POLICY SECTION: **ADMINISTRATION**

SUB-SECTION:

APPENDIX NAME: **MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

Date Approved: September 12, 2013	Date of Review: December 2022	Dates of Amendment: January 25, 2018

Cross Reference:
TCDSB Policy (A.35) Accessibility Standards
TCDSB Policy (A.36) Accessibility Standards for Services and Facilities
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)
Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11
Ontario Human Rights Code
Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001
Notification of Disruption of Service at TCDSB Procedures
TCDSB 2017 Accessibility Annual Status Report

MULTI-YEAR
ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

FOR THE PERIOD DECEMBER 2017 TO DECEMBER 2022

MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
December 2017–December 2022

Prepared by

**Accessibility Working Group
In accordance with
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation**

December 2017

- This publication is available through the Toronto Catholic District School Board's:

  o **website** (www.tcdsb.org → FOR COMMUNITY → Accessibility Policy & Multi-Year Plan)

  o Catholic Education Centre/Head Office (Communications Department- 80 Sheppard Avenue East)

- Hard copies will be made available to all departments, schools and the Catholic School Parent Councils upon request.

- Accessible formats of the plan are available from the Communications Department upon request.

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1.0 <u>Aim</u>

This multi-year Accessibility Plan is developed in accordance with the Integration Accessibility Standards Regulation under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.* It incorporates the intentions of the Board to meet its obligations under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*. The Plan describes the measures that the Board will take over the five year period from 2017-2022 to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who work, learn and participate in the Toronto Catholic District School Board community and environment including students, staff, parents and guardians, volunteers and visitors to the Board and its schools. The plan will be guided by the Board's Accessibility Standards-Policy Statement.

<u>Objectives</u>

This Plan:

1.1 Describes the process by which the Toronto Catholic District School Board will identify, remove and prevent barriers;

1.2 Reviews recent efforts of the Toronto Catholic District School Board to remove and prevent barriers;

1.3 Describes the measures the Toronto Catholic District School Board will take in the period 2017-2022 to identify, remove and prevent barriers;

1.4 Makes a commitment to provide an annual status report on the Board's implementation of the multi-year accessibility plan;

1.5 Makes a commitment to review and update the multi-year accessibility plan at least once every 5 years;

1.6 Describes how the Toronto Catholic District School Board will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

2.0 Commitment to Accessibility Planning

This plan will be established, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and with the Board's Special Education Advisory Committee and Accessibility Working Group. It will be presented to the Board for approval. The Toronto Catholic District School Board is committed to:

2.1 Maintaining an Accessibility Working Group;

2.2 Continuing the process of consulting with the Special Education Advisory Committee and with persons with disabilities;

2.3 Ensuring, wherever practicable, that Board policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the principles of accessibility and inclusive/universal design. The Accessibility Working Group will provide input re: accessibility issues, where appropriate, with regard to new policies and procedures and to those under review;

2.4 Improving access including, but not limited to, facilities, IT services, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community. Consideration of ongoing identification of barriers will be the responsibility of the Accessibility Working Group and will, wherever practicable, be incorporated in the multi-year plan.

The Director of Education has authorized the Accessibility Working Group to review and update the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan that will enable the Toronto Catholic District School Board to meet these commitments.

3.0 Description of the Toronto Catholic District School Board

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is a publicly funded Catholic school board for Toronto, Ontario. It is one of the two English boards of education in the City of Toronto.

With over 90,000 students, the TCDSB is one of the largest school boards in Canada. The TCDSB governs 201 schools in the Toronto area: 30 secondary schools, 168 elementary schools, and 3 schools that combine both secondary and elementary grades.

The TCDSB has 12 wards represented by 12 trustees and 2 student trustees The Chair of the Board and the Vice-Chair are elected at the inaugural meeting of the Board, and serve for one year.

Our Mission
The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ. We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.

Vision of TCDSB
At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

We believe...
- in the worth and dignity of every person
- in the critical role that our Catholic schools play in promoting Gospel values, social justice, environmental responsibility, human solidarity and the common good
- that high standards and expectations foster greater achievement

- that people thrive in a safe, healthy and compassionate environment grounded in respect for the diversity of every person
- that teaching is responsive to individual needs
- that teaching and learning should be rooted in research and evidence
- that each of us shares responsibility for creating collaborative communities of learning
- that equity, diversity, accessibility and inclusivity are integral to the Catholic community
- that the 21st century competencies – collaboration, real world problem solving and innovation, knowledge construction, skilled communication, self-regulation and the use of information communication technology for learning, are essential.

"Our vision of Catholic education invites each one of us—parents, students, teachers, principals, chaplains, support staff, trustees, clergy, supervisory personnel— to work together as a community of believers committed to putting the values of our faith into practice in the daily life of the school, the home, and in all of society."

(*Fulfilling the Promise*, Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario)

4.0   <u>Message from the Director of Education</u>

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an educational community that values the dignity and worth of every individual in its care. In this context, plans are developed to support the well-being of all its members. To this end, the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan has been developed to address the needs of its members who have disabilities.

Our Board currently demonstrates leadership in working with people with disabilities through its special education programs and services to students with special needs, through its accommodations for employees who are disabled and by ensuring that buildings and facilities become increasingly accessible.

It is our hope that all parents, students and employee groups become familiar with accessibility issues and work together to fulfill our mission of providing a community that is safe and welcoming and an example of a Christian community that is highly accessible.

Rory McGuckin
Director of Education

5.0 Members of Accessibility Working Group

The Accessibility Working Group members consist of a core group of advisors, some of whom are persons with disabilities, depending on the area of the plan addressed.

The members represent the following groups:
- Senior Staff
  - Superintendent of Human Resources
  - Superintendent of Special Services
  - Superintendent of Student Success
- Staff Representative(s)
- Student Representative(s)
- Information Technology
- Community Relations
- Human Resources
- Communications
- Facilities Services
- Transportation Services
- Parent Representative(s)

The Accessibility Working Group will meet to review progress and to respond to the requirements of the AODA. Evaluation of the effectiveness in implementing the barrier removal and prevention strategies will be on-going. The Working Group will assist staff regarding roles in the implementation of the Annual Accessibility Plan.

The Accessibility Working Group developed the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for December 2017-December 2022.

6.0 Strategy for prevention and removal of barriers

Beginning in September 1, 2012, the principles of inclusionary practice, freedom from barriers and accessible environments have informed Toronto Catholic District School Board policies, programs, procedures and services. The multi-year accessibility plan places particular emphasis on the provisions of the regulations made under the AODA with regard to service, information and communications, employment and school transportation.

Initiatives at the local level and system wide address accessibility issues and hence identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

Accessibility initiatives are addressed through the various departments, including but not limited to: Planning and Facilities, Special Services, Health and Safety, and Human Resources.

Planning & Facilities:

The TCDSB has undertaken a number of initiatives to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

The Capital Development and Planning services department continues to ensure all schools that are in the design and construction phase, or any additions made to existing schools, meet or exceed accessibility standards. Presently, there are four (4) new elementary school in construction – scheduled to open in late 2018 or the spring of 2019. The Board is proceeding with three (3) replacement secondary schools and four (4) replacement elementary schools. In addition, the Board has completed the construction of four (4) elementary school additions with three (3) other elementary school additions underway.

The Facilities Department ensures that procedures are in place for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces, and for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order. This includes providing notice of the temporary disruptions and contact information both on-site and electronically, when possible. **(TCDSB Notice of Disruption Document)** Malfunctioning or broken accessibility components will be prioritized on work orders.

The following accessibility features have also been installed in some schools several years ago from a one-time accessibility grant:
- Washroom modifications
- Ramps
- Wheelchair Stair-Lifts
- Automatic Door Openers
- Elevator Repairs
- Lifting Devices
- Structural Wall Modifications

The Board operates a large number of schools that either have one (1) story or alternatively, at schools which are greater than one (1) story, have a passenger elevator to assist individuals who may have mobility issues and who may experience a physical/architectural barrier if the individual is unable to utilize the stairwells. All accommodation options will be reviewed for individuals working in a multiple-story building without an elevator.

Through the annual budget presentation, specific projects are identified, prioritized and completed in a coordinated effort between the Planning & Facilities Department, Special Services and the local school Superintendents.

Special Services:

Student accessibility projects and initiatives are reported to the Ministry of Education through the TCDSB's Special Education Plan. This plan is posted on the TCDSB's website www.tcdsb.org.

Through the Intensive Support Amount (ISA), the Board has been able to provide assistive technology and many more accommodations at the individual school for students in need due to a disability.

The ISA process allows for individualized equipment such as a walker, standers, sensory materials, lifts, computers and assistive software to be purchased on behalf of individual students, if it is deemed essential for them to have the equipment in order to access the curriculum.

Human Resources/Employment:

The TCDSB is an equal opportunity employer. In this regard, the Board recruits qualified staff specific to requirements of the particular job. Routine processes allow staff to be placed in facilities that accommodate their disability. The TCDSB accommodates staff with disabilities by providing necessary equipment that allows staff members to perform their duties in a barrier free workplace. The TCDSB has experienced professionals in place to assist staff members with disabilities to appropriately, safely and respectfully accommodate the employee in the workplace.

The workplace accommodation process practiced by the professionals in the Human Resources department is outlined in the Board's Workplace Accommodation for Employees with Disabilities Policy. Itinerant employees are encouraged to contact the site/supervisor prior to or upon arrival at the worksite to discuss accessibility needs.

Customer Service:

The TCDSB updated its Accessibility Standards for Services and Facilities policy (A.36) on September 22, 2016. The TCDSB remains in compliance with the Customer Service Standard.

The TCDSB regularly solicits feedback about the manner in which it provides service and facilities to people with disabilities. Feedback processes vary including: in person, by telephone, in writing by mail, hard copy, diskette or fax, or by some other communication technology.

7.0   Barrier Identification Methodologies

The Accessibility Working Group will use the following identification methodologies. Staff with disabilities will be consulted throughout the process.

- (1)   Presentation to Senior Staff:
    - Input and feedback will be provided as the plan evolves and consultation will be on-going.
- (2)   Presentation to Employee Groups:
    - Information regarding the plan will be provided and the working group will prioritize the removal of barriers.
- (3)   Presentation to Trustees:
    - Providing information regarding the plan and presented prior to posting the updated annual plan.
- (4)   Data Gathering:
    - Information to be gathered from all TCDSB stakeholders to identify barriers and measures that would make the TCDSB more accessible to people with disabilities.

Data will be gathered by either facilitating interviews, focus groups and/or surveys from three (3) sources: the Board's central office, schools and individuals. In addition, data will also be gathered through the review of policies. The data-gathering instruments will address all areas of accessibility barriers (physical, architectural, communication, information, attitudinal, technological, policy and practice).

Board Central Office- Department heads and other key staff will be contacted.

Schools- A representative which may include parents or members of the school community.

Individuals- Individual students, parents and staff will be invited to respond and to contribute their suggestions in the area of accessibility. Information will be gathered from individuals using surveys and/or focus groups.

While the primary focus of the surveys, focus groups or interviews is to gather data for informed decision making, it is expected that they will also serve to raise the awareness of respondents regarding the question of accessibility and accessibility planning within the TCDSB community.

In gathering the data, deliberate efforts will be made to encourage participation from people with disabilities. This will include extensive communication of the plan and widespread invitations for input and feedback.

Pamphlets will be distributed to local schools to raise awareness on accessibility. Principals are encouraged to add accessibility awareness as a topic for discussion at staff meetings.

8.0 Recent Barrier Removal Achievements

Between 2012-2017, the TCDSB implemented projects and programs to improve accessibility for people with disabilities and to meet requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.*

This document includes a summary of the accessibility initiatives the TCDSB has completed.

Information and Communications

The TCDSB ensures it can identify and have ready access to resources that enable the Board to provide information and communication supports upon request and in a timely manner to persons with disabilities. (e.g. access to board meetings/school events)

The TCDSB has ensured readiness of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of print resources upon request.

The TCDSB has reviewed the status of capacity of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of digital or multimedia resources upon request in anticipation of 2020 deadline.

The TCDSB Information Technology (IT) Services has reviewed accessibility features of all updates and purchases related to board and school websites in anticipation of WCAG, 2.0, Level AA standards.

Employment

During the 2012/2013 calendar year, the hiring and recruitment practices were reviewed with a view that employment is based upon qualifications and the ability to complete the core functions of the job description. The hiring and recruitment process for job classifications and professions at the Board was reviewed in order to minimize any possibility of individuals with disabilities being disadvantaged with accessibility barriers when seeking employment with the TCDSB.

Under the AODA, the recruitment process is to be barrier free for job applicants with disabilities and when making offers of employment the Board must notify the successful candidate of the policies in place regarding accommodating persons with disabilities in the workplace.

By January 1, 2014 the TCDSB was required under the AODA to notify all job applicants when they are selected to participate further in the selection process that accommodation is available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used. The Board must consult with the applicant who is selected and who requests an accommodation and is required to provide and arrange for the provision of suitable accommodation. The TCDSB must also notify all successful applicants, when making offers of employment, of policies, procedures and plans for accommodating persons with disabilities.

Architectural & Physical Barriers

All designs of new schools and additions have building features that incorporate principles of universal and barrier-free design to meet the requirements of the Ontario Building Code and in many cases to address additional exceptional program needs.

Accessibility alterations and provisions of specialized facilities within existing schools continue where identified. Accessibility is addressed with the provision of power door operators at major interior and exterior doors, unisex barrier-free accessible washrooms, ramps at level changes, enhanced ventilation requirements, appropriate signage and audio or visual emergency alarm systems.

Policies

The TCDSB's Accessibility Policy, in accordance with the AODA, reinforces the Board's commitment to providing accessible educational material, facilities, transportation and human resource practices for employees, students, volunteers and community members with disabilities.

Training

In accordance with AODA requirements the TCDSB provided interactive training on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities for school board employees, volunteers and all other persons who provide goods and services or facilities on behalf of the school board. All school boards will be obligated to present this training.

Link to training modules:

Accessibility Awareness:
https://intranet.tcdsb.org/Resources/accessibility/Pages/default.aspx

Customer Service Standards:
https://intranet.tcdsb.org/Resources/accessibility/Pages/Customer-Service-Standards-Training-AODA.aspx

9.0 **Barriers to be addressed under the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11 filed in June, 2011 pursuant to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2005 identified specific requirements to achieve accessibility in the areas of:
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation

These requirements build on the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service which came into force in 2007.

The Toronto Catholic District School Board intends, through this Multi-year Accessibility Plan for the period 2017-2022, to take action to address barriers to accessibility related to the Standards areas of current Regulations. This is in addition to ongoing work the Board is undertaking with regard to identification and removal of barriers in the Board's physical environment.

By January 1, 2020, the Board needs to:

(1) Provide accessible school library resources when asked. If available, provide accessible versions of print resources and materials such as large print, electronic or audio versions.

Exceptions

> The Board does not need to provide accessible formats for:
> •rare books
> •special collections
> •archived materials
> •donated books and materials

Types of accessible formats:
> •large print
> •electronic versions

•CDs or other audio, including podcasts
•braille

Types of conversion-ready formats:

Electronic or digital formats that are easy to convert into accessible formats such as HTML and structured Microsoft Word files.

How to comply:

To determine what format to provide, speak with the students who will be using the content. They may already be aware of ways to access it or convert it. If it is not possible to provide information in an accessible or conversion-ready format, your library representative will need to:
•explain why it cannot provide the materials as requested
•provide a summary of the information that cannot be converted

(2) Make printed learning materials accessible

If the Board produces other printed learning materials, it must make them accessible or easy to convert into other formats like accessible Microsoft Word files.

If you are unable to provide the content in an accessible or conversion-ready format, you must:
•explain to individual why you cannot convert the information
•provide a summary of the information

By January 1, 2021, the Board needs to:

Make websites and web content accessible.

The TCDSB public website and its content must meet WCAG 2.0, as outlined in the Accessibility Standard for Information and Communications.

The TCDSB does not have to make its internal website (intranet) accessible. The Board does not have to modify content posted before 2012. If asked, the Board will need to work with individuals to make the content available to them in an alternate format such as large print or braille.

Policies:

The TCDSB's current Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and amended every five years. The TCDSB's Accessibility Policy, in accordance with the AODA, reinforces the Board's commitment to providing accessible educational material, facilities, transportation and human resource practices for employees, students, volunteers and community members with disabilities.

10.0 Review and Monitoring Process

The Accessibility Working Group meets during the year to review progress and evaluate the effectiveness of implementation of barrier-removal and prevention strategies and to plan for increased accessibility throughout the Board.

The Accessibility Working Group will ensure that in respect of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan the following steps take place:
(a)   An annual status report on the progress of the measures taken to implement the plan is prepared.
(b)   At least once every 5 years the plan is reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities, with the Board's Special Education Advisory Committee and other relevant committees.

11.0 <u>Communication of the Plan</u>

In addition to the public availability of the plan as referenced earlier on Page 2, the Toronto Catholic District School Board will post an annual status report on the progress of the Multi-year Accessibility Plan on the Board's website. The Board will accommodate requests for accessible formats of the Plan.

Questions, comments or feedback regarding the Accessibility Plan may be directed to the Superintendent of Human Resources.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Definitions
- Appendix 2: Trustees

APPENDIX 1: DEFINITIONS

BARRIER:

Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his of her disability, including:

Physical barrier- Objects added to the environment, doors, windows, elevators, furniture, workstations, recreational facilities, playgrounds, bathroom hardware, etc.

Architectural barrier- inadequate or incomprehensible signage, difficulties reading brochures, forms, manuals, web sites, fax transmissions, equipment labels, computer screens, etc.

Communication barrier- Difficulties receiving information in person or by telephone; difficulties interacting with staff, difficulties receiving training and articulating in the recruitment and interview process.

Attitudinal barrier- Staff who do not know how to communicate with people with disabilities; staff who refuse to provide service; discriminatory behaviours.

Technological barrier- Computers, photocopiers, fax machines, telephones and switches; inadequate or inappropriate assistive technologies.

Policy or a Practice- Rules, regulations and protocols that prevent one from performing their job satisfactorily; or from serving the public; or that restrict public participation.

DISABILITY:

(a)   Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfiguration 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, amputation,

lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or 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.

(b)   A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability.

(c)   A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.

(d)   A mental disorder, or

(e)   An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under an insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; ("handicap")

APPENDIX 2: TRUSTEES 2017-2018