



Delta School District
Inspired Learning

Accessibility Plan
2023 -2026

Acknowledgement



Our schools and district offices are located on the traditional territories of the Tsawwassen First Nation (TFN) and Musqueam Indian Band. The district offers its respect to the Knowledge Keepers and all First Peoples who have been on these lands since time immemorial. We would like to offer our respect to all the Elders who have gone before us and to all Canadians who are on the journey of Reconciliation.

Table of Contents

Territorial Acknowledgement 1

Introduction 3

About our School District 4

Definitions 5

Legislative Framework 6

Delta School District Guiding Framework 7

Barrier Identification & Methodologies 8

Feedback Mechanisms 8

Reporting 8

Introduction

Message from Board Chair Joe Muego and Superintendent Doug Sheppard



Recently, British Columbia introduced the *Accessible British Columbia Act*; comprehensive accessibility legislation that provides a framework to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility within public organizations such as the Delta School District (DSD).

The *Accessible British Columbia Act's* key themes of breaking down barriers, advancing human rights, and promoting fairness and equity align well with the district's vision of being *an innovative, inclusive community where all learners belong, and everyone soars*. We are committed to providing learning and working environments that inspire and nurture all students and staff and recognize the importance of ensuring *accessibility for all* through our communications, programs, services, schools, and district sites.

A key element to supporting our community is the development of the district's Three-Year Accessibility Plan. The plan considers the principles of inclusion, adaptability, collaboration, diversity, self-determination, and universal design while providing specific goals and actions to support the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to accessibility.

We recognize the importance of accessibility not only for those with disabilities, but also for the benefit of the entire community. As we focus on creating more accessibility by following the actions in this Plan and learning from feedback we receive from the school community and the district's Accessibility Advisory Committee, we are committed to continuous improvement to help foster an environment that enables students, staff and the larger school community to thrive.

Thank you for your continued support, and we welcome your feedback.

Joe Muego
Board Chair

Doug Sheppard
Superintendent of Schools

About the Delta School District



The district's mission is to inspire and nurture thriving, future-ready learners at each of its 31 schools (24 elementary Schools and 7 secondary schools) which are spread across the communities of Ladner, North Delta, Tsawwassen and TFN. Currently, the district has more than 16,000 students, with approximately 600 students identifying as having Indigenous ancestry and more than 1,400 students with disabilities or diverse abilities that require varying levels of support. The district employs more than 2,600 staff and had an amended annual operating budget of just over \$210 million for the 2023/2024 school year.

We are proud to provide safe, culturally diverse, and nurturing learning environments from kindergarten through Grade 12 to meet unique learning needs. The district offers a wide variety of quality programs including International Baccalaureate, French Immersion programs, Distributed Learning programs (Home Quest and Delta Access), traditional schools, a world-class International Student Program, and a wide range of continuing education programs (Delta Community College) to engage students in stimulating and relevant educational experiences. In addition, our dedication to social responsibility teaches our students to respect themselves, their environment and each other, and encourages them to find ways to give back to their local communities.

Definitions

Accessibility: The state of having programs, services and environments that allow all individuals to participate fully in society without encountering barriers.

Accessibility Advisory Committee: An official group formed by the school district in collaboration with people with disabilities to create an accessibility plan and feedback mechanism.

Accessibility Plan: A plan developed by an Accessibility Advisory Committee that identifies challenges and solutions for addressing accessibility barriers.

Barrier: Anything that hinders a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability. This can include any of the following types of barriers:

- **Physical/Environmental/Architectural Barrier:** A barrier resulting from building design, or exterior spaces which can include items such as smells, sounds, lighting, classroom configuration, shape of rooms, width and size of doorways etc.
- **Attitudinal Barrier:** A barrier that arises from the attitudes of staff, students and the school community, including discriminatory behaviours and a lack of disability awareness.
- **Communication Barrier:** A barrier that arises from difficulties receiving information in person, by telephone or online, interacting with teachers, peers, receptionists, or other staff, and/or when receiving training.
- **Information Barrier:** A barrier that arises from inadequate or incomprehensible signage, difficulties reading brochures, forms, manuals, websites, fax transmissions, equipment labels, computer screens etc.
- **Policy or Practice Barrier:** A barrier resulting from rules, regulations and protocols that prevent a person from performing their job satisfactorily or participating in society, or that prevent a student from accessing the curriculum and fully participating in the school community.
- **Technological Barrier:** Barriers resulting from computers, photocopiers, fax machines, telephones, and switches, including the lack of assistive technologies.

Disability: The state of being unable to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction between an impairment and a barrier.

Impairment: A physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, cognitive limitation, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic.

Feedback Mechanism: A process for receiving public comments on the district's Accessibility Plan and on the barriers individuals face both in interacting with and working within the district.

Legislative Framework

The following accessibility legislation has been considered in the development of the district's Accessibility Plan including:

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

Canada has signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which guarantees human rights for individuals with disabilities around the world. The principles outlined in UNCRPD are:

- Respect for inherent dignity; individual autonomy, including the freedom to make one's own choices; and independence of persons
- Non-discrimination
- Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
- Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
- Equality of opportunity
- Accessibility

Accessible Canada Act

The *Accessible Canada Act* came into force in 2019 and applies to a wide range of federally regulated entities. The *Act* has the overarching goal of realizing a barrier-free Canada by 2040 and focuses on seven priority areas:

- Employment
- The built environment
- Information and communication technologies
- Communication other than information and communication technologies
- The design and delivery of programs and services
- The procurement of goods, services, and facilities
- Transportation

Accessible British Columbia Act

The *Accessible British Columbia Act* requires the district to have an Accessibility Advisory Committee, an Accessibility Plan that outlines how the school district will identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people in the district or interacting with it, and a tool to receive public feedback on accessibility.

The Accessibility Plan must be reviewed and updated at least once every three years.

In developing or updating the Plan, a school district must consult with its Accessibility Advisory Committee and consider the following principles:

- Adaptability
- Collaboration
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Self-determination
- Universal design

Delta School District Guiding Framework

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Under the *Accessible British Columbia Act*, a committee must be established to assist the district in identifying barriers that individuals may encounter when interacting with the district and advising how to prevent such barriers.

The selection of the Accessibility Advisory Committee must, to the extent possible, align with the following goals:

- At least half the members are persons with disabilities (PWD), or individuals who support or are from organizations that support PWDs;
- At least one member is an Indigenous person; and
- Members reflect the diversity of persons in B.C.

In addition to the above representatives, it is expected that all other members and organizations associated with the school district will be represented within the Accessibility Advisory Committee not limited to but including the following:

- Delta Student Representative or Delta Youth Advisory Committee (DYAC)
- Delta Parents Advisory Committee (DPAC)
- Indigenous Education Department
- Delta Teacher Association (DTA)
- CUPE 1091
- Delta Principals & Vice Principals Association (DPVPA)

The purpose of the Accessibility Advisory Committee is to work collaboratively to assess and improve community accessibility, focusing on the experiences of individuals with disabilities while encompassing the whole community. The Accessibility Advisory Committee will advise district administrators and the Delta School Board on strategies to reduce social, physical, sensory and other barriers that prevent people from fully participating in all aspects of school community life.

Accessibility Working Group

The district has formed an *Accessibility Working Group*. Members include:

- Patrick Klassen, Director of Learning Services, Inclusive Learning
- Nicole Braid, District Principal, Employee Services

- Cathryn Tucker, Director of Communications
- Curtis Bromley, Director of Information Technology Services
- Florencio De Dios, Director of Facilities and Planning
- Claire Clancy, District Principal, Learning Services, Inclusive Learning
- Sukhi Dherari, Manager, Procurement Services

Currently, the Working Group is beginning the process of recruiting members for the Accessibility Advisory Committee and developing terms of reference for the Committee. Once the Accessibility Advisory Committee has been established, the Working Group will act on feedback received from both the Committee and via the broader school community to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

In addition, the *Working Group* is responsible for developing, updating and coordinating the implementation strategy for the Accessibility Plan's priorities and actions on an ongoing basis in collaboration with the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Barrier Identification Methodologies

Work to identify barriers has started and will continue in consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee:

- Physical Accessibility Audit - An assessment for our schools' physical accessibility was developed by the Inclusive Learning department and conducted in each of our schools between November 2022 and February 2023.
- Audit of policies and practices - A review of current policies and practices that promote accessibility and inclusion will be conducted.
- Survey for Parents/Guardians - An accessibility and inclusion survey will be developed and distributed to parents/guardians.
- Survey for Students - An accessibility and inclusion survey will be developed and distributed to students.
- District Accessibility Feedback Tool – An online tool has been developed and will be posted to the district website to enable the wider community to provide feedback.

Feedback Mechanism

The district has developed online feedback tools (<https://www.deltasd.bc.ca/district/accessibility/>) that include a series of questions about accessibility experiences that all students, staff and individuals interacting with the school district can complete. The tool is posted to the main page of the district website and an information announcement about the tool has been provided to students, staff and parents/guardians. Feedback can be anonymous, or people can add their name and contact information if they wish to be contacted. There is also an option for people to upload a video, voice recording or photo(s).

Reporting

The Delta School District Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every three years in accordance with the *Accessible British Columbia Act*. Updates on the Accessibility Plan will be provided to the public on the district's website and through all mediums as approved by the Accessibility Advisory Committee to ensure that no information barriers exist to access such information.