



**ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN
FOR THE
UPPER CANADA DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
SEPTEMBER 2007 – AUGUST 2008**

Prepared by:
Upper Canada District School Board Accessibility Committee

This publication is available on
The Upper Canada District School Board's website (www.ucdsb.on.ca/About+Us)

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Updates: (usually completed and added by October of the school year ending)

1. Accessibility Projects 2007-2008 – Physical/Architectural & Built Environment
2. All Schools Inventory Accessibility Charts 2006-2007 – Physical/Architectural & Built Environment
3. CODE Special Education Project 2007-2008 (ongoing) – Attitudinal/Technological
System-wide plan for Learning Resource Coach Model to promote integration, differentiation, inclusion and universal design

1. **Executive Summary**

The purpose of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province. To this end, the ODA requires each school board to prepare an annual accessibility plan; to consult with people with disabilities in the preparation of this plan; and to make the plan public.

The purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) is to benefit all Ontarians by achieving accessibility for people with disabilities. This will be done by developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards concerning goods, services, accommodation, facilities, buildings and employment. Improvements will be phased in, in stages of 5 years or less, moving towards an accessible Ontario in 20 years. Standards will address the full range of disabilities including physical, sensory, hearing, mental health, developmental and learning. That is, both visible and invisible disabilities will be included. This legislation covers both the public and private sectors.

This is the updated 2007-2008 tentative annual plan prepared by the Accessibility Committee of the Upper Canada District School Board. The plan describes: (1) the measures that the Upper Canada District School Board has taken in the past, (2) barriers identified by the Accessibility Committee and, (3) the measures that the Upper Canada District School Board will continue to take during the year (2007-2008) to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities, (4) Related Reports.

This school year 2007-2008, the Upper Canada District School Board commits to the continual improvement of access with respect to school board facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community with disabilities.

The Accessibility Committee is focusing this school year 2007-2008 on a continuation of elimination of: architectural barriers for people with disabilities as these relate to the information provided by the study, Architectural Barrier Identification and Modification Prioritization and on attitudinal barriers as identified through Board staff and school communities. As well, the Committee is re-aligning its approaches and planning to reflect the new MCSS standards: Customer Service Accessibility Standard and the Transportation Accessibility Standard.

The designs of new schools in the Upper Canada District School Board have architectural features that incorporate principles of universal design as much as possible. Current renovations to existing buildings have accessibility for people with disabilities addressed in the plans. Such renovations include fire and safety accommodations for those with physical, vision, hearing and learning disabilities. (Built Environment Accessibility) As well, the committee will continue its work in the areas of employment accessibility/wellness and communication/information accessibility with respect to determining, eliminating and preventing barriers.

2. **Aim**

This plan describes the measures that the Upper Canada District School Board's staff, students and community have taken in the past and will take during this school year (2007-2008) to identify, eliminate and prevent barriers for people with disabilities, who work in, use or attend school board facilities and services. (Physical, Architectural, Information and Communication, Attitudinal, Transportation, Technology, Policies and Practices Barriers - previous categories.) 2006-2007 - MCSS PILLARS: Customer Service (Goods & Services), Transportation, Built

Environment (Structures/ Premises/Accommodations, Information & Communication, Employment. This plan also outlines the Upper Canada District School Board's next steps with respect to accessibility.

3. **Objectives**

This plan:

1. describes the process by which the Upper Canada District School Board will identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities in the year 2007-2008 and beyond.
2. reviews efforts the Upper Canada District School Board has made in removing and preventing barriers for people with disabilities during the past year(s).
3. lists the procedures, policies, programs, practices and services that the Upper Canada District School Board will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities. (2007-2008)
4. describes the measures the Upper Canada District School Board will take in the coming years to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. describes how the Upper Canada District School Board will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

4. **Commitment to Accessibility Planning**

The Upper Canada District School Board is committed to:

- maintaining an effective, functional Accessibility Committee reflecting and addressing the various accessibility barriers and ensuring compliance;
- consulting with people with disabilities and professionals in the development and review of its annual accessibility plans;
- ensuring school board policies and procedures are consistent with the principles of accessibility and the related standards;
- improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community;
- designing new facilities that will address inclusionary practice and universal design;
- connecting to the new Student Support Services directions;
- aligning with 2006-2007 MCSS Accessibility PILLARS and resulting standards;
- a strong focus on public education and accessibility, awareness and prevention.

5. **Description of the Upper Canada District School Board**

The Upper Canada District School Board is a diverse, public educational organization in Eastern Ontario. It consists of dedicated individuals committed to quality education that fosters lifelong learning for all, through creative and challenging learning experiences.

The Upper Canada District School Board is geographically one of the largest public school boards in Ontario. It comprises the counties of Lanark, Leeds, Grenville, Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry, Prescott, and Russell. The Board covers 12,000 square kilometers and is bordered by the St. Lawrence River to the south, Quebec to the east, Ottawa-Carleton to the north, and the lake district to the west.

Presently, the Upper Canada District School Board serves approximately 20,000 elementary students and 12,000 secondary students in 100 schools, and 37 alternative/continuing education campuses. The UCDSB employs almost 5,500 staff.

PHILOSOPHY

The Upper Canada District School Board believes that individual learning styles should be respected and accommodated; that all individuals have a right to learn and work in a safe and clean environment; that physical and emotional well-being must be promoted; and that respect for diversity strengthens society.

6. **The Accessibility Committee Members**

The 2007-2008 Accessibility Committee is presently working under the direction of the Superintendent of Special Education/Student Support Services, Ian Carswell.

NOTE: With the emerging provincial accessibility standards, the composition of the committee will need to change to reflect all board departments, and to ensure accessibility compliance throughout the Upper Canada District School Board.

2007 - 2008

Working Group Members	Department
Jeanne Atkins	Rehabilitation Coordinator, Human Resources Department
Beverly Booth	Vision SERT (Special Education Resource Teacher)
Ron Cotnam	Transportation
Peter Bosch	Manager of Construction, Capital Planning & Renewal
Erin Hurford	Speech-Language, CUPE
Pam Little	Principal, Student Support Services, St. Lawrence & Rideau Regions
Linda Lumsden	System Principal, Student Support Services
Tracey Mayer	Alternate - Transportation
Gary Palmer	Principal, Student Support Services, Gateway & Capital Regions
Deena Shorkey	Manager of Children's Mental Health, Cornwall Community Hospital, parent, a community representative
Nancy Wilson	Hearing SERT (Special Education Resource Teacher)

7. **Recent Barrier-Removal Initiatives**

The Upper Canada District School Board, through its Special Education Plan, addresses access for students with disabilities through modifications and accommodations of programs and services. The Special Education Plan is available on the board website at www.ucdsb.on.ca.

under *Special Education/Student Support Services*.

In the spring of 2002 the Upper Canada District School Board initiated the Building School Communities (BSC) review process in response to facilities issues. This review process has evolved whereby the Board has adopted a Family of Schools concept to achieve a number of program and operational objectives; namely equitable access to educational programs, balanced enrolments between schools, effective utilization of school space, and reasonable program boundaries. Details of the BSC review process are available on the Board web site at www.ucdsb.on.ca under *Our Schools*.

The "Plant Operations and Maintenance" department of the Upper Canada District School Board, in consultation with parents, students with disabilities, occupational therapists, various community agencies and services, and special education personnel is continuing to meet the needs of individual students by removing barriers to full participation and independence. The addition of elevators and lifts to multiple storied buildings, the installation of automatic door openers, magnetic hold-open devices for doors, the creation of accessible "special needs" washrooms, ramped entrances, science lab and domestic kitchen disability accommodations are some of the improvements that have been undertaken in many of our facilities. A list of achievements have been compiled which accompanies this plan and is entitled "Inventory of Accessibility" and "Accessibility Projects" (See Appendices A)

Barriers for employees with disabilities continue to be addressed individually though the Board's best practices; specifically the Workplace Accommodation Procedure (Wellness).

The Upper Canada District School Board has succeeded in making the curriculum more accessible to students with a variety of disabilities. For example, the SEA* process has been used to acquire adaptive technology for students with learning disabilities and developmental disabilities, sensory stimulation and integration equipment for students with autism, sound systems for the deaf and hard of hearing students, specialized equipment for students who are blind or have low vision, and individually prescribed work stations, walkers, standing frames, Hoyer lifts, etc. for physically disabled students. The Upper Canada District School Board has also equipped secondary schools with text-to-voice and voice-to-text technology to enable learning disabled students to access curriculum and to serve as an accommodation for the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test.

*This stands for Special Equipment Amount grants. The Ministry of Education funds purchases in a school year of specialized personal equipment that is essential to access the curriculum. The first \$800.00 per student claim is covered by the Board.

8. **Preventing New Barriers**

From this time forward, all Upper Canada District School Board programs, policies, practices and services will be subject to the guiding principles of inclusionary practice. The Board will strive to create an environment that is accessible to all people, regardless of age or ability. Through the annual accessibility planning process, the Upper Canada District School Board's programming policies and practices will be assessed to ensure continuous improvement in accessibility, and compliance with the emerging standards for accessibility.

As well, the designs of new schools in the Upper Canada District School Board have architectural features that incorporate principles of universal design as much as possible. Current renovations to existing buildings have accessibility for people with disabilities addressed in the plans.

Other significant initiatives are: Character Education, Learning to 18, Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test Accommodations, K Entry Plans/Best Start Strategy, EQAO Accommodations and Safe Schools Act.

9. **Barrier-Identification Methodologies**

In the past, the accessibility committee used the following barrier identification methodologies:

- 1 Inventory of accessibility review process by Plant/Maintenance Department. (See Appendix A)
- 2 Regular meetings to determine reviews, etc. and approaches.
- 3 Alignment of MCSS Pillars and members, interim members, guests of the UCDSB Accessibility Committee to ensure clear direction and understanding.

10. **Barriers Identified**

The Accessibility Committee continues to identify barriers. This committee will focus on the following barriers over the next several years: 2008-2009-2010.

Additional Barriers that will be addressed in 2008-2009-2010

1. Customer Service - Determine how UCDSB is to be an exemplary customer service provider. Review all policies, procedures and practices in light of the Customer Service Accessibility Standard (2008-2010) to ensure compliance and leadership with respect to identifying, correcting and preventing barriers.
2. Transportation – inclusion/integration and accessibility increase and awareness. Review all policies, procedures and practices, as these relate to the Transportation Accessibility Standard.
3. Physical/Architectural – Continuation of the addressing of Physical/Architectural Barriers. Review all policies, procedures and practices to ensure accessibility and universal design.
4. Information/Communication – Review of existing Focus Groups and handbooks/guidelines. Greater understanding and working knowledge of Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities - Best Practices. Review of all policies, procedures and practices with respect to information/communication and accessibility requirements.
5. Employment accommodation - For all administrative staff. On-line training module – the Ontarians With Disabilities Act. Maximizing the contributions of employees with disabilities. Also more understanding of Ontario Human Rights Code and implications for Accessibility. Sensitivity and Awareness Training, MCSS website. Review of all policies, procedures and practices with respect to Employment Standards.
6. Physical/Vision/Hearing. Review of present policies, procedures and practices in UCDSB. Student and family awareness of disabilities and educational programs and opportunities. Self-awareness and self-advocacy.
7. Attitudinal – Inclusion/Integration of all students into the regular classroom setting.

8. Attitudinal/Technological – Incorporation of Universal Design/Access into all schools.
9. Technological – Assistive Technologies/Equipment provided for students (SEA)
10. Attitudinal – Differentiated Instruction in the Classroom, Learning Resource Coach CODE project.
11. Using Character Education initiatives and programs to promote accessibility and awareness of disabilities (attitudinal).
12. Explore community public sector partners and best practices.
13. Explore Ministry funding through Council of Directors of Education (CODE) to support accessibility projects and directions. Include Student Success, Special Education/Student Support Services and Learning to 18.
14. Integration of accessibility planning into all business practices and planning. (Policies and Procedures)

11. **Review and Monitoring**

The accessibility committee will meet regularly during the planning year to review progress. Throughout the year, evaluation of the effectiveness in implementing the barrier, removal and prevention strategies will be ongoing.

12. **Communication of the Plan**

The Upper Canada District School Board's accessibility plan will be posted on the board website at www.ucdsb.on.ca/About+Us