

**ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**  
**FOR THE**  
**YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**



**YEAR EIGHT REPORT**  
**OCTOBER 2010**

**Ken Thurston**  
**Director of Education**

**Diane Giangrande**  
**Chair of the Board**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Table of Contents   | 2  |
| Aim, Objectives and Commitment to Accessibility Planning          | 3  |
| Mission, Vision & Values of the York Region District School Board | 4  |
| Achievements for the 2009-2010 School Year                        | 6  |
| Goals for the 2010-2011 School Year                               | 10 |
| Appendix 1 Accessibility Working Committee 2009-2010              | 11 |
| Appendix 2 Definitions  | 12 |

## **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 2010-2011 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 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 – Schools and Staff Resources, 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](http://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.



The York Region District School Board is committed to providing environments for our students and staff that are both inclusive and accessible to all. 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 Plan provides a platform to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. The Accessibility Working Committee develops 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.

Yours truly,

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

Ken Thurston

The York Region District School Board community includes members who are disabled. In keeping with our commitment to inclusivity, suitable accommodations have been provided which will continue to be improved.

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 school year, to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE 2009-2010 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 existing buildings to make them more accessible. Many of 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 York Region students. During the 2009-2010 school year the total spent on accessibility was \$1,025,000. Work completed/started on our buildings during the 2009-2010 school year includes:

| <b>School</b>                      | <b>Description of Work</b>  |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Ballantrae Public School           | Install handrail and ramp at front of school  |
| Bayview Fairways Public School     | Provide barrier free access (lift to 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor, stair lift, barrier free washrooms on 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> floors, barrier free access at main entrance) |
| Beverley Acres Public School       | Provide barrier free access (barrier free washroom and access at main entrance)   |
| Community Education Center – North | Provide barrier free access at main entrance  |
| Coppard Glen Public School         | Install barrier free washroom on 1 <sup>st</sup> floor  |
| Doncrest Public School             | Relocate barrier free parking to be closer to main entrance   |
| Parkland Public School             | Cut out curb for barrier free access  |
| Charles Howitt Public School       | Install ramp and automatic opener at Kindergarten door  |
| Huron Heights Secondary School     | Install automatic openers at tech wing entrance doors   |
| Keswick High School                | Install automatic openers on Library doors  |

| School                    | Description of Work   |
|---------------------------|---|
| John McRae Public School  | Install automatic openers on exterior doors adjacent to special education room                      |
| Thornlea Secondary School | Provide barrier free access to stage lift, barrier free washrooms on 1st and 2 <sup>nd</sup> floors |

### Planning Services

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. Since the start of the Board's Capital Strategy in 1999 a total of 72 new elementary schools, 12 secondary schools, and 41 additions to schools have been constructed.

During the 2009-2010 school year, Planning Services worked to ensure that five elementary schools, and 1 secondary school were built to the Board's accessibility standards. These schools include the replacement of Whitchurch Highlands Public School, Sutton Public School and Markham District High School; and the construction of three new schools; Sam Chapman Public School, Bond Lake Public School and Glenn Gould Public School. The Board is currently constructing an additional two elementary schools, and three additions to elementary and secondary schools which will meet or exceed accessibility standards. These schools are scheduled to open in the 2011-2012 school year.

### Student Services

Student Services works to eliminate barriers for identified students. All students in York Region District School Board schools should be provided the opportunity to develop the skills, attitudes and knowledge required to reach their full potential. During the 2009-2010 school year, over 20,000 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 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
- Safety Plan.

To help eliminate barriers in York Region students' learning environments, during the 2009-2010 year, the Ministry of Education approved 1,517 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.

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. They continue to offer accommodations to applicants during the recruitment process including providing additional time and assistance to some applicants, quiet space, translation devices and hard copies of the interview questions during the interview.

The Recruitment and Promotion of Staff policy was reviewed and approved by the Board in January 2009.

The Disability Management Team serviced 788 clients during the 2009/2010 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;
- arranging Work Site Assessments;
- Functional Abilities Evaluation Assessments to co-ordinate work within the individual's functional limitations; and
- conducting Physical Demands Analysis.



## Accessibility Working Committee

During the 2009/2010 school year the committee met regularly to implement the Customer Service Standard under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005.

| <b>Item</b>   | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Responsibilities and Timelines</b>  | <b>Implementation</b>   |
|---|--|--|---|
| Implement the Customer Service Standard Training  | Training must be completed by January 2010. A combination of on-line and in-class options will be available.   | IT and CLL support<br>Unions' support<br><br>By January 2010   | Training was completed by schools/departments in January 2010. Employee tracking tool was created in Summer 2010 to capture all employees who have completed training   |
| Provide documentation to support service standards.   | Information needs to be available to assist system leaders in carrying out their responsibilities under the Customer Service Standard.   | Committee to review the procedure exemplars and determine the supporting documents to be provided to system leaders. All supporting material to be communicated to system leaders and available on the portal by the spring of 2010. | Documents were available to system leaders on the portal in Spring 2010. Documents included: "Accessibility for All" brochure, sample consent form and notices, signage for all locations and "Tips on Serving Customers with Disabilities" brochure. Information was also posted on the Board's website for the public to access under the Accessibility for All icon. |
| Continue to promote the Barrier Buster Tool and provide alternate methods to obtain feedback. | A tool to obtain feedback regarding accessibility concerns was previously developed. Awareness of this tool needs to be reinforced. Alternate options to obtain feedback also need to be explored. | The barrier buster tool will be sent out annually to administrators along with information for school communities.<br><br>The committee will develop alternate ways to obtain feedback regarding accessibility.                      | Information regarding the Barrier Buster procedure was communicated to all staff in the weekly updates of May 14, 2010.<br><br>The "Accessibility for All" brochure was created and distributed to all work locations. This brochure provided the public with alternate ways to comment on the customer service standard.   |
| Provide input as required on additional standards being developed.                            | The upcoming standards will be the responsibility of various departments.  | The committee will provide input on the developed standards as brought forward by the appropriate departments.   | On-going  |

## Goals for the 2010/2011 School Year

| Item   | Description   | Timelines and Responsibilities  |
|--|---|---|
| Ensure newly hired staff are trained in the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service  | All newly hired staff will be required to complete the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service training. Training may be on-line or done through a classroom setting. | To be completed throughout the year by Human Resource Services.   |
| Create plans to implement any new regulations introduced by the Government under the AODA  | All concerned stakeholders will review the "Integrated Accessibility Regulation" and develop implementation plans.  | Based on the timelines established by regulation, departments directly responsible for the deliverables, with input from the Accessibility Working Committee. |
| 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 Resources Services and Student Services  |
|  | Supply "Accessibility for All" brochures to schools.  | Spring – Human Resource Services  |
|  | Provide a link to the Barrier Buster tool directly from school Web-sites.   | IT Services   |
| Continue to reinforce with those responsible for policy and procedures the need to look through the disability lens when writing documents | Provide information to the Policy By-Law Committee  | Human Resource Services   |
|  | Specific procedural concerns will be brought to the committee for review by the concerned stakeholder(s).   | All as concerns are raised  |
|  | The formal policy review process will be used for all concerned parties to provide input on policies under review.  | On-going  |

## **Appendix 1 - Accessibility Working Committee 2009-2010**

Pam Beetlestone, Vice-President, ETFO  
John Britnell, CUPE 1734  
Ivy Chan, Principal Continuing Education  
Jan Christen, Coordinator, Regional Hearing  
Beth Dolson, Administrative Assistant, Human Resource Services  
Lynette Early, HR Analyst, Human Resource Services  
Kim, Garner, Secondary Vice Principal  
Ken Gouthro, Member of SEAC  
Gerry Harrison, Staffing Officer, OSSTF  
Sue Hastings, Manager Maintenance  
Norma Hick, Assistant Manager Administrative Services  
Janet Hicks, Manager, Human Resource Services  
Lynn Lockhart-Menzies, Teacher Regional Sp Ed  
Peter Luchowski, Trustee  
Jane MacPherson, Elementary Vice-Principal  
Nancy Massie, Assistant Manager, Records Management, MFIPPA  
Rick Medland, Stewart, CUPE Local 1196  
Greg Morandi, Principal on Assignment, Human Resource Services  
Lewis Morgulis, Manager of Planning  
Janet Porter, Principal, Elementary, Special Assignment, Special Education  
Pierre Schipper, Manager of Facilities Services  
Chris Tulley, Coordinating Superintendent of Education, Human Resource Services  
Betty-Lou Twiddy, President, ETFO-OT  
Ross Virgo, Manager, Public Affairs and Communications Services  
Ferial Visram, Member of PEAC  
Colin Wackett, Teacher, Elementary  
Helen Westlake, Business Analyst, Information Technology Services

## Appendix 2 - DEFINITIONS

A number of terms used throughout the Accessibility 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:**

Disability is defined as:

- 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.