



Date: **June 20, 2023**  
Prepared by: **Lisa Demers, Superintendent of Education**  
Subject: **Annual Accessibility Plan 2023 to 2024**

## **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.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (the "AODA") is a provincial Act with the purpose of developing, implementing 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 2023 to 2024 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 (2023-2024) 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.

## **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, Dr. Kim Schonert-Reichl, Michael Way Skinner, Dr. Josephine

Lombardi, Anne Jamieson, and Melissa Mikel, in the areas of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion have been provided for staff.

- *Stronger Together* workforce census completion in April to provide information to better support our diverse staff.
- Hiring of Graduation Coach for Black Students in secondary schools.
- Parent Engagement Facilitator to reach out to families.
- Hiring of English Language Learners teacher.

## 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. This year, a large number of policies were reviewed through the lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

## Recommendations

**That the St. Clair Catholic District School Board receive the report: *Annual Accessibility Plan 2023 to 2024* for information.**