



York Region District School Board

ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY REPORT AND MULTI-YEAR PLAN

October 2014

Prepared by: Accessibility Working Committee
11/7/2014

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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 2014-2017 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 Coordinating Superintendent, Equity and Community Services, 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.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

To advance student achievement and well-being through public education, which motivates learners, fosters inclusion, inspires innovation and builds community.

Vision

To be a leader in public education by empowering all students to become engaged and caring citizens of the world.

Values

Our School Board operates based on a set of values which guides our actions:

Inclusivity

We demonstrate equity and inclusivity in all that we do. We demand an environment in which all students, staff, parents and our community feel valued and have a sense of belonging. We expect empathy, mutual respect and understanding to be demonstrated in our words and actions.

Relationships

We value positive, meaningful relationships with students, staff, parents and our community. We value diversity of opinion, sincere dialogue and community engagement.

Innovation

We continuously strive to provide the best educational programs for all students. We empower staff and students to take initiative and to be innovative leaders.

Engagement

We encourage active participation in all learning and activities by creating an environment that engages students, staff, parents and our community.

Responsibility

We are individually and collectively responsible for creating the best possible school community to support the achievement and well-being of all individuals. We are responsible for the delivery of effective and sustainable educational programs and stewardship of Board resources.

Optimism

We approach all situations with optimism. We cultivate confidence and resiliency in all students and staff.



Message from the Director of Education

At the York Region District School Board, we are committed to providing accessibility “consistent with the principles of dignity, integration and equality of opportunity,” as outlined in Board policy #407, Accessibility. This is part of our ongoing work to create safe, welcoming, inclusive and accessible learning and working environments where students and staff members can thrive.

This Annual Accessibility Report and Multi-Year Plan outline our commitment, plan and the actions we have taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessing our facilities, programs, policies, practices and services. I want to thank the Accessibility Working Committee for their work in updating this plan, and to all those who provided their valuable input.

Together, we are working hard to improve accessibility. Your feedback is important and I encourage you to read the plan and to continue to share your constructive ideas with us – through your school or by using the Barrier Buster or Customer Service feedback tools on our website at www.yrdsb.ca/accessibility.

Sincerely,

J. Philip Parappally
Director of Education

ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE 2013-2014 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 these needs of our students. During the 2013-2014 school year a total of \$800,000 of accessibility projects were underway. Work that was completed/started on our buildings during the 2013-2014 school year includes:

School	Description of Work
Alexander Mackenzie High School	Create 1 exterior ramp by room 151
Charles Howitt Public School	Repaint door mullions and step edges
Franklin Street Public School	Improve accessibility (lift, BF wrms, front door)
Langstaff Secondary School	Install automatic openers on cafeteria and library doors
Mazo de la Roche Public School	Install ramp and automatic openers at front entrance
Walter Scott Public School	Replace interior screen of front vestibule
William Berczy Public School	Improve accessibility (lifts, 2nd fl BF wrm, front door)
Woodbridge Public School	Cut out curb and install ramp

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 83 new elementary schools, 13 secondary schools, and 51 additions to schools have been constructed. Three elementary schools and one secondary school opened in 2014-15 in accordance with the Board's accessibility standards. The schools are named Anne Frank PS, Beckett Farm PS, Robert Munsch PS and Tommy Douglas SS.

The Board is currently constructing two additional elementary schools which will meet or exceed the accessibility standards. These schools are scheduled to open in the 2015-2016 school year.

The Board has completed the implementation of Full Day Kindergarten (FDK). The Board operates 155 FDK schools and 51% of these schools required a capital conversion or addition to implement FDK. 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 2013-2014 school year, over 18,187 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 2013-2014 year, the Ministry of Education approved 1942 Special Equipment Amount (SEA) claims for the purchase of assistive technology for students with special needs. This equipment includes positioning devices, braille, 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 classroom adaptations for students with complexities, ramps, electronic door openers, lift, hand rails in bathrooms, and evacuation chairs to support student and staff exit in case of an emergency are examples of some physical changes to buildings that the Plant Services Department implemented.

Human Resource Services

In June 2014 Human Resource Services and Leadership Development introduced an online training module for all employees on the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation and the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.

The Recruitment and Retention Team continued to ensure that the Board's employment practices are equitable.

Some examples of this past year's work include:

- Increasing accessibility to job opportunities by advertising on websites that support persons with disabilities
- Ongoing professional learning of Recruitment staff to understand, identify and anticipate applicant needs with respect to various types of accommodation.

- Continuing to offer accommodations to applicants with exceptionalities as a part of the selection processes (i.e. providing additional time, assistance or quiet space. All candidates have the questions in front of them as a standard practice)
- Enhancing employment practices by extending the offer of accommodation throughout the recruitment, hiring and sign up processes.
- Resourcing and procuring appropriate accommodations upon request and internal tracking of these accommodations to budget for resources to support needed accommodations
- Ongoing reviews of communications to ensure all materials are reflective of the provision of accommodations.

The Disability Management Team serviced 1257 clients during the 2013-2014 school year. Their work included removing barriers in the workplace for staff who had an identified disability. During the school year there were 199 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 ergonomic assessments;
- Functional Abilities Evaluation (FAE) assessments to co-ordinate work within the individual's functional limitations;
- accessibility devices (i.e. scooter, wheelchairs, wheeled carts and stools);
- flat panel monitor for visual impairment; and
- Dragon Naturally Speaking.
- Modified work stations, including specified desks, monitors, keyboards, mouse, chairs and lighting
- Hearing system – wireless FM transmitters, receivers, audio hubs, microphones and sound barrier devices for the classroom
- Specialized phones and headsets
- Installation of white boards in classrooms

Accessibility Working Committee

During the 2013 - 2014 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	<p>Maintain compliance under the customer service standard.</p> <p>Ensure all new employees are aware of the mandatory training they must complete.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Human Resource Services</p>	<p>Staff that was centrally hired were notified to complete the online training through the Recruitment process.</p>
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	A comprehensive communication memo was sent in the weekly summary (August 22 – 28) to Principals/VP's and Managers that included the roles and responsibilities in ensuring accessibility throughout the Board.
	Review and ensure <i>Accessibility for All</i> brochures and sign information continue to be available at all work locations.	Spring – Human Resource Services	
	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	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.	<p>Leadership Development & Human Resource Services</p> <p>January 2014</p>	<p>Training was developed using modules from the Ontario Human Rights Commission. The training is available for all staff through connect 2 learn and was sent out to the system on June 20, 2014 with a completion date of September 30, 2014. In addition, the training was included in the annual compliance training day memo in June and September 2014.</p>

Item	Description	Responsibilities and Timelines	Implementation
	Provide accessibility awareness training for all educators/classroom based staff on accessible instruction and program delivery	Curriculum Services and Leadership Development January 2013	Training was developed and delivered through connect 2 learn. Communication was sent out to the system on November 25, 2013 providing access and information to staff.
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	Internal websites conform to the WCAG 2.0 Level A standard. Additional resources have been implemented to monitor the websites and the accessibility of the contents.
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	Recruitment & Retention's existing practices aligned with the requirements under the IASR. These included: notifying and providing accommodations throughout the recruitment process. Under the Healthy Schools and Workplaces Policy (#218.0) the Disability Management Program was formalized outlining the process for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying staff members who enter into the disability management program; • creating individual workplace accommodation plans; • creating return to work plans; and • supporting the application of any income protection

Item	Description	Responsibilities and Timelines	Implementation
			benefits
Student Transportation	Develop individual school transportation plans for students with disabilities, clarifying roles and responsibilities.	Student Transportation Services & Student Services January 2014	The transportation of accessible students was developed. Included was: individual transportation plan procedure, Individual Student Transportation Plan form and roles and responsibilities of the Board, students and the community.
Procurement	Reviewing our vendors to confirm their compliance with the Customer Service Training component	January 2014	Notification to vendors advising that they must meet the customer service standard training component and confirmation to be sent and retained by Purchasing Services.

MULTI-YEAR PLAN - 2014 – 2017

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2014 – 2017) outlines the Board's commitment and implementation strategy to identify, remove and prevent barriers in accordance with all applicable legislation.

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

Item	Description	Timelines and Responsibilities
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 2013-2014

Co-Chairs of Accessibility Working Committee

Cecil Roach
Janet Hicks

Superintendent of Equity and Engagement
Manager, Human Resource Services

Committee Members

Pam Beetlestone
John Britnell
Dorothy Cammaert
Carol Chan
Ivy Chan
Jan Christen
Nadia Ciacci
Beth Dolson
Lynette Early
James Flynn
Kim Garner
Carolyn Viney
Gerry Harrison
Norma Hick
Mark Marchand
Nancy Massie
Roddy McLernon
Licinio Miguelo
Juanita Nathan
Kim Tanaka
Jane Ross
Pierre Schipper
Kathryn Smallwood
John Steh
Colin Wackett
Helen Westlake

Vice-President, ETFO
CUPE 1734
Superintendent, Human Resource Services
Trustee
Principal, Continuing Education
Administrator of Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services
President, ETFO-OT
Administrative Assistant, Human Resource Services
HR Analyst, Human Resource Services
Elementary Principal
Secondary Vice Principal
Member of SEAC
Staffing Officer, OSSTF
Assistant Manager, Administrative Services
Associate Manager, Administrative Services
Assistant Manager, Records Management, MFIPPA
Steward, CUPE Local 1196
Manager, Public Affairs & Communication Services
Trustee
Principal of Student Services
Senior Manager, Planning & Property Development
Manager of Facilities Services
Assistant Manager, Contract Specialist
Associate Manager, Leadership & Development
Teacher, Elementary (ETFO-YR)
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 service dog 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.