



York Region District School Board

ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY REPORT AND MULTI-YEAR PLAN

October 2013

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AIM, OBJECTIVES & COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING

Aim

The York Region District School Board (YRDSB) has developed this Annual Accessibility Report and Multi-Year Plan in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standard, Ontario Regulation 191/11 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). It incorporates the intentions of the Board to meet its obligations under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). This Plan describes the measures that the Board has taken in the past school year and measures that will be taken over the period of 2013-2017 to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities who work, learn and participate in the school Board's community. This plan will be guided by the Board's Accessibility Policy.

Objectives

This report:

1. Reviews earlier efforts to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Provides an annual status report on the Board's implementation of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan as required under the AODA, 2005.
3. Lists the policies, programs, practices, and services that the Board will review in the coming years to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Describes how the Board will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

Commitment to Accessibility Planning

The York Region District School is committed to:

1. Establishing an Accessibility Working Committee with representation from all stakeholder groups.
2. Consulting with people with disabilities in the development and review of its annual accessibility plans.
3. Ensuring that Board policies and procedures are consistent with the principles of accessibility.
4. Improving access to facilities, programs, policies, practices and services for students, staff parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community.

The Director of Education has authorized the Accessibility Working Committee, under the leadership of the Superintendent of Equity and Engagement, to prepare, review and update the Annual Accessibility Report and Multi-Year Plan that will enable the York Region District School Board to meet these commitments.

The Annual Accessibility Report and Multi-Year Plan will be presented to the Coordinating Council of Superintendents and subsequently to the Board of Trustees each fall. The annual report is posted on the York Region District School Board website (www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca) along with any additional material that will be useful in the identification, removal and/or prevention of barriers to people with disabilities. The posting of the Annual Accessibility Report and Multi-Year Plan is to be communicated to all York Region District School Board locations.

Overview of the York Region District School Board

Mission

We unite in our purpose to inspire and prepare learners for life in our changing world community.

Vision

We are the faces of public education. We understand our gifts and challenges. We are motivated by our dreams and act towards their fulfillment. We respect and celebrate our differences. We invite and value the spirit of community, creativity, and personal growth. We support each other. We have joy in who we are and who we are becoming.

Values

We recognize and celebrate excellence, and the heart-felt efforts and contributions of our community.

We strive for equity, inclusiveness, and diversity in all our programs, practices, facilities, and people.

We value dedication and commitment.

We value and will respond in an appropriate manner to the voices, ideas, and understanding of all our community members.

We believe it is the right and responsibility of everyone to ensure a safe nurturing community.

We embrace the spirit of innovation that acts to realize opportunities to transform our vision into reality.

We are all responsible for our words and actions.



Message from the Director of Education

The York Region District School Board is committed to providing welcoming, inclusive and accessible learning and working environments for staff and students. We believe the well-being of students, staff and visitors can be achieved by creating a culture of caring and learning that emphasizes inviting physical environments and safe and supportive schools and workplaces.

The Annual Accessibility Report and Multi-Year Plan provide a platform to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. The Accessibility Working Committee updates and reviews this plan annually in consultation with a diverse group of stakeholders who provide valuable input and feedback.

Together, we are working hard to improve accessibility to facilities, programs, policies, practices and services. I encourage you to review the plan and continue to bring forward your constructive ideas regarding accessibility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Thurston'.

Ken Thurston
Director of Education

ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE 2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR

During the past school year many of our service departments continued their efforts to support the elimination of barriers.

Plant Services

Plant Services, within budgetary allocations, worked to update and modify our existing buildings to make them more accessible. Many of our buildings were built years before accessibility standards were in place. Plant Services works in conjunction with Student Services and Human Resources to identify and support the needs of our students. During the 2012-2013 school year the total spent on accessibility was \$960,000. Work that was completed/started on our buildings during the 2012-2013 school year includes:

School	Description of Work
Cornell Village Public School	Install Door Opener on Library Door
Huron Heights Secondary School	Install Stage Lift and Front Door Openers
Keswick High School	Provided Barrier-Free Exterior Pathway from Street to School
Johnsview Public School	Install Lift, Stage Lift, two Barrier-Free Washrooms, and Door Opener on Main School Door
Milliken Mills High School	Install Door Opener on All Barrier-Free Washrooms
O.M. MacKillop Public School	Install Door Opener on Main School Entrance
Regency Acres Public School	Install Lift, Stage Lift, and Second Floor Barrier-Free Washrooms
Richmond Hill High School	Replaced Lift and Create Fire Separation on Second Floor
Ross Doan Public School	Install Door Opener on Main School Entrance
Roy H. Crosby Public School	Install Door Opener on Side School Entrance
Whitchurch Highlands Public School	Install Door Opener on Main Office Door

Planning Services

Planning Services continues to ensure all schools that are either in the design and construction phase or any additions which are being made to existing schools, meet or exceed accessibility standards. Since the start of the Board's Capital Strategy in 1999, a total of 80 new elementary schools, 12 secondary schools, and 43 additions to schools have been constructed. One elementary school opened in 2013-14 in accordance to the Board's accessibility standards. This school was named Phoebe Gilman PS.

The Board is currently constructing three additional elementary schools which will meet or exceed the accessibility standards. These schools are scheduled to open in the 2014-2015 school year.

The Board is well on its way to full implementation of Full Day Kindergarten (FDK). The Board has now opened 122 FDK schools. This represents 79% of our elementary schools that are eligible to offer FDK. In 2014- 2015 the Board will open the final 33 schools. All school renovations or additions for Full Day Kindergarten meet or exceed accessibility standards.

Student Services

Student Services advocates for the needs of students by reducing and/or eliminating barriers to their physical and learning environments. The York Region District School Board strives to provide each student the opportunity to develop the skills, attitudes and knowledge required to reach their full potential. During the 2012-2013 school year, over 16,500 students with special needs were identified.

Students who have been identified as exceptional have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which is a Ministry of Education requirement. An IEP is written for students receiving special education supports and services in order to meet their individual academic, emotional, social and behavioural needs. In consultation with parents, classroom teachers and the Special Education Teacher, the IEP is written within 30 school days of a student's placement in a special education program. Accommodations set out in the IEP are implemented to reduce or remove barriers that hinder the learning of a student with special needs. Access to assistive technology, extra time on tests, varying assessment methods, and providing photocopied notes are some examples of accommodations. The IEP includes the following elements:

- strengths and needs related to the student's learning;
- relevant assessment data;
- specialized health support services;
- list of instructional, environmental and assessment accommodations the student requires;
- current level of achievement for each modified subject/course/alternative program area;
- annual program goals, learning expectations and strategies;
- assessment methods;
- documentation of parent consultation;
- transition plan for students 14 years of age and older; and
- a safety plan, if applicable.

To help eliminate barriers in York Region students' learning environments, during the 2012-2013 year, the Ministry of Education approved 1883 Special Equipment Amount (SEA) claims for the purchase of assistive technology for students with special needs. This equipment includes positioning devices, brailers, amplification systems, computers, and software that provide access to curriculum, such as word prediction programs, speech-to-text programs, and text-to-speech programs.

On an ongoing basis, administrators work to identify physical barriers in schools which hinder the learning of students with special needs. Providing ramps, electronic door openers, lifts and hand rails in bathrooms are examples of some physical changes to buildings that the Plant Services Department implemented.

Human Resource Services

The Recruitment and Retention Team continued to ensure that the Board's employment practices do not pose any barriers to potential applicants.

Some examples of this past year's work include:

- Increasing accessibility to job opportunities by advertising on websites that support persons with disabilities i.e. www.linkup.ca, www.joininfo.ca.
- Ongoing professional development of Recruitment staff to understand, identify and anticipate applicant needs with respect to various types of accommodation.
- Continuing to offer accommodations to applicants with disabilities or special needs which require specific adjustments or equipment when participating in selection processes i.e. providing additional time and assistance or quiet space.
- Enhancing employment practices by extending the offer of accommodation throughout the recruitment, hiring and sign up processes.
- Resourcing and procuring appropriate accommodations upon request.
- Ongoing review of communications to ensure all materials are reflective of the provision of accommodations.

The Disability Management Team serviced 1196 clients during the 2012-2013 school year. Their work included removing barriers in the workplace for staff who had an identified disability. During the school year there were 192 employees with permanent accommodations in the workplace. Assistive devices were used in many instances to help the individual overcome encountered barriers. Assistive devices/services purchased included:

- voice amplification systems;
- computerized note taker services;
- arranging work site assessments;
- Functional Abilities Evaluation (FAE) assessments to co-ordinate work within the individual's functional limitations;
- accessibility devices (i.e. scooter, wheelchairs and wheeled carts);
- flat panel monitor for visual impairment; and
- Dragon Naturally Speaking.
- Modified work stations
- Hearing system – wireless FM transmitters, receivers, audio hubs, microphones and sound barrier devices for the classroom

Accessibility Working Committee

During the 2012 - 2013 school year the committee met regularly to discuss the impact of the new Integrated Accessibility Standard (IAS) that came into effect July 1, 2011, under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005.

Item	Description	Responsibilities and Timelines	Implementation
Continue to support the Customer Service Standard	Maintain compliance under the customer service standard. Ensure all new employees are aware of the mandatory training they must complete.	Ongoing Human Resource Services	Staff that was centrally hired were notified to complete the online training through the Recruitment process. Audit review was conducted in the spring to identify employees who had not yet completed the training.
Continue to promote methods whereby stakeholders can provide the Board with information related to possible barriers.	Barrier Buster information to be redistributed to schools and communities.	Spring – Human Resource Services and Student Services	Communication was sent to the system by Human Resource Services in the weekly update of April 22 – 26, 2013 which included a recap of the various documents within the Accessibility
	Review and ensure <i>Accessibility for All</i> brochures and sign information continue to be available at all work locations.	Spring – Human Resource Services	
Policy & Procedure Information	Continue to reinforce with those responsible for policy and procedures the need to look through the disability lens when writing documents.	Provide input on policies out for review as per the cyclical process	Ongoing
	Develop and implement policies governing accessibility. Develop and include policy statement in Accessibility Policy.	Board Services with consultation from Accessibility Working Committee January 2013	In December 2012 the Accessibility Policy (407.0) was approved by the Board as a working document. In addition, Procedure 407.2 Use of a Support Person by the General Public was revised and was approved as a working document in the Spring 2013.
Procurement	Review procurement practices to incorporate accessibility criteria for goods, services and facilities within the Board	Purchasing Services January 2013	Internal documents were created for RFP's, quotations and tenders

Item	Description	Responsibilities and Timelines	Implementation
Training	Provide accessibility awareness training for all educators/classroom based staff on accessible instruction and program delivery.	Curriculum Services and Leadership Development January 2013	Due to significant labour changes training delivery was delayed.
Educational Resources	Review practices to ensure readiness to provide educational resources or materials, student records and information on program requirements in accessible formats upon request.	Curriculum Services January 2013	Curriculum will provide information in written text, voice recording and/or enlarged text upon request. As technology develops other options will be available.

MULTI-YEAR PLAN - 2013 – 2017

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2013 – 2017) outlines the Board’s commitment and implementation strategy to identify, remove and prevent barriers in accordance with all applicable legislation.

School Year 2013 - 2014

Item	Description	Timelines and Responsibilities
ONGOING INITIATIVES		
Continue to support the Customer Service Standard	Maintain compliance under the customer service standard. Ensure all new employees are aware of the mandatory training they must complete.	Ongoing Human Resource Services
Continue to promote methods whereby stakeholders can provide the Board with information related to possible barriers	Barrier Buster information to be redistributed to schools and communities.	Barrier Buster information to be sent out to the system in early Spring 2014 by Human Resource Services and Student Services.
	Review and ensure <i>Accessibility for All</i> brochures and sign information continue to be used at all work locations.	Communication to be sent out in the Spring 2014 by Human Resource Services
	Review process for receiving/responding to feedback to ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities and readiness to provide accessible formats and communication supports upon request and notify the public of this.	Public Affairs & Communication Services
Policy Information	Continue to reinforce with those responsible for policy and procedures the need to look through the disability lens when writing documents.	Provide input on policies out for review as per the cyclical process. Ongoing
NEW INITIATIVES		
Training	Provide training to all staff on Ontario’s accessibility laws and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. Training will be provided in a way that best suites the duties of the employees, volunteers and other staff members.	Leadership Development & Human Resource Services January 2014
Websites	Review Board and school websites to assess level of accessibility. Ensure that new sites and web content on the sites meet WCAG 2.0, Level A standards.	Information Technology Services and Public Affairs & Communication Services January 2014

Item	Description	Timelines and Responsibilities
Employment Standard	Review and update Human Resource Services policies, procedures and practices with regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruitment processes; • job accommodations; • alternative accessible formats and communication supports for employees; • individual accommodation plans; • return to work processes; • performance appraisals; • career or professional development; and • redeployment processes. 	Human Resource Services January 2014
Student Transportation	Develop individual school transportation plans for students with disabilities, clarifying roles and responsibilities.	Student Transportation Services & Student Services January 2014
School Libraries	Review the readiness of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of print resources upon request.	Curriculum Services Ongoing for 2013-2014 school year for implementation of compliance date of January 2015.
Procurement	Reviewing our vendors to confirm their compliance with the CST component	January 2014

School Year 2014 – 2015

Item	Description	Timelines and Responsibilities
ONGOING INITIATIVES		
Continue to support the Customer Service Standard	Maintain compliance under the customer service standard.	Ongoing Human Resource Services
Continue to promote methods whereby stakeholders can provide the Board with information related to possible barriers	Barrier Buster information to be redistributed to schools and communities.	Barrier Buster information to be sent out to the system in early Spring 2015 by Human Resource Services and Student Services.
	Review and ensure <i>Accessibility for All</i> brochures and sign information continue to be used at all work locations.	Communication to be sent out in the Spring 2015 by Human Resource Services
Policy Information	Continue to reinforce with those responsible for policy and procedures the need to look through the disability lens when writing documents.	Provide input on policies out for review as per the cyclical process. Ongoing
Training	Ensure all new employees are aware of the mandatory training they must complete.	Leadership Development & Human Resource Services Ongoing
NEW INITIATIVES		
Accessible Formats & Communication Supports	Identify and have ready access to resources that enable the Board to provide information and communication supports, upon request, in a timely manner to persons with disabilities.	Information Technology Services and Public Affairs & Communication Services January 2015
Educational or Training Material	Producers of print-based or textbook educational or training resources shall, upon request make accessible or conversion ready versions of the printed material.	Curriculum Services & Purchasing Services January 2015
School Libraries	Ensure readiness of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of print resources upon request.	Curriculum Services January 2015.

School Year 2015 - 2016

Item	Description	Timelines and Responsibilities
ONGOING INITIATIVES		
Continue to support the Customer Service Standard	Maintain compliance under the customer service standard.	Ongoing Human Resource Services
Continue to promote methods whereby stakeholders can provide the Board with information related to possible barriers	Barrier Buster information to be redistributed to schools and communities.	Barrier Buster information to be sent out to the system in early Spring 2016 by Human Resource Services and Student Services.
	Review and ensure <i>Accessibility for All</i> brochures and sign information continue to be used at all work locations.	Communication to be sent out in the Spring 2016 by Human Resource Services
Policy Information	Continue to reinforce with those responsible for policy and procedures the need to look through the disability lens when writing documents.	Provide input on policies out for review as per the cyclical process. Ongoing
Training	Ensure all new employees are aware of the mandatory training they must complete.	Leadership Development & Human Resource Services Ongoing
NEW INITIATIVES		
Website	Review accessibility features of all updates and purchases related to Board and school websites in anticipation of WCAG, 2.0, Level AA standards.	Information Technology Services Ongoing preparation for 2021 deadline

School Year 2016 - 2017

Item	Description	Timelines and Responsibilities
ONGOING INITIATIVES		
Continue to support the Customer Service Standard	Maintain compliance under the customer service standard.	Ongoing Human Resource Services
Continue to promote methods whereby stakeholders can provide the Board with information related to possible barriers	Barrier Buster information to be redistributed to schools and communities.	Barrier Buster information to be sent out to the system in early Spring 2016 by Human Resource Services and Student Services.
	Review and ensure <i>Accessibility for All</i> brochures and sign information continue to be used at all work locations.	Communication to be sent out in the Spring 2016 by Human Resource Services
Policy Information	Continue to reinforce with those responsible for policy and procedures the need to look through the disability lens when writing documents.	Provide input on policies out for review as per the cyclical process. Ongoing
Training	Ensure all new employees are aware of the mandatory training they must complete.	Leadership Development & Human Resource Services Ongoing
NEW INITIATIVES		
School Libraries	Ensure readiness of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of digital or multimedia resources or materials upon request.	Curriculum Services Ongoing preparation for 2020 deadline
Website	Review accessibility features of all updates and purchases related to board and school websites in anticipation of WCAG, 2.0, Level AA standards.	Information Technology Services Ongoing preparation for 2021 deadline

Appendix 1 - Accessibility Working Committee 2012-2013

Co-Chairs of Accessibility Working Committee

Cecil Roach, Superintendent of Equity and Engagement
Janet Hicks, Manager, Human Resource Services

Committee Members

Pam Beetlestone	Vice-President, ETFO
John Britnell	CUPE 1734
Carol Chan	Trustee
Ivy Chan	Principal, Continuing Education
Jan Christen	Administrator of Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services
Nadia Ciacci	President, ETFO-OT
Beth Dolson	Administrative Assistant, Human Resource Services
Lynette Early	HR Analyst, Human Resource Services
James Flynn	Elementary Principal
Kim Garner	Secondary Vice Principal
Ken Gouthro	Member of SEAC
Gerry Harrison	Staffing Officer, OSSTF
Norma Hick	Assistant Manager, Administrative Services
Lynn Lockhart-Menzies	Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Mark Marchand	Associate Manager, Administrative Services
Nancy Massie	Assistant Manager, Records Management, MFIPPA
Rick Medland,	Steward, CUPE Local1196
Licinio Miguelo	Manager, Public Affairs & Communication Services
Juanita Nathan	Trustee
Janet Porter	Principal of Student Services
Jane Ross	Senior Manager, Planning & Property Development
Pierre Schipper	Manager of Facilities Services
Kathryn Smallwood	Assistant Manager, Contract Specialist
John Steh	Associate Manager, Leadership & Development
Colin Wackett	Teacher, Elementary (ETFO-YR)
Helen Westlake	Business Analyst, Information Technology Services

Appendix 2 – DEFINITIONS

A number of terms used throughout the Plan are clarified by the following definitions.

BARRIER:

Anything that prevents a person with a disability from full participation in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including:

Physical barrier - objects added to the environment: doors, windows, elevators, furniture, workstations, recreational facilities, playgrounds, bathroom hardware, etc.

Architectural barrier - building design, area adjacent to the building, shape of room, size of doorways, etc.

Information barrier - inadequate or incomprehensible signage, difficulties reading brochures, forms, manuals, web sites, fax transmissions, equipment labels, computer screens, etc.

Communication barrier - difficulties receiving information in person or by telephone; difficulties interacting with receptionists or other staff; difficulties receiving training.

Attitudinal barrier - staff who do not know how to communicate with people with disabilities; staff who refuse to provide service; discriminatory behaviours.

Technological barrier - computers, photocopiers, fax machines, telephones and switches, inadequate or inappropriate assistive technologies.

Policy or a practice - rules, regulations and protocols that prevent one from performing his/her job satisfactorily; or from serving the public; or that restrict public participation.

DISABILITY:

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes, mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability.
- A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.
- A mental disorder.
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

ACCESSIBILITY:

Ability to be reached; easy to approach, enter, speak with or use.