to begin in late summer/early fall 2022. Shared review of annual report to take place at September 2022 meeting.

B. Accessible transitions final recommendations 2022

Two related final recommendations reports were published on April 22, 2022:

- [Accessible transitions for students with disabilities in K-12](#): to the workforce, the community and postsecondary education
- [Proposed postsecondary education standards](#)

C. York Region Inclusive Language Guide

York Region launched [Inclusive Language Guide](#) on April 20, 2022. Developed as one of many actions resulting from the [Inclusion Charter for York Region](#) in consultation with the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group (MDIG).

Action Item

Accessibility Officer to share feedback about YRDSB Inclusive Language Guide at upcoming MDIG meeting.

Committee members asked to complete short [feedback form](#) to support planning and delivery of future meetings.

7. Upcoming Meeting Dates and Adjournment

Tentative 2022 meetings for next school year:
- September 29, 2022
- November 24, 2022

Thank you for ongoing commitment of committee members to advancing accessibility at YRDSB. Always feel free to reach out with any accessibility questions or concerns.

Meeting adjourned.