

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2022-27

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Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2022-27

Prepared in accordance with:

Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA)

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

Plan Availability:

Grand Erie District School Board's Accessibility Plan is posted on the Board website at: **https://granderie.ca/board/community/accessibility** and hard copies will be made available upon request. The plan can be made in accessible formats by contacting:

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Aim:

Grand Erie's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan describes the measures that will be taken in Grand Erie over the five-year period from 2022-27 to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who work, learn and participate in the district including students, staff, parents and caregivers, volunteers and visitors to Grand Erie schools and worksites.

Grand Erie's Plan is developed in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR), Ontario Regulation 191/11 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005 and has been guided by the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility K-12 Education Standards Initial Report:

https://www.ontario.ca/document/development-proposed-kindergarten-grade-12-k-12-education-standards-2021-initial-recommendations

Implementation of the Plan is guided by the Board's Policy - Accessibility (SO31).

1.0 Definitions and Terminology

Ableism: Attitudes in society that devalue and limit the potential of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are assumed to be less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute and take part, and of less value than other people. Ableism can be conscious or unconscious and is embedded in institutions, systems or the broader culture of a society.

Ableism refers to discrimination towards persons with disabilities. It can be through actions as well as underlying beliefs and attitudes. Ableism involves systemic barriers as well as person-to-person interactions, stereotypes, and negative attitudes that devalue and limit the potential of persons with disabilities.

Accessibility: Accessibility is defined as that which enables people to achieve their full potential.

Accommodation: An accommodation is a means, through reasonable efforts, of preventing and removing – in a timely manner – barriers that impede individuals with disability from participating fully in the services of the Board.

Barrier: A "barrier" means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, policy or a practice; ("obstacle")

Disability: Disability covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and some not visible. A disability may be present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time.

2.0 Objectives

This Plan:

2.1 Describes the process by which Grand Erie will identify, remove and prevent barriers;

2.2 Reviews recent efforts in Grand Erie to remove and prevent barriers;

2.3 Describes the measures Grand Erie will take in the period 2022-2027 to identify, remove and prevent barriers;

2.4 Makes a commitment to provide an annual progress report on Grand Erie's implementation of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan;

2.5 Makes a commitment to review and update the Plan at least once every 5 years;

2.6 Describes how Grand Erie will make this Accessibility Plan available to the public.

3.0 Commitment to Accessibility Planning

This Plan will be established, reviewed, and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities, the Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), the Safe and Inclusive Schools Committee, and other relevant stakeholders. A new Plan is created every 5 years and a progress report shared each year.

Grand Erie is committed to:

3.1 Reviewing accessibility issues through a committee as required.

3.2 The appointment of the Principal Leader for Mental Health Education and Student Support Services as the key contact for accessibility in Grand Erie.

3.0 Commitment to Accessibility Planning Contd.

3.3 Continuing the process of consulting with the Special Education Advisory Committee, the Safe and Inclusive Schools Committee and persons with disabilities.

3.4 Ensuring, wherever practicable, that policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the principles of accessibility and inclusive/universal design.

3.5 Improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/caregivers, volunteers and members of the community.

4.0 Description of the Grand Erie District School Board

The Grand Erie District School Board serves the counties of Brant, Haldimand, and Norfolk, and the City of Brantford. Grand Erie represents more than 26,000 public school board students in 72 schools, and a dedicated staff of 2,800. Grand Erie is committed to its vision of creating and maintaining accessible learning and workspaces that promote all learners to Learn Lead and Inspire.

5.0 Grand Erie's Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Our Vision

Learn **Lead** **Inspire**

Our Mission

Together, we build a culture of learning, well-being and belonging to inspire each learner.

6.0 Strategy for Prevention and Removal of Barriers

The principles of inclusionary practice, freedom from barriers and accessible environments inform all Grand Erie policies, procedures, programs, and services. Through the annual accessibility plan progress report process implemented under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, Grand Erie's programming, policies and practices have been assessed to ensure continuous improvement in accessibility.

7.0 Barrier Identification

Group	Methods
Students	Barriers to accessibility are identified by students and parents/caregivers. Staff members in all departments work with stakeholders to remove/prevent barriers and develop accommodation plans.
Staff	In consultation with union partners, Grand Erie's Human Resources staff members identify barriers, restrictions and limitations and develop accommodation plans.
Public	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. The school will bring these concerns to the Principal Leader for Mental Health Education and Student Support Services if appropriate. The Board website also provides an opportunity for feedback: **http://www.granderie.ca/board/community/accessibility**
Board Wide	Ongoing liaison with bargaining partners, provincial associations, school boards, and public sector agencies provides updates on emerging barriers to accessibility. SEAC and the Ontario Education Services Corporation are examples of some of the resources used for barrier identification. Review of Grand Erie facilities provide up-to-date identification of barriers and permits planning to remove/prevent such barriers. Barriers to accessibility are referred to the Principal Leader for Mental Health Education and Student Support Services for further review and consultation.

8.0 Barriers to be Addressed under the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-27

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.

Through the 2022-27 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, Grand Erie intends to take action to address attitudinal barriers to accessibility with a special emphasis on supporting all students in inclusive environments. This is in addition to ongoing work regarding identification and removal of barriers in Grand Erie's physical environment.

Type of Barrier	Location	Action	Effective Date
Systemic	Board Wide	Newly developed and revised policies/ procedures will be reviewed by the Safe and Inclusive Schools Committee, and an Accessibility Committee if appropriate, to provide input from an accessibility lens.	On-going
Systemic	Board Wide	Continue to implement mandatory (AODA) accessibility awareness training to ensure new staff have been trained. Implementation of program to notify employees (new and existing) and their supervisors of completion rate of mandatory trainings (inclusive of AODA training requirements).	On-Going
Attitudinal	Board Wide	Continue to embed discussions at the school level about the Initial Recommendations of the K-12 Education Standards **https://www.ontario.ca/document/development-proposed-kindergarten-grade-12-k-12-education-standards-2021-initial-recommendations**	

8.0 Barriers to be Addressed under the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-27 Contd.

Type of Barrier	Location	Action	Effective Date
Attitudinal	Board Wide	Rick Hansen Foundation School Partnership Initiative. Partner with the Rick Hansen Foundation to provide schools with an online platform to access resources to support the full participation of all.	On-going
Attitudinal	Board Wide	Accessibility Awareness Month, December 2022. #AccessibleGE	Accessibility Awareness Month is held annually
Attitudinal	Board Wide	With the support of Program K-12, Teaching and Learning and Specialized Services, K-12, system school support staff will design course content, instruction, and assessment in an inclusive (universal) design framework in both in-person and remote learning contexts.	On-going
Attitudinal	Board Wide	Implementing a bias-free hiring process that removes barriers for candidates.	On-going
Information and Communications	Board Wide	Provide all schools and work sites with How can we help you? signage to invite requests for accommodation from the public.	Fall 2022
Technology	Board Wide	Technology for Innovation and Learning and Specialized Services K-12 staff provide in-service to improve staff and student understanding of accessibility features available in Grand Erie software	On-going

8.0 Barriers to be Addressed under the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-27 Contd.

Type of Barrier	Location	Action	Effective Date
Technology	Board Wide	Ensure technology features are used that support accessibility for all ie. Closed captioning on PD presentations, staff meetings, classroom teaching and presentations.	On-going
Architectural	Board Wide	Facilities Services is working towards creating a geographical representation of accessible sites in Grand Erie to ensure there are fully accessible schools in all geographic areas that comply with AODA standards by 2025.	On-going
Physical	Board Wide	Accessibility requests can be made through submission of information online or through Pride of Place	On-going
Physical	Board Wide	Facility Services will hire an Accessibility Consultant to audit specific schools by geographical area	On-going

9.0 Review and Monitoring Process

Accessibility issues are addressed on an ongoing basis in Grand Erie. Wherever possible, proactive measures are put in place to ensure accessible working and learning environments. Feedback and input are through input received from school board staff, families, and community members.

In respect to the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan the following steps take place:

(a) An annual report on the progress of the measures taken to implement the Plan is brought to the Board for information.

(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 stakeholders. The new plan is brought to the Board for information.

10.0 Communication of the Plan

In addition to the public availability of the Plan, Grand Erie will post an annual update report on the progress of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan on the Board's website at:

https://granderie.ca/board/community/accessibility

Requests for accessible formats of the Plan will be accommodated.

Questions, comments, or feedback regarding the Accessibility Plan may be directed to:

Principal Leader
Mental Health Education and Student Support Services

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349 Erie Avenue, Brantford, ON N3T 5V3
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