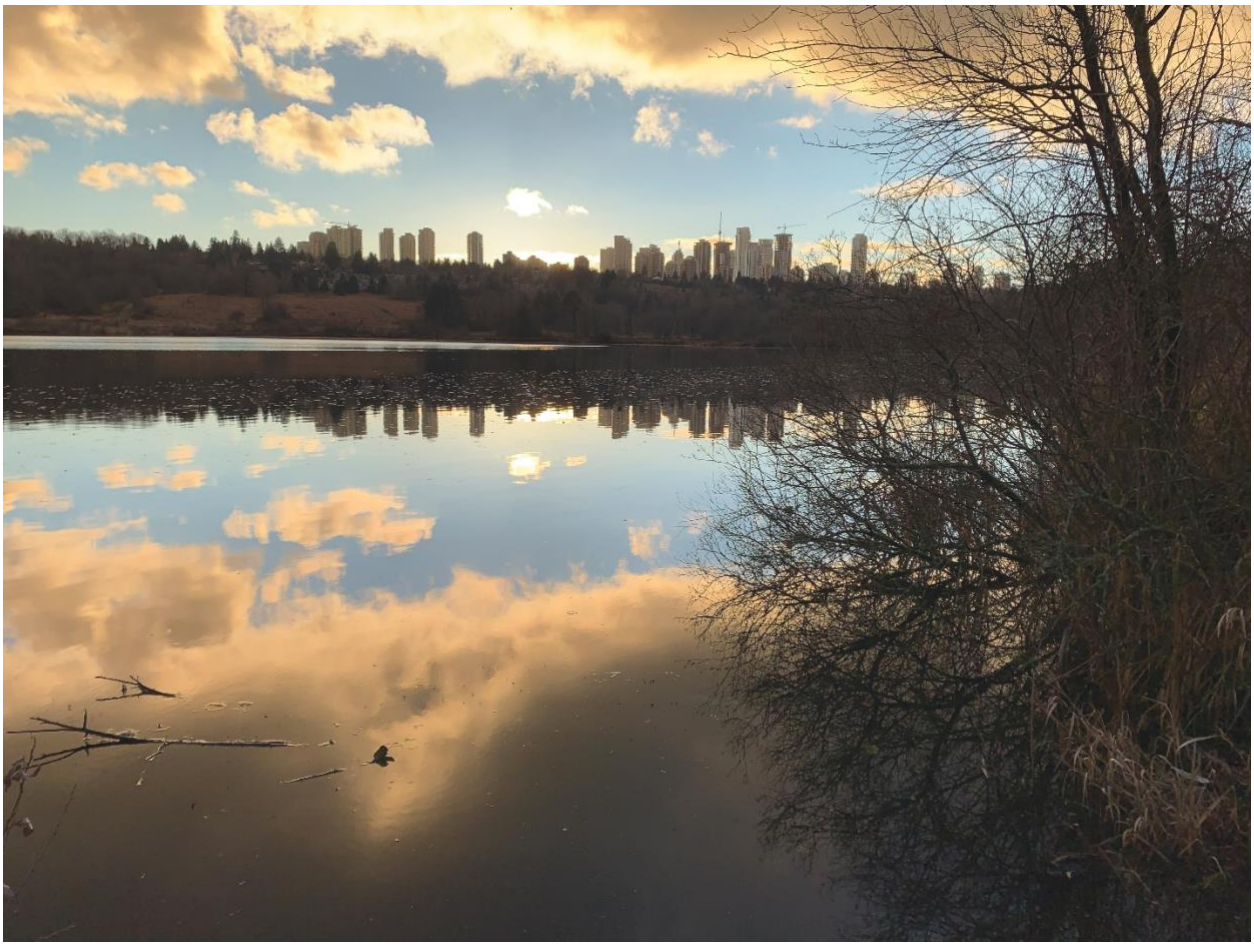
Burnaby School District

Accessibility Plan

2026-2029

Acknowledgment



The Burnaby School District is located on the traditional territories of the hən̓q̓əmiń əm̓ and Sḵwxwú7mesh sníchim-speaking people. As we continue to learn about these traditional territories, and grow as a learning community, our knowledge and understanding of this acknowledgement will evolve.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgment 2

A Message From the Superintendent 4

Who We Are 5

Introduction 6

Accessible British Columbia Act 7

Advisory Committee and Working Group 8

Accessibility Advisory Committee 8

Accessibility Working Group 8

Framework Guiding Our Work 9

Definitions 10

Our Three- Year Plan 11

Priority 1: Understanding Accessibility Together 11

Priority 2: Accessible Learning and Working Environments 11

Priority 3: Inclusive Employment and Organizational Practices 12

Ways to Provide Feedback 12

A Message From the Superintendent

I am proud to introduce our Accessibility Plan. It outlines the steps we will take to further inclusion and improve access, as we strive to support environments where people feel welcomed, valued, able to participate with dignity and confidence, and share their gifts with the community.

The plan is anchored in the belief that all students, their families, and staff members deserve equitable opportunities to engage, learn, work, and succeed.

In creating this plan, we were guided by provincial legislation, the Burnaby School District's Strategic Plan, and, importantly, by the voices and lived experiences of people with disabilities. Their perspectives help us to better understand the barriers that exist today and inform our efforts to create meaningful and lasting change for the future.

I invite you to read the full plan. You'll find ways to provide feedback at the end of this document. Through collaboration, reflection, and action, together we continue to work to build a school district where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential. Accessibility is not simply a legal requirement. It strengthens our learning and working environments for everyone.

While this process is a continuous journey, I'm proud of our ongoing commitment to support an environment where all members of our community have the opportunity to thrive.

Sincerely,

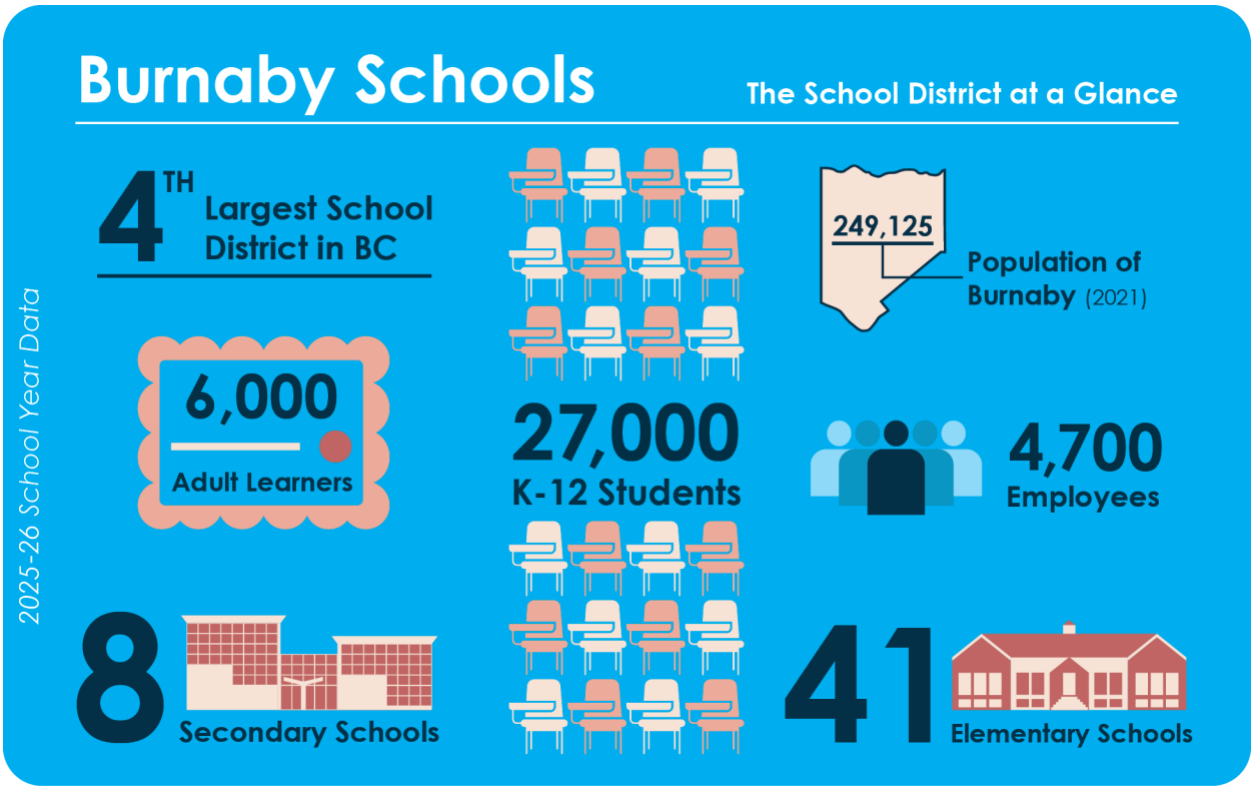
Karim Hachlaf, Superintendent
Burnaby School District

Who We Are

The Burnaby School District is the fourth largest school district in British Columbia, serving more than 27,000 students from Kindergarten through Grade 12. The District operates 41 elementary schools and 8 secondary schools, in addition to a range of District programs and Provincial Resource Programs.

Our District employs more than 4,600 dedicated staff who are committed to fostering student success through a wide variety of educational programs and services.

In addition, the District provides lifelong learning opportunities to more than 6,000 adult learners through the Burnaby Community & Continuing Education program.



Introduction

Burnaby School District's schools and workplaces are for everyone. Accessibility is an essential part of how we support student learning, staff well-being, and meaningful participation across our school communities. This Accessibility Plan reflects the District's commitment to equity, access, and inclusion and supports the Burnaby School District Strategic Plan's value of Belonging and its priorities to Support all Learners, Deepen Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and Foster Healthy Learning Communities by reducing barriers and improving access to learning and working environments.

Disability is part of human diversity. Barriers to accessibility can exist for many reasons and can arise at different times in a person's life. In school communities, barriers may be physical, informational, technological, systemic, sensory, invisible, or attitudinal. When barriers are present, they can affect how students learn, how staff do their work, and how families and community members engage with schools. In support of meaningful participation in District spaces, programs, services, and learning environments, this plan focuses on identifying and preventing barriers to accessibility and working toward removing them.

This Accessibility Plan has been developed in alignment with the Accessible British Columbia Act, which guides public organizations in creating more accessible and inclusive environments. The plan provides a framework for identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility across the District.

The priorities and actions outlined in this three-year plan have been informed by the voices and experiences of students, staff, families, and community members, including people with lived and living experience of disability. Through engagement and consultation, the District has identified areas of focus intended to improve access to learning, working, and participating across school communities. The District's Accessibility Advisory Committee, made up primarily of individuals with lived or living experience of disability, has played an important role in informing the development of this plan. Their insights and perspectives help ensure that accessibility efforts are responsive to the diverse needs and experiences of the Burnaby community.

This plan builds on progress already underway and recognizes that accessibility is an ongoing process of learning, reflection, and improvement. As needs, environments, and experiences change, this plan will continue to be reviewed and updated.

Accessible British Columbia Act

The **Accessible British Columbia Act** and **the Accessible British Columbia Regulation** provide the legislative foundation for this Accessibility Plan. The Act requires school districts to:

- identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility;
- establish an accessibility committee;
- develop and maintain an accessibility plan; and
- provide a way for the public to share feedback about accessibility.

The Accessible British Columbia Act emphasizes collaboration with people with disabilities and is guided by principles of inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design**.** The District is guided by both the requirements and intent of the Act, recognizing accessibility as an essential part of public education.

Accessibility in Burnaby Schools is closely connected to our shared commitment to equity, belonging, and student success. This plan identifies barriers and actions intended to improve accessibility and support learning environments where all students and staff feel safe, valued, and able to participate. Accessibility considerations are woven into how we support learners, foster safe and caring school communities, and create inclusive learning environments that respect dignity, choice, and independence.

Winning design by Alyssa, Burnaby Elementary student for the 2026 BC/Yukon Easter Seals National AccessAbility Week contest, illustrating unity, community, and inclusive play.

Advisory Committee and Working Group

In alignment with the Accessible British Columbia Act, the Burnaby School District has established both:

- an **Accessibility Advisory Committee**, and
- an **Accessibility Working Group.**

Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Accessibility Advisory Committee plays an important role in identifying barriers and advising on priorities and actions to improve accessibility across the District.

The committee is formed in accordance with the Accessible British Columbia Act. To reflect both the spirit and requirements of the legislation:

- At least half of the members are people with disabilities, or people who support individuals with disabilities.
- The voices and experiences represented reflect the diversity of people with disabilities in British Columbia.
- The committee includes Indigenous representation.
- Overall membership reflects the diversity of the broader community served by the Burnaby School District.

Membership includes representatives from the District's employee associations, community organizations, parents, and students.

Accessibility Working Group

The Accessibility Working Group is composed of District leaders and staff from a range of departments and operational areas. The group is responsible for the development, implementation, and monitoring of the Accessibility Plan.

The Working Group collaborates closely with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to ensure that lived experience meaningfully informs the District's decisions and actions.

During the development of this plan, the Accessibility Working Group included representation from:

- Human Resources
- Facilities
- Information Technology
- Business Services
- Inclusive Education
- Instructional Services

Framework Guiding Our Work

The following accessibility legislation has been considered in the development of the Burnaby School District Accessibility Plan:

- **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**
- **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms**
- **Canadian Human Rights Act**
- **Accessible Canada Act**
- **BC Human Rights Code**
- **Accessible British Columbia Act**

The **Accessible British Columbia Regulation** under the Accessible British Columbia Act, came into effect on September 1, 2022. These regulations identify schools as accessible organizations. The goal of the Act is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and involve them in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to their full participation in the life of the province.

The following principles of the Accessible British Columbia Act are adapted from the foundational document BC Framework for Accessibility Legislation.

Adaptability: Accessibility plans should reflect that disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change 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 to promote access and inclusion.

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 principles of intersectionality and diversity within the disability community.

Inclusion: All British Columbians including people with disabilities should be able to participate fully and equally in their communities.

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: The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design defines Universal Design as “the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.” An accessibility plan should be designed to meet the needs of all people who interact with the organization.

Definitions

Sharing definitions can improve understanding and collaboration by creating a common language. Below are definitions of concepts used in the Accessibility Plan.

Accessibility: All people can take part in their communities through learning, work, play, and other daily activities.

Anti-ableism: Actively recognizing, challenging, and removing attitudes, language, policies, and practices that discriminate against or devalue people with disabilities.

Assistive technology: This umbrella term covers the systems and services related to assistive products. Both people with and without disabilities use assistive technology. For example, speech recognition software (like Siri or Alexa) is a form of assistive technology.

Barrier: Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society, including an architectural barrier, an attitudinal barrier, an informational or communications barrier, a physical barrier, a policy, procedure or a practice, or a technological barrier:

- Architectural Barrier: Examples include building designs, areas adjacent to the building, shape of room, and the size of doorways.
- Attitudinal Barrier: Examples include barriers that arises from the attitudes of staff, students and/or other people within the school community including discriminatory behaviors and a lack of disability awareness.
- Communication Barrier: Examples include barriers that arise when communicating or delivering information in person or by telephone, difficulties interacting with teachers, peers, receptionists or other staff, or difficulties receiving training.
- Information Barrier: Examples include barriers that arises from inadequate or incomprehensible signage, fonts, brochures, forms, manuals, websites, fax transmissions, equipment labels, and computer screens.
- Physical Barrier: Examples resulting from objects added to the environment including doors, windows, elevators, furniture, playgrounds, school yards, and portables.
- Policy or Practice Barrier: Rules, regulations, policies, practices, procedures and/or protocols that prevent a person performing the essential requirements of their job, classwork and/or fully participating in the school community.
- Technological Barrier: Barriers that result from the use of inaccessible devices, platforms, software programs, photocopiers, fax machines, telephones and switches, or the lack of appropriate assistive technologies.

Disability: The state of being unable to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction of an impairment and a barrier.

Impairment: Includes, but is not limited to, a physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, or cognitive limitation, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic.

Our Three-Year Plan

Priority 1: Understanding Accessibility Together

Objective: To strengthen shared understanding and collective responsibility for accessible and inclusive events, communications, learning environments, and decision-making processes in the District.

Barrier: Attitudinal

Key Directions:

- Continue to share and promote accessibility resources and practices to build a shared understanding of accessibility.
- Continue delivering structured professional learning on accessibility, including Universal Design for Learning, to support equitable access for all students and staff.
- Continue to build staff awareness of accessibility, anti-ableism, and inclusive language through ongoing professional learning.
- Communicate the Accessibility Plan annually with all staff in the District.
- Support the District's leaders in engaging staff, families, and communities through sharing accessibility information at staff meetings, Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meetings, and Community Council presentations.
- Recognize and promote National Accessibility Week annually, while encouraging ongoing opportunities to elevate disability awareness throughout the year.

Priority 2: Accessible Learning and Working Environments

Objective: To strengthen physical, sensory, and communication accessibility across District sites over time.

Barrier: Physical

Key Directions:

- Refine and implement site-based accessibility scanning processes across the District's sites.
- Use findings from completed scan areas to help identify emerging accessibility priorities and inform future planning decisions.
- Strengthen awareness and use of alternate formats available to support students and promote their use through professional learning and integration into classroom and workplace practices, including magnification tools, colour contrast supports, braille, and large print.
- Explore opportunities to enhance signage and centralized wayfinding across the District's sites, informed by accessibility feedback and site-based needs.

- Continue to promote accessible and inclusive spaces across learning and working environments.

Priority 3: Inclusive Employment and Organizational Practices

Objective: To strengthen and embed accessibility-informed practices across employment, operations, and organizational systems.

Barrier: Policy/practice and Attitudinal barriers

Key Directions:

- Work to explore opportunities to strengthen practices through an accessibility lens.
- Strive to create equitable pathways for career growth, offering all staff, especially those from underrepresented groups, opportunities to contribute and lead.
- Make staff well-being a priority and create an environment where individuals feel supported, valued, and empowered.
- Continue to collect and review accessibility feedback to identify emerging priorities and inform continuous improvement and future planning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Accessibility Advisory Committee meets four times per year to review progress and adjust the plan as needed. The Accessibility Working Group will provide quarterly updates on the feedback received and the progress made.

Ways to Provide Feedback

Online Form: Submit your feedback through our online forms:

- **Accessibility Plan Feedback:** Start Form
- **Barrier Reporting:** Start Form

Within the form, you may attach files to help explain your experience. For example, video recordings, voice recordings, and/or photos.

If American Sign Language (ASL) is your preferred method of communication, you are welcome to upload a video in ASL as part of your submission.

By Email: Email your feedback to: **accessibilityfeedback@burnabyschools.ca**

By Mail:
Attn: Accessibility Committee
Burnaby School District Administration Office
4054 Norfolk Street, Burnaby, BC, V5G 0C3

By Phone: 604-296-6900 ext. 661008