



# ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

School District 10 (Arrow Lakes)

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# School District 10 (Arrow Lakes) Accessibility Plan

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### **About School District 10 (Arrow Lakes)**

School District 10 (Arrow Lakes) serves the communities of north Slocan Lake and the Arrow Lakes with schools and programs in Nakusp, Edgewood, Burton, and New Denver. Our innovative approach to learning and the beautiful mountain settings that surround our communities provide our staff and students with unique teaching and learning opportunities. We are recognized for innovation in place-conscious learning, environmental education, and for creatively personalizing learning experiences for our students.

Our district enrolls approximately 550 students across our five brick and mortar schools, and an online distributed learning school. Approximately twenty percent (20%) of our students self-identify as Indigenous and twenty percent (20%) are diverse learners with six percent (6%) both Indigenous and with diverse needs. We have a team of over one-hundred (100) staff that are committed to providing a positive educational environment that fosters each child's learning in an accessible and inclusive environment.

Our Board of Education includes five (5) members elected from the communities and surrounding areas which the School District serves. Our elected members include two (2) at large trustees, one (1) trustee from the Eastern Zone, one trustee (1) from the Southern Zone, and one trustee (1) from the Central Zone.

### **Territorial Acknowledgement**

In School District 10 (Arrow Lakes) we are grateful to live, work, learn and play on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Sinixt Peoples, and we honour their ongoing presence on the land.



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### **A Message from the Superintendent**

In School District 10 (Arrow Lakes) we celebrate the diverse abilities of students and staff and are committed to providing a learning and working environment that supports all, and that strives to provide equitable opportunities that support and encourage a diverse community. Critical to this is the development, implementation and monitoring of our Three-Year Accessibility Plan which identifies system needs, priorities, and action plans, and provides for ongoing feedback from our stakeholders to enhance our continued efforts to improve accessibility.

We recognize the importance of accessibility not just for those persons with disabilities, but also for the benefit of the entire community. We are committed to advancing the efforts toward accessibility to improve equity and ease of access to work and services, and access to our facilities.

*“Community exists for the sake of belonging and takes its identity from the gifts, generosity, and accountability of its citizens. Community is built by focusing on people’s gifts rather than their deficiencies” – John McKnight and Peter Block*

Peter Dubinsky,  
Superintendent of Schools



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### Definitions

The District recognizes that language preferences are ever evolving and acknowledges that preferences to describe identity and disability should be made on an individual basis. For the purpose of this Accessibility Plan, the District has chosen to default to the language and terminology used in the legislation. Similarly, when speaking about the disability community in general, the District has chosen to follow the BC Government and other government bodies in Canada by defaulting to person-first language in this plan.

- **Accessibility:** Is the degree to which persons with disabilities can access a device, service, or environment without barriers. Accessibility is also a process that allows for the proactive identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities.
- **Barrier:** Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability. This includes physical/environmental, attitudinal, information, communications, policy or practice, and technological barriers.
- **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:** The state of being unable to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction between an impairment and a barrier.



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### Guiding Frameworks

School District 10's accessibility plan builds on global, national, provincial, and school district specific actions to support accessibility. The following legal and best practices frameworks help inform our plan:

- **United Nations:** The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities | OHCHR](#)
- **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms:** The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms ([justice.gc.ca](#))
- **Accessible Canada Act:** Accessible Canada Act ([justice.gc.ca](#))
- **Accessible B.C. Act:** Accessible British Columbia Act ([gov.bc.ca](#))

The Accessible British Columbia Act includes a list of six principles that are considered in the development of the SD10 Accessibility Plan:

- **Adaptability:** Accessibility plans should reflect that disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that changes as services, technology, and attitudes change.
- **Collaboration:** Promoting accessible communities is a shared responsibility and everyone has a role to play. Accessibility plans should create opportunities for Organizations and communities to work together.
- **Diversity:** Every person is unique. People with disabilities are individuals with varied backgrounds. Individual characteristics including race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and lived experience greatly inform the experiences of individuals. Accessibility plans should acknowledge the principle of intersectionality and the diversity within the disability community.
- **Inclusion:** All persons with disabilities, should be able to participate to their fullest potential in their communities by having equal access to opportunities.



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- **Self-Determination:** Accessibility plans should seek to empower people with disabilities to make their own choices and pursue the lives they wish to live.
- **Universal Design:** Accessibility plans should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to interact with the organization.

### Our Commitment

In School District 10 (Arrow Lakes), we are committed to providing an environment that is accessible and practical for all members of our diverse community. We recognize the importance of conscious planning, design, implementation, and follow-up to ensure that barriers are removed, and accessibility is increased. To achieve this goal, we commit to the following:

- Engaging with staff, community members and people with disabilities in the development and review of accessibility initiatives and our accessibility plan.
- Ensuring that our school board policies, district protocols and workplace practices align with the principles of accessibility.
- Improving access to facilities, programs, and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, and community members.
- Connecting our Accessibility initiatives and commitment with the District's Strategic Plan.



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### Connecting Accessibility and our District Strategic Plan

The District's five-year strategic plan purpose is to build a collaborative community of learning, including strong academics, overall well-being, and a connection to the land, in order to provide our students with the knowledge and skills they require to navigate an ever-changing future. The priorities of the strategic plan focus on the following key areas and extend an invitation of inquiry to help inform strategies:

- **Competency:** What knowledge, skills and abilities will students require to be competent in the future?
- **Health:** What are the best ways to support our school-community to achieve greater wellness and resiliency?
- **Environment:** How do we foster a deeper relationship with our land?
- **Collaboration:** What knowledge and skills are required for an effective collaborative education model?

Improving accessibility in School District 10 will contribute to these areas of focus by:

- **Competency:** Building student competency in inclusion and inclusive practices by raising awareness and understanding of accessibility as:
  - Being the degree to which persons with disabilities can access a device, service, or environment without barriers.
  - As a process by which to proactively identify, remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities.
- **Health:** Increasing wellness by decreasing missed opportunities due to inaccessibility.
- **Environment:** Increasing opportunities for connection with the environment by removing and preventing barriers that limit access.
- **Collaboration:** Providing opportunities for engagement across district stakeholders, local and global communities to promote full and equal participation in SD10 activities.



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### Our Approach

Our approach is grounded in the core principles of accessibility, including adaptability, collaboration, diversity, inclusion, self-determination, and universal design. To ensure that our plan is responsive to our ever-changing world our approach is based on a continuous feedback loop that requires ongoing:

1. Planning and Research
2. Engagement and Increasing Awareness
3. Goal Setting and Taking Action
4. Evaluating and Reporting





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### Planning and Research

The following list summarizes strategies and activities that have been taken, or that are in process as part of our work in planning and research:

- Establishment of a *working* Accessibility Committee with recurring meeting dates through the school year
- Development of the SD10 Accessibility Plan, an evergreen document informed by legislation, guiding frameworks, and best practices to fit the context of SD10
- Creation of an online feedback mechanism for reporting accessibility barriers: <https://sd10.bc.ca/district/accessibility-plan/>
- Online surveys sent to staff, students, and community members to gather information about accessibility barriers in SD10
- Site-based accessibility audit to identify areas of strengths and areas of improvement
- Accessibility questionnaire to be completed by district partner groups, committees, and focus groups including but not limited to school counsellors, learning support teams, and the SD10 Indigenous Education Advisory Council
- District audit of existing policies, protocols and work practices
- Preliminary site visits to district facilities to assess accessibility

### Engagement and Increasing Awareness

The following list summarizes strategies and activities that have been taken, or that are in process as part of our work in engagement and increasing awareness:

- Accessibility awareness training completed by Accessibility Committee members
- Accessibility awareness training to be completed by leadership staff
- Distribution of accessibility resources and materials through multiple modes including surveys, questionnaires, and information handouts



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- Disability awareness activity learning challenge to engage classrooms, students, and teachers
- Discussion forums with staff and students

### Goal Setting and Taking Action

The following list summarizes our current goals and actions:

- **Goal:** Identify accessibility priorities based on the information that is gathered through planning and research and engagement and increasing awareness to inform the District's 2024-2027 Accessibility Plan
- **Goal:** Increase engagement and communication with stakeholders to raise awareness and understanding regarding accessibility
- **Action:** Start to integrate accessibility considerations through-out school district programs and operations (i.e., OHS, capital planning, recruitment)

### Evaluating and Reporting

The Accessibility Committee will continue to meet regularly and participate in the cycle of reviewing feedback from stakeholders and recommending updates to the District Accessibility Plan accordingly.

The District will provide an annual report on accessibility each September, and post to the SD10 Website: [Accessibility Plan - School District 10, Arrow Lakes \(sd10.bc.ca\)](https://sd10.bc.ca/Accessibility-Plan).



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### Our Committee

Under the Accessible B.C. Act, organizations must establish an Accessibility Committee to assist with identifying and preventing barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization. The purpose of the accessibility committee is to:

- work collaboratively to assess and improve community accessibility, focusing on the experiences of individuals with disabilities while encompassing the whole community.
- advise the District on strategies to reduce social, physical, sensory and other barriers that prevent people from fully participating in all aspects of school community life.
- review feedback to better understand and identify the issues, challenges, and priorities of stakeholders within our school community
- assist with reviewing and updating the SD10 Accessibility plan based on feedback

### Feedback

School District 10 (Arrow Lakes) has an online feedback tool that includes a series of questions about accessibility experiences that students, staff and members of the school district community can complete. The tool is posted to the main page of the district website: [Accessibility Plan - School District 10, Arrow Lakes \(sd10.bc.ca\)](https://sd10.bc.ca/AccessibilityPlan)

Feedback can be anonymous, or people can add their name and contact information if they wish to be contacted. Persons may also submit feedback regarding accessibility including questions, concerns, comments to [accessibility@sd10.bc.ca](mailto:accessibility@sd10.bc.ca).



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### **Three-Year Plan**

SD10s three-year accessibility plan will continue to be shaped over the course of the 2023-2024. Priorities for the remainder of the 2023 – 2024 school year include:

1. Continue to build awareness and understanding about accessibility through training, communication, and engagement.
2. Gather information necessary to inform priorities for the 2024-2027 three-year plan.