



Upper Grand District School Board

Annual Accessibility Report

For the Period September 2015 to August 2016

Prepared by

Upper Grand District School Board

Accessibility Steering Committee

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The Board continues to meet all of the accessibility requirements outlined by the AODA. The purpose of the Annual Accessibility Report is to highlight the progress made during the 2015-16 school year in identifying, removing and preventing barriers for persons with disabilities.

Education and Training

Equity of access for students who have limited opportunities to obtain professional recommendations for SEA equipment continues to be a focus. There has also been a focus on PD for staff in order to help them assist students in using technology to access the curriculum and to demonstrate their learning.

- A process has been developed whereby professional recommendations for SEA equipment can be accessed through the Consultant Support Team. Implementation of this process began in January 2016. Since this time requests for SEA technology have increased significantly in Quartile 1 and 2 schools, and teacher requests for technology support in the classroom has also risen.
- In 2015-2016, there were 757 SEA computers ordered, 51 iPads, 57 Laptops, 632 Chromebooks, and 17 Other Products (iPods, Chromebook Touch, iPad minis)
- Anecdotal feedback received from the Elementary Inclusion Technology Coaches (EITCs) suggests that equitable access to technology has improved self-regulation and advocacy skills and confidence in students who would not otherwise have had access to technology.
- Grade specific technology workshops are being provided to teachers to support their training needs in technology. Specific training includes Google Read & Write, Digital Citizenship, Assessment and Technology, Literacy and Numeracy Mindomos, Google Classroom and Google Apps and Extensions.
- The technology coaching model has also been adapted to be more equitable and inclusive. Elementary Inclusion Coaches work with teachers who have students with SEA equipment in their class, and model how to integrate technology into their daily practice, so that what is good for some becomes beneficial for all.

- The “AERO” website created and run by the Ministry of Education produces and provides alternative format materials to elementary and secondary schools to support students with perceptual disabilities. Teachers are being in-serviced and reminded of this resource for classroom usage.
- Terry James Resource Centre provides text in accessible formats. These include Overdrive which offers thousands of books in eBook and Audiobook versions. There are also numerous library of books on UGCloud that can be read with Read & Write. Students also have access to AERO (Alternative Education Resources Ontario), and CELA (Centre for Equitable Library Access).

To learn more about what is provided go to <http://library.ugdsb.on.ca> and click the button on Accessible Resources.

Information & Communication

The Board endeavours to ensure that all persons are able to access information in a manner that is fair, empathetic, respectful and timely. We create documents, forms, web content and other materials with accessibility in mind. Techniques range from the technical, such as using software to ensure documents and web pages have a proper semantic structure, to best practices like the use of plain language.

In October 2014 we launched a redesign of the Board website. Accessibility was a top priority and a key consideration at every step of the design process. The new site meets Level A criteria of WCAG 2.0 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines). The site is navigable using a screen reader by persons who are blind or have low vision, with properly coded headings providing semantic structure, and alternative text for images. Users who cannot use a mouse due to a physical disability can navigate the site using only a keyboard. The colours used in the site’s design have sufficient contrast for persons with colour blindness or a colour deficiency. We maintain the accessibility of the board website by ensuring that all new content meets WCAG 2.0 criteria.

All elementary school websites and eight secondary (Centre Dufferin, Centre Wellington, College Heights, Erin, GCVI, Norwell, ODSS, and Wellington Heights) have now been migrated over to Wordpress, which is a mobile-friendly and accessible format. The remaining three secondary websites are in progress this year.

Training has been provided to Principals and Office Coordinators so that they are able to post content to their own websites. More training is required to ensure that content is accessible, thus maintaining the accessibility of the site.

This year we will be conducting a review of all school websites to check for accessibility.

Physical

The Special Education Department has continued this year to monitor the needs of individual students with disabilities and worked with Plant Operations to prioritize modifications as required. Student specific equipment, such as change tables and equipment for students who are deaf or hard of hearing or for students who are blind or have low vision were purchased through Special Equipment Amount (SEA) grants. Many of these modifications also reduce barriers for staff and other persons with disabilities.

New schools are designed to aid access for students, staff and members of the public. Ecole Guelph Lake Elementary School, which opened in September 2016 includes a barrier free front entrance with automatic door openers, accessible public and student washrooms, designated accessible parking spaces and an elevator.

The Accessibility Steering Committee and Plant Operations continue to use the audit which was completed in 2015 to prioritize renovations or upgrades that improve accessibility in three main areas. These areas, as prioritized by the Accessibility Steering Committee are: barrierfree front access (including parking spaces, level access and automatic door opener), accessible washrooms for students and accessible universal washrooms for public use.

To assist in meeting these goals across the system, the following accessibility projects were completed in 2015-16:

Norwell District Secondary School – improved front door access and vestibule, accessible parking spaces, curb cuts, rear entrance accessible opener and ramp, improved accessibility in washrooms

JF Ross Secondary School – upgrades to washrooms to increase accessibility, addition of one fully accessible staff/student washroom

Central Public School – accessible exterior doors and door opener, accessible washroom

Purchasing

Special basketball shot clocks were purchased for all of our secondary schools in order to support accessibility. The clocks include white LED's to support individuals with visual impairments.