



Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2023-24 Update

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Grand Erie Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2022-27

November 2024 Update

Prepared in accordance with:

Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA)

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

Plan Availability:

Grand Erie District School Board's Accessibility Plan is posted on the Board website at:

<https://granderie.ca/board/community/accessibility> and hard copies will be made available upon request.

The plan can be made in accessible formats by contacting:

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Aim:

The Plan describes the measures that Grand Erie will take over the five-year period from 2022-27 to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who work, learn and participate in the district including students, staff, parents and caregivers, volunteers and visitors to Grand Erie and its schools.

Grand Erie's 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* and has been guided by the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility K-12 Education Standards Initial Report: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/development-proposed-kindergarten-grade-12-k-12-education-standards-2021-initial-recommendations>

Implementation of the Plan is guided by **Grand Erie's Policy - Accessibility (SO-31)**.

1.0 Definitions and Terminology

Ableism: Attitudes in society that devalue and limit the potential of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are assumed to be less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute and take part, and of less value than other people. Ableism can be conscious or unconscious and is embedded in institutions, systems or the broader culture of a society.

Ableism refers to discrimination towards persons with disabilities. It can be through actions as well as underlying beliefs and attitudes. Ableism involves systemic barriers as well as person-to-person interactions, stereotypes and negative attitudes that devalue and limit the potential of persons with disabilities.

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.

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”)

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.

2.0 Objectives

This Plan:

- 2.1** Describes the process by which Grand Erie will identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- 2.2** Reviews recent efforts in Grand Erie to remove and prevent barriers;
- 2.3** Describes the measures Grand Erie will take in the period 2022-2027 to identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- 2.4** Makes a commitment to provide an annual progress report on Grand Erie’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 Grand Erie will make this Accessibility Plan available to the public.

3.0 Commitment to Accessibility Planning

Grand Erie’s Board of Trustees will receive updates to progress on the Plan annually and be provided with a fulsome overview of the revised and updated Plan every 5 years.

Grand Erie is committed to:

- 2.7** Forming an Accessibility Committee when input re: accessibility issues are required
- 2.8** Continuing the process of consulting with the Special Education Advisory Committee, the Superintendents for Curriculum and School Culture and Well-Being and persons with disabilities;

3.0 Commitment to Accessibility Planning Contd.

- 2.9** Ensuring, wherever practicable, that Grand Erie policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the principles of accessibility and inclusive/universal design.
- 3.1** Improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community.

4.0 Description of the Grand Erie District School Board

The Grand Erie District School Board is a medium-sized school board in Ontario that serves the Counties of Brant, Haldimand, and Norfolk, and the City of Brantford. Grand Erie represents more than 26,000 public school board students in 72 schools, and a dedicated staff of 2,800. Grand Erie is committed to its vision of creating and maintaining accessible learning and workspaces that promote all learners to Learn Lead and Inspire.

5.0 Grand Erie's Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Our Vision

Learn

Lead

Inspire

Our Mission

Together, we build a culture of
learning, **well-being** and **belonging**
 to inspire each learner.

6.0 Strategy for Prevention and Removal of Barriers

The principles of inclusionary practice, freedom from barriers and accessible environments inform all Grand Erie policies, procedures, programs, and services. Through the annual accessibility plan progress report process implemented under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, Grand Erie's programming, policies and practices have been assessed to ensure continuous improvement in accessibility.

7.0 Barrier Identification

Group	Methods
Students	Barriers to accessibility are identified by students and parents. staff in Curriculum Services and Student Achievement, Specialized Services, School Culture and Well-Being, Facilities and Transportation Departments work with stakeholders to remove/prevent barriers and develop accommodation plans
Staff	In consultation with OSSTF, ETFO and CUPE, Staff, Health and Disability 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 Grand Erie. Members of the public may bring concerns to the attention of the school or the Education Centre. Grand Erie's website also provides an opportunity for feedback: https://granderie.ca/community/accessibility
District 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 Education Services Corporation are examples of some of the resources used for barrier identification. Review of Grand Erie facilities provide up-to-date identification of barriers and permits planning to remove/prevent such barriers. Barriers to accessibility are addressed as they are received

8.0 Barriers to be Addressed under the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-27

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 the 2022-27 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, Grand Erie intends to take action to address attitudinal barriers to accessibility with a special emphasis on supporting all students in inclusive environments. This is in addition to ongoing work regarding identification and removal of barriers in Grand Erie's physical environment.

Type of Barrier	Location	Action	Recent Activity	Effective Date
Systemic	District Wide	Newly developed and revised policies/ procedures will be reviewed by departments to provide input from an accessibility lens	On-going	On-going
Systemic	District Wide	Review status of mandatory (AODA) accessibility awareness training to ensure new staff have been trained. Implementation of program to notify employees (new and existing) and their supervisors of completion rate of mandatory trainings (inclusive of AODA training requirements)	Adoption of new online PD platform to ensure notification and access to mandatory annual training	Annual Training each September. New PD training platform September 2024.
Attitudinal	District Wide	Continue to embed discussions at the school level about the Initial Recommendations of the K-12 Education Standards https://www.ontario.ca/document/development-proposed-kindergarten-grade-12-k-12-education-standards-2021-initial-recommendations	Job-embedded Professional Development directly meets recommendations from the standard (CRRSP, UDL, accessible technology)	On-going

8.0 Barriers to be Addressed under the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-27 Contd.

Type of Barrier	Location	Action	Recent Activity	Effective Date
Attitudinal	District Wide	Rick Hansen Foundation School Partnership Initiative	Continued partnership with the Rick Hansen Foundation to provide schools with an online platform to access resources to support the full participation of all. Access to (New) Rick Hansen Foundation Educator Inclusion and Accessibility Professional Development	On-going February 2024
Attitudinal	District Wide	Through a partnership between Curriculum and Student Achievement and Specialized Services, school staff design course content, instruction and assessment in an inclusive (universal) design framework (UDL) in both in-person and remote learning contexts	Partnership with Novak Education provides professional development opportunities about UDL for all Grand Erie staff. Each Professional Development session embeds explicit learning about UDL in the context of the learning	On-going

8.0 Barriers to be Addressed under the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-27 Contd.

Type of Barrier	Location	Action	Recent Activity	Effective Date
Information and Communications	District Wide	Develop school/work site signage to invite requests for accommodation from the public	How can we help you? Signage	Fall 2022
Information and Communications	District Wide	Website re-design to enhance user experience including easily readable fonts and colour contrast, clear and consistent navigation, alt text for images, language translations, and user testing to identify areas for improvement, going beyond AODA compliance	Updated Grand Erie website launch Similar updates under development for School websites and Staff Portal	September 2024 Fall 2024
Information and Communications	District Wide	Communications department to translate materials to ensure families can complete registration, obtain additional information, and reach out to the appropriate board contacts for supports and resources	Five most common languages in Grand Erie identified and materials translated. Statistical data used to identify additional translations including kindergarten and secondary transitions	Spring 2023 Fall 2024
Technology	District Wide	Technology and Innovation and Specialized Services staff provide in-service to improve staff and student understanding of accessibility features available in Grand Erie software	PD opportunity for system and school educators to leverage iPad technology for accessing student thinking, communication and curriculum	2023-24 school year.

Type of Barrier	Location	Action	Recent Activity	Effective Date
Technology	District Wide	Ensure technology features are available that support accessibility for all ie. Closed captioning on PD presentations, staff meetings, classroom teaching and presentations	FM system added to PD meeting rooms	On-going
Architectural	District Wide	Facilities Services ensures there are fully accessible schools in all geographic areas that comply with AODA standards by 2025	Accessibility projects continue to be completed in all geographic areas of Grand Erie	On-going
Physical	District Wide	Accessibility requests are made by the school administrator	Pathway for request identified on Grand Erie website and on the Staff Portal	On-going

9.0 Review and Monitoring Process

Accessibility issues are addressed on an ongoing basis in Grand Erie. Wherever possible, proactive measures are put in place to ensure accessible working and learning environments. Feedback and input is through input received from school board staff, families and community members.

A report of the progress on the measures taken to implement the Plan is brought to the Board of Trustees annually.

10.0 Plan Updates

At least once every five years the Plan is reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities, with Grand Erie's Special Education Advisory Committee and other relevant stakeholders and is shared with the Board of Trustees.

11.0 Communication of the Plan

In addition to the public availability of the Plan as referenced earlier on Page 3, Grand Erie will post an annual update report on the progress of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan on the website at:

<https://granderie.ca/community/accessibility>

Grand Erie will accommodate requests for accessible formats of the Plan.

Questions, comments or feedback regarding the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan may be directed to:
info@granderie.ca



Grand Erie District School Board

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