



School District 70 Pacific Rim

Always learning | takaasʔaaqʷin huuhtakšiih | ka kishkaytaynaan | apprendre, toujours

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Accessibility Plan

(FINAL DRAFT)



Territorial Acknowledgement

The Pacific Rim School District is situated on the ha-houlthees of the čišaaʔath, Hupačasath, Tla- o-qui-aht, Yuuʔuʔiʔath, and Huu-ay-aht First Nations and acknowledges that we work alongside these Nuuchah-nulth nations as well as the Ditidaht, Uchucklesaht, Toquaht, Ahousaht, and Hesquiaht First Nations, the Métis Nation of British Columbia and the Alberni-Clayoquot Métis Society to serve the children and youth of the Alberni-Clayoquot region.

The district strives to increase awareness, understanding and integration of Nuuchah-nulth, Métis and Inuit culture, history, and language in all Pacific Rim School District schools as part of our ongoing commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.

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Section 1: Introduction

Message from Leadership

Thank you for taking the time to review the Accessibility Plan for the Pacific Rim School District. The Board of Education has identified, through the 2023/24 – 2027/28 Strategic Plan, that creating safe, welcoming, and modern learning environments is essential to fostering an optimal educational experience. The Board is dedicated to maintaining facilities that are conducive to learning and are equipped with modernized and accessible resources and technology in learning and working environments. In doing so, the Board aims to create a sense of belonging and support for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility for every student, staff member, and family in all schools and workplaces across the district.

A map of Central Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. The landmass is shown in a light teal color, with its intricate coastline and numerous fjords and inlets clearly visible. The surrounding waters are a darker teal. A specific region on the southern coast of the island is highlighted in a solid orange color, indicating the area covered by the Pacific Rim School District. The map is oriented vertically, with the top of the island at the top of the frame.

About our Organization

The Pacific Rim School District covers much of Central Vancouver Island's rugged, picturesque West Coast and serves a regional population of approximately 31,000 residing on the ha- houlthees of the čišaaʔath, hupačasath, Tla-o-qui-aht, Yuuʔuʔiʔath, and Huu-ay-aht First Nations within the communities Port Alberni, Tofino, Ucluelet and Bamfield. Our district respectfully acknowledges that we work alongside all Nuu-chah-nulth Nations as well as the Nuu Chah Nulth Tribal Council, the Alberni Clayoquot Métis Society, and the Port Alberni Friendship Center to serve the children and youth of the Alberni-Clayoquot region.

Our district learning facilities include eight K-7 elementary schools, two 8-12 secondary schools, one K-12 school, one Alternate Education Learning Centre and one Continuing Education Centre serving approximately 4,200 students including school aged and adult learners. In addition, our district's Pacific Rim Children and Families programs include a Family Hub, four StrongStart programs, and growing childcare programs. The school district employs close to 500 employees and has a 2022/2023 overall budget of nearly \$45 million.

Relative to provincial and regional socio-economic indicators, risk factors that impact our communities include a higher unemployment rate, lower levels of education, lower median income, and higher rates of lone-parent families. Thus, the social, emotional, and economic impact on families and learners presents itself daily in schools across the district. Our Indigenous student population is approximately 36%.



Our Accessibility Story

The Board of Education of School District 70 Pacific Rim recognizes how diversity of our School District and classrooms strengthens learning opportunities and fosters learning environments that value the contributions of all members of our school communities.

This recognition and awareness inspired School District 70 Pacific Rim to develop policies in 2022-2023 formalizing the recognition of diversity through policies on Inclusion, Diversity and Equity, Accessibility, Non-Discrimination, Anti-Racism, Newcomers, and Multiculturalism. By formalizing our beliefs and celebration of diversity, in our schools and communities, the school district understands that our actions to this recognition are as important as the policy development.

The Accessible BC Act adopted in 2021 is the catalyst and guide School District 70 Pacific Rim needed to move forward. The School District 70 Pacific Rim Accessibility Plan conveys our commitment to walk this path of improving accessibility to learning , growing and connection with students, families and our communities.

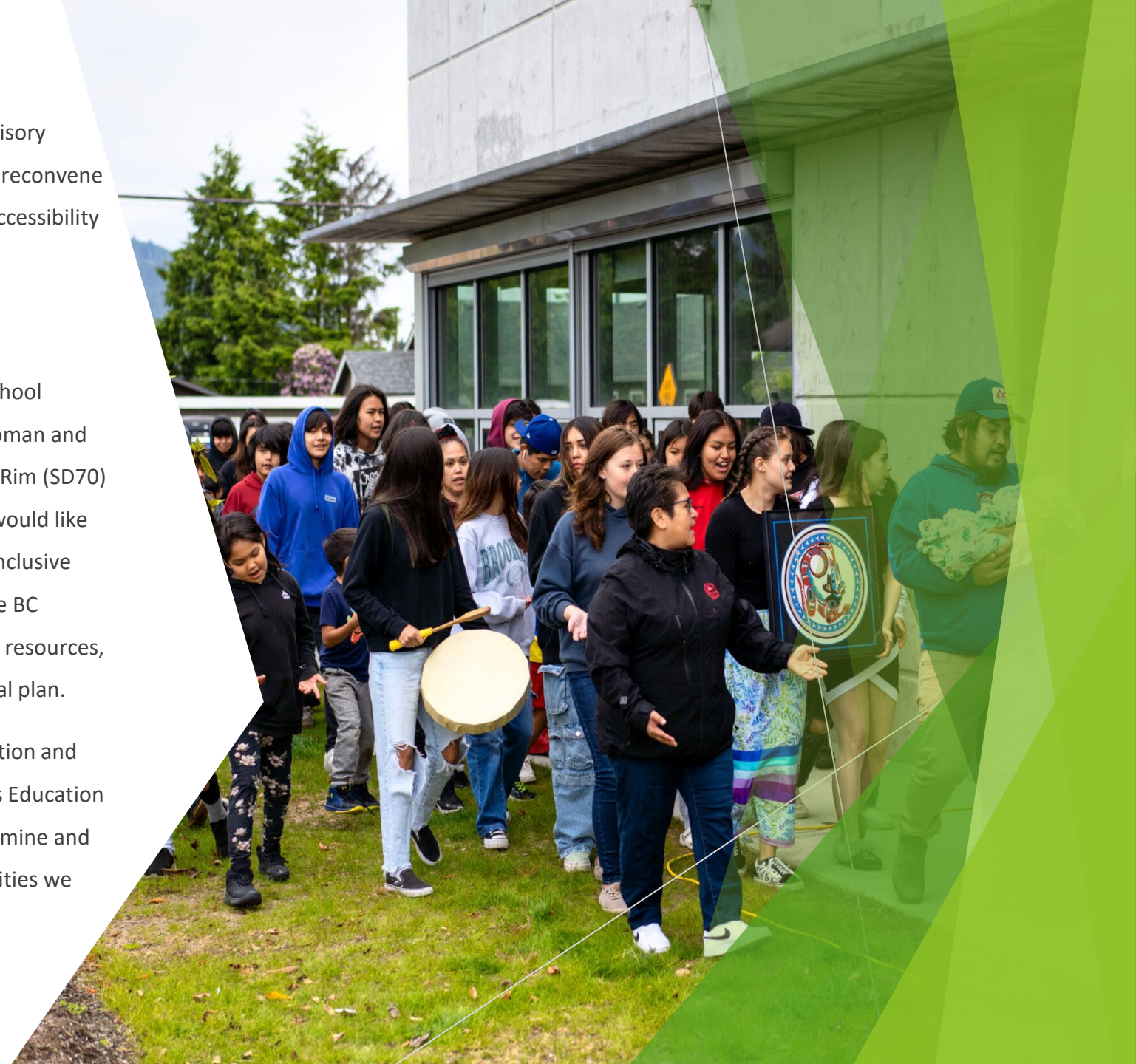
Message from the District Accessibility Advisory Team

School District 70 Pacific Rim's newly assembled District Accessibility Advisory Team (DAAT) came together in June 2023. In September 2023, DAAT will reconvene and craft a message to include in the SD70 Accessibility Plan. The SD70 Accessibility Plan will be updated with this additional message on Oct 1, 2023.

Acknowledgement of Key Contributors

The key contributors to this initial accessibility plan extend beyond the school district team. The Director of Inclusive Education, Vice Principals Heidi Homan and Lisa Fryer, and Counsellor Erin Venn are the key School District 70 Pacific Rim (SD70) contributors of the District Accessibility Advisory Team. This small team would like to extend gratitude and appreciation to BC Council of Administrators of Inclusive Support in Education (BCCAISE), Untapped Accessibility, Disability Alliance BC (DABC), and several school districts in BC for the collaboration, sharing of resources, ideas, and templates which have influenced the development of this initial plan.

Furthermore, School District 70 Pacific Rim looks forward to the consultation and collaboration planned with the School District 70 Pacific Rim's Indigenous Education Advisory Council and Indigenous partners to walk along side us as we examine and plan for increased awareness and improved accessibility for the communities we serve.



Definitions Important to Know

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: A physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, cognitive limitation, whether permanent, temporary or episodic.

Inclusion: “An attitude and approach that embraces diversity and differences and promotes equal opportunities for all. Inclusion is not just about people with disabilities. When our communities include and embrace everyone, we are ALL better able to reach our full potential.” - Inclusion BC

Accessibility: The state of having programs, services and environments that allow all individuals to participate fully in society without encountering barriers.

Barrier: Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability. This includes architectural, attitudinal, information, communications, policy or practice, and technological barriers.

Examples of Disabilities

Mental health disability: Psychiatric disorders such as major depressive disorder, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance addiction

Physical disability: Paraplegia, multiple sclerosis, cancer, epilepsy, diabetes

Sensory disability: Hearing loss, vision loss

Neurodevelopmental: Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, Intellectual disability

Learning disorder: Dyslexia

Cognitive impairment: Brain injury, stroke or dementia

Examples of Barriers

Physical/Environmental

Communication/Information

Technological

Policies and Practices

Attitudinal

Section 2: Framework Guiding our Work

Accessible BC Act – Principles

In developing a proposed accessibility standard, the provincial accessibility committee must consider the following principles:

- A) inclusion;
- B) adaptability;
- C) diversity;
- D) collaboration;
- E) self-determination;
- F) universal design.

<https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/21019>

Other Legislation

- Order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council Number 218

[Order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council Number 218](#)

- Human Rights Code of BC

[Human Rights Code of BC](#)

- BC Accessibility Plan

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/about-the-bc-government/accessible-bc/accessiblebc-plan.pdf>





Existing Policy

SD70 Accessibility Policy: (P:XXX)

The Board of Education of School District 70 Pacific Rim recognizes the diversity of our School District and classrooms strengthens learning opportunities and fosters learning environments that value the contributions of all members of our school communities.

The Board of Education further identifies accessibility, in addition to inclusion, as a core value and supports the principle of accessibility in all aspects of the district's sites, educational programs, classrooms, schools, and community interactions. The values evident in the principle of accessibility honours diversity, equity, safety, and an individual's right to have made accessible to them the school district, school environment, and learning opportunities.

This policy captures protected grounds covered by the Accessible British Columbia Act, the Order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council Number 218, the Human Rights Code of BC and is intended to ensure that all employees, regardless of their personal beliefs, reflect on how their actions and interactions create an accessible, respectful, safe and supportive environment for all members of our school communities. Therefore, the Board of Education expects the principles of accessibility are reflected in the creation of the following: Accessibility District Committee; District Accessibility Plan; Public Feedback Format.

Internal Values, Service Commitment or Vision Statement

Our vision is to be a safe, welcoming, and engaging learning community that is diverse, equitable, inclusive, accessible, and collaborative, and creates belonging and opportunities for all. Our overall intent is to educate students in safe, inclusive, and engaging learning environments where every student develops the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be lifelong learners and responsible members of our global society.



Section 3: About our District Accessibility Advisory Team

Initial Focus of District Accessibility Advisory Team

To increase familiarity with the Accessibility BC Act, School District Pacific Rim policy, to explore and refine the scope and purpose of the advisory team within the school district, to finalize Terms of Reference, and explore ways to seek volunteers more the District Accessibility Advisory Team.

Recruitment

The District Accessibility Advisory Team was initiated by the Director of Inclusive Education, a high school and elementary administrator, and district counsellor. This small SD70 staff group reached out to parents and community members, along with select SD70 staff to make up the initial advisory team.

Recruitment for the Accessibility Advisory Team will be determined and activated within year one of this plan being adopted. The goal is to seek team members that represent the diverse abilities as prescribed by the Accessibility BC Act and that represent the diverse abilities composition found within the province.

District Advisory Team Members and Background

- Parents of students with identified neurodiversity
- Community members who work with individuals with neurodiversity
- Community members with personal neurodiversity
- School District staff that work with students with neurodiversity
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous members on the team.

Section 4: Consultation Conducted

<u>Consultations to Date</u>	Senior Administration Team, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Directors of Instruction	Principals and Vice Principals Association (SD70 PVPA)	SD70 Executive Committee, including union presidents (ADTU & CUPE)	SD70 Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) - Special/Inclusive Education Committee, as per Collective Agreement.
<u>Upcoming Consultations:</u>	Indigenous Education Advisory Council September 2023			
<u>Key Discussion Themes</u>	Accessibility BC Act - what is it, what is meant by “disability”, role and responsibility of School District,	School District Requirements - Part 3 of the Act	Process to develop advisory team and working group	

Section 5: Feedback Mechanism

Feedback Mechanism Development

- A feedback form was created for the individuals to complete and provide feedback on individual experience with accessibility in the school district. A link to the feedback form is provided on the School District 70 Pacific Rim website with a brief description about the feedback form's purpose and how this information will be processed.
- Feedback on the form will be initially screened to ensure personal information is removed from the feedback.
- The feedback information will be shared with the District Accessibility Advisory Team. This team will review this feedback and make recommendations/suggestion/queries to the chair of the advisory team to take back to the school district. These recommendations/suggestion/queries will be then brought to the Accessibility Working Group (to be created in September 2023) to review.
- The Accessibility Working Group will receive feedback and suggestions from the District Accessibility Advisory Team. With this information the Working Group will create potential actionable items that may be brought forward to the Senior Leadership to consult on viability and potential next steps. This information will be brought back to the District Accessibility Advisory Team through the Working Group, with potential options.

[SD70 Pacific Rim Feedback Form](#)



Section 6: Our 3 Year Plan

Summary

1. Organize and complete an Accessibility Needs Assessment of School District 70 Pacific Rim sites.

- Information will be gathered through a formal assessment and review of all aspects of SD70, using the types of barriers listed in this document in section 1.
- Feedback and suggestions will be made by District Accessibility Advisory Team

2. District Accessibility Advisory Team Membership and Function

- Recruitment – team expansion, representation
- Terms of Reference Review
- Gather feedback – explore ways for Advisory Team to gather information about lived experiences in School District 70 Pacific Rim

3. Administrative Procedures

- Develop Administrative Procedures to align practices and procedures with the Accessibility Plan, Strategic Plan and District Policies that directly influence/impact accessibility.
- Develop procedures to explain the function of various teams, working groups as it relates to accessibility.

4. Develop a School District 70 Pacific Rim Staff Working Group

- Create a School District 70 Pacific Rim Working Group, consisting of SD70 staff to bridge with the feedback and suggestions from the District Accessibility Advisory Team.
- Develop scope of group for actionable items and reporting process to the District Accessibility Advisory Team.



Section 7: Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring

A monitoring report will be produced by the Director of Instruction for Inclusive Education on an annual basis and will be delivered at the [first accessibility committee meeting of the fiscal year]. This review will include consultation with the District Accessibility Advisory Team and the Indigenous Education Advisory Team. The goals set out for School District 70 Pacific Rim are embedded in the SD70 Operational Plan. This plan is reviewed throughout the year with an annual review to be reported to the SD70 Board of Education annually. The monitoring report will be shared with the School District 70 Executive Committee and with the SD70 Board of Education.

Evaluating

In the annual review conducted by the Director of Instruction for Inclusive Education, an evaluation of the accessibility action items and goals will take place. The outcomes of the evaluation will influence any amendments to the Operational Plan. This review will be shared with the District Accessibility Advisory Team annually to inform and seek advice for future actionable items.

On September 1st (every three years from its date of adoption) School District 70 Pacific Rim will make public, the draft SD70 Accessibility Plan. The final, approved SD70 Accessibility Plan will be made public by October 1st of the same year.

Section 8: How to give us feedback.

School District 70 Pacific Rim would like to hear back from you! The District provides different ways in which you can provide feedback to us about your accessibility experience in our district. Here are the ways you can reach us:

- [SD70 Pacific Rim Feedback Form](#)

This form is found on the School District Pacific Rim website:

- **Email:** daat@sd70.bc.ca

Emails will be received by secretarial staff who will then forward to the appropriate department. Please make sure the subject line indicates the focus of your feedback. (example – “accessible parking stalls at School Board Office”)

- **Phone:** If you prefer a phone call, please call the Board Office at **(250) 723-3565** to be connected to the Director of Instruction for Inclusive Education.

Thank you for sharing your accessibility experience with us. We strive to learn and improve the accessibility to the students, families and communities we serve.

