



# HANOVER SCHOOL DIVISION ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

## COMMUNITY REPORT - 2023 to 2024

The Hanover School Division is committed to creating and maintaining a positive and inclusive environment in which students, staff and parents/caregivers are aware of and respect the human rights, diversity and dignity of others.

### ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

Hanover School Division (HSD) is dedicated to removing barriers that impede participation in the learning environment; and improving accessibility to promote inclusive school communities for all persons. HSD is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for all persons with disabilities in our school communities. We believe in inclusion and the maintenance of dignity and independence for all.

The HSD Accessibility Plan will implement procedures to assist in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act. Hanover School Division is committed to continuous improved accessibility to our facilities, activities, and opportunities for all. The outcomes of this plan are to (1) identify, and (2) remove barriers to full participation for all members of the inclusive school community.

This plan applies for 2023 and concludes December 2024. Regular review of the plan will take place over this period of time.



**Date: March 6, 2023**

**Superintendent: Mrs. Shelley Amos, Superintendent/CEO of the Hanover School Division**

**Accessibility Coordinator: Mr. Rod Kehler, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services**

**Goal of Accessibility Plan: To provide an analysis of the types of barriers Manitobans may have accessing the programs or facilities provided by the Hanover School Division and developing an action plan to address the challenges.**

**Overview of Program and Services:** General description of our organization.

Hanover School Division is a rural public school division with 19 schools serving approximately 8500 students and 1200 employees. As a public sector organization, our buildings and facilities are open to parents, guardians, and community members for student, teacher, and community-initiated activities and events.

In addition to being a large, growing learning community for our students and employees, HSD facilities:

- provide community space for recreational activities for students, families, and community members;
- provide equipment, materials, supplies, and venues for community events;
- encourage and promote community participation and engagement.

The senior management team, superintendents and school trustees, show strong leadership and place a strong emphasis on meeting the needs of all students; "Our Kid". Because relationships matter in the Hanover School Division, senior management is concerned about the safety and well-being of all persons (students, families, and employees) and the important work of schools. The HSD senior management leadership team references the division's vision, priorities and deeper learning plan in all aspects of educational, operational, and fiscal decision making. As a public sector organization, HSD currently adheres to the Education Administration Act (EAA), Public School Act (PSA), Appropriate Educational Programming (SSP) Regulations, and related amendments to legislation. Educational staff strive to promote inclusive school communities by differentiating instruction, adapting teaching methodology and curricula, and accommodating the needs of persons with disabilities in the classroom and larger school community.

Additional members of the senior management leadership team committed to accessibility for inclusive learning community are:

- The superintendents and trustees review and revise existing policies and procedures as new legislation is enacted.
- The Assistant Superintendent of Students Services is responsive to the needs of students by providing accessibility to buildings, opportunities, and curriculum as directed by legislation and Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning (MEECL).
- The Director of Buildings and Maintenance is diligent in addressing accessibility in all buildings and facilities. Maintenance staff respond promptly to broken or failing equipment, when notified. Custodial staff are well supervised and attend promptly to barriers, such as clear pathways on all divisional properties. Procedures are in place for reporting faulty or broken equipment, and maintenance repairs and improvements.
- The Communications Manager manages divisional and school websites, public notices, news releases and divisional publications for student, community, and employee access. The Communications Manager collaborates with the Human Resources and Information Technology departments.
- The Information and Communications Technologies Manager is attentive to new technologies that impact the learning needs of students; and the professional development/training needs of

employees; optimizing digital technologies to improve accessibility and independence. Procedures are in place for requesting technology improvements and reporting service disruptions.

- Human Resources Manager reviews hiring policies and practices to ensure potential employees have access to employment opportunities and are representative of a diverse population.

**Accessibility Achievements:** Summarize the steps HSD has taken to achieve accessibility.

1. Senior managers and administrators have participated in professional development sessions with the Human Rights Commission of Manitoba on the protected characteristics under the Code and duty to reasonably accommodate.
2. The development and implementation of policy which is committed to the equity and respect of human diversity and maintaining positive and inclusive learning environments for all students and staff. Policy Number AF: Respect for Human Diversity.
3. Established meetings to discuss fiscal implications (budget), capital expenditures and implementation timelines for improvements, renovations or procedural revisions.
4. The continued practice of posting community reports and feedback forms on HSD website.
5. The continued use of online training for staff on the importance of service and accessibility (Accessible Employment online training)
6. Established dates for regular review of Accessibility Plan and Community Reporting documentation.
7. HSD has purchased software licensing to improve student access to text (Co-Writer/Snap & Read)
8. Twenty-two (22) playground core communication boards were installed on playgrounds to assist students.
9. HSD has purchased and is utilizing accessible and portable staging for school community events.
10. All door knob handles have been replaced with lever door handles at the Steinbach Regional Secondary School to allow easier accessibility for students and staff.
11. HSD implementing all staff are required to take part in **Respect in Schools** as a condition of employment.

**Accessibility Committee:**

The Accessibility Committee is composed of the Accessibility Coordinator (Assistant Superintendent of Student Services), Secretary-Treasurer, Director of Transportation, Director of Communications, and the Director of Buildings and Maintenance. May include consultations with principals, students, parents, community members, and occupational therapists.

<b>Education and Accessibility Awareness</b>		
<b>Actions needed</b>	<b>Expected outcomes, including completion date.</b>	<b>Departments responsible</b>
Continued professional development and awareness training	1. By December 2024, online training for all new staff on the importance of service and accessibility (Accessible Employment online training).	Superintendent/CEO
<b>Communications and Publications</b>		
Welcome the Use of Assistive Technology  Accessible publications  Screen reader compatible website	1. By September 2024, HSD will complete its assessment of implementing assistive technology on it's web-based platforms for people who are blind or vision impaired.	Accessibility Coord.  Communications Manager  Human Resources ICT department.
	2. By May 2024, All HSD websites will meet or exceed globally followed World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA	Communications Manager
	3. By September 2023 and ongoing, HSD will inform the public and employees that they can request information through communication support or accessible format.	
	4. By September 2023, A link and corresponding accessibility feedback form will be placed on all HSD web-based platforms. The form will provide an opportunity to receive feedback about accessible information and communication.	
<b>Facilities and Buildings</b>		
Identify physical barriers and remove; or provide reasonable accommodation	1. By December 2024, three (3) additional sound fields will be purchased and installed in classrooms to support students who are deaf or Hard of Hearing.	OT & SLP /Student Services
	2. By December 2024, HSD will install strobe lights to assist with the identification of an "emergency" for those individuals who may benefit from this mode of alert.	Buildings & Facilities
	3. By December 2024, a path will be constructed at Stonybrook Middle School which will allow students with mobility issues to access the school track and play structure.	Sec.-Treasurer  Accessibility Coord.