



York Region District School Board

Annual Accessibility Report 2018-2019

Building an Accessible and Inclusive York Region District School Board

A report on the achievements and measures taken in the past school year to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disability-related needs who learn, work and participate in the YRDSB community.



York Region District School Board (YRDSB)

Annual Accessibility Report

September 2018 – August 2019

Prepared by

AODA Advisory Committee

In accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards
(O. Reg. 191/11, s. 4) under the Accessibility for
Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

This report is available through the following ways:

- **Online to the public:** Visit www.yrdsb.ca → [Human Rights Commissioner's Office](#) → [Accessibility](#) → [Accessibility Reports and Plans](#)
- **Online to YRDSB staff:** Login to the Board Wide Web (BWW) and under “Board Documents”, search for “[Accessibility](#)”
- **By email (in an alternative format upon request):** Contact the Human Rights Commissioner’s Office via aoda@yrdsb.ca; and
- **By phone (in an alternative format upon request):** Call the Human Rights Commissioner’s Office at 905-884-2046 ext. 311.

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1.0 Purpose and Commitment to Accessibility

1.1 Purpose

York Region District School Board (YRDSB or “the Board”) has prepared this Annual Accessibility Report in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005.

This report describes the measures that YRDSB has taken in the past school year and the ensuing summer months (September 2018 – August 2019) to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disability-related needs who learn, work and participate in the Board community.

This report will be made available to the public following the submission of our accessibility compliance report to the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility.

1.2 Commitment to Accessibility

YRDSB is committed to providing accessible learning and working environments which support the four core principles of the AODA: dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity. The Board’s commitment to accessibility further includes:

- Building fully accessible learning and working environments through shared responsibilities and inter-departmental collaboration;
- Delivering customer¹ service excellence through accessible policies, procedures, practices, programs and facilities for all members of YRDSB community;
- Consulting with people with disabilities, exceptionalities and/or special needs in the development and review of its accessibility plans;
- Maintaining an AODA Advisory Committee with representation from across the Board; and
- Completing an Annual Accessibility Report as well as reviewing and updating the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan at least once every five years.

The Human Rights Commissioner’s Office (HRCO) is tasked with managing the accessibility portfolio for YRDSB. As of January 2018, accessibility leadership and guidance by the HRCO is articulated through the work of the AODA Advisory Committee (formerly known as the Accessibility Working Committee), which is co-chaired by the Human Rights Commissioner and the Accessibility Officer.

This Annual Accessibility Report has been prepared as a separate document from the

¹ “Customer” is defined under [Board Policy #407, Accessibility](#) as “any member of the Board community, including but not limited to: trustees, employees, students, parents/guardians, permit holders, vendors, service providers, contractors, volunteers and visitors and all other persons who are invited to or who work on Board property.”

previously integrated Annual Accessibility Report and Multi-Year Plan 2018-2022. The revised format Annual Accessibility Report is based on the school year calendar plus ensuing summer months (September to August), while the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will continue to be published according to the calendar year (January to December). The preparation of separate documents is consistent with the reporting format of other school boards (e.g., Peel District School Board and York Catholic District School Board), post-secondary institutions (e.g., Queen's University and McMaster University) as well as York Region.

As per Board practice, the Annual Accessibility Report is presented to Executive Council and subsequently to Board Standing Committee each fall. Following approval and submission of the accessibility compliance report to the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, this report will be posted on the Board's accessibility webpage under "[Accessibility Reports and Plans](#)".



2.0 Message from the Human Rights Commissioner

Our Board remains committed to fostering an environment that is welcoming, safe, inclusive and is reflective of diversity among staff, students and the wider YRDSB community. For people with disabilities, we are especially mindful of structural and systemic barriers, both explicit and implicit. The principles of dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity are foremost in ensuring that people with disabilities are acknowledged, represented and have a voice in everything that we do.

Recognizing our legal obligations under Ontario's Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, we support social and educational equity with the understanding that many different paths can be pursued towards inclusion.

Accessibility remains central to enabling all members of our YRDSB community to construct and celebrate a barrier-free educational environment. We strive for nurturing inclusive pathways and opportunities supportive of all abilities. Being creative, innovative and bold when promoting initiatives that recognize the self-worth of all people remain integral to our approach to creating a welcoming environment and a barrier-free culture.

Through our Board's Mission, Vision and Values statements, we are firmly committed to fostering a culture of accessibility through a student-centered lens that defines student success through the four priorities identified in the Director's Action Plan and the Multi-Year Strategic Plan, which includes:

- **Fostering Well-Being and Mental Health** because for people with disabilities, a culture that endeavours to create safe, healthy and inclusive learning and working environments is one that understands the importance of mattering.
- **Championing Equity and Inclusivity** because by recognizing the unique challenges faced by people with disabilities, we are better able to articulate and develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to remove barriers in support of all learners.

- **Building Collaborative Relationships** because it is through engagement and giving voice that we build trusting relationships based on respectful and responsive communication.
- **Empowering Ethical Leadership** because it is by focusing on students and upholding our values that our leaders can meaningfully engage and entrust people with decision-making autonomy and independence.

I am proud and grateful to ongoing work of the AODA Advisory Committee and the seven supporting subcommittees and working groups in producing this report. During the past year, we have brought forward a revised [Accessibility Policy](#) and a more streamlined approach to barrier elimination through the [Barrier Buster](#) online report tool. We are equally excited about our accessibility projects in creating All Access Washrooms as well as Braille and High Contrast Signage in YRDSB schools. In addition, we have built capacity to better monitor and track our Board's accessibility compliance training for all employees and volunteers. We have updated the accessibility section of our HRCO website to include relevant information to keep our YRDSB community fully informed.

I am excited that we have set in motion important initiatives toward the goal of an accessible and barrier-free learning and working community at YRDSB.

Sincerely,

Anthony Anirud
Human Rights Commissioner

3.0 AODA Advisory Committee: Our Achievements for the 2018-2019 School Year

As per Ministry direction, AODA compliance falls under the Human Rights Commissioner's Office (HRCO). The AODA Advisory Committee was established in January 2018 under the direction of the HRCO to champion accessibility and provide leadership within the Board on all matters related to the implementation of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The Terms of Reference for the AODA Advisory Committee was revised in April 2019 (see [Appendix A](#)).

HRCO-branded Accessibility Diagram

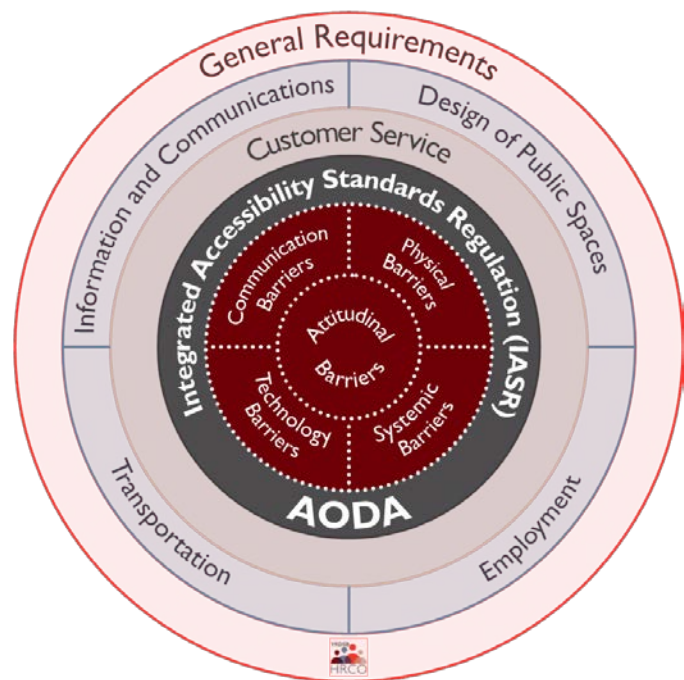
A diagram depicting the IASR was designed by the HRCO to uniquely incorporate the five main barriers to accessibility.

The barriers were incorporated in the centre of the diagram to illustrate the “target” or goal of the IASR – to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. Dotted lines are used in outlining the barriers to represent permeability and the aim to “break through” the barriers in key areas of daily living for people with disabilities.

The Customer Service standard is situated within its own ring as it is the most substantive and first of the five accessibility standards to be introduced. The remaining four accessibility standards (Information and Communications, Design of Public Spaces, Employment, and Transportation) are represented in each quadrant of the next outer ring. The outermost ring encompasses the IASR diagram in the same way that the General Requirements broadly encompass the AODA.

A Dedicated Position for Accessibility at YRDSB

In further demonstrating the Board's commitment to accessibility, the position of “Accessibility Officer” was created and filled in January 2019. This position resides within the HRCO in the role of Vice-Chair, AODA Advisory Committee. In this capacity, the Accessibility Officer acts as liaison between the HRCO and each subcommittee and working group within the AODA Advisory Committee.



7 Dedicated AODA Advisory Subcommittees and Working Groups

To best operationalize the work of the AODA Advisory Committee, the following seven specialized subcommittees and working groups were created to advance various areas of accessibility at YRDSB:

- 3.1 [Built Environment & Planning Services Subcommittee](#)
- 3.2 [Barrier Buster Subcommittee](#)
- 3.3 [Student Services Subcommittee](#)
- 3.4 [Human Resources Subcommittee](#)
- 3.5 [Digital Media, Website Management & Learning Working Group \(D5G\)](#)
- 3.6 [Curriculum Working Group](#)
- 3.7 [Accessibility Policy Review Subcommittee \(ad hoc\)](#)

The next sections outline the mandate of each subcommittee or working group, followed by their respective achievements in accessibility for the 2018-2019 school year.

3.1 Built Environment and Planning Services Subcommittee

Mandate

The Built Environment and Planning Services subcommittee is responsible for removing building and other structural barriers within the Board's working and learning environments. This subcommittee incorporates Plant and Planning Services to address both barrier removal and compliance with the AODA Design of Public Spaces standard. These built environment standards are reflected in the most recent amendments (as of January 1, 2015) to the Ontario Build Code whereby newly constructed and renovated buildings are subject to updated accessibility requirements.

Achievements for the 2018-2019 School Year

Plant Services, within budgetary allocations, annually schedules projects to update and modify existing buildings in order to make them more accessible. Plant Services works in conjunction with Student Services, Human Resource Services and the HRCO to identify and support the needs of students, staff and the wider community. During the 2018-2019 school year, over \$2.96 million were spent on accessibility-related projects and work on YRDSB buildings.

A complete list of accessibility projects/work started and/or completed on YRDSB buildings during the 2018-2019 school year is outlined in the table below:

School	Description of Work
Alexander Mackenzie High School	Installed automatic door opener on library door
Armadale Public School	Replace lift with LULA (Limited Use / Limited Application) accessibility elevator (in progress)
Bayview Hill Elementary School	Replace fire alarm system (including upgrade to visual fire alarm) (in progress)
Bayfield Secondary School	Installed automatic door openers on 3 washrooms
Central Park Public School	Replace lift with LULA accessibility elevator as part of larger project (in progress)
Charles Howitt Public School	Installed automatic door openers on 2 exterior doors
Denne Public School	Replace fire alarm system (including upgrade to visual fire alarm) (in progress)
Doncrest Public School	Installed auto door openers on barrier-free washroom and 2 exterior doors
Dr. Bette Stephenson Centre for Learning	Installed automatic door openers on 5 doors

School	Description of Work
Education Centre Aurora	Installed automatic door openers on 2 barrier-free washroom doors
Emily Carr Secondary School	Installed automatic door openers on main office, gym and change room doors
German Mills Public School	Installed automatic door openers on 3 doors (leading to elevator)
Glad Park Public School	Installed automatic door openers on main entrance doors (2) and barrier-free washrooms (2)
Glen Cedar Public School	Replaced fire alarm system (upgraded to visual fire alarm)
H.G. Bernard Public School	Modernize elevator controls and replace stage incline lift (in progress)
Mackenzie Glen Public School	Add remote for existing main entrance automatic door opener; and install automatic door opener to staff room and ground floor barrier free washroom doors
Meadowbrook Public School	Install ramp to front door (in progress)
Newmarket High School	Replace fire alarm system as part of larger project (in progress)
Pierre Elliot Trudeau High School	Renovate family studies room to create accessible station (in progress)
Randall Public School	Install stage lift and automatic door openers on office and gym doors (in progress)
Sutton District High School	Upgrade elevators as part of larger project (in progress)
Teston Village Public School	Add remote for existing main entrance automatic door opener; and install automatic door opener to staff room and ground floor barrier free washroom doors
Thornhill Secondary School	Replace fire alarm as part of larger project (in progress)
Unionville High School	Installed LCN automatic door opener with key switch on guidance office door
W.J. Watson Public School	Upgraded elevator as part of larger project
Walter Scott Public School	Installed automatic door opener on main office door
Wellington Public School	Install stage lift and automatic door openers on office and gym doors (in progress)
Westmount Collegiate Institute	Installed automatic door opener on guidance office and 2 washrooms doors; and modernized elevators controls

New Schools: YRDSB opened one new elementary school (Victoria Square Public School) during the 2018-2019 school year.



The Board is also in the final stages of construction on two new elementary schools (Viola Desmond Public School and Rouge Park Public School) that will meet or exceed Ontario Building Code accessibility standards.

Since the start of the Board's Capital Strategy in 1999, a total of 88 new elementary schools, 14 secondary schools, and 55 additions to schools have been constructed.

All Access Washroom Pilot Project: A second all access (gender neutral) washroom pilot project was carried out and completed in 2018 across 10 additional schools (35 schools were included in the initial pilot project). Plant and Planning Services undertook a joint assessment and evaluation over the summer of 2018 to determine the requirements to fully implement this initiative across the system.

A set of guidelines for all access washrooms were established. All access washrooms are intended for use by students or staff who self-identify as gender diverse or feel the need for privacy due to religious or other personal reasons. Project preparations were conducted throughout the 2018-2019 school year, including reviewing and finalizing all access washroom signage following consultations with various stakeholders.

In June 2019, each school was contacted by Planning Services to finalize the recommended washroom locations that were identified in the project assessment. Plant Services has now begun the implementation phase of the project. A total of 483 school washrooms will be transitioned to an all access or all gender washrooms (gender-neutral but not barrier-free).

The full-scale implementation of the All Access Washrooms Project is expected to be completed during the winter 2019-2020.

Braille and High Contrast Signage Pilot Project: All YRDSB schools constructed after 2005 have Braille included as part of all school signage. However, signage colours were typically chosen to match school colours, which did not always provide fully accessible contrast levels.

Blind/Low Vision (BLV) Services, an interdisciplinary team of Students Services, worked in

collaboration with Plant Services to establish a standardized high contrast style and format for all new Board signage (i.e., white lettering on a black background). Signage throughout the Board's two newest elementary schools (Viola Desmond Public School and Rouge Park Public School) will use this new high contrast standard.



Braille translation: Barrier Free All Access Washroom

BLV Services are currently in the process of creating a list of priority schools with students who are known to require Braille signage as an accessibility support. Once these priority schools are identified, Plant Services will begin the process of updating and replacing existing signage throughout these identified schools with Braille and high contrast signage. The goal is to have the Braille and High Contrast Signage Project completed in advance of 2025, the year identified for full accessibility in Ontario.

3.2 Barrier Buster Subcommittee

Mandate

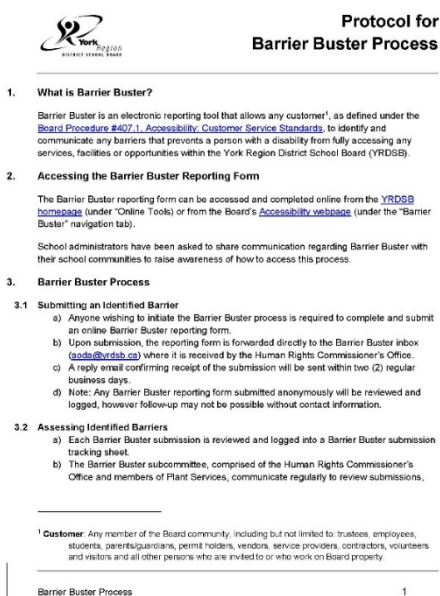
The Barrier Buster Subcommittee is responsible for reviewing relevant board projects and site plans to ensure compliance with the AODA and applicable legislation regarding barrier-free facilities. The subcommittee meets regularly to review submissions received through the online Barrier Buster reporting form. Recommendations arising out of this review process are conveyed to project managers and other relevant Board staff for follow-up and implementation. All Barrier Buster submissions are tracked and all progress is reported in the Annual Accessibility Report.

Achievements for the 2018-2019 School Year

The Barrier Buster subcommittee, comprised of members of Plant Services and the HRCO, met regularly throughout the school year to review and follow-up on submissions, as well as determine actions to remove barriers where appropriate.

During the 2018-2019 school year, the Barrier Buster Subcommittee received, responded to, and/or referred a total of 20 Barrier Buster submissions. 3 submissions were carried over from the previous school year while 17 new submissions were received.

Accessibility and barrier removal work completed as a result of Barrier Buster submissions can be viewed in the Section 3.1 table on pages 10-11 of this report.



Barrier Buster Protocol: The Barrier Buster process was formalized into a supporting protocol document of the Board's revised Accessibility Policy. The Protocol for Barrier Buster Process was created to outline the process that is undertaken once a Barrier Buster submission is received by the HRCO.



3.3 Student Services Subcommittee

Mandate

The Student Services subcommittee is responsible for meeting the learning needs of students as outlined in the Special Education Plan through the development of accessible resources, programs, services and learning environments.

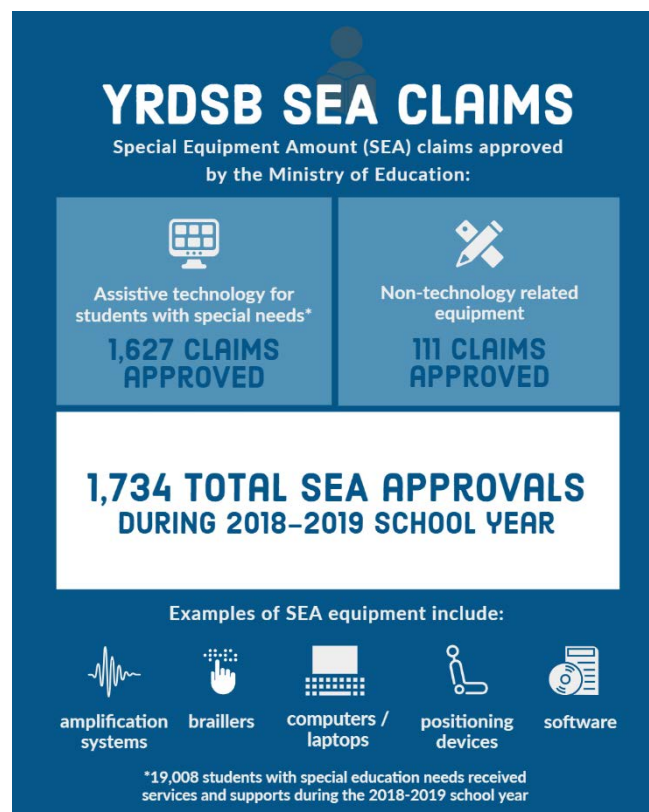
Achievements for the 2018-2019 School Year

YRDSB strives to provide each student with the opportunity to develop the skills, attitudes and knowledge required to reach their full potential. To this end, our Board's Student Services department continues to support the needs of students by identifying and reducing barriers to their learning environments.

During the 2018-2019 school year, a total of 19,008 students with special education needs (or exceptionalities) received services and supports through their Individual Education Plan (IEP). Accommodations set out in the IEP are implemented to reduce or remove barriers to learning for a student with special needs. Some examples of accommodations include: extra time on tests, varying assessment methods, photocopied notes and access to assistive technology through Special Equipment Amount (SEA) claims.

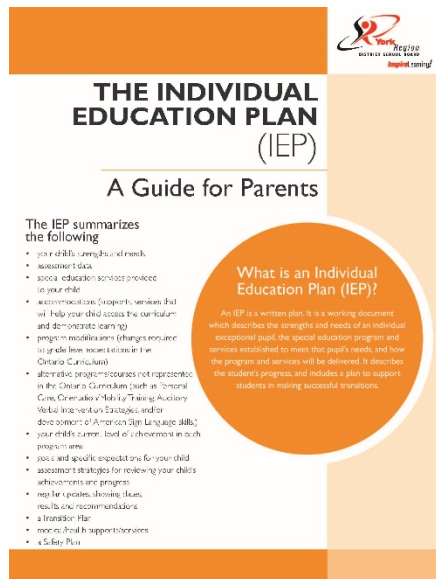
SEA Claims: The Ministry of Education approved 1,627 SEA claims for the purchase of assistive technology for students with special needs, and 111 claims for non-technology related equipment. Therefore, the SEA process supported a total of 1,738 SEA claims during the 2018-2019 school year. This equipment includes (but it not limited to):

- amplification systems,
- braille,
- computers / laptops,
- positioning devices (for sitting, standing and lying); and
- software that provides access to curriculum (such as word prediction programs, speech-to-text programs, and text-to-speech programs).



Accessible Special Education Plan: Over the course of the 2018-2019 school year, the Board's Special Education Plan was converted into accessible webpages. Each section now exists on the YRDSB website as its own fully accessible webpage in accordance with alternative format requirements under the AODA. The accessible webpages were shared with the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) in May 2019 for approval. The final and approved version of the accessible [Special Education Plan](#) was presented to Board Standing Committee in June 2019 for submission to the Ministry of Education.

Accessible Student Services Brochures: Revisions are also underway for the various informational brochures within Student Services that were identified for conversion into accessible PDF formats.



Two Student Services brochures were converted into accessible documents during 2018-2019 school year:

- A Parent's Guide to Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC); and
- The Individual Education Plan (IEP): A Guide for Parents

Two additional brochures will be made accessible during 2019-2020 school year:

- A Parent's Guide to Special Education Funding for Assistive Technology and Equipment for Students with Special Education Needs; and
- Special Education: A Communication Guide for Parents

Service Dog Protocol: Through spring 2019, Student Services was engaged by the HRCO to collaboratively update the Board's current "Protocol for Service Dogs in YRDSB Schools" to align with AODA legislation and the Board's Accessibility Policy. Further revisions to the Protocol are expected in light of the Draft Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM): School Board Policies on Service Animals² that was issued on April 1, 2019.

² The Ministry of Education released the official PPM 163: School Board Policies on Service Animals on September 9, 2019. Further reconsiderations for the Board's Service Dogs Protocol will be made during the 2019-2020 school year.

3.4 Human Resources Subcommittee

Mandate

The Human Resources subcommittee is responsible for reviewing all aspects of human resources and employment at the Board including: recruitment, hiring, training, disability management, duty to accommodate, and any other accessibility issues that may impact the employee-employer relationship.

Achievements for the 2018-2019 School Year

The Recruitment and Retention Team continues to ensure that YRDSB's employment practices are accessible and equitable. Some examples of this past year's work include:

- ensuring that the Recruitment/Careers site on the internal portal and external website is available to those who are visually impaired;
- including a statement around equity, diversity and accommodation in all job postings;
- increasing accessibility to job opportunities by advertising on websites that support persons with disabilities;
- ongoing review of communications to ensure that all materials and webpages reflect the provision of accommodations; and
- ensuring that all candidates receive consistent communication by including any policies that relate to AODA within job postings and email communication through Apply to Education.

Disability Management: The Disability Management (DM) team serviced a total of 2,454 clients during the 2018-2019 school year (a 19% increase from previous school year). 1,027 files were carried over from the previous 2017-2018 school year and 1,427 new files were opened. A total of 1,254 files were closed in the 2018-2019 school year.

The work of the DM team included removing barriers in the workplace for staff who had an identified disability, which included 468 employees with permanent workplace accommodations (a 16% increase from the previous school year). Assistive devices were used in many instances to help the individual overcome encountered barriers.

Assistive devices/services purchased and provided included:

- Air cleaners and humidifiers for scent sensitivities / allergies,
- American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters,
- Arranging work site ergonomic assessments,
- Custom ear plugs,
- Document cameras,
- Dragon Naturally Speaking (speech-to-text software),
- Functional Abilities Evaluation (FAE) assessments to coordinate work within the

individual's functional limitations,

- Live captioning and computerized notetaker services,
- Mobility devices (scooters, wheelchairs, wheeled carts, stools),
- Modified work stations (e.g., special desks, monitors, keyboards, chairs and lighting),
- Specialized phones and headsets,
- Voice amplification and hearing systems (e.g., wireless FM transmitters, receivers, auto hubs, microphones, and sound barrier devices for the classroom),
- White boards in classrooms, and
- Zoomtext Plus technology.

Client Satisfaction Survey: Human Resources Services, in collaboration with Assessment and Development Services, launched a client satisfaction survey in May 2019 for employees who had been supported by the DM team. The client satisfaction survey was identified in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan as an action item for 2019 and was carried out with the goal of better understanding client concerns and improving the overall DM program.

The survey was completed in July 2019 and Human Resources Services has since used the results to host a number of focus groups that were conducted in the fall. A final report will be completed during the 2019-2020 school year.

3.5 Digital Media, Website Management & Learning Working Group (D5G)

Mandate

The Digital Media, Website Management & Learning Working Group (D5G) is responsible for AODA compliance with regard to all Board communications, Information Technology Services (ITS) and accessibility training requirements. These responsibilities include ensuring that all public-facing website and web content are compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

Achievements for the 2018-2019 School Year

Accessibility Awareness and Professional Learning: Presentations were delivered at each of the Board's regional Joint Administrator Meetings to provide an overview of AODA legislation and compliance. These presentations served as an introduction to the Board's renewed commitment to accessibility.

A more tailored accessibility awareness presentation ("Accessibility 101") was delivered at a Trustee Briefing Session in the spring of 2019, and acted as a starting point for further Accessibility 101 professional learning opportunities that will be delivered to various departments and/or units across the Board.

Accessibility Compliance Training: Strategies were developed over the course of the 2018-2019 school year to improve the monitoring and tracking of accessibility compliance training for current and new employees. In collaboration with Information Technology Services (ITS), a self-declaration form was developed and emailed out to all current YRDSB employees as a way to capture all staff who completed accessibility training in groups during its initial rollout in 2010 and 2014. Data from the self-declaration forms were used to generate a more accurate report of the Board's staff completion rates for accessibility training.

Over the summer of 2019, the Board's 3 accessibility training modules were reviewed, refreshed and integrated into the Board's new Rise 360 e-learning and training suite. Details about each of the training modules is outlined in the table below:

Accessibility Training Module	Approximate Timing	Description and Details	Total Staff Completions (as of Nov. 1, 2019)
Accessibility Standards for Customer Service One-time training	20 minutes	The Customer Service Standards established under the AODA requires all employees to complete training in order to be compliant with the AODA legislation. This online training module will outline the provision of accessible and quality customer service, including best practices for how to communicate and interact with people with various types of disabilities,	15,470

Accessibility Training Module	Approximate Timing	Description and Details	Total Staff Completions (as of Nov. 1, 2019)
		as well as specific Board Policies and Procedures related to the AODA Customer Service Standards.	
Accessibility and Human Rights: Working Together (Formally 6 separate modules titled "AODA Working Together: The Code and the AODA") One-time training	25 minutes	The AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code are key provincial laws that work together towards promoting greater accessibility and equity for people with disabilities. This module outlines how the accessibility standards under the AODA build on the rights and responsibilities under the Code, and how they affect the learning and working environments of YRDSB. This module consists of a YRDSB Introduction video followed by a 5-part video series developed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission.	15,354
Accessibility Awareness for Educators (Formerly titled "AODA for Educators") One-time training for educators* only	15 minutes	Under the AODA, school boards are required to provide "educators with accessibility training related to accessible program or course delivery and instruction." (Ontario Regulation 191/11, s. 16). In order to support this work, the Board has developed an online training module specifically designed for YRDSB educators, which includes Board staff who are involved in program or course design, delivery and instruction. All YRDSB educators are required by law to complete the "Accessibility Awareness for Educators" training module. *Educators include administrators, teachers, Designated Early Childhood Educators (DECEs), Educational Assistants (EAs), and all other classroom-based support staff.	13,740*

Accessible Document Training: Through the Board's Enterprise Application Support (EAS) team, 10 half-day training sessions were offered during the 2018-2019 school year, and a total of 68 curriculum staff received training. EAS also offered a number of drop-in sessions throughout the school year to provide individualized support for creating an accessible document.

Accessibility Website Launch: In January of 2019, a new accessibility website (www.yrdsb.ca/hrco/accessibility) was launched under the Board's existing HRCO website (www.yrdsb.ca/hrco). The accessibility website includes information and resources related to the following:

- [the AODA and barriers to accessibility](#),
- [Barrier Buster](#),
- [AODA Advisory Committee](#),
- [Accessibility Projects](#),
- [Accessibility Reports and Plans](#), and
- [Accessibility Resources](#)

3.6 Curriculum (Library) Working Group

Mandate

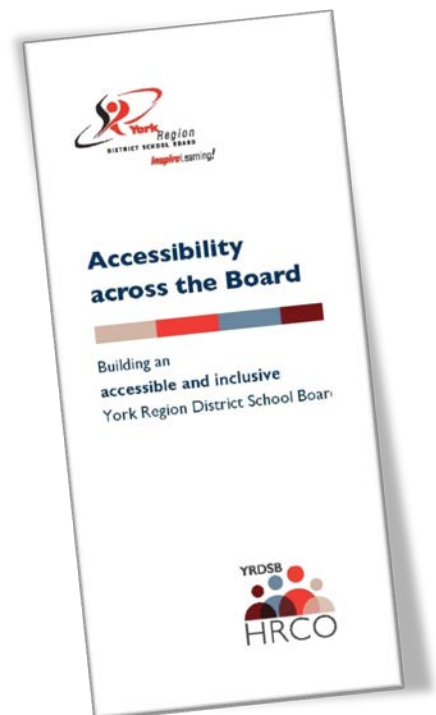
The Curriculum Working Group is responsible for promoting inclusive design and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) through the development and distribution of accessible multimedia resources, learning materials and curriculum across the system.

Achievements for the 2018-2019 School Year

Accessibility Brochure: An educational brochure was created in spring 2019 with the goal of raising general awareness about accessibility and the AODA, and how they relate to the Board's commitment to and ongoing work in accessibility.

The tri-fold accessibility brochure, along with a human rights brochure, is in the process of being finalized for hard copy distribution to each of the 222 schools across the YRDSB. School-based staff will be encouraged to provide a copy of the brochure to any student or parent/guardian who inquires about accessibility.

An electronic version of each brochure was also designed as an alternative format (shown on Page 22).



Accessibility across the Board

Building an accessible and inclusive York Region District School Board

Our Commitment

York Region District School Board (YRDSB) is committed to providing accessible programs, services and environments which support the [four core principles](#) of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA):

- Integration
- Equality of Opportunity
- Dignity
- Independence

These principles are aligned with the four priorities of the [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#):

- Foster Well-Being and Mental Health
- Champion Equity and Inclusivity
- Build Collaborative Relationships
- Empower Ethical Leadership

Building fully accessible learning and working environments requires shared responsibilities and collaboration across the Board.

Accessibility and Disability

Accessibility is about designing environments and creating a culture that benefits everyone, including people with disabilities. Accessibility is best understood as the process of identifying, removing and preventing barriers to people with disabilities.

Disability is a broad term that covers a wide range of conditions. A disability may have been present at birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time. The [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) provides a detailed definition of "disability".

The percentage of people who reported having a disability across different groups:



Barriers to Accessibility

A barrier is any circumstance that keeps a person with a disability from fully participating in society. These are main types of barriers to accessibility:

Attitudinal barriers: False ideas about people with disabilities based on assumptions. *Example: Speaking to the support person instead of communicating directly to the person with a disability.*

Physical barriers: Anything in the built environment that prevent people from accessing goods, services and/or facilities. *Example: A classroom design where the desks are too close together for a student in a wheelchair to move around.*

Communication barriers: Prevent people with disabilities from understanding or accessing information or technology in a way that would be beneficial to them. *Example: Videos without closed captions are not accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing.*

Systemic barriers: Usually created through policies, procedures and practices which apply to everyone, but are unfair to people with disabilities. *Example: A policy which requires all students to complete exams in a specific time period.*



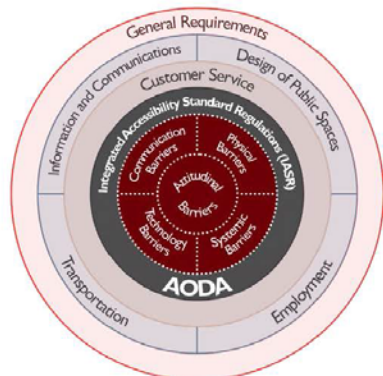
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

With the goal of making Ontario fully accessible by 2025, the government of Ontario passed the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#) in 2005.

Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulations (IASR)

The AODA is made up of five accessibility standards, known as the IASR, and some General Requirements that were created to address barriers in key areas of daily living for people with disabilities.

The circular diagram below was created by the Human Rights Commissioner's Office (HRCO) to show the IASR as well as the five barriers to accessibility:



General Requirements

- Provide training to staff and volunteers
- Develop an accessibility policy
- Create a multi-year accessibility plan and update every five years
- Consider accessibility in all purchasing and design decisions

Accessibility Policy

In keeping with the IASR, the Board's [Accessibility Policy](#) and its related procedures are the framework for how we are building accessible learning and working communities for all YRDSB students, staff, visitors and customers.

Barrier Buster

[Barrier Buster](#) is an electronic reporting tool for communicating any barriers that may be preventing you or someone you know with a disability from fully accessing Board services, facilities or opportunities. Our Barrier Buster subcommittee reviews all submissions, determines steps to remove barriers where appropriate, and reports progress in our Annual Accessibility Plans.

Annual Accessibility Plans

In compliance with the AODA, our Board files and publishes an accessibility plan each year to demonstrate how we are reaching our goal to become more accessible to people with disabilities.

How May We Help You?

If you require assistance accessing school or Board services, you should first speak to a member of your school or department staff about how they can help you before contacting the HRCO. If you require an alternative format for materials or information, please contact us at: aoda@yrdsb.ca

Additional Information and Resources

Accessibility information and resources at YRDSB is available on our website: www.yrdsb.ca/hrc/aoda

3.7 Accessibility Policy Review Subcommittee (ad hoc)

Mandate

The Accessibility Policy Review subcommittee is responsible for reviewing Policy #407.0, Accessibility and Policy #425.0, Provision of Barrier-Free Facilities for the purpose of updating and consolidating them into one comprehensive accessibility policy.

Achievements for the 2018-2019 School Year

A review of legislation and jurisdictional scan was conducted with the purpose of identifying exemplary accessibility policies. Once identified, these documents were analyzed, examined and used as the foundation for the Board's revised [Accessibility Policy](#).



Board Policy #407.0 Accessibility

1. Policy Statement

York Region District School Board is committed to providing accessible programs, services and environments for persons with disabilities which support the four principles of the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) (AODA): dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity. This policy will govern how the Board will address accessibility standards for the identification, removal and prevention of barriers in accordance with the AODA and all other applicable legislation.

2. Application

In applying the core principles of the AODA, this policy shall:

- ensure that Board programs and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- ensure that the provision of programs and services to persons with disabilities are integrated with those services provided for all, unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable a person with disability from accessing and benefiting from Board services;
- ensure that persons with disabilities are given opportunities equal to others in obtaining, using or benefiting from Board programs and services; and
- ensure that all communications and interactions with a person with a disability take into account the individual differences of each person and their specific disability.

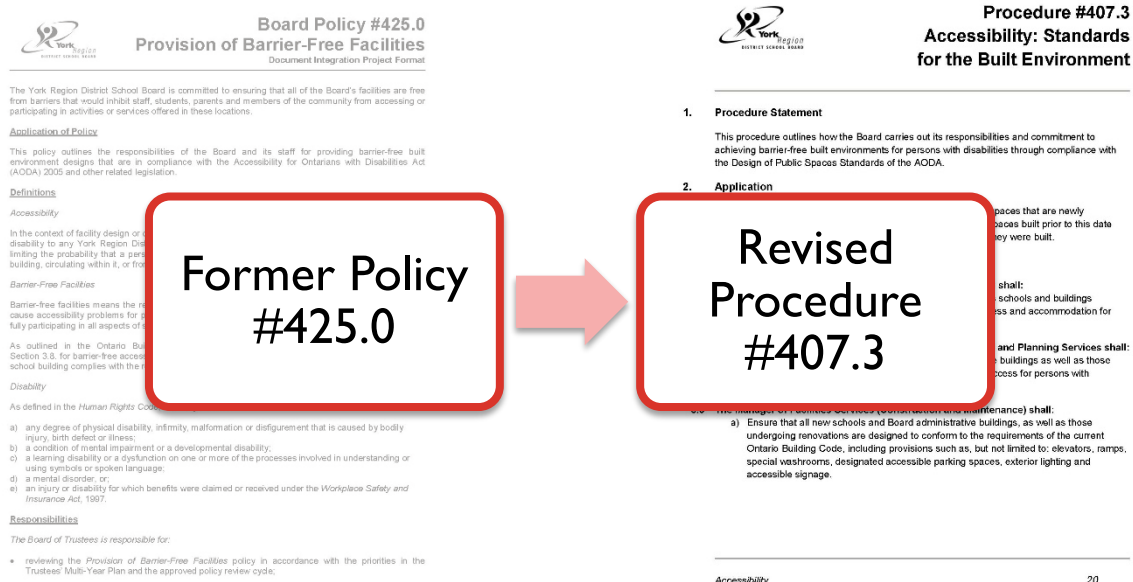
This policy applies to all members of the Board community, including but not limited to: trustees, employees, students, parents/guardians, committee members, permit holders, vendors, service providers, contractors, volunteers and visitors, as well as all other persons who are invited to or who work on Board property.

The application of this policy does not limit any requirements under the AODA, the Ontario Human Rights Code, or any other applicable legislation. Any allegations of harassment and discrimination based on disability that violate the Ontario Human Rights Code will be addressed through Human Rights Complaint Resolution Processes under [Board Policy #240, Human Rights: Code-Related Harassment and Discrimination](#).

The accessibility policy and its related procedures were significantly reformatted and revised to be consistent with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). These revisions effectively addressed a specific recommendation from the externally-conducted [Employment Systems Review](#) “that the Accessibility Policy be updated to fully address the requirements of

the AODA”³. The policy was also expanded to include and apply to all students, staff, trustees and community members.

Subject experts were consulted from various departments and units across the Board to ensure content was consistent with all related policies, procedures and practices of YRDSB. This consultation and consolidation process included the integration of the former Provision of Barrier-Free Facilities Policy (Policy #425.0) into the revised Accessibility Policy (as Procedure #407.3).



Following approval by Board Standing Committee in July 2019, the revised [Accessibility Policy](#) has been adopted as a working document for six school months. During this period, the policy will be circulated across the system for comments and feedback.

A plain language companion document to the Accessibility Policy is in the process of being finalized with the purpose of offering a more reader- and user-friendly version of the policy. This companion document is also intended to address the AODA requirement to prepare one or more documents describing its accessibility policy ([O. Reg. 191/11, s. 3](#)).

³ Turner Consulting Group. (2018). *Employment Equity Audit – Employment Systems Review*. York Region District School Board. Retrieved from <https://yrdsb.civicweb.net/document/98027>

Appendix A: AODA Advisory Committee Terms of Reference and Membership 2018-2019

Purpose

Under the direction of the Human Rights Commissioner's Office (HRCO), the York Region District School Board's (YRDSB) commitment to the providing accessible learning and working environments in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) is articulated through the work of the AODA Advisory Committee.

Mandate

The work of the AODA Advisory Committee includes, but is not limited to:

- Carrying out the Board's commitment to providing accessible programs, services and environments which support the four core principles of the AODA;
- Championing accessibility and universal design principles while promoting, planning and implementing AODA deliverables to strengthen a culture of inclusion within the Board;
- Providing leadership, review and recommendations to the various constituencies within the Board with the goal of promoting systemic change;
- Providing guidance on all matters related to the implementation of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR);
- Addressing accessibility concerns based on feedback with the goal of identifying and eliminating barriers in the service, working and learning environments of the Board;
- Developing and updating the Annual Accessibility Report and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, and ensuring they are available to the public in accessible formats upon request;
- Providing recommendations relating to the provisions of the AODA to the Board's senior leadership team and the Director of Education; and
- Assisting the Board in promoting an accessible, respectful and welcoming environment.

Reporting

The AODA Advisory Committee is accountable to the Director of Education.

Composition

The AODA Advisory Committee shall be composed of the following members:

- 7 union representatives,
- 3 Board Advisory Committee members,
- 1 Board Trustee,
- 2 School Administrators,
- 1 Teacher Equity Liaison,
- 4 Managers or Coordinators,
- 2 Human Resources Services staff,
- 2 Plant and Facility staff, and
- 5 HRCO staff

Membership

Dawn Adams

Senior Manager, Property Development and Planning Services

Anthony Anirud (Co-Chair)

Human Rights Commissioner

Lopa Banerjee

Parent, Family and Community Engagement Advisory Committee (PEAC) Representative

Pamela Beetlestone

ETFO-YR Vice President

Karen Bett

Coordinator of Strategic Development, Leadership Development

Dale Brusselers

Communications Specialist, Corporate Communications

Julie Burgis

Early Resolutions Officer, HRCO

Teresa Estriga

Associate Manager of Disability and Attendance Management, Human Resource Services

Dawn Forsythe

Safety Analyst, Student Transportation Services of York Region

Gerry Harrison

OSSTF (District 16) Representative

Rizwana Kaderdina

Equity Teacher Facilitator, Inclusive Schools and Community Services

Shelly Khushal

Assistant to Human Rights Commissioner, HRCO

John Kostic

CUPE 1196 Representative

Gail Long

Manager of Recruitment and Retention, Human Resource Services

Mark Loya

Superintendent of Business

Stephanie Luong

Web Portal and Communications Officer, Corporate Communications

Stephanie Lynn

Assistant Manager of Corporate Policy, Corporate Secretariat and Trustee Services

John Malcolm

CUPE 1196 Representative



Anne Mason

Equity and Inclusivity Advisory Committee (EIAC)
Representative

Rob McRoberts

Trustee Representative

Susie Nunes

Principal of Continuing Education Services

Derek Petri

Assistant Manager of Maintenance Services, Plant
Services

Shellyann Rodney

Investigations Officer, HRCO

Steve Rutledge

Associate Manager of Learning Resources & Design
Development, Learning Resource Services

John Sellers

Senior Application Support Analyst, Enterprise
Application Support

Robert Selvazzo

Manager of Facility Services, Plant Services

Jacqueline Smith

Senior Application Support Analyst, Enterprise
Application Support

Patrick Smith

CUPE 1196 Representative

Rhonda Star

ETFO-YR OT Representative

Wendy Swaine

Principal of Student Services

Shane Taylor

CUPE 1734 Representative

Carolyn Viney

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
Representative

George Vellathottam

Principal of Learning Design and Development,
Curriculum Services

Tina Wieringa

Leadership Development Advisor, Leadership
Development

Brandon Wu (Co-Chair)

Accessibility Officer, HRCO

Subcommittees and Working Groups Members

Built Environment and Planning Services Subcommittee:

- Dawn Adams
- Derek Petri
- Robert Selvazzo

Barrier Buster Subcommittee:

- Anthony Anirud
- Julie Burgis
- Shelly Khushal
- Derek Petri
- Shellyann Rodney
- Robert Selvazzo

Student Services Subcommittee

- Lopa Banerjee
- Rizwana Kaderdina
- Tom Robbins
- Wendy Swaine
- Carol Viney

Human Resources Services

- Gail Long
- Teresa Estriga
- Gerry Harrison

Digital Media, Website Management & Learning Working Group (D5G)

- Karen Bett
- Dale Brusselers
- Stephanie Luong
- John Sellers
- Jacqueline Smith
- Tina Wieringa

Curriculum (Library) Working Group

- Susie Nunes
- Steve Rutledge
- George Vellathottam

Accessibility Policy Review Subcommittee (ad hoc)

- Anthony Anirud
- Tod Dungy
- Mark Loya
- Stephanie Lynn