



Ministry of Education

2014 Accessibility Plan

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Message from the Ministry Accessibility Executive Champion

Ensuring that all Ontarians are equally able to access and use the services and programs we develop and provide is at the heart of great public service.

The Ontario government has made significant progress over the last decade in removing barriers and improving accessibility in many areas of people's lives. However, as the Ontario Public Service (OPS) Multi-Year Accessibility Plan: 2013 Annual Status Report acknowledges, we are still at the early stages of our transformation journey.

I am pleased to share the many accessibility accomplishments the Ministry of Education has made in 2014, and I am even more excited about our focused approach for 2015. Section two of the plan provides an overview of the specific goals and deliverables.

It is a privilege to be the ministry's executive champion for accessibility and I remain committed to working with all of you as we move forward in removing accessibility barriers both within our organization for our colleagues and partners and to ensure that our education system is accessible to all children and students.

In line with the OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan deliverables, one of the ministry's key priorities in 2015 will be to seek feedback from our customers and employees. We want to hear your:

- thoughts or feedback on what has been accomplished by the ministry so far
- ideas on how ministry plans or projects could be improved
- experience in accessing government programs and services

Please refer to page 31 for a list of the different ways you can provide feedback.

Sincerely,

Pam Skinner

Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Administrative Officer
Corporate Management and Services Division
Ministry of Education and Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

Introduction

Under the [Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 \(ODA\)](#), ministries are required to produce, and make available to the public, annual plans that describe how ministries will identify and remove barriers to accessibility. This plan allows us to highlight the measures taken by the ministry in 2014 to identify and remove barriers and to identify the measures planned for 2015 that will make our ministry more accessible.

In 2010, the Ministry of Education began complying with the first accessibility standard established under the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#) - [Accessibility Standards for Customer Service](#).

In 2011, [the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation \(IASR\)](#) was introduced, establishing phased-in requirements in the following accessibility standards:

- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces

Each year, the Ontario Public Service (OPS) as an obligated organization, confirms its compliance with the requirements of these standards to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.

The IASR requires that obligated organizations shall create and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan that outlines the organization's strategies to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility. The OPS multi-year plan [Leading the Way Forward](#) was released in 2012.

Organizations are also required to develop an annual status report that highlights progress in advancing the multi-year accessibility plan strategy and in meeting the requirements of the IASR. In 2013, the OPS released its first [Annual Status Report](#), highlighting progress made in 2012.

To access the 2014 Accessibility Plan (ODA) of the Ministry of Education and other ministries' 2014 Accessibility Plans, visit [Ontario.ca](#).

Section One: Measures Taken by Ministry of Education in 2014

Customer Service

OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Key Outcome

People with disabilities who are OPS customers receive quality goods and services in a timely manner.

Measures Taken by Ministry in 2014

- Information about customer service obligations under the accessibility legislation was updated on the internal ministry website and promoted as a learning resource for staff. The ministry continued to promote the mandatory online accessibility training modules to staff and orientation materials for new employees also included information about customer service obligations.
- A new reporting system was developed to track staff training in an effort to strengthen the compliance assurance process. Implementation will begin in 2015.
- A customer service feedback system on accessibility issues was available to the public through the ministry's [website](#) and a response to all email inquiries was provided within two business days.
- The ministry continued to expand the range of accessibility accommodations provided at internal and external meetings and events. Through meeting invitations soliciting accommodation requirements from participants. For example:
 - using accessible venues and providing a variety of communication material formats (e.g. PDF and Word versions of attachments)
 - providing sign language translation in meetings and events
 - ensuring teleconference and online options were provided for stakeholder meetings and that transcripts were available upon request for all online professional learning sessions

- The ministry has included accessibility considerations in many programs, including:
 - The ministry released the How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, which highlights the importance and value of inclusion in early years settings.
 - Special Needs Resourcing funding was made available to educators to actively support inclusion in early years' settings so that children with special needs and their families are supported to participate in early years programs.
 - Pan Am/Parapan Am Activity Day Kits designed to motivate and encourage Ontario children and youth to lead active, healthy lives were distributed to all publicly-funded elementary schools, First Nation schools and after- school programs in the province. The kit was created in alternate formats, such as braille, making it accessible for all children.

Information and Communications

OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Key Outcome

Information and Communications are available in accessible formats or with necessary supports to all OPS staff and customers.

Measures Taken by Ministry in 2014

- The ministry continued to expand the variety of formats and supports available to ensure that information and communication materials were accessible to all Ontarians. Active offers to make information available in alternative formats, ensuring that people with various disability types get the accommodation they need, are made in most ministry communications. Examples include:
 - Memos, resources, guidelines and professional training materials related to ministry programs were converted to accessible formats for clients and staff.
 - All Grants for Student Needs release materials were made accessible.
 - Early Years Implementation Branch communications and operational policy guidelines were written in plain language.
 - The ministry released How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years. It is available in alternative formats along with supporting videos that are part of the Think Feel Act series. These videos are available with closed captioning and transcripts are also available.
 - E-Learning Ontario webinars created for the Ministry of Education website and/or e-Community continue to include accessible transcripts.
 - Professional learning videos posted on the internet included captioning or accessible transcripts.
- Staff were required to complete the "IASR – Information and Communications Standards" course by December 31, 2014. The training was tracked and recorded by the OPS Centre for Leadership and Learning.

- Training was provided to staff on how to create accessible documents, including:
 - ten sessions on creating accessible documents (Word, PowerPoint and Excel) for more than 100 staff
 - accessibility basics for 15 administrative staff and executive assistants during a professional development conference
 - accessible PDF training for more than 30 staff
- The new I&IT Accessibility Centre of Excellence training videos, on how to create accessible documents, were promoted on the ministry intranet and in memos sent to staff directing them to this resource.
- The ministry also promoted corporately-developed tip sheets and guides, as well as training materials developed by Ministry of Government and Consumer Services pertaining to the creation of accessible documents.
- The ministry continued to meet Web Content Accessibility Guideline Standards (WCAG 2.0) in digital learning resources:
 - Pictures in Video Viewing Guides and posted on the EduGAINS website have descriptive captioning for use by e-readers.
 - Videos produced for posting on EduGAINS have available transcripts.
 - New video resources on the EduGAINS website were reformatted to include captioning and PowerPoint presentations included audio-recorded support.
- Communications staff responsible for web content and webmasters received training on accessible websites.
- Web content editors monitor all documents for accessibility and ensure they conform to plain-language principles.
- The ministry began the process of redesigning several intranet sections to ensure that all requirements under the accessibility legislation are met or exceeded.

- The School Facility Inventory System (SFIS) Modernization Project has been under development and a future accommodation will include providing users with accessible applications. Until SFIS is compliant, the ministry has been offering services through an accessible login page and personalized accessibility services.
- The Provincial Schools Branch (PSB) completed a number of significant projects. Highlights include:
 - An American Sign Language (ASL) version of its external website, which was launched in the fall of 2014. ASL version of the content on the website provides accessible information to staff, students and parents.
 - ASL version of internal employee policies on American Sign Language. These videos were posted on the intranet.
 - Producing accessible versions of Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessments.
- The Community Services I&IT Cluster continued to support the Disability Advisory Council (DAC) in developing the DAC Registry of staff with disabilities. As an OPS enterprise-wide initiative, consensus on the content contained in the DAC Registry required extensive consultation. Refinements to business requirements are still underway. Once this stage is finalized, the Community Services I&IT Cluster will complete the development and testing of the application/registry with implementation to follow.
- Ministry staff members were encouraged to attend the annual Accessibility Expo/JOIN conference held in December 2014. The event was promoted on the ministry intranet and through memos to all staff via divisional accessibility leads as well as key staff in corporate branches. Broad staff attendance was encouraged in an ongoing effort to raise awareness of accessibility issues.

Employment

OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Key Outcome

OPS employees with disabilities participate fully and meaningfully in their employment.

Measures Taken by Ministry in 2014

- Enterprise-wide communication about the Ontario Public Service compliance requirements under the Employment Standard, including accommodation procedures such as HROntario's comprehensive Disability Support Strategy, and the new e-course on the Employment Standard were shared with, and promoted to, staff through memos, presentations at branch meetings and posted on the ministry intranet.
- The ministry's Chief Administrative Officer sent memos to all managers and HR professionals to notify them of the requirement to complete the online mandatory training on the Employment Standard by December 31, 2014.
- All corporately-developed tools, resources and guidelines related to employment obligations under the accessibility legislation were promoted within the ministry through internal staff information presentations, memos from the Chief Administrative Officer and the ministry intranet.
- Ministry recruitment best practices included notification of the availability of employment accommodation in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act in job postings, interview scheduling, confirmations and job offer letters.
- Employees were encouraged to identify and discuss any potential employment accommodation needs at the time of assignment or at any time thereafter.
- The accommodations provided to ministry staff included ergonomically-designed computer equipment, specialized chairs, stand up desks, as well as flexible work arrangements.

- A new tracking system was developed to help monitor compliance with accessibility commitments. It will be implemented in 2015.
- The ministry has a dedicated lead to provide mental health information and training which includes promoting awareness of the new corporate resources available on the OPS Human Resources intranet. More than 15 “Let’s Talk....You’re not alone” workshops were delivered across the province.
- The ministry representative on the Disability Advisory Council (DAC), which discusses internal obstacles and challenges faced by staff, continued to participate in the work of the council and champion the interests of staff with disabilities. This included organizing the “Creating Enabling Environments in the OPS” event on December 3, 2014. This day-long awareness and educational event promoted best practices across the OPS in providing support to people with disabilities.
- The Learning Ministries completed their 4th Diversity Mentoring Partnership Program in the fall of 2014. In the Ministry of Education, 24 employees and 34 mentors were enrolled in the program. The program is designed to provide an inclusive environment for reciprocal learning in which mentors and employee partners engage in honest, open and meaningful dialogue about diversity, accessibility and inclusion.

Built Environment

OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Key Outcome

There is greater accessibility into, out of and around OPS facilities and public spaces.

Measures Taken by Ministry in 2014

- The ministry prepared for the new accessibility requirements in the built environment coming into effect on January 1, 2015 by:
 - Providing an overview of the new built environment obligations, including the requirement to provide training, to divisional accessibility leads, facilities managers and senior management.
 - Developing a training plan, and tracking system, for all managers and staff, to be completed by June 2015.
 - Posting information on the ministry's intranet about upcoming accessibility in the built environment requirements.
- The ministry has been implementing an accommodation plan that will reduce the office footprint but will still provide flexible and accessible design features which ensure that all staff-identified work station accommodation needs have been addressed. Accessible design features have also been incorporated in offices, cubicles, and washrooms.
- During office renovations and moves, communications materials were available in accessible formats and accessibility was considered in all renovation procurements.
- Ministry offices on the 4th, 10th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 16^h, 21st and 24th floors of Mowat Block at 900 Bay Street in Toronto were renovated to provide an accessible and barrier-free workplace, including offices, cubicles, washrooms and public spaces.

Other Commitments

OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Key Outcome

OPS staff members are able to identify barriers to accessibility, in OPS policies, programs, services and facilities, and actively seek solutions to prevent or remove barriers on an ongoing basis throughout the organization.

Measures Taken by Ministry in 2014

Procurement

- The ministry continued to support accessibility through the procurement of goods and services by incorporating a mandatory accessibility section into the “Procurement Request Information Gathering Template” which staff are required to consider and address when procuring goods, services or facilities.
- The Community Services I&IT Cluster’s intranet site continues to promote the “AccessOPS” link, which directs users to the OPS’ Diversity and Accessibility site. This site assists staff with obtaining accessibility information on procuring goods, such as software and hardware to ensure accessibility requirements are met.
- Mandatory for every I&IT procurement is the submission of a completed Accessibility Checklist (Meeting Accessibility Obligations in Procurement) which is kept on file, and the provision of links to the Ontario Human Rights Code, Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
- The ministry supports regional child care licensing offices on any requirements set out in the accessibility legislation, including providing referrals to appropriate organizations (e.g. to Municipal Affairs and Housing as the ministry responsible for the Building Code, which includes accessibility standards for the Built Environment).
- The ministry organized the Ontario Leadership Congress (an educational learning conference) held in May 2014 with the assistance of an event coordinator to ensure all aspects of the congress were accessible.

- The ministry has included accessibility considerations in many programs and practices, including:
 - The ministry funded diverse education, parent and equity stakeholders to support implementation of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and Parent Engagement Policy. Transfer payment agreements stipulated that all funded products were accessible.
 - For the 2014-15 school year, the ministry provided \$3.5 million for Parents Reaching Out grants (totalling 2,279 projects) to address barriers and foster parent engagement in their children's learning and well-being.
 - The ministry continued to support school boards and schools in embedding the principles of equity and inclusive education into all operations and learning environments. All school boards now have an equity and inclusive education policy in place. The ministry provided funding to seven Equity and Inclusive Education Networks to support school and school board implementation of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.
- The ministry funded a number of projects with the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) and VOICE for Hearing Impaired to enhance the capacity of the education sector in teaching students who are deaf and hard of hearing. One of these projects includes a collaborative project by both CHS and VOICE to develop a Mental Health Guide for students who are deaf and hard of hearing, ensuring that issues of mental health and well-being are addressed. Other deliverables included resources for deepening system knowledge to enhance capacity for educators, teachers and school leaders in teaching students who are deaf and hard of hearing from kindergarten to Grade 12. These resources can be accessed through the CHS Website: <http://www.chs.ca/> and VOICE Website: <http://www.voicefordeafkids.com/>.

- The ministry provided transfer payment funding to VIEWS for the Visually Impaired to support students who are blind or have low vision. A portion of the funding for VIEWS is used to subsidize blind and deaf blind additional qualifications courses and other types of specialized teacher training.
- The ministry reviewed the Guidelines for Special Education Programs and Services for Students with Learning Disabilities and issued a revised Policy/Program Memorandum 8 (PPM 8) Identification and Program Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities. This will promote consistency across the province in the identification and program planning for students with learning disabilities. Implementation of PPM 8 is scheduled for January 2, 2015.
- In September 2014, the ministry, in collaboration with the Ministries of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) and Community and Social Services (MCSS), began the implementation of new integrated transition planning protocols to support young people with developmental disabilities. The goal of the integrated planning process is one transition plan for the student to post-secondary activities such as work, further education and community living. A monitoring framework has been developed and MCYS/MCSS agencies will collect information and monitor the integration transition planning process.
- The ministry funded the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) in 2013-2014 to:
 - launch the Learning Disabilities @school (English) and TA@l'école (French) websites
 - prepare summaries of research covering assessment and instructional approaches, practices and strategies for students with learning disabilities
 - prepare summaries of effective teaching tools, webinars, videos and case studies
 - organize and host the Educators' Institute 2014

- The ministry established a provincial Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) expertise professional working group consisting of district school board representation from rural, urban, Catholic and public and French Language school boards. The Working Group was responsible for:
 - reviewing current practices, identifying gaps, and setting targets to enhance local processes of use for ABA in supporting students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
 - identifying resources that have proven to be effective in improving the outcomes of students with ASD at both elementary and secondary levels
 - supporting the development of a repository of relevant resources on ABA and ASD that can be available to all district school boards
 - designing and supporting continuous development of an ABA expert e-community
 - informing the development of provincial learning modules for educators and administrators that support ASD, ABA and behaviour needs of students
 - developing a framework and participating in a provincial ABA Professional Learning Day
 - acting as a liaison for all ABA expertise professionals within their respective regions
 - participating and leading professional learning communities at the regional level to collect and share effective ABA practices

- In response to recommendations from the Report of the Auditor General, the ministry developed a list of requirements that may be included in training opportunities provided by district school boards to educators who work or may work with students with ASD. All district school board ABA Expertise Professionals were provided the opportunity to offer input into the training requirements through each regional ABA professional learning community. The ministry communicated the list of training requirements at the 2014 ABA Day this year.

- District school boards will be expected to monitor the availability and participation of educators in ABA training opportunities provided by the board. The ministry will begin monitoring provincial implementation of training requirements through the 2014-15 annual Policy Program Memorandum (PPM) 140 Survey.
- The ministry will work collaboratively with district school boards to ensure that key principles of ABA instruction are included in training opportunities that will be made available to all district school boards. This summer, the ministry continued its partnership with the Geneva Centre for Autism by providing training opportunities through the annual summer institute. Additionally, beginning in September 2014, Geneva offered an ABA Certificate Course for Educators through online e-Learning modules that focus on comprehensive training on ABA, including evidence-based behavioural strategies that can be incorporated into the classroom setting to promote student achievement and well-being. The ministry will provide district school boards with an allocation of spaces to participate in the ABA Certificate Course for Educators online e-Learning modules. This certificate course complements the existing free online series for educators already available through the Geneva website. District school boards may also wish to use their annual ABA training funding to support these learning opportunities.
- The ministry also launched an e-Learning community for ABA to allow for the sharing of effective practices among professionals across the province.
- The ministry implemented Policy and Program Memorandum 156 (PPM156): Supporting Transitions for All Students with Special Education Needs, effective September 2, 2014. PPM 156 provides direction to district school boards regarding the development of a transition plan as part of the students' Individual Education Plan (IEP) for all students with special education needs, including those formally identified through an Identification, Placement and Review Committee, and those not formally identified receiving special education programs and/or supports at the discretion of a principal.

- The ministry has provided funding to all district school boards to support continued use of Learning for All, K-12 (2013), a guide to effective assessment and instruction for all students from kindergarten to Grade 12. In 2014-15 Learning for All K-12 regional projects will integrate the following areas of focus:
 - “knowing your student” and “students knowing themselves as learners” and the use of an integrated process of assessment and instruction through collaborative inquiry
 - fostering continuous improvement of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and transition plans as critical tools in driving student achievement and well-being for students with special education needs
- The ministry will fund the Educational Care, Treatment, Custody and Correctional (CTCC) programs for approximately \$96 million in 2014-15. These programs expand opportunities, remove barriers and provide more tailored and personalized learning environments to meet the needs of students who are unable to attend regular school settings because of their need for care, treatment or because of a court order to serve a custody or detention sentence.
- The Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education’s mandate is to advise the minister on any matter related to the establishment and provision of special education programs and services. It has identified Full-Day Kindergarten and Early Intervention and Special Education Exceptionalities, Guidelines and Interventions as focus areas for 2014-2015.
- In the 2013-14 school year, the American Sign Language (ASL) curriculum for Grade 12 (credit bearing courses) was approved by the ministry. As a result, the ASL curriculum has been fully implemented in all secondary grades at the Provincial Schools for the Deaf for the 2014-15 school year.
- The Provincial Schools Branch hosted an American Sign Language immersion camp for its staff in August, 2014.

Section Two: Measures Proposed by Ministry of Education for 2015

Part A – Measures Proposed by the Ministry for Supporting the OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Deliverables and all Accessibility Standards

In 2015, the ministry will focus on three priority goals, each with specific measures, which support the OPS multi-year accessibility plan deliverables and the individual accessibility standards.

This section provides an overview of these three goals and measures.

1. Ensure staff and managers have the knowledge and tools in order to incorporate accessibility considerations and accommodations into all of their work. Specific measures for 2015:
 - Provide training on all standards.
 - Incorporate this requirement into all new staff orientation
 - Explore ways to offer more training regionally
 - Encourage all staff and managers to complete Inclusion Lens training by December 2015 so they can understand how to apply an accessibility lens to all aspects of their work, including policy development and program delivery.
 - Provide staff and managers with easy-to-access information on accessibility requirements and best practice approaches by updating the ministry intranet in 2015 with a focus on practical tools and tips, checklists and links.
 - Continue to provide staff and managers with opportunities to expand their knowledge of accessibility issues and solutions by participating in or attending the annual JOIN conference.

2. Build strong partnerships with staff and clients with disabilities by ensuring their input and feedback are sought on accessibility innovations and improvements. Specific measures for 2015:
 - Outreach to both staff and clients with disabilities will be communicated as a priority by senior management.
 - The OPS Disability Advisory Council will be consulted on how best to implement feedback mechanisms, for clients and staff, such as focus groups and confidential surveys.
 - Results of the feedback will be tracked for continuous improvement purposes.
3. Strengthen accountability for meeting ministry accessibility requirements and compliance assurance. Specific measures for 2015:
 - Develop and implement ministry-wide tracking systems for key requirements and accomplishments such as staff training, performance plan commitments and attendance at the annual JOIN conference.
 - Implement a ministry-wide consolidated accessibility reporting template (ART) pilot project, which includes simplified templates on a secure SharePoint site.

Part B – Measures Proposed by the Ministry for 2015

This section outlines new measures planned to support individual accessibility standards, including applicable OPS multi-year accessibility plan commitments. Ongoing 2014-2015 commitments already outlined in Section One of this plan will not be repeated.

Customer Service

OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Key Outcomes

People with disabilities who are OPS customers receive quality goods and services in a timely manner.

Ministry Proposed Measures for 2015

- In addition to the measures proposed in Section Two Part A, which will be undertaken for all accessibility standards, the ministry will continue to comply with all requirements under the customer service standard.
- The ministry will continue to demonstrate leadership in accessible customer service by exploring new ways of supporting the participation of staff and clients with disabilities in all ministry programs and events.
- All major events hosted by the ministry will be accessible, including:
 - Trustee Orientation Sessions – January 2015
 - Ontario Leadership Congress – May 2015
 - the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario Summer Educators' Institute
 - the 4th annual Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Expertise Professional Learning Day in spring 2015
- The ministry will continue to provide funding for the following:
 - district school boards to support the use of Learning for All, A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2013)
 - the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) and VOICE for Hearing Impaired for additional deliverables to enhance educators' capacity in teaching students who are deaf and hard of hearing
 - the Educational Care, Treatment, Custody and Correctional (CTCC) programs for students who are unable to attend regular school settings

- The ministry will partner with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities on a Transitions Model to support transitions of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder to postsecondary education. Three demonstration projects with coordinating district school boards will receive a total of \$180,000.

Information and Communications

OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Key Outcome

Information and communications are available in accessible formats or with necessary supports to all OPS staff and customers.

Ministry Proposed Measures for 2015

- In addition to the measures proposed in Section Two Part A, which will be undertaken for all accessibility standards, the ministry will ensure communications materials, websites, technology solutions and documents employ accessibility best practices, including:
 - linking the I & IT Accessibility Centre of Excellence training videos, and other guides on how to make documents accessible, to the ministry intranet
 - providing “how to make documents accessible” training and posting tip sheets on accessible documents to the ministry intranet
 - updating accessible format standards and templates, based on best practices, and posting to the intranet to enhance staff access to resources, e.g., business card templates with braille e-mail address and TTY listings, plain-language forms
 - The Community Services I&IT Cluster (CSC) will continue the development and implementation of the Disability Advisory Council (DAC) Registry. Once the registry is implemented and operational, CSC will continue to provide ongoing support and maintenance
- The ministry plans to create accessible versions of the following:
 - PDF versions of the School Climate Surveys and Online Tool (available to schools and school boards)
 - Board Leadership Development Manual
 - Special Education in Ontario: Kindergarten to Grade 12 (working title). This will be a comprehensive and integrated guide on special education regulations and policy.

- The Provincial Schools Branch will develop and launch a langue des Signes Québécoise version of its external website following the launch of the American Sign Language (ASL) version in November, 2014. The website will contain video translations of the content on the public-facing website as a way to provide accessible information to staff, students and parents.
- The Provincial Schools Branch will also create a langue des Signes Quebecoise version of internal employee policies and post the videos on its intranet site.

Employment

OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Key Outcome

OPS employees with disabilities participate fully and meaningfully in their employment.

Ministry Proposed Measures for 2015

In addition to the measures proposed in Section Two Part A, which will be undertaken for all accessibility standards, the ministry will:

- Ensure all new staff and managers are provided with information about their accessibility responsibilities as part of their orientation training and materials.
- Encourage all managers and staff to incorporate at least one accessibility commitment in their 2015-2016 performance plans.
- Improve practices on employment accommodation and return to work by:
 - Reviewing the 2014 OPS Employee Survey results to identify issues and develop best practice approaches based on OPS-wide policies and procedures.
 - Implementing the recommendations from the 2013 disability management review.
 - Providing managers with clear and concise checklists that promote actions articulated in the Disability Accommodation Policy.
- Encourage managers to participate in the mental health workshops “Let’s Talk... You’re not alone” which will better enable them to engage in accommodation discussions with staff.
- Support the OPS Disability Advisory Council activities, including promoting staff participation in and attendance at learning events such as the Enabling Environments in the OPS, held in December 2014.
- Work with the Disability Advisory Council to secure feedback from employees with disabilities at least once a year on priority issues.

- Participate in the 5th Learning Ministries' Diversity Mentoring Partnership Program. The program is designed to provide an inclusive environment for reciprocal learning in which mentors and employee partners engage in honest, open and meaningful dialogue about diversity, accessibility and inclusion. Sixty-five staff are enrolled in the program for 2015. The Community Services I&IT Cluster will develop a Cluster-wide learning plan to raise awareness and knowledge of accessibility for all staff, including increased awareness among managers of employment accommodation directives and policies.

Built Environment

OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Key Outcome

There is greater accessibility into, out of and around OPS facilities and public spaces.

Ministry Proposed Measures for 2015

In addition to the measures proposed in Section Two Part A, which will be undertaken for all accessibility standards, the ministry will ensure staff and managers are aware of the new built environment requirements, including the Design of Public Spaces Standard coming into effect January 1, 2015. Activities to include:

- Key staff such as facilities managers will be provided training on accessibility in the built environment.
 - All branches will be provided an overview of accessibility in the built environment Standard prior to June 1, 2015.
 - All managers will be required to review the training materials developed by the Diversity Office.
 - Information about accessibility in the built environment including any best practices regarding physical structural changes in the workplace, and updates to the OPS Guidelines for Barrier Free Design of OPS Facilities will be posted on the ministry intranet and circulated to key staff.
- Working with the Disability Advisory Council the ministry will solicit feedback from staff with disabilities to identify issues with the built environment, including issues regarding accommodation and any ideas for improvement.
- All training will be tracked and recorded by divisional accessibility leads and stored on the new ministry Accessibility SharePoint Project site.
- While the accessibility at newly-built schools is at the discretion of school boards, the ministry is currently exploring reporting options for spending on making school facilities more accessible and barrier free.

Section Three: Addressing the Identification of Barriers

In support of our commitment to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, the Ministry of Education will continue to review government initiatives, including Acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services for the purposes of identifying and removing barriers.

Recognizing the importance of addressing accessibility barriers in laws that have a high impact on members of the public and persons with disabilities, the government is following a three-pronged strategy that prioritizes the review of high-impact legislation including:

1. Development of a standardized process and tools for identifying and addressing accessibility barriers;
2. By the end of 2014, review of 51 targeted high-impact statutes that meet the following criteria:
 - a. Statutes that affect persons with disabilities directly;
 - b. Statutes that provide for the delivery of widely applicable services or programs;
 - c. Statutes that provide benefits or protections; or
 - d. Statutes that affect a democratic or civic right or duty; and
3. Review procedural rules, policies and guidelines for select high-impact legislation, where necessary.

The ministry reviewed the Day Nurseries Act to improve the safety, quality and access of child care programs for all children, including those with special needs, and their families.

The Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 was enacted in December of 2014 and it provides for a regulatory framework, which will include public consultations to inform the development of new regulations and policies, including policies related to special needs and accessibility.

Links

Public Links

[OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan - Leading the Way Forward](#)

[Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001](#)

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#)

[Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#)

[Accessibility Standards for Customer Service](#)

[Ontario Accessibility Website](#)

[Accessible, Fair and Sustainable Services for People with Developmental Disabilities program](#)

[Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#)

Contact Us

Questions or comments about the ministry's accessibility plan are welcome.

General inquiries: 1-416-325-2929

Toll-free: 1-800-387-5514

TTY: 1-416-325-3408

TTY: 1-800-268-7095

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Ministry website address: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>

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