



Policy Principle

This policy principle was approved by the Board of Directors at their November 25, 2018 meeting.

Renewed by the Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting on March 6, 2021 without any changes.

Policy A05: Visually Impaired Students

Updated: March 6th, 2021

Expires: March 6th, 2022

WHEREAS the New Brunswick Human Rights Act recognizes that all persons are equal, regardless of physical or mental disability;

WHEREAS postsecondary institutions are considered a service for the public under Section 6 of the Human Rights Act, they have a legal obligation to accommodate students with a disability;

WHEREAS discrimination is differential treatment of, or failure to accommodate, an individual on the basis of physical or mental disability;

WHEREAS less than 15% of blind or visually impaired individuals have a postsecondary degree;

WHEREAS students who are blind or visually impaired need access to course materials in their format of choice at the same time as their sighted counterparts;

WHEREAS converting a textbook to braille costs a student approximately \$50 per page, costing up to \$20,000 per textbook;

WHEREAS the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) Library and Braille Service is responsible for the provision of alternate format to support the needs of students who are visually impaired in Atlantic Canada and is organized by the Ministers of Education in the Atlantic provinces;

WHEREAS this program is only accessible to students through their public education and does not include postsecondary students;



WHEREAS the Alternative Education Resources for Ontario (AERO) was created through a partnership between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development to provide students with perceptual disabilities with the educational resources they need from kindergarten to post-doctorate;

WHEREAS AERO is based on collaboration between the Government of Ontario, textbook publishers and Ontario's publicly funded universities to provide students with high quality course material and resources in the alternative format they need, faster; and

WHEREAS major textbook publishers are already partnered with AERO, meaning accessible versions of textbooks are already created and available, but are not available to New Brunswick students.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the New Brunswick Student Alliance advocate that the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour invest in the APSEA Library to have accessible textbooks available for post-secondary students in New Brunswick.