



## ***Simcoe County District School Board***

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### **Annual Accessibility Plan for the Simcoe County District School Board**

**2011 – 2012**

*Submitted to the*

**Board of Trustees  
Simcoe County District School Board**

**As required by the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA), and  
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)**

**September 2011**

*Prepared by the*

**Simcoe County District School Board  
Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)  
September 1, 2011**

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## **Executive Summary**

The purpose of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)*, and *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. Both of these Acts will continue to exist until all standards from the new legislation have received Royal Assent and until the ODA is repealed. The goal is to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in society.

The AODA 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.

This is the ninth annual plan (2011-2012) prepared by the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) of the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB). The plan describes: the measures that the SCDSB has taken in the past, and the measures that the SCDSB proposes to take during the year (2011–2012) to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.

The SCDSB is committed to the continual improvement of access to school board facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents and 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.

## **1. Aim**

The aim of the Accessibility Plan for the SCDSB is to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities who work in, use, or attend school board facilities and services. This plan also describes the measures that the SCDSB has taken over the past year and measures that will be undertaken during the 2011 – 2012 school year.

## **2. Objectives**

This plan:

- (a) describes the process by which the SCDSB will identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities;
- (b) reviews efforts at the SCDSB to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities during the past year, 2010-2011;
- (c) lists the policies, procedures, programs, practices and services that the SCDSB will review in the coming year, 2011-2012, to identify barriers for people with disabilities;
- (d) describes the measures the SCDSB will take in the coming year, 2011-2012, to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities; and
- (e) describes how the SCDSB will make this Accessibility Plan available to the public.

## **3. Commitment to Accessibility Planning**

The SCDSB is committed to:

- (a) maintaining an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC);
- (b) operating the AAC according to the committee's terms of reference;
- (c) consulting with people with disabilities in the development and review of its annual accessibility plans;
- (d) ensuring school board policies and procedures are consistent with the principles of accessibility; and
- (e) improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will review and approve an Accessibility Plan that will enable the SCDSB to meet these commitments.

#### 4. Description of the Simcoe County District School Board

The mission of the SCDSB, serving diverse growing urban and rural communities in the Huronia and Georgian Bay region, is to ensure students reach their full potential to become responsible and contributing members of an ever-changing global society through quality programs which develop the skills of lifelong learning in a safe, caring environment enhanced by community support.

Already one of Ontario's largest public education systems, the SCDSB serves more than 49,000 students in 87 elementary schools, 17 secondary schools and six adult learning centres, the number one priority for the dedicated and skilled team of teaching, administrative and support staff is to help students learn, strive to be their best and achieve success.

The predecessor of the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) was The Simcoe County Board of Education (SCBE), which was created through amalgamation of various municipal school boards in 1969. The name changed to Simcoe County District School Board in 1998.

#### 5. The Accessibility Advisory Committee Members and Committee Support

The AAC for 2010-2012 consists of the following members:

<b>Working Group Member</b>	<b>Department</b>
Sarah Mueller	Chair, Community Representative
Albert Stein	Vice-chair, Community Representative
Margaretta Papp-Belayneh	Community Representative
Rick Ball	Community Representative
Dee-Anne Benson	Community Representative
Deirdre Fitzgerald	Community Representative
Doug Mein	Community Representative
Helen Zandbelt	Community Representative
Peter Gumbrell	Principal of Special Education
Brad Parkes	Assistant Manager, Design and Construction Services
Janis Medysky	Associate Director
Robert North	Trustee
<b>Support Members</b>	<b>Department</b>
Bonnie Branch	Transportation Officer
Abigail DesForges	Human Resource Services Officer
Kevin LePage	Software Support Coordinator
Michelle Maurice	Buyer, Business Services
Jane Ryckman	Human Resource Services
Marla Tomlinson	Communications Officer

## 6. Recent Barrier Removal Initiatives

During the last several years, there have been a number of initiatives at the SCDSB to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

National Access Awareness Week was highlighted through a numbered memorandum that was issued to the entire school system. Schools followed up with such activities as daily announcements, poster contests and the use of related websites to encourage increased sensitivity.

Training in accordance with the Ontario Regulation 439/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service was implemented for all Simcoe County District School Board staff during 2009-2010. One new board policy and a variety of Administrative Procedures Memorandums (APM) were created to address this training.

The SCDSB has improved and implemented many accessibility projects through its budget process in the past ten years. Some of the projects completed were the installation of elevators in various schools, ensuring washrooms are accessible, addition of special needs washrooms, installation of barrier-free ramps and door operators.

### **Barrier-Free Projects Completed in 2010-2011**

<b><u>School</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>
Collingwood Collegiate	Install hold open devices on all corridor doors, install door operator on Special needs classroom, and fill in pit in Library to make space fully accessible including changes to two washrooms to make them fully accessible
Ernest Cumberland	Construct a ramp at Exit E-13
Ferndale Woods	Washroom renovations, door operator and ramp
Minesing Central	Construct a fully accessible washroom
Mundy's Bay	Install hold open devices in washrooms
Tecumseth South	Construct a fully accessible washroom

Elevators are being installed during major re-construction at Harriett Todd Public School and Hillcrest (Barrie) Public School.

## 7. Preventing New Barriers

Accessibility has come more to the forefront in the past years as we strive to make our built environment fully accessible to all by 2025. A spreadsheet has been created that is shared amongst departments. This spreadsheet gives a general outline of the accessibility of each of our facilities.

The Ministry of Education will be undertaking an inspection process that will have inspection teams in each of our schools over the next four years. Included with this inspection will be a Barrier Free Accessibility checklist that will be uploaded into the new TCPS software. This information will assist staff in planning future accessibility projects.

Generally we have made changes to our building standards such as all doors leading into the buildings will be ramped at 1:20 wherever possible but no steeper than 1:12. Washrooms and corridor doors are being installed with magnetic hold open devices for full unfettered access to the schools. Fire alarm systems are installed with both audible and visual signals. All new washrooms are being constructed to barrier free standards. Working with our design teams we are suggesting that the use of colour be used for change in direction of corridors, frames and doors being painted to stand out against the surrounding wall, and that any change in floor elevation be indicated by a change in floor colour and texture if possible.

Should a school be undergoing a major renovation or addition and should budget allow we are attempting to make the entire facility barrier free.

Within the next two to three years we will start a program of elevator and lift installations financed from the Annual Renewal budget to bring us closer to a barrier free environment.

Within the next year a design brief will be prepared for use by all consultants employed by the Board explaining our wants and needs. This brief will be reviewed by the Accessibility Committee prior to its implementation.

There is ongoing training in accordance with the Ontario Regulation 439/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

## 8. Barrier Identification Methodologies

The AAC plans to continue to use the following barrier identification methodologies:

<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
Presentation to Senior Administration	Opportunity to provide input and feedback	ongoing
Advisory Committee	Discuss related issues and determine	ongoing

<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
	priorities A sub-committee of the Accessibility Advisory Committee will visit schools and audit buildings for barrier identification	
Community Representation	Community groups will be invited to make presentations to the Accessibility Advisory Committee as requested.	ongoing
Request for feedback	Feedback from the system is encouraged	ongoing
School Administration/Facility Services	Design and Construction Services will continue to review building requirements in conjunction with school administration to better plan and budget for future projects. Construction staff reviews site conditions while on site for other reasons and add potential projects to the backlogged project list. This list is reviewed annually while planning for projects a year in advance.	ongoing
Commit to Character Initiative	Continue to promote the concept of inclusiveness in school and work settings	ongoing
Expand Public Awareness	Create public awareness and invite feedback Have disability awareness tied into character committee	ongoing

## 9. Barriers Identified

In its review, the AAC identified many barriers. Over the next several years, the AAC has decided to focus on the following:

<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Strategy For Its Removal/Prevention</b>
<b>Physical</b> Many doors are very heavy and inaccessible and may be difficult to open.	Install power-operated doors and/or adjust closers as well as construct ramps as required.
<b>Physical</b> In several school libraries, the aisles are wide enough for wheelchairs, but there is insufficient space to turn around at the ends of the aisles.  Libraries and office counters – cannot reach/see over top.	Re-organize the shelving configuration in libraries as renovations and construction takes place. Inform librarians and consultants about keeping facilities accessible.
<b>Physical</b> Many schools do not have accessible	Continue with identification of sites and construct/alter facilities to suit.

<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Strategy For Its Removal/Prevention</b>
washroom facilities.	
<b>Physical</b> Steps or steep grades impede access to many schools. Add contract strips to steps	Continue with identification of sites and construct ramps or other devices to meet Ontario Building Code requirements.
<b>Physical</b> Many interior corridor doors are closed due to Building and Fire Codes.	Install either power operated openers or install magnetic hold open devices tied into the fire alarm system.
<b>Physical</b> Soap dispensers, hand dryers, colour contrast	Look at purchasing materials that contrast with wall colours
<b>Physical</b> People who are deaf and hard of hearing cannot detect audio fire alarms currently being used in many schools.	Install audio visual emergency notification systems.
<b>Communication</b> Some parents/committee members may require support to facilitate full participation (interpreters/note takers).	Schools currently arrange and pay for this service.
<b>Programming</b> Our diverse student population requires an equally diverse range of interventions, accommodations and modifications to support the potentials of all learners.	Continue to provide professional development for teachers focusing on high yield strategies to improve student outcomes for all learners. As outlined in Learning For All these strategies include universal design for learning, differentiated instruction and a tiered approach to intervention.
<b>Information</b> Many forms, records and brochures are only available in print.	Forms and records can be provided in alternate formats on request.
<b>Attitudinal</b> Bullying, social isolation problems and cultural diversity.	Each school has developed an anti-bullying plan.
<b>Technological</b> The SCDSB web site is not accessible to people who are blind and visually impaired or who use screen-reading software.	Staff will continue to upgrade the website as budget allows.
<b>Policy/Practice</b> There is no central location for raising and addressing accessibility issues.	Continued discussion is required at senior management level.
<b>Sensitivity</b> Limited disability awareness among staff and students	Continue to highlight National Access Awareness Week in various ways (i.e. poster contest, daily announcements, sensitivity awareness sessions, sensitivity obstacle course).

## **10. Accessibility Issues to be addressed in 2011- 2012**

The type of barriers to be addressed will be related to barriers and strategies outlined in Section 9. Because no additional funds have been provided to support this legislation, the committee and senior administration will need to plan within resources currently available.

Senior administration will review committee recommendations as outlined in Section 8, Barrier Identification Methodologies. The barriers to be addressed for the 2011-2012 year will be shared with the trustees once they are finalized.

The AAC will review current changes and standards, attend seminars and workshops as required, conduct audits and promote National Access Awareness Week.

## **11. Review and Monitoring Process**

The AAC meets 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 following year of accessibility planning.

The AAC informs staff about roles in implementing the plan. The SCDSB has allocated an operating budget to the committee for 2011-2012 in order to be able to support and undertake recommended initiatives, as outlined in section 9. Minutes of meetings will be available upon request.

The AAC developed a comprehensive Terms of Reference document which references the AAC parameters as set out in the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. It is reviewed and updated on a yearly basis.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee has developed an Accessibility Role Definition outlining how various departments at the SCDSB support the ODA and AODA mandate to enhance accessibility at the SCDSB.

## **12. Communication of the Plan**

The Simcoe County District School Board's Accessibility Plan will be posted on the Board website at [www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca). Hard copies and copies in alternate formats will be made available upon request.

Feedback is always welcome. Please send your comments to the Accessibility Advisory Committee by email [jryckman@scdsb.on.ca](mailto:jryckman@scdsb.on.ca), or phone (705) 734-6363, extension 11384.