



AP 1-310 – ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

Western School Division believes learning is continuous and a life-long process.

Western School Division is committed to an educational philosophy that recognizes the fundamental equality of all people. Respect for diversity – individual’s characteristics and abilities – and the process of making education reflect a belief of the fundamental equality of all people, is woven into the everyday learning environment. It supports and facilitates the acceptance, respect, and appreciation for all people and their individual characteristics and abilities. Western School Division is committed to continually improving on and meeting the diverse needs of all learners – customers and clients – by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers which discourage accessibility.

BACKGROUND

The *Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)* became law December 5, 2013, providing a clear, proactive process to prevent and remove barriers that may interrupt persons from fully participating in daily living. The *Act* requires the development of accessibility standards in five areas, including customer service, employment, information and communication, transportation, and the build environment.

1. **Customer Service** – to provide barrier-free customer service; the provision of goods and services in a manner that is accessible to all persons and their abilities
2. **Employment** – endeavoring to create equal employment opportunities through the recruitment, retention, and accommodation of persons and their abilities
3. **Information and Communication** – the provision of information and communication in ways that are accessible to all persons and their abilities
4. **Transportation** – aspects of accessible public transportation for going to work or school, and other aspects of daily life
5. **Build Environment** – the ability to access into and within building and outdoor spaces

These standards are the building blocks formulating change for sustained achievement of higher levels of accessibility.

More information regarding the AMA may be found at www.accessibilityMB.ca.



PROFILE OF WESTERN SCHOOL DIVISION

The establishment of the division is effective a body corporate and politic under the name the "Western School Division" (*Public Schools Act (PSA) 3*). The boundaries of the Western School Division shall be the boundary of the area contained in the wards of the division.

Western School Division is located in Morden, Manitoba, Canada, a prosperous community in South-Central Manitoba adjacent to the United States border. Western School Division operates a system of four schools and an adult education centre, that serve the City of Morden and a rural area of approximately 400 square kilometres. Our student population is composed of over 1700 students, both urban and rural. Morden is the home of many dramatic and fine arts groups, as well as strong sports programs which are reflected in the courses offered by the division.

The Board of Trustees is committed to the educational needs of the community within the Western School Division and seeks to carry out this role through the practise of good governance. Effective governance includes sound policies that support a school board's mandate in the areas of leadership, stewardship and relationship. The Western School Division and Board operate under the terms of the Manitoba *Public Schools Act* and other provincial and municipal legislation and/or regulations that may apply, including : *The Public Schools Act; The Education Administration Act; The Safe Schools Charter; The Workplace Safety and Health Act; The Manitoba Human Rights Code; The Child and Family Services Act; Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba: Standards for Student Services; The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA); and the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA)*. Compliance with federal legislation includes *The Charter of Rights and Freedoms, The Youth Criminal Justice Act and The Constitution Act*.



MEMBERS OF THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Accessibility Coordinator

Responsible for coordinating accessibility initiatives, the Coordinator will be responsible for, but not limited to:

- Assisting senior management develop an Accessibility Plan and coordinate accessibility initiatives
- Create and coordinate an accessibility working group
- Assist different groups ensure public information and events are accessible
- Liaise between subject experts and colleagues to incorporate best practices in everyday activities
- Facilitate the inclusion of accessibility awareness in staff training and orientation
- Monitor progress in implementing the Accessibility Plan
- Assist Human Resources with the development of an accommodation program
- Consolidate information and report on the organization's progress
- Encourage continual consideration of accessibility needs in fiscal, physical environment, and information technology planning
- Stay up-to-date on compliance requirements for new standards under the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act*

Accessibility Committee

Responsible for representing various branches and/or functions within the organization, the Committee will be responsible for, but not limited to:

- Participating in the development and introduction of the Accessibilities Plan
- Provide feedback and monitoring, from the branch or function represented, to ensure accessibility is integrated into policies, procedure, and practices
- Assist in providing training and/or information to their respective groups

Appendix B – Accessibility Advisory Committee Members



ACCESSIBILITY PRINCIPLES

The AMA provides the following principles, which must be regarded in achieving accessibility:

- Access:** Persons should have barrier-free access to places, events and other functions that are generally available in the community;
- Equality:** Persons should have barrier-free access to those things that will give them equality of opportunity and outcome;
- Universal design:** Access should be provided in a manner that does not establish or perpetuate differences based on a person's disability;
- Systemic responsibility:** The responsibility to prevent and remove barriers rests with the person or organization that is responsible for establishing or perpetuating the barrier.

PLAN

Identify Barriers

There are many different types of barriers, with some barriers being more visible than others. Regardless of the type of barrier, a barrier impedes an individual's ability to participate on an equal basis with another individual.

Some examples include:

- Attitudinal barriers – when persons think and act based on false assumptions
- Informational and communication barriers – when information is offered in a form that suits some, but not all, of the population
- Technological barriers – when information and service are delivered utilizing technology with limited accessibility
- Systemic barriers – policies, practices, and/or procedures that result in some individuals receiving unequal access
- Physical and architectural barriers – when the physical environment present challenges that make it difficult for some individuals to easily access a place

The Division will seek the input of various individuals in helping to identify existing and potential barriers, and accessibility issues.

Western School Division will continually seek ways to identify, prevent, and remove barriers to improve accessibility. An awareness and understanding of barrier(s) to accessibility and the needs of individuals are needed. The Division therefore invites individuals to help identify, prevent, and remove barriers, within our organization, by providing feedback.

[Appendix C – Accessibility Request & Feedback Form](#)



Request for Accommodation

The Division recognizes some barriers will be easier to address than others, and will require varying levels of resources.

Informal requests will continue to be addressed through the current decision making levels of authority, and financial budgets.

All requests shall be tracked, with monthly reports remitted to the Accessibilities Coordinator.

Formal requests, such as those received via the Accessibility Request & Feedback Form, shall be reviewed by the Accommodations Coordinator for delegation and action.

Preventative actions and/or actions to remove barriers, requiring resources beyond current authority levels, will be forwarded to Senior Management and the Accessibilities Coordinator for consideration and action. Action requiring financial assistance will be forwarded for consideration in the Division's annual budget process.

Request for accessible format(s) and communication supports

1. When a customer makes a request for an accessible format and/or communication support, ensure your response is in a timely manner.
2. Ask the customer making the request, for suggested accessible format and/or communication support.
3. Inform the customer of any cost associated, if applicable.
4. Provide customer with accessible format and/or communication support, or approximate timeframe in which it will be provided.

Training

Regulation 13 (1) requires that “an organization must ensure training about accessible customer service is or has been provided to the following persons:

- (a) A person who provides goods or services directly to the public or to another organization in Manitoba on behalf of the organization, including employees, agents and volunteers;
- (b) A person who participates in or is responsible for the development or implementation of the organization's measures, policies and practices.”

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will work together with the Professional Development Committee to develop processes to deliver, document, and track training.

Accessibilities Action Plan

Specific details regarding identified barriers, and the measures to remove the barriers, are contained within Appendix D.

Appendix D – Accessibilities Action Plan is a living document that will continually be amended and added to, as the Division takes action to remove barriers and celebrate achievements.



Communication Process

Communication of the Division’s Accessibility Plan and its corresponding initiatives will be through a variety of strategies including:

- Western School Division website
- Administrative Procedure Manual

REVIEW AND MONITORING

Records and Reporting

In compliance with Section 18 of the AMA, the Division shall maintain records in accordance with the regulations, and make the records available for inspection and examination. These records will be maintained with the Division’s Accessibility Action Plan – Appendix D.

Compliance

The Division will deem to have met the accessibility standards:

Customer Service – “when all persons who are reasonably expected to seek to obtain, use or benefit from a good or service have the same opportunity to obtain, use or benefit from the good or service”.

Communication – “when communicating with a person who self-identifies as being disabled by barrier, the communication is done in a manner that takes into account the barrier”.

Build Environment – “any aspect of its built environment intended to facilitate barrier-free access to the goods or services it provides are available for use in the intended manner”.

Monitoring

For 2016, and every second year thereafter, the AMA requires the Division prepare an accessibility plan that addresses the identification, prevention, and removal of barriers that disable people in the policies, programs, practices, and services. Therefore this plan will reviewed biannually.



FEEDBACK

If you have any questions or comments related to this Accessibilities Plan, or how we can further improve accessibility, and/or would like to request an alternate format, please contact:

Accessibility Coordinator at 204.822.4448

email: accesswsd@westernsd.mb.ca

Reference:

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (C.C.S.M. C A1.7)

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act – Customer Services Standard Regulation

Respect for Human Diversity and Equity Education

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Manitoba Human Rights Code

Public Schools Act

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act Implementation Guide – Integrated Accessibility Standards:

Information and Communications, Employment and Transportation

Adopted: January 9, 2017



Appendix A – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accessibility Standard	an accessibility standards prescribed under the Accessibilities for Manitobans Act
Accessible Formats	may include, but not limited to, large print, recorded audio, electronic formats, braille, and other formats usable by persons interrupted by a barrier
AMA	<i>The Accessibilities for Manitobans Act</i>
Assisting Device	examples: cane, power driven or manually operated wheel chair
Barrier	for a person who has a physical, mental, intellectual or sensory disability, a barrier is anything that interacts with that disability in a way that may hinder the person's full and effective participation in the society on an equal basis
Communications	the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received
Communication Supports	may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communication
Conversion Ready	an electronic or digital format that facilitates conversation into an accessible format
Duty to Reasonably Accommodate	the requirement, established by <i>The Human Rights Code</i> (Manitoba), to remove barriers up to the point of undue hardship
EE	Employee
ER	Employer
Extranet Website	a controlled extension of the intranet, or internal network of an organization to outside users over the Internet
Information	includes data, facts and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that conveys meaning
Service Animal	a service animal as defined in <i>The Human Rights Code</i>



Appendix B – ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Accessibility Coordinator	Kathryn Reimer, Human Resources Manager
Accessibility Committee	Stephen Ross, Superintendent Cyndy Kutzner, Student Services Coordinator Allan Toews, Supervisor of Operations Roger Worms, Workplace Safety & Health Coordinator Parviz Salimi, Director of Information Technology Member at Large Member at Large



Appendix C – ACCESSIBILITY REQUEST & FEEDBACK FORM

Accessibility Request & Feedback

Personal Information

Name _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Request for Documents in Alternate Formats

Name of Document: _____

School: _____

Event (if applicable): _____

Which for format would you prefer?

- Braille
- Audio
- Plain Language
- Large Print: Preferred font size: _____
Preferred font style: _____
- Electronic:
 - Microsoft Word
 - HTML
 - Rich Text
 - PDF
- Other: _____

Request for American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter or Captioning:

Date Interpreter Required: _____

Duration Interpreter is Required _____

Type of Meeting _____

Comments – Tell us your story

Tell us about your experience - when things go well and when things could have gone better. Your feedback and suggestions are valued
