



**ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN:  
YEAR TWO REPORT**

**YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

**SEPTEMBER 2004**

**Bill Hogarth  
Director of Education**

**Bill Crothers  
Chair of the Board**

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**Background**

The Year Two Report is a follow-up to the York Region District School Board's previous report, *Annual Accessibility Planning: Year One Report*, dated September 30, 2003.

**ODA ACCESSIBILITY PLAN – YEAR ONE**

The Year One Report can be accessed on the Board's website at: [www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca](http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca). This initial Accessibility Plan (2003) was intended as a transitional plan which would begin a longer-term planning process to set priorities for the ongoing "identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities in the [school board's] by-laws, if any, and in its policies, programs, practices and services" (*Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) s.15 (2)*).

In accordance with the requirements of the *ODA*, the Year One Report referenced the measures that the York Region District School Board (the Board) had taken in the past and the measures the Board would take in the 2003-2004 school year "to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province" (*ODA, s.1*).

Initiatives to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities which had already been undertaken by the Board were identified in the Report including:

- Character Education, Policy #380.0, Revised 2003;
- Provision of Barrier Free Facilities, Policy #425.0, Amended 2002;
- Fair and Equitable Employment and Promotion Practices, Policy #532, Revised 2002;
- Transportation to Schools, Policy #680, Revised 1998;
- Special Education – Identification, Placement and Review, Procedure NP360.0, Revised 2000;
- York Region District School Board's Special Education Plan;
- Building New Elementary and Secondary Schools;
- Facility Renewal; and
- Awareness Training.

The Report acknowledged the critical role that the local elementary and secondary schools perform in the life of the community. Universal accessibility to education facilitates equity of opportunity for students, employees and members of the community.

In identifying current barriers, the Year One Report noted that many persons with disabilities identified attitude as the major barrier that they encounter.

## **ODA ACCESSIBILITY PLAN – YEAR TWO**

### **Commitment**

Guided by its Mission, Vision and Values statement, the York Region District School Board is committed to annual accessibility planning and to the continual improvement of accessibility and opportunity for persons with disabilities. This commitment will include a planned review of Board facilities, policies, programs, practices and services to improve accessibility for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community with disabilities.

An Accessibility Plan Team will undertake the responsibility for drafting the annual plan and for highlighting specific areas of focus each year. The annual draft plan will be presented to Coordinating Council of Superintendents (CCS) for its review, revision and approval. The annual accessibility plan is published yearly as a Report and is made available on the Board's website and through other communication channels.

### **Objective**

The Year Two Report reviews the Board's progress in 2003-2004 with respect to identifying, removing and preventing barriers for people with disabilities and identifies an area of focus for continuous improvement in 2004-2005.

### **Progress to Date:**

In **2003-2004** attention was focused on the following areas:

#### **(a) Physical/Architectural/Informational**

A New School Survey was provided to both the principal and to a representative of the Special Education Team in order to ensure comments from administration, teachers and support staff as applicable. Survey results will be considered as input for possible changes to the Board's prospectus for new schools.

#### **(b) Architectural**

Provision for interior signage in Braille and located at an accessible height will be included in the elementary and secondary school prospectus for the 2006 elementary school and 2007 secondary school projects.

#### **(c) Technological**

Provision of a larger-print alternative to the standard visual format on the Board website allows the end user to access a larger print font.

**(d) Attitudinal**

Plans for raising awareness of attitudinal barriers and for developing strategies for the removal of such barriers are underway. In July 2004 sessions focused on increasing awareness and acceptance of working with co-workers with disabilities were delivered to close to 600 CUPE 1196 members. Professional development for all staff is a key element in the plan for 2004-2005.

**(e) Policy/Practice**

The review of Board policies and procedures and the drafting of a supporting procedure to the Barrier Free Policy will be undertaken as Board staff become aware of expectations regarding identification, removal and prevention of barriers.

**ODA – Accessibility Plan Team**

The ODA - Accessibility Plan Team (the Team) is a working committee comprised of staff, teachers, trustees, Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) members and administrators.

The members of the Team are noted below:

Linda Bernofsky	Special Education Advisory Committee
Christina Doyle	ETFO
Steve Harrison	CUPE 1196
Janet Hicks	Employee Services
Rhonda Jacobsen-Cherry	Special Education Advisory Committee
Brian Jolicoeur	President, CUPE 1734
Sue Kaufman	OSSTF, District 11
Andrew Keuken	Planning Department
Stan Korolnek	Trustee
Fred Mayor	ETFO-YR, OT
Fran McKenna	Employee Services
Louise Moreau	Curriculum and Instructional Services
Daniel Morgan	President, CUPE 1196
Susan Plamondon	Trustee
Jaimini Randev, Chair	Superintendent of Employee Services
Deborah Rose	Special Education Advisory Committee
Pierre Schipper	Manager of Facilities Services
Doug Tateishi	Superintendent of Education
Ross Virgo	Public Relations Officer
Sandra Ware	Secondary Teacher
Kathy Wosnick	Elementary Vice-Principal
Beth Dolson	Recorder

## **Identification of Barriers to be Addressed in 2004-2005**

The Accessibility Plan Team has identified the removal of attitudinal barriers as the Board's main focus for the 2004-2005 school year. The Team believes that raising awareness of attitudinal barriers which may limit full participation in education and community is the first significant step to reducing and eliminating such barriers.

The attached plan describes the proposed implementation schedule to begin the process of raising awareness of attitudinal barriers. It will be critical to gather specific recommendations from a variety of key stakeholders and partners including students, parents/guardians, teachers, support staff, administrators, school councils, trustees, SEAC and individuals and agencies representing people with disabilities with respect to the implementation of this year's plan.

Attitudinal barriers are difficult to identify and difficult to remove. It will be important to generate a respectful, thoughtful educational campaign that challenges attitudinal barriers which can jeopardize the full participation of individuals with disabilities.

Team discussions thus far have been characterized by meaningful dialogue, the consideration of a number of attitudinal barriers and the posing of some questions for further deliberation, including the following:

- Does accessibility to school and Board facilities for students, staff and community mean physical access to the building or part thereof, or does physical accessibility include attitudinal issues such as claustrophobia in small, windowless lifts?
- Do students and staff feel comfortable enough to self-identify as disabled persons, or do they lack the confidence to divulge their disability for fear of being diminished in the eyes of their teacher, supervisor or peers?
- Do students, staff, parents and teachers assist in the provision of equitable opportunities for all persons by accepting that there may need to be differences in expectations for some persons with disabilities? Do they acknowledge these differences in planning assignments, duties, schedules, and such?
- Do individuals with disabilities have the confidence in their teachers, supervisors and principals to bring requests for accommodation(s) to their notice?
- Are persons with disabilities part of an ongoing dialogue to address attitudinal barriers to their full participation?

## Implementation Schedule

Action	Description	Timeline
Share Year One Report with SEAC	Initial working group made presentation	October 2003
Expand working group	ODA-Accessibility Plan Team (Team) formed	May 2004
Review progress 2003/04	Team informed by various departments re progress on planned actions	June 2004
Establish focus for 2004-2005	Team identified attitudinal barriers as major focus	June 2004
Circulate Draft Position Paper (Year Two Report) to key stakeholders and partners	Draft Position Paper to be circulated for input	September 2004
Review input and amend Position Paper to <i>ODA-Accessibility Plan, Year Two Report</i>	Coordinating Council (CCS) to review, amend and approve ODA Year Two Report	October 2004/ Ongoing
Post Year Two Report on Board website	Year Two Report to be communicated via website and other communication channels	November 2004/ Ongoing
Provide professional development for staff and community	Workshops and training materials to be developed and delivered to key stakeholders	Fall 2004/Ongoing
Provide direction to school administrators	Superintendents shall assist administrators to raise their own awareness and model a process for staff	Fall 2004/Ongoing

Provide information to School Councils	Principals will provide materials and information to school councils and parents/guardians	Winter 2004/Ongoing
Monitor Progress	Team will review progress and amend the plan as appropriate	Ongoing/ 2005

### **Annual ODA Accessibility Planning**

An ODA Accessibility Plan Team, under the leadership of the Superintendent of Employee Services, will undertake responsibility for monitoring progress and achievement with respect to meeting the objectives of the annual plan.

The Team will be pleased to consider recommendations and proposed direction from key stakeholders and partners on an ongoing basis. It is imperative that the dialogue continue with the persons most affected by this plan.

Questions and comments should be directed to the Superintendent of Employee Services, Jaimini Randev, at [jaimini.randev@yrdsb.edu.on.ca](mailto:jaimini.randev@yrdsb.edu.on.ca) or by phone at (905) 727-0022, ext. 220.