



**PRAIRIE SPIRIT**  
SCHOOL DIVISION

# **Accessibility Plan**

**2026 - 2028**

## Table of Contents

<b>Messages from the Board Chair and Director of Education</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>About Prairie Spirit School Division</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Definitions</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Goal 1: Improve employee knowledge and awareness of accessibility .....	<b>5</b>
Goal 2: Make school division buildings and properties more accessible .....	<b>6</b>
Goal 3: Improve the accessibility of school division programs and services.....	<b>7</b>
Goal 4: Make digital content more accessible .....	<b>9</b>
Goal 5: Support a diverse and inclusive workforce .....	<b>11</b>
Goal 6: Provide leadership to promote accessibility and inclusion.....	<b>13</b>
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Appendix A: Glossary of Common Definitions</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Appendix B: Accessibility Barriers</b> .....	<b>17</b>

This report is available in alternate format upon request.

To request an alternate format, please contact Division Office by email at [contact@spiritsd.ca](mailto:contact@spiritsd.ca) or call 306-683-2800.

## Messages from the Board Chair and Director of Education

### From the Board of Education Chair



Kate Kading  
Board Chair

On behalf of the Prairie Spirit Board of Education, I am pleased to introduce Prairie Spirit's three-year Accessibility Plan. This document reflects our ongoing commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive learning environment for every student, staff member, and community partner. As a Board, we want each person to fully engage in the life of our schools and contribute their unique talents.

The inclusive definition of disability in *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act* guides our approach: we recognize that barriers are not only physical, but may also relate to information, communication, or attitudes, and may not be evident.

We are committed to partnering with students, families, staff, and our broader community. We believe accessibility is not just about compliance, but about culture: a culture where belonging, participation and equity are foundational.

### From the Director of Education



Tracey Young  
Director of Education

As Director of Education, I am proud to share our Division's Accessibility Plan, a reflection of our shared commitment to making our schools and workplaces welcoming, inclusive, and barrier-free for everyone.

We know that improved accessibility benefits us all. Guided by this understanding, our plan focuses on identifying and removing obstacles that may limit participation or belonging within our learning and working environments.

This work is part of our ongoing journey toward equity and inclusion. By listening to the voices of students, staff, families, and community members, we can continue to build a culture where everyone has the opportunity to learn, contribute, and thrive.

Thank you for being part of this important effort. Together, we are shaping a more inclusive future for our schools and communities.

## About Prairie Spirit School Division

Prairie Spirit covers a wide geographic area surrounding the City of Saskatoon: north to Leask, south to Hanley, east to Colonsay and west to Perdue. The school division boundaries encompass nine Hutterite colonies and three First Nations communities (Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, Mistawasis First Nation and Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation).

In 2025/26, Prairie Spirit's approximately 11,600 students are served by a team of 1,300 dedicated professionals and support staff.

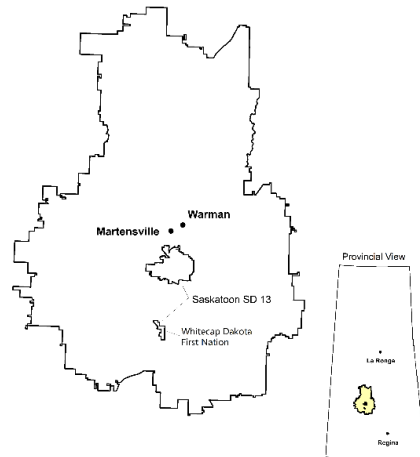
In Prairie Spirit, students and adults learn in creative ways, embracing community as their classroom. We support one another, challenge one another and celebrate our learning together. We are developing engaged citizens with confidence, courage, empathy and commitment in shaping positive change. We create environments where learners can inquire, take risks and apply their learning in the real world.

Prairie Spirit learners are active participants in the classroom, school and community where engagement and a sense of belonging are both nurtured and promoted so all students achieve their learning goals, regardless of gender, culture, and race.

**Vision:** Learners for Life

**Mission:** Inspiring a lifelong love of learning

Prairie Spirit proudly serves students and communities on Treaty 6 territory, the homeland of the Métis Nation. Treaty 6 is the traditional territory of the Cree, Dakota, Nakota, Lakota, Dené, and Saulteaux peoples, and home to many diverse Métis and Non-Status First Nations people. Daily we are reminded of the work and learning that needs to be done to include Indigenous perspectives, history, cultures, knowledges, and contemporary experiences.



## **Introduction**

The Government of Saskatchewan introduced *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act*, which came into force on December 3, 2023. *The Act* requires Prairie Spirit School Division to publicly post an accessibility plan to remove and prevent accessibility barriers for persons with disabilities.

Prairie Spirit School Division is committed to identifying, removing, and preventing accessibility barriers for individuals who work at or access school division facilities, programs, and services. An accessibility plan is intended to help identify accessibility barriers for people who are in, or interact with, an organization and describes the actions that will be taken to remove and prevent accessibility barriers.

Prairie Spirit School Division is committed to Accessibility for All guided by all people protected under *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* and recognizing that accessibility is good for everyone. Prairie Spirit is also committed to the Calls to Action of the TRC and seeks culturally responsive solutions to all aspects of the accessibility plan.

A school division committee worked together to gather and consider feedback and identified actions that the school division will take over the next three years to improve the accessibility of facilities, programs, and services.

As part of the development of this accessibility plan, Prairie Spirit conducted a survey of staff, families and the community. The purpose of this survey was to gather feedback to help shape the Division plan to make our schools and offices more inclusive. The survey had over 900 responses, with many informative comments provided. Respondents expressed concern for those in the school community with disabilities. In particular, survey respondents highlighted the need for greater accessibility in school playgrounds and parking lots.

When developing our accessibility plan, Prairie Spirit reviewed existing programs and services and reflected on the Division's administrative procedures. In addition, local experts were consulted to guide the Division's survey and plan development. We want to recognize the hard work of everyone on our team to promote an inclusive workplace. As a learning community in Prairie Spirit, we value the contributions of all members.

### **Accessibility goals and actions**

Prairie Spirit School Division has taken steps to improve the accessibility of Division facilities, programs, and services. However, we recognize that progress will be ongoing as we aim to become more inclusive.

This plan outlines the actions that the school division will prioritize over the next three years to remove accessibility barriers that persons with disabilities experience. Division staff will work together to complete the actions outlined in this plan and raise awareness about accessibility.

## **Definitions**

### **Accessibility barriers**

*The Accessible Saskatchewan Act* defines a barrier as anything that hinders or challenges the full and equal participation in society of persons with disabilities.

There are many types of barriers that persons with disabilities may experience, including physical barriers, information and communications barriers, and attitudinal barriers. Definitions and examples of each barrier type are outlined below to help people understand the experiences of people with disabilities.

### **Physical barriers**

Physical barriers exist when spaces are designed in ways that prevent or limit mobility or access.

For example:

- Hosting public events at a venue that is only accessible by stairs
- Parking lots with no curb cuts that make it difficult to access sidewalks
- Washrooms that lack accessible stalls or automatic door openers

### **Information and communications barriers**

Information and communications barriers exist when information or material is shared in a way that is not accessible to all people.

For example:

- Using small print that is hard to read
- Websites and documents that are not accessible for screen readers or convert text to multiple languages
- Videos that do not have closed captioning

### **Attitudinal barriers**

Attitudinal barriers exist when people act or think based on false assumptions.

For example:

- Not including persons with disabilities in decisions that impact them
- Making assumptions about a person's ability to communicate or do things for themselves
- Avoiding a person with a disability for fear of offending them

## **Goal 1: Improve employee knowledge and awareness of accessibility**

Increasing employee awareness about accessibility and understanding the importance of inclusion are key to improving the quality of services provided to all individuals, including persons with disabilities.

### **Achievements to date:**

- Prairie Spirit has created an Accessibility Working Committee to oversee the creation of the three-year Accessibility Plan
- Staff were invited to respond to an accessibility survey as the three-year accessibility plan was developed

### **Actions for 2026 - 2028:**

- Continue development of a Division Accessibility team to implement the three-year plan and consider future plans for the school division
- Plan focused training to increase accessibility awareness and promote a more inclusive and accepting work environment
- Explore opportunities for additional specialized training for employees related to the services that the school division provides
- Continue to engage with staff and students to monitor and improve accessibility

## **Goal 2: Make school division buildings and properties more accessible**

Prairie Spirit recognizes that accessible buildings are an important part of improving the accessibility of school division services.

### **Achievements to date:**

- Over the past two years, the Division has completed a number of school renovations that included creating more accessible spaces, including:
  - washrooms
  - home economics spaces
  - automated doors
  - new sidewalk with accessible parking
  - stage lift
  
- All new schools in Prairie Spirit are designed with accessibility as a high priority
- When portable classrooms are relocated, automated doors are added and a ramp attached for access
- If stairs or ramps are added or modified at a school, visual strips are added
- Prairie Spirit's Facilities department collaborates with the Occupational Therapists (OT) on staff to determine and meet the needs of students
- Multiple school sidewalks are replaced each year and made accessible at time of replacement
- It is important to note that school playgrounds are planned and funded by schools. Prairie Spirit's Facilities Department recommends schools choose accessible play structures. Several schools in the Division have installed new and accessible playground equipment over the past year.

### **Actions for 2026 - 2028:**

- When portable classrooms are relocated, automated doors will be added and a ramp attached for access
- Automated doors will be replaced, repaired or installed, as required
- Accessible parking will be added or improved, as requested
- We will continue to work with the OT department for the needs of students and the potential new students that are enrolling
- Dalmeny High: Home Economics upgrades will include an accessible kitchen - start 2026
- Borden Gym: Renovations will include accessible washrooms and new automated exterior doors - start 2026
- South Corman Park: New school to be built, will be fully accessible when complete - completion date to be determined
- Multiple school sidewalks will be replaced each year and made accessible at time of replacement

### **Goal 3: Improve the accessibility of school division programs and services**

Prairie Spirit is taking steps to identify accessibility barriers that limit access to Division programs and services.

#### **Achievements to date:**

- Prairie Spirit Newcomer Centre - English as Additional Language (EAL) Strategic Facilitators support families with the registration process, providing support from outside agencies and interpreters when needed
- Students benefit from services offered by Division Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists and Physical Therapist support, with all positions fully staffed, and increased support funding through Early Learning Intensive Supports (ELIS)
- Prairie Spirit's Educational Psychologists provide consultations and assessments for identifying learning profiles
- Mental health and wellness supports for students are accessible at each school provided by school counsellors and other specialized staff
- Prairie Spirit's Capacity and Connection Team (CCT) program (itinerant model of specialized support classroom) provides additional support to Kindergarten and Grade 1 students
- The Division's Capacity-Building Team (CBT) provides support to students with complex behaviours
- Students at Martensville High School benefit from an innovative Mental Health Capacity Building (MHCB) Program
- Prairie Spirit's *Essential 8 - Mental Health and Well-being for Learning* framework provides awareness and training for staff
- The Division's School Health Support Facilitator is dedicated to reducing barriers that may exist due to medical restrictions, ensuring students with diverse health needs can fully participate in school activities
- Educational Associates provide specific support for students
- Adjustable furniture, desks, and other school-based resources allow persons who have mobility limitations or disabilities to access their environment
- Decodable and special format or alternate materials and books (large print, audiobooks, braille and online platforms – CELA, NNELS, SAFM) for libraries and student use. These are designed to be more accessible to children experiencing print disabilities creating an inclusive reading experience
- Students have access to technology to assist with specific learning disabilities in the areas of reading, writing, and math
- Assistive Technology - Prairie Spirit students can access apps and technology to support communication. This includes individualized seating, Rifton chairs, harnesses for safety, standing frames to support individual physical needs while fostering inclusion, personal care equipment, mechanical lift systems, high and low mats for stretching and position change needs, etc. throughout the school day
- Sound-field systems have been installed in many classrooms, particularly in PreK-3, to ensure more effective communication

- The Division is using reporting platforms that are more accessible to teachers and Division office personnel (Clevr, MSS) and to parents remotely (Edsby)
- TEAMS and video conferencing creates quick access to supports, meetings and interviews where distance is significant or mobility is a barrier for participants. This is also more time and cost efficient. The closed captions are also helpful for hearing impaired users
- Programming - Inclusion and Intervention plans allow individualized programming tailored to students' strengths and abilities
- High school programs offer a variety of credit course options: Regular, Modified, Alternative and Functional Integrated
- Instruction in Kindergarten to Grade 8 is differentiated, with tiered levels of supports
- Pre-K – Early Entrance and Early Learning Intensive Supports recognition (ELIS) provide additional supports
- Learning Support Teachers and Complexity Support Teachers are available for programming and support needs in every Division school
- Strategic Facilitators are available in the areas of: Early Learning; English as Additional Language (EAL)/Newcomers; Mental Health and Well-Being; Numeracy; Indigenous Perspectives, Partnerships and Outcomes; and Literacy to support staff with accessing new initiatives, programs and supports
- Free bring your own device (BYOD) Wi-Fi is available in all schools and offices for student and staff personal devices. While there is no completely open Wi-Fi for other community members, the school office can provide temporary guest access for others in certain circumstances

**Actions for 2026 - 2028:**

- Review and update Division documents and website to ensure information is easy to find, easy to read and easy to understand
- Continue to update the All Staff portal for Instructional Supports to ensure the information is more accessible to teachers
- Continue developing centralized and accessible data platform for documentation online - called Clevr - to create consistency and immediate access to important confidential information
- Continue to review Learning Support Services and other support staffing to meet needs of all students
- Explore adding nurses in schools to provide support due to the increased number of students with complex medical needs

## **Goal 4: Make digital content more accessible**

As many individuals access information through digital platforms like websites and social media, it is important to make sure that digital content is understandable and accessible on the devices that people use.

### **Achievements to date:**

- Conducted testing to identify difficulties that people experience when using the school division's website
- All school technology – various accessibility settings and programs available for Windows, iPads, Chromebooks, etc. Microsoft Office apps, Google Workspace apps, Edge browser, and Chrome browser have built-in screen reading, reading assistance, and dictation functions. Microsoft's Immersive Reader is available across most of their apps and portal products.
- There are many free or paid web browser extensions available to assist users with accessibility needs. We ensure access to approved extensions is available for Chrome and Edge web browsers.
- Our Division website and portals adapt to various screen sizes

### **Actions for 2026 - 2028:**

- Bring all new digital content into alignment with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA standards. WCAG is the common benchmark for public-sector websites, including many school divisions.
- Continue to review and improve the accessibility of the school division website and web-based services
- Ensure Prairie Spirit's website uses plain language and strong visual hierarchy
- Continue to reduce the need for fillable PDFs
- Use Prairie Spirit's accessibility survey results to inform future plans
- Review third party tools that may assist with making our website more accessible
- Audit the registration process for families to improve processes
- Give school staff guidance for providing accessible communications for students and the public
- Review and update Division documents to ensure information is easy to find, easy to read and easy to understand
- Review the Division website and make changes where possible to allow third party translation and accessibility tools (web browser functions, Google Translate, etc.) to work more effectively with our site
- Ensure all public-facing documents (policies, forms, newsletters, reports) are produced in accessible formats by default:
  - Use proper headings, alt text for images, and clear formatting in Word, Google Docs, PDFs
  - Avoid scanned-image-only PDFs
  - Create templates that are pre-formatted for accessibility
- Convert paper-based forms and inaccessible PDFs into accessible online forms so they are screen-

reader friendly and easier for parents and community members with disabilities to complete

- Establish a clear and timely process to provide accessible formats for individuals who request them (for example: large print, simplified text, accessible HTML versions, captioned or described media)

## **Goal 5: Support a diverse and inclusive workforce**

Prairie Spirit School Division recognizes the importance of fostering an inclusive environment for all employees.

### **Achievements to date:**

#### **Inclusive recruitment and hiring practices**

- Accessible job postings
  - Inclusive language
  - Online compatibility with screen reader
  - Advertised postings using different platforms
- Bias-free interviewing

#### **Workplace Accessibility Enhancements**

- Accommodation Plans - continue to work with the employee in developing accommodation plans with disabilities, including regular reviews and as appropriate using the *Duty to Accommodate - A Guide for Schools Divisions and Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Members (STF/SSBA)*
- Adaptive Technology - explore the use of tools such as screen readers, speech-to-text software, ergonomic keyboards and accessible communication platforms as appropriate for individualized needs/requests
- Furniture Adjustments - offer adjustable desks, ergonomic chairs/furniture tailored to individual needs as per specialist/physician assessments
- Physical Modifications - ensure office spaces are compliant with accessibility standards such as ramps, automatic doors, lifts, accessible restrooms, etc.

#### **Employee wellness**

- Employee engagement - building awareness, reducing stigma, promoting healthy practices, building resilience, and encouraging inclusion.
- Supervisor engagement - provide supervisors with resources to support staff wellness
- Emergency Preparedness - Education Continuity Plan includes considerations for staff with disabilities/identified needs

### **Actions for 2026 - 2028:**

#### **Access to Resources**

- Online portal to centralize all resources, policies, guidelines, contact information for supports (EFAP/MFAP promotion), community partnerships
- Accessibility recommendations/suggestions with ergonomic solutions, adaptive technologies, and community resources

#### **Training and Capacity Building**

- Onboarding training - Harassment in the Workplace online modules with a focus on diversity, acceptance, respect and inclusive practices
- Leadership training with Human Right legislation

- HR Team focus on inclusive practices

**Self-declaration**

- Review the current process for school division employees to self-declare a disability to identify opportunities for improvement

## **Goal 6: Provide leadership to promote accessibility and inclusion**

Guided by *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act*, Prairie Spirit has committed to following any new requirements created by *The Act* and the regulations created under it.

### **Achievements to date:**

- Established a broad-based school division committee of leaders to guide school division actions in the area of accessibility, including leaders from Human Resources, Facilities, Communications, Student Services, and the Board

### **Actions for 2026 - 2028:**

- Develop a guide for Hosting Accessible Events in school division facilities
- Develop a template to guide site-based leaders (i.e., school administration) with setting local accessibility goals
- Provide professional development for site-based leaders on accessibility and their role in achieving a more accessible work and learning place
- The school division will include accessibility requirements during the procurement and tendering processes. Including accessibility considerations will ensure that the school division proactively considers accessibility when purchasing goods and services

## **Conclusion**

Prairie Spirit School Division is committed to improving accessibility in our schools, facilities, communications, and our processes. The Division will review and update this plan every three years. The actions outlined in this plan are intended to improve the accessibility of school division services and remove barriers that persons with disabilities experience. As we move forward, we want to continue to hear from members of our community about accessibility barriers that impact the lives of persons with disabilities.

### **Contact us:**

We value your feedback and welcome members of the public to submit comments about our accessibility plan using the contact information below.

- Phone: 306-683-2800
- Email: [contact@spiritsd.ca](mailto:contact@spiritsd.ca)
- Mail: 121 Collins Street, Warman, SK S0K 4S0

## Appendix A: Glossary of Common Definitions

**Ableism and Disability Oppression:** Ableism or disability oppression is the discrimination of and social prejudice against people with disabilities based on the belief that typical abilities are superior. At its heart, ableism is rooted in the assumption that disabled people require 'fixing' and defines people by their disability. Ableism views typical abilities as the norm and devalues people who have physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, or other disabilities.

**Accommodation:** Any technical aid or device, personal support or disability-related support that a person may require. This can include, but is not limited to, accessible document formats, mobility supports to attend a meeting, interpretation or captioning services, or ensuring space has sensory sensitive features.

**Adaptability:** The ability to be modified for a new use or purpose. Disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology and attitudes change.

**Alternate formats:** Alternate ways of providing information beyond traditional printed material. Examples include large print, text-only documents and Braille.

**Alternative text:** Also referred to as alt tags or alt attributes. Alternative text provides a verbal description of a visual or graph for individuals with visual impairments who use screen readers.

**Barrier:** Anything that hinders or challenges the full and equal participation in society of persons with disabilities.

**Captioning:** Text at the bottom of the screen (television/video) allows people to follow spoken dialogue and distinct noises. Closed captioning is similar, but the text must be decoded to appear on the screen.

**Disability:** Any impairment that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and equal participation in society. Disabilities can be permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, and may or may not be evident. There are many types of disabilities that people experience, including physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication and sensory impairments.

**Diversity:** Recognizing that each person is unique and has different backgrounds. Diversity means including or involving people from a range of different social or ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, disabilities, etc.

**Inclusion:** Providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as individuals with physical or intellectual disabilities and members of other minority groups.

**Gender Diversity:** Gender diversity encompasses the recognition and celebration of individuals whose gender identities and expressions fall outside of the traditional binary of male and female. It includes transgender, non-binary, and gender-nonconforming individuals, among others.

**Large print:** Printed information provided in a large font size (18 pt or larger) for people who have low vision. For easier reading, select "sans serif" fonts.

**Neurodiversity:** Neurodiversity acknowledges that differences in how brains function are normal variations, not deficits, and embraces the diverse ways people think, learn, and interact with the world.

**Plain language:** Clear, conversational communication that makes sense to the intended audience. The goal of plain language is to communicate so clearly that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use the information.

**Self-determination:** People are empowered to make their own choices and control their own lives.

**Service animal:** The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission defines a service animal as an animal with specialized training to assist a person with a recognized physical and/or mental disability.

**Universal design:** Universal design means making things safer, easier and more convenient for everyone. It involves a range of design concepts, including design of products, or spaces and environments, to provide access in a way that respects all abilities.

## **Appendix B: Accessibility Barriers**

There are many types of accessibility barriers that persons with disabilities may experience. Examples of different types of barriers are outlined below.

**Physical and architectural** - Structural and design-based obstacles that prevent or limit mobility or access

Examples of physical barriers include:

- doorknobs that cannot be turned by a person with limited dexterity or strength instead of easier to use lever-style handles
- public events hosted at venues that can only be accessed by steps; and walkways with obstacles, such as snow-covered paths into buildings

**Information and communication** - Obstacles experienced by persons with disabilities related to hearing, speaking, reading, writing or understanding, and those who communicate in different ways

Examples of information and communication barriers include:

- using small print and poor color contrast
- creating websites and documents without considering how some people with vision impairments use screen readers; writing documents with complex language instead of simple and easy to understand words
- only providing customers with one option to contact your organization such as by phone instead of multiple options like email, text message, and in-person

**Attitudinal** – When people act or think based on false assumptions

Examples of attitudinal barriers include:

- assuming someone with an intellectual disability cannot make decisions, instead of asking them if they need any support
- speaking to an aid or interpreter instead of directly to a person with a disability
- assuming all persons with disabilities require the same accommodations instead of asking how you can support them
- not considering the needs of people with different types of disabilities when planning events