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## **Beautiful Plains School Division Accessibility Plan 2024/25**

### **-Update May 2024**

#### **Accessibility Achievements**

Beautiful Plains School Division is committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment. The policies that currently promote accessibility include: mission statement, school division goals and objectives, respect for human diversity and equity, belief statements, transportation, workplace health and safety and school programs/instruction-student services. We communicate regularly with families with special needs in our communities and consult for ongoing ways to improve accessibility. The division engages in consultation with individuals disabled by barriers that support them when planning the updates to the accessibility plan. This is accomplished by holding meetings with families that experience accessibility barriers. We completed several ongoing projects to improve accessibility including the addition of an elevator in our largest high school which was requested for a number of years and grooming room renovations in all of our large schools. The design of our new school completed in 2020 was in compliance with MB building code and regulations for accessibility. We purchased wheelchair accessible buses in previous years. Our accessibility committee added accessible parking spots with improved signage, and we increased communication about reasonable accommodations for employees through a new resource provided through MB Accessibility Office. We also added an accessible door to a high school back entry and universal bathrooms in both high schools. Assistive technology for students and staff are ongoing purchases that are used to advance student learning and assist individual needs of students or staff.

In addition to these projects, This past year, all of our staff received accessibility training. Our board of trustees also passed a new BPSD Accessibility Policy in addition to current policies that ensure accessibility such as Workplace Health and Safety, Service Animals, and our Student Services policies. We also have ongoing processes and procedures for maintaining existing accessibility features including, elevators and power doors so that they are used as intended. We have provided on-going support to individual requests of accommodations. We also provide access to technology for students and staff to support virtual learning within classrooms and remote learning at home, including mifis and assistive technology specific to each individual need.

#### **Barriers to Accessibility**

Barriers to accessibility for Beautiful Plains School Division are mainly the result of the cost and time needed for improvements. There are upgrades to our buildings, website, and other spaces that continue to require improvement. Our largest challenge continues to be upgrades aging facilities and buildings to meet accessibility standards where costs are high and completion/design process are lengthy. Barriers such as information and communication, policies which require new software or hardware, systemic improvement and attitudes are examples of possible barriers for long term improvement. These require not only time and financial resources but also human capital.

## Statement of Commitment

Beautiful Plains School Division is committed to ensuring educational opportunities, access, and outcomes for all people. We are committed meeting the needs of all people who face accessibility barriers. We will do this by identifying, removing and preventing barriers and by adhering to the requirements of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act* (AMA).

## Policies

Beautiful Plains School Division reviews all programs, services and new initiatives to ensure accessibility. We review existing policies attached to these programs and services for possible barriers. Beautiful Plains School Division is committed to providing equitable education to all students and this is reflected in our decision making principles which include

- Ensuring appropriate learning opportunities for all students and employees
- Assessing programs and services effectiveness to help students and staff succeed
- Using data to inform resource allocation
- Advocating for funding, resources and equity rights to support students in at-risk situations and staff who have barriers that impact their work

## Actions

<b>Action 1- Accessibility Working Group</b>	
<b>Initiatives/Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Management appointed an accessibility coordinator</li><li>• Management established an accessibility working group</li><li>• Meet to review initiatives working toward accessibility</li></ul>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A working group which consists of representation of the division will meet to review and update plan and policies</li><li>• Meeting minutes are available to review through accessibility coordinator</li><li>• Working group has work plans, multi-year timelines</li><li>• Members participate in developing, implementing, updating the accessibility plan on an annual basis</li><li>• Ensure that any provisions related to accessible customer service, employment, information and communication supports are consulted on as a committee</li><li>• Work with supervisors to let employees know that policies and practices are updated and where to locate information with communication supports available upon request</li></ul>

<b>Action 2- Engage in a Facility Accessibility Planning Process (Build Environment and Transportation)</b>	
<b>Initiatives/Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Our Maintenance Team completes a signage audit for accessibility</li><li>• Continue progress for universally accessible washrooms upgrades throughout BPSD buildings</li></ul>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improved access to all division facilities</li><li>• Reviewing barriers in order to determine priority needs for next steps in physical changes needed to buildings</li><li>• Review and revise action plan on a yearly basis</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hygiene room renovations continue on capital planning and a number of schools are completed</li> <li>• Continue to install accessible hardware to meet accessibility standards (ex. Door levers)</li> <li>• Audit of automatic door openers and installations to address facility accessibility needs are completed. Installations are in progress.</li> <li>• Signage on non working accessible features is visible and includes who to contact if something is in repair</li> <li>• Transportation fleets including planning for accessibility needs for all students; these needs include lifts and reviewing code/standards to remain current</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure any new space design that are interior or exterior provides access to services with barrier free arrangements; this includes those areas outside of the jurisdiction of the Manitoba building code such as sidewalks, pathways, and parks.</li> </ul>
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**Action 3- Offer and Provide Information in an Accessible Format on Request**

<b><i>Initiatives/Actions</i></b>	<b><i>Expected Outcomes</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our student services team work with families to address student specific needs for assistive technology as well as universal supports for all learners; these include features for chat and text to speech</li> <li>• Staff are participating in sign language professional development and identifying accessibility needs for additional planning and progress</li> <li>• Our Technology team is doing an audit of accessibility requirements and develop a compliance strategy to update our website and provide a higher level of accessibility online that ensures we meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA guidelines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform staff of alternate formats as they become available</li> <li>• Provide support in areas that include web applications, print media, signage, public communication</li> <li>• Work towards advertising the availability of alternate formats</li> <li>• Ensure communication by using accessible formats, easy to read fonts, plain language, and an active offer button “how can I help” to request alternative formats that offer support for mobility, vision, hearing, and understanding</li> <li>• Purchasing accessible learning resources</li> <li>• Continue to provide interventions that require individualized programming for students</li> <li>• Investigate text to voice and text enlarger capabilities for Weebly</li> <li>• By May 1, 2024, we develop a compliance strategy for the Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation (AICSR) to remove and prevent barriers that exist digitally, in print or through interaction with technology or people. This includes work toward ensuring that web content that is required to access their goods and services, and all newly published web content, meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA guidelines</li> </ul>

**Action 4- Implement A Staff Awareness and Training Program (Customer Service and Employment)**

<i><b>Initiatives/Actions</b></i>	<i><b>Expected Outcomes</b></i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beautiful Plains School Division will provide and track accessibility training for all staff</li> <li>• Continue to implement the customer service and employment standards as identified in the Accessibility of Manitobans Act (AMA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to offer accessibility training/awareness to all BPSD employees as per the Customer Service Standard Regulation 171/2015 and Accessibility Employment Standard Regulation 70/2019; Training is offered one AMA website and required as part of employment</li> <li>• Ensure our staff are following policy H. Workplace Health and Safety regulations</li> </ul>

**Action 5- Monitor Progress**

<i><b>Initiatives/Actions</b></i>	<i><b>Expected Outcomes</b></i>
<p>Accessibility coordinator will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document progress on the accessibility plan and establish a reporting format</li> <li>• Develop and review existing procedures and policies that will increase accessibility</li> <li>• Work with the accessibility committee to communicate the processes to staff and the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior administration will monitor progress supporting the effective implementation of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act</li> <li>• We continue to consult with people with disabilities for determining barriers and how to overcome them</li> <li>• We continue to consult Manitoba Accessibility Office to improve our plan and remove barriers in accordance with the AMA</li> <li>• Annual reporting on Accessibility Plan implementation</li> <li>• Accessibility Plan posted on website</li> </ul>

Accessibility Committee

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|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Garth Hunter      | Board of Trustees                    |
| Jason Young       | Superintendent                       |
| Krista Reynolds   | Assistant Superintendent             |
| Shannon Bayes     | Secretary Treasurer                  |
| Julie Van Kommer  | Student Services Coordinator         |
| Tristan Dela Cruz | Technology Coordinator               |
| Tyler Stewart     | Maintenance Supervisor               |
| Warren Rainka     | Transportation Supervisor            |
| Gary Salmon       | Beautiful Plains Teacher Association |

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