



**WATERLOO REGION  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

# **ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

**2021-2026**





# CONTENTS

---

Message from the Director and Chairperson	4
Glossary	5
Commitment to Accessibility	6
About the Waterloo Region District School Board	7
Accessibility Working Group and Developing the 2021-2026 Plan	8
Accessibility Accomplishments	9-14
Overview of Objectives for the 2021-2026 Plan	16-25
Communication of the Plan	26
Review and Monitoring	27
Appendix A	28-32
Appendix B	33
Appendix C	34

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR AND CHAIRPERSON



The Waterloo Region District School Board's (WRDSB) Multi-Year Accessibility Plan represents our plans to meet our obligations under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) 2001, and outlines our recent achievements in this important work over the past few years.

This latest document marks a renewal of our commitment to our responsibilities under the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), and under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (2011), in a way that ensures equitable access to our buildings, programs and services for all of the students, families, employees, and community members who learn and work in the WRDSB.

Our commitments, like our plans, continue to grow and evolve. We are building on our past work, to further commit to achieving our accessibility goals in a way that promotes and ensures respect for every person's human rights, dignity and independence.

Our efforts have resulted in tangible accomplishments across our system, from improved recruitment, hiring and training practices that highlight the WRDSB's accommodation procedures and relevant accessibility legislation, to the physical improvements to our 121 schools, more than 80% of which are accessible as of December 31, 2020. These changes help to make our system a more accessible, welcoming place for all those in our community, but we know our work is not done.

Our work is rooted in our responsibilities to the OHRC and AODA; however, our goals lie well beyond the realm of compliance. We must ensure that we are one step ahead in removing barriers, so we may act before they have the opportunity to impact our students, staff and community. Our focus extends beyond physical barriers, and includes those that we can't touch and feel. At the WRDSB, we endeavour to ensure that we are a truly accessible and inclusive system – in every way.

As we look to the future, we know there is still much work to be done in ensuring that we prioritize accessibility for all across the WRDSB. We are ambitious, but determined in our efforts as we look to take on the systemic barriers that exist, including the development of new policies and procedures to help guide the WRDSB in this work as a whole. This work will be led by the Human Rights and Equity Advisor, in collaboration with senior leadership to identify and eliminate barriers in our system that would otherwise contravene the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) and represents our ongoing commitment to removing systemic barriers in our school board.

Although we are taking a system-wide approach, we remain focused on addressing barriers in specific areas, as well. From how our community accesses information and communication, to how we transport our students to school, to how we hire new employees – our approach is multi-faceted and aims to address these concerns with speed and effectiveness.

We invite you to review our Accessibility Plan 2021-2026, and would welcome any questions or feedback.

Sincerely,



**John Bryant**  
Director of Education



**Joanne Weston**  
Chairperson of the  
Board of Trustees



# GLOSSARY

---

**“Accessibility Standard”** shall,

- (a) set out measures, policies, practices or other requirements for the identification and removal of barriers with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, premises or such other things as may be prescribed, and for the prevention of the erection of such barriers; and
  - (b) require the persons or organizations named or described in the standard to implement those measures, policies, practices or other requirements within the time periods specified in the standard.
- 2005, c. 11, s. 6 (6).

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

**“Disability”** means,

- (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 co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or
- (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; (“handicap”)



# COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY

**The Director of Education has authorized the Accessibility Committee to review and update the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to enable the WRDSB to meet these commitments.**

The Waterloo Region District Board (WRDSB) is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under the Ontario Human Rights Code, and under Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Integrated Regulation, in a way that ensures equitable access to its buildings, programs and services for all of the students, families, employees, and members of the public who collectively make up the WRDSB community.

The WRDSB further commits to achieving its accessibility goals in a way that promotes and ensures respect for every person's human rights, dignity and independence. The WRDSB commitment to accessibility further includes:

- Developing policies, procedures and practices that promote inclusion in all aspects of service delivery for students, families, staff, and members of the public.
- Ensuring individual accommodations meet the needs and provide the opportunity for every WRDSB student and employee to achieve success.
- Building accessible learning and working environments through shared responsibilities and collaboration

amongst departments.

- Consulting people with disabilities, exceptionalities and/or special needs in the development and review of its accessibility plans.
- Maintaining an Accessibility/AODA committee with representation from across the Board and community.
- Reviewing and updating the Accessibility Plan on a regular 5 year cycle and reporting on our progress annually.
- An understanding that this work is necessary for some but good for all.
- Given the evolving state of accessibility, we know our work will never be done.

The WRDSB Accessibility Plan outlines the steps that will be undertaken in order to identify and remove structural, attitudinal, systemic, and communication barriers to access for persons with disabilities. The Plan also sets out the steps that the WRDSB will take to achieve these goals, and how we envision the outcomes of our efforts, and how we will measure our progress.

## THE WRDSB IS COMMITTED TO

**3.1** Maintaining an Accessibility Committee.

**3.2** Ensuring, wherever practical, that Board policies, procedures, and practices are consistent with the principles of accessibility and inclusive/universal design. The Accessibility Committee will provide input, where appropriate, about accessibility issues relating to new policies and procedures, and to those under review.

**3.3** 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 practical, be incorporated in the multi-year plan.



# ABOUT THE WATERLOO REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**The WRDSB is one of the larger school districts in Ontario, providing junior kindergarten to grade twelve education to elementary and secondary students in the cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo and the townships of North Dumfries, Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot. The geographical area of the Board covers 1,345 square kilometers.**

For 2020-21, the WRDSB has a full-time enrollment of 64,178 students (44,326 elementary students and 19,852 secondary students). Average class sizes are 18.89 in the primary division, 21.57 in the elementary overall and 21.5 in secondary schools. There are presently 5,978 instructional staff and 867 non-instructional staff employed by the WRDSB.

The WRDSB operates 105 elementary schools, 16 secondary schools, four Outdoor Education facilities, an Adult Education Centre, an administrative Education Centre, and other learning facilities.

The Board operates within the requirements of the Education Act. For the 2020-21 school year the WRDSB has a budget comprising \$805.1M in expenditures, the capital budget has been increased to \$115.4 M with the addition of COVID-19 Resiliency Infrastructure Stream (CVRIS) and Climate Action Incentive Fund (CAIF). The Board of Trustees includes 11 elected Trustees and two Student Trustees. The Trustees are accountable to the Ministry of Education and the people of Waterloo Region. They establish the strategic directions and priorities of the Board, and monitor our progress. Trustees approve an annual budget, and review and approve Board policies.



# ACCESSIBILITY WORKING GROUP AND DEVELOPING THE 2021-2026 PLAN

In February 2020, the WRDSB Accessibility Working Group began meeting with the goal of reviewing the previous Accessibility Plan and to plan the WRDSB accessibility work for the next iteration of the plan. Over the course of the project, the working group expanded to include stakeholders from various unions and employee groups.

The working group engaged various board committees including the Special Education Advisory Committee, the Equity and Indigenous Advisory Group, the Parent Involvement Committee and the Student Senate.

All of these efforts have resulted in a refreshed vision of accessibility and a detailed plan to further improve accessibility for the WRDSB and community that it serves. Throughout the life of the Accessibility Plan, the WRDSB will hold itself accountable through a detailed monitoring plan.

The Accessibility Working Group also worked to consult with the Accommodation Steering Committee and members of the Staff Advisory Committee. The Staff Advisory Committee includes members of the Secondary Schools Principals Association (SSPA), Secondary Schools Vice-Principals Association (SSVPA), Waterloo Region Elementary Association (WREA), Education Centre Managers' Group, Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO), Waterloo Region DECE Local (WRDECE), Waterloo Region Occasional Teacher Local (WROT), Educational Assistants Association (EAA), Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF), Educational Support Staff (ESS), Supervision Monitors and Cafeteria Assistants (SMACA), Professional Student Services Personnel (PSSP), and Custodial & Maintenance Association (CAMA).

# ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The WRDSB has made progress in achieving the plans laid out in the previous iteration of the WRDSB's Accessibility Plan. This action of the report outlines the WRDSB's accessibility enhancements in the areas of Customer Service, Employment, Information and Communication, Physical Environment, and Transportation.





**The WRDSB has, and continues to, make notable progress in improvements to our information and communication systems and strategies.** From how we communicate to our community, to how we offer training to our employees, we remain focused on continuing to ensure that our information and communications are available and accessible to everyone in our community.

The WRDSB has undertaken the redevelopment of the corporate and school websites 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 the web content provided via the WRDSB web properties. Further, content on the WRDSB corporate and school websites are readily translated into almost 100 languages. Finally, the WRDSB has procured an automated website accessibility assessment tool to continually monitor and evaluate the accessibility of WRDSB websites.

The WRDSB also uses a variety of other communications tools to share information and communicate with students and families. Brightspace and Google Classroom provide accessible communication and the ability to share information with a variety of stakeholders.

In order to train new and existing staff on accessibility awareness the WRDSB has developed online modules. As of January 2015, all existing staff completed the training and all new staff are required to complete the training.

Feedback, both from our community and our staff, continues to help shape our approach to increasing the accessibility of our information and communications. Students, staff and community members are all invited to offer feedback on WRDSB websites and their effectiveness as communication tools via the website feedback form and accessibility feedback form, available from each of our WRDSB websites. This user feedback plays a crucial role in helping to shape future developments to our communication strategies and platforms to help ensure our information and communications are accessible to all in our community.

To support those who require alternate formats of information and communication, we established a framework to offer these accessible formats on an as-needed basis. From large print, to braille documents, to online, digital content, we have the means to ensure that any member of our community has the ability to access our information and communications in a manner that works for them.

Educational and training resources and materials, both those produced internally by the WRDSB and those produced by our partners and vendors, have the capability to support accessible communication formats. This includes the use of transcripts for training sessions provided via video or webinar formats, and the use of reading software, which includes text to speech functions, to ensure training and professional development opportunities that incorporate written or text-based content are available to all staff.

Our libraries and our online library, the Library Learning Commons employ a variety of strategies to ensure content accessed via these outlets meets our accessibility requirements and the needs of our system.

The Library Learning Commons, through our online database vendors, has integrated accessibility tools that support the reading and voice playback of the resources in their libraries. This also includes the magnification of text, to ensure that those with limited sight are able to consume the content they offer, without barriers. In addition, these databases include audiobooks, translation functionality, the ability to adjust font size, as well as highlight and annotate.

Additionally, Google Chrome extensions, deployed centrally by WRDSB IT Services, offer increased accessibility for all WRDSB users accessing online resources by offering read and write capability directly in the browser.

For print materials, educators and staff are encouraged to provide enlarged print copy through photocopying, while abiding by copyright guidelines.



**The WRDSB has made notable improvements to a number of areas associated with Customer Service. The WRDSB provides mandatory training to staff on the Customer Service Standards supporting the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).** This training enhances staff understanding of the standards and provides better support and services for all stakeholders. Additional training on the Ontario Human Rights Code (Code) supplements AODA training.

The WRDSB continued to improve its approach to creating, implementing and monitoring administrative procedures, guidelines, and protocols that ensure respect for every person's independence, dignity, and human rights. Building on this foundation, the WRDSB continues to review and improve its procedures, guidelines, and

protocols to ensure that services are provided equitably across the system.

The WRDSB utilizes a number of feedback mechanisms to provide an opportunity for those engaged with schools, departments or on behalf of stakeholder groups. The WRDSB solicits feedback about our policies, procedures, practices and programs, thereby providing an opportunity to identify operational or systemic barriers, resulting in access to the full spectrum of opportunities and outcomes. Stakeholder feedback is gathered through regularly scheduled meetings or the cyclical implementation of surveys, town halls, the Accessibility Feedback Form, Website Feedback Form, emails, advisory meetings, and regular updates to the Board and the broader community.



**The WRDSB has made notable improvements to a number of areas associated with employment.**

## **RECRUITMENT/HIRING AND TRAINING**

The WRDSB's internal and external recruitment, assessment, and selection processes have been standardized to include a notification to participants of the availability of accommodations. New and existing employees are informed of the availability of accommodations.

The job posting, the documentation to the Hiring Team and the invitation for an interview includes a notification that, if requested, accommodations are available. If an accommodation is requested at any stage of the recruitment process, applicants are consulted regarding necessary arrangements to account for individual accessibility needs.

New hire conditional offers of employment include a step by step guide to the Online Employee Training Centre which includes the module, "Accessibility for Ontarians". Also included in the offer letter is a reference to WRDSB's accommodation procedure and an information brochure is provided in the successful candidate's orientation package.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

The process for employee assessment and the subsequent development of accommodation plans has been documented. Individual plans are kept confidential within the Employee Wellness Department. Plans are shared with the employee, manager and union to facilitate the implementation of the recommended accommodation plans.

The Employee Wellness Department supports staff returning to work and supports them through the development of an individual accommodation plan. As part of the accommodation process, emergency evacuation plans are developed if needed (see IERPs). The process was designed to support the employees' successful return to work and their ability to remain working.

## **INDIVIDUAL EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANS (IERPS)**

To support Board employees with disabilities, Health, Safety & Security used the standard to develop an Individual Emergency Evacuation Plan (IERP) template and request letter. The request letter serves as a means for employees to notify the Board that they need a plan developed. The IERP template builds an emergency evacuation plan specific to the individual and captures all necessary information around the employee's evacuation needs. To date, the Accessibility Committee, Employee Wellness and Human Resource Services have reviewed the template and request letter.



**From 2012 to 2020, the WRDSB made significant improvements to its facilities, focusing primarily on mobility accessibility.** As of December 31, 2020, the WRDSB has improved 88 of 105 elementary schools, making more than 80% accessible. Similarly in secondary schools, 15 of 16 are more than 80% accessible.

Facility Services works collaboratively with the Special Education Department to identify and prioritize capital expenditures on accessibility enhancements. Through the use of capital funding, school condition improvement funding, and school renewal allocations, the WRDSB has been able to improve accessibility within its facilities.

When designing capital projects, Facility Services works to incorporate accessibility enhancements into these projects. This approach to capital projects allows the WRDSB to use its limited funding to complete a higher number of accessibility projects.

School based staff work closely with Special Education staff, and Facility Services to identify on-site supports to students. This information is maintained by the Special Education Department and allows the WRDSB to provide individual accommodations to students in a timely manner thus ensuring every student can experience an inclusive learning environment at the WRDSB.



**To assist in addressing the WRDSB's systemic needs, a new position was posted and the successful candidate started in the role in January 2020.** The role of the Human Rights and Equity Advisor (HREA) was created to collaborate with the senior leadership team at the WRDSB to identify and eliminate barriers and gaps in policies, procedures, practices and programs that would otherwise contravene the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC). Specifically, the HREA will be developing a human rights policy and a formal complaints process. A formal complaints process for Code-based incidents will help bring resolution to anyone who experiences discrimination based on the protected grounds, including individuals with disabilities.

The HREA will supervise a new Human Rights Branch that will work in collaboration with other departments to assist in creating a culture of human rights and equity. As part of their mandate, the Human Rights Branch will support professional learning for Board staff around human rights. As of September 2020, mandatory Human Rights 101 online training has been implemented on a yearly basis for all WRDSB staff so that everyone understands their rights and responsibilities under the Code.

The Human Rights Branch is a part of a broader Indigenous, Equity, and Human Rights (IEHR) Department. This department has been formally established since October 2020. A new website about the department and its three branches - Indigenous education, equity and inclusion, and human rights, was created and made public in the latter part of the 2020/2021 school year. This website will allow members of the WRDSB community to have access to important information about the work of the IEHR Department.

The WRDSB also depends on advisory groups to help identify barriers in our policies, procedures, practices and programs. There are two advisory groups in particular that will be invited to provide input and feedback into the multi-year accessibility plan. These are the Equity Inclusion Advisory Group (EIAG) and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

The EIAG has been in existence since 2009. Its members represent various community groups and organizations that serve diverse and marginalized communities. This 15 member advisory group meets monthly to discuss equity and inclusion at the WRDSB.

Under the Education Act school boards are responsible for establishing Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs) and the regulation sets out the requirements for that committee. The WRDSB SEAC represents a number of local associations and organizations that support and advocate for students with special needs and their families. One of the many roles of our SEAC is to review WRDSB Policies and Procedures and make recommendations to the Board regarding Special Education programs, services and accessibility measures for students with exceptional needs.

The WRDSB also has a comprehensive plan to support human rights and equity called the Equity and Indigenous Action Plan (EIAP). The EIAP has been shared with system leaders who are responsible for the action items in the plan and have begun implementation. This Plan, which will impact students, staff as well as other stakeholders, is a priority for the WRDSB.



**Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR) is a non-profit corporation that supports student transportation in both the WRDSB, and the Waterloo Catholic District School Board.** The Director of Education and the Coordinating Superintendent, Business Services sit on the STSWR Board of Directors.

STSWR ensures students' needs are met according to those identified by the school. Transportation services

continue to evolve with new design and technology. For example, small buses were equipped with integrated child seats to provide additional options in transporting small students who need more support to remain seated properly. Secondly, technology was used to automate the Individual Travel Plan to ensure no details were missed and every student's needs were properly communicated to drivers by being integrated to the route details process.

# OVERVIEW OF OBJECTIVES FOR THE 2021-2026 PLAN



# COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION



Objectives	Actions	Outcomes and measurements to be considered
Improve accessibility of website design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design new web user interface for WRDSB web properties.</li> <li>Implement new design and features across appropriate web properties.</li> <li>Use of accessibility monitoring tool during website design process to ensure WCAG 2.0 compliance of features in the design.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designs implemented across the appropriate WRDSB web properties (WRDSB.ca, school websites).</li> <li>Accessibility monitoring tool crawl data to be used to measure WCAG 2.0 compliance percentage once implemented and to ensure compliance of any future upgrades or updates.</li> <li>Accessibility monitoring tool crawl data will also be used to identify any areas of improvement.</li> </ul>
Improve accessibility of existing and future content on WRDSB websites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of accessibility monitoring tool provides 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 WRDSB web properties with direction on how to prioritize accessible content design.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessibility monitoring tool crawl data to be used to measure WCAG 2.0 compliance percentage of content across WRDSB web properties and to ensure compliance of any future and existing content.</li> </ul>
Continue to build supports and offer resources to staff to empower and prioritize the creation of accessible web content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build and improve existing writing and web content guides offered to all WRDSB staff via the Staff Intranet.</li> <li>Provide training opportunities to those creating content for WRDSB web properties with direction on how to prioritize accessible content design.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use accessibility monitoring tool to track WCAG 2.0 web accessibility across all WRDSB web properties and identify areas where more support for staff is needed.</li> </ul>

## COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION (CONTINUED)



Objectives	Actions	Outcomes and measurements to be considered
Receiving and addressing feedback from our users and community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We continue to welcome user and community feedback regarding accessibility concerns via our website feedback and accessibility feedback forms, available from any of the WRDSB web properties.</li> <li>Feedback is collected and beyond addressing specific identified issues, is used to help shape future feature development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued user and community feedback via these forms allows us to measure the success of our work.</li> </ul>
Capability to provide student records in an accessible format to persons who request them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore options to offer student records in a selection of formats to meet accessibility requirements of those who may request them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Framework developed to support requests for student records in accessible formats for current and former students requiring this documentation.</li> </ul>
Support the development of training materials for staff that meet accessibility guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop new and enhance existing resources to support departments with the creation of training materials and courses that meet accessibility guidelines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Framework developed and in place to support departments with the creation of accessible training materials throughout the WRDSB.</li> <li>Monitor feedback from staff regarding accessibility concerns with training materials.</li> </ul>

# CUSTOMER SERVICE



Objectives	Actions	Outcomes and measurements to be considered
Improve staff understanding of their roles and responsibilities as it relates to the provision of accessible customer service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the delivery of training on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and Ontario Human Rights Code (Code) professional learning and training to staff and volunteers.</li> <li>Empower staff to find innovative ways to remove barriers to accessing equitable customer service.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff and volunteers complete mandatory training as required.</li> <li>Feedback is acknowledged and responded to in a timely manner.</li> </ul>
Formalize the WRDSB's process of reviewing policies, procedures, guidelines, and protocols with a focus on the AODA and Code requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post the review process on the WRDSB's website to promote transparency and awareness.</li> <li>Train staff on their roles and responsibilities in the review process.</li> <li>Cyclical review of policies, procedures, guidelines, and protocols to ensure high quality of service delivery to those that may experience barriers due to visible or invisible disabilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service delivery addresses the needs of stakeholders regardless of visible or invisible disabilities.</li> <li>Policies, procedures, guidelines, and protocols are posted to the WRDSB's website in a timely manner.</li> </ul>
Formalize the process of engaging stakeholder groups for feedback.	<p>The AODA Working Group will engage the following stakeholders biannually (every two years) for feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff Advisory Committee</li> <li>Special Education Advisory Committee</li> <li>Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group</li> <li>Indigenous Education Advisory Group</li> <li>Equity and Social Justice Student Advisory</li> <li>Parent Involvement Committee</li> <li>Accessibility Committee</li> <li>Student Senate</li> <li>Board of Trustees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback is acknowledged and responded to in a timely manner.</li> <li>Service delivery addresses the needs of stakeholders regardless of visible or invisible disabilities.</li> <li>Feedback will be reviewed, assessed, adapted or integrated within the existing or future multi-year plan.</li> </ul>



Objectives	Actions	Outcomes and measurements to be considered
Review and revise processes and procedures as needed related to workplace accommodation, to ensure they reflect current regulatory requirements and best practices and ensure they are inclusive and applicable to all staff.	Review and revise processes and procedures where required to ensure they reflect current legislative and regulatory standards. Enhance the information available electronically to ensure all employees have access to WRDSB's accommodation processes.	Enhancements are achieved prior to conclusion of this plan.  If required, a revised procedure draft will progress through the WRDSB review process.
Explore ways in which the WRDSB can enhance professional learning related to the duty to accommodate and bias - free hiring practices amongst WRDSB system leaders (hiring teams).	Research the best way to develop content for leadership training related to accommodations and to ensure applicable staff have the training to equip them to be able to see all disabilities and provide the best support to staff and students. Continue to explore professional learning initiatives regarding delivery of bias-free hiring training.	System leaders are more knowledgeable regarding the Duty to Accommodate and bias-free hiring. Concerns from staff related to accommodations are reduced and resolved informally.
Enhance the diversity and inclusivity of the WRDSB workforce by identifying and expanding targeted recruitment groups with inclusion for persons of varying ability.	Research/survey and identify opportunities for targeted recruitment activities amongst groups, including persons with disabilities, which are underrepresented amongst WRDSB employees.	WRDSB will endeavour to become an employer of choice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>plan for action based on research/survey outcomes is determined.</li> </ul>
Implementation of the Individual Emergency Evacuation Plan (IERP) template and request process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update and finalize the IERP template and request letter, post it on the staff website.</li> <li>Add in general wording to the employee offer letter about requesting the development of a plan.</li> <li>Send out an 'All Staff Communication' to inform existing employees of the process and resources.</li> </ul>	Track number of requests received for support in the development of IERPs from Administrators and Supervisors.

# PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT



Objectives	Actions	Outcomes and measurements to be considered
Ensure that all students are able to physically access all program offerings in each WRDSB school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the schematic design of non-accessible and partially accessible schools to cost out and plan for the accessibility upgrade work.</li> <li>Continue to use existing school renewal grants and school condition improvement grants to complete accessibility projects.</li> <li>Leveraging application based funding to accelerate accessibility project completions.</li> <li>Combining capital projects to leverage limited funding to complete a greater number of accessibility projects.</li> <li>Consult with staff, students, and board advisory groups to collect feedback on accessibility projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2025, complete accessibility projects (mobility) at the 8 remaining non-accessible schools and the 8 remaining partially accessible sites.</li> <li>Existing accessibility upgrades are updated to meet revised code requirements and stakeholder needs.</li> <li>Continued improvement of the WRDSB's ability to efficiently use financial resources to support accessibility-related projects.</li> </ul>
Focus on developing a standard for both vision and hearing impairment related accessibility upgrades.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop strategies and costings to provide more effective vision and hearing accessibility upgrades to existing buildings.</li> <li>Pilot vision and hearing impairment upgrades at select sites.</li> <li>Consult with stakeholders and experts during the development of these strategies and costs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a design standard for vision and hearing impairment related accessibility upgrades.</li> </ul>
Improve transparency of accessibility-related upgrades to schools sites through more effective communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update accessibility related information for all facilities on the WRDSB website.</li> <li>Develop a process to update facility specific information annually.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site specific accessibility information is publicly available for each WRDSB site.</li> <li>Publicly available site specific accessibility information is complete and accurate within three (3) months of the completion of capital projects.</li> </ul>

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (CONTINUED)



Objectives	Actions	Outcomes and measurements to be considered
Identify student needs sooner to facilitate advanced planning for facilities-related accommodations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facility Services and Special Education Department collaboratively identify accommodation upgrade capital projects at least 10 months before the accommodations are required.</li><li>• Enhance the process of tracking student accessibility needs from preschool to graduation.</li><li>• Continued improvement of the functionality of existing systems used to track student accessibility needs.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting students' needs quicker through more efficient capital project planning.</li><li>• Minimal unanticipated requests for accommodation upgrade capital projects.</li></ul>



Objectives	Actions	Outcomes and measurements to be considered
Develop, as needed, further policies, procedures, and/or guidelines to support the Accessibility Plan and other Board initiatives related to the rights of persons with disabilities and the creation of equitable and inclusive learning and working environments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update WRDSB Policy 1010 - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (annually) and Administrative Procedure 1630 - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (bi-annually).</li> <li>Engage stakeholders including but not limited to the Special Education Advisory Committee and the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group.</li> <li>Identify other policy supports, as appropriate and necessary based on a review of best practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRDSB policies and procedures reflect best practices, consistent with the approach of boards in other jurisdictions.</li> </ul>
Update and implement a WRDSB Equity and Indigenous Action Plan (EIAP) to guide and coordinate the Board's work related to equity, inclusion and Human Rights, system-wide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steering Committee established to determine approach to action planning and next steps.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steering Committee to guide EIAP work internally, as well as to increase public awareness of WRDSB's commitment and actions related to equity and inclusion.</li> </ul>
Develop a plan for, and begin to deliver, system-wide professional development regarding the duty to accommodate persons with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review recently completed and existing professional learning in relation to the WRDSB's duty to accommodate students, family members, and members of the public to identify system needs.</li> <li>Develop a plan for effective implementation of professional learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased understanding among staff and management regarding the duty to accommodate persons with disabilities.</li> <li>Reduction in concerns raised regarding a lack of, or the nature and scope of, accommodation.</li> <li>Improvement in data from staff census.</li> </ul>
Develop a plan for and provide support for school-based student learning opportunities that focus on enhancing students' understanding of inclusive communities that welcome individuals of all abilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work collaboratively with Learning Support Services and the Special Education Department staff to provide resources to schools to support student learning opportunities that focus on understanding and supporting the needs of individuals with disabilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased understanding among both staff and students of the ways in which schools can help to foster inclusive communities as seen through school-wide initiatives and more inclusive classroom learning environments.</li> <li>An organizational culture that is committed to the principles of human rights and equity as outlined in the AODA.</li> </ul>

## SYSTEMIC (CONTINUED)



Objectives	Actions	Outcomes and measurements to be considered
Create a new Human Rights Policy and Code-Based Complaints Procedure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of a new WRDSB Human Rights Policy and Code-Based Complaints Procedure.</li> <li>Training on the new policy and procedure for all staff.</li> <li>Sufficient and qualified staff are recruited and retained by the WRDSB to implement and operationalize the Code-based complaint process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater awareness of basic human rights.</li> <li>Human rights complaints addressed through the Human Rights Branch.</li> <li>Complainants are satisfied with the resolution of their issue by the WRDSB.</li> </ul>
Prioritize the AODA and accessibility work through intentional efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire a Human Rights Officer with a specific focus on AODA who will monitor the implementation of the AODA plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased attention to the AODA and accessibility at the WRDSB.</li> </ul>
Program implementation and monitoring results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A set of measures to be collected on an on-going basis that reflect the degree to which the plan's goals have been met in each of the domains.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect data and conduct surveys to measure the implementation and impact of the AODA Plan.</li> <li>Annual update to the plan.</li> </ul>

# TRANSPORTATION



Objectives	Actions	Outcomes and measurements to be considered
Design and monitor service for home to school transportation in keeping with the Board's policies and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop transportation arrangements for students identified and approved by partner school boards, consistent with each student's Individual Student Transportation Plan (ISTP).</li> <li>Ensure effective communication of ISTP information to service providers contracted to deliver service to students.</li> <li>In accordance with STSWR's commitment to integrated transportation, ensure exceptional students are transported on traditional school buses unless alternate accessible transportation is required to meet a student's needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transportation service that meets individual students' needs, while maintaining maximum inclusion and integration.</li> <li>Successful implementation of ISTP requirements by contracted service providers.</li> </ul>
Review existing practices and procedures to ensure these reflect current best practices and principles of equity and inclusion and proactively address barriers to access and integration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review legislative and regulatory requirements for any updates or changes.</li> <li>Review policies and procedures of student transportation providers in other jurisdictions to identify best practices.</li> <li>Review and propose revisions to STSWR procedures and practices, as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procedures are up to date, clear and comprehensive.</li> <li>Procedures embody organizational commitments.</li> </ul>
Ensure compliance with STSWR policies and procedures, and commitment to safe, efficient and effective service by all staff, including service delivery partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan and deliver training to staff, in particular training related to accessible transportation and ISTPs.</li> <li>Ensure training includes, in particular, all bus operators under contract to STSWR.</li> <li>Monitor the quality of home to-school services provided by contracted service delivery partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fewer concerns raised by students and families related to services provided by service delivery partners.</li> <li>Organizational culture reflects commitment to principles of equity and inclusion.</li> </ul>

## COMMUNICATION OF THE PLAN



The WRDSB Accessibility Plan will be posted on the Board's website at **[www.wrdsb.ca/accessibility](http://www.wrdsb.ca/accessibility)**. The WRDSB will provide accessible formats of the Plan upon request.

**Waterloo Region District School Board**  
**51 Ardelt Avenue**  
**Kitchener, Ontario**  
**N2C 2R5**  
**Telephone: (519) 570-0300**  
**Email: [info@wrdsb.ca](mailto:info@wrdsb.ca)**

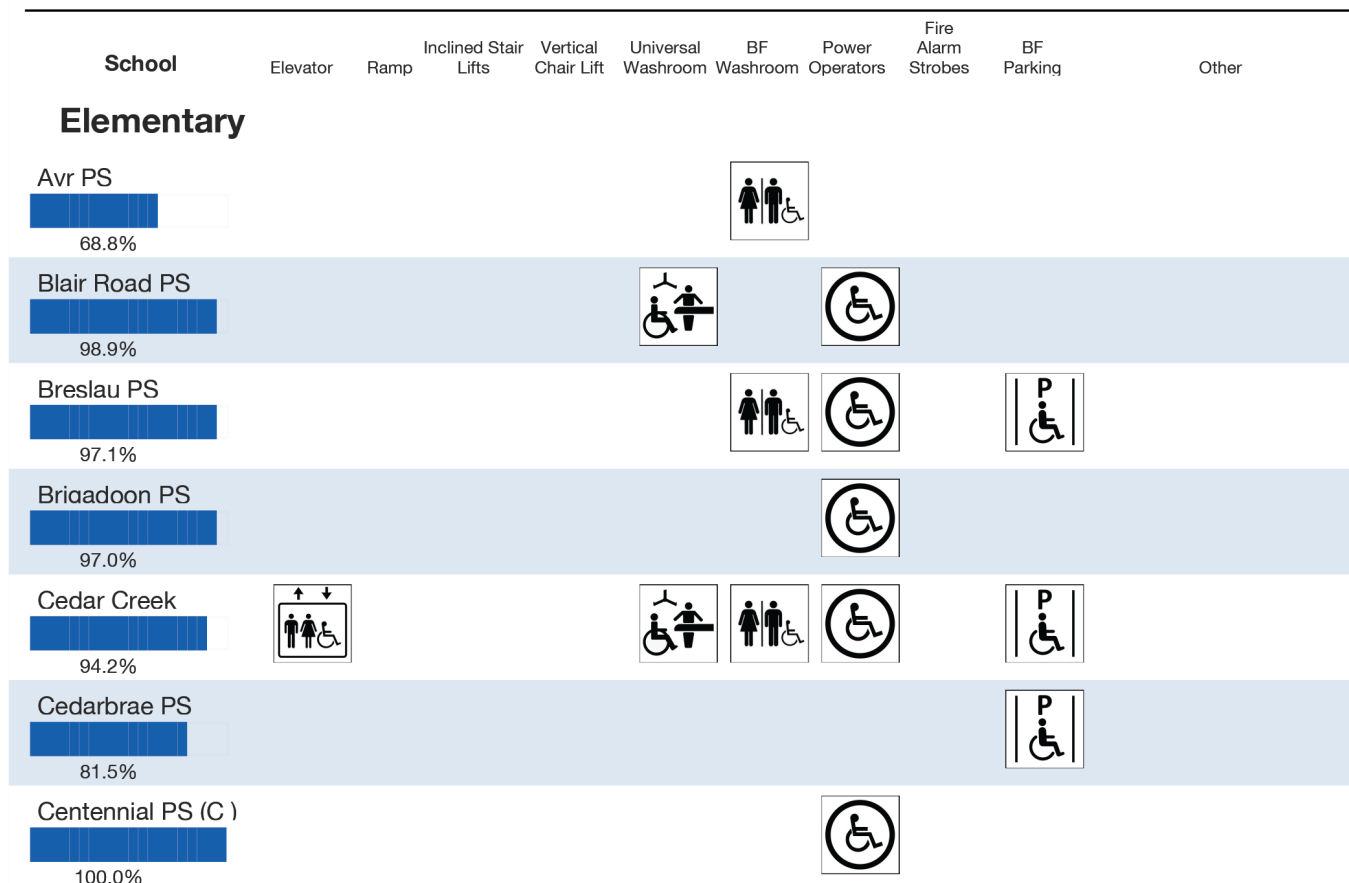
## REVIEW AND MONITORING



**During the life of the plan, the Accessibility Plan Working Group will meet quarterly to discuss the WRDSB's progress in implementing and achieving the objectives detailed in this plan.** WRDSB staff will be responsible for all actions, measures, and outcomes detailed in this plan. Further WRDSB staff will report annually to the Board of Trustees on all progress made in completing the stated action plans contained within the plan.






































The WRDSB will continue to consult with its stakeholders throughout the life of the plan. Feedback can be provided directly to staff through the [Accessibility Feedback Form](#). Updates to the plan will be posted on the WRDSB website at [www.wrdsb.ca/accessibility](http://www.wrdsb.ca/accessibility).

# PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT ACCESSIBILITY ACHIEVEMENTS 2012-2021



School	Elevator	Ramp	Inclined Stair Lifts	Vertical Chair Lift	Universal Washroom	BF Washroom	Power Operators	Fire Alarm Strobes	BF Parking	Other
Centennial PS (W) <div><div></div></div> 93.7%										
Central PS <div><div></div></div> 60.1%										
Chicopee Hills PS <div><div></div></div> 97.8%										
Courtland Senior <div><div></div></div> 87.8%										
Doon PS <div><div></div></div> 88.4%										
Empire PS <div><div></div></div> 92.8%										
Forest Hill PS <div><div></div></div> 90.3%										
Glencairn PS <div><div></div></div> 100.0%										
Grand View PS <div><div></div></div> 100.0%										
Grandview PS <div><div></div></div> 87.7%										
Groh Dr <div><div></div></div> 98.6%										
Highland PS <div><div></div></div> 96.9%										
Hillcrest PS <div><div></div></div> 96.0%										
Howard Robertson <div><div></div></div> 98.4%										
Janet Metcalfe PS <div><div></div></div> 97.6%										
Jean Steckle PS <div><div></div></div> 98.4%										

School	Elevator	Ramp	Inclined Stair Lifts	Vertical Chair Lift	Universal Washroom	BF Washroom	Power Operators	Fire Alarm Strobes	BF Parking	Other
Kina Edward PS 24.5%										
Lackner Woods PS 99.5%										
Lester B. Pearson 96.4%										
Lexington PS 95.2%										
MacGreor Sr PS 94.5%										
MacKenzie Kina 97.5%										
Manchester PS 81.0%										
Margaret Avenue 95.3%										
Moffat Creek PS 91.8%										
N A MacEachern 99.6%										
New Dundee PS 48.6%										
Pioneer Park PS 99.5%										
Preston PS 94.7%										
Queen Elizabeth 88.7%										
Queensmount Sr 94.3%										
Riverside II PS 97.5%										

School	Elevator	Ramp	Inclined Stair Lifts	Vertical Chair Lift	Universal Washroom	BF Washroom	Power Operators	Fire Alarm Strobes	BF Parking	Other
Rverson PS										
95.7%										
Sheppard PS										
0.0%										
Silverheiahts PS										
93.1%										
Sir Adam Beck										
96.6%										
St Andrews Sr PS										
45.3%										
Stewart Avenue Sr										
98.2%										
Tait Street PS										
91.7%										
Vista Hills										
96.3%										
Westmount PS										
97.6%										
William G. Davis										
97.3%										
Williamsbura PS										
96.0%										
Wilson Avenue PS										
91.6%										
Winston Churchill										
98.9%										

School	Elevator	Ramp	Inclined Stair Lifts	Vertical Chair Lift	Universal Washroom	BF Washroom	Power Operators	Fire Alarm Strobes	BF Parking	Other
<b>Secondary</b>										
Cameron Heights										
Eastwood CI										
Elmira DSS										
Forest Heights CI										
Galt CI										
Glenview Park SS										
Grand River CI										
Kitchener CI										
Waterloo Oxford										

APPENDIX B

## ACCESSIBILITY WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP



Name	Role
<b>Deepa Ahluwalia</b>	Human Rights & Equity Advisor
<b>Benoit Bourgault</b>	General Manager, Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region
<b>Ron Dallan</b>	Manager of Capital Projects
<b>Jessica Eldred</b>	Health & Safety Training Officer
<b>Matthew Gerard (Chair)</b>	Coordinating Superintendent, Business Services and Treasurer of the Board
<b>Sundeep Hans</b>	Equity & Inclusion Officer
<b>Ross Howey</b>	Communications Officer
<b>Krista Jansen</b>	Human Resources Officer
<b>Steve Karley</b>	Senior Draftsperson, Facility Services
<b>Jason Locklin</b>	Research Officer
<b>Ivana MacIsaac</b>	Senior Manager, Information Technology Services
<b>Scott Miller</b>	Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well Being (Special Education)
<b>Kim Radersma</b>	Human Rights Officer
<b>Peter Rubenschuh</b>	Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well Being
<b>John Veit</b>	Controller of Facility Services

APPENDIX C  
**STAFF ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE**



Name	Role
<b>Jason Martz</b>	Custodial and Maintenance Association (CAMA) OSSTF
<b>Jenn Wallage</b>	Designated Early Childhood Educators (DECE) ETFO
<b>Colleen Dietrich-Sisson</b>	Educational Assistants Association (EAA)
<b>Nathan Core</b>	Elementary Occasional Teachers (EOT) ETFO
<b>Greg Weiler</b>	Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)
<b>Shawn Hibbs</b>	Educational Support Staff (ESS) OSSTF
<b>Robert Gascho</b>	Secondary Teachers'/Occasional Teachers' Bargaining Units (OSSTF)
<b>Colleen McGray</b>	Professional Student Services Personnel (PSSP) OSSTF
<b>Susan Faber</b>	Supervision Monitors and Cafeteria Assistants (SMACA) OSSTF
<b>Blair Ernest, Jessica Eldred and Andi Thiessen-Regehr</b>	Managers' Group
<b>Brenda Cathcart</b>	Secondary School Principals' Association (SSPA)
<b>Susan Martin</b>	Secondary School Vice-Principals' Association (SSVPA)
<b>Jodi Albrecht, Stephen McCrae and Janet Hale</b>	Waterloo Region Elementary Administrators (WREA)