WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION

Accessibility Plan

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)

Provincial legislation was introduced to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. Under the AMA, each organization is required to develop and publish a plan to identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility.

The plan will cover accessibility standards as they are released including: Customer Service, Employment Standards, Accessible Information and Communications, Accessible Transportation and Physical Environment Standards. The standards outline specific measures to be taken by public and private organizations. Changes will result in improved accessibility for all Manitobans regardless of (dis) abilities.

Introduction

Winnipeg School Division is proud of the significant progress we have made in removing barriers and creating a more inclusive and accessible environment for all members of our community. Our ongoing commitment to accessibility reflects our core belief in equitable opportunities for everyone, regardless of ability.

Over the years, we have implemented effective changes in key areas such as customer service, information and communication, transportation, employment standards, and the physical environment. These improvements have helped ensure that our schools and services are accessible to students, staff, and visitors alike.

We are also proud of the policies we have developed, which are the result of ongoing consultation with community members. Their feedback has been invaluable in shaping practices that meet the diverse needs of our students and staff. By listening and responding to the community, we have created policies that not only comply with accessibility requirements but also have a lasting, positive impact on the WSD community.

As we move forward, we remain committed to continuing this important work. We will stay focused on removing barriers and ensuring greater accessibility, creating an inclusive environment where all individuals can succeed and thrive.

WSD's Accessibility Plan is an on-going document. Feedback is continually welcomed to improve accessibility and inclusiveness within the division and will be added, as appropriate, to this document. Any questions or feedback regarding the WSD Accessibility plan can be directed to the Accessibility Coordinator.

Customer Service Standard Requirements

ACHIEVEMENTS

» Established an AMA Steering Committee.

» Developed a Certified Service Animal Policy (JI) for use in schools.

» Installed an accessibility widget on WSD website to assist in navigation.

» Implemented assistive technology on multiple web-based platforms for people who are blind or vision impaired.

» WSD website uses captions for video uploads. All printed publications advertise the availability of alternate formats.

» WSD Library Support Services provides a resource-rich lending library of materials for classrooms and teachers in multiple formats, including digitally.

» WSD Digital Library, powered by OverDrive, provides students and staff with access to a wide variety of e-books, audiobooks, and interactive story books. How-to guides have been translated to languages other than English and are available on the website.

» Addressed multiple accessibility issues for newly built schools and many older facilities.

» Sound field systems are installed in classrooms to ensure that students can hear classroom instruction and direction.

» WSD events include information gathering and consideration on removing barriers for people with disabilities.

» WSD is compliant with WCAG 2.1 AA on Connect Product

NEXT STEPS

» Develop a recruiting and employment procedure for applicants with disabilities.

» Further consultation with staff, students and parents of students with disabilities will continue to occur.

» Develop a process to notify school communities that arrangements to accessibility are available.

» Continue to review 5-Year Capital Plan to prioritize structural planning requirements for accommodation.

» Review and Update Policy EC – Facilities Management Process

» Review and Update Policy IGBA – Inclusive Education Policy

LINKS

» Policy AB: Accessibility

» Policy IGBA: Special Education Supports/ Program

» Policy JI: Certified Service Animals

» Policy EC: Facilities Management Process

Information and Communications Standard Requirements

ACHIEVEMENTS

» Telephone system (Avaya) operates on VOIP, featuring voicemail-to-email functionality.

» School and classroom technology include features like touch interfaces, text-to-speech functionality, and translation tools. Tools used in the classroom include Windows 11, Office 365, Microsoft Teams, Google Screen Reader, Google Classroom and others.

» Wi-Fi is available in all buildings to support Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) initiatives, facilitating diverse forms of communication.

» Students and staff have access to mobile computing devices, including laptops, Chromebooks, and iPads.

» Majority of classrooms are equipped with computer projection devices.

» Descriptive text and alternative text added throughout WSD website.

NEXT STEPS

» Develop partnerships with organizations like CNIB and Visual and Hearing Services to provide additional accessibility support.

» Enhance our Wi-Fi network for increased accessibility for all staff and students.

» Continually refresh staff and student devices to ensure the latest accessibility tools are included.

» Enhance and refresh wired network to provide a more consistent connectivity experience.
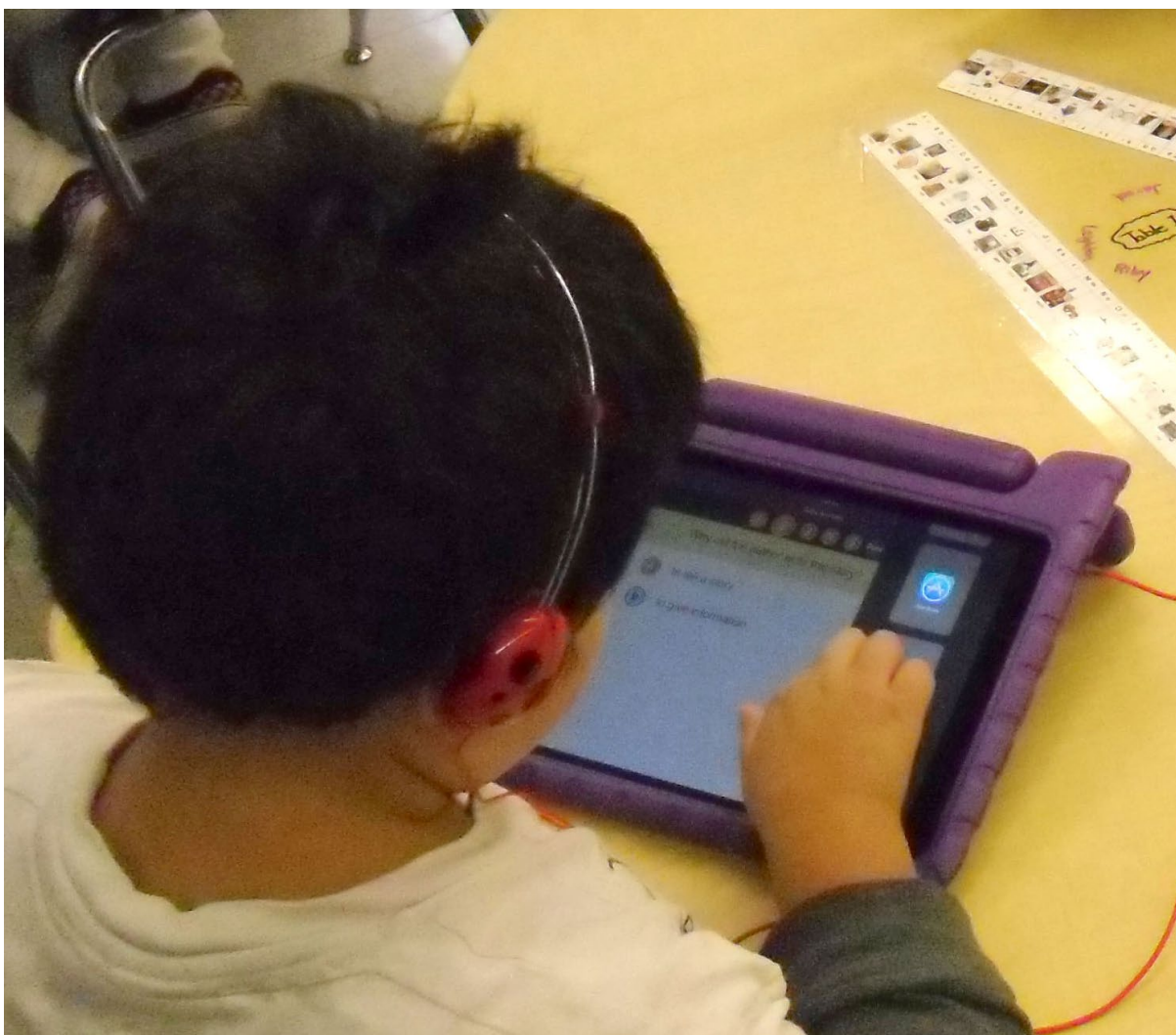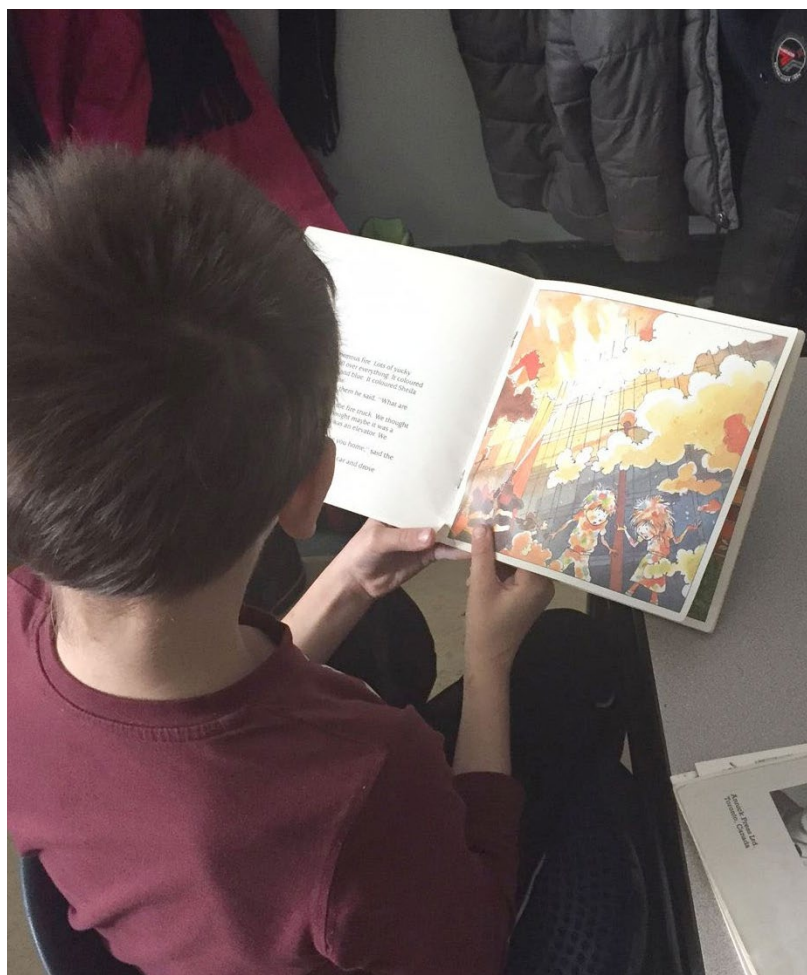
Employment Standard Requirements

ACHIEVEMENTS

» Developed a Diversity and Equity Education Policy and a Recruitment Policy to show commitment to an educational philosophy and hiring practices that recognizes the fundamental equality of people of all origins, abilities, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ethnic origin, ancestry, culture, socio-economic background or status, religion or spirituality, family status, mental and physical abilities, intelligence or ability, learning references, first language or mother tongue.

» Developed a Safe and Caring Policy for Trans and Gender Diverse students and staff (IGABB) to show commitment to providing safe, accessible learning opportunities, dignity, respect and equity for all including trans and gender diverse students and staff.

» Established Workplace Health and Safety committees in every building. Additionally, Workplace Health and Safety officers support training and safe work procedures across the school division.

» Continue to accommodate accessibility requests from all staff, as required.

» Continue to provide an Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and return to work supports, as required.

NEXT STEPS

» Ensuring, whenever practical, that Board policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the principles of accessibility and inclusive/universal design.

» Continue to support and develop accommodation plans that ensure accessibility.

» Review and assess hiring processes and recruit practices for accessibility.

» Continue to train employees with knowledge of accessible practice in all aspects of staff support.

LINKS

» Policy IGAB: Diversity and Equity Education
» Policy IGABB: Safe and Caring Policy
» Policy GBE: Workplace Health and Safety
» Policy GCC: Recruitment

Physical Environment Standard Requirements

ACHIEVEMENTS

- » WSD has 46 locations that have elevators and/or lifts providing full or partial access within the facility.
- » Building projects are prioritized by PFSB based on student needs.
- » Mulvey school elevator project is under construction. It will provide access to first and second floors.
- » Majority of facilities have one or more direct access to buildings either by ramps, elevator or entrances at grade level.
- » WSD includes exterior ramps to provide access to main entrances as part of WSD maintenance projects, or as part of elevator projects funded by the Province of Manitoba.
- » 78 facilities have one or more auto door operators located at accessible entrances.
- » ADOs installed (as new installations or additional operators) at 10 new facilities.
- » 79 locations have either designated UTR and/or accessible washrooms.
- » New or additional accessible washrooms completed at Niji Mahkwa, RB Russell, Prince Charles.
- » Accessible washrooms are under construction and/or renovation at Churchill, George V and Mulvey.
- » 36 play structures are fully accessible.

NEXT STEPS

- » Install elevators and/or lifts to provide full or partial access as required in at least 15 buildings.
- » Install ramps at exterior entrances to facilities that do not currently have access.
- » Install door operators at entrances for accessibility that do not currently have at least one.
- » Install accessible washrooms to all new construction or renovation projects, where required.
- » Install visibility strips to all new stair installations. Add visibility strips to existing stairs during maintenance projects.
- » Provide access to play space and accessible route within play space boundary. Provide adequate accessible ground and elevated play component.
- » Update 5-year Capital Plan.

LINKS

- » Policy EC: Facilities Management Process

Transportation Standard Requirements

ACHIEVEMENTS

» Provides integrated, accessible school transportation, or appropriate alternative accessible transportation services for students with disabilities.

» Consults with parents to develop individual school transportation plans for students with disabilities.

» Owns 21 non-ambulatory buses to transport students to and from school, field trips and extra-curricular activities.

» Provides taxi service (23 routes), Handi-Transit (11 routes) and Wheelchair Services (14 routes) to ensure accessible transportation for students.

NEXT STEPS

» Continued professional development opportunities to provide training on accessibility awareness.

» Annual review of fleet to ensure adequate ambulatory and non-ambulatory vehicles meet demands.

LINKS

» Policy EEA: Transportation of Pupils

WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION