



SIMCOE COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MULTI-YEAR

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 2018 TO DECEMBER 2023

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Multi-Year Accessibility Plan  
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## **Message from the Chair of the Simcoe County District School Board:**

Simcoe County District School Board's (SCDSB's) new Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) for 2018–2023 outlines how we will continue to remove and prevent accessibility barriers. This new plan builds on what we have accomplished since we introduced our first five-year plan in 2008 that laid out a comprehensive roadmap to make SCDSB an accessible employer.

As a Board, we are committed to helping people with disabilities feel welcomed within our organization and facilities. We are also committed to having the right policies, procedures, and structures in place to ensure that the SCDSB provides people with disabilities equitable access throughout our school board.

Information technology is also changing the way students and their families access our system. To meet these new expectations, SCDSB is undertaking a renewal of our website to ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians Disabilities Act.

While there's still work to be done to ensure the board meets its regulatory requirements by 2025, I am proud of our achievements to date and our ongoing commitment to show leadership as an accessible and respectful employer in the school board sector.

Peter Beacock, Chair

Simcoe County District School Board

## Introduction

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Ontario organizations, including the SCDSB, are required to develop multi-year accessibility plans to help make Ontario accessible by 2025.

The new SCDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) builds on this work and reaffirms the board's commitment to accessibility across the system

An accessible school board means:

- Persons with disabilities receive quality goods and services in a timely manner.
- Information and communications are available in accessible formats to all SCDSB employees, students, families, and interested stakeholders.
- Persons with disabilities are able to participate fully and meaningfully as SCDSB students and employees.
- There is greater accessibility into, out of, and around SCDSB facilities.
- SCDSB staff, students, and interested stakeholders are able to continually identify barriers to accessibility and actively seek solutions to prevent or remove them.

The 2018–2023 SCDSB MYAP is based on best practice research, as well as input from staff, students, and accessibility stakeholders. It is organized around the following standards and general requirements of the AODA.

The five standards are:

Customer Service  
Information and Communications  
Employment  
Transportation  
Design of Public Spaces

The general requirements are:

Procurement  
Training

## 2018–2023 Priorities and Commitments

The new five-year accessibility plan includes both new and continuing priorities and commitments that will help the board's goal towards identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and providing seamless accessibility to services provided by the board.

## **Customer Service**

The Accessible Customer Service Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation requires the school board to provide accessible public services for people with disabilities and to ensure that policies and procedures are in place to support this requirement.

### **Outcome:**

An accessible SCDSB that includes ensuring people with disabilities receive quality services in a timely manner, supported by effective policies, procedures, tools and resources that promote accessibility in customer service.

### **2018–2023 Commitments:**

#### ***Leadership***

Through its Accessibility Advisory Committee, the SCDSB is a leader in the education sector, ensuring the board is ever aware of its obligations to foster excellence in accessible customer service delivery to all affected stakeholders.

#### ***Policies and Practices***

- Ensure that the appropriate policies are in place to support the mandate of the school board re: accessibility.
- Through the semi-annual audit process, consult staff and students with disabilities to examine and address potential barriers in board facilities.
- Ensure digital services will be accessible and result in an improved customer experience.

#### ***Training***

- Ensure that all employees continue to complete mandatory training on Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation requirements and disability-related obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- Continue to promote training to support SCDSB excellence in accessible customer service.

## **Information and Communications**

The Information and Communications Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation requires the school board to communicate and provide information in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities.

### **Outcomes:**

- Enhanced accessibility as it relates to communication supports, report formats, websites and web content.
- SCDSB staff have the tools and resources to effectively develop information and communications in accessible formats.
- By delivering information and communications in accessible formats to all students, employees, and stakeholders, the board will support the effective delivery of services.
- As well, the SCDSB will regularly review compliance and focus on ways to improve accessibility in information and communications.

### **2018–2023 Commitments:**

#### ***Standards and Resources***

- Develop and update standards and guides for accessible digital, marketing and media content in the board.
- Develop, provide and promote resources, using a variety of communications and training formats, including in-person sessions, guides, tutorials, and tools.

#### ***Web Platforms***

- Continue to administer the scdsb.on.ca platform to ensure it is fully accessible, and will provide templates and guidance on accessible web content.

#### ***Digital Services***

- Ensure that digital services are designed with accessibility at its core. Specifically, we will ensure the SCDSB social media accounts are utilizing the full range of accessibility features available to the SCDSB on those platforms, We will place captions on all photos posted to our Twitter account to assist those who use assistive technology, such as screen readers, when using the internet.

#### ***Forms/Reports***

- Ensure all forms/reports that are included in the board's repository are accessible by 2020.

### **Notices**

- Provide consistent notices in board spaces, and online notifications to the public regarding accessible formats and communications support, upon request.

### **Accessible Employment**

The Employment Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation sets out accessibility requirements that the SCDSB must follow to support the recruitment and accommodation of employees. This includes preparing individualized emergency response information for persons with disabilities and making employment practices and workplaces more accessible for new and existing employees with disabilities.

#### **Outcomes:**

- Efforts will align with the province's employment strategy for people with disabilities, as the board works to ensure that more people with disabilities are employed and advancing in the school board.
- Accommodation practices will be reviewed to ensure people with disabilities are able to participate fully and meaningfully as SCDSB employees.

#### **2018–2023 Commitments:**

##### ***Policies***

- In accordance with board practice, continue to regularly review our human resources policies to prevent or remove systemic employment barriers, ensure they are compliant with legislation and reflect best practices.

##### ***Data***

- Collect more data to evaluate our recruitment, leadership development and accommodation practices, and ensure that employment-related policies and programs are evidence-based. This will include a refreshed SCDSB employee survey that will provide new demographic insights that will inform future priority setting. The survey includes questions on disability and accommodation, and the data collected can be used by the board to inform program and policy decisions. The SCDSB will continue to monitor and integrate best practice research within its employment policies and programs.



### ***Learning and Development***

- Continue to build accessibility awareness through e-courses and training for all leaders, such as training to respond to the needs of employees with an illness, injury, and/or disability..
- Access for employees to training that helps them understand how hidden biases impact workplace interactions and how to prevent biases from negatively impacting others, including people with disabilities.
- Promote principles and practices of respectful workplaces through training and resources that help:
  - Improve managers' ability to intervene in workplace conflict, including potential harassment and discrimination.
  - Promote employee responsibilities for contributing to respect in the workplace.
  - Support employees to address low intensity rude or disrespectful behaviours that erode productivity, engagement, teamwork, diversity and service.
  - Ensure that principles of "inclusive leadership" are embedded in the content of leadership development programs. These programs will also be enhanced to better meet the diverse needs of participants and reflect greater diversity. This will address concerns of employees who have reported having issues with recruitment, accommodation and career advancement.
- Ensure all materials, activities and learning methods for leadership programs and other corporately developed programs are in accessible formats, or will be made accessible upon request, to support the professional development and advancement of all employees.

### ***Employee Support***

- Embed a centralized disability support services model to provide better support and dedicated employee accommodation planning.

### ***Mental Health***

With a greater emphasis on mental health, the SCDSB will:

- Ensure a mental health framework will include new strategic goals for the organization including employee wellness, empowered leaders, open culture, social responsibility and HR performance measures. It will outline board-wide initiatives that promote mental health well-being and awareness.
- Continue to provide and improve the Employee Assistance Program to support employees in the areas of mental health and wellness through a wide range of supports and resources.

## **Transportation**

### **Outcome:**

Ensure our transportation consortium partners have the necessary providers in place to meet the obligations of the board for students with disabilities.

## **Public Spaces**

The Design of Public Spaces Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation requires the board to ensure that newly constructed or significantly renovated schools and administrative buildings are accessible.

The SCDSB also complies with the Ontario Building Code's requirements for accessibility in the built environment.

### **Outcome:**

Greater accessibility into, out of and around SCDSB facilities. This includes incorporating accessibility retrofits where possible during renovations.

### **2018–2023 Commitments:**

#### ***Standards***

- With the input of accessibility stakeholders through an open school board and open dialogue approach, the board will improve accessibility design requirements for the organization with the goal to move to universal design principles that comply with the Ontario Human Rights Code, Ontario Building Code and Design of Public Spaces standard.
- When constructing or renovating board facilities, all features, such as elevators, doors, washrooms, parking, and furnishings, will be fully accessible.

#### ***Infrastructure Planning and Projects***

- Develop a Long Term Infrastructure Plan (LTIP) that will include a description of the state of board-owned infrastructure assets, a description of anticipated infrastructure requirements and a strategy to meet these requirements. The LTIP will ensure that infrastructure planning is integrated and aligned with provincial plans and strategies, including accessibility requirements under the AODA, as well as Ontario's commitment to building an accessible province by 2025.
- Continue to prioritize accessibility in every element of the infrastructure projects at board-owned and leased facilities.

## **Demonstrating Accessible Procurement**

Under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation, the school board is required to incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so.

### **Outcomes:**

- A procurement program for the SCDSB that considers the needs of people with disabilities at all stages of the procurement process, to help ensure that goods and services at board facilities are accessible.

## **Governance, Policies and Legislation**

In addition to the Standards under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation, the school board is committed to going beyond to ensure that barriers to accessibility are identified and addressed across the organization.

### **Outcomes:**

- Clear roles and accountability at all levels of the organization.
- Employees are supported to identify barriers to accessibility and actively seek solutions to remove and prevent them.
- Updated or new policies and legislation that are barrier-free.

### **2018–2023 Commitments:**

- Ongoing advisory and oversight of the 2018-2023 MYAP by the Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Provide greater clarity over roles and responsibilities in key areas, such as the accessible built environment and website compliance.
- Strengthen quality assurance and monitoring processes to maintain compliance with the legislation.
- Raise management and staff awareness of relevant corporate policies and guidelines.
- Enhance employee training, knowledge and skills to support compliance.
- Review policies and procedures to address accessibility barriers and build accessibility considerations into the design and implementation of any new policy or procedure.

## **Conclusion**

As the SCDSB continues to prevent, identify and remove accessibility barriers, it is important for us to monitor and report on the progress and results in meeting the commitments in the five-year accessibility plan.

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MYAP status reports will be updated annually and shared with all stakeholders. The SCDSB's compliance reports will also be submitted to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, as required.

Moving forward together, the SCDSB will become a more accessible employer and service provider.