



# MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

September 2020 - August 2025



Lakehead  
Public  
Schools

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# **MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

## **LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD September 2020 – August 2025**

### **Prepared by the Accessibility Planning Committee**

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act  
Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan can be found:

1. Board's website: [www.lakeheadschoools.ca](http://www.lakeheadschoools.ca) → ABOUT → BOARD → Accessibility
2. At the Jim McCuaig Education Centre, 2135 Sills St., Thunder Bay, ON P7E 5T2
3. In accessible formats upon request.

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## 1.0 Overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities act, 2005 (AODA) and Standards

The Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment indicates that one in seven Ontarians lives with a disability. By the year 2036, that number is expected to increase to one in five. The purpose of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is to improve opportunities for people living with disabilities and to provide for their full participation in society by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers. A barrier is anything that prevents an individual with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society as a result of that disability, and can include physical/architectural barriers (e.g. absent/broken elevators in buildings with more than one floor), information or communication barriers (e.g. documents with small print or complex terminology), attitudinal barriers (e.g. underestimating the abilities of a person with a disability), technological barriers (e.g. websites that do not support screen reading software), and systemic barriers (e.g. policies that do not support full integration of individuals with disabilities).

The AODA applies to public, broader public, and private sector organizations, including school boards. It calls for the development of enforceable accessibility standards in the areas of: customer service, the built environment, employment, information and communication, and transportation.

The government is moving forward to implement the standards required under the AODA to ensure a barrier free Ontario by the year 2025.

Principles of accessibility include: demonstrating respect for the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities, providing goods and services to persons with disabilities in a manner that is integrated with individuals who do not have disabilities unless another method is required due to the person's disability, and equality of opportunity. Lakehead District School Board is committed to ensuring that its policies, procedures, and practices are consistent with these principles.

### **Accessibility Standards under the AODA**

#### a) Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

This standard addresses the manner in which goods and services are delivered to the public and other third parties. The public sector and broader public sector were required to fulfill their obligations under this standard by January 1, 2010. Initiatives include items such as the development of policies and staff training requirements.

#### b) Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

The Integrated Accessibility Standard (IASR) establishes standards for accessibility in the areas of: Information and Communication, Employment, and Transportation. The requirements for this Regulation are being phased in over the period of 2011-2021.

#### c) Accessibility Standards for Information and Communication

This standard establishes requirements for providing accessible information and communication to persons with disabilities. Compliance involves, but is not limited to, the areas of: policy development, procurement processes, website accessibility, training, emergency and public safety information and accessible educational resource materials.

#### d) Accessibility Standards for Employment

This standard relates to paid staff members. Compliance involves, but not limited to, the areas of: recruitment, selection and promotion, policy development, workplace accommodations, return to work processes, work related document accessibility, and individual emergency response plans.

e) Accessibility Standards for Transportation

This standard applies to school boards and other organizations that provide transportation services. Compliance involves, but not limited to, the areas of: developing individual transportation accommodation plans for students, communicating these plans to appropriate parties, operator and driver responsibilities as well as training and technical requirements.

f) Proposed Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment

The Proposed Built Environment Standard under the AODA calls for enhanced accessibility of interior and exterior spaces and applies to new construction and areas undergoing change of use or extensive renovations.

## 2.0 **Aim**

This multi-year Accessibility Plan is developed in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. It incorporates the intentions of the Board to meet its obligations under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001. The Plan describes the measures that the Board will take over the five year period from 2020-2025 to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who work, learn, and participate in the school board community and environment including students, staff, parents and guardians, volunteers and visitors to the Board and its schools. The plan will be guided by the Board's Accessibility Policy 3100 (<https://www.lakeheadschoools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3100-Accessibility-Policy.pdf>)

## 3.0 **Objectives**

This Plan:

- 1.1 Describes the process by which the Lakehead District School Board will identify, remove, and prevent barriers;
- 1.2 Reviews recent efforts of the Lakehead District School Board to remove and prevent barriers;
- 1.3 Describes the measures the Lakehead District School Board will take in the period 2020-2025 to identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- 1.4 Makes a commitment to provide an annual status report on the Board's implementation of the multi-year accessibility plan;
- 1.5 Makes a commitment to review and update the multi-year accessibility plan at least once every five years; and

- 1.6 Describes how Lakehead District School Board will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

#### **4.0 Commitment to Accessibility Planning**

This plan will be established, reviewed and updated in consultation with Senior Administration, persons with disabilities, and with the Board's Special Education Advisory Committee and the Accessibility Planning Committee. It will be presented to the Board for approval. The Lakehead District School Board is committed to:

- 4.1 Maintaining an Accessibility Planning Committee;
- 4.2 Consulting with the Special Education Advisory Committee and with persons with disabilities in the review of the multi-year accessibility plan;
- 4.3 Ensuring, wherever practicable, that Board policies, procedures, and practices are consistent with the principles of accessibility and inclusive/universal design. The Accessibility Planning Committee will provide input re: accessibility issues, where appropriate, with regard to new policies and procedures and to those under review; and
- 4.4 Improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, and members of the community. Consideration of ongoing identification of barriers will be the responsibility of the Accessibility Planning Committee and will, wherever practicable, be incorporated in the multi-year plan.

The Director of Education has authorized the Accessibility Planning Committee to review and update the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan that will enable the Lakehead District School Board to meet these commitments.

#### **5.0 Description of the Lakehead District School Board**

Governed by an elected Board of nine publicly elected Trustees, and operating with an annual budget of approximately \$147,000,000, Lakehead District School Board is the largest public school board in Northwestern Ontario with 23 elementary schools, 3 secondary schools, and one adult education center. Approximately 1,900 staff support 10,000 students in the District of Thunder Bay, Armstrong and Collins, Ontario. We provide distance and online educational opportunities for students and staff throughout the region.

Lakehead Public Schools educates, encourages and supports all students to develop a passion for learning, set high personal standards, and become active community members. Every student is provided with equal opportunities to learn in safe schools with many learning choices and innovative programming. We offer consistent high quality core programming from Junior Kindergarten through to Grade 12. Comprehensive adult education is available for students over the age of 18. At Lakehead Public Schools, we work with parents, community partners and employees to make good things happen for our students inside and outside the classroom.

Our Mission: Lakehead Public schools is committed to the success of every student.  
Our Vision: Your Children Our Students The Future  
Our Values: Integrity, Acceptance Empathy Respect Responsibility

#### **6.0 Members of Accessibility Planning Committee**

The Accessibility Planning Committee is an internal working group comprised of staff who meets regularly to create, monitor, update, and improve the accessibility of Lakehead District School Board facilities and services in accordance with the AODA and applicable standards.

Committee Member	Role	Contact Information
Kirsti Alaksa	Superintendent of Business	Phone: (807)-625-5226 Email: kirsti_alaksa@lakeheadschoos.ca
Michelle Probizanski	Superintendent of Education	Phone: (807) 625-5126 Email: michelle_probizanski@lakeheadschoos.ca
Helen Valnycki, Committee Chair	Manager of Human Resources	Phone: (807) 625-5171 Email: helen_valnycki@lakeheadschoos.ca
Dave Covello	Manager of IT and Corporate Planning	Phone: (807) 625-5230 Email: dcovello@lakeheadschoos.ca
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Jenny Fenton	Human Resources Officer	Phone: (807) 625-5140 Email: jenny_fenton@lakeheadschoos.ca

## 7.0 **Strategy for the Prevention and Removal of Barriers**

Beginning September 1, 2012, the principles of inclusionary practice, freedom from barriers and accessible environments have informed all Lakehead District School Board policies, programs, procedures, and services. Through the annual accessibility plan status report process implemented under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*, the Lakehead District School Board's programming, policies, and practices have been assessed to ensure continuous improvement in accessibility. This process will continue through the establishment of a multi-year accessibility plan which places particular emphasis on the provisions of the regulations made under the AODA with regard to customer service, information and communications, employment, and school transportation.



## 8.0 **Barrier Identification Process**

The Accessibility Planning Committee will use the following barrier-identification methods:

<b>Process</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
Presentations to Senior Administration	Opportunity for input and feedback	Ongoing
Presentations to the Board	Opportunity to provide information and answer questions	Annually
Presentations to Special Education Advisory Committee	Opportunity for input and feedback, and constituent input from their representative groups	Annually
Communication of Plan	Plan posted on website	Ongoing
Review of Feedback	Accessibility Planning Committee to review input received and make recommendations	Ongoing

## 9.0 **Recent Barrier Removal Achievements 2020-2021**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
Systemic	Board-wide	Update Accessibility Policy and Procedures (Appendix A)
Physical	CD Howe, Valley, Whitefish Valley, Woodcrest, Superior	Visual strobe fire alarms and panels
Physical	Kakabeka, Mackenzie, CD Howe, and Armstrong	Installation of play structure
Physical	System wide	Washroom renovation
Physical	Whitefish Valley, Valley Central, Woodcrest, Gorham & Ware, Kingsway	Conversion of door hardware to level type operator
Physical	Vance Chapman	Accessibility ramps and auto door opener for daycare entrance.

Information and Communication	System wide	Review and update Policy 3030: Purchasing Policy to incorporate AODA procurement requirements
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Lakehead District School Board is continually looking to improve the accessibility of our services and facilities. Some of the recent barrier removal achievements include:

Type of Barrier	Location	Action Taken
Attitudinal/ Systemic	System-wide	Ongoing training in Accessible Customer Service for new employees
Information and Communication	System-wide	Ensure public safety information is made available to the public in an accessible format upon request
Information and Communication – Student Transportation	System-wide	Ongoing consultation with parents/guardians regarding transportation needs of students and the development of individual transportation plans
Systemic- Employment	System-wide	Implemented a process to provide staff with individualized workplace emergency response information upon request (Appendix B)

In addition, any new school construction has adhered to the current building code and includes level access to schools, automatic door openers, elevators in schools of more than one floor, and accessible washrooms.

## 10.0 **Barriers to be addressed under the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11 filed in June, 2011 pursuant to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 identified specific requirements to achieve accessibility in the areas of:

- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation

These requirements build on the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service which came into force in 2007.

Lakehead District School Board intends, through this Multi-year Accessibility Plan for the period 2020-2025, to take action to address barriers to accessibility related to the Standards areas of current Regulations. This is in addition to ongoing work the Board is undertaking with regard to identification and removal of barriers in the Board's physical environment which are also include

**2021-2022**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Attitudinal/ Systemic	Board-Wide	Training on Human Rights and Integrated Accessibility Standards for existing employees	Established and ongoing
Physical	System-wide	Visual strobe fire alarms and panels	Ongoing
Physical	System-wide	Installation of play ground structures	Ongoing
Physical	System wide	Washroom renovation	Ongoing
Physical	System wide	Door hardware conversion	Ongoing
Information and Communication – Student Transportation	System-wide	Review existing student transportation processes. Consult with parents to develop individual student transportation plans	Established and ongoing
Information and Communication	System-wide	Review of existing internal physical and staff resources in place to be able to meet accommodation needs of individuals	Ongoing
Information and Communication	System-wide	Review feedback processes	Established and ongoing
Information and Communication	System-wide	Board to convert to accessible website features	December 2021

Systemic - Employment	Human Resources	Review and update HR recruitment, selection and promotion practices, communication supports / accessible formats, workplace accommodations, return to work processes, and performance management to ensure accessibility criteria are included	Established and ongoing
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**2022-2023**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Physical	System-wide	Visual strobe fire alarms and panels	Ongoing
Physical	System-wide	Installation of play ground structures	Ongoing
Physical	System wide	Washroom renovation	Ongoing
Physical	System wide	Door hardware conversion	Ongoing
Information and Communication	System-wide	Review of the process for accessible formats and communication supports	Ongoing
Information and Communication	System-wide	Review school libraries ability to provide accessible or conversion ready resources (print materials)	Ongoing

General	System-wide	Post annual update to the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan	Ongoing
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**2023-2024**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Physical	System-wide	Visual strobe fire alarms and panels	Ongoing
Physical	System-wide	Installation of play ground structures	Ongoing
Physical	System wide	Washroom renovation	Ongoing
Physical	System wide	Door hardware conversion	Ongoing
Information and Communication	System-wide	Review capacity of school libraries to provide accessible digital and multimedia resources	Ongoing
General	System-wide	Develop and post annual update to the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan	Ongoing

<b>2024-2025</b>			
<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Physical	System-wide	Visual strobe fire alarms and panels	Ongoing
Physical	System-wide	Installation of play ground structures	Ongoing
Physical	System wide	Washroom renovation	Ongoing
Physical	System wide	Door hardware conversion	Ongoing
General	System-wide	Begin work on completion of the 2025-2030 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan	

## **11.0 Review and Monitoring Process**

The Accessibility Planning Committee meets regularly during the school year to review progress and evaluate the effectiveness of implementation of barrier removal and prevention strategies and to plan for increased accessibility throughout the Board.

The Accessibility Planning Committee will ensure that an annual status report on the progress of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is prepared.

The Multi-Year Accessibility plan will be reviewed and updated in its entirety at least once every five years, using feedback received and in consultation with persons with disabilities, the Special Education Advisory Committee, the Accessibility Planning Committee and other relevant committees.

## 12.0 Communication of the Plan

In addition to the public availability of the plan as referenced earlier on the inside cover, Lakehead District School Board will post an annual status report on the progress of the Multi-year Accessibility Plan on the Board's website and will be available in accessible formats upon request.

Questions, comments or feedback regarding the Accessibility Plan may be directed to:

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