

MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2021 – 2025

IN ACCORDANCE WITH:

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Customer Service Accessibility Standard

Ontario Regulation 191/11 – Integrated Accessibility Standards

Available at www.ncdsb.on.ca and all our NCDSB school sites and in accessible formats upon request.

Feedback on this plan can be provided at:

<https://www.ncdsb.on.ca/accessibility.php>

Updated June 22, 2021

CONTENTS OF PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY..... 1

 Aim..... 2

 Objectives..... 2

 Description of the Northeastern Catholic District School Board 2

 NCDSB Mission & Vision Statements.....3

 The Accessibility Planning Committee 3

 Members of the Working Group.....3

 Coordinator3

 Review and monitoring process..... 3

 NCDSB commitment to accessibility planning 4

 Barrier-identification methodologies..... 5

 Identification of barrier..... 6

 Annual School Year Accountability Tables.....7 & 8

 Multi-Year Capital Expenditures for Accessibility to School Buildings.....9

 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Review and Monitoring Process 9

 Communication of the plan..... 9

 Appendixes.....10

Appendix A: NCDSB Policy F-1

Executive Summary

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 to their full participation in the life of the province. To this end, the ODA mandates that each school board prepare an annual accessibility plan.

The plan, prepared by the Accessibility Planning Committee of the Northeastern Catholic District School Board (NCDSB), describes the measures that the NCDSB has taken and the measures that the Board will take during the period of the Multi-year Accessibility Plan to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the Board, including staff, day students, summer students, parents of students and other members of the community.

The NCDSB has committed itself to the continual improvement of access to school premises, facilities and services for students and staff with disabilities; the participation of people with disabilities in the development and review of its annual access plans; and the provision of quality services to all students, parents and members of the community with disabilities.

The Accessibility Planning Committee has identified a number of barriers to people with disabilities. The most significant findings were that some of our facilities are not fully wheelchair accessible. Over the next several years, the Accessibility Planning Committee recommends focusing on several different barriers.

Aim:

This Multi-year Accessibility Plan describes the measures that the Northeastern Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) has taken and the measures that the Board will take during the period of the Multi-year Accessibility Plan to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the Board, including staff, day students, summer students, volunteers, parents of students and other members of the community.

Objectives:

To ensure compliance with the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Customer Service Accessibility Standard)* and *Ontario Regulation 191/11 (Integrated Accessibility Standards)* this plan:

1. Describes the process by which the Northeastern Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) will identify, remove and prevent barriers;
2. Reviews efforts to remove and prevent barriers to date;
3. Describes the measures the Board will take in the Multi-year Accessibility Plan to identify, remove and prevent barriers;
4. Describes how the Board will make this accessibility plan available to the public;
5. Makes a commitment to review and update the Multi-year Accessibility Plan at least once every 5 years as a minimum;
6. Makes a commitment to provide an annual status report no later than at the September Board meeting on the Board's implementation of the Multi-year Accessibility Plan.

Description of the Northeastern Catholic District School Board:

At the NCDSB, we believe that public education creates a dynamic environment for learning that prepares students to face a changing world as life-long learners and informed, responsible citizens. Our school district includes facilities in Cobalt, New Liskeard, Englehart, Kirkland Lake, Timmins, Cochrane, Iroquois Falls and Kapuskasing and Moosonee.

Our Board serves approximately 2600 at fourteen (14) schools with a total of approximately 500 employees. We have twelve (12) elementary schools, one (1) secondary school and one (1) secondary school focusing on at risk secondary students (ACCESS Centre). Our administrative school board office is located in Timmins.

Northeastern Catholic District School Board Mission Statement

Learning together. Striving for excellence. In service to God and each other.

Northeastern Catholic District School Board Vision Statement

Faithful and thoughtful learners, working together to transform the world.

Members of the Accessibility Planning Committee:

Working Group Member	Department	Contact Information
David Horton	Facility & Plant Manager	Board Office - Timmins
Catherine Hoven	Special Assignment Teacher, Special Education	Board Office - Timmins
Keld Scott	Superintendent of Business - Chair	Board Office – Timmins
Shelley McGee	Parent/Public Representative	Board Office - Timmins
Michele Mahaffy	Policy & Director's Office Representative	Board Office – Timmins
TBD	Principal Representative	Board Office – Timmins
Andrew Marks	Recording Secretary	Board Office – Timmins

The coordinator of the Accessibility Planning Committee will be the Superintendent of Business.

All decisions of the committee will be by consensus.

Review and Monitoring Process:

The Accessibility Planning Committee will meet annually in June or as required to review progress. Throughout the year, the effectiveness of implementing the barrier-removal and prevention strategies will be discussed in preparation for appropriate revisions. Please note that the recommendations made by the Accessibility Planning Committee are subject to available funding.

Through the Accessibility Planning Committee the Board will plan for the gradual review of programs, policies, practices and services based on the guiding principles of inclusionary practice. The Board will strive to create an environment that is accessible to all students, employees, family members, volunteers and visitors. The annual accessibility planning process ensures that the Board’s programming, policies and procedures are assessed to demonstrate continuous improvement in accessibility.

NCDSB Commitment to Accessibility Planning:

This plan will be established, reviewed and updated in consultation with the Municipal Accessibility Committee and with the Board's Special Education Advisory Committee. It will be presented to the Board. The Northeastern Catholic District School Board is committed to:

- a) Maintaining an Accessibility Planning Committee;
- b) Continuing the process of consulting with the Special Education Advisory Committee and with the Municipal Accessibility Committee;
- c) 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;
- d) 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 Committee and will, wherever practicable, be incorporated in the multi-year plan.

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

The NCDSB policy *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and Planning (F-1)*, currently reviewed and updated in 2020, stipulates:

The Northeastern Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) is committed to providing services to our students, parents, guardians, staff, and our community partners that are free of barriers and biases. The NCDSB strives to ensure that key principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity are reflected and valued in our learning and working environments. The NCDSB is also committed to ensuring that all people have the same access to our services. The NCDSB commits to the continuous improvement of access to our facilities, schools, and services for all members of our communities.

(see Appendix A for complete Board policy)

Barrier-Identification Methodologies

The Accessibility Working Committee continues to use the following barrier-identification methodologies:

Methodology	Description	Status
Letter to Principals	A letter is sent to Principals describing the Accessibility Planning Committee's mandate and asking Principals to submit their concerns about barriers in Board facilities and services and their ideas to remove	Letter sent annually. Responses categorized and presented to Accessibility Working Group's
Presentations at staff meetings	Principals will describe the mandate of the Accessibility Planning Committee and invite staff to voice concerns about barriers in Board facilities, services, policies and regulations and to suggest ways to remove them.	Meetings will be conducted throughout the year with feedback to the Manager of Plant
School Councils	Principals will ask councils to submit their concerns about barriers in Board facilities and services and their ideas to remove them.	Carried out annually in updating Accessibility Plan
Special Education staff	Special education staff will be asked to submit their concerns about barriers in Board facilities and services and their ideas to remove them.	On-going practice
Working Group	The Accessibility Planning Committee will conduct a brainstorming session using input received.	Brainstorming exercise done annually in the revision of Plan.

Identification of Barriers:

The Ministry of Community and Social Services has categorized types of barriers that stand in the way of people with disabilities doing many day-to-day activities

1. Architectural and physical barriers are features of buildings or spaces that cause problems for people with disabilities. Examples are hallways and doorways that are too narrow for a wheel chair, counters too high for a person with short stature, poor lighting for people with low vision, telephones not equipped with telecommunication devices for people who are deaf.
2. Information or communication barriers happen when a person cannot easily understand information. Examples are print is too small to read, websites that do not support screen-reading software, signs that are not clear or easily understood.
3. Attitudinal barriers are those that discriminate against people with disabilities. Examples are thinking that people with disabilities are inferior, assuming that a person who has a speech impediment cannot hear you.
4. Technology barriers occur when technology cannot be modified to support various assistive devices. An example is a website that does not support screen reading software.
5. Systemic barriers are an organization's policies, practices or procedures that discriminate against people with disabilities. An example is a hiring process that is not open to people with disabilities.

With the assistance of the School Principals, the staff in each school and using the categories above, the Accessibility Planning Committee has identified a number of barriers board-wide. Over the next several years, the Accessibility Planning Committee will focus on addressing the access problems/barriers identified in each of our schools.

Annual School Year Accountability Tables:

See the following school year tables to ensure follow up and actions to be taken to ensure compliance with the Multi-year Accessibility Plan.

2021-2022

Type of Barrier	Responsibility	Action	Effective Date
Customer Service / Information and Communication	Director / designate	Review status of accessibility awareness training to ensure new staff have been trained.	Ongoing
Information and Communication	Director / designate	Review status of Board accessibility policies and procedures and update as	Ongoing
Information and Communication	Director / designate	Review status of capacity of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of all resources upon	Ongoing
Information and Communication	Director / designate	Review accessibility features of all updates and purchases related to board and school websites in anticipation of WCAG, 2.0, Level AA standards	Ongoing
Physical / Architectural	Director / designate	Installation of accessibility features. (Appendix attached)	Ongoing 2021-2022

2022-2023

Type of Barrier	Responsibility	Action	Effective Date
Customer Service / Information and Communication	Director / designate	Review status of accessibility awareness training to ensure new staff have been trained.	Ongoing
Information and Communication	Director / designate	Review status of Board accessibility policies and procedures and update as	Ongoing
Information and Communication	Director / designate	Review status of capacity of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of all resources upon	Ongoing
Information and Communication	Director / designate	Review accessibility features of all updates and purchases related to board and school websites in anticipation of WCAG, 2.0, Level AA standards	Ongoing
Physical / Architectural	Director / designate	Installation of accessibility features. (Appendix attached)	Ongoing 2022-2023

2023-2024

Type of Barrier	Responsibility	Action	Effective Date
Customer Service / Information and Communication	Director / designate	Review status of accessibility awareness training to ensure new staff have been trained.	Ongoing
Information and Communication	Director / designate	Review status of Board accessibility policies and procedures and update as	Ongoing
Information and Communication	Director / designate	Review status of capacity of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of all resources upon	Ongoing
Information and Communication	Director / designate	Review accessibility features of all updates and purchases related to board and school websites in anticipation of WCAG, 2.0, Level AA standards	Ongoing
Physical / Architectural	Director / designate	Installation of accessibility features. (Appendix attached)	Ongoing 2023-2024

2024-2025

Type of Barrier	Responsibility	Action	Effective Date
Customer Service / Information and Communication	Director / designate	Review status of accessibility awareness training to ensure new staff have been trained.	Ongoing
Information and Communication	Director / designate	Review status of Board accessibility policies and procedures and update as	Ongoing
Information and Communication	Director / designate	Review status of capacity of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of all resources upon	Ongoing
Information and Communication	Director / designate	Review accessibility features of all updates and purchases related to board and school websites in anticipation of WCAG, 2.0, Level AA standards	Ongoing
Physical / Architectural	Director / designate	Installation of accessibility features. (Appendix attached)	Ongoing 2024-2025

Please refer to Appendix B for a listing of school renovations and accommodations that have taken place within the Northeastern Catholic District School Board. Also, a listing of Accessibility Features by School at our Board are provided.

Multi-Year Capital Expenditures for Accessibility to School Buildings

Future accessibility plans will be dependent on funding allocations and needs. The Ministry is strongly encouraged to increase allocation in capital funding to enable the Board to develop a long-term plan.

A copy of the Board's budget is available upon request. The budget is also posted on the Board's website.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Review and Monitoring Process:

The Accessibility Planning Committee meets annually in June or as required 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 at the June committee meeting and to be presented to the Board no later than at its September Meeting.
- b) At least once every 5 years the plan is reviewed and updated in consultation with the Municipal Accessibility Committee, with the Board's Special Education Advisory Committee and other relevant committees.

Communication of the Plan:

In addition to the public availability of the plan on the Board's website the Northeastern Catholic District School Board will post an annual status report on the progress of the Multi-year Accessibility Plan on the Board's website. The Board will accommodate requests for accessible formats of the Plan.

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

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705-268-7443, ext. 3244

Or

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amarks@ncdsb.on.ca
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Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Appendixes:

Appendix A: NCDSB Policy F-1 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and Planning