

Windsor-Essex Catholic

DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY, 2023 TO DECEMBER, 2027

MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

WINDSOR-ESSEX CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD January 2023 – December 2027

Prepared by

Accessibility Planning Committee

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

Last Reviewed
April 13, 2022

This publication is available through the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board's

- website (www.wecdsb.on.ca → ABOUT → Accessibility)
- Catholic Education Centre
- In accessible formats upon request*

*Contact the Catholic Education Centre

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Glossary of Terms

AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
SEAC – Special Education Advisory Committee
OASBO – Ontario Association of School Business Officials
OCSBOA - Ontario Catholic School Business Officials
Association ODA – Official Development Assistance
IASR – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation
WSIB – Workplace Safety and Insurance Board

1.0 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 2023-2027 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 Board's Accessibility Standards-Policy Statement (Policy Reference-link).

2.0 Objectives

This Plan:

- 2.1** Describes the process by which the WINDSOR-ESSEX CATHOLIC District School Board will identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- 2.2** Reviews recent efforts of the WINDSOR-ESSEX CATHOLIC District School Board to remove and prevent barriers;
- 2.3** Describes the measures the WINDSOR-ESSEX CATHOLIC District School Board will take in the period 2023-2027 to identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- 2.4** Makes a commitment to provide an annual status report on the Board's implementation of the multi-year accessibility plan;
- 2.5** Makes a commitment to review and update the multi-year accessibility plan at least once every 5 years;
- 2.6** Describes how the WINDSOR-ESSEX CATHOLIC School Board will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

3.0 Commitment to Accessibility Planning

The Director of Education has authorized the Accessibility Planning Committee to prepare an accessibility plan that will enable the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board to meet these commitments.

The WINDSOR-ESSEX CATHOLIC District School Board is committed to:

- 3.1** Maintaining an Accessibility Planning Committee;
- 3.2** Continuing the process of consulting with the Special Education Advisory Committee and with persons with disabilities;
- 3.3** 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;
- 3.4** 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 WINDSOR-ESSEX CATHOLIC District School Board to meet these commitments.

4.0 Description of the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board

The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board operates 32 elementary schools, 3 middle schools and 8 secondary schools, as well as an adult education program that provide quality Catholic education to over 20,300 students. The board employs 1240 full time equivalent elementary and secondary teachers as well as 906 support staff, which includes principals, vice-principals, educational assistants, child and youth workers, early childhood educators, IT technicians, school office support, custodial and maintenance staff, as well as board office administration and other professional staff.

Mission, Priorities and Goals of the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board

Mission

In keeping with the virtues of our Catholic Faith, we are called to know every student, to inspire them to follow the example of Jesus, and empower them with the knowledge and skills they need to live purposeful and meaningful lives.

PRIORITIES & GOALS

Our Students

To understand and know each student, in order to better promote their intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being.

To focus on the success of our most vulnerable, by creating positive, welcoming, safe, innovative learning environments where every child can achieve success.

To provide experiential learning opportunities that are related to exciting career pathways in a variety of promising sectors consistent with their individual aspirations.

Our Faith

To create an atmosphere that nurtures the faith journey of all our students and encourages them to put into practice the virtues inherent in our faith.

To foster mutual respect for other beliefs while remaining true to our core Catholic principles and values.

To seek out creative ways of strengthening connections between faith and academics through curriculum.

Our Team

To provide meaningful professional growth opportunities for everyone.

To encourage all our employees and the broader Catholic community to commit to the faith formation and achievement of our students.

To foster a culture where we celebrate the success of our staff and students by recognizing their achievements.

Our Community

To advocate for and support Catholic education by nurturing and cultivating school, parish and home relationships in collaboration with the Diocese of London.

To strengthen our community through servant leadership.

To foster, build and maintain partnerships that create a culture of innovation in a rapidly changing world.

Our Resources

To be prudent, wise and responsible stewards of our resources.

To focus our resources on providing outstanding learning experiences for our students, while exploring and cultivating new community partnerships that can lead to exciting new learning opportunities.

To ensure that the priorities identified in the multi-year strategic plan shape the board's budget and strategically direct our resources to support evidence-based student achievement initiatives.

5.0 Members of Accessibility Planning Committee

Working Group Member	Department	Contact Information
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The Plan was last reviewed April 13, 2022. The Committee will meet 3 times per year in continuing to review the Plan and will report the status of the Plan annually.

(Note: The above list is based on typical composition of the Accessibility Planning Committee.)

6.0 Strategy for Prevention and Removal of Barriers

Beginning in September 1, 2001, the principles of inclusionary practice, freedom from barriers and accessible environments have informed all WINDSOR-ESSEX CATHOLIC District School Board policies, programs, procedures and services. Through the annual accessibility plan status report process implemented under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*, the WINDSOR-ESSEX 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 and school transportation.

7.0 Barrier Identification Methodologies

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

Group	Method
Students	Barriers to accessibility are identified by students, parents and school staff. Facilities, Special Education and Transportation departments work with stakeholders to remove/prevent barriers and develop accommodation plans.

Staff	Staff, working with Union representatives and Human Resources, apply the Board's WSIB/Disability/Management programs, to identify barriers, restrictions and limitations and develop accommodation plans.
Public	Barriers to accessibility are identified by individuals accessing programs and services offered by the school board. Members of the public may bring concerns to the attention of the school or the Catholic Education Center. The Board website also provides an opportunity for feedback. Barriers identified by members of the public are referred to the Board's Accessibility Committee. Development of the Multi-Year Accessibility Planning Committee. Development of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and the ongoing feedback opportunities are additional important methods to identify barriers to accessibility.
Board Wide	Ongoing liaison with bargaining partners, provincial associations, school boards, and public sector agencies provides updates on emerging barriers to accessibility. SEAC, OASBO, OACSB, ODA, AODA, IASR, and the Customer Service Regulation are examples of some of the resources used for barrier identification. Review of our facilities provides up-to-date identification of barriers and permits planning to remove/prevent such barriers.

8.0 Annual Status Report - Barrier Removal Achievements

The most recent Annual Accessibility Plan developed in accordance with the Ontarians with Disabilities 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	Holy Name Essex	Electronic door openers on accessible washrooms
Physical	St. Teresa of Calcutta	Lift and tracking in both accessible washrooms

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Information and Communication	Board-Wide	Implementation of Website AODA compliant software – Accessible
Physical	Catholic Central Secondary High School	New fully accessible secondary school
Student Access to Mental Health Services	Board-Wide	Continuation of the Mental Health Tiered services and confidentiality for students
Student Access to Special Education Services	Board-wide	Ongoing assessment and accommodation through physical modifications to support programming for students with special needs

Student Access to Mental Health Service specific to racialized students	Secondary Schools	Current Psychotherapy staff will liaise with community partners to access services as needed
Information and Communication	Secondary schools	Continuation of the programming in grade 9 – addressing bullying, relationships, alcohol and drug awareness
Removing barriers for marginalized students	Board-Wide	Hiring of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor
Information and Communication	Elementary schools	Continuation of VIP (values, influence and peers) program to grade 6 students on good decision making.

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.

9.0 Barriers to be addressed within the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11 filed in June, 2011 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

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

WINDSOR-ESSEX CATHOLIC Board intends, through this Multi-year Accessibility Plan for the period 2023-2027, 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.

2023-2027

Type of Barrier	Location	Action	Effective Date
Systemic	Board-wide	Review status of accessibility awareness training to ensure new staff have been Trained	Ongoing
Systemic	Board-wide	Review status of Board accessibility policies and procedures and update as required	Ongoing

Information and Communication	Schools	Review status of capacity of schools to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of all resources upon request. Inform principals of the common system approach.	Ongoing
Information and Communication	Board-wide	Review accessibility features of all updates and purchases related to board and school websites in anticipation of WCAG, 3.0, Level AAA standards	Ongoing preparation for deadline
Physical	Various Sites	Installation of accessibility features	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

The Board will continue to review and update as necessary the Multi-year Accessibility Plan, and post any revisions, including annual status updates on the Board's website. The Board will accommodate requests for accessible formats of the Plan.

Questions, comments or feedback regarding the Accessibility Plan may be directed to:

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