



Niagara Catholic DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN (Working Document)

**Submitted to
NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
December 2012 to December 2017[†]**

**Prepared by
Accessibility Planning Committee**

**In accordance with
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation**

April 2015

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Aim

This multi-year Accessibility Plan is developed in accordance with the Integration Accessibility Standards Regulation under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. It incorporates the intentions of the Board to meet its obligations under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*. The Plan describes the measures that the Board will take over the five year period from 2012-2017 to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who work, learn and participate in the School Board community and environment including students, staff, parents and guardians, volunteers and visitors to the Board and its schools. The plan will be guided by the Niagara Catholic District School Board Accessibility Standards Policy and Procedures No. 800.8.

1.0 Objectives

This Plan:

- 1.1** Describes the process by which the Niagara Catholic District School Board will identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- 1.2** Reviews recent efforts of the Niagara Catholic District School Board to remove and prevent barriers;
- 1.3** Describes the measures the Niagara Catholic District School Board will take in the period 2012-2017 to identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- 1.4** Makes a commitment to provide an annual status report on the Board's implementation of the multi-year accessibility plan;
- 1.5** Makes a commitment to review and update the multi-year accessibility plan at least once every 5 years;
- 1.6** Describes how the Niagara Catholic District School Board will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

2.0 Commitment to Accessibility Planning

This document has been written with the intent that the recommendations prepared by the Accessibility Planning Committee will be presented to Administrative Council and to the Board of Trustees.

The Niagara Catholic District School Board is committed to:

- 2.1** Maintaining an Accessibility Planning Committee;
- 2.2** Continuing the process of consulting with the Special Education Advisory Committee and with persons with disabilities;
- 2.3** Ensuring, wherever practicable, that Board policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the principles of accessibility and inclusive/universal design. The Accessibility Planning Committee will provide input re: accessibility issues, where appropriate, with regard to new policies and procedures and to those under review;
- 2.4** Improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community. Consideration of ongoing identification of barriers will be the responsibility of the Accessibility Planning Committee and will, wherever practicable, be incorporated in the multi-year plan.

The Director of Education has authorized the Accessibility Planning Committee to review and update the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan that will enable the Niagara Catholic District School Board to meet these commitments.

3.0 Description of the Niagara Catholic District School Board

Following government legislation entitled the “Fewer School Boards Act,” the total number of school boards in Ontario was reduced to 72. The aforementioned legislation also impacted the Niagara Catholic District School Board. The Niagara Catholic District School Board was established on January 1, 1998, as a result of the amalgamation of the former Lincoln County Roman Catholic Separate School Board and Welland County Roman Catholic Separate School Board, in compliance with government legislation.

The Niagara Catholic District School Board, consisting of eight secondary schools and forty-nine elementary schools, currently serves 22,213 students and 3,133 employees. The philosophy of the Niagara Catholic District School Board is that learners are called by God to fulfill their potential; all learners are gifted by God and can learn; learning is an interactive process; learning is an enriching experience; and learning is for eternity. Furthermore, students, regardless of special talents or challenging needs can grow and they can grow best by attending schools, which offer accessible programs, in accessible settings, through accessible services.

The Niagara Catholic District School Board, through the charisms of faith, social justice, support and leadership, nurtures an enriching Catholic learning community for all to reach their full potential and become living witnesses of Christ.

4.0 Members of Accessibility Planning Committee

Planning Committee Members	
Yolanda Baldasaro	Senior Administration; Superintendent of Education
Cathy McMullin	Applied Behaviour Analysis Supervisor; Special Education
Shonna K Daly	Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee
Jennifer McArthur	First Vice President OECTA Elementary
Jennifer Pellegrini	Communications Officer
Frances Brockenshire	Vice-Principal; Saint Michael Catholic High School
Theo Dagenais	Principal; St. John Bosco Catholic School
Amy Dowd	Coordinator; Special Education
Jayne Evans	Consultant; Arts/FSL/ESL
Mark Ferri	Manager; Purchasing Services
Tara Formisano	Teacher; Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Bill Helmeczi	Member; Special Education Advisory Committee
Sheila Lohnes	Supervisor; Library Information Centres
Sabina Bernardi	Human Resources Administrator
Grant Frost	Education Technology Officer
Lori Powell	Executive Director; Niagara Student Transportation Services
Janice Barretto-Mendonca	Consultant; Equity and Student Leadership
Scott Whitwell	Controller of Facilities Services

5.0 Strategy for prevention and removal of barriers

The principles of inclusionary practice, freedom from barriers and accessible environments informs all Niagara Catholic District School Board policies, programs, procedures and services. Through the Annual Accessibility Plan implemented under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*, the Niagara Catholic District School Board’s programming, policies and practices have been assessed to ensure continuous improvement in accessibility. This process will continue through the establishment of a multi-year accessibility plan which places particular emphasis on the provisions of the regulations made under the AODA with regard to customer service, information and communications, employment, school transportation and the design of public spaces.

6.0 Barrier Identification Methodologies

The Accessibility Planning Committee uses the following barrier-identification methods:

Methodology	Description	Status
Feedback process	Information received through Feedback – Accessibility link on Board website.	Ongoing
Accessibility Planning Committee regular meetings	Potential actions re: identified accessibility issues discussed within multi-year strategy	Ongoing
Accessibility Planning Committee also considers Facilities report re: physical environment	Surveys of buildings considered and identification of criteria for action within multi-year strategy	Ongoing
Communication steps: Board, SEAC, Employee Groups, Public	Opportunity for input or feedback prior to approval and posting on website	To be scheduled, annual expectation

7.0 Recent Barrier Removal Achievements

The most recent Annual Accessibility Plan developed in accordance with the Ontarians with Disability Act (ODA) identified a range of barriers and appropriate strategies for their removal. The detailed achievements are set out in the following chart:

Type of Barrier	Location	Action Taken
Physical/Architectural	Identified schools as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment recommended through certified professionals • Mobility training for blind and low vision • Specialized transportation • Accessible parking • Sensory rooms • Communication devices for fire alarms
Physical/Architectural	See Appendix A Accessibility Projects Completed 2013-2014	
Information and Communication	All School Board Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The front doors at all elementary schools are complete – both doors open with a single card reader. Secondary schools and the Catholic Education Centre are on a schedule where front doors are unlocked during the day.
Information and communication	Niagara Catholic Board Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update of JavaScript file that supports keyboard accessible menu dropdowns (navigation). • The Board website's menu was successfully tested using the following Internet Browsers: Google Chrome and Internet Explorer, as well a Screen Reader: 64-bit Demo of JAWS 15.

Information and Communication	Identified schools/students as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of electrical receptacles for the use of identified communication devices • Provision of interpreter service upon request • FM systems
Information and Communication	Board-wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Workplace Response Plan • All Emergency Procedures Plans for Public Safety Information • Alternative formats available upon request • Accessibility link on Board website
Attitudinal	Board-wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing training in Accessible Customer Service • Creating caring and safe school environments through professional development, School Improvement Plan Process, Safe Schools Surveys • Ongoing Accessibility Awareness Training for Educators. • Ongoing Accessibility Awareness Training as it Pertains to the Human Rights Code. • Targeting ways to improve parent engagement and student voice (BIPSA) • Bi-Annual School Climate Survey • Ongoing Cultural Competency Training
Technology	Identified schools/students as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology to support individual needs. (hardware, software)
Systemic	Board-wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board policies, guidelines,

		<p>protocols and procedures that reflect accessibility needs (e.g. Accessibility Customer Service; revised Feb. 2015, Guidelines for Certified Service Animals)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular Special Education Advisory Committee meetings • Compliance with Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation timelines to date (Employment, Transportation, Information & Communication and Design of Public Spaces Standards)
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New school construction has adhered to the current building code and includes level access to schools, automatic door openers, elevators in schools of more than one floor, accessible washrooms.

8.0 Barriers to be addressed under the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11 filed in June, 2011, and Ontario Regulation 413/12 (amendment to 191/11) to reflect changes to 191/11 and inclusion of The Design of Public Spaces Standard, pursuant to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 identified specific requirements to achieve accessibility in the areas of:

- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces

These requirements build on the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service which came into force in 2007.

Niagara Catholic District School Board endeavors, through this Multi-year Accessibility Plan for the period 2012-2017, to take action to address barriers to accessibility related to the Standards areas of current Regulations. This is in addition to ongoing work the Board is undertaking with regard to identification and removal of barriers in the Board’s physical environment.

2012-2013

Type of Barrier	Location	Action	Effective Date
Systemic	Board-wide	Develop Accessibility Policy Statement	January 1, 2013 Completed
Attitudinal – Information and Communications	Board-wide	Develop Administrative Procedures re: Accessible Information and Communications	January 1, 2013 Completed
Attitudinal – Employment	Board-wide	Develop Administrative Procedures re: Accessible Employment	January 1, 2013 Completed
Systemic	Board-wide	Review procurement practices to incorporate accessibility criteria for goods, services, facilities	January 1, 2013 Ongoing
Information and Communication	Board-wide	Provide accessibility awareness training for all educators/ classroom-based staff on accessible instruction and program delivery	Ongoing 2012-2013
Information and Communication	Board-wide	Review practices to ensure readiness to provide educational resources or materials, student records and information on program requirements in accessible formats upon request	January 1, 2013 Completed

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Physical	See Appendix B Accessibility Projects Completed 2013-2014 (as of February 11, 2014)	Ongoing 2013-2014
Type of Barrier	Location	Action
Information and Communication	Identified schools/students as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of electrical receptacles for the use of identified communication devices
Information and Communication	All School Board Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The front doors at all elementary schools are complete – both doors open with a single card reader. Secondary schools and the CEC are on a schedule where front doors are unlocked during the day.
Information and communication	All School Board Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update of JavaScript file that supports keyboard accessible menu dropdowns (navigation). • The Boards website’s menu was successfully tested using the following Internet Browsers: Google Chrome and Internet Explorer, as well a Screen Reader: 64- bit Demo of Jaws 15.

2013-2014

Type of Barrier	Location	Action	Effective Date
Systemic - attitudinal	Board-wide	Provide training to all staff, volunteers on accessibility standards requirements and on Human Rights Code provisions re: disabilities and ensure third-party providers have similar training. On-line training	Ongoing 2013-2014 Ongoing

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		program completed Feb. 2015.	
Information and Communication	Board Offices	Review process for receiving/responding to feedback to ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities and readiness to provide accessible formats and communication supports upon request. Notify the public re: above.	January 1, 2014 Completed
Information and Communication	Board-wide	Review Board and school websites to assess level of accessibility. Ensure that new sites and web content published after Jan 1, 2012 meet WCAG 2.0, Level A standards.	January 1, 2014 Completed
Systemic - Employment	Board-wide	Review and update Human Resources procedures and practices with regard to recruitment, job accommodations, alternative accessible formats and communication supports, individual accommodation plans, return to work, performance appraisal, career or professional development, redeployment	January 1, 2014 Ongoing
Information and Communication – Student Transportation	Board-wide (Niagara Student Transportation Services and Special Education Department and Elementary and Secondary Schools)	Consult with parents and develop individual school transportation plans for students with disabilities, clarifying roles and responsibilities. NSTS receives daily student updates from Maplewood. Changes are flagged by NSTS to inform the need for student update	January 1, 2014 Ongoing
Information and Communication	School Libraries	Review the readiness of school libraries to	2015 Completed

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		provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of print resources upon request	
Physical	See Appendix C Future Accessibility Projects for Consideration		Ongoing 2015-2016

2014-2015

Type of Barrier	Location	Action	Effective Date
Information and Communication	Board-wide	Identify and have ready access to resources that enable the Board to provide information and communication supports upon request and in a timely manner to persons with disabilities. (Consider access to board meetings/school events)	January 1, 2015 Completed
Information and Communication	School Libraries	Ensure readiness of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of print resources upon request. Catholic Resource Centre (CRC) purchase of large print materials, electronic books and digital books which are available to all students through classroom teacher. Sourcing alternative formats throughout school board, public libraries and other community agencies to meet student need. Access Learning Video Streaming - Ontario Curriculum content available to all staff and students. Further inquiry to determine if	January 1, 2015 Completed

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		closed captioning and described video available.	
Information and Communication	Board-wide	Review accessibility features of all updates and purchases related to board and school websites in anticipation of WCAG, 2.0, Level AA standards. Exploring increased methods of providing accessible ready formats, i.e. verbal descriptions of photos with captioning. All public facing websites are in compliance. Ongoing exploration of school board intranet as it relates to accessibility.	Ongoing preparation for 2021 deadline
Physical	See Appendix C Future Accessibility Projects for Consideration		Ongoing 2015-2016

2015-2016

Type of Barrier	Location	Action	Effective Date
Systemic	Board-wide	Accessibility Awareness Training for Educators will be converted to on-line training and will become part of Human Resources New Hire package. Accessibility Awareness Training as it pertains to the Human Rights Code is now available as an on-line training program and is completed by all employees both new and existing.	Ongoing
Information and Communication	School Libraries	Review status of capacity of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of digital or	Ongoing preparation for 2020 deadline

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		multimedia resources upon request in anticipation of 2020 deadline	
Information and Communication	Board-wide	Review accessibility features of all updates and purchases related to board and school websites in anticipation of WCAG, 2.0, Level AA standards	Ongoing preparation for 2021 deadline
Physical	See Appendix C Future Accessibility Projects for Consideration		Ongoing 2016-2017

2016-2017

Type of Barrier	Location	Action	Effective Date
Systemic	Board-wide	Continue to ensure all new staff; teaching and non-teaching, complete Customer Service Training, Accessibility Awareness Training For Educators (where appropriate) and Accessibility Awareness Training as it pertains to the Human Rights Code Training.	Ongoing 2016-2017
Systemic	Board-wide	Review status of Board accessibility policies and procedures and update as required	Ongoing 2016-2017
Type of Barrier	Location	Action	Effective Date
Information and Communication	School Libraries	Review status of capacity of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of all resources upon request	Ongoing preparation for 2020 deadline
Information and Communication	Board-wide	Review accessibility features of all updates and purchases related to board and school websites in anticipation of WCAG,	Ongoing preparation for 2021 deadline

		2.0, Level AA standards	
Physical	See Appendix C Future Accessibility Projects for Consideration		Ongoing

10.0 Review and Monitoring Process

The Accessibility Planning Committee meets regularly during the year to review progress and evaluate the effectiveness of implementation of barrier-removal and prevention strategies and to plan for increased accessibility throughout the Board.

The Accessibility Planning Committee will ensure that in respect of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan the following steps take place:

- (a) An annual status report on the progress of the measures taken to implement the plan is prepared.
- (b) At least once every 5 years the plan is reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities, with the Board’s Special Education Advisory Committee and other relevant committees.

11.0 Communication of the Plan

This publication is available through the Niagara Catholic District School Board’s

- website www.niagaracatholic.ca → [Accessibility](#)
- Catholic Education Centre, 427 Rice Road, Welland, Ontario

Accessible formats available upon request. Contact the Communications Department.

Niagara Catholic District School Board will post an annual status report on the progress of the Multi-year Accessibility Plan on the Board’s website.

We welcome your comments and feedback about accessibility issues at Niagara Catholic. If you have comments or suggestions, please write to us at accessibility.compliance@ncdsb.com or by contacting: the Communications Department at the Catholic Education Centre.

Appendix A

Accessibility Projects Completed 2013 - 2014

SN#	Facility	Description
148	St. Kevin	sensory room/main entrance automatic door operator
120	Mary Ward	side entrance accessibility
127	St. Mary (NF)	automatic door operators - main & playground entrance
133	St. John Bosco	automatic door operators - main & playground entrance
132	St. Ann (F)	ramp to portables
127	St. Mary (NF)	renovated accessible washroom
195	St. John (B)	ramp & operator to main entrance
145	St. Andrew	automatic door operators - main & playground entrance
280	Saint Francis	sensory room/accessible washroom/spec. ed. renovation

Appendix B

Accessibility Projects Completed 2014 - 2015

SN#	Facility	Description
115	St. Philomena	accessible washroom renovation
115	St. Philomena	ramp and operator to main entrance
116	St. Joseph	sensory room
118	Our Lady of Mount Carmel	ramp to gym
145	St. Augustine	sensory room
180	St. James	automatic door operator to side entrances
180	St. James	build accessible washroom

Appendix C

Future Accessibility Projects For Consideration

SN#	Facility	Description
116	St. Joseph (Stevensville)	provide lift to stage
116	St. Joseph (Stevensville)	revise interior ramp for minimum 1:12 slope
128	St. Patrick (NF)	provide elevator
129	Loretto Catholic	retrofit to allow barrier free emergency evacuation from second floor
139	Monsignor Clancy	retrofit to allow barrier free emergency evacuation from second floor
148	St. Kevin	provide barrier free access to second floor
171	Assumption	provide barrier-free lift for stage
175	St. Alfred	retrofit to allow barrier free emergency evacuation from second floor
176	St. Ann (SC)	retrofit to allow barrier free emergency evacuation from second floor
179	St. Denis	retrofit to allow barrier free emergency evacuation from second floor
181	St. Nicholas	provide barrier free access to second floor
182	St. Peter	retrofit to allow barrier free emergency evacuation from second floor
183	St. Theresa	provide lift to stage
184	Mother Teresa	provide sensory room
197	St. Mark	install 2 sets of magnetic hold-open devices
197	St. Mark	retrofit to allow barrier free emergency evacuation from second floor
220	Saint Michael	retrofit to allow barrier free emergency evacuation from second floor
230	Saint Paul	retrofit to allow barrier free emergency evacuation from second floor
250	Notre Dame College	retrofit to allow barrier free emergency evacuation from second floor
250	Notre Dame College	provide barrier free access to second floor
260	Denis Morris	install automatic door openers at main office and attendance office
260	Denis Morris	retrofit to allow barrier free emergency evacuation from second floor
270	Holy Cross	retrofit to allow barrier free emergency evacuation from second floor
280	Saint Francis	retrofit to allow barrier free emergency evacuation from second floor