



**Annual Accessibility Status Report
2021-2022**

**Prepared by the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board
Accessibility Working Group**

December 2022

This publication is available on the Renfrew County Catholic DSB website at www.rccdsb.ca and available in alternate formats upon request.

Schools to believe in!

Introduction

The Renfrew County Catholic District School Board remains committed to supporting and meeting the objectives and requirements of the Accessibility for Ontario with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA). The board continues to meet all of the accessibility requirements outlined by the AODA.

The purpose of the annual Accessibility Report is to highlight the progress made during the 2021-2022 school year in providing an environment in all its workplaces and learning spaces that builds independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for students, parents/guardians, staff and the public.

The Renfrew County Catholic District School Board is committed to the goal of giving persons with disabilities the same opportunity of access to its services in a similar way as these services are available to all others we serve. (Note: The impact of COVID-19 restricted the completion of some actions outlined in the operational plan for 2021-2022.)

Objectives

The Annual Accessibility Status Report 2021-2022 supports and reflects the objectives of the RCCDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2020-2023) to:

- Describe the process by which the Board will identify, remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities;
- Review recent efforts of the Board to remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities;
- Describe the measures the Board has taken in the specified time period to identify, remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities;
- Provide an annual status report on the Board's implementation of the multi-year accessibility plan;
- Provide an update on the status of the multi-year accessibility plan; and
- Make the accessibility plan available to the public.

Policy & Procedure

The three-year Multi-Year Accessibility Plan demonstrates RCCDSB's commitment to accessibility and the goals for the next year. The three-year plan is available on the RCCDSB website at:

- <https://rccdsb.ca/accessibility-for-ontarians-with-disabilities/>

Customer Service Standard

Training

We know that accessibility and inclusion training is necessary to instill needed change and understanding. All Board staff are required to complete online training related to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and complete a declaration on a cyclical three-year basis as part of our commitment to providing better services. The next system training date is September 2024.

Special Education Staff are provided Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) training on a three-year cycle. BMS is also part of the orientation of our Educational Assistants. A review of BMS training is available to school teams or individuals throughout the school year with our Board's Lead BMS Training Team.

Education

The Renfrew County Catholic DSB is committed to ensuring that Specialized Equipment Amount (SEA) claims are processed in a timely and efficient manner throughout the school year.

Our Claims-Based SEA is processed once a recommendation arrives from a professional (e.g. Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, etc.), and our Per-pupil-amount SEA recommendations (e.g. Chromebooks, Laptops, iPads) are processed 3 times per school year.

During the 2021-2022 school year, our Board had 125 PPA SEA claims, which included 113 SEA Chromebooks, 11 SEA iPads and 2 SEA iPods.

The RCCDSB continues to ensure that there is at least one SEA Assistive Technology Trainer per school to help expedite training for students when their SEA equipment arrives. During the 2021-2022 school year, there were four new SEA Assistive Technology trainers added to the Board-wide SEA trainer list. Students are provided with both in-person and virtual training opportunities, as well as in-class and small group sessions.

During the 2021-2022 school year, our Board had a total of 435 Claims-based SEA items processed. Some examples of equipment include Soundfield FM Systems, Personal FM Systems, Student lifts, Standing frames, Rocking Chairs, Swings, Fidgets, Mirrors, Bikes, etc.

We have continued our focus on building educator capacity through professional development sessions that incorporate technology, particularly technology utilized with SEA equipment.

Certified Service Animals

There were no formal applications for a certified service animal in the 2021-22 school year.

Information and Communication Standard

The RCCDSB provides internet websites and web content that conforms with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, level AA. A review of accessibility features of all updates and purchases related to Board and school websites is ongoing.

During the 2022-2023 school year, the Renfrew County Catholic DSB will migrate to a new website which will assist in meeting AODA requirements. The project is scheduled to be completed by November 2022.

Employment Standard

During the 2021-2022 school year, we remain committed to inclusive and accessible employment practices. The offer to provide accommodations in the job application process for applicants is stated in all postings. Applicants are directed to contact the Human Resources Department to make their accommodations known. Our Human Resources Department has processes in place to support accommodation requests from potential applicants and will continue to review and revise with the goal of providing optimal support.

Our Board's Employee Assistant Program (EAPs) provides information and support to individuals who may be experiencing either temporary or permanent disabilities through information regarding supports and/or programs aimed at improving overall wellness.

Our Human Resources Department regularly reviews their practices and procedures in the areas of recruitment, accommodations, return to work plans, and re-deployment to ensure compliance with the AODA standards.

Transportation Standard

The RCCDSB works with the Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium (RCJTC). Each bus operator is obligated in their contract to provide initial training covering: "Awareness of Sensitivity for Special Needs Students".

The consortium provided training to drivers in August of 2021 on Mental Health Awareness Training and the Impact of the Pandemic.

The AODA Student Transportation Plan is developed for all students who require accommodations and then is updated, as needed, when accommodations change. In order to be efficient and effective with this process between the RCJTC and our Board, we endeavor to maintain the following practices:

- Clear communication between the Consortium and our Special Education department who, along with the school, identify a need for an AODA Student Transportation Plan for individual students.

- Input from the Consortium staff when developing plans and the processes for communicating the plan.
- Continue to develop processes to share and update safety information between the RCCDSB and the Consortium

Our Special Education Department continues to revisit the above strategies to continually improve our responsiveness to student safety on transportation vehicles.

During the 2021-2022 school year:

- The Renfrew County Catholic DSB provided 4 wheelchair accessible vehicles to transport students with physical disabilities.
- The RCCDSB provided student transportation to 300 students requiring an AODA Student Transportation Plan submission.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

To assist in meeting our goals of accessibility, the following projects were undertaken and completed in the 2021-2022 school year:

Location	Renovation
St. John XXIII	Exit 4 Accessible Door Opener installed
George Vanier	Accessible Washroom created
St. Michael's	Exit 1, 2 & 13 Accessible Door Openers Installed

Upcoming Renovations/Projects planned at elementary and secondary schools:

Location	Renovation
St. Mary's OLGC	Stair Lift from gymnasium
Our Lady of Grace	Ramps for portables
Bishop Smith CHS - Elementary	Accessible Washroom in Elementary area

Policies/Regulations and Administrative Procedures to be reviewed in the 2022-2023 year, include:

- *Accessibility for Ontario with Disabilities Act (AODA) Customer Service Standard*

The Board will continue to monitor the effectiveness of implementation of the Accessible Customer Service Standards through a process for receiving and responding to feedback.

Located on our RCCDSB website, under the heading of *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities*, the public can access the identified contact number 613-735-1031 and/or email clint.young@rccdsb.ca to share concerns and feedback.

The Board will also utilize constituency groups such as the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) to gather feedback.

All feedback gathered will be shared with the Accessibility Working Group to determine how we can better support students, staff, parents/caregivers, and members of the community who are identified as having a disability.

Moving Forward

The Special Education Department, in conjunction with the other departments of the RCCDSB, continues to monitor the needs of our students, our staff and our community with the intent of identifying, prioritizing and removing existing barriers.