

# RCDSB Accessibility Plan

## Purpose

The Renfrew County District School Board is committed to ensuring an environment that supports independence, dignity and respect. To achieve this goal, the Renfrew County District School Board undertakes to continually improve accessibility in order to provide greater equity for all in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005).

The Renfrew County District School Board is committed to the principles and practices of inclusion to foster full community participation and integration. When accommodation is required, it will involve a collaborative process. Not all requests will be met in the manner proposed but option(s) will be provided to meet accessibility needs.

## PROFILE of the RENFREWCOUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

The Renfrew County District School Board is in the northeastern region of Ontario. Our catchment areas follows the Ottawa River on the east and borders Algonquin Park to the southwest. Our southernmost schools are in Arnprior and our northernmost school is in Deep River. We have seven secondary schools and 21 elementary schools. In addition, we have adult high schools and Programs for Alternative Learning (PAL) in Arnprior, Renfrew, Pembroke and Barry's Bay.

Informed by staff, partners, and students, our Strategic Priorities reflect our Board's vision of education in Renfrew County. We will work together to foster outstanding educational experiences.

Our staff is committed, passionate and focused on doing their part to create the conditions that will ensure our students are healthy, happy and successful in their personal and professional pursuits

## Guiding Principles

The RCDSB's three Guiding Principles are:

1. Inspire Community Engagement and Partnerships
2. Empower Equity and Well-being
3. Achieve Excellence in Teaching and Learning

The Renfrew County District School Board is committed to the principles and practices of inclusion to foster full community participation and integration.

## STATEMENT of COMMITMENT

The Renfrew County District School Board ignites success by setting high expectations and providing support to ensure all students and staff reach their full potential. We value your achievement, how you feel, how you grow, who you are, your involvement and forward thinking. We support your well-being by creating safe, welcoming, inclusive learning spaces as well as promoting a sense of belonging increasing outcomes for all by identifying and addressing barriers to success and engagement.

The Renfrew County District School Board is committed to:

1. Maintaining an Accessibility Committee with representation from across the system.
2. Consulting with all stakeholder groups including people with disabilities (eg. Special Education Advisory Committee) to continuously improve policies, programs, practices and services for all students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community living with disabilities.
3. Ensuring that District policies, procedures, and practices are consistent with the principles of accessibility and universal design.

## OBJECTIVES

The Renfrew County District School Board (RCDSB) has developed the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standard, Ontario Regulation 191/11 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The plan outlines the intentions of the Board to meet its obligations under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) [www.aoda.ca](http://www.aoda.ca) as well as implement the recommendations from the Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy: [Accessible Education for student with disabilities](#) (2018).

This plan describes the measures the RCDSB will take over the period 2021-2025 to identify, remove and prevent barriers to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.



# There are 2.6 million people in Ontario who have a disability.

# Most disabilities are invisible.

## REVIEW and MONITORING

The Accessibility Committee will:

1. Post the Multi-year Accessibility Plan on the RCDSB website.
2. Provide the plan in an accessible manner upon request.
3. Prepare an annual status report on the implementation of the plan.
4. Review and update the plan in 2024.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

To give feedback or request information about accessibility within the Renfrew County District School Board, please contact:

[accessibility@rcdsb.on.ca](mailto:accessibility@rcdsb.on.ca)

(613) 735-0151



INSPIRE. EMPOWER. ACHIEVE.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT EACH WORD IN TODAY'S TERMINOLOGY HAS A PRECISE MEANING. THE LANGUAGE AND IMAGES USED TO PORTRAY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE VITALLY IMPORTANT IN CHANGING PERCEPTIONS. THE ONTARIO DEFINITION OF A DISABILITY FROM BOTH THE ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (2005) AND THE ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS CODE (1990) INCLUSIVE OF VISIBLE AND NON-VISIBLE DISABILITIES.

## ACCESSIBILITY TERMINOLOGY

### DISABILITY

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act adopts the broad definition for disability that is set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Disability is defined as:

- a. any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes, mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impairment, muteness, or speech impediment, or reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other medical appliance or device.
- b. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- c. a learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d. a mental disorder;
- e. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

### BARRIER

A "barrier" is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including physical, architectural, informational, communication, attitudinal, technological and environmental. Policies can also act as barriers.



## OUR PATH FORWARD

The Renfrew County District School Board is committed to ensuring an environment that supports independence, dignity and respect.

The following table identifies accessibility outcomes that the District has or will put in place.

INSPIRE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS		
LEAD Department	Outcomes	Timeframe
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>	<p>The RCDSB will continue to make progress and improvements in the ways in which we communicate with our staff, students and school communities.</p> <p>We pledge to remain focused on ensuring that our information and communications are available and accessible to everyone.</p> <p>We have redeveloped the corporate website in order to achieve compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0. Compliance with these guidelines will provide greater opportunities for all stakeholders to engage with content.</p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with Phase II of this project and focus on school websites. This will include implementing accessibility monitoring tools to provide ongoing data regarding web content accessibility compliance and can be used to help flag areas where improvement is needed.</li> <li>Provide training opportunities to those creating content for posting with direction on how to prioritize accessible content design.</li> <li>Welcome user and community feedback regarding accessibility concerns via website feedback and accessibility feedback email.</li> </ul>	
<b>Websites</b>		Completion Fall 2022
<b>Staff training</b>		2022
<b>Input collection</b>		2022-2025

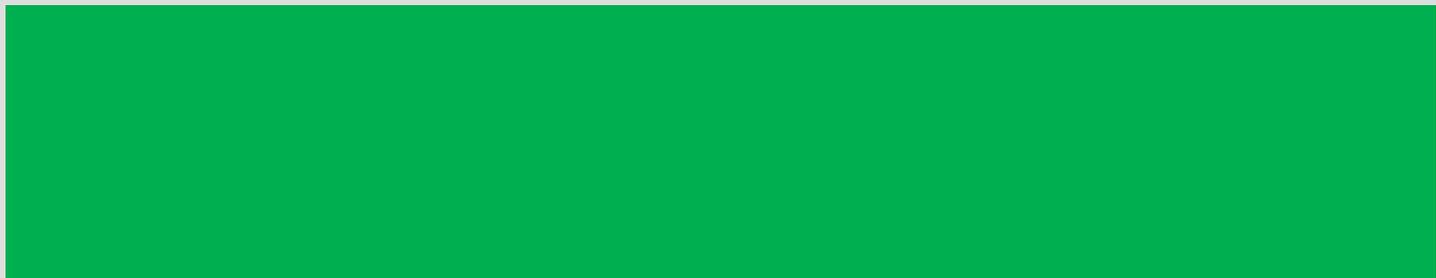
<p><b>Administrative Procedure Review Committee and Policy Review Committee</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalize the process of reviewing policies, procedures, guidelines, and protocols with a focus on the AODA and Code requirements</li> </ul>	<p>Spring 2022</p>
<p><b>Communication (engagement and promotion)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve transparency of accessibility related upgrades to schools sites through more effective communication.</li> <li>• Collaborate with IT to implement an electronic portal for parents/guardians in order to augment two-way communications with staff and provide ease of access to the teaching and learning environments of their children, whether in-person at school or online at home.</li> <li>• Implement regular opportunities for all staff, as well as federation/union partners, to be able to provide input on accessibility needs so that we can serve the diverse needs of all and deliver effective and efficient operations.</li> <li>• Encourage the Student Senate to continue to seek a diversity of student voices — of all backgrounds and interests — so that students’ perspectives are reflected in activities and initiatives, system-wide.</li> </ul>	<p>Spring 2022</p> <p>2022-2023</p> <p>2022-2023</p> <p>2022-2023</p>

EMPOWER EQUITY AND WELL-BEING		
LEAD Department	Outcomes	Timeframe
<p><b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b></p>	<p>In RCDSB’s commitment to ensuring that our internal and external recruitment and assessment processes are fair and accessible, all supervisors and other employees involved in staffing will be required to complete the Accessibility Standards online course (AccessForward) that includes the Employment Standard module (Employment Standard Module).</p> <p>RCDSB will take the following steps to ensure compliance with this standard:</p>	

<p><b>Recruitment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring the RCDSB career page is in an accessible format (i.e screen reader)</li> <li>• Specify that accommodation is available for applicants with disabilities in recruitment material, and with regards to interviews and assessments</li> <li>• When making offers of employment, notify successful applicant of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities</li> <li>• Inform employees of policies supporting employees with disabilities. Provide this information to new employees as soon as practicable after hiring</li> <li>• Provide updated information on accommodations policies to employees when changes occur.</li> <li>• Consult with employee to determine suitability of format or support.</li> </ul>	<p>2022-2023</p>
<p><b>Individual Accommodation Plans</b></p>	<p>RCDSB is committed to creating documented individual accommodation plans, when necessary, that may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation of the employee requiring the individual accommodation plan and their union representative.</li> <li>• Ability to request outside medical evaluation to determine necessary information in an effort to accommodate an individual.</li> <li>• Ability to request the support of a specialist in the area of disability to determine all possible accommodation options.</li> <li>• Modifications to the physical/cognitive work environment</li> <li>• Yearly review and updates.</li> <li>• Providing plans in a format that takes into account the needs of the employee.</li> <li>• Workplace emergency response planning.</li> </ul>	<p>2022-2023</p>
	<p>RCDSB is committed to developing individual accommodation and/or return-to-work plans for</p>	

<p><b>Return to Work</b></p>	<p>employees that have been absent due to a disability, when necessary.</p> <p>RCDSB has developed and maintained a return to work process for our employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability related accommodations in order to return to work. The process includes steps RCDSB takes to facilitate the return to work process &amp; uses the documented individual accommodation plans.</p> <p>For more information on RCDSB's Accommodation and Return to Work practices see <a href="#">AP 485 - Disability Management Program</a></p>	
<p><b>Performance Management, Career Development &amp; Redeployment</b></p>	<p>RCDSB is committed to ensuring the accessibility needs of employees with disability needs are taken into account concerning performance management and career development.</p> <p>RCDSB will review and update any Human Resources policies and procedures to include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans are taken into account when using performance management processes</li> <li>● Accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans are taken into account when providing career development and advancement opportunities.</li> </ul>	<p>2022</p>
<p><b>Policies and Procedures</b></p>	<p>RCDSB is committed to training all employees on the AODA Standard (AccessForward). Further RCDSB is committed to determining which positions require training within the specific context of AODA in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Customer Service Standard</li> <li>● Information and Communication Standard</li> <li>● Employment Standard</li> <li>● Design of Public Spaces Standard</li> <li>● Transportation Standard</li> </ul> <p>RCDSB will endeavour to educate its staff on equity, specifically as it relates to disability, in an effort to reduce attitudinal barriers within the school board.</p>	<p>2022-2025</p>

<b>ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING</b>		
<b>LEAD Department</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY</b>	The RCDSB will continue to build upon the progress realized through its Information Communication Technology strategy.	
<b>Remote Access</b>	Continue to offer virtual meetings as an option beyond the pandemic. This allows attendees, regardless of their personal circumstances, to actively participate virtually. This includes ensuring that all secondary schools have videoconferencing ability to support system-wide vLearning classes.	2022-2023
<b>Technological</b>	Ensure the District's technological and digital devices are responsive to the abilities of all users (staff and students) and that we continue to plan toward a 1:1 ratio for devices to students.	2022-2023
<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b>	IT will implement an electronic portal for parents/guardians in order to augment two-way communications with staff and provide ease of access to the teaching and learning environments of their children, whether in-person at school or online at home.	2023-2024



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