

ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN
FOR THE
YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



YEAR SIX REPORT
OCTOBER 2008

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Director of Education

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Chair of the Board

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AIM

This Plan describes the measures that the York Region District School Board has taken in the past and measures that will be taken during the 2008-2009 school year to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities who work in, use or attend school board facilities and services.

OBJECTIVES:

This report:

1. Describes the process by which the YRDSB will identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Reviews earlier efforts to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
3. Lists the facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services that the Board will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Describes the measures the Board will take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. 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 school 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 Coordinating Superintendent of Education, Human Resource Services, to prepare an annual accessibility plan that will enable the York Region District School Board to meet these commitments.

The annual report 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 Plan is to be communicated to all York Region District School Board locations.

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.

“It is our hope that all parents, students and employee groups become familiar with accessibility issues and work together to fulfill our mission of providing a community that is safe, inviting and fully accessible to all.”(Bill Hogarth, Director of Education)



Learning in York Region's public schools is a sacred trust. As publicly-supported and accountable employees, we believe that York Region District School Board students have a right to feel safe, academically challenged, nurtured, and respected. Each one is a capable learner and, as a system, we are responsible for preparing them to become contributing citizens within our global economy.

A supportive learning community, however, is incomplete without the assistance of parents and regional partners. With your support, we can improve the quality of educational programs and services for all students. With your involvement, we can ensure that York Region public school students develop their skills, interests, and talents to the fullest potential.

If after reviewing this report, you can think of ways to make our school board more informative and accessible, please drop us a line. We are particularly interested in identifying, removing and preventing all barriers that limit the full participation of our students, their families and our staff members.

Yours truly,

Bill Hogarth

People with disabilities represent a portion of the YRDSB population. To that end, enhancing the ability of these members of our community, whether they are students, teachers, support staff, parents, volunteers or other community members, will have only positive effects for our Board and the quality of their life.

The purpose of the accessibility plan is to describe the measures that the board has taken during the previous year, and the measures the board will take during the coming year, to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE 2007-2008 SCHOOL YEAR

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

Plant Services

Plant Services, within budgetary allocations, continued to work 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. In addition, Plant Services worked in conjunction with Special Education Services to support the needs of our students. Work completed/started on our buildings during the 2007-2008 school year include:

Facility	Budget	Description of Work	Estimate	Status
Adult Day School	Accessibility	Install automatic door opener at front entrance	\$13,000.00	Complete
Bayview Secondary School	Accessibility	Install stage and stair lifts	\$105,000.00	In Progress
Dr. J.M.Denison Secondary School	Accessibility	Install automatic openers on library and cafeteria doors	\$1,200.00	Complete
Dr. J.M.Denison Secondary School	Special Education	Install automatic opener on B-F washroom door	\$9,400.00	Complete
Education Centre - Newmarket	Accessibility	Install automatic door opener on 1st floor washroom	\$4,800.00	Complete
Holland Landing Public School	Accessibility	Install automatic door openers at main entrance	\$8,300.00	Complete
Holland Landing Public School	Accessibility	Install stage lift	\$60,000.00	In Progress
Huron Heights Secondary School	Special Education	Install automatic door openers on 3 B-F washrooms	\$18,100.00	Complete
Keswick High School	Special Education	Install automatic door opener on 2nd fl. barrier free washroom	\$9,000.00	Complete
Keswick High School	Special Education	Install automatic door opener on 1st fl. barrier free washroom	\$9,000.00	Complete
King City Secondary School	Accessibility	Upgrade building for accessibility (excl. elevator)	\$250,000.00	In Progress
Maple Leaf Public School	Accessibility	Install automatic door openers at main entrance	\$4,900.00	Complete
Morning Glory Public School	Accessibility	Replace existing ramp near staff entrance	\$5,700.00	Complete
Pierre Elliott Trudeau High School	Special Education	Install automatic door openers on library and cafeteria doors	\$13,000.00	In Progress
Prince Charles Public School	Accessibility	Install stage lift	\$42,000.00	Complete
Ramer Wood Public School	Accessibility	In B-F washrooms, replace door and sink handles with B-F hardware	\$1,600.00	Complete
Reesor Park Public School	Accessibility	Complete design for accessibility project	\$24,000.00	In Progress
Sutton District High School	Accessibility	Install stage lift	\$60,000.00	In Progress
Thornhill Secondary School	Accessibility	In B-F washroom on 1st floor, replace fixtures with B-F fixtures	\$800.00	Complete
Unionville Public School	Special Education	Install ramps at N & S entrances, install automatic door openers at N entrance	\$8,000.00	Complete
Walter Scott Public School	Accessibility	Install automatic door opener at front entrance	\$6,600.00	Complete
William Armstrong Public School	Accessibility	Install automatic door opener and ramp at front of school	\$5,800.00	Complete
Wilshire Elementary School	Special Education	Install ramp	\$1,300.00	Complete
Total			\$661,500.00	

Planning Services

The York Region District School Board continues to be one of the fastest growing school boards in Canada, and has grown by 17,610 elementary and 7,690 secondary school students from 1998 to 2007 as the region experienced rapid urban expansion and housing development.

Planning Services continues to work to ensure that all schools being designed and built, or any additions to existing schools, meet or exceed accessibility standards. Over the last 10 years a total of 62 new elementary schools, 11 secondary schools, and 38 additions to schools have been constructed. During the 2007-2008 school year, they worked to ensure that six new elementary and one secondary schools were built to standard. These schools include: Alexander Muir PS, Dr. Roberta Bondar PS, Oscar Peterson PS, Harry Bowes PS, Donald Cousens PS, Herbert Carnegie PS and Bill Crothers SS.

Special Education Services

Special Education Program Services works to eliminate barriers for identified students. All students in our schools, regardless of background or ability, need the opportunity to develop the skills, attitudes and knowledge required to reach their full potential. During the 2007-2008 school year, over 13 000 students with special needs were identified.

Identified students 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 suggested 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, reduced expectations, and providing photocopied notes are some examples of appropriate 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 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
- Safety plan

To help eliminate barriers in our students' learning environments, during the 2007-2008 year, the Ministry of Education approved 1,255 Special Equipment Amount Claims (SEA) 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 handle rails in bathrooms are examples of some physical changes to our buildings that our Plant Services Department implemented.

As a Special Education department, we continue to advocate for the needs of all students by reducing and/or eliminating barriers to their physical and learning environments.

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.

The Board policy entitled "Recruitment and Promotion of Staff" was drafted and will be reviewed by the Accessibility Working Committee.

The Disability Management Team serviced 632 clients during the 2007/2008 school year. Their work included removing barriers in the workplace for staff who had an identified disability. Assistive devices were used in many instances to help the individual overcome the encountered barrier. Assistive devices/services purchased included:

- voice amplification systems
- computerized note taker services
- wheel chair
- ergonomically correct chairs
- Closed circuit TV for a visual impairment
- Arranging Work Site Assessments
- Functional Abilities Evaluation assessments to co-ordinate work within the individual's functional limitations
- white boards
- HEPA filter
- Voice activation system on computer

Accessibility Working Committee

During the 2007/2008 school year the committee began working to implement the new Customer Service Regulation under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (A.O.D.A.). The committee educated itself on the new regulation and consulted with a wider group in planning to implement the Customer Service Standard. A board policy for Accessibility Standards for Customer Service was drafted.

GOALS FOR THE 2008/2009 SCHOOL YEAR

The Accessibility committee will meet regularly to review the work being done in the area of accessibility with reference to the legislation. In order to assess the board's policies, programs, practices and services the following take place in the coming school year:

Item	Description	Responsibilities and Timelines
Barrier Buster	The Barrier Buster tool will be re-communicated to all administrators with a communication piece going to the community.	A draft was reviewed in the spring of 2008. The communication needs to be tailored to the desired audience. It will be sent out by the end of November. All administrators will be asked to bring this tool to the attention of staff and their communities. Barrier Buster review will remain a standing item of the committee agenda.
Policy and Procedure	A document will be prepared educating system leaders about the requirements under the AODA. This document will provide system leaders with a lens they should consider when drafting required policies, procedures or programs.	A draft communication piece will be brought to the committee for review in January 2009. A standing item on the agenda will be policies out for feedback.
Begin to implement the Customer Service Regulation under the AODA	The committee is drafting and seeking input on the "Accessibility Standards for Customer Service" policy. A detailed implementation plan of the service standard will be developed.	The draft policy will be forwarded through the system by the Accessibility Working Committee by mid-October 2008. The detailed implementation plan will be developed by the committee at the January 2009 meeting.
Review of Service Department plans supporting accessibility	All affected Service Departments will continue to work on their accessibility plans throughout the school year.	Service Department Plans will be presented by the departments at the last scheduled Accessibility Working Committee meeting of the 2008/2009 school year.

Appendix 1 - Accessibility Working Committee 2007-2008

Pam Beetlestone, Vice-President, ETFO
Darren Campbell, Vice-President, ETFO
Jan Christen, Coordinator, Regional Hearing
Lesley Crossley, Principal, Secondary
Beth Dolson, Administrative Assistant, Human Resource Services
Gerry Harrison, Staffing Officer, OSSTF
Janet Hicks, Manager, Human Resource Services
Sarah Kahan, President CUPE Local 1734
Lynn Lockhart-Menzies, Teacher Regional Sp Ed
Peter Luchowski, Trustee
Flora MacDonald, Member of SEAC
Jane MacPherson, Elementary Vice-Principal
Rick Medland, Stewart, CUPE Local 1196
Lewis Morgulis, Manager of Planning
Janet Porter, Principal, Elementary, Special Assignment, Special Education
Chris Tulley, Coordinating Superintendent of Education, Human Resource Services
Betty-Lou Twiddy, President, ETFO-OT
Ross Virgo, Public Affairs Officer
Colin Wackett, Teacher, Elementary
Kathy Wosnick, Principal, Elementary
Scott Yake, Principal on Assignment, Human Resource 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, or

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.