



ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
Lighting the Way ~ Rejoicing in Our Journey

MEDIA RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC IDENTIFIES BARRIERS AS PART OF ACCESSIBILITY PLAN UPDATE FOR 2014-2015

Each year, school boards in Ontario are required under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* to review their accessibility plans and find ways to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities. The act also requires boards to involve persons with disabilities in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers.

“Through consultation, St. Clair Catholic has a plan which is well-researched,” says Dan Parr, Director of Education. “We have identified barriers that, once addressed, will greatly improve opportunities for all stakeholders to fully participate in the life and business of St. Clair Catholic.”

Barriers include attitudinal, technological, information and communication, architectural and policy. Some of the highlights of this year’s report include:

Attitudinal

- Students in grades 4 through 8 in all schools across the System participated in a Mental Health and Bullying survey in the fall of 2013. As well as the School Climate Surveys in the last quarter of 2013 with inclusive questions pertaining to Equity and Inclusion.

Technological

- Both small and large group training sessions on assistive technology have been provided to 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*, *Dragon Naturally Speaking 11* (voice to text), *Word Q* (word prediction software) and *Worksheet Wizard*.
- Students with Special Equipment Amount (SEA) funded assistive technology were provided with several hours of individualized training by the Itinerant Assistive Technology Teacher as well as a SEA Technology Trainer. Parents and school staff were invited to participate in the training with the students.
- Reviewed Board to Board and elementary to secondary transfer process for students with SEA equipment to ensure prompt response to the needs of the incoming or outgoing student.

Information and Communication

- Increased device to student ratios in all elementary 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.

Policy

- Ensure the Annual Accessibility Plan is available on the Board Website to be accessible.

“I want to thank Superintendent of Education Ann Sutton and her team for their tremendous work on this annual report,” says Mr. Parr.

The *Annual Accessibility Plan 2014-2015* will now be filed with the Ministry of Education.