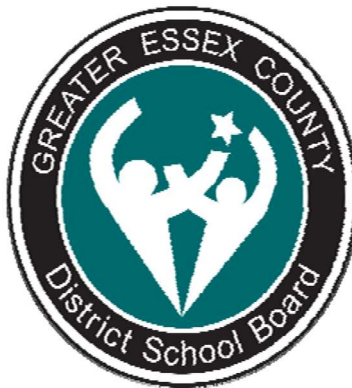


Greater Essex County District School Board

**Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities
(AODA)**

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

September 2017 – August 2022



Through accessibility planning and with the advice of the Accessibility Planning Committee, the Greater Essex County District School Board will strategically identify, remove and prevent as many barriers as possible.

Greater Essex County District School Board is committed to:

Providing an environment consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity to all with particular attention for persons with disabilities.

This publication is available through the Greater Essex County District School Board's website –

<https://www.publicboard.ca/Community/Accessibility/Pages/AODA--Multi-Year-Accessibility-Plan.aspx#/=>

Greater Essex County District School Board Head Office, Park Street West

- all material on the GECSDB website can be accessed by any reader

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1.0 Introduction

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and specifically Regulation 191/11 “Integrated Accessibility Standards” (“Regulation”), the Government of Ontario, Legislative Assembly, designated public sector organizations and large organizations, including the Office of the Ombudsman, are required to develop multi-year accessibility plans outlining their **strategy to prevent and remove barriers, and to meet requirements under the Regulation. (O. Reg. 191/11, s.4).**

The plan describes the measures that the GECDSB will take over the next five years (August 2017 to September 2022) to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who work, learn and are part of the GECDSB community. This includes students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and visitors to our Board and our school and work sites.

The Greater Essex County District School Board’s Plan sets out time frames for action, where appropriate, and in accordance with the Regulation. This Plan will be posted on the Greater Essex County District School Board’s website.

The Greater Essex County District School Board has always endeavored to provide accessible service, strived to remove barriers, and accommodated those requiring assistance. This Plan will assist the GECDSB going forward in coordinating these efforts in meeting the needs of persons with disabilities.

2.0 Aim

The Greater Essex County District School Board is required to establish, implement, maintain, and document a multi-year accessibility plan. This plan describes the strategy to prevent and remove barriers and enhance accessibility for individuals who work, learn and participate in the School Board community and environment. The plan outlines how the Greater Essex County District School Board will meet its requirements under the Ontarians with Disability Act, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, the Standards for Customer Service, and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

3.0 Objectives

This Plan:

- 3.1 Describes the process by which the Greater Essex District School Board will identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- 3.2 Reviews recent efforts of the Greater Essex District School Board to remove and prevent barriers; (Appendix A)
- 3.3 Describes the measures the Greater Essex District School Board will take in the next 5 years to identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- 3.4 Makes a commitment to provide an annual status report on the multiyear accessibility plan implementation;
- 3.5 Makes a commitment to review and update the multi-year accessibility plan at

Greater Essex County District School Board Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2017-22
least once every 5 years;

- 3.6 Describes how the Greater Essex District School Board will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

4.0 Commitment to Accessibility Planning

This plan will be presented to the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) for information and to Director's Council for approval. Greater Essex District School Board is committed to:

- 4.1 Maintaining an AODA Accessibility Planning Committee;
- 4.2 Continuing the process of consulting with SEAC and people with disabilities; and,
- 4.3 Ensuring, wherever possible, that School Board policies and procedures are consistent with the principles of accessibility and inclusive/universal design. The Accessibility Planning Committee will provide input regarding accessibility issues, where appropriate, to new policies and procedures and to those under review;
- 4.4 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 Greater Essex County District School Board to meet these commitments.

5.0 Description of the Greater Essex County District School Board

Our School Board is the most southerly school board in Canada. It includes the City of Windsor, the County of Essex and the Township of Pelee (Pelee Island). There are 55 elementary schools, 14 secondary schools, two adult and continuing education locations (City/County), one Board Office, one Facility Services building, one shared office building that houses the Student Transportation Services Department and the Media Services Department (both these departments are jointly shared and operated with other school boards in the region), two sites for Service Canada programs (operated by the Board) and one site for our Joint Employee Assistance Program. There are four sites for secondary alternative programs, one in Amherstburg, one in Essex, one in Leamington and one in Riverside Secondary School. There is one rented site in Leamington for our ESL (English as a Second Language) program. In summary, the Board is responsible for over 89 sites. In addition, there are five closed schools that are still owned by the Board. There are approximately 36,400 students as of 2017 plus approximately 1,300 night school and continuing education students. The Board employs approximately 4,400 staff.

6.0 Board Mission Statement

The mission statement of the Greater Essex County District School Board is that the Board, in partnership with the community, provides learning opportunities which support, challenge, and inspire all students to achieve their full potential and enable them to participate meaningfully in their communities.

7.0 Accessibility Planning Committee Members:

Mike Wilcox, Superintendent of Special Education	mike.wilcox@publicboard.ca
Kristie Sweet, Supervising Principal of Special Education	kristie.sweet@publicboard.ca
Shelley Armstrong, Superintendent of Business	shelley.armstrong@publicboard.ca
Chris Mills, Superintendent of Technology Integration	chris.mills@publicboard.ca
Giuliana Hinchliffe, Manager of Facility Services	giulana.hinchliffe@publicboard.ca
Debra Laforet, Principal	debra.laforet@publicboard.ca
Rob Romano, Principal	rob.romano@publicboard.ca
Jennifer Newton, Special Education Coordinator	jennifer.newton@publicboard.ca
Peggy Russette, Administrative Assistant, Special Education	peggy.russette@publicboard.ca

8.0 GECSB Commitment to Accessibility Planning

The Board is committed to:

- the improvement of access to school premises, facilities and services to our students, parents/guardians, the public and our staff that are free of barriers and biases.
- ensure that key principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity are reflected and valued in our learning and working environment.
- ensuring the design of any new facility will be constructed with accessibility as one of the key criteria.

Beginning September 1, 2003, all Greater Essex County District School Board policies, programs, procedures and services have been subject to the principles of inclusionary practice, free from barriers, to provide an accessible environment for people. Through the annual accessibility plan status report process, the Greater Essex County District School Board's programming, policies and practices will be assessed to ensure continuous improvement in accessibility.

9.0 Barrier Identification

The Accessibility Planning Committee used the following methods to identify barriers to accessibility for people who work, learn, and participate in the school board community and environment.

Group Methods

Students	Barriers to accessibility are identified by students, parents, guardians and school staff. Facilities, Special Education and Transportation departments work with stakeholders to develop accommodation plans.
Staff	Staff, Disability Officers and other Human Resources staff identify restrictions and limitations and develop accommodation plans.
Public Barriers	Barriers to accessibility are identified by individuals accessing programs and services offered by the School Board. Members of the public may bring concerns to the attention of the school, school board satellite sites, the Board Office or may use the Board website link to share concerns or comments. Barriers identified by members of the public are referred to the Board's Accessibility Committee. Development of the Multi-year Accessibility Plan and ongoing feedback opportunities are additional important methods to identify barriers to accessibility.
Board Wide	Barriers to accessibility may be identified through regulation, quasi-judicial proceedings or through the courts. Ongoing liaison with bargaining partners, provincial associations, school boards, and public sector agencies. The Greater Essex County District School Board Multi-Year Accessibility Plan provides updates on emerging barriers to accessibility. SEAC, the OPSBA, ODA, AODA, IASR, and the Customer Service Regulation are examples of some of the resources used for barrier identification. Review of our facilities provides up-to-date identification of barriers and plans to remove/prevent such barriers.

10.0 Barriers Identified

As required by the Ontarians with Disability Act (ODA), the Accessibility Planning Committee first identified barriers which can be grouped into the following nine types:

- Architectural
- Attitudinal
- Built Environment
- Informational
- Learning
- Physical
- Policy/Practice
- Systemic
- Technological
- Transportation

The AODA 2005 identified specific additional barriers to accessibility through the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11. **See Appendix A.**

Policies and procedures were developed to meet the board's requirements under the Accessible Customer Service Regulation and further policies and procedures have been developed to address the requirements of accessibility standards in the areas of Information and Communications, Employment and School Transportation as set out in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

The following Facility-related barriers have been identified. When required at a specific date, or when completing major renovations or constructing new facilities, the Board will attempt to remove the identified barriers.

Barrier	Objective	Means to Prevent/Remove	Performance Criteria	Time Line	Responsibility
Updating Building Construction Standards as deemed necessary or when built into funded projects	To ensure that older buildings where feasible are updated with accessible materials	As items are requested for repair or replacement, new and more accessible items are installed (e.g. door handles)	Buildings will be updated as required. Students will be accommodated at the closest site that is accessible	2012/13 School Year projects chosen on an "as needed" with students as the priority	Facility Services, Special Education Department, School Principal
Accessible Washrooms	To provide access to washrooms	Provide appropriate beams and lifts	Meet needs as necessary	2012/13 School Year projects chosen on an "as needed" with students as the priority	Facility Services, Special Education Department, School Principal
Accommodations for the Visually Impaired as deemed appropriate	Submit request to the Superintendent of Special Education	Provide appropriate accommodations	Meet the needs as necessary	2012/13 School Year projects chosen on an "as needed" with students as the priority	Facility Services, Special Education Department, School Principal
Automatic Doors	To provide access to schools for people with disabilities	Install access ramps and automatic doors, openers and frames as needs are identified	People with disabilities will have access to schools	2012/13 School Year projects chosen on an "as needed" with students as the priority	Facility Services, Special Education Department, School Principal

11.0 Review and monitoring process

Throughout the year, evaluation of the effectiveness in implementing the barrier-removal and prevention strategies will be ongoing in preparation for the next year of accessibility planning.

The Accessibility Planning Committee will meet to review the progress and evaluate the effectiveness of barrier removal and prevention strategies and to continually plan for increased accessibility throughout the Board. The Accessibility Planning Committee will meet in December and June each school year.

The Accessibility Planning Committee will take the following steps to ensure that they are reporting progress moving forward:

- a) An annual status report on the progress of the implementation of the plan is prepared and posted on the Board website;
- b) Once every 5 years the plan is reviewed and updated with the advice of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), the Accessibility Planning Committee and others as deemed appropriate.

The Accessibility Planning Committee Chair will seek members to serve in the vacant positions identified. Accessibility Planning Committee Members remind staff about roles in implementing the plan.

12.0 Communication of the Plan

The Greater Essex County District School Board's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be posted on the Board's website at www.publicboard.ca and hard copies will be available upon request. On request, the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be made available in accessible formats. The Board will also post an annual status report on the progress of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

Contact information for accessible format requests: Special Education Services -Tel: 519 255-3200 ext. 10219 or Fax:519 255-3242.

Any questions, comments or feedback regarding the GECDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan should be directed to:

Peggy Russette
Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of Special Education
519-255-3200 (Ext. 10219)
Or email:
peggy.russette@publicboard.ca

Appendix A - The Integrated Accessibility Standard

Ontario regulation 191/11 brought into force the Integrated Standard for transportation, Information and Communication and Employment. This standard is the third set of regulations enacted under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and came into force July 1, 2011. The regulations establish accessibility standards to remove barriers in the following three areas.

1) Transportation Standard

The proposed Transportation Standard is the only industry-specific standard to be developed under the AODA and focuses on making transportation services accessible. It would apply to all public transportation systems including subways, buses, trains and taxis.

2) Information and Communications Standard

This Standard is intended to remove barriers in all information and communications for people with disabilities. The Standard is to help people with disabilities access more sources of information that people rely on every day. This includes websites, public libraries, textbooks and public safety information.

3) Employment Standard

This Standard aims to prevent, identify and remove barriers across all cycles of the employment lifecycle for people with disabilities. The Standard helps employers support and keep skilled employees. It will make accessibility a normal part of finding, hiring and communicating with employees, whether they have disabilities or not.

Specific requirements under the various standards will be phased in between 2012 and 2025, however Part I of each of the integrated regulations contains common requirements that obligated organizations must meet under all three standards. The regulations require that all of the areas are addressed through policies and multi-year plans. Appendix C illustrates the timelines for each of the three integrated standards.

4) Built Environment Standard

The Built Environment Standard is the most extensive of the AODA standards developed to date. The Standard aims to remove barriers for people with disabilities in the physical environment, including over 70 elements such as buildings and facilities, sidewalks, parks, parking areas, housing, and more.

The Built Environment Standards Development Committee (SDC) has been active since 2007, developing the initial proposed standard. The proposed standard was released for its mandatory public review period from July 14 to October 16 2009. The proposed standard is nearly 300 pages in length with an additional document with technical illustrations. The proposed standard would apply to both the public and private sectors, with compliance required for all new construction, extensive renovation, change of use, and retrofitting existing facilities and elements. Although the proposed standard as developed by the SDC included retrofit and housing requirements, the Ministry of Community and Social Services website provided clarification that it is expected that requirements for housing and retrofit will be addressed through separate standard development committee processes in the future.

Proposed Timelines for Compliance With Accessibility Standards

**Broader Public Organizations
50+**

Note – all WCAG 2.0 requirements only apply to websites, web content and web-based applications that an organization can control either directly or through a contractual relationship, and where meeting the requirements are technically feasible

2011

- Transportation**
- Technical requirements
 - Equal fares and fees
 - Pre-boarding route or destination announcements (verbal)
 - On-board announcements (verbal)
 - Courtesy seating
 - Public school transportation services
 - Other transportation services
 - Ferries (maintenance)
 - Maintenance of equipment
 - Integration of transportation services

2012

- General Requirements**
- Emergency and public safety information
- Transportation**
- Accessible boarding/ de-boarding
 - Storage of assistive devices
 - Companions
 - Treatment of support persons
 - Taxi registration on bumper
 - Availability of accessible equipment and features
 - Operator Responsibilities
 - Emergency preparedness and response
- Employment**
- Workplace emergency information

2013

- General Requirements**
- Policies and practices
 - Accessibility Plans
 - Kiosks
- Information & Communications**
- Educational institutions - accessible materials and training
 - Public libraries
- Transportation**
- Coordinated services between adjacent municipalities
 - Service disruptions
 - Visitor service
 - Fare parity for conventional and specialized transportation (single tier)
 - Alternative Accessible method of transportation
 - Hours of service (within single tier)
 - Service delays
 - Ferries (signage, etc.)

2014

- General Requirements**
- Training
 - Accessible feedback processes
- Information & Communications**
- All new internet websites and web content on those sites conforms with WCAG 2.0 level A
- Employment**
- Recruitment
 - Employees returning to work
 - Employees and accommodation
 - Performance management, career development, and redeployment
- Transportation**
- Training
 - Accessibility plans
 - Trip restrictions
 - Eligibility Application and Process (existing)
 - Booking
 - Proportion of accessible taxis

2015

- Information & Communications**
- Accessible formats and communication supports
 - Educational libraries – print based resources
 - Producers (publishers) - conversion ready educational textbooks
- 2017**
- Transportation**
- Pre-boarding route or destination announcements (electronic)
 - On-board announcements of stops and connections (electronic)
 - Ferries (electronic messages)
 - Fare parity for conventional and specialized transportation (multi tier)
 - Hours of service (multi tier)
 - Eligibility application and (new) process
 - Categories of eligibility

2020

- Information & Communications**
- Educational libraries - multi-media/digital resources
 - Producers (publishers) - conversion ready files of "other educational print materials"

2021

- Information & Communications**
- All existing internet websites and web content conforms with WCAG 2.0 level AA (excluding live captioning and audio description)



2025

- Information & Communications**
- Producers (publishers) - conversion ready files of "other print resources - not specifically developed for the education market"