



Date: **June 21, 2022**
Prepared by: **Lisa Demers, Superintendent of Education**
Subject: **Annual Accessibility Plan 2022-2023**

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 2021 to 2022 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 (2022-2023) 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 considers five barriers for people with disabilities. The following measures were taken to address these five barriers:

Attitudinal

- A number of professional development and training opportunities for system leaders from experts such as Dr. Noumann Ashraf, Kevin Cameron, Dr. Jean Clinton, Dr. Kim Schonert-Reichl, Chris D'Souza in the areas of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion have been provided for staff. Topics included are Mentally Healthy Schools; Understanding Trauma through an inclusionary lens; School Mental Health Ontario Toolkit resources; Social Emotional Learning; Indigenous Education; Right to Read and Checking your Bias
- *Stronger Together* student census completion in May to provide information to better support marginalized students
- Maintenance of the learning hub for staff and the learning at home hub for parents, focusing on special education resources such as mental health, wellbeing, social emotional learning, autism, etc.

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

- Review software images and incorporate changes identified to improve boot-up times, efficiency and to modernize options for learners and staff
- Worked collaboratively with the Special Education team to leverage software ensuring accessibility for learners

Information and Communication

- The Information Services Team deployed additional WIFI access points as requested to facilitate increased usage of the Board's WIFI networks. This network also supports the use of personal electronic devices via our BYOD program. SD WAN project to ensure 1MB/S per student at all locations.
- Prioritized deployment of new hardware based on feedback from school-based staff



- 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.

Policy

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

Recommendations

That the St. Clair Catholic District School Board receive the report: *Annual Accessibility Plan 2022-2023* **for information.**