

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



**YEAR NINE REPORT**  
**OCTOBER 2011**

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

**Anna DeBartolo**  
**Chair of the Board**

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## **AIM**

This Plan describes the measures that the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) has taken in the past school year and measures that will be taken during the 2011-2012 school year to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities who work in, use or attend school board facilities and services.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

This report:

1. Describes the process by which the YRDSB will identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Reviews earlier efforts to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
3. Lists the policies, programs, practices, and services that the Board will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Describes the measures the Board will take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. Describes how the Board will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

## **COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING**

The York Region District School is committed to:

1. Establishing an Accessibility Working Committee with representation from all stakeholder groups.
2. Consulting with people with disabilities in the development and review of its annual accessibility plans.
3. Ensuring that school board policies and procedures are consistent with the principles of accessibility.
4. Improving access to facilities, programs, policies, practices and services for students, staff parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community.

The Director of Education has authorized the Accessibility Working Committee, under the leadership of the Associate Director of Education, Schools and Human Resources, to prepare an annual accessibility plan that will enable the York Region District School Board to meet these commitments.

The annual report will be presented to the Coordinating Council of Superintendents and subsequently to the Board of Trustees each fall. The annual report is posted on the York Region District School Board website ([www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca](http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca)) along with any additional material that will be useful in the identification, removal and/or prevention of barriers to people with disabilities. The posting of the Annual Accessibility Plan is to be communicated to all York Region District School Board locations.

## **THE YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

### **Mission**

We unite in our purpose to inspire and prepare learners for life in our changing world community.

### **Vision**

We are the faces of public education. We understand our gifts and challenges. We are motivated by our dreams and act towards their fulfillment. We respect and celebrate our differences. We invite and value the spirit of community, creativity, and personal growth. We support each other. We have joy in who we are and who we are becoming.

### **Values**

We recognize and celebrate excellence, and the heart-felt efforts and contributions of our community.

We strive for equity, inclusiveness, and diversity in all our programs, practices, facilities, and people.

We value dedication and commitment.

We value and will respond in an appropriate manner to the voices, ideas, and understanding of all our community members.

We believe it is the right and responsibility of everyone to ensure a safe nurturing community.

We embrace the spirit of innovation that acts to realize opportunities to transform our vision into reality.

We are all responsible for our words and actions.



The York Region District School Board is committed to providing environments for our students and staff that are both inclusive and accessible to all. We believe the well-being of students, staff and visitors can be achieved by creating a culture of caring and learning that emphasizes inviting physical environments and safe and supportive schools and workplaces.

The annual Accessibility Plan provides a platform to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. The Accessibility Working Committee develops this plan annually in consultation with a diverse group of stakeholders who provide valuable input and feedback.

Together, we are working hard to improve accessibility to facilities, programs, policies, practices and services. I encourage you to review the plan and continue to bring forward your constructive ideas regarding accessibility.

Yours truly,

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

Ken Thurston  
Director of Education

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

The purpose of the accessibility plan is to describe the measures that the board has taken during the previous year, and the measures the board will take during the coming school year, to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE 2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR**

During the past school year many of the service departments continued their efforts to support the elimination of barriers.

### Plant Services

Plant Services, within budgetary allocations, continued to work to update and modify our existing buildings to make them more accessible. Many of our buildings were built years before accessibility standards were in place. In addition, Plant Services worked in conjunction with Student Services to support the needs of our students. During the 2010-2011 school year the total spent on accessibility was \$975,000. Work completed/started on our buildings during the 2010-2011 school year includes:

<b>School</b>	<b>Description of Work</b>
Bond Lake Public School	Install automatic door openers
Charlton Public School	Improve accessibility
Cornell Village Public School	Install ramp and opener at south-west exit
Doncrest Public School	Install concrete ramp and automatic openers at KG door
Edward T. Crowle Public School	Improve accessibility
Kettleby Public School	Install ramp to portapack
Louis-Honore Frechette Public School	Install automatic openers at main entrance
Moraine Hills Public School	Modify automatic opener at main entrance and add automatic opener on east side
Pierre Elliott Trudeau High School	Install automatic opener on office and gym doors
Silver Pines Public School	Install ramps for access to playground
Silver Pines Public School	Install automatic door opener on north side
Stouffville District Secondary School	Install automatic openers on office and library doors
Thornhill Public School	Install ramp and automatic opener
Unionville Public School	Install wood ramp at west exit from portables.

## Planning Services

Planning Services continues to work to ensure that all schools being designed and built, or any additions to existing schools, meet or exceed accessibility standards. Since the start of the Board's Capital Strategy in 1999, a total of 74 new elementary schools, 12 secondary schools, and 42 additions to schools have been constructed.

During the 2010-2011 school year, Planning Services worked to ensure that two elementary schools and one secondary school addition were built to the Board's accessibility standards. These schools include Nellie McClung Public School and Pierre Berton Public School, and an addition to Emily Carr Secondary School. The Board is currently constructing an additional five elementary schools, and two additions to elementary schools which will meet or exceed accessibility standards. These schools are scheduled to open in the 2012-2013 school year.

## Student Services

Student Services works to eliminate barriers for identified students. 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 2010-2011 school year, over 16,000 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 2010-2011 year, the Ministry of Education approved 1,201 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 ramps, electronic door openers, lifts and hand rails in bathrooms are examples of some physical changes to buildings that the Plant Services Department implemented.

Student Services advocates for the needs of students by reducing and/or eliminating barriers to their physical and learning environments.

### Human Resource Services

The Recruitment and Retention Team continued to ensure that the Board's employment practices do not pose any barriers to potential applicants.

Some examples of this past year's work include:

- Increasing accessibility to job opportunities by advertising on websites that support persons with disabilities i.e. [www.linkup.ca](http://www.linkup.ca), [www.joininfo.ca](http://www.joininfo.ca).
- Continuing to offer accommodations to applicants with disabilities or special needs which require specific adjustments or equipment when participating in selection processes i.e. providing additional time and assistance, quiet space, translation devices.
- Enhancing employment practices by extending the offer of accommodation throughout the recruitment, hiring and sign up processes.

The Disability Management Team serviced 954 clients during the 2010/2011 school year. Their work included removing barriers in the workplace for staff who had an identified disability. Assistive devices were used in many instances to help the individual overcome the encountered barrier. Assistive devices/services purchased included:

- voice amplification systems
- computerized note taker services
- arranging work site assessments
- Functional Abilities Evaluation (FAE) assessments to co-ordinate work within the individual's functional limitations
- Accessibility devices (ie: scooter, wheelchairs and wheeled carts).



## Accessibility Working Committee

During the 2010/2011 school year the committee met regularly to implement the Customer Service Standard under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibilities and Timelines</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
Ensure newly hired staff are trained in the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service	All newly hired staff will be required to complete the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service training. Training may be on-line or done through a classroom setting.	To be completed throughout the year by Human Resource Services.	This process continued throughout the school year. Staff who were hired centrally were notified to complete the online accessibility training through the recruitment process.
Create plans to implement any new regulations introduced by the Government under the AODA	All concerned stakeholders will review the "Integrated Accessibility Regulation" and develop implementation plans.	Based on the timelines established by regulation, departments directly responsible for the deliverables, with input from the Accessibility Working Committee.	Deferred
Continue to promote methods whereby stakeholders can provide the board with information related to possible barriers	Barrier Buster information to be redistributed to schools and communities.	Spring - Human Resources Services and Student Services	Communication was sent to the system in our weekly update of April 8 – 14, 2011.
	Supply "Accessibility for All" brochures to schools.	Spring – Human Resource Services	This was deferred until the Fall 2011 as an audit of the availability of brochures was conducted at schools.
	Provide a link to the Barrier Buster tool directly from school Web-sites.	IT Services	Due to the implementation of several new systems, the Board was not able to complete this at this time.
Continue to reinforce with those responsible for policy and procedures the need to look through the disability lens when writing documents	Provide information to the Policy By-Law Committee	Human Resource Services	This information was provided to the committee at the January 10, 2011 meeting.
	Specific procedural concerns will be brought to the committee for review by the concerned stakeholder(s).	All as concerns are raised	
	The formal policy review process will be used for all concerned parties to provide input on policies under review.	On-going	

## Goals for the 2011/2012 School Year

Item	Description	Timelines and Responsibilities
Implement the Integrated Accessibility Standard	Review the Integrated Accessibility Standard and ensure specific departments/teams develop plans for implementation.	Based on the timelines established by regulation, multi disciplinary teams directly responsible for the deliverables, with input from the Accessibility Working Committee.
Continue to support the Customer Service Standard	Ongoing training of new employees	As new employees are hired – through Human Resource Services.
Policy Review	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.
Feedback on barriers and the Customer Service Standard	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 2012 by Human Resource Services and Student Services.
	Audit the Accessibility for All brochures visibility in all work locations.	Unions to conduct an audit in the spring.

## **Appendix 1 - Accessibility Working Committee 2010-2011**

Pam Beetlestone, Vice-President, ETFO  
John Britnell, CUPE 1734  
Carol Chan, Trustee  
Ivy Chan, Principal Continuing Education  
Jan Christen, Administrator of Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services  
Beth Dolson, Administrative Assistant, Human Resource Services  
Lynette Early, HR Analyst, Human Resource Services  
James Flynn, Elementary Principal  
Kim Garner, Secondary Vice Principal  
Ken Gouthro, Member of SEAC  
Gerry Harrison, Staffing Officer, OSSTF  
Sue Hastings, Manager Maintenance  
Norma Hick, Assistant Manager Administrative Services  
Janet Hicks, Manager, Human Resource Services  
Lynn Lockhart-Menzies, Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
Nancy Massie, Assistant Manager, Records Management, MFIPPA  
Rick Medland, Steward, CUPE Local 1196  
Lewis Morgulis, Manager of Planning  
Janet Porter, Principal of Student Services  
Chris Tulley, Coordinating Superintendent of Education, Human Resource Services  
Betty-Lou Twiddy, President, ETFO-OT  
Ross Virgo, Manager, Public Affairs and Communications Services  
Ferial Visram, Member of PEAC  
Colin Wackett, Teacher, Elementary (ETFO-YR)  
Helen Westlake, 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 other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,

A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,

A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,

A mental disorder, or

An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

### **ACCESSIBILITY:**

Ability to be reached; easy to approach, enter, speak with or use.