

**SD71 Accessibility Advisory Committee**  
**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Background**

The Accessible BC Regulation came into effect on September 1, 2022. The Regulation requires covered organizations to meet the requirements of the Accessible BC Act (2021) by September 2023. These requirements include establishment of:

- An accessibility committee
- An accessibility plan
- A tool to receive feedback on the accessibility plan and barriers to accessibility at SD 71.

**Purpose**

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) provides advice on identifying, preventing, and eliminating barriers to people with disabilities in programs, services, initiatives, and facilities. The committee plays a pivotal role in helping SD 71 become accessible and meet its obligations under the Accessible BC legislation (2021).

**Role and Responsibilities**

- a) Assist the organisation to identify barriers to persons with disabilities in or interacting with the organization (students, employees, and visitors).
- b) Advise the organization on how to remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities in or interacting with the organization.
- c) Provide support and consultation in the development of SD 71's accessibility plan. The plan will be reviewed every 3 years with further consultation with the accessibility committee.
- d) Monitor the progress of goals related to the accessibility plan.
- e) Be a resource to members of the SD 71 community seeking advice on the accessibility of projects, programs, services and operations.
- f) Provide input and feedback to the Leadership Team on accessibility priorities and the impact and effectiveness of accessibility initiatives.

**Membership**

Membership of the committee is voluntary. As per the Accessible BC Act, committee members are selected in accordance with the following goals.

- a) at least half the members are
  - a. persons with disabilities, or
  - b. individuals who support, or are from organizations that support, persons with disabilities
- b) the members reflect the diversity of persons with disabilities in BC;
- c) at least one of the members is an Indigenous person;
- d) the committee reflects the diversity of persons in BC.

Members are expected to attend as many meetings as possible and may send a designate in their absence.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will invite non-members, as needed, to present on and help inform decision making. Guest participation and contribution is actively encouraged.

### **Appointment Procedures and Terms**

The Accessibility Advisory Committee Chairs can appoint four - six members of the Committee from staff that are responsible for understanding and enhancing disability inclusion and/or supporting persons with disabilities within the school district.

A seat will either be reserved for student involvement, or the committee will solicit student input from SD 71's Superintendent's Students Advisory Group.

The remaining members are selected by the chairs from "expressions of interest" received through an open call to the school district and community.

### **Term**

- All appointed members who are in positions serving persons with disabilities will hold a two-year term and may be renewed for additional two-year terms.

### **Meetings**

The committee shall meet at least 3 times per year, or as needed to fulfill its duties. Meetings may be in-person or virtual via Teams. The chairs will develop the agenda for the meeting in consultation with Committee members. Requests from members to place an item on the agenda may be submitted to the chairs, ideally at least one week ahead of the meeting.

Meeting minutes will be prepared by the chairs and circulated to the committee members via email.

The committee may establish working groups to explore specific issues related to the Accessibility Plan and/or other responsibilities. A working group may include members who are not committee members. The chair of a working group must be a member of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

### **Expectations of the Committee Chairs:**

- 1) What is said here stays here; the "Las Vegas" rule. Some folks will be sharing personal experiences and those are their stories to share as they choose, and we ask that these personal experiences are shared in a space of safety and confidentiality. There are of course topics we will be discussing publicly – our areas of focus, key accomplishments and goals, systems and structures, etc. but we want folks to have a safe space to share in our committee.
- 2) Communicate with the Committee Chairs and set boundaries. If ever you have a need or a challenge that is impacting either your involvement in this committee or your regular work, please let the Chairs know. If you are uncomfortable approaching the Chair directly, you are welcome to ask a trusted colleague to speak on your behalf.
- 3) Assume Positive Intention – Sometimes, people say things that are easy to take personally, especially if it is criticism of a process, system, or piece of work that you have been involved with previously. However, the goal is to make things better, so assume positive intention as that is most likely true.
- 4) Speak as a human, to other humans: You are on this committee not only because of your professional expertise and experience, but because as a human being your lived experience

brings a perspective of great value to this work. As you are comfortable, please bring your full human to our conversations; don't restrict your participation to "only" your role at SD 71.

- 5) Celebrate and honour our prior achievements and progress. We've come a long way!
- 6) Center Truth and Reconciliation in this work; this is a shared responsibility for all of us.

**Expectations from the Group:**

- 1) Seek clarity and to understand if you do not know. Respond to requests for clarity and understanding positively; everyone brings different ideas and experiences to this work and some of those might not be familiar to everyone, so if you aren't familiar don't be shy about asking.
- 2) Treat others with respect and respect the space for sharing. Don't interrupt and give people space to express themselves.
- 3) Do not take things personally. Use the personal to inform this work but remember that our focus is on our community.
- 4) Be open to being held accountable and hold to account kindly.

**Expectations for the Chairs:**

- 1) Stick to the expectations of the committee.
- 2) Give everyone a chance to be heard.
- 3) Ensure this work is meaningful and tangible – it needs to result in action, not just discussion.
- 4) Walk the Walk of Accessibility – ensure information for this group is accessible, and support access needs and barrier reductions in the way we lead this committee.