

Annual Accessibility Plan
for the
Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board
September 2010 – August 2011

Prepared by

**Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board
Accessibility Working Group**

This publication is available on the
Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board's website
www.alcgsb.on.ca
and in accessible formats upon request

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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 requires each school board to prepare an annual accessibility plan; to consult with people with disabilities in the preparation of this plan; and to make the plan public.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 received Royal Assent in June 2005. However, until provincially developed standards are in place, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 will remain in effect, and government ministries and other affected public sector organizations continue to have planning obligations in accordance with that legislation.

This is the 2010-2011 Updated Plan for the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board. The plan describes: (1) the measures that the Board took in the past, and (2) the measures that the Board will take during the year (2010-2011) to identify and remove existing barriers and prevent the creation of new barriers for people with disabilities.

The Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board is committed to the continual improvement of access to school board facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community with disabilities. The plan also reports on the participation of people with disabilities in the development and review of its Annual Accessibility Plans.

Over the past years, the Accessibility Working Group identified numerous barriers for people with disabilities. The Accessibility Working Group has proposed that the 2010-2011 plan should continue to focus on the development of processes that will identify and prioritize barriers for removal, and that these processes should be integrated with the annual system planning, budget planning, policy review and special education planning processes of the Board.

1. Aim

This plan describes the measures that the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board took in the past and measures that will be taken during the next year (2010-2011) to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities who work in, use or attend school board facilities and services.

2. Objectives

This plan:

1. Describes the *process* by which the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board will identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.
2. Reviews efforts at the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities during the *past year(s)*.

3. Lists the policies, procedures, programs, practices and services that the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board will review in the *coming year* to identify barriers for people with disabilities.
4. Describes the *measures* the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board will take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.
5. Describes how the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board will make this accessibility plan *available to the public*.

3. Commitment to Accessibility Planning

The Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board is committed to:

- § Establishing an Accessibility Working Group
- § Consulting with people with disabilities in the development and review of its annual accessibility plans
- § Ensuring school board policies and procedures are consistent with the principles of accessibility
- § Improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community.

The Director of Education authorized the preparation of the Accessibility Plan that will enable the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board to meet these commitments.

4. Description of the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board

Educators and support staff have served the students of the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board and its predecessor Boards, willing, lovingly and with unprecedented professionalism for the past 36 years.

The jurisdiction of the Board covers 16,101 square kilometers from Seeley's Bay in the east to Trenton in the west to Picton in the south and Whitney near Algonquin Park in the north.

For 2010-2011, the student population of the school system is estimated at 11,548. Of these, 6,903 are elementary pupils, 4,400 are secondary pupils and 245 are adults in special retraining or life skills programs.

Our students are educated in 5 secondary schools, 36 elementary schools and 1 Adult Learning Centre with 5 annexes.

The system employs over 1,764 full, part-time and occasional teachers and support staff.

The 2010-2011 Board budget is set at \$131,000,000 dollars.

We are a Catholic school system, called to work in partnership with home, parish and community on our journey to understand and live the way of Jesus Christ.

We are committed to excellence in Catholic education and to lifelong learning, so that those with whom we journey may become caring and contributing citizens in a world of constant challenge.

LIVING OUR MISSION

| | |
|--|---|
| Catholic: | We shall participate fully in the Church's mission of Catholic education through our philosophy, policy and practice. |
| Called: | We shall acknowledge that our primary mission rests in living the call of Christ each day. |
| To Work in Partnership | We shall welcome the active participation of home, parish, and community by promoting communication, cooperation and teamwork. |
| On Our Journey: | We shall make this journey with profound respect for the innate dignity and unique capabilities of each person. |
| Excellence: | We shall provide quality instruction and diversified learning in a safe environment, so that the potential of each learner may be realized. |
| Catholic Education: | We shall provide a distinctive education through the integration of Catholic beliefs and values in all learning experiences. |
| Lifelong Learning: | We shall initiate and encourage educational experiences that foster an enduring love of learning. |
| Caring and Contributing Citizens: | We shall value and promote responsible participation in our local and global communities. |

As a Board, we strive to educate each student in the most enabling environment.

6. The Accessibility Working Group Members

The accessibility working group was formally constituted in April 2003. Effective January 2009, membership of the Working Group will be revised to include representation from the following constituent members:

| Working Group Member | Department |
|----------------------|---|
| Co-Chairs | Superintendent of School Effectiveness Plant and Planning Services |
| | Principal(s) |
| | Community Member |
| | Trustee |
| | Human Resources |
| | Information Technology |
| | Educational Assistants Teacher |
| | SEAC |

Theresa Kennedy, Assistant Superintendent of School Effectiveness is the current lead coordinating the formation of the Accessibility Working Group.

7. Recent Barrier-Removal Initiatives

During the past several years, a number of initiatives at the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board were undertaken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

The Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board has a Special Education Plan. This plan addresses accommodations and modifications of programs and services that support access for students with disabilities.

Following the amalgamation of school boards in 1998, the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board consolidated central administrative operations in a new facility in Napanee. This facility provides full accessibility for persons with disabilities.

In September of 1999, the Board approved the following resolution:

The Board shall ensure that during the building/structure design and construction process for new schools, renovated schools and school playgrounds, that a qualified professional such as an Occupational Therapist, be consulted at regular and appropriate intervals during the design

and construction process to ensure that the accessibility needs of children with physical disabilities are appropriately addressed.

The Capital Strategic Plan, approved by the Board in November of 2000, proposed major additions and/or renovations to approximately 1/3 of our school facilities. Each of these projects provide an opportunity to improve accessibility. Several of these projects are now underway.

The table below summarizes recent architectural barriers removal initiatives of the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board

| RECENT ARCHITECTURAL BARRIER-REMOVAL INITIATIVES | | |
|--|---------|---|
| School | Year | Initiative |
| Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School | 2008-09 | Installation of five (5) new automatic door openers at various locations throughout the school. Completed Summer 2009 |
| | | Installation of new locksets at various location in throughout the school. Completed Summer 2009 |
| St. Marguerite Bourgeoys CES | 2008-09 | Construction of a new Barrier-Free sidewalk Completed Summer 2009 |
| St. Thomas More CES | 2008-09 | Construction of a new Snoezelen Room for students. Completed Fall 2009 |
| Nicholson Catholic College | 2008-09 | Installation of one (1) new automatic door opener for the Life Skills Room Completed Summer of 2009 |
| Various Schools | 2008-09 | Installation of new barrier-free lever handled locksets at various locations throughout the school board. Completed summer 2008. |
| Capital Plan | | The recommendations contained in the “ <i>Accesssibility Assessment of Schools for Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board</i> ” report have been included in the Board’s updated Capital Plan. Following approval of the Capital Plan by the Province, and dependent on the availability of funding, the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report will be completed within the planning horizon. |
| St. Michael CES | 2008-09 | Installation of new automatic door openers for the temporary Portable Classroom Room Complex Completed Summer of 2009 |

| | | |
|----------------------------|------|--|
| | 2010 | The Ministry of Education has approved approximately \$7.3 million dollars to complete the deep retrofit to the existing school building, including the construction of a new section. Upon completion of the reconstruction of the school, all accessibility requirements of the ODA will be satisfied. Project currently under construction. |
| Sacred Heart (Marmora) CES | 2009 | The Ministry of Education has approved approximately \$3.2 million dollars for the construction of a new school facility. Upon completion of the new school, all accessibility requirements of the ODA will be satisfied. Project currently under construction. |

8. Preventing New Barriers

From this point forward, all school board programs, policies, practices and services will be subject to the guiding principles of inclusionary practice. We strive to create an environment that is accessible to all people, regardless of age or ability. Through the annual accessibility planning process, the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board’s programming, policies and practices are assessed to ensure continuous improvement in accessibility.

9. Barrier-Identification Methodologies

The Accessibility Working Group used the following barrier-identification methodologies:

| Methodology | Description | Status |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------|
| Presentation to Senior Administration | Opportunity for input and feedback | Ongoing |
| Letter to Stakeholders | Describe the working group composition and initiatives for the coming year and invite participation | Complete |
| Research | Members of Accessibility Working Group identify barriers | Complete |
| Consultation | With SEAC | Complete |

10. Barriers Identified

In its review, the Accessibility Working Group identified many barriers. Over the next several years, the Accessibility Working Group will focus on the following:

Ontarians with Disabilities - Action Plan

| Type of Barrier | Description of Barrier | Process | Possible Strategies |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Information | Student records and Board forms are only available in print and are not accessible to persons with learning disabilities and persons who are blind or visually impaired | Research alternative formats. Develop survey to ascertain need. Develop plan to produce non-print format for all forms of Board information | All forms available on internet, on disk or in other electronic format. |
| Information/Communication | Lack of public awareness | Develop a process to address public awareness of ODA. | Provide information to schools, parishes for inclusion at masses, bulletins and newsletters. Poster displays in schools and Board office. |
| Communication | People who are deaf and hard of hearing cannot detect audio fire alarm systems currently being used in all schools. | Survey schools to establish need and set priorities. | Investigate visual emergency notification system. |
| Communication | Need for access to alternative forms of communication i.e.) hands-free telephones, voice amplifiers, TTY, accessibility software, screen readers, sign language interpreters. | SEPPA looks after these needs for students. Employee/parent needs require a process of application to be developed. | Requests come to central group established to review such information. |

| Type of Barrier | Description of Barrier | Process | Possible Strategies |
|------------------------|---|---|---|
| Attitudinal | Teaching and non-teaching staff members are often unaware/lack knowledge of non-physical disabilities i.e.) LD, mental health issues, etc., or other issues that hinder student learning (homosexuality, homophobia, bullying). | Through Student Services, Curriculum and Religious Education and Family Life and input from administrators to identify areas of need. | Sessions for staff and preparation of material for staff orientation binder. |
| Policy/Practice | No central location for raising and addressing accessibility issues. | Develop process to address and prioritize accessibility issues. | Becomes part of the mandate of the Working Group. |
| Policy/Practice | Not all policies are 100% barrier free. | Utilize cyclical review already in use. | As policies go out to system for review by all stakeholders, a reminder is given to carefully review with an eye to barriers. |
| Physical | Snow Removal Plans may not consider accessibility for persons with disabilities. | Undertake a review of current site plans included in contract documentation in consultation with School Administration. | Update and revise contract documentation as required. |
| Physical | Some facilities may not have accessible parking areas. | Conduct a survey of each facility to identify need. | An implementation strategy would be developed within the Board Capital Plan for school renewal. |
| Architectural | Some facilities may not have automatic door openers on all of the doors that someone may need to use to access the building. | Conduct a survey of each facility to identify need. | An implementation strategy would be developed within the Board Capital Plan for school renewal. Complete |

| Type of Barrier | Description of Barrier | Process | Possible Strategies |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|
| Architectural | Some areas within facilities are not accessible. | Conduct a survey of each facility to identify need. | An implementation strategy would be developed within the Board Capital Plan for school renewal. Complete |
| Architectural | Some facilities do not have accessible washrooms. | Conduct a survey of each facility to identify need. | An implementation strategy would be developed within the Board Capital Plan for school renewal. Complete |
| Transportation | Accessible transportation is not available in all areas of the Board. Manual lifting in and out of regular taxis and buses is otherwise required. | Review current practices and identify available resources. | Develop an implementation strategy in consultation with Tri-Board Transportation Authority. |

11. Barriers to be Addressed in 2010-2011

The Accessibility Working Group will address eight barriers during the coming year. This plan addresses at least one area in each of policies, programs, practices, services and facilities.

| Barrier | Objective | Means to remove/prevent | Performance Criteria | Resources | Timing | Responsibility |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <p>Communication/ Information</p> <p>Most school board forms, records and student information brochures only available in print format in English</p> | <p>To the extent possible, provide non-print, alternative formats for school board forms, records and student information brochures</p> <p>*Note: to be completed over five year period</p> | <p>Research alternative formats</p> <p>Survey and establish need</p> <p>Develop plan to produce non-print format for school board forms, records and student information brochures;</p> <p>translation services</p> | <p>Forms, records and student information brochures produced after 2002 to be made available in various formats in accordance with plan</p> | <p>Annual Budget Plan</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>I.T. and Communications</p> |
| <p>Communication/ Information</p> | <p>Develop a process to address public awareness of ODA</p> | <p>Provide information to schools, parishes for inclusion at masses, bulletins and newsletters. Poster displays in schools and Board Office</p> | <p>Community members will be aware of ODA and its mandate</p> | <p>Existing Budget</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>ODA Committee</p> |
| <p>Attitude</p> <p>Staff lack knowledge about disabilities</p> | <p>Staff will better understand how to accommodate students and staff with various types of disabilities</p> | <p>Disability awareness workshops for staff and material prepared for staff</p> | <p>All staff will be aware of ways to accommodate students and staff with physical and non-physical disabilities</p> | <p>Student Services Central Office Staff</p> | <p>Sessions to be offered in fall of each year</p> <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Student Services</p> |
| <p>Attitude</p> <p>Bullying creates disabling circumstances for its victims</p> <p>Staff lack knowledge about bullying issues</p> | <p>Staff will better understand how to deal with students that bully and are bullied</p> | <p>Workshops will be provided throughout the year</p> | <p>Staff and Parent/Guardian will be aware of how to deal with bullying situations in their communities</p> | <p>Ministry of Education</p> | <p>Information and resource to school communities</p> <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Anti-Bullying Task Force</p> |
| <p>Technical</p> | <p>Develop a plan to ensure that website is accessible to people who use screen-reading software</p> | <p>Enrol I.T. Staff in courses on accessible website design</p> | <p>Develop implementation plan in order that people can access school board website</p> | <p>Annual Budget Plan</p> | <p>Plan work in Spring 2008 for completion by January 2009</p> | <p>I.T.</p> |
| <p>Physical</p> <p>School facilities are not equally accessible</p> | <p>Establish a plan to improve the accessibility of school facilities</p> | <p>Using a standard evaluation tool, assess the accessibility of each school building</p> | <p>Accessibility improvements to schools will be incorporated in the Board's capital plan for school renewal</p> | <p>Board's capital plan for school renewal</p> | <p>Evaluation completed Summer 2006. A strategy to address identified needs to be incorporated in new Board Capital Plan, to be developed</p> | <p>Plant and Planning Services</p> |

| Barrier | Objective | Means to remove/prevent | Performance Criteria | Resources | Timing | Responsibility |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|-----------------------------|
| | | | | | during 06/07 school year. Complete | |
| Policies Some school board policies may result in barriers to people with disabilities | Ensure all board policies are inclusive and address accessibility issues | During Board's cyclical review of Policy, that particular attention be paid to the removal of barriers that might be present in Policy | No individual is left out | Incorporated in existing review process | Ongoing | All stakeholders |
| Policy and Practice Emergency preparedness response plans require provisions for personnel with disabilities | Ensure that emergency preparedness response plans provide for the safe evacuation and protection of persons with disabilities | Update and revise existing emergency preparedness response plans | Consult with persons with disabilities | Existing budget | Complete by Summer 2008 | Plant and Planning Services |

12. Review and Monitoring Process

The Accessibility Working Group will meet regularly during the planning year to review progress. Throughout the year, evaluation of the effectiveness in implementing the barrier-removal and prevention strategies will be ongoing in preparation for the second year of accessibility planning.

The Working Group reminds staff about roles in implementing the plan.

13. Communication of the Plan

The Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board's accessibility plan is to be posted on the board website at www.alcdsb.on.ca, with hard copies available upon request.