



MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN  
for the  
NEAR NORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
January 2013 – December 2017

Prepared by  
Near North District School Board Accessibility Planning Committee  
January 2013

This publication is available through the Near North District School Board's website [www.nearnorthschools.ca](http://www.nearnorthschools.ca) and in accessible formats upon request.

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## **Executive Summary**

The purpose of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (O.D.A.) is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to enable their full participation in the life of the province. To this end, the O.D.A. requires each school board to prepare a multi-year accessibility plan; to consult with people with disabilities in the preparation of this plan; and to make the plan public.

This plan describes:

1. the achievements and measures that the Near North District School Board (NNDSB) has taken in 2012 to implement its accessibility plan, and
2. the measures that the NNDSB will take in the upcoming five years to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities (subject to the availability of resources).

The NNDSB remains committed to continual improvement of access to school board facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services for students, staff, parent / guardians, volunteers, and members of the community with disabilities. As evidence of this commitment, the plan provides for the participation of people with disabilities, or those community-based agencies who advocate on behalf of those with disabilities, to contribute to the development of its multi-year accessibility plans.

While the Accessibility Planning Committee identified categories of barriers to be addressed during the annual plan, it has also emphasized the necessity of maintaining a measure of flexibility for response to site-specific accessibility issues as circumstance may warrant.

## **Aim**

This plan describes the measures that the Near North District School Board has taken in the past and measures that will be taken during the next five years (2013-2017) to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities who work in, use, or attend school board facilities and services.

## **Objectives**

This Plan:

1. Describes the process by which the Near North District School Board will identify, remove and prevent barriers;
2. Reviews recent efforts of the Near North District School Board to remove and prevent barriers;
3. Describes the measures the Near North District School Board will take in the period 2013-2017 to identify, remove and prevent barriers;
4. Describes how the Near North School Board will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

## **Commitment to Accessibility Planning**

The Near North District School Board is committed to:

1. Maintaining an Accessibility Planning Committee;
2. Continuing the process of consulting with the Special Education Advisory Committee and with persons with disabilities;
3. Ensuring that Board policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the principles of accessibility.
4. Improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community.

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

## **Description of the Near North District School Board**

The Near North District School Board is responsible for the public education of over 10,000 learners across the geographic regions of Almaguin, North Bay and Parry Sound. This Board was formed in 1998 as a result of a government initiative to amalgamate boards in the province of Ontario. The Board currently operates thirty-four elementary schools, seven secondary schools and related programs and services. The mission of the Near North District School Board is “To educate learners to their fullest potential in preparation for life-long learning”.

## **Accessibility Planning Committee**

The Accessibility Planning Group was formed in November 2012. The committee’s mandate is to:

- Establish a multi-year Accessibility Plan
- Conduct a review of all facilities and make a list of accessible sites, then create a list of priorities
- Review regulations, Board policies, practices and services offered by the NNDSB to assess barrier to people with disabilities
- Identify barriers that require more immediate changes to make premises accessible for new students, employees and parents
- Review the list of working group partners and renew their commitment.

## **Recent Barrier Removal Achievements**

The most recent Annual Accessibility Plan developed in accordance with the Ontarians with Disability Act (ODA) identified a range of barriers and appropriate strategies for their removal. The detailed achievements are set out in the following chart:

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
Physical	Northern SS	New slightly larger elevator, change room modifications for wheelchair accessibility, wheelchair accessible work area in Home Ec. Room, creation of handicap washroom second floor.

Physical	Widdifield SS	New elevator with larger cab.
Physical	Chippewa	Some washroom modifications stone corridor including automatic door openers and stalls, main entrance door operator and ramp, stair lift (shop hall), some lever operated locksets.
Physical	West Ferris SS	Stair lift, washroom modifications including stalls and door operators near custodian lunchroom.
Physical	E. W. Norman PS	Handicap washroom at main entrance.
Physical	Laurentian Learning Centre	Stair lift to gym.
Physical	M. T. Davidson PS	Yellow lines painted at the edge of each stair in the hallways to accommodate a student with low vision.

New school construction has adhered to the current building code and includes level access to schools, automatic door openers, elevators in schools of more than one floor, accessible washrooms.

### **Strategy for Preventing New Barriers**

As of January 2013, all school board programs, policies, practices, and services will be subject to the guiding principles of inclusionary practice. We will strive to create an environment that is accessible to all people, regardless of age or ability. Through the annual accessibility planning process, Near North District School Board's programming, policies, and practices will be assessed to ensure continuous improvement in accessibility.

### **Barrier Identification Methodologies**

The Accessibility Planning Committee uses the following barrier-identification methods:

<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
Accessibility Survey	Results of surveys to be tabulated/analyzed	Planning
Facilities Report re: physical environment	Surveys of buildings considered and identification of criteria for action within multi-year strategy	Planning
Presentation to Senior Administration / Principals	Opportunity for input and feedback	Planning
Community Consultations	Meetings to solicit input from local agencies and the Board's Special Education Advisory Committee	Planning

### **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.

Near North Board intends, through this Multi-year Accessibility Plan for the period 2012-2017, to take action to address barriers to accessibility related to the Standards areas of current Regulations. This is in addition to ongoing work the Board is undertaking with regard to identification and removal of barriers in the Board's physical environment.

**2012-2013**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Systemic	Board-wide	Develop Accessibility Policy Statement	January 1, 2013
Attitudinal – Information and Communications	Board-wide	Develop a Procedure re Accessible Information and Communications	January 1, 2013
Attitudinal – Employment	Board-wide	Develop Procedure re Accessible Employment	January 1, 2013
Systemic	Board-wide	Review procurement practices to incorporate accessibility criteria for goods, services, facilities	January 1, 2013
Information and Communication	Board-wide	Provide accessibility awareness training for all educators/ classroom-based staff on accessible instruction and program delivery	Ongoing 2012-2013
Information and Communication	Board-wide	Review practices to ensure readiness to provide educational resources or materials, student records and information on program requirements in accessible formats upon request	January 1, 2013
Physical	Plant Department	Conduct a survey of all locations in the Board to identify physical barriers.	2013 -See Appendix A
Information and Communication	Human Resources	Te recruitment process will be made barrier free for job applicants with disabilities	2013



**2013-2014**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Systemic - attitudinal	Board-wide	Provide training to all staff, volunteers on accessibility standards requirements and on Human Rights Code provisions re disabilities and ensure third-party providers have similar training	Ongoing 2013-2014
Information and Communication	Board Offices	Review process for receiving/responding to feedback to ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities and readiness to provide accessible formats and communication supports upon request. Notify the public re above.	January 1, 2014
Information and Communications	Board-wide	Review Board and school websites to assess level of accessibility. Ensure that new sites and web content published after Jan 1, 2012 meet WCAG 2.0, Level A standards.	January 1, 2014
Systemic - Employment	Board-wide	Review and update Human Resources procedures and practices with regard to recruitment, job accommodations, alternative accessible formats and communication supports, individual accommodation plans, return to work, performance appraisal, career or professional development,	January 1, 2014

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<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Information and Communication – Student Transportation	Board-wide (Student Transportation and Special Education)	Consult with parents and develop individual school transportation plans for students with disabilities, clarifying roles and responsibilities	January 1, 2014
Information and Communication	School Libraries	Review the readiness of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of print resources upon request	Ongoing 2013-2014 in anticipation of the 2015 compliance date
Board's Corporate Public Facing Website does not meet WCAG Level A accessibility standards	Public Website	Redesign/redevelop public facing website to meet the standard or publish an accessible version	December 31, 2013
Internal Staff Portal where employee resources are published does not meet WCAG Level A accessibility standards	Board Intranet	Redesign/redevelop Staff Portal to meet the standard or publish an accessible version	December 31, 2013
School Websites facing public do not meet WCAG Level A accessibility standards. (42 + websites, one at each school)	All Schools	Redesign/redevelop Staff Portal to meet the standard or publish an accessible version	December 31, 2013
Audited Financial Statements	Website	Accessibility Statement and IT-Guidelines for Accessible Websites	2013
Tenders/RFPs	Website	Accessibility Statement	2013
Advertising	Website, Local Newspapers	Accessibility Statement and IT-Guidelines for Accessible Websites	2013
Pay Stubs/ T4s	Employee Portal	IT – Guidelines for Accessible Websites	2013
Access to areas/offices within Department	Board Office	Meet in accessible friendly room within the board office or another suitable location.	2013

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**2014-2015**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Information and Communication	Board-wide	Identify and have ready access to resources that enable the Board to provide information and communication supports upon request and in a timely manner to persons with disabilities. (Consider access to board meetings/school events)	January 1, 2015
Information and Communication	School Libraries	Ensure readiness of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of print resources upon request	January 1, 2015
Information and Communication	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	Ongoing preparation for 2021 deadline

**2015-2016**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Systemic	Board-wide	Review status of accessibility awareness training to ensure new staff have been trained.	Ongoing
Information and Communication	School Libraries	Review status of capacity of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of digital or multimedia resources upon request in anticipation of 2020 deadline	Ongoing preparation for 2020 deadline
Information and Communication	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	Ongoing preparation for 2021 deadline

**2016-2017**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Systemic	Board-wide	Review status of accessibility awareness training to ensure new staff have been trained	Ongoing 2016-2017
Systemic	Board-wide	Review status of Board accessibility policies and procedures and update as required	Ongoing 2016-2017
Information and Communication	School Libraries	Review status of capacity of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of all resources upon request	Ongoing preparation for 2020 deadline
Information and Communication	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	Ongoing preparation for 2021 deadline

## **Review and Monitoring Process**

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

The Accessibility Planning 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 prepared.
- (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 committees.



### **Communication of the Plan**

In addition to the public availability of the plan as referenced earlier on Page 2, Near North District School Board will post an annual status 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:

Accessibility Planning Committee  
District School Board  
963 Airport Road, P.O. Box 3110  
North Bay, ON P1B 8H1

Appendix A

NEAR NORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**ACCESSIBILITY CHART 2012-2013?**

SCHOOLS	Designated Parking	B/F Access from Parking to Building	B/F Accessible Exterior & Vestibule Doors	B/F Washroom at Each Accessible Level	Single or Multi Storey	Elevator Access to All Levels	Stair Lift to Access Multi Level Storeys	B/F Ramp to Access Multi Level Storeys	
Almaguin (Old school)									
Almaguin (New school)	y	y			m	y			AH
Alliance	y	n			m	n			NB
Argyle	y	y			s	n/a			PS
Britt	y	y			s	n/a			PS
Chippewa	y	y			m	n	*		NB
Dr. MacDougall	*	n			m	n			
E.T. Carmichael	y	y			s	n/a			NB
Evergreen Heights	y	y			s	n/a			AH
E.W. Norman	y	y			m	n			NB
F.J. McElligott	y	n			m	y			MT
Ferris Glen	y	y			s	n/a			NB
Humphrey	y	n			m	n			PS
J.W. Trusler	y	y			s	n/a			
King George	*	n			m	n			
Land of Lakes	y	y			s	n/a			AH
Laurentian	y	y			s	n/a			NB
M.A. Wittick	y	y			m	y			AH
M.T. Davidson	y	y			m	n			NB
Macter	y	y			m	n			PS
Magnetawan	y	y			s	n/a			PS
Mapleridge	y	y			s	n			AH
Marshall Park	y	y			m	n			
Mattawa District	y	y			s	n/a			MT
McDougall	y	n			s	n			PS
Nobel	y	y			s	n			PS
Northern	y	y			m	y			SF
Parry Sound High	y	y			m	y			PS
Phelps Central	y	y			s	n/a			NB
Silver Birches	y	y			s	n/a			NB
South River	y	y			s	n/a			AH
South Shore	y	y			s	n/a			AH
Sundridge	y	y			s	n/a			AH
Sunset Park	y	y			s	n/a			NB
Tweedsmuir	y	y			s	n/a			
Victory	y	n			m	n			
Vincent Massey	y	y			m	y			NB
W.J. Fricker	y	y			m	n			NB
West Ferris	y	n			m	n			NB
White Woods	y	y			s	n/a			SF
Whitestone	y	y			s	n/a			PS
Widdifield	y	y			m	y			NB
William Beatty	y	y			m	n			
NNDSB Head Office	y	y			m	n			NB
NNDSB Maint. Shops									

Y = Yes    N = No    N/A = Not applicable    \* = location not optimal    B/F=Barrier Free