



ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY REPORT AND MULTI-YEAR PLAN

October 2015

Prepared by: Accessibility Working Committee

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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.

Should this report be required in an alternate format please contact Corporate Communications by email communications.services@yrdsb.ca.

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.
5. Reviewing and updating the Multi-Year plan at least once every five years.

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 believe in safe, supportive and inclusive learning and working environments for all staff, students and community members.

Over the last year, our service departments have worked to support the elimination of employment and learning barriers across our system. The Annual Accessibility Report highlights many of our Board's accomplishments in this area and identifies ongoing initiatives to support accessibility.

You will also find information about our multi-year plan to continue to improve access to Board facilities, programs, policies, practices and services.

I would like 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. I encourage you to continue to share your constructive ideas with us through your school, by using the Barrier Buster or by using the Customer Service feedback tools on our website at www.yrdsb.ca/accessibility.

Sincerely,

J. Philip Parappally

Director of Education

ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE 2014-2015 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, staff and community. During the 2014-2015 school year a total of \$950,000 of accessibility projects were underway. Work that was completed/started on our buildings during the 2014-2015 school year includes:

School	Description of Work
E.J. Sand Public School	Interlocked magnetic hold open devices for door
German Mills Public School	Installed ramp and automatic opener at front door
Highgate Public School	Installed lift at stage
Joseph A. Gibson Public School	Installed automatic openers, ramp, elevator, stage lift and provide barrier free washrooms
Lake Wilcox Public School	Modification to millwork to improve accessibility
Markham District High School	Install automatic opener
Prince Charles Public School	Install automatic opener
Willowbrook Public School	Install automatic opener, lift and provide barrier free washrooms
Woodbridge College	Install lift at stage and provide barrier free washrooms

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 85 new elementary schools, 13 secondary schools, and 54 additions to schools have been constructed. Two elementary schools opened in 2015-16 in accordance with the Board's accessibility standards. The schools are named Fred Varley PS and Roméo Dallaire PS.

The Board is currently constructing one additional elementary school which will meet or exceed the accessibility standards. This school is scheduled to open in the 2016-17 school year.

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 2014-2015 school year, over 18,298 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 2014-2015 year, the Ministry of Education approved 1518 Special Equipment Amount (SEA) claims for the purchase of assistive technology for students with special needs. We also provided 1381 SEA claims to refresh the technology for those students with dated hardware. Thus the SEA process supported 2899 SEA claims in the 2014-2015 year. 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

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; and
- ongoing reviews of communications to ensure all materials are reflective of the provision of accommodations.

The Disability Management Team serviced 1424 clients during the 2014-2015 school year. Their work included removing barriers in the workplace for staff who had an identified disability. During the school year there were 298 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;
- 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; and
- sign language interpreters.

Accessibility Working Committee

During the 2014 - 2015 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 promote methods whereby stakeholders can provide the Board with information related to possible barriers.	<p>a. Barrier Buster information to be redistributed to schools and communities.</p> <p>b. Review and ensure <i>Accessibility for All</i> brochures and sign information continue to be available at all work locations.</p>	<p>a. Human Resource Services and Student Services – Spring</p> <p>b. Human Resource Services – Spring</p>	a & b: A comprehensive communication memo was sent in the weekly summary in June 2014 (June 12-18) to Principals/VP's and Managers that included the roles and responsibilities in ensuring accessibility throughout the Board for the 2014/15 school year.
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	Continuous
Training	<p>Customer Service Standard</p> <p>Working Together: The Code and the AODA (IASR & Human Rights)</p> <p>AODA for Educators</p>	Human Resource Services, Leadership Development and Curriculum Services – Ongoing	<p>Training for the Customer Service Standard and the IASR & Human Rights was completed for all employees and volunteers, all persons who develop Board policies and all persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Board.</p> <p>Training to educators, which includes teachers, DECEs and educational assistants related to accessible program or course delivery and instruction was completed.</p> <p>Notification of the annual compliance training was provided in a memo in June and September 2015.</p>

Item	Description	Responsibilities and Timelines	Implementation
Websites	Continue to 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 Corporate Communications – Ongoing	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.
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, Corporate Communications and Learning, Design and Development – Summer 2015 and Ongoing	Committees were created to review documents and training materials available. All videos were captioned and/or transcribed during the summer of 2015. Monitoring and updating of the public website continues to ensure documents are in accessible formats
School Libraries	Ensure readiness of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of print resources upon request.	Curriculum Services – anticipated completion by June 2016	A committee, with representation from Curriculum, Purchasing and Learning, Design and Development, was created to review current practices, leverage existing opportunities for capacity building and establish a recommended procedure to respond to requests.

MULTI-YEAR PLAN 2015 – 2017

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2015 – 2017) outlines the Board’s commitment and implementation strategy to identify, remove and prevent barriers in accordance with all applicable legislation.

School Year 2015 – 2016

Ongoing Initiatives

Item	Description	Responsibilities and Timelines
Continue to support the Customer Service Standard	Maintain compliance under the customer service standard.	Human Resource Services – Ongoing
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. Review and ensure <i>Accessibility for All</i> brochures and sign information continue to be used at all work locations.	Human Resource Services – Spring communication
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 training is delivered to all new employees and volunteers, all persons who develop Board policies and all persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Board for the Customer Service Standard and the IASR & Human Rights (Working Together: The Code and the AODA). Ensure training to educators, which includes teachers, DECEs and educational assistants, related to accessible program or course delivery and instruction is completed for all new employees.	Human Resource Services and Curriculum Services – Ongoing

New Initiatives

Item	Description	Responsibilities and Timelines
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
Design of Public Spaces	Make new and redeveloped spaces accessible.	Plant Services – January 2016

School Year 2016 – 2017

Ongoing Initiatives

Item	Description	Responsibilities and Timelines
Continue to support the Customer Service Standard	Maintain compliance under the customer service standard.	Human Resource Services – Ongoing
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. Review and ensure <i>Accessibility for All</i> brochures and sign information continue to be used at all work locations.	Human Resource Services – Spring communication
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 training is delivered to all new employees and volunteers, all persons who develop Board policies and all persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Board for the Customer Service Standard and the IASR & Human Rights (Working Together: The Code and the AODA). Ensure Training to Educators, which includes, teachers, DECE's and Educational Assistants related to accessible program or course delivery and instruction is completed for all new employees.	Human Resource Services and Curriculum Services – Ongoing

New Initiatives

Item	Description	Responsibilities and Timelines
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 2014 – 2015

Co-Chairs of Accessibility Working Committee

Cecil Roach	Coordinating Superintendent, Equity and Community Services
Janet Hicks	Senior Manager, Human Resource Services

Committee Members

Pam Beetlestone	Vice-President, ETFO
John Britnell	CUPE 1734
Dorothy Cammaert	Superintendent, Human Resource Services
Carol Chan	Trustee
Ivy Chan	Principal, Community and International Education Services
Jan Christen	Administrator of Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services
Nadia Ciacci	President, ETFO-OT
Beth Dolson	Administrative Assistant, Human Resource Services
Debbie Donsky	Principal, Curriculum & Instructional Services
Lynette Early	HR Analyst, Human Resource Services
James Flynn	Elementary Principal
Lisa Gibson	Assistant Manager, Web Portal & Communications
Gerry Harrison	Staffing Officer, OSSTF
Norma Hick	Assistant Manager, Administrative Services
Mark Marchand	Associate Manager, Administrative Services
Nancy Massie	Assistant Manager, Records Management, MFIPPA
Roddy McLernon	Steward, CUPE Local1196
Juanita Nathan	Trustee
Karen Parris	Secondary Vice Principal
Kim Tanaka	Principal of Student Services
Robert Selvazzo	Manager, Facilities Services
Jane Ross	Senior Manager, Planning & Property Development
Steve Rutledge	Enterprise Portal Officer
Pierre Schipper	Manager of Facilities Services
Kathryn Smallwood	Assistant Manager, Contract Specialist
John Steh	Associate Manager, Leadership & Development
Carolyn Viney	Member of SEAC
Colin Wackett	Teacher, Elementary (ETFO-YR)

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

Objects added to the environment: doors, windows, elevators, furniture, workstations, recreational facilities, playgrounds, bathroom hardware, etc.

Architectural

Building design, area adjacent to the building, shape of room, size of doorways, etc.

Information

Inadequate or incomprehensible signage, difficulties reading brochures, forms, manuals, web sites, fax transmissions, equipment labels, computer screens, etc.

Communication

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

Attitudinal

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

Technological

Computers, photocopiers, fax machines, telephones and switches, inadequate or inappropriate assistive technologies.

Policy or 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.