

Accessibility Report

June 2025



Part 1. Baseline Report

River East Transcona School Division (RETSD) is the second largest school division in Manitoba. The division includes 42 schools with a student enrollment nearing 19,000 and staff count at over 3500. RETSD operates on the principle of inclusion and is grounded in the belief that all students belong in their catchment schools. RETSD exists to educate students to be inspired, skilled, responsible citizens.

RETSD's longstanding commitment to inclusion directly aligns with the *Accessibility of Manitobans Act* (AMA) as both seek to identify, eliminate and prevent barriers that limit participation for students, staff and members of the public with additional needs or disabilities.

In December 2013, the AMA became law and as such, mandates the development and implementation of five accessibility standards. RETSD has responded to these standards through strategic planning and ongoing work.

In December 2016, the division's accessibility committee developed its first accessibility plan. The purpose of the plan is to demonstrate the division's commitment to equitable access and participation for people with disabilities in accordance with AMA legislation. The plan highlights the division's accessibility achievements, any barriers to accessibility and the division's work plan aligned to AMA timelines. The committee's work is ongoing and includes regular updates and consultations to ensure continued progress. Committee members include:

- Assistant Superintendent of Student Services (chair)
- Secretary Treasurer
- Assistant Superintendent of Educational Programming
- Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources
- Director of Human Resources
- Director of Information Technology
- Director of Transportation
- Manager of Communications and Research

Through a review of the five AMA standards, the accessibility committee identified the following potential barriers that students, staff and the public might face:

Barriers to Accessibility

Accessible Customer Service Standard

- Limited staff training disability-specific interventions/support
- Inconsistent or delayed responses to accommodation requests
- Unavailability of alternate communication methods
- Inflexible practices for in-person services

Accessibility Standard for Employment

- Inaccessible formats for Job postings and applications
- Unaccommodating interview and hiring process
- Inaccessible physical environments for staff

- Limited processes for workplace accommodations

Accessible Information and Communication Standard

- Inconsistent availability of learning materials in alternative formats
- Non-compliance of school websites and online platforms with WCAG 2.1 Level AA
- Absence of closed captions, ASL interpretation or transcripts of videos
- Unclear protocols to request accessible formats
- Unclear or low-contrast signage that lacks tactile features

Accessible Transportation Standard

- Limited number of accessible school buses
- Lack of accessible communication about transportation eligibility or changes
- Difficulty navigating drop-off zones with mobility devices
- Inconsistent access to designated accessible parking

Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces

- Inaccessible building entrances, hallways, doorways, playgrounds, sidewalks, and outdoor learning spaces
- Inadequate signage in buildings
- Insufficient accessible seating, washrooms or public spaces
- Inadequate snow removal hindering mobility

Accessibility Achievements

RETSD has made significant progress in addressing and reducing accessibility barriers identified through its ongoing planning and consultation.

Customer Service Standard

RETSD has made staff training on equity, inclusion, and responsive service delivery a core component of its accessibility work. This training is embedded into the onboarding process and is reinforced throughout staff development initiatives. Online training videos are available and ensure all staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to support students and families with diverse needs.

Employment Standard

RETSD has taken concrete steps to build inclusive hiring practices. Applicants are offered accommodation during the hiring process, and interviews are modified where necessary to ensure accessibility. Staff can request workplace accommodation, including ergonomic supports and adjustments that promote wellbeing. The division also provides meaningful work placements for students that are tailored to meet a wide range of learning needs and abilities.

Information and Communication Standard

Classroom materials are provided in a variety of formats to support students with visual, auditory, or cognitive needs and assistive technologies are integrated into classroom practice to enhance learning and communication. RETSD's divisional and school websites have been updated to meet accessibility compliance standards under the AMA and translation and interpretation services are offered to families to ensure equitable access to information.

Transportation Standard

RETSD provides accessible school buses and offers door-to-door service for students who require it and transportation staff receive training to ensure they are prepared to work with students with additional needs. Bus routes are designed with consideration for accessibility, including stop locations and time spent on the bus. Each school site includes at least one designated accessible parking space to facilitate safer and easier access for families and visitors.

Design of Public Spaces

All schools in the division are accessible and any renovations or upgrades are completed using universal design principles to ensure barrier-free access to classrooms, hallways, entrances, and essential spaces. RETSD's maintenance team plays a key role in ensuring schools remain accessible throughout the winter by ensuring timely and effective snow and ice removal.

Consultation with Community

AMA legislation requires school divisions to consult with those most affected by accessibility plans. In October 2024, RETSD surveyed 275 caregivers of students with additional needs. The goal was to gather feedback about their child's experience with accessibility supports in RETSD schools. Their feedback will inform future accessibility planning and help shape improvements to supports, facilities and communication.

Part 2. Accessibility Plan

The division's accessibility plan was first created in 2016 and is reviewed and updated annually. The plan aligns with the AMA and supports the division's mission to provide inclusive, barrier-free learning and working environments.

Statement of Commitment

River East Transcona School Division is committed to advancing equal access and participation for people with disabilities. The division is dedicated to treating all people with dignity and respect and to upholding independence and equity in all actions. This goal will be achieved by identifying, removing and preventing accessibility barriers across all operations.

Policies

RETSD conducts regular policy reviews to ensure compliance with AMA standards. All new policies, programs and services are developed with accessibility and inclusion in mind. The division is committed to ongoing compliance across all AMA standards.

Actions

RETSD has met the requirements for the customer service standard, the employment standard and the information and communication standard. The actions listed below are specific to the two remaining standards.

Action 1 – Ensure compliance with the accessible transportation standard

Initiatives/Actions	Expected Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing transportation policy • Revise existing personal transportation plan (PTP) • Plan to increase the number of accessible buses • Develop a communication process for changes in bus scheduling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy meets AMA standards • PTP is electronic and accessible • All eligible students receive transportation • Timely, accessible updates are provided

Action 2 – Ensure compliance with the accessible design of public spaces

Initiatives/Actions	Expected Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing accessibility policy • Audit buildings for accessibility • Audit building signage • Audit play structures and outdoor learning spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated policy reflects design requirements • Annual review cycle established • Clear and accessible signage throughout • Inclusive outdoor spaces for all

Contact Person:

Jón Olafson, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
 (204) 667 7130
joafson@retsd.mb.ca

REFERENCES and ALIGNMNET

All the committee work is aligned with:

- RETSD mission, vision, and belief statements
- RETSD Educational priorities
- RETSD Policies: GBA, GBAA, GBAA-R, GBA-E, GBA-R, ECABB

Guiding Documents:

- The Accessibility for Manitobans Act <https://web2.gov.mb.ca/bills/40-2/b026e.php>
- Manitoba Accessibility Office <https://accessibilitymb.ca/accessibility/the-accessibility-for-manitobans-act.html>