

Accessibility Plan

February 2017



Accessibility Plan (February 2017)

NAME OF ORGANIZATION: Louis Riel School Division

Part 1. Baseline Report

Overview of Programs and Services

The Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) is within the City of Winnipeg, bordered by Mission Street and Dugald Road to the north, slightly past the perimeter highway to the south, the Red River to the west and by Plessis Road to the east.

LRSD has 40 schools including 12 French Immersion schools serving approximately 14,750 students, their families and our community by over 1,000 teaching staff and over 800 supporting staff. As a public education provider, we offer a full range of programs and services to learners within our schools and board office.

LRSD is committed to providing quality educational programs and opportunities for its community of learners. LRSD is committed 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.

Public access the schools and board office occurs for events such as open houses, Seniors Day, holiday concerts, awards ceremonies, and parent teacher conferences.

The Continuing Education program offered for the public include courses and workshops to leisure and fitness programs throughout the school year.

The schools are an integral part of the community, with many public groups accessing school facilities in the evenings.

Accessibility Achievements

The Louis Riel School Division's mission is to foster safe, inviting and inclusive learning environments and to develop responsible global citizens through respectful partnerships between home, school and community.

It is the division's belief that as much as possible students and public are accommodated in their chosen school without barriers. In the past several years there have been many projects to ensure barriers are removed in our schools.

Examples of achievements in the past few years:

- Installed an elevator at Windsor Park Collegiate
- Installed an elevator J.H. Bruns Collegiate
- Installed an accessible washroom at Hastings School
- Purchased two stair crawlers for use in any school

- Purchased hearing devices for many schools for use by teachers
- Installed handicap door opener at West and North entrances at General Vanier School
- Installed handicap door openers at Windsor Park Collegiate
- Installed wheel chair ramps at General Vanier School

LRSD has included within their mission statement a commitment to **foster safe, inviting and inclusive** learning environments and to develop responsible global citizens through respectful partnerships between home, school and community.

Within our admin guidelines we have the following policies that directly or indirectly address accessibility within our division:

- AC-1 Human Diversity - Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
- AC-1-2 Respect for Diversity
- ACF-G Interpersonal Relations and Resolution of Concerns about Harassment Discrimination
- AD Educational Philosophy - Divisional Statements on Vision and Mission
- EB Initiatives to Support Sustainable Development
- GBEB Standards of Employee Conduct
- IHBA - Special Education - IEP Development
- JLCD Administering Medicines to Students

Barriers to Accessibility

The largest barrier that LRSD faces in meeting the accessibility needs in our division is the cost to remove barriers. Schools themselves are paid for by the provincial government and as of November 2016 the provincial government is also responsible for meeting accessibility needs of students residing in those schools.

The Accessibility for Manitoba Act goes beyond what would normally be funded by the provincial government. Therefore, any costs to remove barriers would have to be borne by the school division and the taxpayers within the division. Given the intense pressure to keep the tax increase low it will be difficult to fund the removal of barriers except over a very long time.

There are many existing barriers to accessibility in our division. Part of this plan will be to create a process to determine where barriers exist. This will require full audits of all our buildings, services, website, communications and more.

Barriers that are known to exist but not yet fully quantified are as follows:

- Board Room is not fully wheelchair accessible
- Communications from the division/schools are not fully available in alternative formats
- Website is accessibility friendly through online tools but needs to be audited
- 10 of our schools are not fully wheelchair accessible ranging from 0% (1 school) to 90% accessible
- Policies within the division need to be reviewed and supplemented to accommodate everyone
- 17 of our buildings do not have automatic doors at the entrance
- Translation services are not currently offered for all communications, meetings, board-meetings

- Communications and forms are not offered in an alternate formats (such as large print)
- Groups representing persons with disabilities or seniors have not been consulted to determine how inclusion could be promoted.
- Our Website has not been audited to ensure it is fully accessible to hearing and visually impaired

Part 2. Accessibility Plan

A. Statement of Commitment

LRSD 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 Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA).

B. Policies

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

C. Actions

Action 1 – Establish Accessibility Working Group	
Initiatives/Actions	Expected Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • management to appoint an accessibility coordinator • management to establish an accessibility working group • accessibility coordinator develop draft terms of reference for the working group, including purpose, timelines and membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each area or division that serves the public is represented on the working group. • Other levels of the organization are represented. • Working group has detailed work plans, multi-year timelines. • Members participate in developing, implementing and updating the Accessibility Plan.

Action 2 – Offer and provide information in an accessible format on request	
<p>Initiatives/Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessibility working group to develop a process for responding to requests for accessible supports and services • accessibility coordinator to communicate process to all staff • HR to create on-line training on how to respond to requests • communications to promote the availability of alternate formats on request, by including the active offer on all new documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website to be audited to ensure all material is accessible to people who use screen readers. • Ensure multiple methods are available to the public to communicate (submit forms, job applications, phone, email, feedback) 	<p>Expected Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working towards advertising the availability of alternate formats in all communications. • Staff will be made aware of alternate formats and how to make them available to the public when they are available. • Public will be able to communicate in a form that best meets their needs.

Action 3 – Staff Awareness and Training	
<p>Initiatives/Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • management to confirm LRSD’s commitment to accessibility in writing, endorse the commitment at meetings and celebrate progress • Management to offer training/awareness presentations to managers, program and frontline staff in the future • management to acknowledge accessibility achievements and share information with staff internal website portal 	<p>Expected Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility will be considered as LRSD plans future programs and services. • Upon approval of the Board of Trustees, accessibility plan will be shared with Leadership Council, who will share with their staffs • Staff understands accessibility and supports implementation of the plan. • Information on progress on implementing Louis Riel School Division’s Accessibility Plan is available to staff. • Accessibility issues that arise will be forwarded to the Accessibility Coordinator.

Action 4 Review facilities for physical accessibility barriers	
<p>Initiatives/Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a checklist to review all LRSD buildings for accessibility • Review facilities and note where barriers exist and note possible remediation • Establish budget for removal of barriers. • Integrate barrier removal into Five-Year Capital plans with the Public Schools Finance Board and for out of scope items inclusion in operating budget in future years. • Review impact on operating budget to meet accessibility standards with the Board of Trustees to determine time line to become compliant. 	<p>Expected Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term plan in place to address removal of physical accessibility barriers. • Plan will outline provincial government responsibilities and divisional responsibilities • Long term budget outlining yearly accessibility projects

Action 5 Monitor Progress	
<p>Initiatives/Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessibility coordinator, with assistance of working group, to track progress on challenges, and requests for accommodations with budgetary implications • accessibility coordinator to report annually to senior administration • future plans and budgets to be integrated into operational plans 	<p>Expected Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior administration is aware of progress on AMA compliance and considers future plans. • Annual report includes progress on accessibility. • Accessibility committee will review the plan annually

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