



BRANDON
SCHOOL DIVISION
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ACCESSIBILITY IN BRANDON SCHOOL DIVISION

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ACCESSIBILITY PLAN UPDATE

NAME OF ORGANIZATION: BRANDON SCHOOL DIVISION

Date of First Approval: January 11, 2017

Date of Update: December 2024

Years Applicable: December 2024 – December 2026

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Brandon School Division (BSD) is a diverse community with 26 facilities, over 10,000 students, and more than 1,800 staff members. BSD has developed a network of resources and expertise to meet the needs of students, parents/guardians, and staff in an agile manner.

The Division offers a wide range of programs, including English and French Immersion Academic Diploma Programs, Technology/Vocational Diploma streams, Mature Student Diplomas, Advanced Placement programming, and alternative education models. BSD is committed to providing an inclusive environment, ensuring that all instructional and public spaces are accessible.

ACCESSIBILITY ACHIEVEMENTS

Brandon School Division supports the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We believe every child is entitled to a quality education free from discrimination, regardless of race, religion, gender, disability, or other factors. Our policies and procedures promote fair and equitable access for all.

Key actions and achievements include:

- **Accessible Design:** We continue to incorporate accessibility-focused design and technology in our facilities. For example, accessible washrooms and parking spaces have been added at schools like Crocus Plains Regional Secondary and École O’Kelly School. We are also upgrading the entrances with ramps and automatic doors, with plans for further implementation across other schools in the coming year.
- **Assistive Technology:** Devices and software, such as Augmentative/Alternative Communication (AAC) devices and specialized software, are being provided to students with exceptionalities. In addition, we have expanded our Accessible Learning Lending Library, and professional development on assistive technology is provided to all relevant staff.
- **Clear Print Guidelines:** The Communications Office reviews and updates documents, brochures, and other materials annually to ensure they meet accessibility standards. We continue to develop and distribute accessible versions of resources, including educational materials and event notices, upon request.

BARRIERS TO ACCESSIBILITY

Barriers to education can be cognitive, physical, technological, financial, or systemic. When students require additional support, multi-disciplinary teams develop Student Specific Plans. We assess the physical space for barriers and make necessary modifications. For example, our ongoing development of capital assets, such as accessible entrances and washrooms, continues to be prioritized.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR STUDENTS

Brandon School Division continues to enhance its technology resources for both students and staff. We have increased the availability of AAC devices and software programs, particularly in the Accessible Learning Lending Library, to support students with special learning needs. Furthermore, the Division offers ongoing professional development workshops on assistive technology to ensure staff are equipped to meet students' individual needs effectively.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

The Board of Trustees is committed to ensuring equitable educational opportunities for all students. Our mission is to help students achieve maximum intellectual, emotional, social, and physical growth. To achieve this, we are focused on removing barriers and maintaining an inclusive learning environment in line with the Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA).

Actions include:

- Identifying and removing barriers in our schools through regular audits.
- Ensuring that all new construction projects comply with accessibility standards.
- Providing ongoing staff training to raise awareness of accessibility issues.

POLICIES

The Board ensures that policies are in place to provide resources for quality instruction, closing achievement gaps, and removing systemic barriers. Key actions taken include:

- **Curriculum Development:** Updating the curriculum to ensure it meets the diverse learning needs of all students, including those with disabilities.
- **Resource Allocation:** Using data to inform decisions on resource allocation, ensuring that funds are directed to areas where accessibility needs are most critical.

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD

The Division is committed to implementing the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service under the AMA. Specific actions taken include:

- Conducting annual surveys to identify barriers faced by students, staff, and the public when accessing services.

- Developing alternative solutions for those unable to access services due to barriers, such as offering digital forms for parents who cannot attend in person.
- Training staff to ensure they are aware of accessibility issues and how to provide services to people with disabilities.

ACCESSIBLE EMPLOYMENT STANDARD

Brandon School Division is committed to ensuring an inclusive workplace. Specific actions taken include:

- **Recruitment and Selection:** Modifying recruitment processes to ensure accessibility for candidates with disabilities, including making sure job postings are available in accessible formats.
- **Accommodation Plans:** Developing individualized accommodation plans for staff with disabilities, including flexible work arrangements and assistive devices when required.
- **Training:** Providing accessibility awareness training for all staff, including managers and HR personnel, to ensure they can effectively support employees with disabilities.

ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STANDARD

The Division ensures that all communication, including websites, print media, signage, and public events, is accessible. Specific actions include:

- **Enhanced Accessibility Features:** A new Accessibility Focus Solution was added to the BSD website in February 2024, which includes tools for improving visibility, reducing motion and animation, and adding reading assistant options.
- **Training:** Staff complete training on accessibility standards for information and communication, which includes how to make digital resources and printed materials accessible to people with disabilities.
- **Materials in Accessible Formats:** We provide information in alternative formats (such as large print, braille, or audio) upon request to ensure everyone can access necessary information.

ACCESSIBLE DESIGN OF OUTDOOR PUBLIC SPACES STANDARD

The Facilities Department continues to implement improvements to accessibility in all its facilities. Actions include:

- **Parking Lot and Entrance Improvements:** We are focusing on improving parking lot access, handicapped parking spaces, accessible doors, and ramps, with work ongoing at schools like Alexander School, Betty Gibson School, École Harrison, George Fitton School, Green Acres School, École O'Kelly, Riverheights School and Vincent Massey High School.

- **Accessible Washrooms:** The renovation of universally accessible washrooms is in progress, with plans for further updates at additional schools.
- **Hygiene Rooms:** The work on hygiene rooms in schools is ongoing. Most recently, a hygiene room has been completed at Green Acres School, and we have submitted a request to the province for a similar facility at Waverly Park School.

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION STANDARD

The Division has ensured that all transportation services meet the required accessibility standards. Specific actions include:

- **Accessible Buses:** We continue to update our fleet to include more buses equipped with wheelchair accessibility features.
- **Transportation Support:** We work with parents and guardians to address any transportation-related accessibility challenges on an individual basis.

CONCLUSION

Brandon School Division is committed to providing an inclusive environment and ensuring that all instructional and public spaces within our facilities are fully accessible. We are dedicated to maintaining ongoing improvements through regular assessments, staff training, and community engagement. Our schools serve as integral parts of their communities, and we are committed to ensuring equitable access for all community members.

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