



RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD - ACCESSIBILITY PLAN - SEPTEMBER 2016

The RCDSB constantly seeks to improve the accessibility of programs. The Board seeks input from the public regarding the continuous development of the accessibility plan. We invite suggestions for barrier identification and reductions.

Annual Accessibility Plan for the Renfrew County District School Board September 2016 - August 2017

Submitted to the
Accessibility Directorate of Ontario
September 2016

Prepared by the
Renfrew County District School Board Accessibility Working Group

This publication is available on the Renfrew County District School Board' website at
www.renfrew.edu.on.ca
and in accessible formats upon request

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Executive Summary

The purpose of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (O.D.A.) is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to enable their full participation in the life of the province. To this end, the O.D.A. requires each school board to prepare an annual accessibility plan; to consult with people with disabilities in the preparation of this plan; and to make the plan public.

This is year fourteen for the annual plan (2016 - 2017), up-dated by the Accessibility Working Group of the Renfrew County District School Board. The plan describes:

1. the achievements and measures that the Renfrew County District School Board (R.C.D.S.B) has taken in 2015 – 2016 to implement its accessibility plan, and
2. the measures that the Renfrew County District School Board will take during the 2016 – 2017 school year to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities (subject to the availability of resources).

The R.C.D.S.B. remains committed to continual improvement of access to school board facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services for students, staff, parent / guardians, volunteers, and members of the community with disabilities. As evidence of this commitment, the plan provides for the participation of people with disabilities, or those community-based agencies who advocate on behalf of those with disabilities, to contribute to the development of its annual accessibility plans.

While the Accessibility Working Group identified categories of barriers to be addressed during the annual plan, it has also emphasized the necessity of maintaining a measure of flexibility for response to site-specific accessibility issues as circumstance may warrant.

1. **Aim**

This plan describes the measures that the Renfrew County District School Board has taken in the past and measures that will be taken during the next year (2016 - 2017) to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities who work in, use, or attend school board facilities and services.

2. **Objectives**

This plan:

1. Describes the *process* by which the Renfrew County District School Board will identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.
2. Reviews efforts at the Renfrew County District School Board to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities during the *past year (2015 – 2016)*.
3. Lists the policies, procedures, programs, practices, and services that the Renfrew County District School Board will review in the *coming year* to identify barriers for people with disabilities.
4. Describes the *measures* the Renfrew County District School Board will take in the coming year to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.
5. Describes how the Renfrew County District School Board will make this accessibility plan *available to the public*.

3. **Commitment to Accessibility Planning**

The Renfrew County District School Board is committed to:

- (a) Establishing an Accessibility Working Group
- (b) Consulting with people with disabilities, or those community-based agencies that advocate on behalf of those with disabilities, to contribute to the development and review of its Annual Accessibility Plan
- (c) Ensuring school board policies and procedures are consistent with the principles of accessibility
- (d) Improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services for students, staff, parents / guardians, volunteers, and members of the community.

The Director of Education has authorized the Accessibility Working Group to prepare an Accessibility Plan that will enable the Renfrew County District School Board to meet these commitments.

4. Description of the Renfrew County District School Board

The Renfrew County District School Board was established in 1969 as a result of the amalgamation of individual school boards throughout Renfrew County. Presently the Renfrew County District School Board serves 9498 students through 5 secondary, 6 adult, 18 elementary schools and 2 JK-12 schools. Our schools vary in size ranging from very small rural schools to mid-sized schools in more populated areas. The Renfrew County District School Board’s motto “Education for Life, Opportunities for All” is apparent in all our settings. The philosophy of the Renfrew County District School Board is to develop each student to his / her greatest potential as individuals within our society. All students, regardless of special talents or challenging needs, can grow and they can grow best by attending schools which offer accessible programs in accessible settings through accessible services.

5. The Accessibility Working Group Members

The Accessibility Working Group was formally constituted in September 2002. The group consists of the following members:

Member	Department	Contact
Jodie Barrett (Chair)	Assistant Superintendent of Early Learning and Renewed Math Strategy	735-0151 (ext. 3316)
Cathy McCann-Kyte	Principal, Adult & Continuing Education Department	735-0151 (ext. 3323)
Kim Dunsmoor-Lough	Trustee	735-0151
Bill Murray	Plant Manager	735-0151 (ext. 2265)
Bill Smith	Supervising Principal for Special Services	735-0151 (ext. 3320)

6. Recent Barrier Removal Initiatives

During the last school year, there have been a number of formal and informal initiatives at the Renfrew County District School Board to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities. These initiatives include:

- A) The R.C.D.S.B., through its Special Education Plan 2011 has addressed access for students with disabilities through modifications and accommodations of programs and services. The Special Education Plan is available on the Board website at www.renfrew.edu.on.ca.
- B) Accessibility has been facilitated through the following achievements.
 - Installation of a new accessible washroom at Cobden and Eganville PS
 - Reconfigured front entrance at Eganville PS
 - 1st Floor accessible from interior of building at Fellowes HS

7. Preventing New Barriers

As of September 2002, all school board programs, policies, practices, and services will be subject to the guiding principles of inclusionary practice. We will strive to create an environment that is accessible to all people, regardless of age or ability. Through the annual accessibility planning process, Renfrew County District School Board's programming, policies, and practices will be assessed to ensure continuous improvement in accessibility. For example, when the JK-12 school Mackenzie Community School Madawaska Valley District School was modified and Valour K-12 School was built, accessibility was a key consideration.

8. Barrier-Identification Methodologies

The Accessibility Working Group will use the following barrier-identification methodologies:

Methodology	Description	Status
Survey to Principals /Vice Principals	Opportunity for input and feedback	November 2016
Community Consultations	Meetings to solicit input from local agencies and the Board's Special Education Advisory Committee	Monthly

9. Barriers Identified in 2016 – 2017

The Accessibility Plan seeks to address as many of the following categories of barriers during the coming year, subject to available resources:

Barrier	Objective	Means to Remove / Prevent	Performance Criteria	Resources	Timing	Responsibility
Physical	Paved area outside the back doors at the annex (parking lot area) has a lip on it making it difficult for wheelchairs to access Access to music room Weight room not accessible		COB FHS FHS, MCS, RCI	General Maintenance Budget		
Architectural	Accessibility to Office Handicap parking not close to office Access to Annex		COB COB	Facilities Renewal Budget		
Attitudinal	Survey community partners		Survey designed and administered		Spring 2017	Spec. Ed.

10. **Barriers to be Addressed in 2016-2017**

The Accessibility Working Group identified a number of barriers in the initial Accessibility Plan for 2016 – 2017. The Accessibility Working Group has decided to focus on the following, subject to the availability of resources:

Type of Barrier	Description	Strategy for Removal / Prevention
Physical: (AJ Charbonneau PS)	- Add four handicapped operators at doorways	
Physical: (Cobden PS)	- Paved area outside the back doors on the annex (parking lot area) has a lip on it making it difficult for wheelchairs to access	
Architectural: (Cobden)	- Accessibility to Office - Handicap parking not close to office - Access to Annex	
Architectural: (FHS)	- Access to music room	

11. **Customer Service**

Under subsection 14 (1) of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (the act) people and organizations to whom an accessibility standard applies were required to file an accessibility report with an appointed director. The act provides for the appointed director to specify when accessibility reports are to be filed by those persons and organizations. Designated public sector organizations were required to submit their first accessibility report indicating compliance with the Customer Service Standard by March 31, 2010. The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario will communicate any new reporting requirements for the Customer Service Standard and other future accessibility standards as they come into effect. The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation came into force in July, 2011 and addresses:

School Boards must develop policies, practices and procedures that ensure accessible services for people with disabilities in the areas of:

- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Student Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces

School Boards must also have a multi-year Accessibility Plan (attached here).

School boards are also required to provide training:

- For all educators on accessibility awareness in program delivery and instruction (2013)
- For all staff and volunteers on the requirements of the accessibility standards and on the Ontario Human Rights Code re disabilities (2014)

12. **Review and Monitoring Process**

The Accessibility Working Group endeavours to meet regularly during the planning year to review progress. Throughout the year, evaluation of effectiveness in implementing the barrier - removal and prevention strategies will be ongoing in preparation for the next year of accessibility planning.

13. **Communication of the Plan**

The Renfrew County District School Board's accessibility plan will be posted on the Board's website at www.renfrew.edu.on.ca and hard copies will be available in schools.

**Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)
Requirements for School Boards**

Effective Date	IASR Requirement	IASR Section
Jan. 2013	<p><i>Establishment of Accessibility Policies</i></p> <p>Develop, implement and maintain policies governing how the organization achieves or will achieve accessibility through meeting its requirements under the accessibility standards referred to in this Regulation.</p> <p>Include a statement of organizational commitment to meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner in their policies.</p> <p>Prepare one or more written documents describing its policies; and make the documents publicly available, and shall provide them in an accessible format upon request.</p>	s.3
Jan. 2013	<p><i>Accessibility Plans</i></p> <p>Establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers.</p> <p>Post the accessibility plan on their website, if any, and provide the plan in an accessible format upon request.</p> <p>Review and update the accessibility plan at least once every five years.</p> <p>Update the accessibility plan in consultation with persons with disabilities and the accessibility working group.</p>	s.4
Jan. 2013	<p><i>Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services, or Facilities</i></p> <p>Incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so.</p> <p>If it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, it shall provide, upon request, an explanation.</p>	s.5

<p>Jan. 2013</p>	<p><i>Educational and Training Resources and Materials</i></p> <p>Every obligated organization that is an educational or training institution shall do the following, if notification of need is given:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide educational or training resources or materials in an accessible format that takes into account the accessibility needs due to a disability of the person with a disability to whom the material is to be provided by, <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. procuring through purchase or obtaining by other means an accessible or conversion ready electronic format of educational or training resources or materials, where available, or ii. arranging for the provision of a comparable resource in an accessible or conversion ready electronic format, if educational or training resources or materials cannot be procured, obtained by other means or converted into an accessible format. 2. Provide student records and information on program requirements, availability and descriptions in an accessible format to persons with disabilities. 	<p>s.15</p>
<p>Jan. 2013</p>	<p><i>Training to Educators</i></p> <p>School boards shall provide educators with accessibility awareness training related to accessible program or course delivery and instruction, and keep a record of the training provided under this section, including the dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided.</p>	<p>s.16</p>
<p>Jan. 2014</p>	<p><i>Training</i></p> <p>Ensure that training is provided on the requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in this Regulation and on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities to,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) all employees, and volunteers; (b) all persons who participate in developing the organization's policies; and (c) all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization. 	<p>s.7</p>

	<p>The training shall be appropriate to the duties of the employees, volunteers and other persons.</p> <p>Every person shall be trained as soon as practicable.</p> <p>Keep a record of the training provided under this section, including the dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided.</p>	
Jan. 2014	<p><i>Feedback</i></p> <p>Every obligated organization that has processes for receiving and responding to feedback shall ensure that the processes are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communications supports, upon request.</p> <p>Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.</p>	s.11
Jan. 2014	<p><i>Accessible Websites and Web Content</i></p> <p>Internet and intranet websites and web content must conform with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level A.</p> <p>Where practicable, this requirement applies to websites and web content, including web-based applications, that the organization controls directly or through a contractual relationship that allows for modification of the product; and to web content published on a website after January 1, 2012.</p> <p>To determine if not practicable, consider availability of commercial software/tools, and significant impact on a plan initiated before January 1, 2012.</p>	s.14
Jan. 2014	<p><i>Recruitment General</i></p> <p>Notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes.</p> <p>Notify that accommodations are available in recruitment process re materials or processes to be used.</p> <p>Consult with applicants and arrange accommodation in a way that takes into account accessibility needs due</p>	<p>s.22</p> <p>s.23</p>

	<p>to the disability.</p> <p>Notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.</p>	s.24
Jan. 2014	<p><i>Informing Employees of Supports</i></p> <p>Inform employees of policies used to support its employees with disabilities, including, but not limited to, policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability.</p> <p>Provide information to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment and provide updated information to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability.</p>	s.25
Jan. 2014	<p><i>Accessible Formats and Communication Supports For Employees</i></p> <p>Consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and b. information that is generally available to employees in the workplace. <p>Consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.</p>	s.26
Jan. 2014	<p><i>Documented Individual Accommodation Plans</i></p> <p>Develop a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.</p> <p>The process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans shall include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The manner in which an employee requesting accommodation can participate in the development of the individual accommodation plan. 2. The means by which the employee is assessed on an individual basis. 	s.28

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The manner in which the employer can request an evaluation by an outside medical or other expert, at the employer's expense, to determine if and how accommodation can be achieved. 4. The manner in which the employee can request the participation of a representative from their bargaining agent, where the employee is represented by a bargaining agent, or other representative from the workplace, where the employee is not represented by a bargaining agent, in the development of the accommodation plan. 5. The steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information. 6. The frequency with which the individual accommodation plan will be reviewed and updated and the manner in which it will be done. 7. If an individual accommodation plan is denied, the manner in which the reasons for the denial will be provided to the employee. 8. The means of providing the individual accommodation plan in a format that takes into account the employee's accessibility needs due to disability. <p>Individual accommodation plans shall,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. if requested, include any information regarding accessible formats and communications supports provided; b. if required, include individualized workplace emergency response information; and c. identify any other accommodation that is to be provided. 	
<p>Jan. 2014</p>	<p><i>Return to Work Process</i></p> <p>Develop and have in place a return to work process for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work and document the process. The return to work process shall outline the steps the employer will take to facilitate the return to work of employees who were absent because their disability required them to be away from work; and use individual documented accommodation plans as part of the process.</p> <p>This return to work process does not replace or override any other return to work process created by or under any other statute.</p>	<p>s.29</p>
<p>Jan. 2014</p>	<p><i>Performance Management</i></p> <p>Take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when using its performance management process in respect of employees with disabilities (activities related to assessing and improving employee performance, productivity and effectiveness, with the goal of facilitating employee success).</p>	<p>s.30</p>

Jan. 2014	<p><i>Career Development and Advancement</i></p> <p>If career development and advancement to its employees is provided, the employer shall take into account the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities as well as any individual accommodation plans (career development and advancement includes providing additional responsibilities within an employee’s current position and the movement of an employee from one job to another in an organization that may be higher in pay, provide greater responsibility or be at a higher level in the organization or any combination of them and, for both additional responsibilities and employee movement, is usually based on merit or seniority, or a combination of them).</p>	s.31
Jan. 2014	<p><i>Redeployment</i></p> <p>Employer that uses redeployment shall take into account the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when redeploying employees with disabilities (redeployment means the reassignment of employees to other departments or jobs within the organization as an alternative to layoff, when a particular job or department has been eliminated by the organization).</p>	s.32
Jan. 2014	<p><i>School Transportation</i></p> <p>School boards will identify students with disabilities before the commencement of each school year or during the school year, based on the needs of the student with a disability;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. develop individual school transportation plans for each student with a disability that, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. detail student assistance needs for each student with a disability, and ii. include plans for individual student boarding, securement and deboarding; and b. identify and communicate to the appropriate parties the roles and responsibilities of the transportation provider, the parents or guardians of the student with the disability, the operator of the vehicle used to transport the student, appropriate school staff and the student with the disability. 	s.75
Jan. 2015	<p><i>Accessible Formats and Communication Supports</i></p> <p>Upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. in a timely manner that takes into account the person’s accessibility needs due to disability; and 	s.12

	<p>b. at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.</p> <p>Consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.</p> <p>Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.</p>	
Jan. 2015	<p><i>Producers of Educational or Training Material</i></p> <p>Upon request, provide, procure or acquire accessible or conversion ready versions of the textbooks.</p>	s.17
Jan. 2015	<p><i>Libraries of Educational and Training Institutions</i></p> <p>Provide, procure or acquire accessible or conversion ready format of print resources or materials for a person with a disability, upon request.</p> <p>Special collections, archival materials, rare books and donations are exempt.</p>	s.18
Jan. 2020	<p><i>Producers of Educational or Training Material</i></p> <p>Upon request, provide, procure or acquire accessible or conversion ready versions of print-based educational or training supplementary learning resources.</p>	s.17
Jan. 2020	<p><i>Libraries of Educational and Training Institutions</i></p> <p>Provide, procure or acquire accessible or conversion ready format of digital or multimedia resources or materials for a person with a disability, upon request.</p> <p>Special collections, archival materials, rare books and donations are exempt.</p>	s.18
Jan. 2021	<p><i>Accessible Websites and Web Content</i></p>	s.14

	<p>All internet and intranet websites and web content must conform with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level AA, other than live captions and audio descriptions.</p>	
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