



## Avon Maitland District School Board Annual Accessibility Plan Working Group

Wednesday, November 29, 2017

4:00 p.m.

Avon Maitland District School Board  
Education Centre, Seaforth, ON  
Festival Room

### MINUTES

Attendance: Janet Baird-Jackson (co-chair), David Frier (co-chair), Martin Ritsma, Laurel Mitchell, Hugh Cox, Jamie Gibbings, Julia Opie, Amy Kipfer, Shelley King, Janice Richmond, Diane Doctor, Mary Jane Karkheck, Anne Copeland, Mary Lou Bilcke, Randy Wagler, Cheryl Peach

Regrets: Wendy Case, Vince Trocchi, Terry Marklevitz, Nancy Rothwell, Robert Simmons, Ralf Mesenbrink, Lorne Strasser, Jason Hillier, Tim Bilcke

#### 1.0 Welcome and Introductions

Janet Baird-Jackson welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

#### 2.0 Approval of Agenda

Moved by Mary Lou Bilcke and seconded by Mary Jane Karkheck that the agenda be approved. Carried.

#### 3.0 Review of Minutes from October 11, 2017

Moved by Martin Ritsma, and seconded by Mary Lou Bilcke that the minutes from the October 11, 2017 meeting be approved. Carried.

#### 4.0 Business Arising

##### 4.1 Inclusive Language – use of

Janet shared the inclusive language poster that was sent out in the system memo created by Tim Bilcke regarding gender neutral language. The next posters are going to cover 'person first language' and 'cultural identity'. Shared in the memo were website accessibility, web accessibility guidelines and clear print accessibility guide. There needs to be more messaging on font, style, and point size.

Julia Opie has accessibility guidelines for creating accessible documents, presentations and PDFs that she is going to share with the committee. The Board should have a PowerPoint Presentation template with guidelines that everyone must use.

**Action:** Julia will post the guidelines and templates to the AODA Google Group that Julia Opie provides.

## 4.2 Accessibility Compliance Report – Update

David has submitted the Accessibility Compliance Report and has received confirmation that it was received.

## 5.0 New Business

### 5.1 Message from Accessibility Directorate regarding Education Standard

Julia Opie contacted the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario about the Education Standard to see if they could share anything new. They responded by saying, “The Government of Ontario has committed to identifying and addressing accessibility barriers in the Education sector and to develop new and accessibility standards for education. Ontario’s current accessibility standards include a number of requirements that apply to education institutions, for example, accessibility standards require accessibility policies to be in place, educators to be trained in accessible programs and curriculum, libraries to provide accessible formats. These requirements help promote inclusive education system and provide an important foundation to support all students with disabilities. A new accessibility standard for education will help us to go farther to reach our goal to an accessible Ontario by 2025. The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Advanced Education Skills Development are working together to establish a standards development committee for education. In May 2017, we launched an online survey to gather feedback from students with disabilities, parents and professionals in the education sector. The survey was open to public feedback until October 16, 2017. We received nearly 3,000 responses to date, via the online survey. Respondents also sent feedback directly to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario and our partner ministry sharing personal experiences, recommendations and information about accessibility in education. The results of this survey will help support the work of the Standards Development Committee providing insight into where new standards can happen for Ontario Students. Recruitment for Standards Development Committee members is now closed. The ADO received a high number of applications from across the education sectors and the disability community. We’re excited to bring together an expert diverse committee to develop the standard and provide the most strong evidence base that can support their work.”

**Action:** Julia Opie is going to ask the Standards Development Committee about the Education Standards.

## 6.0 Subcommittee/Working Group Structure

The working groups each provided their updates as follows:

### Built Environment

The Facility Department is working on getting accessible washrooms in all of the schools. There are quite a few schools with accessible washrooms and some that have a plan on where the accessible washrooms will go. The facility department is looking at all of the schools to see where it would make sense to put these washrooms. The standard has changed, so where it may have been accessible then, it may not be now.

Second story evacuation has been an ongoing discussion. The procedure is that the people with disabilities will be placed at the point of refuge and it is the firefighter's responsibility to evacuate them. The schools have created individual plans and Jamie is working on labeling doors and points of refuge.

It was suggested to share the plans with the parents of the students with disabilities.

### Customer Service

Poster was generated by the group.

### Information and Technology

Diana demonstrated the "Site Improved Tool" that was created to check websites to make sure they are AODA compliant. This tool is very recommended by Tim and the IT sub-committee. IT has paid to check 500 page, which limits them to elementary schools. The company sends weekly audits that shows what accessible areas we have the most issues with. The most common issue is with the school council minutes. It is suggested to provide a template to all schools for the school minutes. It is recommended that the Board buys the Site Improve Tool for everyone which would cost approximately \$7300.

It was suggested that Communications take on the challenge of further standardization and branding.

### Employment

The sub-committee is working on getting all of the letters and documents AODA compliant.

### Transportation

Transportation is looking at moving the individual travel plans to a program called Clever that is going to allow schools to complete the form through Maplewood. This will send notifications and make sure the proper people are notified when there is someone that requires assistance.

Transportation is also looking into getting more vehicles with wheel chair lifts. They have 8 out there now but it would be desirable to have a chair lift bus for every school.

The MTO has authorized the purchase of integrated seat. The seats have a harness underneath so when it is folded down it will look like a regular seat but when needed, the back of the seat folds down and forms a cushion on the seat but also has a harness attached.

The program started years ago with EAs riding the bus has been a very positive transition. The impact of having the skilled employees on the bus has be outstanding with a lot of support for Learning Services.

### Community

There is a lot of work to do in the communities. It is about getting the small businesses to understand why they need to make these accessibility changes. There is a lot of educating and training needed throughout the communities.

Julia suggested that when building new buildings, talk to people with disabilities within the communities.

The committee is going to create another 5 year plan labeling their goals and accomplishments. The sub-committees will have their information by the next meeting scheduled for February 28, 2018.

**Action:** Julia Opie will provide a template on the 5 year plan. Julia M. will send out reminders.

**7.0 Future meetings**

Dates of next meetings:

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

April

**8.0 Adjournment** at 5:10 p.m.

Moved by Hugh Cox, and seconded by Randy Wagler that the meeting be adjourned.

Carried.