



ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY REPORT AND MULTI-YEAR PLAN

October 2016

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 2016-2017 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.

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 of Human Resources, Plant and Planning 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 providing safe, welcoming and inclusive learning and working environments for all students, staff and community members.

Our service departments continue working to eliminate barriers and improve accessibility across the system. This annual report and multi-year plan highlights many of our accomplishments in this area and identifies ongoing plans and initiatives to continue improving access to Board facilities, programs, policies, practices and services.

I would like to thank the Accessibility Working Committee for their work in supporting these efforts across our Board.

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 2015-2016 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, annually schedules projects to update and modify our existing buildings to make them more accessible. Many of our facilities were built years before accessibility standards were in place. Plant Services works in conjunction with Student Services and Human Resource Services to identify and support the needs of our students, staff and community. During the 2015-2016 school year, a total of \$900,000 of accessibility projects were identified. Work that was started/completed on our buildings during the 2015-2016 school year includes:

School	Description of Work
Alexander Mackenzie High School	Installed lift at stage
Ballantrae Public School	*Upgraded fire alarm system including strobe
Bayview Glen Public School	Installed lift at stage and provided automatic door opener
Deer Park Public School	Installed automatic door opener
Devins Drive Public School	Asphalt and concrete replacement to improve accessibility
Keswick High School	*Upgraded elevator replacement
Langstaff Secondary School	Installed accessible ramp and provided barrier free washroom
Lester B. Pearson Public School	*Upgraded fire alarm system including strobe
O.M. MacKillop Public School	Installed lift at stage and provided automatic door opener
Prince Charles Public School	Interlocked magnetic hold open devices for door
Richmond Hill High School	Installed automatic door opener
Summitview Public School	*Upgraded fire alarm system including strobe
Westmount Collegiate Institute	Installed automatic door opener

*Existing systems identified and scheduled by Plant Services for replacement/renewal with replacement equipment providing enhanced accessibility features.

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 Public School and Roméo Dallaire Public School.

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 2015-2016 school year, over 18,152 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 2015-2016 year, the Ministry of Education approved 1589 Special Equipment Amount (SEA) claims for the purchase of assistive technology for students with special needs. We also provided 1376 SEA claims to refresh the technology for those students with dated hardware. Thus the SEA process supported 2965 SEA claims in the 2015-2016 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 continues 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 1675 clients during the 2015-2016 school year. Their work included removing barriers in the workplace for staff who had an identified disability. During the school year there were 275 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
- sign language interpreters;
- document camera; and
- air purifiers for scent sensitivities/allergies.

Accessibility Working Committee

During the 2015 - 2016 school year the committee met regularly to discuss the impact of the Integrated Accessibility Standard (IAS) that came into effect July 1, 2011, under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005. Under the legislation we are required to develop a Multi-Year plan. Our original plan was developed for the years 2012-2017. A new Multi-Year plan will be created during the upcoming school year.

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 2015 (June 12-18) to Principals/VP's and Managers that included the roles and responsibilities in ensuring accessibility throughout the Board for the 2015/16 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>Notification of the annual compliance training was provided to system leaders in June and September 2015. Leaders were reminded to ensure that all new staff complete the required training under the AODA.</p> <p>Training for the Customer Service Standard and the IASR & Human Rights should be 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 for educators, related to accessible program or course delivery and instruction, should be completed by teachers, DECEs and educational assistants.</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	Our public and school websites conform to the WCAG 2.0 Level AA standard. Additional resources have been implemented to monitor the websites and the accessibility of the contents to ensure that content consistently meets WCAG 2.0 standards. Additional resources include SiteImprove software for monitoring. Resources to improve capacity on how to create accessible website content include webcasts (e.g. AODA Checklist, Web Standards, 'How To' videos on our AODA intranet).
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 2016 and Ongoing	<p>The Accessible Formats Committee continues to meet to review documents and training materials and develop other supporting strategies. Members include staff from ITS, Directors, Leadership Development, HRS.</p> <p>During the summer of 2015 & 2016 videos on the public facing website and videos used for compliance training were transcribed and/or captioned.</p> <p>Key content contributors to the board's public facing website have been trained in making accessible word, excel and PDF documents. Internal training modules being revised to include accessibility considerations and opportunities are sought (e.g. K-12 Networks, Tech Ed. Camp) to continue to build capacity within the organization.</p>

Item	Description	Responsibilities and Timelines	Implementation
			<p>A process is in place for students and staff to request accessible formats and communication supports.</p> <p>Requests from the public can be invited and received through: Barrier Buster, Parent Handbook and Guides, school libraries, 'How May We Help You' signage in all facilities, and, school and department staff.</p>
School Libraries	Ensure readiness of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of print resources upon request.	Curriculum Services – June 2016 and ongoing	<p>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 procedure to respond to requests.</p> <p>All Librarians and Library Technicians were trained during the 2015-16 school year to ensure they are aware of the processes in place for providing accessible or conversion-ready formats of print resources upon request.</p>
Design of Public Spaces	Ensure all new and redeveloped public spaces are accessible	Plant Services – January 2016	<p>All requests for outside features are to be submitted to the School Grounds Enhancement Committee for approval. This will ensure that all new or enhancements are compliant with legislation. Standard designs (compliant with the legislation) have been created for raised gardens, pathways and outdoor classrooms to assist with the process.</p>

MULTI-YEAR PLAN 2016 – 2017

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2016 – 2017) outlines the Board’s commitment and implementation strategy to identify, remove and prevent barriers in accordance with all applicable legislation.

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, related to accessible program or course delivery and instruction, is completed by teachers, DECEs and educational assistants	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 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 2015 – 2016

Co-Chairs of Accessibility Working Committee

Scott Yake
Janet Hicks

Coordinating Superintendent, HR, Plant and Planning Services
Senior Manager, Human Resource Services

Committee Members

Pam Beetlestone
Karen Bett
John Britnell
Dorothy Cammaert
Carol Chan
Ivy Chan
Jan Christen
Nadia Ciacci
Debbie Donsky
Lynette Early
James Flynn
Elaine Gaudio
Lisa Gibson
Gerry Harrison
Roddy McLernon
Juanita Nathan
Karen Parris
Kim Tanaka
Robert Selvazzo
Jane Ross
Steve Rutledge
Pierre Schipper
Kathryn Smallwood
John Steh
Carolyn Viney
Colin Wackett

Vice-President, ETFO
Coordinator Strategic Development
CUPE 1734
Superintendent, Human Resource Services
Trustee
Principal, Community and International Education Services
Administrator of Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services
President, ETFO-OT
Principal, Curriculum & Instructional Services
HR Analyst, Human Resource Services
Elementary Principal
Administrative Assistant, Coordinating Superintendent
Assistant Manager, Web Portal & Communications
Staffing Officer, OSSTF
Steward, CUPE Local1196
Trustee
Secondary Vice Principal
Principal of Student Services
Manager, Facilities Services
Senior Manager, Planning & Property Development
Enterprise Portal Officer
Manager of Facilities Services
Assistant Manager, Contract Specialist
Associate Manager, Leadership & Development
Member of SEAC
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.