



AODA Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

**Monday, May 7, 2020
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
Google Meet**

In Attendance (24 members)

| | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Anirud, Anthony | Khushal, Shelly | Petri, Derek | Taylor, Shane |
| Beetlestone, Pam | Lee, Paul | Rutledge, Steve | Viney, Carolyn |
| Estriga, Teresa | Long, Gail | Sellers, John | Wieringa, Tina |
| Forsyth, Dawn | Luk, Gilbert | Shep, John | Woods, Paul |
| Hastings, Sue | Luong, Stephanie | Smith, Patrick | Wu, Brandon |
| Kaderdina, Rizwana | McRoberts, Bob | Snowball, Andrew | |

Regrets

Brusselers, Dale; Harrison, Gerry; Kostic, John; Laliberte, Dawn; Leesti, Laura; Malcolm, John; Susie Nunes; Vellathottam, George.

1. Welcome

Introduction and statement on COVID-19 shutdown and implications for accessibility from Human Rights Commissioner, Anthony Anirud.

2. Land / Relationship Acknowledgment

Non-typical land acknowledgment because we would normally be meeting on Board property. However, today we are all meeting from our homes. Rather than just acknowledge the lands and honour the treaties within York Region, today is an opportunity to reflect on our relationships to neighbouring indigenous communities on which our homes reside – some within York Region and some beyond.

Action Item

Keep these ideas in our mind as we go through our meeting today and consider how we can better support our Board's indigenous community.

3. Approval of Previous Minutes

Motion passed to approve November 25, 2019 minutes (all minutes are in draft format until

approved by committee members); approved by Tina Wieringa, seconded by Steve Rutledge.

4. Inclusion Activity / Professional Learning

Accessibility Considerations for Virtual Meetings – online live poll conducted (using Poll Everyone) asking: **What is your preferred virtual meeting platform?**

Virtual meeting platforms (poll results) and discussion:

- **Adobe Connect (7%)** – Recommended for engagement features such as blackboard and is currently used for summer school online learning. However, Flash requirements for Adobe Connect will be problematic once Adobe ends supports for Flash by end of 2020.
- **Google Meet (47%)** – User friendly and easy to access with your Board credentials. Student Service teams appreciate automatic live captioning features which support DHH staff members and learners, with recognition that captioning software. “Google Translate” feature for Chrome can be used in Google Meet to translate live captions into different languages.
- **GoToMeeting (7%)** – Officially supported by and licensed through the Board. All principals and superintendents now have access GoToMeeting, which is arguably more user friendly, has better connections and allows you to have co-organizers. Option to provide live captions through live captionist.
- **Zoom (33%)** – Preferred based on ease of access, use and features (e.g., breakout rooms and host control). However, notable security concerns and high profile security breaches were raised. Not recommended by HRS and ITS at this time.
- **Other (7%)** – Microsoft Team was also recommended as a lesser-known virtual meeting platform that is currently being utilized by ITS / EAS.

Debrief question: What are some pros/cons for using virtual meetings once we resume regular operations?

Action Items

- Consider various accessibility features (e.g., live captions, screen reader support, magnifiers, keyboard accessibility) available for each platform
- Recognize the type of meeting being conducted (e.g., small team meeting vs. large committee meetings) to determine which platform will best serve audience/participants.

5. HRCO Staffing News

Departure of Shellyann Rodney from HRCO and acknowledgment of her contributions.
Replacement hiring on hold due to the current closure; revaluation upon return to work.

6. Subcommittee Restructuring

Motion passed to formally merge existing Built Environment & Planning Services Subcommittee with Barrier Buster Subcommittee. Newly amalgamated subcommittee to be called “**Barrier Buster and Built Environment Subcommittee**”, and will have the following combined mandate:

- The Barrier Buster and Built Environment Subcommittee operates primarily through Plant and Planning Services, and with the two-part objective of ensuring compliance with the AODA and all other relevant legislation:
 1. Barrier Buster: Review, assess and resolve submissions received through the [Barrier Buster online reporting tool](#). Recommendations arising out of this review process are communicated the relevant Board staff for follow-up and/or implementation, as well as to the individual(s) who submitted the Barrier Buster reporting form. All Barrier Buster submissions are tracked chronologically and resulting accessibility work are reported in the HRCO Annual Accessibility Reports.
 2. Accessibility Projects: Determine feasibility, timelines and implementation of initiatives to remove physical and/or structural barriers within the learning and working environments of YRDSB. Status reporting on all [accessibility \(pilot\) projects](#) related to the built environment are communicated through the Barriers Buster and Built Environment Subcommittee.

New AODA Advisory Committee member, Gilbert Luk (in place of Dawn Adams) to join Barrier Buster and Built Environment Subcommittee.

Following formal approval of Accessibility Policy #407 at the February 2020 Policy and By-Law Committee meeting, motion passed to formally disband the ad hoc Accessibility Policy Review Subcommittee.

7. Subcommittee Status Updates

Representative from each subcommittee/working group presented actions currently in place to support students/staff accessibility in response to COVID-19.

A. Barrier Buster and Built Environment Subcommittee

- **Building checks and access to schools** – Plant staff maintaining operations through regular building checks and operations team still providing access to school staff (as required) as part of the Learning and Caring Plan.
- **SEA equipment and PPE distribution** – Operations team supporting Student Services by gathering Special Equipment Amount (SEA) equipment from schools and couriering to homes to support students with IEP needs; also helped in gathering Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from schools and distributed to local hospitals.
- **Barrier Buster** – accessibility work currently on hold during shutdown, but will continue as soon as re-entry into schools is permitted.
- **All Access Washrooms** – Hardware and signage completed at most schools. Some issues from specific schools regarding hardware noted by Principals, but vast majority of Category 1-3 work completed. Some 38 Category 4 schools that require significant renovations to be reassessed for feasibility.

B. Student Services Subcommittee

- **Student Services online resources** – Series of 12 online resources have been created and embedded into Learning and Caring Plan in support of students with special education needs:
 1. Implementing Accommodations in an Online Learning Model
 2. Alternative Programming for Providing Modified/Accommodated Learning at Home
 3. Student Services Supports
 4. Student Suicide Response During School Closures
 5. Mental Health Resources and Information to Support Students and Families
 6. Community Resources for Behaviour, Mental Health & Financial Supports
Student Services Department Staff
 7. Supplementary Resources for Students with Special Education Needs
 8. Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction (multiple documents)
 9. AODA Guidelines and technical tips for the web accessibility (multiple documents)
 10. Visuals Section - pre-created documents
 11. Task Analysis - pre-created documents
 12. Assistive Technology Tip Sheets (e.g., Accessing Google Classroom Instructions, Screenshot Reader Install Instructions, Accessing the Boardmaker Online Student Centre, etc)
- **Synchronous learning pilot** – 26 BLV / DHH teachers volunteered to do pilot

synchronous learning and conferencing. Involved consent, always having at least two educators present, will be optional with alternative learning formats available to students. Feedback collected and sent to board to inform synchronous learning supports for students with special needs (difficult with conflicting union messaging to teachers).

- **Alternative format Board videos** – Ongoing work with HRCO to make second version of Director’s speech that would be captioned with ASL translations. Script will also include video descriptions to support BLV students, staff, community members.
- **IPRC interim process** – Secure online “Confirmation of Continued Individual Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Identification and Placement” process using Microsoft Teams platform to confirm student placements for 2020-2021 school year.
- **IEP development** – Review of student IEPs to reassess accommodations/modifications required with online learning. Early Intervention Services meetings for JK students entering into school with exceptionalities.
- **SEA equipment protocol** – In process of creating protocol to outline SEA equipment summer collections process for how to safely collect SEA equipment for repair/servicing that is remaining in schools.
- **Inclusive Schools and Community Services (ISCS) update** – Seeing how school closures have illuminated barriers to accessibility and have disabled students and families in a variety of ways.
- **Supporting vulnerable families project** – Collaborating with nutrition program providers to support families through \$100 e-transfer subsidies for financial, housing, clothing, mental health needs.
- **ISCS/FNMI referral form** – Revised to focus on matters related to the school closures.
- **Teacher Liaisons (TLs) support** – Have supported the communication of Ministry and York Region documents, plans and resources for families trying to support their children (translation requests are often surface to underlying issues that families are experiencing).
- **Equity Consultants** – Developing resources that focus on caring using students’ pyramid of needs (i.e., Maslow’s hierarchy of needs).

- **CUPE 1734 update** – Union is actively working (from home) with the Board to ease concerns and fears of members as a result of the pandemic. Office remains open to receive calls and is operating virtually under “business as usual” conditions. Staying engaged and supportive of members has helped to ease members/staff during these uncertain times.

C. Human Resources Subcommittee

- **Disability Management (DM) team update** – Entire DM staff is working remotely, continuing to opening DM files, increase/decrease work percentages based on IWAPs, call employees, arrange virtual meetings for return to work. DM staff have reached out specifically to employees on caseload with anxiety to ensure they are have resources and supports as required.
- **Mental Health training modules for system leaders** – HRS previously hosted a series of Mental Health presentations that have now been converted into online training modules for system leaders (completed in collaboration with Wellness Coordinator and LDD). Training module will go live by end of May to provide knowledge/skills for how to:
 - 1) identify staff with mental health concerns (duty to inquire),
 - 2) offer support/accommodation for employees,
 - 3) provide attendance management support for employee absences, and
 - 4) conduct virtual meeting with employees in need.
- **Client Satisfaction survey** – Focus groups completed, but final report still in progress (delayed due to shut down and redirected priorities).

Action Item

Important for us all to continue to engage with staff and make sure they are doing okay during this time.

D. Digital Media, Website Management and Learning Working Group (D5G)

- **ITS continued operations** – Hit the ground running since closure began with all teams (including Service Desk) are still operating and actively involved in Working/Learning from Home initiatives.
- **Access to and distribution of technology** – Teacher Technology Exchange Program (TTEP) hardware distributed to teachers then technology provided to students, which included cell phones with internet data plans to participate in online

learning (highly successful). Subsequently, secretarial staff provided with technology to perform day-to-day work.

- **Attendance recording** – Employee attendance and timecards still need to be recorded and submitted. Adjustments have been made for ITS to support mass timecard processing.
- **Increased online capacity for teachers** – Teachers given increased access to student management accounts. Changes to the way Trillium is accessed for teaching staff and Guidance Counsellors to allow remote access for performing teaching and guidance duties.
- **New remote applications and systems** – Secure document handling (for IPRCs), system designed to share confidential information securely through Microsoft Teams (ITS increasingly adopting this platform).
- **New YRDSB website launch** – In process of having web content migrated to new platform. Delay in plans to connect with departments to update respective webpages and to train content contributors due to shutdown.
- **Learning Design and Development (LDD) update** – Collaborating with various departments to support Learn and Work from Home plans, including Mental Health online module, Mental Health Guide for Managers. Work from Home Guide and COVID-19 website and related documents.
- **Staff professional development opportunities** – Leadership Developing is actively working with Webmaster to create staff professional development page on BWW ([The Learning Hub](#)).
- **Principal and VP onboarding** – Supporting onboarding process for new principals and vice-principals who have started during this time.

Action Item

Staff encouraged to visit The Learning Hub and review/participate in online professional development opportunities.

E. Curriculum Working Group

- **Accessibility supports for teachers** – Creating accessibility resources (e.g., web tools, slide deck templates, captioning) to ensure content shared with students and parents in the Learning and Caring Plan meets AODA requirements. Has been difficult because tools available to teachers often do not have functionality to make accessible content.

- **Improving accessibility resources** – Research and testing resources and technology to better support accessible events and other meetings styles through universal design. Considerations around standardizing lower third of slideshow to support captioning and translations.

8. Accessibility News Items

A. Annual Accessibility Report 2018-2019

- **November 19, 2019:** Report presented to and approved by Board Standing Committee and now available online to the public via HRCO website under Accessibility Reports and Plans
- **December 19, 2019:** Accessibility Compliance Report submitted to the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility

B. Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Revisions and Renewal

- Significant reformatting and revisions underway, including adjusted reporting period (September to August), renewed 5-year time frame (September 2020 to August 2025) to align with AODA and stronger alignment with Accessibility Policy #407 and AODA standards.

C. New provincial accessibility framework: Advancing Accessibility in Ontario

- **January 27, 2020:** [Government of Ontario announced a new cross-government framework](#) focused on four key areas:
 - 1) Breaking down barriers in the built environment,
 - 2) Government leading by example as an accessible policy maker, service provider and employer,
 - 3) Increasing participation in economy for people with disabilities, and
 - 4) Improving understanding and awareness about accessibility.

D. Membership call-out (2 vacancies)

- One (1) Parent, Family and Community Engagement Advisory Committee (PEAC) representative; and
- One (1) Equity and Inclusivity Advisory Committee (EIAC) representative.

9. Additional Items from Committee Members

- Anthony Anirud discussed the suite of online accessibility training beyond Accessibility 101.

- Carolyn Viney need how we to ensure learning is impactful.
- Patrick Smith asked about Family Status implications during closure; AA responded how this is an important consideration, weighs on decision-making daily, being dealt with on case-by-case basis.
- Bob McRoberts thanked entire AODA Advisory Committee for update and continued work in support of system.

10. Upcoming Meeting Dates and Adjournment

- Process for scheduling upcoming meetings for September 2020 and November 2020 (please note: if you are unable to attend a meeting, please send an email to let us know and arrange for a designate to attend on your behalf).
- Concluding remarks by Anthony Anirud – social isolation is one of the worst aspects of this pandemic and we may want to reach out for support but we're not sure where to go. If this is the case, please reach out to us and we can direct you where you need to go.

Meeting adjourned.