



SWAN VALLEY SCHOOL DIVISION

Accessibility Plan – 2019 to 2021

Part 1. Overview, Achievements, and Barriers

Overview of Programs and Services

Swan Valley School Division (SVSD) is a rural school division located near the MB/SK border and serves the communities of Benito, Bowsman, Minitonas, and Swan River. Student enrollment is approximately 1,441 and we offer a vast range of programs and activities. SVSD operates 12 buildings in total that form our learning and working environments. All of our schools and grounds also see welcomed and frequent use from our local communities for various sports, rentals, events, services, and special functions.

SVSD is committed to providing a broad range of educational programs and opportunities, including early learning initiatives and specified secondary and vocational training for our students. SVSD is also committed to creating and maintaining a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for our staff as well as our students. We want everyone who is a part of SVSD to belong and feel valued and accepted in our learning and working community.

Accessibility Achievements

Seeking to be proactive as well as considerate, SVSD has traditionally resolved to work cooperatively with those who have accessibility needs. We have utilized and benefitted from the help of various groups including DisAbility Services, CNIB and MB School of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, SMD (Society of Manitobans with Disabilities) and The Public School Finance Branch, working together to improve on and obtain reasonable levels of accessibility to our schools, grounds, facilities and events. Special requests are typically brought forward via our Student Services Dept. and meeting the individual needs of students is included in IEPs (Individual Education Plans).

Achievements include:

- Elevator/lift installation in 3 of 5 multi-story buildings
- Accessible ramps to main entrances of 4 out of 6 buildings requiring one
- Automatic door openers on main entrance doors on 6 of 14 buildings (secondary entrances as well on 2 buildings)
- Visual announcements at SVRSS high school
- Some door handles changes to lever style
- Special needs/grooming rooms in 6 of 9 schools
- Majority of doors and corridors meet ADA width requirements
- SVSD website has high contrast option
- Installed temporary ramp for grade 12 graduation ceremony so that entire class could approach the stage in the same fashion
- Installed FM classroom microphones in various classrooms
- Specialized furniture is available and has been provided for students as needed
- One play structure that has barrier free elements included in its design

Barriers to Accessibility

SVSD recognizes and acknowledges that continued review, communication, training, consultation, and awareness of barriers is important in the goal of achieving increased accessibility. Barriers are also not solely limited to how they affect persons with disabilities or those close to them. They also cause significant strain and force significant re-evaluation on how our organization plans, budgets, operates, and interacts. One of the most significant barriers will be the cost to retrofit existing facilities and grounds, as well as the time to administer the plan and carry out any changes that are needed. A rough estimate of direct and associated costs would easily be in the area of \$3,000,000.

Barriers include:

- Limitations on funding and human resources for programs, training, physical and technological revisions and changes
- Slowly declining population and enrollments – makes it difficult in the area of public financial stewardship to justify and deliberate on investing in significant changes to some of the less populated and less utilized buildings
- No indication from Province of Manitoba as to how the required changes will be funded or if they will be funded
- Access ramps should be added to the main entrance of 2 buildings
- Signage not consistent throughout our facilities and grounds
- Very little braille signage
- Announcements are typically made available in either visual or audio formats, not both
- Office reception desks are all installed for regular standing heights and should be lowered or have a lowered section
- 2 of 5 multi-story building not accessible on all levels and would require an elevator
- Automatic door openers should be added to 8 buildings at the main entrances (most cases 2 sets of doors – inside and out)
- Lever style door handles should be added to a majority of rooms throughout (estimated at 350 to 400 doors)
- Partially completed ADA/special needs grooming room should be completed at 1 school
- Washrooms are not ADA compliant at Maintenance workshop, Transportation garage and Division office
- Staff washrooms at one school could be adapted to be accessible, however an accessible washroom does exist in the building already
- Main office at one school is not accessible (located on a lower half-level)
- No formal accessibility coordinator or training program for staff at present
- Website, documents, correspondence and materials don't promote or make mention of accessible or alternate formats
- Attitudes and awareness towards disabilities and accessibility
- Barrier free access to grounds, sports fields etc. would need to be looked at
- Accessible and barrier free parking would need to be reviewed and added at most facilities. Some parking areas do not belong to SVSD and are not on our property

Statement of Action

SVSD will resolve to improve equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in ways that allow them to maintain their dignity, respect, and independence. We do not feel the physical or social environment should stop this from happening. We are committed to meeting the needs of all those we serve, including people who face barriers and we will do this by preventing, identifying and removing these barriers as much as possible. We desire to work towards reasonably achieving compliance with the Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

Policies

Policy shall be created to ensure all programs, services and new initiatives work towards greater and increased accessibility and removal of barriers for persons with disabilities. The policy will be made available in accessible formats and promote and encourage communication, awareness and understanding of accessibility.

Actions and Measures

Action 1 – Install an Accessibility Coordinator and Committee

Initiatives/Actions

- Gather a representative from each building and/or group. Meet and select a coordinator. Chair for the group
- Establish the function and parameters for the group
- Plan future meetings and organize visits to facilities to establish a detailed baseline for accessibility

Expected Outcome

- Have a coordinator to lead the discussion and monitor progress of plan
- Create an annual meeting schedule
- Create a schedule to review facilities for accessibility
- Present findings and make recommendations to the Board and Senior Admin.
- Monitor progress
- The SVSD has a coordinator and meetings regularly with the division office group that will correspond with principals

Action 2 – Offer and provide information on accessibility options and requests

Initiatives/Actions

- Develop a procedure to encourage and respond to requests for accessible supports and services
- Make staff aware of the process so if they are asked they know where to go

Expected Outcomes

- Creation of a procedure to handle requests and the ability to grow in being proactive with needs and requests
- Creation of a “Customer Service Standards” as per the AMA
- Customer Service Standard has been created and training for staff will be happening via the Accessibility website.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A form is being created that will be sent to all schools and parents on how to request issues in accessibility. ➤ Parking is going to be looked at for all schools in regards to disability spots ➤ The committee is also working on signs for each school to include info for visitor to the schools to access accessibility services should they need it
--	--

Action 3 – Training staff upon Board Approval

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Initiatives/Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Management to explain division’s obligation to accessibility ➤ Management to provide accessibility training to divisional staff ➤ Management to update on advancements and new achievements 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Excepted Outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accessibility will be considered in all planning and operations ➤ Accessibility plan will be reviewed by Board of Trustees and shared with staff and the public ➤ Staff learns more about accessibility and the different areas ➤ The Board will be kept up to date on the accessibility committee actions and training is going to be done on the customer service standard in the fall of 2019
--	--

Action 4 – Continuous and Ongoing Improvement

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Initiatives/Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accessibility committee will meet regularly to discuss progress and areas of concern and success ➤ Coordinator to report annually to Board of Trustees on the plan ➤ Budgeting to be reviewed and integrated when it comes to the accessibility plan 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Expected Outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Trustees and division consider accessibility compliance in decision making ➤ Accessibility barriers are gradually removed ➤ All staff and users are aware and familiar with discussing accessibility and seek to be proactive and cooperative in removing barriers ➤ The accessibility group will handle issues on a case by base basis and has set up a system to look at accessibility issues in school ➤ The accessibility group will also start to look at the employment standard that is coming up in May 2020/2021
---	--

Contact Person: _____

(Accessibility Coordinator)

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Senior Manager’s

Signature: _____ Date: _____