



# **Niagara Catholic DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

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## **MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN (Working Document)**

**Submitted to  
NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
December 2012 to December 2017<sup>†</sup>**

**Prepared by  
Accessibility Planning Committee**

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

**June 2016**

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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 Guidelines 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 21,640 students and 3,233 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**

<b>Planning Committee Members</b>	
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	OECTA Elementary
Jennifer Pellegrini	Communications Officer
Frances Brockenshire	Vice-Principal; Saint Michael Catholic High School
Theo Dagenais	Principal; St. Nicholas Catholic School
Amy Dowd	Coordinator; Special Education
Karen Infantino Desjardins	Coordinator of Library Information Centres
Roxanne Rees	First Nations Meti Inuit/Equity & FSL/International Languages Consultant
Teri Cristelli	Arts/Student Leadership Consultant
Mark Ferri	Manager; Purchasing Services
Tara Formisano	Teacher; Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Bill Helmeczi	Member; Special Education Advisory Committee
Sabina Bernardi	Human Resources Administrator
Grant Frost	Education Technology Officer
Lori Powell	Executive Director; Niagara Student Transportation Services
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:

<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
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:

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
Physical/Architectural	Identified schools as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipment recommended through certified professionals</li> <li>• Mobility training for blind and low vision</li> <li>• Specialized transportation</li> <li>• Accessible parking</li> <li>• Sensory rooms</li> <li>• Communication devices for fire alarms</li> </ul>
Information and Communication	All School Board Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Information and communication	Niagara Catholic Board Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Information and Communication	Identified schools/students as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installation of electrical receptacles for the use of identified communication devices</li> <li>• Provision of interpreter service upon request</li> <li>• FM systems</li> </ul>
Information and Communication	Board-wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Workplace Response Plan</li> <li>• All Emergency Procedures Plans for Public Safety Information</li> <li>• Alternative formats available upon request</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility link on Board website</li> </ul>
Attitudinal	Board-wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing training in Accessible Customer Service</li> <li>• Creating caring and safe school environments through professional development, School Improvement Plan Process, Safe Schools Surveys</li> <li>• Ongoing Accessibility Awareness Training for Educators.</li> <li>• Ongoing Accessibility Awareness Training as it Pertains to the Human Rights Code.</li> <li>• Targeting ways to improve parent engagement and student voice (BIPSA)</li> <li>• Bi-Annual School Climate Survey</li> <li>• Ongoing Cultural Competency Training</li> <li>• On-going awareness building and initiatives to support Ontario First Nations Metis Inuit Education Policy Framework</li> </ul>
Technology	Identified schools/students as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology to support individual needs. (hardware, software)</li> </ul>
Systemic	Board-wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board policies, guidelines, protocols and procedures that reflect accessibility needs (e.g. Accessibility Customer Service; revised February 2015, Guidelines for Certified Service Animals)</li> <li>• Regular Special Education Advisory Committee meetings</li> <li>• Compliance with Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation timelines to date</li> </ul>



		(Employment, Transportation, Information & Communication and Design of Public Spaces Standards)
Physical/Architectural	<b>See Appendix A</b> Accessibility Projects Completed 2014-2015 <b>See Appendix B</b> Accessibility Projects Completed 2015-2016	

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**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Systemic	Board-wide	Develop Accessibility Policy Statement	January 1, 2013  Completed
Attitudinal – Information and Communications	Board-wide	Develop Administrative Guidelines re: Accessible Information and Communications	January 1, 2013  Completed

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Attitudinal – Employment	Board-wide	Develop Administrative Guidelines 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

**2013-2014**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
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 program completed February 2015.	Ongoing 2013-2014  Ongoing
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.	January 1, 2014  Completed

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		Notify the public re: above.	
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 provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of print resources upon request	2015 Completed

**2014-2015**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
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 closed captioning and described video available.	January 1, 2015 Completed
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	Ongoing preparation for 2021 deadline

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		<p>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.</p>	
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**2015-2016**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Systemic	Board-wide	<p>Accessibility Awareness Training for Educators converted to on-line training and is 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.</p>	Ongoing
Information and Communication	School Libraries	<p>Review status of capacity of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of digital or multimedia resources upon request in anticipation of 2020 deadline</p>	Ongoing preparation for 2020 deadline
Information and Communication	Board-wide	<p>Review accessibility features of all updates and purchases related to board and school websites in anticipation of WCAG, 2.0, Level AA standards</p>	Ongoing preparation for 2021 deadline
Physical/ Architectural	<b>See Appendix C</b> Accessibility Projects Completed 2015-2016		Completed

**2016-2017**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
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. Updated to include Design of Public Spaces Standard.	Ongoing 2016-2017
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, 2.0, Level AA standards	Ongoing preparation for 2021 deadline
Physical/ Architectural	Board Wide	Board intends to comply with the Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces.	January 2016 Ongoing
Physical/ Architectural	<b>See Appendix C</b> 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](http://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](mailto:accessibility.compliance@ncdsb.com) or by contacting: the Communications Department at the Catholic Education Centre.

## Appendix A

### 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 B

### Accessibility Projects Completed 2015 - 2016

SN#	Facility	Description
133	St. John Bosco	Add personal operator
144	Holy Name	Add personal operator
183	St. Theresa (SC)	Sensory room
198	St. Michael (NOTL)	Sensory room
198	St. Michael (NOTL)	Automatic door opener

## 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



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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