

# Accessibility Plan

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January 2019

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## Pembina Trails School Division

### Part I: Baseline Report

#### Overview of Programs and Services:

The Pembina Trails School Division serves students in the areas of Fort Garry, Fort Richmond, Waverley West, Whyte Ridge, Lindenwoods, Tuxedo, and Charleswood. Thirty-four schools provide a full spectrum of programming and activities for approximately 14,000 students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Our student body continues to grow and we will be adding two new school buildings, an Early Learning to Grade 8 English program school and a Grade 9-12 (with Early Learning) English program school with technical vocational programming, that will open in September 2021. These new schools are being designed to allow the greatest amount of inclusive and accessible education to the students and others both in learning spaces and public spaces.

The Pembina Trails School Division is committed to ensuring that students are personally and intellectually engaged in learning opportunities that will help them develop, practice and refine the skills that will allow them to be successful in school, and also importantly, enter post-secondary life as productive citizens through the world of work and post-secondary education.

As part of our learning and work environment, Pembina Trails has worked diligently to provide an inclusive work environment for all learners and is striving to ensure that all instructional and public spaces within our facilities are fully accessible to all. Our schools are an integral part of the communities that they serve and are widely used by community groups.

#### Accessibility Achievements:

Pembina Trails has had a long-standing commitment to working towards full accessibility within all of our facilities and services. To that end, we have continued our work towards:

- Ensuring that all buildings have been provided with universally accessible washrooms including two more schools who have undergone renovations since the last report.
- In conjunction with the Public Schools Finance Board, ensuring that all of our schools are provided with accessibility to all levels through the installation of appropriate lifts and elevators including recent or ongoing additions at two more schools since the last report.
- Providing gender-neutral washrooms in all our schools, with initial attention paid to schools with older students. Since the last report we have continued renovations into the schools with younger students with one more renovation being completed since the last report, with one more upcoming this school year cycle.
- Continuing to support an educational philosophy and practice of inclusion in our school programming. A more recent example of this is the accessibility work done at Vincent Massey Collegiate which also included school and community wide education about accessibility with support from the Rick Hansen Foundation.
- Updating our website and access portal platforms to provide full accessibility to our online information sources.
- Providing increased accessibility at entrances at several schools, with more in the upcoming school year.

Pembina Trails has stated a commitment to creating and maintaining a safe and inclusive environment for all through a number of documents and policies. Those that promote accessibility and inclusion are:

- Mission, Vision and Values
- Creating a Safe, Caring and Inclusive Community – A Standard of Behaviour for the Pembina Trails School Division
- Policy AC – Non-Discrimination
- Policy ACG – Resolution of Discrimination Procedure
- Policy GBA – Equal Employment Opportunity
- Policy GBAA – Harassment
- Policy IFC – Inclusion and Appropriate Educational Programming
- Policy IJ – Selection of Instructional Resources
- Policy IJL – Library Resources Selection
- Policy IMG – Animals on Division Premises
- Policy JLCEA – Students with Special Health Needs
- Manitoba Education – Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Students in Manitoba Schools (new)
- Manitoba Education – Resources for Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Students (new)
- Manitoba Education – Case Studies to Explore the Challenges and Possibilities for Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Children and Youth (new)
- Rick Hansen Foundation – “From Where I Sit: Five Traits of a Meaningfully Accessible Building”
- A Path Towards Inclusivity – Report on Accessibility in the Pembina Trails School Division (Monteyne Architect Works: January 2018)
- Manitoba Education - Safe and Caring Schools – A Whole-School Approach to Planning for Safety and Belonging

### **Barriers to Accessibility:**

Upgrading of facilities to ensure universal accessibility to all facilities will continue to be a barrier for some time. While steady progress has been made in this regard in recent years, the cost of ensuring that all facilities are fully accessible is significant. The required expenditures will need to be spread out over a number of years to realize full accessibility in all spaces. Current capital funding protocols continue to dictate that larger capital renewal projects, including those that enhance accessibility, are dependent on funding from the provincial government and are therefore out of scope for the school division.

Since the last report the Division, in conjunction with the Public Schools Finance Board, has been able to upgrade some facilities and ensure in new builds that accessibility is a key component of the plans. Examples of these upgrades include the Dalhousie elevator addition, the Vincent Massey Collegiate accessibility renovations, life skills programming renovations at Arthur A. Leach School and Fort Richmond Collegiate. Other, less major projects, include systematic and systemic changes to doors and their door handles when years of use indicate the need for new ones.

Other barriers to progress continue to be time, available human resources and the rate at which Pembina Trails will be able to universally enculture attitudes that reflect full inclusivity and accessibility.

## Part 2: Accessibility Plan

### A. Statement of Commitment

Pembina Trails School Division is committed to moving forward to equal access and participation for all. We are committed to continuing our work to create an environment where all individuals, regardless of their abilities can thrive with dignity and independence. We have had a long-standing philosophy of inclusion and are committed to meeting the needs of those who face accessibility barriers. We will continue this work by identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility throughout our division.

### B. Policies

The Pembina Trails School Division will review all programs, services and policies, and will scrutinize all new initiatives with a view to providing accessibility for all.

### C. Actions

<b>Action 1 – Establish an Accessibility Working Group</b>	
<b>Initiative and Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appointment of an Accessibility Coordinator</li><li>• Establishment of an accessibility working group including facilities and operations, IT, student services, clinicians, consultants, workplace safety and health</li><li>• Establish regular meetings to review initiatives that support accessibility and to generate recommendations for action (twice yearly)</li></ul>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working group will be representative of divisional stakeholders</li><li>• Working group establishes plans for progress along with timelines for completion</li><li>• Working group will review divisional policies and practices and forward recommendations for improvement</li><li>• Working group will review new initiatives and make any recommendations necessary to ensure accessibility</li></ul>
<b>Action 2 – Accessibility of Information</b>	
<b>Initiative and Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accessibility Working Group to establish a process for responding to requests for accessible supports and services</li><li>• Process to be communicated to all staff</li><li>• Continue to update our website and portal platforms to provide accessibility options to make web content more usable for our communities</li><li>• Ensure that multiple formats are available to submit information to the Division</li></ul>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An established and timely process for processing requests for accessible supports</li><li>• Division-hosted electronic media that are accessible to our 'customers'</li><li>• An expanded range of formats for submitting information to the Division that provide a full range of accessibility</li></ul>

<b>Action 3 – Accessibility Audit of Divisional Buildings</b>	
<p><b>Initiative and Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement of a consultant to complete an accessibility audit of all Pembina Trails facilities (completed by Monteyne in January 2018)</li> <li>• Development of a strategic plan with timelines to address all remaining physical accessibility barriers within the Division (multi-year plan developed as part of our five-year capital plan cycle)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Expected Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific deficiencies with respect to physical barriers in all facilities will be identified</li> <li>• Specific plans for resolving existing accessibility barriers will be created and costed</li> <li>• Timelines for resolving issues will be established</li> <li>• Financial resources for resolving issues will be secured with a strategic plan</li> <li>• Existing accessibility barriers in all facilities will be resolved</li> <li>• Future facilities projects will ensure full accessibility in design and build</li> </ul>
<b>Action 4 – Staff Awareness and Training</b>	
<p><b>Initiative and Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Trustees to affirm Pembina Trails commitment to accessibility in divisional operations</li> <li>• Administration to provide resources for training of staff in accessibility issues where required</li> <li>• Administration to acknowledge accessibility achievements as appropriate through divisional information streams</li> </ul>	<p><b>Expected Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility will be considered in all future planning</li> <li>• Accessibility planning will be communicated to all staff</li> <li>• All staff members are aware of divisional accessibility initiatives and their role in implementation</li> <li>• Concerns with regard to accessibility will be forwarded to the Assistant Superintendent – Divisional Support Services</li> </ul>
<b>Action 5 – Monitoring Progress</b>	
<p><b>Initiative and Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility Coordinator, with the working group, to track progress, challenges and requests for accommodations</li> <li>• Accessibility Coordinator will report annually to Senior Administration</li> <li>• Financial planning for resolving accessibility issues will be integrated into the annual budget process</li> </ul>	<p><b>Expected Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Administration is kept apprised of requirements and progress with respect to the Accessibility for Manitobans Act</li> <li>• Accessibility Plan will be reviewed annually</li> <li>• Annual report on progress provided</li> </ul>

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