



Turtle River School Division Accessibility Plan

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Part 1 - Baseline Report:

A.	Overview of Programs and Services
<p>Turtle River School Division is located in the Parkland region of Manitoba. In total, the division includes seven schools that vary in grade and programming. There is a Kindergarten through Grade 12 school in Alonsa, Glenella, McCreary, and Ste. Rose du Lac and a Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8 French Immersion school in Laurier. As well as, two schools that are located on the Hutterian Colonies of Grass River Colony and Parkview Colony. There are approximately 625 students throughout the division.</p>	
<p>Mission: <i>“The board will focus on the overall needs of its students. Notwithstanding this, the board will pay due regard to its responsibilities to the community and encourage a high quality of education. The degree to which the board attains its goals will be measured through the use of standard evaluation tools, internal and external testing and the performance of students in their chosen endeavors. The board, in implementing its programs will draw upon the unique skills of staff and its use of progressive and varied methods of instruction. In doing so, the board will maximize the use of specialized facilities to provide the greatest opportunity for student learning and social growth.”</i></p>	
<p>As part of the school environment, the public access the schools and other school buildings for many different events such as Christmas Concerts, Awards Ceremonies, Parent/Teacher Conferences, Public Consultation meeting, and various extra-curricular events. Schools are an integral part of our small community and with our <i>Use of School Facilities Policy</i>; public groups access our facilities outside the regular school day.</p>	
B.	Accessibility Achievements
<p>Turtle River School Division Accessibility Committee conducts annual school tours of each work site. During these tours, the committee has/will identify barriers, plan follow up meetings to address the barriers, and prepare a plan to address and remove or modify the barrier. We have an accessibility request form and welcome any special requests that are forwarded to us. If needed a special meeting is set up to discuss the individual needs and is to be included in the students’ IEP (Individual Education Plans). The Education Funding Branch, works together with the division to improve and obtain reasonable levels of accessibility to our schools on any new builds or remodels.</p>	
<p>Accessibility Achievements Include:</p>	
<p><u>Customer Service</u></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All staff completed respect in school and accessibility training• Make reasonable accommodations for staff, students and the public when requested• Provide accessibility request form online, to assist in identifying concerns/requests and give feedback.• Assist and support staff in understanding and promoting inclusive education practices	

- Clinical staff (Social Work, Psychologist, Speech and Language Pathologist) work as school team members to support student program planning, families and staff capacity building.
- Student Service Policy developed to provide clear directions on adaptation and accommodation to students with disabilities.

Employment

- Support accessibility accommodations for all staff as required
- Maintain an inclusive view in hiring process
- Employees have access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and return to work supports.

Information & Communications

- When requested we provide information and communication through a communication support or accessible format.
- Available to all staff FM transmitters when requested
- We provide a language translation on our website
- Software is provided such as, but not limited to Office 365, Windows 10 & 11, Microsoft Team, Microsoft Read Aloud, Adobe, Seesaw to support students and teacher's accessibility needs
- Website descriptive text and alternate text has been added throughout the website
- Additional students' devices have been provided to meet individual student's needs (resource students, speech iPads)
- Access to mobile computing devices, i.e. laptops, Chromebooks, iPads, etc, including remote internet access to families in need
- Computer projection devices are in school classrooms. Approximately 90% of existing school classrooms have access to projection devices.
- Provide access to school division devices which support touch, text to voice, and translation tools.

Transportation

- Provide transportation including accessibility busing when necessary for students with individual needs to and from school as well as special activities.
- Additional staff, such as Educational Assistants assigned when necessary for the transfer of students

Physical Environment

- Automatic door openers on the main doors at every public school within the division
- Specialized furniture is available and has been provided for students as needed
- Remodeled a grooming room to meet all current accessibility requirements in one of our schools.
- In the process of converting door handles to "lever style"
- We have converted all exit signage throughout the division to the "running man" pictogram.

C. Accessibility Barriers

After conducting the assessment of our buildings and communication practices, the cost of implementing accessibility standards to make Turtle River School Division's facilities barrier-free will be the greatest problem. Declining enrolment in most of our schools can be challenging to our financial management to justify and deliberate on investing any significant changes to some of our less utilized buildings. A list has been created of identified barriers and ranked in order of greatest importance; this will be used to work towards removing barriers. Short term strategies may be implemented until permanent solutions can be funded. This list will be ongoing as new barriers are identified.

Barriers include but are not limited to: (no particular order)

- All washrooms in every building be accessible
- Accessibility designated parking spots for staff and public in all locations
- Counter height and door widths to all main office/reception area
- Division Office is not accessible
- Signage/school related documents (Ensure new signage meets basic accessibility requirements such as plain language, use of graphic symbols, contrasting colors, raised tactile lettering for easier readability).
- Barrier free access to grounds and sports fields on division property
- Staff time and resources to update documents both online and print (Division & School)
- Time and cost to improve accessibility of digital content towards the WCAG 2.1 level AA compliance.

Part 2 – Accessibility Plan:

A. Statement of Commitment

Turtle River School Division is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for all people, regardless of their abilities. We are committed to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who work, learn, and participate in the school board community and environment. This includes, but is not limited to, students, staff, parents, guardians, volunteers, and visitors to the Board and its schools, in accordance with the requirement of *The Accessibility for Manitoba Act*.

We are committed to meet and adhere to the five standards addressed in the Accessibility for Manitoba Act.

1. Customer Service Standard
2. Information and Communication
3. Transportation
4. Employment
5. Built Environment

B. Policies		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turtle River School Division will review all programs, services, and new initiatives to ensure accessibility. • Turtle River School Division will make information available in an accessible format or provide communication support to people with disabilities in a way that considers their disability. 		
C. Actions		
Actions	Strategies/Initiatives	Expected Outcomes
1. Establish an Accessibility Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint an accessibility coordinator and committee members • Meet regularly to review initiatives and discuss accessibility goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members participate in developing, implementing, and updating the plan. • Bring more awareness to staff, student and all stakeholders
2. Provide staff/student with awareness training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuously train administration and staff to increase awareness of accessibility barriers. • Organize training and information sessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and students will have greater knowledge of accessibility barriers, making them easier to identify so the barrier can be properly addressed.
3. Offer and provide information in an accessible format, proactively and upon request.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the needs of the visually impaired on all communications including Division and School websites. • Our Technology team is doing an audit of accessibility requirements and develop a compliance strategy to update our website and provide a higher level of accessibility online • Our student services team work with families to address student specific needs for assistive technology as well as universal supports for all learners; these include features for chat and text to speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written and electronic communication from schools or the division is accessible to all. • Inform staff of alternate formats as they become available • Provide support in areas that include web applications, print media, signage, public communication • Work towards advertising the availability of alternate formats • Ensure communication by using accessible formats, easy to read fonts, plain language, and an active offer button “how can I help” to request alternative formats that offer support for mobility, vision, hearing, and understanding • Purchasing accessible learning resources • Continue to provide interventions that require individualized programming for students • Accessible learning for all students
4. Identify, modify, and/or remove any architectural barriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform an initial site visit to all division locations to identify barriers as well as yearly visits to identify any new barriers. • Create a list of identified barriers and establish a plan to address the barrier as feasible with budget limits and time restraints. • New and renovation construction projects will have accessibility barriers considered. • Provide an accessibility request form to identify areas of concern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical barriers will be overcome. Modified, short-term solutions may be the best outcome until funding for a long term solution is in place. • Improved access to all division facilities

Actions	Strategies/Initiatives	Expected Outcomes
5. Offer transportation to those with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Accessibility Committee and Transportation Supervisor will work together to identify and address any accessibility needs on the School Buses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students will participate in field trips and daily transportation will be available if needed.
6. Be conscious of accessibility during the employment process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Division will notify its current and future employees along with the public about the availability of accommodations for new-applicants with disabilities during the hiring and recruitment process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All work places within the division will be positive and diverse.
7. Establish an accessibility monitoring program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document progress on the accessibility plan Develop and review existing procedures and policies that will increase accessibility Work with the accessibility committee to communicate the processes to staff and the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior administration will monitor progress supporting the effective implementation of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act We continue to consult with people with disabilities for determining barriers and how to overcome them We continue to consult Manitoba Accessibility Office to improve our plan and remove barriers in accordance with the AMA Accessibility Plan posted on website

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