

Interlake School Division Accessibility Plan

Prepared by

Interlake School Division's Accessibility Steering Committee

in accordance with The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) 2013

This publication is available through the Interlake School Division website
www.interlakesd.ca

Baseline Report

Introduction

The Interlake School Division (ISD) is committed to providing services to our students, parents/guardians, staff, and community at large that are free from barriers and biases. This Accessibility Plan is developed in accordance with the Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) 2013. The legislation requires accessibility standards to be developed over the next several years. The standards will address barriers and set out requirements in five key areas of daily living.

1. Customer service standard
2. Employment
3. Information and communication
4. Transportation
5. Built environment

Overview of Programs and Services

The ISD is a rural public school division with 21 schools serving approximately 3000 students and 500 employees. ISD school communities include Balmoral, Brant-Argyle, Grosse Isle, Rosser, Stonewall, Stony Mountain, Teulon, Warren, and Woodlands. We also serve students in eight colony communities including Clearwater, Interlake, Keystone, Meadow Lane, New Haven, Prairie Blossom, Rock Lake, and Sturgeon Creek. The ISD is committed to providing quality educational programs and opportunities for its community of learners, and to creating a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment to support and enable learners to develop the knowledge, skills and values to reach their full potential and become contributing members in a democratic society.

Public access to schools is essential to be inclusive for all people and to promote community engagement. Parent teacher conferences, progress conversations, drama productions, athletics,

Christmas concerts, Open Houses, and community workshops are a few events that schools organize for their communities. ISD schools are an integral part of the community with many public groups accessing school facilities in the mornings and evenings.

Accessibility Achievements

ISD foundational beliefs include:

- Fostering independent, lifelong learners who are critical and creative thinkers
- Nurturing responsible global citizens who have respect and empathy for others in a diverse society
- Communicating in a way that facilitates the open-minded sharing of ideas
- Creating a challenging, caring, inviting and respectful learning community
- Addressing the needs of all learners in a safe and engaging learning environment
- Providing appropriate resources to meet a range of learning needs

The ISD places a strong emphasis on the safety and well-being for all students, employees, families, and community members. A few accessibility achievements include:

- Wheelchair accessible buses
- Sidewalk extended to parking lot for students utilizing wheelchairs
- Assistive technology
- Service animal
- Single use washrooms
- Elevators
- Front Row pro digital and Red Cat sound systems in classrooms
- Push button door openers
- Handrails
- Visual, accessible division and school websites
- Strategic Plan Priority - Positive, respectful learning environment
- Teachers differentiate instruction to meet a diverse range of learners
- Respect in the workplace training for all employees

A few ISD administrative procedures that promote accessibility include:

- Student Supervision
- Use of a Certified Service Animal
- Respect for Human Diversity

Barriers to Accessibility

The cost associated with meeting accessibility standards will be the biggest barrier for the ISD. The ISD has schools and buildings that need to be upgraded. In particular, the ISD has a school which is a Manitoba Heritage Site. The cost to meet accessibility standards for this school could be extensive. Other barriers include space, attitudes, and time to ensure the ISD plan is carried out.

Accessibility Plan

Statement of Commitment

The ISD is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in ways that allow them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in inclusion. We are committed to meeting the needs of people who face accessibility barriers. We will do this by identifying, removing and preventing barriers and by meeting the requirements of the AMA.

Policies

The ISD will review all programs, services and new initiatives to work toward accessibility. The ISD will also make information available in an accessible format or provide communication supports to people with disabilities in a way that considers their disability.

Actions

Action 1 - Establish Accessibility Working Group

Initiatives/Actions

Appoint an accessibility coordinator
Establish an accessibility working group
Meet on a regular basis to review initiatives working towards accessibility

Expected Outcomes

- To create a working group which represents the division
- To establish detailed work plans and multi-year timelines
- To develop, implement, and update the Accessibility Plan

Action 2 - Offer and provide information in an accessible format on request

Initiatives/Actions

Develop a process for responding to requests for accessible supports and services
Communicate process to all staff
Improve communications

Expected Outcomes

- To advertise the availability of alternate formats

Action 3 - Staff Awareness and Training

Initiatives/Actions

Confirm ISD' s commitment to to accessibility in writing and celebrate progress
Offer accessibility awareness presentations to divisional staff
Acknowledge accessibility achievements and share information with staff in newsletters and staff meetings

Expected Outcomes

- To consider accessibility with future programs and services
- To share Accessibility Plan with Admin Council who will share with their staffs
- To have staff understand accessibility and support implementation of the plan
- To ensure progress of Accessibility Plan is available to staff

Action 4 - Monitor Progress

Initiatives/Actions

Track progress on challenges and requests for accommodations with budgetary implications
Report annually to Board of Trustees
Integrate future plans and budgets into operational plans
Review Accessibility Plan annually

Expected Outcomes

- To ensure Senior Admin and Board of Trustees are aware of progress on AMA compliance and consider future plans
- To include progress on accessibility in annual reports
Post Accessibility Plan on website

Accessibility Achievements

Accessibility Standard for Customer Service

We are committed to complying with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. If a barrier to accessing our services cannot be removed, we seek to provide alternate ways to access the service.

Over the past number of years Interlake School Division has made progress to meet these requirements under the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service.

- Meet Communication Needs - When appropriate we offer to communicate in different ways, such as writing things down, reading things aloud, taking extra time to explain things, and utilizing multiple forms of messaging through our school messaging system.
- Accommodate the Use of Assistive Devices - We accommodate the use of assistive devices when accessing our services or facilities. On an as-needed basis we have been upgrading our facilities to ensure continued accessibility.
- Welcome Support Persons - We welcome support persons and make space for support persons on-site to assist with individuals who require aid.
- Allow Service Animals - Under the guidelines of our Divisional administrative procedures, service animals are allowed on our premises.
- Maintain Accessibility Features - To ensure barrier-free access to our facilities, we maintain our accessibility features so they can be used as intended.

- Inform public when accessibility features are unavailable - If one of our accessibility features becomes temporarily unavailable, we post a notice indicating details regarding the service interruption.
- Welcome and Respond Promptly to Feedback - Feedback from parents, community members and students is welcome and if the feedback requires us to follow-up a response will be provided.
- Provide the Required Training to Staff - Accessible Customer Service training has been provided to all staff and ongoing training is conducted with all new staff. Records of training materials and when the training was provided is kept on file.

Accessible Employment Standard

We are committed to complying with the Accessibility Standard for Employment under the Accessibility for Manitobans Act. We aim to remove barriers in our workplace. If a barrier cannot be removed, we seek to provide reasonable accommodations to affected employees.

Over the past number of years Interlake School Division has made progress to meet these requirements under the Accessible Employment Standard.

- Remove Barriers to Recruitment and Selection - During recruitment and hiring, applicants are informed that reasonable accommodations are available and we respond to requests for accommodations.
- Inform Employees about Accommodation Policies and Practices - Our Accessible Employment Process is made available to all employees and is posted on our website.
- Communicate in Ways to Meet Employees' Needs - Workplace information is provided in ways that are easy to access for all.
- Provide Individualized Accommodation Plans - Individualized accommodation plans are developed and documented as per request.
- Manage Performance - We ensure that our performance management process takes into account that an employee may be temporarily or permanently disabled by one or more barriers in the workplace, an employee's individualized accommodation plan, and that the accommodations provided may not fully address a workplace barrier.
- Return to Work Process - Our return to work process ensures that reasonable accommodations necessary to facilitate a return to work for employees who have been absent due to a disability or health condition are in place.
- Provide Workplace Emergency Response Information - Employees are made aware of steps to be taken in the event of an emergency and we inquire with all employees as to whether they need assistance during an emergency.
- Maintain Privacy - Proper protocol is followed to ensure that we protect the privacy and confidentiality of employee's personal information and personal health information.
- Provide Training - All staff responsible for recruiting, selecting or training employees are provided training on the Accessible Standard for Employment and our Accessible Employment Process. Records of this training are maintained.

Information and Communications Accessibility Standard

ISD is working towards having the following in place by May 2024 to ensure that we meet the requirements of the Information and Communications Accessibility Standard under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

- Employees, students, applicants, parents/guardians of students will be informed that information and educational materials are available through a communication support or accessible format on request. We will consult with the person requesting accessible information or materials to identify

the support or format that would remove the barrier.

- We will provide information, including educational materials, requested in alternate formats or through communication supports in a timely manner and will not impose a fee that would not be imposed on a person who did not make a request. Comparable educational materials will be provided when a specific material cannot be provided.
- All ISD website content and applications will meet or exceed WCAG 2.1 Level AA guidelines.
- Training on accessible information and communication will be provided to all employees who develop or maintain web content, purchases communication tools, develops or implements accessible information and communication policies or provides information to the public or to other organizations in Manitoba.
- A process will be in place to maintain records of accessibility and training processes.

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