



GRAND ERIE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

TO: Brenda Blancher, Director of Education & Secretary
FROM: Liana Thompson, Superintendent of Education
RE: **Renewed Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2017-22**
DATE: November 13, 2017

Recommended Action: Moved by _____ Seconded by _____
THAT the Grand Erie District School Board approve the Renewed Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, 2017-22.

Background

The Grand Erie District School Board has implemented a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the period 2012-17. The multi-year plan must be reviewed at least every five years. An annual report on the progress of the accessibility strategies must also be presented to the November Board Committee of the Whole meeting each year.

Additional Information

A Renewed Multi-Year Accessibility Plan incorporating any new or revised aspects from the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation must be developed for 2017-22. The proposed plan has been vetted through Executive Council and our Accessibility Committee. The renewed plan was presented to the Special Education Advisory Council for input on October 19, 2017.

The Renewed Multi-Year Accessibility Plan aligns with Grand Erie's Multi-Year Plan in a variety of ways. Accessible work sites and programs will contribute to the well-being of students, staff and families and provide increased equity to accessing program and supports. The Renewed Multi-Year Accessibility Plan also supports planning for school and board learning and work sites to ensure that space is created and used in the best way possible for students and staff.

Next Steps

When approved, the Renewed Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2017-22 will be distributed in keeping with Board Bylaw BL9 and will be posted on the Board website.

Grand Erie Multi-Year Plan:

This report supports the Equity and Environment indicators of Success for Every Student and the following statements: we will promote practices that help students, families and staff feel safe, welcomed and included and we will ensure that students and staff have a safe and welcoming environment in which to learn and work.

Respectfully submitted,

Liana Thompson
Superintendent of Education



GRAND ERIE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

NOVEMBER 2017 to NOVEMBER 2022

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MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

GRAND ERIE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD November 2017 – 2022

Prepared by
Accessibility Committee

In accordance with:

Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA)
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

Plan Availability:

The Grand Erie District School Board's Accessibility Plan is posted on the Board website at www.granderie.ca and hard copies will be made available upon request. The plan can be made in accessible formats by contacting:

Kimberly Newhouse, Manager of Communications and Community Relations
Grand Erie District School Board
269 Erie Avenue, Brantford ON
Telephone: (519) 756-1601 or 1-888-548-8878 ext. 281147
E-mail: kimberly.newhouse@granderie.ca

Aim:

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (the Plan) is developed in accordance with the [Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation \(IASR\), Ontario Regulation 191/11](#) under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005*. It incorporates the intentions of the Board to meet its obligations under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005*. The Plan describes the measures that the Grand Erie District School Board (the Board) will take over the five-year period from 2017-2022 to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who work, learn and participate in the School Board community and environment including students, staff, parents and guardians, volunteers and visitors to the Board and its schools. The Plan will be guided by the Board's Accessibility Policy and Procedures, SO31 Accessibility.

1.0 Definitions and Terminology

Disability: Disability covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and some not visible. A disability may be present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time.

Barrier: A “barrier” means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, policy or a practice; (“obstacle”)

Accessibility: Accessibility is defined as that which enables people to achieve their full potential.

Accommodation: An accommodation is a means, through reasonable efforts, of preventing and removing – in a timely manner – barriers that impede individuals with disability from participating fully in the services of the Board.

2.0 Objectives

This Plan:

- 2.1 Describes the process by which the Board will identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- 2.2 Reviews recent efforts of the Board to remove and prevent barriers;
- 2.3 Describes the measures the Board will take in the period 2017-2022 to identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- 2.4 Makes a commitment to provide an annual status report on the Board’s implementation of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan;
- 2.5 Makes a commitment to review and update the Plan at least once every 5 years;
- 2.6 Describes how the Board will make this Accessibility Plan available to the public.

3.0 Commitment to Accessibility Planning

This Plan will be established, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities, the Board’s Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), the Accessibility Committee and other relevant stakeholders. It is the Board’s role to consider and approve the Plan.

The Grand Erie District School Board is committed to:

- 3.1 Maintaining an Accessibility Committee;
- 3.2 Continuing the process of consulting with the Special Education Advisory Committee and persons with disabilities;
- 3.3 Ensuring, wherever practicable, that Board policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the principles of accessibility and inclusive/universal design. The Accessibility

Committee will provide input re: accessibility issues, where appropriate, with regard to new policies and procedures and to those under review;

- 3.4 Improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community. Consideration of ongoing identification of barriers will be the responsibility of the Accessibility Committee and will, wherever practicable, be incorporated in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

The Director of Education has authorized the Accessibility Committee to review and update the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan that will enable the Grand Erie District School Board to meet these commitments.

4.0 Description of the Grand Erie District School Board

The Grand Erie District School Board is a medium-sized school board in the Province of Ontario. It represents more than 26,000 students in 75 schools within the City of Brantford and the Counties of Brant, Haldimand, and Norfolk. With a dedicated staff of 2,800, Grand Erie is committed to its goal that promotes *SUCCESS for Every Student*.

5.0 Board Multi-Year Plan

SUCCESS for Every Student.

We will achieve this through a focus on students and staff in a culture of high expectations.

6.0 Members of Accessibility Committee

Working Group Member	Department	Contact Information
Anderson, Greg	Board of Trustees	519-446-0170 greg.anderson@granderie.ca
Bell, Sharon - Manager Human Resource Services	Human Resource Services	519-756-6301, ext. 281289 sharon.bell@granderie.ca
Boudreault, Lesley – Special Education Program Coordinator	Special Education	519-756-6301 ext. 287217 lesley.boudreault@granderie.ca
Crotta, Giancarlo – Principal, Houghton School	School Administration	519-875-2291, ext. 538001 giancarlo.crotta@granderie.ca
Erauw, Robert– Supervisor IT Support and Development	Information Technology	519-756-6301, ext. 287028 robert.erauw@granderie.ca
Forbes, David – Supervisor of Purchasing	Purchasing	519-756-6301, ext. 281194 david.forbes@granderie.ca
Gregoire, Gabe –Graphic Designer	Communications and Community Relations	519-754-1601, ext. 281251 gabrielle.gregoire@granderie.ca
Hunt, Doug - Participation House	Community	519-756-1430 ext. 273 dhunt@participationhousebrantford.org
Krukowski, Tom - Division Manager Maintenance & Energy	Facilities Services	519-756-6301, ext. 281115 tom.krukowski@granderie.ca
Kuckyt, Philip – Manager of Transportation Services	Transportation	519-756-6301, ext. 228202 philip.kuckyt@granderie.ca
Mertins, Karin - School and Program Supports Lead (CHAIR)	Student Support Services	519-756-6301, ext. 287219 karin.mertins@granderie.ca
Newhouse, Kimberly – Manager of Communications and Community Relations	Communications and Community Relations	519-756-6301, ext. 281147 kimberly.newhouse@granderie.ca

Senior, Jeff – Principal, Cobblestone School	School Administration	519- 442-2500, ext. 102001 jeff.senior@granderie.ca
Thompson, Liana – Superintendent of Education	Senior Management Special Education/Student Support Services	519-756-6301, ext. 281122 liana.thompson@granderie.ca
Wong, Rob – Vice-Principal, Cayuga Secondary School	School Administration	905-772-3301, ext. 729002 rob.wong@granderie.ca

The Accessibility Committee will meet 4 times per year to review and update the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for 2017-22.

7.0 Strategy for Prevention and Removal of Barriers

The principles of inclusionary practice, freedom from barriers and accessible environments inform all Grand Erie District School Board policies, programs, procedures and services. Through the annual accessibility plan status report process implemented under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, the Grand Erie District School Board’s programming, policies and practices have been assessed to ensure continuous improvement in accessibility. This process will continue through the establishment of a renewed Multi-Year Accessibility Plan which places particular emphasis on the regulations made under the AODA with regard to Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, School Transportation, and the Design of Public Spaces, in accordance with legislation.

8.0 Barrier Identification

The Accessibility Committee uses the following barrier-identification methods:

Group	Methods
Students	Barriers to accessibility are identified by students and parents. Staff in Elementary Program, Student Success, Special Education, Safe and Inclusive Schools, Facilities and Transportation Departments work with stakeholders to remove/prevent barriers and develop accommodation plans.
Staff	In consultation with OSSTF, ETFO and CUPE, Staff, the Health and Disability Officer, and Human Resource Services identify barriers, restrictions and limitations and develop accommodation plans.
Public	Barriers to accessibility are identified by individuals accessing programs and services offered by the school board. Members of the public may bring concerns to the attention of the school, School Support Centres, or the Education Centre. The Board website also provides an opportunity for feedback: http://www.granderie.ca/board/community/accessibility
Board Wide	Ongoing liaison with bargaining partners, provincial associations, school boards, and public sector agencies provides updates on emerging barriers to accessibility. SEAC and the Ontario Public School Boards Association are examples of some of the resources used for barrier identification. Review of our facilities provides up-to-date identification of barriers and permits planning to remove/prevent such barriers. Barriers to accessibility are referred to the Board’s Accessibility Committee for review and recommendations. In June 2017, administrators, SEAC and members of the public participated in a provincial consultation to develop an Accessibility Standard for Education at the invitation of Bruce Rodrigues, Deputy Minister of Education.

9.0 Barrier Removal Achievements

Equipment

The Grand Erie District School Board is committed to ensuring that students with special needs have the personalized equipment necessary to access their educational programs. Student equipment needs are identified through the Resource Team process which acts on recommendations made by qualified Board staff and community service providers such as: Lansdowne Children's Centre, Community Care Access Centres, Psychologists, Audiologists, Speech-Language Pathologists and Ophthalmologists. Equipment requests with supporting documentation are approved by the Program Coordinator – Special Education. For computer hardware and software claims that meet the Special Equipment Amount (SEA) criteria, equipment is purchased with the SEA Per Pupil Allotment funds. For all equipment (non-computer related) costs that exceed the SEA criteria level of \$800, individual claims-based student SEA claims are submitted to the Ministry of Education. All other equipment needs are purchased with instructional supply funds.

Access to Program

Ed Tech, Elementary Program, Student Success and Special Education staff work collaboratively to ensure that classroom programs are accessible to all students by using universal design and differentiated instruction strategies. Improvements to digital library resources with accessible or conversion ready formats of print, digital or multi-media resources for full compliance with the *Integrated Accessibility Standards in School Boards*, January 2020 are on-going.

Accessible Website

Grand Erie websites are fully accessible with web content that meets WCAG 2.0, Level AA accessibility in advance of the January 2021 deadline.

Accessibility Awareness Day

In November, the Grand Erie District School Board invites all sites to participate in an annual Accessibility Awareness Day in support of accessibility for everyone and to engage in activities that celebrate abilities. The success of the day can be followed on social media.

Early and Safe Return to Work

Employees with an occupational or non-occupational illness or injury who require accommodation to return to work are supported through the Board's Return to Work programs. The objective of the program is to return employees to their pre-illness/injury status as soon as possible, consistent with their medical condition. The Ontario Human Rights Commission *Policy and guidelines on disability and the duty to accommodate* have guided the development of these programs.

Transportation Services

The needs of each student, registered at the Grand Erie District School Board, is reviewed annually to determine what services need to be implemented to meet their needs as they relate to transportation services. Vehicles of a variety of sizes and other assistive/safety devices are made available to meet the integrated, accessible needs of each student of the Board.

Accessibility of School Buildings

The Grand Erie District School Board's Facility Services Department takes a portion of their annual budget and dedicates funds to address building accessibility opportunities. Proposals for upgrades are submitted through the Pride of Place process or by completing a request through the staff portal. The draft capital plan proposes alterations to ensure that all our facilities will be compliant with AODA by 2025.

Special Education Staff and Principals identify immediate and anticipated needs for barrier free participation in learning at specific school sites based upon existing and anticipating students enrolled at each school.

Renovations are completed and new buildings are constructed to meet accessibility standards as defined in the Ontario Building Code.

A comprehensive list of accessibility features in all Grand Erie facilities has been created and informs planning.

Systemic

As policies/procedures are developed and/or revised, they are examined to reflect Grand Erie District School Board direction with regards to accessibility.

10.0 Barriers to be Addressed under the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11 filed in June, 2011 pursuant to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* identified specific requirements to achieve accessibility in the areas of:

- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation

These requirements build on the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service which came into force in 2007.

Through this 2017-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, the Grand Erie District School Board intends to take action to address attitudinal barriers to accessibility with a special emphasis on raising awareness of individual differences. This is in addition to ongoing work with regard to identification and removal of barriers in the Board’s physical environment.

Type of Barrier	Location	Action	Recent Activity	Effective Date
Systemic	Board-wide	Newly developed and revised policies/procedures will be reviewed by the Accessibility Committee or through the Safe and Inclusive Schools Committee to provide input from an accessibility lens.	SO126 revision February 2017	Ongoing
Attitudinal	Board-wide	Provide training to all staff and volunteers on accessibility standards requirements and on Human Rights Code provisions re: disabilities and ensure that third-party providers have similar training.	Access to training for volunteers with certificates of completion was placed on Board website May 2017. Roll-out at May 2, 2017. Directors meeting with information provided for school newsletters. Added to school websites August 2017. Updated facilities rental permit agreement to indicate that permit holders must	On-going

Grand Erie District School Board
 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan November 2017-2022

Type of Barrier	Location	Action	Recent Activity	Effective Date
			comply with AODA requirements, February 2017	
Attitudinal		Accessibility Awareness Day #AccessibleGE	November 25, 2016	Annually November 24, 2017
Attitudinal		With the support of Elementary Program, Student Success and Special Education, school staff design course content, instruction and assessment in an inclusive (universal) design framework.	Board supports and interventions have been and will continue to be developed utilizing a tiered approach. To achieve success for every student, Renewed Math Strategy and Literacy collaborative professional learning initiatives emphasize differentiated math instruction and assessment.	On-going
Information and Communications	School Libraries	Elementary Program and Student Success staff will develop the capacity of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of digital or multi-media resources upon request		Ongoing preparation for 2020 deadline
Information and Communications	Board-wide	Review accessibility features of all updates and purchases related to board and school websites in anticipation of WCAG, 2.0, Level AA standards		Board website compliant with this standard went live in August 2017, in anticipation of 2021 deadline
Technology	Board-wide	Ed Tech and Special Education staff provide in-service to improve staff and student understanding of accessibility features available in Grand Erie software	Digital Lead Learners were trained on Microsoft accessibility features in OneNote, Word and PowerPoint.	On-going
Architectural	Board-wide	Facilities Services is working towards full compliance with AODS standards at all sites by 2025	Major Ballachey elevator Fairview Avenue PS rebuild Elgin Avenue PS re-construction	September 2017 September 2018 September 2019
Physical	Board-wide	Accessibility requests can be made through submission of information to the Accessibility Committee or Pride of Place	See 2012-17 Multi-year Accessibility Plan 2017 Update	On-going

11.0 Review and Monitoring Process

The Accessibility Committee meets regularly during the year to consider feedback received, review progress, evaluate the effectiveness of implementation of barrier-removal and prevention strategies and to plan for increased accessibility throughout the Board.

The Accessibility Committee will ensure that in respect of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan the following steps take place:

- (a) An annual status report on the progress of the measures taken to implement the Plan is brought to the Board for approval at the Committee of the Whole meeting in November;
- (b) At least once every 5 years the Plan is reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities, with the Board's Special Education Advisory Committee and other relevant stakeholders. The Plan will be brought to the Board for consideration and approval.
- (c) Development of a new Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be undertaken in 2021-22.

12.0 Communication of the Plan

In addition to the public availability of the Plan as referenced earlier on Page 2, the Grand Erie District School Board will post an annual update report on the progress of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan on the Board's website. The Board will accommodate requests for accessible formats of the Plan.

Questions, comments or feedback regarding the Accessibility Plan may be directed to:

Chair
Accessibility Committee
Grand Erie District School Board
Or
www.granderie.ca "Contact Us"