



**Hamilton-Wentworth
Catholic District School Board**

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2027

*This publication is available on the Hamilton - Wentworth Catholic District School Board website
<https://www.hwcdsb.ca/support/accessibility/>*

Table of Contents

- Table of Contents 2
- HWCDSB Mission and Vision 3
- Philosophy of Special Education “Each Belongs” 4
- Message from the Director of Education 5
- Executive Summary 6
- Historical Background of AODA..... 8
- Goal and Objectives..... 10
- Terminology..... 11
- Commitment to Accessibility Planning..... 12
- Description of the HWCDSB 13
- Site-Based Accessibility Features 13
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA) Working and Advisory Group
(2022/2023)..... 14
- Section One:
- Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers 15
- Customer Service Standard 15
 - Training 16
 - Transition Planning 17
 - Specialized Equipment..... 17
 - Identifying Barriers 18
- Information and Communication Standard 18
- Employment Standard..... 20
- Procurement Standard 21
- Transportation Standard 21
- Design of Public Spaces Standard..... 22
- Section Two:
- Future Strategies to Remove and Prevent Barriers 24

Table of Contents continued

- Customer Service Standard 24
 - Training 24
 - Transition Planning 25
 - Specialized Equipment 26
 - Identifying Barriers 26
- Information and Communication Standard 26
- Employment Standard 28
- Transportation Standard 29
- Design of Public Spaces Standard 29
- Review and Monitoring Process 31
- Communication of the Plan 32
- For More Information 33
- Appendices 34
 - [Appendix A: Equity and Inclusion](#) 35
 - [Appendix B: Policy - Administration, A.19 Accessibility Policy](#) 35
 - [Appendix C: Policy - Administration, A.18 Multi- Year Accessibility Plan](#) 35
 - Appendix D: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service 36
 - Appendix E: School and Site Accessibility Survey January, 2023 64
 - Appendix F: Accessibility Projects 2017 – 2022 66

Mission

The mission of Catholic Education in Hamilton-Wentworth, in union with our Bishop, is to enable all learners to realize the fullness of humanity of which Our Lord Jesus Christ is the model.

The Catholic Community of Hamilton-Wentworth believes the learner will realize this fullness of humanity

If the learning process

- begins at home and is part of family life
- is nurtured in the Parish
- is anchored in the Catholic Faith
- takes place within the context of worship, sacraments, and the life of the Church
- is enhanced by the school community
- is embraced by the learner as a personal responsibility for life

If learning takes place in an appropriate and challenging environment

- in which members of the school community exemplify the teachings of Jesus Christ
- which reflects Gospel values and responsible use of human, financial and natural resources and
- which promotes academic excellence and clear indicators of achievement.

Vision

Learners from Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Schools will demonstrate

- knowledge and practice of their Catholic Faith
- the capability of nurturing a strong family unit
- esteem, respect and responsibility for self and others
- academic competence
- the ability to listen accurately and express knowledge clearly
- independence, critical thinking and effective problem solving
- proficiency with technology in order to adapt to a challenging world
- the values, attitudes and skills for effective partnerships
- the ability to transform our society.

To enable learners to achieve this vision, the faith community of the HWCDSB will reflect

- the centrality of Jesus Christ in our lives
- the teachings of the Catholic Church
- exemplary role models
- social justice, respect and fairness for all
- a dedicated staff
- a curriculum that is dynamic, practical and relevant
- high standards
- an environment conducive to learning
- effective partnerships
- accountability at all levels.



PHILOSOPHY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

"Each Belongs"

The philosophy of the HWCDsB is to meet the needs of all children and to help them develop fullness of humanity in a Catholic Community. All students, regardless of special talents or challenging needs, can grow and they can grow best by attending their neighbourhood schools along with their brothers and sisters.

Every child with challenging needs requires a sense of belonging, reasonable and realistic success and concern for his or her dignity as a person. The child is not served by sympathy or sentimentality. Exceptional pupils share with their fellow pupils the responsibility to demonstrate acceptable behaviour and to strive for total growth and development.

It is the responsibility of each individual who instructs children to foster growth. No handicap, however severe, and no learning deficit, however persistent, should discourage our efforts. No special gift is to be neglected. All human and material resources must be used to meet the needs of the pupil. Provision of programs and services in our schools is governed by an individualized and inclusive approach. (Adapted from the June 17, 1969 Board report to the Education Committee)

Believing, Achieving, Serving

Message from the Director of Education

The adoption of Special Education in 1969 not only transformed ordinary schools into places where “Each Belongs,” but firmly established the HWCDSB as a world leader in inclusive education. That landmark decision nearly fifty years ago to fully integrate students with special education needs into mainstream schools paved the way for students with exceptionalities to attend neighbourhood schools, and enjoy many of the same experiences and opportunities as their siblings and friends.

Championed by my father, James Hansen, a former senior superintendent of education and other visionary leaders in the HWCDSB, “Each Belongs” recognized the value of each human person as well as his/her potential to realize the fullness of humanity as modelled by Jesus Christ. This philosophy was based on the understanding, in the words of my late father, that “Each belongs not because he/she can do something or cannot do something; each belongs because he or she is.”

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, introduced in 2003, became an opportunity for us to expand on our definition of inclusivity by focusing on ways in which we could improve accessibility for people with disabilities. This updated Multi-Year Accessibility Plan highlights many of the procedures, practices and programs that have been put into place over the past several years to improve accessibility, and outlines measures by which we, as a system, will continue to identify, remove and prevent barriers for individuals who work, learn and participate in our buildings and schools.

At a Mass for the Year of Mercy jubilee of the sick and persons with disabilities, Pope Francis suggested that the world becomes better “when human solidarity, mutual acceptance and respect increase.” He added that diversity is not something to fear, but is “the path to improvement, to be more beautiful and richer.” This plan is a demonstration of that.

Our commitment to creating safe, accepting and accessible learning and work environments is reflected in the many dedicated individuals who have been involved in this document’s development as well as those involved in the important work of creating an accessible environment. It is our hope that this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will continue to assist us in making our schools and workplaces welcoming and inclusive places for students, staff and the communities we serve.

David Hansen

Director of Education

Executive Summary

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (HWCDSB) is an inclusive organization that values diversity and strives to meet the needs of its students and staff with disabilities.

The HWCDSB mission and vision is the first section of the HWCDSB Equity and Inclusion Policy ([Appendix A](#)) which directly links to the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) Policy [MYAP Policy](#).

The HWCDSB works diligently to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. Our statement of commitment to fulfilling the requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities is found in the HWCDSB Accessibility Policy and posted on the HWCDSB website. ([Appendix B](#)).

As a designated public sector organization, the HWCDSB shall establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan (MYAP) which outlines the strategies used to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act (AODA), 2005 and Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR).

The MYAP outlines the steps that the HWCDSB is taking to meet those requirements to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. The plan will also demonstrate how the HWCDSB will fulfill its role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians.

Every year the HWCDSB continues to be locally, nationally, and internationally recognized for its inclusive education practices. Staff are recognized for their contributions to inclusive education by a variety of organizations. Delegations from abroad continue to come to visit HWCDSB schools and consult with central staff regarding the best practices used, challenges encountered and strategies to remove barriers.

The HWCDSB continues to demonstrate exemplary leadership and commitment to the improvement of access to school board facilities, as well as to board policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community with disabilities.

The MYAP will be posted on the board website and contain hyperlinks to current policies. This plan can be made available in accessible format upon request. Contact information is outlined in the "[For More Information](#)" section. The MYAP will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

The MYAP was reviewed by the Board's current [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Advisory and Working Group Committee](#). This plan incorporated consultation with the Special Education Advisory Committee. Staff and students with disabilities provided insight and feedback throughout the process of developing and reviewing the plan. Human, financial, and technical resources were taken into account. Responsibility was assigned to various departments to lead efforts to meet various commitments. Timelines and practicality were also taken into consideration to ensure alignment with both compliance deadlines for Ontario's accessibility laws and Board priorities.

On March 3, 2022, the Education Accessibility Standards Working Group submitted its [final report and recommendations](#) to the Minister of Seniors and Accessibility. The Ministry of Seniors and

Accessibility and the Ministry of Education will now review the reports' recommendations and draft submissions to cabinet for the creation of a K-12 education standard regulation under the Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act (AODA). As of the updating of this MYAP the Ministry continues its review. The HWCDSB AODA Working and Advisory Committee will review the final report and recommendations when received by district school boards.

Historical Background of AODA

The following summary outlines the history and evolution of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) which was passed in the spring of 2005 by the government of Ontario. This legislation provides a framework for the goal of making the province of Ontario completely accessible by the year 2025. The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario was also established through this legislation and is currently under the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. This legislation requires that standard development committees recommend accessibility standards to the Ontario Cabinet Minister responsible for the AODA. The Customer Service Standard (Ontario Regulation 429/07) was the first accessibility standard to come into effect when it was enacted on January 1, 2008.

On May 31, 2010 the Ontario Government announced that the next three standards (Information and Communications, Employment, and Transportation) be integrated into one streamlined regulation known as the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). Each of these standards was developed, publicly vetted and submitted to the Government independently. The Integrated Standard (Ontario Regulation 191/11) came into effect on July 1, 2011 with its requirements being phased in between 2011 and 2025.

In December 2012, the Province passed Ontario Regulation 413/12 under the AODA, for the Built Environment Standard which took effect on January 1st, 2013, and became part of the IASR. The Ontario Building Code (OBC) has been amended to include enhancements to accessibility in buildings. As of January 1, 2015, new construction and renovations are subject to updated accessibility requirements and address access to and within buildings as well as outdoor spaces. These standards are harmonized with the OBC, and cover issues such as counter height, aisle and door width, parking, and way-finding signage.

In September 2013, after being in effect for five years, a review of the Customer Service Standard was undertaken by the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council / Standards Development Committee which included feedback from the public. In November 2014, the Government made public the final proposal for revisions to the Customer Service Standard which included incorporating the Customer Service Standard into the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and making changes to requirements of the Standard. This proposal would house all the accessibility standards under one comprehensive regulation. The Ministry prepared a detailed summary of the proposed changes for public review and comment and proposed that these changes be enacted on July 1, 2016 and take immediate effect.

The Honourable David Onley, former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario (2007-2014) was guest speaker at an i-Learn: Making Education Accessible Student Symposium hosted by the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board in November 2010 at the NMC. He was invited as we are the Each Belongs board and he championed the whole movement for AODA. His vision was to ensure Ontario was fully accessible by year 2025. Unfortunately, he passed away in 2023, before he could fully see this carried out.

On the 10th anniversary of the AODA, the Ontario Government reflected on their accomplishments and renewed their commitment to building an accessible Ontario by 2025. On February 13, 2015, the government published a report on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) by Mayo Moran, Provost and Vice-Chancellor of Trinity College at the University of Toronto. The report constitutes the second legislative review of the AODA and outlines recommendations to the government.

As a result of the review, Reg. 429/07 was revoked on July 1, 2016 and the Customer Service Standard was incorporated into the Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11).

Effective July 1, 2016 there are now five Integrated Accessibility Standards under the AODA:

1. Information and Communication Standard;
2. Employment Standard;
3. Transportation Standard;
4. Design of Public Spaces Standard (formerly Built Environment); and,
5. Customer Service Standard.

In 2017 the provincial Minister responsible for accessibility established the 'Education Standards Development Committee' (ESDC). This committee consisted of representatives of people with disabilities, disability organizations, trustees and other sector experts. The group met monthly over a period of four years to develop its recommendations. The ESDC put forward initial recommendations in the fall of 2020 asking for public feedback. The board website contained a link for parents, guardians, staff, students and the community to respond. SEAC members were also invited to respond. The ESDC then reviewed all comments and finalized their recommendations which were submitted to the Minister of Seniors and Accessibility for consideration in January, 2022. On March 3, 2022, the Education Accessibility Standards Working Group submitted its [final report and recommendations](#) to the Minister of Seniors and Accessibility. The Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility and the Ministry of Education will now review the reports' recommendations and draft submissions to cabinet for the creation of a K-12 education standard regulation under the Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act (AODA). As of the updating of this MYAP the Ministry continues its review.

Goal

The MYAP highlights some of the measures that the HWCDSB has undertaken in the past five years and describes future measures that will be taken during the next five years in order to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities who work in, or attend our school board facilities and/or use its services. This plan will demonstrate how the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School works to meet the compliance requirements set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act, 2005 (AODA) in all of the five of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations.

Objectives

The Hamilton-Wentworth Multi-Year Accessibility Plan:

1. Describes the process which the HWCDSB has used in the past five years to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities;
2. Reviews efforts of the HWCDSB to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities during the past five years;
3. Describes the future measures the HWCDSB will undertake in the coming years to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities;
4. Makes a commitment to provide an annual status report on the multi-year accessibility plan implementation;
5. Makes a commitment to review and update the multi-year accessibility plan at least once every five years; and,
6. Describes how the HWCDSB will make the accessibility plan available to the public.

Terminology

Disability:

Covers a broad range and degree of conditions which may have been present at birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time. This procedure takes on the following definitions as provided by the Ontario Human Rights Commission; Section 10 of the Code which defines “disability” as:

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability, a learning disability or using symbols or spoken language,
- A mental disorder or
- An injury, or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997. The definition includes disabilities of different severity, visible as well as non-visible disabilities, and disabilities the effects of which may come and go.

Barrier: A barrier is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability.

Attitudinal barriers refer to persons who do not know how to communicate with people with disabilities, or persons who display discriminatory behaviours.

Architectural barriers may result from the original design of the building, shape of rooms, size of doorways, or width of hallways, for example.

Information or communication barriers make it difficult for people to receive or send information for example, a person with a visual disability may not be able to read print materials, read signs, locate landmarks, or see a hazard. A person with an intellectual disability may not understand information that is not expressed in plain language.

Physical barriers refer to objects added to the environment, such as doors, windows, elevators, furniture, bathroom hardware, etc.

Systemic barriers can result from an organization’s policies, practices and protocols if they restrict persons with disabilities.

Technology barriers refer to devices such as computers, telephones, inadequate or inappropriate assistive technologies.

Commitment to Accessibility Planning

The updated Multi-Year Accessibility Plan as outlined in the Board Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Policy ([Appendix C](#)) was revised in June, 2022. Persons with disabilities were consulted. The current plan was reviewed by senior administration and by the HWCDSB's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). The final plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval. The approved plan will then be posted on the Board's website as a public facing document. Accessible formats will be available upon request.

The HWCDSB is committed to continue:

1. Maintaining an Accessibility Advisory and Working Group;
2. Consulting with the Special Education Advisory Committee;
3. Consulting with persons with disabilities;
4. Ensuring school board policies and procedures are consistent with the principles of accessibility; and
5. Improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community.

Description of the HWCDSB

The HWCDSB has 56 schools providing Catholic Education to approximately 29,000 students. The Board encompasses the jurisdiction of the new City of Hamilton, formerly the Towns of Flamborough, Dundas, Ancaster, Stoney Creek, Glanbrook and former City of Hamilton.

The HWCDSB is comprised of the following:

Total Number of Schools:	Elementary: 49	Secondary: 7
Total Number of Students:	Elementary: 19,145	Secondary: 10,710
Total Employees:	Academic: 2,641	Support: 1,965
Students enrolled in French Immersion:	Elementary: 1,411	Secondary: 187
Students served through Special Education:	Elementary: 2,503	Secondary: 1,678
Students participate International Languages:	1,800	
Students transported by bus:	Elementary: 7,409	Secondary: 5,186
Students receive specialized transportation	Elementary: 307	Secondary: 155
Adult Education Sites	997 students	
Community Use of School Hours:	Average 34,585 hours over past 5 years	
Total Square Metres of Schools:	Elementary: 194,395	Secondary: 117,426

Site-Based Accessibility Features

A school and site accessibility survey was completed by Facilities Management Services in January, 2023 ([Appendix E](#)) to determine current accessibility features of elementary and secondary schools and administrative office buildings. This information will help inform future upgrades in accessibility over the next five years. The survey is updated on an annual basis.

HWCDSB Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Working and Advisory Group (2022-2023)

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Section One:

Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

Identifying, preventing and removing barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities who learn, work, and participate in the school board community and environment is important.

This section will highlight some of the achievements and undertakings of the HWCDSB to implement and improve accessibility for people with disabilities over the past five years in order to meet requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act, 2005 and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR).

Customer Service Standard

School boards are obligated organizations under the legislation that are required to provide educators including teachers, educational assistants, designated early childhood assistants, and school board staff with accessibility awareness training related to accessible programming, course delivery and instruction. In addition, school boards shall keep a record of the training. In July 2016, accessibility and awareness training became mandated for volunteers in public sector organizations.

The HWCDSB has moved to a more accessible virtual platform from Skype to Microsoft (MS) Teams for an improved user experience. MS Teams has closed captioning which works well in synchronous teaching with video and has the ability to post recording for reviewing. This platform is used for virtual learning, meetings, conferences, etc. Closed captioning (cc) is also available in online PowerPoint as part of the MS Suite offerings.

Ongoing professional development for staff to support individuals with various disabilities occurs during professional activity days, conferences, and meetings. MyClass/Learning Management Systems (LMS) contains a plethora of resources and self-directed modules posted to be accessible for review at any time for educators, parents/guardians, and students.

Technological accessibility equipment priority is given to the distribution and loan of Special Education Amount (SEA) computer-based equipment (e.g., iPads, laptops, headsets) and claims-based equipment (e.g., braille, FM systems, walkers, bicycles, standers) for students with special education needs to support access to Ontario curriculum.

Continuity of Learning was a priority during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown of schools. Steps to prepare for a virtual learning scenario were undertaken including distribution of iPads and laptops as well as headsets (some with microphones) to students and staff. Students with the highest special education needs were welcomed back into the schools in person.

Training

As part of the on-boarding procedures for new employees, the 'Letter of Engagement' from the Human Resources department directs the new employee to complete two mandatory training online modules: AODA Customer Service Training module and the IASR Training module. A Quick Reference Card ([QRC](#)) is available in order for volunteers, co-op students, and summer staff to be able to access and complete the online mandatory customer service training modules. A record of the training for all staff and volunteers is archived by the board on HR Service Centre. A certificate of completion of AODA training may also be printed by an employee, student or volunteer.

The HWCDSB [AODA Customer Service Training booklet \(Appendix D\)](#) will be revised in the spring of 2023. This internal document outlines HWCDSB protocols and procedures as they relate to serving persons with disabilities. Administrators, special education resource teachers and clerical staff will receive professional development on this updated resource in 2023, ensuring that all members of the school community have differentiated training to provide an accessible and inclusive educational experience.

Capacity building training of all staff in accessibility practices and a variety of disabilities is interwoven in the HWCDSB's inclusive culture. All staff receive regular professional development on a variety of exceptionalities and disabilities. An electronic registration system tracks the participation of professional development for all staff. One example of staff training for accessibility for academic programming is the use of visual strategies to support students with communication, behaviour and intellectual exceptionalities.

One example of capacity building is with professional development of staff with the integration of the Renewed Math Strategy to support students with learning disabilities. Strategies include the use of using concrete, hands-on mathematics manipulatives for to assist with visual conceptual understanding. Visual support strategies are necessary for some students; however, these strategies can also be beneficial for all, not just those students with exceptionalities such as learning disabilities, communication, behaviour and intellectual. Visual supports can also reduce anxiety for students.

Staff continued to share and model their knowledge and support of students who have a variety of disabilities. Student voice and engagement in creating and promoting safe and inclusive schools is key.

The HWCDSB Service Dog Protocol was reviewed. A new HWCDSB Certified Service Animals in Schools Policy and Protocol was finalized in spring 2018. These were reviewed in September, 2022.

The Human Resources department's letter of engagement for new employees provides a list of mandatory/legislated training modules which now includes the AODA Customer Service and IASR training modules.

Ongoing training is provided for staff and students on how to interact and communicate with people with various disabilities. Staff and students have received education and support in the area of mental health. These include collaborating with community partners such as Contact Hamilton and Public Health. Student voice in creating and promoting safe and inclusive schools is key.

Transition Planning

Transition planning is critical in supporting children and families of students with special education needs. HWCDSB has a comprehensive intake process for children entering school from a child care setting or home into Kindergarten. This process includes a parent/guardian information evening in the winter prior to entry. With parent permission, preschool community service providers share information related to assessment, intervention and recommendations for programming and accessibility, with school board staff prior to entry to school. These reports may be from preschool resource teachers, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, occupational therapists, pediatricians. In addition to receiving reports, an intake meeting takes place in the spring, prior to the start of kindergarten, with parents/guardians, school staff (including home school and central special education resource staff), and if possible, preschool community services. Accommodations and accessibility concerns are discussed at these meetings in order to plan a smooth transition to school. During the COVID-19 pandemic these transition meetings continued in virtual format to support families.

Similar care is taken to ensure a smooth transition for students with disabilities from elementary to secondary school, and also from secondary school to the community. The HWCDSB employs a transition coordinator to support the job coaches in each secondary school who in turn assist students transition from secondary school to work, community programs or volunteer opportunities. The transition coordinator also supports and advocates for HWCDSB adult employees with special needs ('support hires'). There are currently 14 adult employees with special needs.

Many students with special education needs require visual schedules strategies to support transitions between activities and locations within the school. The use of a visual schedule is an example of a strategy that is beneficial for everyone but adapted to meet the needs of students with special education needs. This strategy can be essential as it can increase understanding and reduce transition anxiety for these students.

Specialized Equipment

The HWCDSB accessed the Ministry of Education Special Equipment Amount (SEA) funding in order to assist with the costs of equipment necessary to support students with special education needs. This equipment may be essential for a student to access, or be accommodated within the school setting. This equipment may also be essential for a student's academic program by supporting accommodations and differentiated instruction in order to access Ontario curriculum expectations or alternative programming. This equipment may include items such as, FM

systems, speech generating devices, sensory equipment, positioning devices for sitting, standing, lifts, and harnesses.

The HWCDSB has also purchased and provided equipment or assistive devices for staff requiring an accommodation in order for them to perform the functions of their employment or access HWCDSB resources and facility use, for example, a personal FM system may be prescribed for a teacher with a voice disorder. An example of universal design as a way for the board to support staff as well as students is the integration of sound field systems into classrooms of all new school buildings. Sound field systems improve signal to sound ratios supporting all students, as well as teachers. Another example is staff was provided with ergonomic equipment to support disabilities following an ergonomic assessment by the HWCDSB Manager of Health and Safety.

Identifying Barriers

Students, staff, parents/guardians and the public were able to identify and bring forward any accessibility concerns and suggestions for improvement thus ensuring people with lived experience have a voice. Staff and students who identified barriers to accessibility were able to discuss their concerns with a staff member or their parent/guardian who in turn notified an administrator. The concern was routed to an appropriate manager or to the Assistant Superintendent of Education responsible for AODA.

All staff have received AODA training and have been instructed to bring identified barriers forward to their supervisor. The Manager of Health and Safety and Human Resources department identify restrictions and limitations and develop accommodation plans for staff. The special education resource teachers, classroom teachers, educational assistants and support staff brought forward any accessibility concerns for students with special education needs.

Members of the public have identified barriers to accessibility when accessing programs and services offered by the school board. Members of the public have brought concerns to the attention of the school or school board or via the Board website. Barriers identified by members of the public through the Board website were referred to the Assistant Superintendent of Education responsible for AODA. Review of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and the ongoing feedback opportunities are additional important methods of identifying barriers to accessibility.

Information and Communications Standard

The Information and Communications Standard requires the HWCDSB to create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities. This standard includes modes of receiving and responding to feedback, accessible formats and communication supports, emergency procedures, and safety plans.

In the Board's annual Special Education Plan, program modifications, accommodations and alternative expectations for students with disabilities are addressed. Universal design and differentiated instruction principles and guidelines are continuously provided through Curriculum and Special Education staff for all school staff. Parents/guardians, students, and

teachers have access to information about services, accommodations, policies and programs through a variety of methods including posting the [HWCDSB Special Education Programs and Services Plan 2022-2023](#) link to the board website and the [Special Education- Parents'/Guardians' Guide to Special Education Programs and Services 2022-2023](#).

A laminated AODA [Feedback Notification](#) was created and posted at the entrance of each school and board site. It contains contact information to provide feedback. An AODA Customer Feedback loop for the HWCDSB website was also created. A form for school sites was developed as well <https://www.hwcdsb.ca/support/aodafeedback/>.

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is posted on the board website. It provides contact information for the Assistant Superintendent of Education responsible for AODA in the [For More Information](#) section as well as contact information for members of the [AODA Working and Advisory Group](#). Staff and students also bring forward concerns or suggestions to staff members who direct the feedback to the appropriate staff member (administrator, manager or Assistant Superintendent of Education responsible for AODA). Feedback is received through a variety of ways; the website, email, telephone, and in person. All feedback and concerns are dealt with in a timely manner respecting the privacy and dignity of all parties.

Best practices for legibility are encouraged for board communications including memos for staff. Visually clear *sans serif* font (Arial or Calibri) with a minimum 12pt font size is the AODA recommendation.

Laptops, computers and iPads are purchased through the SEA funding in order to support students who require assistive technology and differentiated instruction to access the Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum. The Ministry's Special Equipment Amount (SEA) funding allows the HWCDSB to support students to access curriculum and alternative programs when required. Technological supports include computer software and hardware. Board staff are also eligible for similar technological supports to help them in their daily work, if accommodations are necessary. Accessible text to speech format is available for staff and students as required.

Teacher-Librarians and special education resource teachers are able to request texts in accessible formats and receive them in a timely manner to support students with visual and hearing impairments.

The HWCDSB has established a list of interpreters who speak a variety of languages, including sign language. The interpreters are available upon request.

Many school and board sites have screens/monitors at the entrances to provide visual and auditory information for students, staff, parents/guardians and visitors attending the site.

Substantial efforts have been made to continuously maintain an accessible website which meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards. The accessibility standard for Information and Communications creates obligations for public sector organizations to conform to a set of guidelines published by the World Wide Web Consortium, called the Web Content

Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0. AODA requires public institutions such as school boards to be compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) level A by 2016 and level AA by 2021. After achieving a WCAG Level A compliance in 2016 by restructuring and redesigning public websites, Level AA compliance was achieved in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the challenges of maintaining this compliance when staff were unable to provide the time required for compliance. This led the board to re-evaluate the underlying technology of the public websites. It was concluded that a system was needed that can enforce Level AA compliance as part of its workflow. This technological gap will be addressed to ensure that compliance is not only met, but maintained across time. Some examples of AA include multiple navigation points, resizable text, page structure and timing controls.

Over the years, HWCDSB has nurtured positive and collaborative relationships with parents/guardians and community agencies. Individual needs are taken into account and accommodated, thus enabling parental/guardian engagement with their school community, free from barriers. For both employees and parents/guardians, facilitation of full participation in the HWCDSB experience is guaranteed. Parent/guardian engagement along with information sessions will continue. One example is the annual parent/guardian information session for the school intake process will continue to occur in the January/February prior to a September school start.

In spring 2018, the HWCDSB Speech, Language and Hearing Department partnered with the Hamilton branch of the Canadian Hearing Society to extend an invitation to adults with cochlear implants through the Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) used to support hearing impaired adults. CART live translation services are available on request and schools can use the service to support students and caregivers when live speech is being presented in various school settings.

Employment Standard

The Employment Standard requires the Board to make employment practices and workplaces more accessible to potential and existing employees with disabilities.

All internal and external postings have an AODA clause. Over the past five years the Human Resources department has revised the clause. It currently states “The HWCDSB is an equal opportunity employer that is committed to inclusive, barrier-free recruitment and selection processes. We also recognize our duty to accommodate and foster a culture of inclusion. We will provide accommodations during the hiring process. If an accommodation is required, please inform the Human Resources Team or Hiring Manager in advance of any part of the process. All information received relating to a candidate’s required accommodation will be addressed confidentially.”

When interviewing all candidates for positions, each interview question is also provided in written form in enlarged, sans serif font as well as read aloud. If a virtual interview is undertaken the questions are enlarged and posted on the screen as well as read to the candidate.

E-VAC chairs were purchased for employees who require assistance in the event of an evacuation. Employees who work with these individuals are regularly trained by the Health & Safety Officer, in the safe use of the chairs and support of the person with the disability, in the event of an evacuation. E-VAC chairs are inspected 4 times per year.

The 'Disability Management Program – Early Intervention, Stay at Work (SAW), Return to Work (RTW) and Accommodation Policy' was created and approved on June 19, 2018 and subsequently revised on February 1, 2022. Written, individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities are provided. The process includes employee participation, a means of individual assessment, a process for the employer to request outside medical evaluation, a process for the employee to have union or other representation, steps to protect privacy, frequency of review standards and how the review will be conducted as well as a means for providing the plan in an accessible format upon request. The Human Resources Department, including Disability Management continued to monitor its procedures to adjust to COVID-19.

Procurement Standard

As a designated public sector organization, the HWCDSB is required to incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it was not practicable to do so. Where it is determined not to be practicable, the board provides an explanation upon request. For example, technological compatibility between older products and newer ones being procured, availability of accessible goods, services or facilities. The HWCDSB Manager of Procurement is responsible for ensuring this is carried out.

Third party agreements or service contracts continue to have an AODA clause to ensure service providers have had AODA training in their own organizations.

Transportation Standard

The Transportation Standard ensures that integrated accessible school transportation services are provided. Transportation services for Ontario School Boards underwent an organizational change. All of the transportation services for the HWCDSB are now run out of the consortium Hamilton-Wentworth Student Transportation Services (HWSTS).

Individualized Student Transportation Forms (ISTS) were revised to better support the transportation of students with special education needs. Communication procedures between the board, parents/guardians and the carriers were reviewed. Training was provided for Special Education Resource Teachers on the newly revised ISTS to better support the request and approval process for the transportation of students with identified needs as well as communication with the carriers.

Students with various special education needs receive necessary equipment to safely transport them to and from school.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Student Transportation Services (HWSTS) Consortium continues to work diligently to uphold AODA requirements with the various carriers.

Review of renewals and approval of new applications for individual student transportation form (ISTF) for specialized transportation occurred annually.

Specialized transportation routes remained a priority during COVID-19 with enhanced safety measures and cleaning procedures.

New Individual Student Transportation Plans were created and implemented in 2018. Upgrading to a supportive specialized services data base is being investigated.

Revisions were made to the HWSTS Operational Procedure “Use of Service Animals and Support Persons” in 2018.

The Operations Supervisor of HWSTS joined the AODA Advisory and Working Committee in February 2018.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

During each of the past five years the HWCDSB has allocated funds to address issues through identified projects in schools or board buildings related to accessibility as part of an annual building renewal program. These included upgrades or improvements for entrances/exits, washrooms, sound field systems, ramps, visible fire alarms. Continuous improvements in accessibility occurred in many buildings. An example is the installation of an accessible main floor washroom in the Nicholas Mancini Center which is utilized by staff, students, and the public. Accessible door openers were installed in numerous schools and sites. Other accessibility projects completed from 2017 - 2022 are available in [Appendix F](#) .

In each of the past five years Facilities Management Services completed a school site survey to determine the state of accessibility of the 49 elementary schools and seven secondary schools and other board sites in the system to determine current accessibility and to inform plans for future upgrades. The most current School and Site Accessibility Survey was completed in January, 2023.

Compliance was met for the new or redeveloped public spaces as per the accessibility laws of the Ontario Building Code and AODA. All new schools and major renovation projects incorporated Barrier Free Design. In most cases, the requirements of the Ontario Building Code (OBC) and AODA were exceeded to permit improved accessibility for students, staff and the public.

As part of the site condition assessment program, each of 20 board sites were accessibility evaluated and costed per a Ministry of Education template and completed by early 2018. This exercise detailed numerous dimensional and qualitative factors in determining each site’s accessibility needs and corresponding investments required. The areas of focus were parking, exterior and interior barrier free paths of travel, fire alarm visual annunciation, universal

washrooms and barrier free washrooms. Each year a different group of sites was analyzed and catalogued with all facilities completed within a five-year span.

In April of 2018, the board opened the new Our Lady of the Assumption CES which replaced the former site. There were significant advances in accessibility due to this initiative such as elevator, designated entrances, etc. The board opened Our Lady of Hope CES in March of 2020. This relieved some capacity issues at St. Matthew CES and allowed the addition of a fire alarm system with strobe and audible signals.

In 2021, the board developed the [AODA Accessibility Request Form](#) in order to track accessibility requests from school administrators, based on recommendations from community Occupational Therapists (OT) and Physical Therapists (PT) for students with special education needs. This process ensures appropriate funding and expedites. The form is filled out by the administrator and submitted to the Assistant Superintendent of Education for approval. Upon approval the Facilities Management Services completes the request. Examples of accessibility requests that have been completed include touchless soap and towel dispensers mounted at the appropriate height, accessible parking spots and automatic door openers.

Section Two: Future Strategies to Remove and Prevent Barriers

The excellent efforts and accomplishments over the years to identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities who learn, work, and participate in the school board community and environment will continue. The HWCDSB will continue to be a leader in inclusive and equitable practices.

This section will highlight projects and programs that the HWCDSB will undertake to continue to implement and improve accessibility for people with disabilities in the next five years in order to meet requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. These strategies will be in place in order to be compliant with Ministry reporting by December 31, 2023, December 31, 2025 and December 31, 2027.

Customer Service Standard

The HWCDSB is committed to continuing to improving accessible customer service to people with disabilities.

The philosophy of “Each Belongs” is fundamental to the inclusive model of the Board and continues to evolve. All persons will continue to be accepted and welcomed. Students and staff of varying abilities and cultures are already included as part of the fabric of the Board culture. This attitude will continue to be reflected in the Board’s implementation of the equity principle in all elements of the learning and working environment. In elementary and secondary schools, a wide variety of school leadership initiatives have been developed by the students in response to several issues, including bullying, equity and inclusion. Policies will continue to reflect the fundamentals of the Ontario Human Rights Code, to ensure that all Board employees enjoy the opportunity to come to workplaces which are free from barriers-attitudinal or physical.

The board will be developing the “HWCDSB Guide to Accessible Documents and Presentations” which will include information related but not limited to font types and sizes, links, colour, contrast, tables and charts, navigation and accessible document checklist.

Training

Capacity building and training of all staff in accessibility practices and a variety of disabilities that is interwoven into the HWCDSB’s inclusive culture will continue. All staff will continue to receive regular professional development on a variety of exceptionalities and disabilities. An electronic registration system will continue to track the participation of professional development for all staff. For example, a particular emphasis will continue to be on job-embedded support where staff will receive more in-depth information on applied behavior analysis principles and strategies to support students with a variety of exceptionalities; strategies that are necessary for some, but beneficial for all students.

Ongoing training, professional development and participation in conferences will continue to occur with staff on how to interact and communicate with people with various disabilities. Staff and students have received and will continue to receive awareness and education to support positive mental health and safe learning environments. Collaborating with and learning from numerous community partners including CNIB, Contact Hamilton, Public Health, Ron Joyce Children's Health Center, McMaster Children's Hospital, Lynwood Charlton Centre will continue. Interdisciplinary teams to support students with disabilities will continue to provide a circle of care.

Staff will continue to share and model their knowledge and support of students who have a variety of disabilities. Student voice and engagement in creating and promoting safe and inclusive schools is key.

Staff who are new in a role will continue to receive routine training on the HWCDSB Customer Service Training booklet which outlines HWCDSB protocols and procedures as they relate to serving persons with disabilities. This booklet will be reviewed and updated in 2023.

Transition Planning

Transition planning will continue to be vital in supporting children and families of students with special education needs. HWCDSB will continue with the established comprehensive intake process for children entering school from a child care setting or home into Kindergarten. This process includes a parent/guardian information evening in the winter prior to entry. With parent/guardian permission, preschool community service providers share information related to assessment, intervention and recommendations for programming and accessibility, with school board staff prior to entry to school. These reports may be from preschool resource teachers, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, occupational therapists and pediatricians. In addition to receiving reports, an intake meeting takes place in the spring, prior to the start of kindergarten, with parents/guardians, school staff (including home school and central special education resource staff), and if possible, preschool community services. Accommodations and accessibility concerns will be discussed at these meetings in order to plan a smooth transition to school. Similar care is taken to ensure a smooth transition for students with disabilities from elementary to secondary school, and also from secondary school to the community. A transition coordinator will continue to support the job coaches in each secondary school to assist students transition from secondary school to work, community programs or volunteer opportunities. The transition coordinator will continue to support and advocate for HWCDSB adult employees with special needs.

Students with special education needs that require visual schedules strategies to support transitions between activities and locations within the school will continue to be emphasized. The use of a visual schedule is an example of a strategy that is beneficial for everyone but adapted to meet the needs of special needs students, this strategy can be essential as it can increase understanding and reduce anxiety these students.

Specialized Equipment

Ministry of Education Special Equipment Amount (S.E.A.) funding, provided to support equipment costs for students with special education needs, assists the Board in purchasing items such as adjustable desks, positioning devices, lifts or harnesses, etc. and/or access to curriculum, including computers or other communication devices. This process will continue. The HWCDSB also provides staff with equipment required for them to perform their functions. Purchases of E-Vac chairs for emergency evacuation situations will continue.

All staff will continue to receive AODA training and be informed about bringing identified barriers forward to their supervisor. The Manager of Health and Safety and Disability Management, within the Human Resources department will identify restrictions and limitations and develop accommodation plans for staff. The special education resource teachers, classroom teachers, and educational assistants will continue to bring forward any accessibility concerns for students with special education needs.

Accessibility will continue to be considered when making plans for out-of-school learning experiences, events and school trips, taking into account such items as, but not limited to ramps, accessible washrooms, lighting and signage.

Identifying Barriers

Staff are encouraged to continue to bring forward to their supervisor any identified accessibility barriers.

Students will continue to be encouraged to identify barriers to accessibility, to discuss their concerns with a staff member or their parent/guardian who in turn will notify an administrator.

Members of the public may continue to identify barriers to accessibility when accessing board programs, services and sites. Members of the public may bring concerns to the attention of the school or school board or may use the Board website. Barriers identified by members of the public through the Board website will be referred to the Assistant Superintendent of Education responsible for AODA, who will respond in a timely manner. Development of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, annual status review, and the ongoing feedback opportunities will continue to be additional important methods to identify and try to remove barriers to accessibility. Any identified barriers or concerns will continue to be routed to an appropriate manager or to the Assistant Superintendent of Education responsible for AODA.

Information and Communications Standard

The HWCDSB will continue to create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities. This standard includes modes of receiving and responding to feedback, accessible formats and communication supports, emergency procedures, and safety plans as outlined in the Information and Communications Standard.

The HWCDSB will continue to review and update the HWCDSB Special Education Program and Services Plan and Special Education – Parents’/Guardians’ Guide on an annual basis and post these plans on the board website. SEAC will continue to be consulted on the plan and guide. Universal design of learning (UDL) and differentiated instruction (DI) principles and guidelines will continue to be provided through the curriculum and special education departments for all school staff.

Various modes of communication to provide accessibility feedback will continue. A laminated AODA Feedback Notification will continue to be posted at the entrance of each school and board site and contain current contact information to provide feedback. The AODA Customer Feedback loop for the HWCDSB website will continue. School sites will also have forms for those who prefer. The Board website posts the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan which provides contact information for the Assistant Superintendent of Education responsible for AODA in the [For More Information](#) section as well as contacting members of the [AODA Advisory and Working Group](#). The members of this group will be updated every school year and posted with the annual status report. Staff and students will also be able to continue to bring forward concerns or suggestions to staff members who direct the feedback to the appropriate staff member (administrator, manager or Assistant Superintendent of Education responsible for AODA). Thus ensuring feedback is able to be received through a variety of ways; the website, email, telephone, written and in person. All feedback and concerns will be dealt with in a timely manner respecting the privacy and dignity of all parties.

Best practices for legibility will continue to be encouraged for board communications including memos for staff. Visually clear *sans serif* font (Arial or Calibri) with a minimum 12pt font size is the AODA recommendation.

The Ministry’s Special Equipment Amount (SEA) funding will continue to provide assistive technology devices such as but not limited to laptops, computers and iPads in order to support students who require assistive technology and technological supports for differentiated instruction to access the Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum. Board staff will continue to be eligible for similar technological supports to help them in their daily work, if accommodations are necessary.

The Manager of Library Services will continue to review the capacity of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of digital or multimedia resources upon request. Teacher-Librarians and special education resource teachers will continue to be able to request texts in accessible formats and receive them in a timely manner to support students with visual and hearing impairments.

Maintaining an accessible board website will be a focus as well as providing ongoing training for principals and school site web ambassadors regarding accessibility compliance. Following a needs-analysis the board will be procuring a new web CMS platform to support public websites, with AODA as one of the strict requirements of the system. This will require a full replacement of all elementary, secondary, adult education and board websites, including technical retraining of staff. This will also include a parallel awareness campaign for staff and the community

regarding accessibility and inclusion. The result will be a sustainable Level AA process in a strategic position to support some Level AAA guidelines. This process will begin in 2023.

To address the training requirements of the Information and Communication Standard the HWCDSB has provided its staff accessibility awareness training modules. This has been delivered through the board's online training system. This online training system assigns the training to the staff and maintains a record of all staff that have completed the training. The online training system will send monthly reminders to staff if they have not completed the training. Reports are generated and provided to Human Resources to assess the level of compliance with staff completing the training.

Encouraging presentation materials for staff, students, parents/guardians and the public, such as slide decks, signs that have large fonts, high contrast colours and a clean layout will continue. This strategy is necessary for some (those with visual impairments and other disabilities) yet good for all.

School and board sites will continue to have monitors at the entrances to provide visual and auditory information for students, staff, parents/guardians and community.

The HWCDSB will continue to nurture the relationships with parents/guardians and community agencies. Individual needs will continue to be taken into account and accommodated. Parent/guardian engagement and information sessions will continue. Some examples include the annual parent information session for the school intake process which will continue to occur in the January/February prior to a September school year.

Employment Standard

The Board will continue to make employment practices and workplaces more accessible to potential and existing employees with disabilities as outlined in the Employment Standard. The Disability Management Program – Early Intervention, Stay at Work (SAW), Return to Work (RTW) and Accommodation Policy as well as the accompanying Guidelines and Procedures was reviewed in February, 2022 and will be reviewed every three years.

The board will continue to employ persons with disabilities who are valued and respected members of staff in a variety of roles. Accommodation plans are created for these employees to support them in their employment. The process will continue to include a means by which the employee can participate, a process for the employer requesting outside medical evaluation, a process for employee to have union or other representation, steps to protect privacy, frequency of review standards and how the review will be conducted and will provide the plan in accessible format upon request.

The HWCDSB Human Resources department will continue to accept applications in a variety of formats in addition to online job applications (e.g., hard copy submissions).

All internal and external postings will continue to have an AODA clause “The HWCDSB is an equal opportunity employer that is committed to inclusive, barrier-free recruitment and selection processes. We also recognize our duty to accommodate and foster a culture of inclusion. We will provide accommodations during the hiring process. If an accommodation is required, please inform the Human Resources Team or Hiring Manager in advance of any part of the process. All information received relating to a candidate’s required accommodation will be addressed confidentially.”

When interviewing all candidates for positions, each interview question will continue to be provided in a written form in enlarged, sans serif font as well as read aloud. If a virtual interview is undertaken the board will continue to enlarge the questions and post on the screen as well as read to the candidate.

E-VAC chairs will continue to be purchased for employees who require assistance in the event of an evacuation. Employees that work with these individuals will be trained annually in the safe use of the chairs and how to support the person with a disability, in the event of an evacuation.

Transportation Standard

The HWCDSB will continue to provide integrated accessible school transportation services as outlined in the Transportation Standard.

The HWCDSB and HWSTS will continue to consult with parents/guardians in identifying students with disabilities before commencement of each school year; develop individual school transportation plans that detail needs and plans for boarding, securement and deboarding; identify and communicate to appropriate parties the roles and responsibilities of the transportation provider, the parents/guardians of students, the operator of vehicle, and appropriate school staff.

Specialized transportation and safety equipment will continue to be provided for those students requiring this support to attend school.

Integrated accessible school transportation services or appropriate alternative accessible transportation services for students with disabilities will continue depending on the nature of the disability or safety concerns.

Annual review of renewals and approval of new applications for individual student transportation form (ISTF) for specialized transportation will continue to occur.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

The HWCDSB will continue to advance accessibility infrastructure to the most current of regulatory requirements in all new facility construction, including new builds, additions, and

renovations. Newly constructed schools and extensively renovated buildings will continue to be built on a Barrier Free Design model. Ontario Building Code requirements will be met or exceeded to accommodate accessibility needs of students, staff, and the public.

Annual funding from the Ministry of Education's School Renewal Grants will be utilized to fund upgrades to washrooms, etc. or to respond to emerging accessibility needs such as ramps, sound (hearing) fields, etc. Limitations for physical adaptations at some Board sites are a result of their original construction models and the challenge of accommodating to today's standards.

Accessibility requests will continue to follow the current process. The form is submitted to the Assistant Superintendent of Education. If approved the request is sent to Facilities Management Services and will be handled in a reasonable and timely manner.

The new St. Patrick CES building opened in 2023 and provides significant accessibility improvements to the school community. The new St. James the Apostle CES will also provide great improvements.

Paths of travel to main entrance doors of board buildings, from the School and Site Accessibility Survey are being explored. For example:

- Blessed Sacrament should be feasible for a modest cost.
- Canadian Martyrs doesn't have a front entrance. The most used entrance is at the east side and is not accessible but the entrance at the library is accessible. No further action is planned.
- Construction of a barrier free ramp at Cathedral HS is scheduled for July, 2023.
- At Regina Mundi there is no feasible option without chair lifts which would conflict with fire codes due to narrow stairwells.
- St. Charles Young is accessible at the rear for gyn and main floor. Front entrance accessibility would require a stair lift which would not comply with fire codes.
- St. Charles Barlake is accessible now due to recent work.
- Due to the floorplan at St. Eugene, multiple chair lifts would be needed. The stairwells are narrow so fire code could be an issue.
- St. Francis Xavier has an accessible entry at the rear which leads to a chair lift for stairs. The front entrance is not practical due to stairwells.
- St. John the Baptist has a second front entry which is barrier free.
- The rear entrance at St. Joseph is barrier free and more suitable than the front entrance which is restricted by stairwells.
- St. Mary CERC entrance is now barrier free.
- An architect review was done at Sts. Peter and Paul but the options were impractical due to interior and exterior stairs.

A revised School and Site Accessibility Survey will be provided at yearly AODA status updates.

Review and Monitoring Process

As a public sector organization, the HWCDSB, is required to submit a compliance report to the Government of Ontario through the Accessibility Directorate every two years. The HWCDSB has remained in compliance with the regulations of the standards as per the reports submitted to the Government through the Accessibility Directorate by December 31st of 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2021. The Board will continue to file an online compliance report with the Government every two years by December 31st in 2023, 2025 and 2027.

Through the Assistant Superintendent of Education responsible for AODA, the HWCDSB Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act (AODA) Advisory and Working Group will meet at least twice per year to consider feedback received, review progress, evaluate the effectiveness of identification, implementation of barrier-removal and prevention strategies and to plan for increased accessibility throughout the Board.

This group will ensure that the following steps will take place:

- (a) prepare an annual status report on the progress of the measures taken to implement the HWCDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan;
- (b) review the HWCDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan at least once every five years in consultation with persons with disabilities, with the Board's Special Education Advisory Committee, the Board of Trustees and other relevant stakeholders; and,
- (c) review the compliance reporting questions in preparation for the Ministry report to provide an opportunity to determine what is accomplished and what remains to be done prior to the compliance report submission to the Government of Ontario.
- (d) the HWCDSB will work to incorporate a lived-experience perspective into the organizational outlook and deliver on the initiatives outlined in this plan.

Communication of the Plan

The HWCDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2027) will be posted on the Board website.

An annual status report on the progress of the HWCDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be posted on the Board's website.

The HWCDSB will accommodate requests for accessible formats of the multi-year plan or annual status update in a timely manner.

Questions, comments or feedback regarding the Accessibility Plan may be directed to:

Assistant Superintendent of Education
responsible for Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

HWCDSB
90 Mulberry Street, Hamilton, Ontario
L8N 3R9

Telephone: 905-525-2930

Fax: 905-525-2914

<http://www.hwcdsb.ca/contactus/>

<http://www.hwcdsb.ca/support/accessibility/>

For More Information

Questions can be directed to:

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario
Ministry of Economic Development,
Employment and Infrastructure
601A – 777 Bay Street
Toronto ON
M7A 2J4

On-line:

www.ontario.ca/accesson

Phone:

Toll Free: 1-866-515-2025

International: 416-849-8276

TTY/TDD: 1-800-268-7095 or 416-325-3408

Appendices

[Appendix A: Policy Manual- Administration - Equity and Inclusion Education](#)

[Appendix B: Policy Manual- Administration, A.19 Accessibility \(Formerly Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations Policy\)](#)

[Appendix C: Policy Manual- Administration, A.18 Multi - Year Accessibility Plan](#)

Appendix D: AODA Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

Appendix E: School and Site Accessibility Survey January, 2023

[Appendix F: 2017-2022 Accessibility Projects](#)

Appendix D



Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Believing, Achieving, Serving

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

AODA

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service



January, 2010
Revision – February, 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)	1
Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy(IASR) A.19	2
Customer Service Standard	3
Notification of Disruption of Services	6
Use of Assistive Devices by the General Public	8
Use of Support Person by the General Public	12
Use of Service Animals by General Public	15
Monitoring and Feedback on Accessible Customer Service	19
Appendices:	21
Appendix A: Barriers and Solutions to Customer Services	22
Appendix B: Sample Documents for Notifying the Public about Disruptions in Service	25
Appendix C: Tips on Assisting People using Assistive Devices	26
Appendix D: Consent Form for Confidentiality Regarding Use of Support Person	28
Appendix E: Sample Board Notice Regarding Feedback	29
Appendix F: Sample Site Notice on the Feedback Process	30
Appendix G: Sample Document for Obtaining Feedback	31

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Background

School Boards in Ontario have long served the needs of students with disabilities. Inclusion of all students has become an integral part of our delivery of service. The educational system has not only served students with disabilities, but has also demonstrated leadership, through lesson and example, in embedding the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity in our learning and working environments. As a result, students in Ontario are well-positioned to be effective leaders in realizing the Accessible Ontario envisioned for 2025.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), sets a goal of an Accessible Ontario by 2025. The legislation requires all public and private organizations or businesses to provide service to persons with disabilities. School Boards are among the first to be required to comply with the regulations.

New legislation as of July 1, 2016 under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy, defines five (5) areas for which standards will be set:

- Customer Service Standard
- Design of Public Spaces Standard (previously Built Environment)
- Employment Standard
- Information and Communications Standard
- Transportation Standard

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy (IASR) A.19

Purpose

The HWCDSB is committed to providing services to students, parents/guardians, the public and staff that are free of barriers and biases. The HWCDSB strives to ensure that key principles of independence, dignity, integration, inclusiveness and equality of opportunity are reflected and valued in the learning and working environments.

The HWCDSB is committed to providing services (i.e., programs, resources, materials) in a way that is accessible to all customers.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the HWCDSB to provide an environment in all of its facilities that builds independence, dignity and respect for all students, parents/guardians, the public and staff. Further, the Board is committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity of access to services in the same location and in a similar way as these services are available to all others we serve.

Possible barriers and solutions to customer service issues are identified in Appendix A.

1. CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD

a) The First Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy (IASR) is the Customer Service Standard.

b) Possible barriers and solutions to customer service issues are identified in Appendix A.

Definitions

Customer	any person who uses the services of the school board.
Assistive Device	any device used by people with disabilities to help with daily living. Assistive devices include a range of products such as wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, electronic communication devices.
Service Animal	an animal that is being used because of a person's disability and this is either readily apparent or is supported by a letter from a list of health professionals (pg. 15).
Support Person	a person who assists or interprets for a person with a disability as they access the services of the Board. A support person is distinct from an employee who supports a student in the system.
Third Party Contractors	person or organization acting on behalf of or as an agent of the Board (e.g. bus operators, psychologists).
Barriers to Accessibility	anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of the services of the Board. This includes, but is not limited to, a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier.
Accommodation	a means, through reasonable efforts, of preventing and removing barriers that impede individuals with disabilities from participating fully in the services of the Board.

Board Expectations

1. The Board will make every reasonable effort to ensure that all policies, practices and procedures from the date of the policy forward are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration inclusiveness and equality of opportunity to everyone with particular attention for persons with disabilities.
2. The Board will welcome all members of the school and broader community to its facilities by committing staff and volunteers to providing services that respect the independence and dignity of persons with disabilities, such services to incorporate measures that include but are not limited to the use of assistive devices and service animals.
3. To ensure greater awareness and responsiveness to the needs of a person with disabilities, the Board will provide appropriate training for all staff who deal with the public or other third parties on behalf of the Board. As new staff are hired, the training will become a component of their orientation training and will be provided within a reasonable timeframe. Volunteers will be provided with customer service training. (QRC link-<https://www.hwcdsb.ca/careers/?fileID=267872>)
4. The Board will ensure that its policies and procedures related to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* are made available to the public and also ensure there is capacity to provide communication about these policies and procedures in a format that takes into account a person's disability.
5. When services that are normally provided to a person with a disability are temporarily unavailable such as access to an elevator, a disruption of service notice will be posted at the site (preferably on the front door) and on the site's website. See Appendix B for sample.
6. In order to monitor the effectiveness of implementation of the Accessible Customer Service Standard, the Board has a process for receiving and responding to feedback. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to the public and will allow people to provide feedback using a variety of methods. (Pages 19-20)
7. So that adherence to this policy can be achieved efficiently and effectively, the Board, its managers and principals will consider the impact on persons with disabilities when purchasing new equipment, designing new systems or planning a new initiative.
8. The Board will establish a process for consulting with frontline staff and volunteers who have a role in implementing the expectations and procedures established under this policy to review its effectiveness.

Legal Framework

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy 191/11

Ontario Human Rights Code

Notification of Disruption of Services

Rationale

Generally, disruptions to all of the Board's services, (such as during a major storm or power outage) do not require this special notice. However, if the disruption has a significant impact on people with disabilities, a notice of disruption should be provided, (e.g., sign on the front door).

When services that are normally provided to a person with a disability are temporarily unavailable such as access to an elevator, a disruption of service notice will be posted at the site and on the Board's website.

Administrative Procedure

Supervisory Officers, Principals, Site Managers and/or the Board Communications Officer will ensure that the users of board and school services are notified when there is a disruption in services that may have an impact on access to services by people with disabilities:

- When facilities or services used by any persons, including those with disabilities, are temporarily unavailable, a descriptive notice will be posted at the school or administrative site and communicated to the public through any means available, including school website and notice on front door. Sample documents for notifying the public of disruptions in service are given in Appendix B.
- When unavailability of a service or facility is expected to be of a considerable duration, notification will be posted in the school newsletter, on the school website, and on the Board website, as deemed appropriate. In such an event, alternate means of accessing the service will be explored by the service provider and will be properly communicated to services users.
- Consideration should be given to providing notice in multiple formats.
- Principals will provide the following information on the school's website and/or written notification:
 1. Service that is unavailable
 2. Reason for disruption
 3. Anticipated duration
 4. Description of alternatives
 5. Notify those who you are aware of that may be impacted

Use of Assistive Devices by the General Public

Rationale

An assistive device is any device used by people with disabilities to help with daily living. Assistive devices include, but are not limited to, a range of products such as wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, electronic communication devices.

Administrative Procedure

1.0 Responsibility

- 1.1 Board training focused on how to interact with people using assistive devices rather than on the technical use of the assistive devices is to be provided to all staff.
- 1.2 Students and staff have separate and specific procedures related to their personal use of assistive devices. Example; some use AT for communication purposes (their voice) and others for academic purposes.

2.0 Communication Regarding the Use of Assistive Devices (Appendix C)

Assistive Devices Carried by Persons with Disabilities

- 2.1 The board website and each school website will indicate that all board facilities provide services that respect the independence and dignity of people with disabilities and offer services that include the use of assistive devices.
- 2.2 Each board facility that is open to the public will post information in the front office/reception area that welcomes the use of assistive devices and encourages users to seek support as they require it.

Assistive Devices/Services – Examples available by the Board*

- 2.3 The board website and school websites, as applicable, will indicate the availability of assistive devices provided by the board or school to assist in provision of services to people with disabilities. Each board facility that is open to the public will, as applicable, post information in the front office/reception area that indicates the availability of assistive devices and encourage potential users to seek support as they require it.

***NOTE** – these examples could include:

Assistive Devices: TTY service, telephones with large numbers,

amplifiers, lifts.

Services: Sign language interpretation, oral interpretation, real-time captioning.

Alternative Service Methods: Assistance of a staff person to complete a transaction, e.g., school registration.

How to Use TTY and Canada Relay Services

A TTY (teletypewriter) is an electronic device which enables text messages to be sent through a telephone line. The device has a keyboard, a screen and often the capacity for a typed message to be printed.

This is primarily available to support communication access and enable students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing to initiate calls (calling out). However, it could also be used to enable a Deaf or Hard of Hearing person to receive a telephone call while at school. (Currently, in the school year 2016-2017 there are no students in our Board who use this system).

The device can be used at anytime in place of a traditional telephone call.

A TTY is used in conjunction with a Relay Service, such that a Bell Canada operator receives a text message and then reads (relays it verbally) to the person receiving the call, or conversely, hears a message and then encodes it in text to be read by another.

Text messaging (using cell phones) is another method of communication that is accessible to people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

How to Make a Call with a TTY and the Relay System

1. Push the ON switch.
2. Push the DISPLAY switch if you wish to use the screen alone or the PRINT switch if you want what is typed both on screen and in print.
3. Place the telephone receiver on the TTY's rubber receptacles. Make sure that the receiver is firmly in place and that the telephone's receiver cord is on the LEFT side of the TTY.
4. Check the telephone indicator light; if it is lit, you have the line.
5. Dial the number, and watch the telephone light; if it is flashing slowly, this indicates that the device on the other end is ringing.
6. When the person you are calling answers, you will see a phrase appear on the screen such as: "Hello, Richard Smith here, GA." The "GA" stands for "Go Ahead". Don't forget to use it whenever you have finished speaking, so that other person will know it's his or her turn to speak. The person who receives the call is always the one who starts typing first.
7. When the call is over and you want to advise the other person that you are ready to get off the phone, type "SK". It means "Stop Keying". The other person will respond by typing "SK" if he or she agrees that the call is completed. To be courteous, each person waits until the other one has indicated "SK" before hanging up the phone. Always switch the TTY "OFF" as soon as you have finished the call.

To Make a Call Using the Relay System

1. Phone the number (1-800-855-0511), and tell the operator your name, the name of the person you are calling, and the number you wish to reach.
2. The operator will make the call for you, and you speak to the operator as if you were talking directly to the person you are calling. For example, say "Hi, How are you doing?" Do not say: "Tell him I said hello." Remember to say "Go Ahead" when you finish speaking, so the person on the other end will know it is his or her turn to speak.
3. If you normally speak very quickly, the operator may ask you to speak slower so your message can be typed. There will be brief silences as the operator types to the TTY user and the user replies.
4. Operators will not betray confidences. They will not relay profanity, threats or criminal propositions, but will relay banking and personal financial information and other personal conversations.

Use of Support Person by the General Public

Rationale

A support person is a person who assists or interprets for a person with a disability who accesses the services of the Board. A support person is distinct from an employee who provides support services to a student or staff person in the system – separate and specific procedures apply.

A support person is an individual chosen by a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services. Personal care needs may include, but are not limited to, physically transferring an individual from one location to another or assisting an individual with eating or using the washroom. Medical needs may include, but are not limited to, monitoring an individual's health or providing medical support by being available in the event of a seizure.

The support person could be a paid professional, a volunteer, a friend or family member. He or she does not necessarily need to have special training or qualifications.

Administrative Procedure

1.0 Access to Board premises

1.1 Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be welcomed on Board and/or school premises with his or her support person. Access will be in accordance with normal security procedures. This requirement applies only to those areas of the premises where the public or third parties customarily have access and does not include places or areas of the school or board offices where the public does not have access.

2.0 Confidentiality

2.1 Where a support person is accompanying a person with a disability, who is the parent/guardian of a student, for the purpose of assisting in a discussion that may involve confidential information concerning the student, the superintendent, principal or other staff member must first secure the consent of the parent/guardian regarding such disclosure.

2.2 Consent to the disclosure of confidential information in the presence of the support person must be given in writing by the parent or guardian.

2.3 The support person must also provide assurance in writing to safeguard the confidentiality of information disclosed in the discussion. (Appendix D)

2.4 A copy of the signed consent document will be retained in the school/board office/site.

a) The original shall be stored in the student's OSR Documentation file, if appropriate.

b) The original shall be retained in the site office if it is for a non-parent customer.

2.5 If the parent/guardian uses a different support person for subsequent meetings, a new signed consent will be required.

3.0 Support Persons Accompanying a Person with a Disability at School Events for which there is an admission fee

3.1 Parents/guardians and other members of the public attending on school premises, including those who are renting facilities, may also be accompanied by a support worker, where necessary. Should a school event charge a fee for entry, a support worker should NOT be charged in their capacity as a support provider for a member of the public.

4.0 Where the Board may require the presence of a Support Person

4.1 The Board may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.

(NOTE: People with disabilities are free to accept a reasonable risk of injury to themselves just as other people do. Different individuals will have a different tolerance for risk. Risk should be weighed against any benefit for the person with a disability. It is not enough that the support person might help to protect health and safety; a support person must be necessary or essential to protect health and safety before you can require one – the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means. Any considerations on protecting health or safety should be based on specific factors and not on assumptions. A person with a disability may be capable of meeting health and safety requirements on their own.)

Use of Service Animals by General Public

Rationale

A service animal is an animal that is being used because of a person's disability and this is either readily apparent or is supported by a letter from a member of a regulated health professional's college, who can provide medical documentation to support the need for a service animal. These include members of the following:

- the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario;
- the College of Chiropractors of Ontario;
- the College of Nurses of Ontario;
- the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario;
- the College of Optometrists of Ontario;
- the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario;
- the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario;
- the College of Psychologists of Ontario; and
- the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario.

Examples of service animals include dogs used by people who have vision loss, hearing alert animals for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, and animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure and lead them to safety. The customer service standard's provisions also apply to animals providing other services to people with disabilities.

It is "readily apparent" that an animal is a service animal when it is obvious by its appearance or by what it is doing. For example, it may be readily apparent that an animal is a service animal, if it is wearing a harness, vest or other visual indicator and the person with a disability provides documentation from a regulated health professional which confirms that the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

Service animals have a job to do. They are not pets. Avoid touching or addressing a service animal. Your customer is responsible for the care and supervision of their service animal.

Administrative Procedures

1.0 Access to Board Premises

1.1 Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a fully trained service animal will be welcomed on Board and/or school premises with his or her service animal and will be accompanied by the service animal while on the premises. Access will be in accordance with normal security procedures.

1.2 This procedure deals solely with the individual's right to be accompanied by a service animal. Access to classrooms for service animals used by students and staff is covered under separate procedures.

2.0 Exclusion of Service Animal

2.1 A service animal can only be excluded from access to the premises where this is required by another law. Examples include the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and the *Food Safety and Quality Act*. The former Act prohibits service animals in places where food is prepared, processed, or handled (e.g. kitchen of school cafeteria or culinary arts classroom) although service dogs are permitted where food is served and sold (e.g., school cafeteria or lunchroom).

2.2 Where there is a risk to the health and safety of another person as a result of the presence of a service animal, consideration must be given to options available prior to exclusion of a service animal. An example would be a situation where an individual has a severe allergy to the service animal. It is the Board's expectation that the situation be fully analyzed and all measures to eliminate the risk be considered, e.g., creating distance between the two individuals concerned, making reasonable alterations to schedules, etc.

2.3 A service animal can be excluded if it is of a breed that is prohibited by law. An example would be the *Ontario Dog Owners' Liability Act* which places restrictions on pit bull terriers.

3.0 Alternative measures if Service Animal must be excluded

3.1 In the rare instance where a service animal must be excluded, the Board must make every effort to put alternative arrangements in place to provide the services required by the person with a disability. This could involve leaving the animal in a secure area where it is permitted by law and discussing with the person how best to serve them, e.g., a person with a vision disability might need someone (a member of staff

or volunteer) to guide them.

4.0 When it is necessary to confirm an animal is a Service Animal

Where an animal is not a trained guide dog and it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the school or board staff member may ask the person using the service animal for a letter from a member of regulated health professionals, who can provide medical documentation to support the need for a service animal, based on the disability, these include members of the following:

- the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario;
- the College of Chiropractors of Ontario;
- the College of Nurses of Ontario;
- the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario;
- the College of Optometrists of Ontario;
- the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario;
- the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario;
- the College of Psychologists of Ontario; and
- the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario.

4.1 Where the person using the service animal regularly attends at the school or board facility, the principal or site manager may request to keep a copy of the letter on file but only as long as required by the circumstances. Alternatively, the person using the service animal may be asked to bring a letter with them on occasions when they visit the premises. The principal or site manager shall preserve the confidentiality of the letter and information contained in the letter, and shall not use or disclose the letter or information except as provided for in the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.O. 1990, cM56, or as otherwise required by law.

4.2 The person responsible for the service animal must attend to the personal care and physical needs of the service animal including but not limited to the removal and disposal of animal waste.

Monitoring and Feedback on Accessible Customer Service

Rationale

The Board will monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of the Accessible Customer Service Standard through a process for receiving and responding to feedback. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to the public and will allow people with disabilities to provide feedback using a number of methods.

Administrative Procedure

1.0 Implementation Process

1.1 A process for Feedback on Accessible Customer Service has been developed:

(a) Information on the Board will invite users of Board services to provide feedback on their experience with or concerns about access to services for people with disabilities. (Appendix E)

(b) Printed information will be available through school offices and public offices of the Board to invite people with disabilities to provide feedback on their experience with or concerns about accessibility of services. Consideration will be given to providing information in alternate formats upon request. (Appendix F)

1.2 A process for reviewing implementation of the policy on Accessibility Standards for Customer Service includes consultation with the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

2.0 Methods for Feedback

2.1 A range of methods for soliciting feedback will be employed to ensure optimum access to the feedback process by people with disabilities.

2.2 Methods may include e-mail, verbal input or letter.

2.3 The feedback process will include the title(s) of the person(s) responsible for receiving the feedback; i.e., the school principal or the site manager, or when unsure, the Board's Communication Officer. The feedback process will also indicate that the Board's response to the feedback will be made known through a direct response to the individual.

3.0 Proactive Measures for Accessible Customer Service

3.1 To ensure ongoing efficient and effective adherence to the Board's policy on Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, the Board, managers and principals will take into account the impact on people with disabilities when purchasing new equipment, designing new systems or planning a new initiative.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Barriers and Solutions to Customer Services

POSSIBLE BARRIERS	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
VISION LOSS	
Staff are not aware of the need to describe services when a person cannot read a sign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it standard practice to describe to people the services offered if they are unable to view them due to vision loss.
DEAF, DEAFENED, ORAL DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING	
Telephone services not accessible for customers who are Deaf, deafened, oral deaf or hard of hearing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate use of TTY and Relay services in the telephone service (where available). • Ensure staff are trained in, and practice using, TTY and Relay services (where available). • Contact a person trained in sign language to assist where possible.
Staff are not aware of the need to paraphrase or repeat more slowly what is said to customers when the customer has not understood the message.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the practice of paraphrasing and repeating communications while maintaining dignity of the person and a positive attitude to customers upon request or using other means such as passing notes back and forth.
Speaking with hands covering the mouth which does not allow for lip reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the practice of speaking clearly and making sure that nothing is covering the mouth when communicating with customers who lip-read. • Facing the person to whom you are speaking so the voice travels in the direction

	of the person with the disability.
Loud music and poor acoustics, making hearing difficult for people using hearing aids.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish the practice of having pen and paper available and communicate through note-writing.
INTELLECTUAL / DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY	
Use of complicated or technical language in customer service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish the practice of using plain language and avoid technical language when communicating, where appropriate.
Ignoring customers who are more reserved or afraid to ask for assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish the practice of building in extra time to deal with customers who need it and adjust the availability of other staff to assist as needed.

POSSIBLE BARRIERS	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
LEARNING DISABILITY	
Providing complicated documents to customers without explanation or opportunity to discuss or ask questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish the practice of discussing and explaining any documentation provided to customers, as needed.
Employees who are not flexible in offering alternative communication strategies or adequate time in providing service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make it a standard procedure to break up lengthy conversations into a series of shorter ones. This may assist customers who need additional time to process certain types of information.
MENTAL HEALTH DISABILITY	
Negative stereotypes about people with mental health disabilities resulting in disrespectful or impatient treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure staff have received training on the needs of people with mental health disabilities. Make it a standard procedure to break up lengthy conversations into a series of shorter ones and speak more slowly so that some customers will not feel overwhelmed with the

	information. This may help to prevent anxiety for some customers.
PHYSICAL DISABILITY	
Failure of staff to offer assistance when some services require particular agility and/or motor skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff offers to assist customers in handling or reaching goods when required.
Failure of staff to set aside convenient seating (close to rest rooms or exits).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the practice of setting aside convenient seating for people with disabilities.
SPEECH IMPAIRMENT	
Verbal speech is the only form of communication used to interact with customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff have pen and paper on hand and communicate through note-writing when requested to do so.

Appendix B

Sample Documents for Notifying the Public about Disruptions in Service

School Website and Posted on Front Door

Sample 1

< Insert School Letterhead >

Dear Staff and Visitors,

The elevator will be out of service from [April 1 to 15] for routine maintenance. To access the upper level of the building, please use the stairs at the west end of the building next to the library. We regret any inconvenience this may cause. If you have questions or concerns, please call (insert school phone number).

Thank you,

Principal / Site Manager

Sample 2

< Insert School Letterhead >

Dear Visitors,

The accessible washroom is out of service due to a broken pipe. A repair person will be on the premises tomorrow to fix it. In the interim, we have made arrangements for visitors to use the accessible washroom at the Resource Centre, which is located next door to the library. We apologise for any inconvenience.

Thank you,

Principal / Site Manager

Appendix C

Tips on Assisting People Using Assistive Devices

Tips for Helping Someone with an Assistive Device

Many users of board services and facilities who have disabilities will have their own personal assistive devices.

Examples of personal assistive devices include:

- wheelchairs
- scooters
- walker
- amplification devices that boost sound for listeners who are hard-of-hearing without reducing background noise
- hearing aids
- oxygen tanks
- electronic notebooks or laptop computers
- personal electronic devices (PEDs)
- communication boards used to communicate using symbols, words or pictures
- speech-generating devices that “speak” when a symbol, word or picture is pressed

Note: One should NOT touch or handle an assistive device without permission. (e.g., staff not to touch iPads, wheelchairs, or other devices without asking for permission first)

Moving Personal Assistive Devices

If you have permission to move a person in a wheelchair, remember to:

- wait for and follow the person's instructions;
- confirm that the person is ready to move;
- describe what you are going to do before you do it;
- avoid uneven ground and objects that create bumpy and unsafe ride;
- practice consideration and safety;
- Do not leave the person in an awkward, dangerous, or undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors. (e.g. pushing someone into elevator so they are facing door);
- Do not move items or equipment, such as canes or walkers, out of the user's reach;
- Respect personal space. Do not lean over a person with a disability or lean on their assistive device;
- Let the person know about accessible features in the immediate environment (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.).

Appendix D

Consent Form for Confidentiality Regarding Use of Support Person

< Insert School Letterhead >

I, (parent, guardian's name), consent to the sharing of confidential information by (name of principal/teacher/other staff member) related to my child/ward (name) in the presence of my support person (name).

My support person (name) consents to safeguarding confidentiality of the information shared.

Affirmation of consent:

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name of
Parent/Guardian: _____

I undertake to safeguard the confidentiality of information shared between (school staff) and (parent/guardian) for whom I am a support person.

Support Person: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name of Support
Person: _____

Signature of Witness: (Principal/Staff
Member): _____

(Printed Name of Staff
Person): _____

FOR THIS MEETING ONLY

FOR ALL MEETINGS

Appendix E

Sample Board Notice Regarding Feedback



Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Believing, Achieving, Serving

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Feedback Form

The HWCDSB is committed to ensuring that its services meet optimum standards of accessibility for all persons, including those with disabilities, using the facilities and services of the Board. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcomed and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way the HWCDSB provides services to all persons can be made by **letter, e-mail or verbally**.

All feedback shall be directed to the school principal or site manager or through the HWCDSB feedback link on the board website.

<https://www.hwcdsb.ca/support/aodafeedback/>

Appendix F

Sample Site Notice on the Feedback Process

Feedback process on provision of services to people with disabilities

< Insert School Letterhead >

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Feedback Form

Dear Valued Visitor;

We strive to improve accessibility for our visitors with disabilities. We would like to hear your comments, questions and suggestions about the provision of our resources or services to people with disabilities. Please contact the Principal or Site Manager in person, by mail or contact 905-525-2930 ext. 2865 or access the HWCDSB feedback link on the board's website to share your comments.

Thank you,

Principal / Site Manager

Appendix G

Sample Document for Obtaining Feedback

< Insert School Letterhead >

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) **Customer Feedback Form**

Thank you for visiting (school/site). We value all of our students, staff, parents/guardians and visitors and strive to meet everyone's needs.

Date of Visit: _____

Time of Visit: _____

Did we respond to your customer service needs?

YES NO

Was the response provided to you given in an accessible manner?

YES SOMEWHAT NO (please explain below)

Did you have any problems accessing our services?

YES SOMEWHAT NO

Please add any other comments you may have:

Contact information (optional): _____

Thank you.

Principal / Site Manager

Appendix E – School and Site Accessibility Survey January, 2023

FACILITY NAME	Building Storeys	Designated Parking Spaces	Path of Travel to the Main	Designated entrances	Path of travel to all	Elevator	Stair chair lift	Instructional Spaces Entrance	Fire Alarm System with Strobe & Audible Signals	Fire Policy & Fire Safety Plan	Communal washrooms	Designated Barrier Free	Number of E-VAC Chairs
Annunciation of Our Lord	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	Y	1
Bishop Ryan CSS	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
Bishop Tonnos CSS	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	Y	1
Blessed Sacrament	2	Y	N	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	Y	1
Canadian Martyrs	2	Y	N	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	N	0
Cardinal Newman CSS	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	Y	9
Cathedral HS	2	Y	N	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	Y	3
Corpus Christi	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
Fr. Kennedy CEC (Admin)	3	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	N	0
Guardian Angels	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
Holy Name of Jesus	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	1
Holy Name of Mary	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
Immaculate Conception	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	1
Immaculate Heart of Mary	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
Nicholas Mancini Centre (Admin)	3	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	Y	1
Our Lady of Hope	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Our Lady of Lourdes	2	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
Our Lady of Peace	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
Our Lady of the Assumption	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	0
Regina Mundi	2	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
Sacred Heart	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	N	0
St. Agnes	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
St. Ann Ancaster	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
St. Ann Hamilton	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	2
St. Anthony Daniel	2	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	0
St. Augustine	3	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	0
St. Bernadette	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
St. Patrick (formerly St. Brigid)	2	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	0
St. Charles Mtn (Con Ed)	2	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
St. Charles Young (Con Ed)	2	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	0
St. Charles Barlake (Con Ed)	2	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	0
St. Charles/Wilma's (Con Ed)	2	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	0
St. Clare of Assisi	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0

St. David	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	Y	1
St. Eugene	2	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
St. Francis Xavier	3	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	0
St. Gabriel	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	0
St. James the Apostle (former OLOA)	2	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	0
St. Jean de Brebeuf CSS	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	Y	3
St. Joachim	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
St. John Paul II	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
St. John the Baptist	2	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	1
St. Joseph	2	Y	N	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	N	0
St. Kateri Tekakwitha	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
St. Lawrence	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
St. Luke	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
St. Margaret Mary	2	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	0
St. Marguerite d'Youville	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	Y	2
St. Mark	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
St. Martin of Tours	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	N	0
St. Mary CSS	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	Y	7
St. Mary CERC (Admin)	3	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
St. Matthew	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
St. Michael	2	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	0
St. Paul	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
St. Teresa of Avila	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
St. Teresa of Calcutta	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
St. Therese of Lisieux	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
St. Thomas More CSS	3	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	Y	2
St. Thomas the Apostle	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	1
St. Vincent de Paul	1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	N	Y	Y	Y	0
Sts. Peter & Paul	2	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	1

Hamilton - Wentworth Catholic District School Board
 Multi - Year Accessibility Plan for the years January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2027

ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2017		
SITE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
St. Thomas More	Accessible washroom cons	\$ 30,676
Fr. Kennedy CEC	Barrier free door hardware	\$ 13,665
St. Jean de Brebeuf	Barrier free universal wast	\$ 75,000
Cathedral	Barrier free door hardware	\$ 25,203
St. John the Baptist	Barrier free door hardware	\$ 14,120
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel	Barrier free door hardware	\$ 17,820
St. Mark	Barrier free door hardware	\$ 30,846
Our Lady of Lourdes	Barrier free door hardware	\$ 22,492
St. Agnes	Barrier free door hardware	\$ 14,662
St. Mary CSS	Barrier free door hardware	\$ 6,904
Bishop Ryan	Barrier free door hardware	\$ 13,441
Guardian Angels	Barrier free door hardware	\$ 7,881
St. Therese of Lisieux	Barrier free door hardware	\$ 15,273
St. Kateri	Stage lifting device	\$ 50,132
	TOTAL:	\$ 338,115
	Barrier free door hardware	\$ 178,307
	Accessible washroom cons	\$ 109,676
	Stage lifting device	\$ 50,132
	TOTAL:	\$ 338,115
ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS FOR 2019		
DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	LOCATION
DOOR AUTOMATIC	\$1,009.09	Bishop Tonnos CSS
DOOR AUTOMATIC	\$1,582.00	St. Charles Barlake
DOOR OPERATORS	\$9,915.75	St. Jean de Brebeuf CSS
DOOR OPERATORS	\$2,430	Immaculate Heart of Mary CES
DOOR OPERATORS	\$2,430	St. Lawrence CES
DOOR OPERATORS	\$2,430	Holy Name of Mary CES
DOOR OPERATORS	\$11,830	St. Margaret Mary CES
DOOR OPERATORS	\$7,983	Bishop Tonnos CSS
DOOR OPERATOR	\$1,706	Cardinal Newman CSS
DOOR OPERATOR	\$5,065	Bishop Tonnos CSS
DOOR OPERATOR	\$1,706	Our Lady of Assumption CES
DOOR OPERATORS	\$9,049	St. Charles Mountain
DOOR OPERATORS	\$3,255	NMC
DOOR OPERATORS	\$4,661	St. Gabriel
DOOR OPERATORS	\$2,192	Immaculate Conception
DOOR OPERATORS	\$1,300	Annunciation
DOOR OPERATORS	\$20,802	St. Mary CSS
DOOR OPERATORS	\$1,910	St. Matthew
DOOR OPERATORS	\$4,612	St. James the Apostle
DOOR OPERATORS	\$4,977	St. Jean de Brebeuf
DOOR OPERATORS	\$3,788	St. Thomas More
DOOR OPERATORS	\$3,837	St. Kateri
Electrical estimate for door operators	\$64,800	
TOTAL DOOR OPERATORS:	\$173,269	
DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	LOCATION
ELEVATOR INSTALLED (cost shared 3 ways)	\$65,000	Blessed Sacrament
ELEVATOR REPLACED - ACCESSIBLE FEATURES	\$75,000	Cathedral
ELEVATOR REPLACED - ACCESSIBLE FEATURES	\$75,000	Fr. Kennedy CEC
TOTAL ELEVATORS:	\$215,000	
DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	LOCATION
ACCESSIBLE WASHROOM	\$8,500	NMC
ACCESSIBLE WASHROOM	\$24,500	St. Kateri
ACCESSIBLE WASHROOM	\$30,000	St. Teresa of Avila
MODIFICATIONS AT 4 SITES FOR EMPLOYEES	\$18,500	St. Luke/St. Gabriel/NMC/St. Agnes/ Immaculate Conception
ACCESSIBILITY RAMP	\$8,000	Fr. Kennedy CEC
RAMP FOR 6 PACK PORTABLES	\$10,000	Our Lady of the Assumption
SOUND FIELD SYSTEMS FOR JASP CLASSROOMS	\$5,300	St. Anthony Daniel
TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS:	\$104,800	
GRAND TOTAL:	\$493,069	

Hamilton - Wentworth Catholic District School Board
 Multi - Year Accessibility Plan for the years January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2027

ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS 2020		
DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	AMOUNT
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	St. Jean de Brebeuf CSS	\$9,916
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	Holy Name of Mary CES	\$2,430
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	St. Lawrence CES	\$2,430
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	Immaculate Heart of Mar	\$2,430
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	Bishop Tonnos CSS	\$7,983
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	St. Margaret Mary CES	\$11,830
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	Our Lady of Assumption	\$1,706
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	Bishop Tonnos CSS	\$5,065
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	St. John Henry Newman C	\$1,706
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	St. Charles Mountain	\$1,983
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	St. Charles Young Street	\$7,390
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	Our Lady of Mount Carm	\$1,706
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	Our Lady of Assumption	\$1,706
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	St. Charles Barlake	\$1,582
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	Bishop Tonnos CSS	\$1,009
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	St. Margaret Mary CES	\$12,102
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	St. Martin of Tours CES	\$4,147
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	Bishop Ryan CSS	\$5,243
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	St. Thomas the Apostle C	\$3,752
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	Bishop Ryan CSS	\$1,193
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	St. Teresa of Avila CES	\$8,550
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	Regina Mundi CES	\$3,654
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	St. Thomas More CSS	\$3,407
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	St. Paul CES	\$4,486
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	St. Ann (Hamilton) CES	\$2,031
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	St. Mark CES	\$5,427
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	Guardian Angels CES	\$4,201
AUTOMATIC DOOR OPERATORS	St. Jean de Brebeuf CSS	\$5,085
Electrical For Door Operators	All Sites	\$80,000
TOTAL FOR AUTO DOOR OPERATORS		\$204,149
DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	AMOUNT
PORTABLE WHEELCHAIR RAMP	St. Francis Xavier CES	\$2,000
GRAND TOTAL:		\$206,149
ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2021		
SITE	DESC	COST
St. Joachim CES	3 Automatic door operat	\$ 14,595
St. Joachim CES	Type A extra wide Handi	\$ 2,200
St. Margaret Mary CES	1 Automatic door operat	\$ 7,458
Regina Mundi CES	Accessible washroom cre	\$ 22,986
Cathedral HS	6 Automatic door operat	\$ 20,410
St. John Henry Newman CSS	5 Automatic door operat	\$ 17,774
St. Jean de Brebeuf CSS	5 Automatic door operat	\$ 17,774
St. Mary CSS	5 Automatic door operat	\$ 17,774
St. Thomas More CSS	5 Automatic door operat	\$ 17,774
Bishop Ryan CSS	5 Automatic door operat	\$ 17,774
Bishop Tonnos CSS	5 Automatic door operat	\$ 17,774
St. Jean de Brebeuf CSS	Barrier free staff washro	\$ 25,540
	TOTAL:	\$ 199,832
ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2022		
SITE	DESCRIPTION	EST. COST
St. Ann Hamilton CES	1 Automatic door operat	\$ 6,000
St. David CES	4 Automatic door operat	\$ 22,000
St. Mary CSS	1 Automatic door operat	\$ 4,000
St. Jean de Brebeuf CSS	1 Automatic door operat	\$ 4,500
St. Charles Mountain	2 Automatic door operat	\$ 10,000
St. Francis Xavier CES	2 Automatic door operat	\$ 16,000
St. Francis Xavier CES	1 Chairlift Installed	\$ 104,000
Cathedral HS	Accessibility ramp install	\$ 35,756
	TOTAL:	\$ 202,256