



## Annual Accessibility Status Report 2022-2023

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

This publication is available on the Renfrew County Catholic DSB website at [www.rccdsb.ca](http://www.rccdsb.ca) and available in alternate formats upon request.

Strategic Plan 2022-2027 | Renfrew County Catholic District School Board

### 2022-2023

*As a community of believers, we strive to recognize and remove barriers to create just and equitable opportunities for all.*

An illustration of a pair of scales of justice. The scales are black and are set against a colorful, abstract background of green, blue, and yellow. The scales are balanced, with a small figure of a person on the left pan and a small figure of a person on the right pan.

A Responsible Citizen

*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 strive to meet all the accessibility requirements outlined by the AODA.

The purpose of the Annual Accessibility Status Report is to highlight the progress made during the 2022-2023 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.

## **Objectives**

The Annual Accessibility Status Report 2023 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 (2020-2023) is available on the RCCDSB website at:

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

The Accessibility Working Group is currently revising and updating the previous plan, and as we approach the **"Path to 2025", the Renfrew County Catholic DSB Accessibility Plan for 2024-2025 will be published on the board's website in February 2024.**

## **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 2022-2023 school year, our Board purchased the following equipment through SEA Per Pupil Amount funding:

- 2 SEA Chromebooks
- 30 SEA iPads
- 97 DELL laptops
- 2 SEA iPhones
- 20 C-Pens

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 Chromebook or Laptop arrives. During the 2022-2023 school year, there were six new SEA Assistive Technology trainers added to the Board-wide SEA trainer list. Students receive in-class training, and small group sessions as needed.

During the 2022-2023 school year, our Board had a total of 67 Claims-based SEA items processed. Some examples of equipment include Soundfield FM Systems, Personal FM Systems, Rifton tricycles, standing desks, trampolines, portable swings, fidget tools, 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 was 1 formal application for a certified service animal in the 2022-2023 school year. This application was reviewed by a school board committee and in the end, was denied.

An updated policy for Service Animals in RCCDSB came into effect in September 2023.

### **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 migrated to a new website which has assisted in further meeting AODA requirements.

### **Employment Standard**

During the 2022-2023 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) through Homewood Health 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, accommodation, 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 and sensitivity for special needs students.

An AODA Student Transportation Plan is developed for all students who require accommodations and then is updated, as needed, when accommodations change. 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 2022-2023 school year:

- The Renfrew County Catholic DSB provided 13 wheelchair accessible vehicles to transport students with physical disabilities.
- The RCCDSB provided student transportation to 121 Specialized Transportation 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 2022-2023 school year:

| <b>Location</b>              | <b>Renovation</b>  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Our Lady of Grace, Westmeath | Ramps for portables  |
| Bishop Smith CHS, Pembroke   | Accessible Washroom in Elementary area, asphalt paths with ramps, paved basketball court |
| St. Andrew's, Killaloe       | LED lighting throughout building   |

## **Upcoming Renovations/Projects planned at elementary and secondary schools:**

| <b>Location</b>                     | <b>Renovation</b>                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| St. Mary's OLG, Deep River          | Stair Lift for access to gymnasium |
| Cathedral Catholic School, Pembroke | Elevator upgrade                   |
| Our Lady of Sorrows, Petawawa       | Walkways and parking lot           |

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](mailto: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.

