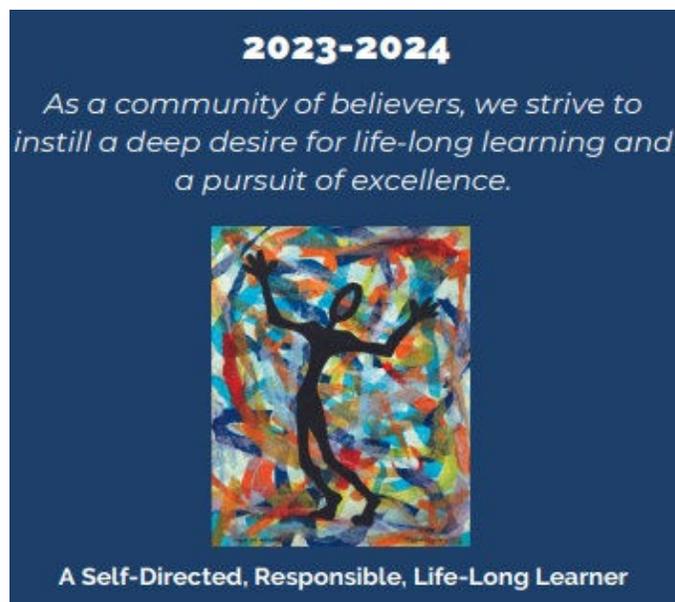




**Annual Accessibility Status Report  
2023-2024**

**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.**



*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 Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The Board continues to strive to fulfill all accessibility requirements outlined by the AODA.

The purpose of the Annual Accessibility Status Report is to highlight the progress made during the 2023-2024 school year in providing an environment in all its workplaces and learning spaces that fosters 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 ensuring that persons with disabilities have the same opportunity to access its services as all others we serve.

## Objectives

The Annual Accessibility Status Report 2023-2024 supports and reflects the objectives of the RCCDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plans to:

- Describe the process by which the Board will **identify, remove, and prevent** barriers for persons with disabilities.
- Review the Board's recent efforts 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.
- Make the accessibility plan publicly available.

## Policy & Procedure

The Accessibility Working Group recently revised and updated the previous plan (2020-2023) as we approach the **"Path to 2025"**.

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for 2024-2025 is available on the RCCDSB website at <https://rccdsb.ca/accessibility-for-ontarians-with-disabilities/>

## **Customer Service Standard**

### **Training**

We recognize the importance of accessibility and inclusion training in fostering a culture of understanding and change. All board staff completed online training on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) in September 2024 as part of our commitment to improving services.

Special Education Staff (SERTs and Educational Assistants) receive comprehensive Behaviour Management System (BMS) training during their orientation. This training is followed by a refresher course every three years to ensure ongoing learning and skill development.

To further enhance support, Principals and Vice-Principals have recently completed BMS training to strengthen their understanding and capacity in this area.

Upon request, the Board's Lead BMS Training Team is available to provide a review of BMS training to individual staff members or entire school teams throughout the academic year.

### **Education**

The Renfrew County Catholic District School Board is committed to the prompt and efficient processing of all Specialized Equipment Amount (SEA) claims throughout the school year.

Claims-Based SEA requests are processed upon receipt of a professional recommendation (e.g., from an Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist). Per-pupil-amount (PPA) SEA requests (e.g., Chromebooks, Laptops, iPads) are processed three times annually.

During the 2023-2024 school year, our Board had 385 PPA SEA claims, which included 263 SEA Chromebooks, 85 laptops, 17 SEA iPads and 20 C-Pens.

The RCCDSB maintains at least one SEA Assistive Technology Trainer per school to facilitate timely training for students upon receiving their Chromebooks or Laptops. During the 2023-2024 school year, five new trainers were added to the Board-wide SEA trainer roster. Students receive individualized in-class training and participate in small group sessions as required.

During the 2023-2024 school year, the Board processed a total of 932 Claims-Based SEA items. Examples of equipment include Soundfield FM Systems, Personal FM Systems, Rifton Tricycles, standing frames, rocking chairs, portable swings, fidgets, mirrors, and other assistive devices.

To better support student learning, we have continued to invest in professional development for educators, focusing on the effective use of technology, particularly with respect to SEA equipment.

*\*\*\*Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, the Ministry will introduce a modernized Specialized Equipment Allocation (SEA) funding model. This new approach is designed to:*

- *Better address the evolving needs of students.*
- *Reduce administrative burdens for school boards.*
- *Increase flexibility in how boards utilize funding to meet local needs.*

*Considering these significant changes, the RCCDSB will conduct a comprehensive review of its SEA processes in the fall of 2024.*

### **Certified Service Animals**

During the 2023-2024 school year, one formal application was received for a certified service animal. This application was thoroughly reviewed by a school board committee and subsequently approved.

In September 2023, the RCCDSB implemented an updated policy regarding Service Animals.

### **Information and Communication Standard**

The RCCDSB is committed to providing internet websites and web content that adhere to the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA. Ongoing reviews ensure that all updates and purchases related to Board and school websites incorporate accessibility features.

### **Employment Standard**

The RCCDSB remains committed to inclusive and accessible employment practices.

All job postings explicitly state that accommodations are available throughout the application process. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Human Resources Department to discuss their accommodation needs.

The Human Resources Department is dedicated to creating an inclusive and supportive recruitment experience for all applicants. They will continue to review and refine their processes to ensure that accommodation requests are effectively addressed.

The Board's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), provided by Homewood Health, offers confidential support and resources to employees experiencing temporary or permanent disabilities. This includes access to information and support programs aimed at enhancing overall well-being.

### **Transportation Standard**

The RCCDSB collaborates with the Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium (RCJTC).

All bus operators are contractually obligated to provide initial training that emphasizes awareness and sensitivity for special needs students.

An AODA Student Transportation Plan is developed for each student requiring accommodations and is regularly updated to reflect any changes in their needs.

To ensure efficient and effective transportation for students with special needs, the RCCDSB collaborates with the RCJTC to:

- Foster clear and consistent communication between the Consortium, school teams, and our Special Education department to identify students requiring an AODA Student Transportation Plan.
- Actively involve Consortium staff in the development of these plans and the communication processes.
- Continuously refine processes for sharing and updating critical safety information between the RCCDSB and the Consortium.

To prioritize student safety on transportation vehicles, our Special Education Department continually evaluates and refines these strategies.

During the 2023-2024 school year:

- The Renfrew County Catholic DSB provided 13 wheelchair accessible vehicles to transport students with physical disabilities.
- The RCCDSB provided student transportation to 135 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 2023-2024 school year:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Renovation/Additions</b>
Our Lady of Sorrows, Petawawa	Walkways and parking lot upgrades
Bishop Smith Catholic High School. Pembroke	Additional accessible door openers for entrances; accessible door openers in the grade 7/8 area ("kick plates")
St. Mary's Our Lady of Good Counsel, Deep River	Stair lift installed for accessibility to gymnasium

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

<b>Location</b>	<b>Renovation/Additions</b>
Cathedral School, Pembroke	Installation of new elevator
Various schools across the system	Improving access to portables
Various schools across the system	Accessible washrooms on each level in schools

A thorough review of our current *Policy: Ontarians with Disability – Accessibility Commitment* is underway.

## **Feedback Process**

The public can provide accessibility concerns and feedback through the following channels:

- A dedicated contact on the RCCDSB website - please visit the *Accessibility* section at [www.rccdsb.ca](http://www.rccdsb.ca) (Clint Young, Superintendent, 613-735-1031).
- RCCDSB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC): The Board actively seeks feedback through constituency groups like SEAC.

All feedback gathered is reviewed by the Accessibility Working Group to identify ways to better support students, staff, parents/caregivers, and community members with disabilities.

**Moving Forward**

The Special Education Department, in collaboration with all departments within the Renfrew County Catholic DSB, proactively monitors the needs of our students, staff, and community to identify, prioritize, and remove existing accessibility barriers.