



REPORT TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES June 23, 2020

Deb Crawford, Director of Education

SUBJECT: Annual Accessibility Plan 2020 to 2021

PREPARED BY: Lisa Demers, Superintendent of Education

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers and to promote their full participation in the life of the province. To this end, the ODA requires each school board to prepare an annual accessibility plan; to consult with people with disabilities in the preparation of this plan; and to make the plan public.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (the "AODA") is a provincial Act with the purpose of developing, implementation and enforcing accessibility standards to make the province accessible for all people with disabilities by 2025.

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board has integrated both accessibility plans (ODA and AODA) to meet our obligations under the above noted Acts and will continue to develop future plans accordingly.

The attached Accessibility Plan for 2020 to 2021 describes the process by which the St. Clair Catholic District School Board will identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. The plan will review the efforts taken at the St. Clair Catholic District School Board to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities during the past year and outlines the policies, procedures, programs, practices and services that the St. Clair Catholic District School Board will review in the upcoming school year (2020-2021) to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board continues to recognize the need for improvement of access to school board facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community with disabilities. The plan also reports on the participation of people with disabilities in the development and review of the annual accessibility plan and the consultation of community partners to ensure that school board policies and procedures are consistent with the principles of accessibility.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The Accessibility Working Group identified five barriers for people with disabilities. The following measures were taken to address these five barriers:

Attitudinal

- A number of professional development opportunities and training have been provided for all staff throughout the year. These include: Student Wellbeing; Mentally Healthy Schools; Suicide Prevention Protocols; Trauma; Resiliency; Physical and Emotional Health Literacy; Parent Engagement; Self Regulation; Wellbeing Pathway to Care; Mental Health Learning Series;
- Behaviour Management Systems Training; Applied Behaviour Analysis; Universal Supports; Structured Learning and Assistive Technology training. **See Appendix 4: Inclusionary Workshops and Professional Development for Board Employees 2019-2020.**
 - The St. Clair Catholic District School Board continues to work in partnership with local associations, community partners and our coterminous Board to provide professional development opportunities for students, parents and staff. The Lambton Kent District School Board and St. Clair Catholic District School Board are working with Chatham Kent Public Health Unit on a focus on physical literacy and its impact on wellbeing and student achievement.
 - Our board is working together with community partners on developing strategies to address the most vulnerable students in their communities (e.g. ACCESS CANADA in Sarnia-Lambton, trauma informed schools).

Architectural

- Facilities Services worked in consultation with the Special Education Department and school communities to plan and provide accessible facilities ensuring that all renovations and additions meet building code requirements.
- Facilities Services addressed accessibility inside, outside and around buildings.

Technological

- Both small and large group training sessions on assistive technology have been provided upon request to staff and students on an individual school basis by the Itinerant Assistive Technology Teacher. The focus has been on a range of software programs including:
 - *Boardmaker Studio*
 - *Read and Write for Google* (both voice to text and text to speech capabilities).
- The Program Resource Teacher as well as the Itinerant Assistive Technology Teacher continue to provide additional training to Grades 2-6 Classroom Teachers and students, specifically with Read and Write for Google. This also provided additional support for students in Grades 3 and 6, in preparation for the EQAO assessment.
- Students with Special Equipment Amount (SEA) funded assistive technology continue to be provided with several hours of individualized training by the Itinerant Assistive Technology Teacher as well as a SEA Technology Trainer. School staff were invited to participate in the training with the students. *Read and Write for Google* has been the focus.

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- In order to provide a continuity of support for the exceptional learners in the school and home environments, training opportunities for parents on various programs are available upon request by the individual school principal. *Read & Write for Google* continues to be available system-wide, as well as for home use. This program is accessed through the student's SCCDSB account. Parents of children with SEA funded assistive technology may request to attend their child's training sessions.
- A process has been developed to ensure that SEA equipment is upgraded as needed. Equipment is upgraded if there are changes in student need or if the equipment is inoperative.

Information and Communication

- The Information Services Team deployed additional WIFI access points as requested to facilitate increased usage of the Board's WIFI networks.
- Implemented changes to software images aimed at improving boot-up times.
- Obtained feedback from end-users via thought exchange data collection approach to assess effectiveness of current systems in order to inform and direct planning priorities for future implementations. Information and feedback sessions with users in planning stages.
- Prioritized deployment of new hardware based on feedback from school based staff

Policy

All policies are reviewed on a cyclical basis and will include consideration of Equity and Inclusion and Accessibility legislation.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the St. Clair Catholic District School Board receive the report: *Annual Accessibility Plan 2020 to 2021*, for information.