



RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD - ACCESSIBILITY PLAN - SEPTEMBER 2009

Annual Accessibility Plan
for the
Renfrew County District School Board
September 2009 - August 2010

Submitted to the

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

September 2009

Prepared by the

Renfrew County District School Board
Accessibility Working Group

This publication is available on the Renfrew County District School Board' website at
www.renfrew.edu.on.ca
and in accessible formats upon request



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Table of Contents

	Page
Executive Summary	1
Aim.....	2
Objectives	2
Commitment to Accessibility Planning	2
Description of the Renfrew County District School Board.....	3
The Accessibility Working Group Members	3
Recent Barrier Removal Initiatives.....	3
Preventing New Barriers.....	4
Barrier-Identification Methodologies	4
Barriers Identified.....	5
Barriers to be Addressed in 2009 - 2010	6
Customer Service Standards – As per Regulation 429/07	7
Review and Monitoring Process	7
Communication of the Plan.....	7



RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD - ACCESSIBILITY PLAN - SEPTEMBER 2009

- 1 -

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (O.D.A.) is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to enable their full participation in the life of the province. To this end, the O.D.A. requires each school board to prepare an annual accessibility plan; to consult with people with disabilities in the preparation of this plan; and to make the plan public.

This is Year SEVEN for the annual plan (2009 - 2010), up-dated by the Accessibility Working Group of the Renfrew County District School Board. The plan describes:

1. the achievements and measures that the Renfrew County District School Board (R.C.D.S.B) has taken in 2008 - 2009 to implement its accessibility plan, and
2. the measures that the Renfrew County District School Board will take during the 2009 - 2010 school year to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities (subject to the availability of resources).

The R.C.D.S.B. remains committed to continual improvement of access to school board facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services for students, staff, parent / guardians, volunteers, and members of the community with disabilities. As evidence of this commitment, the plan provides for the participation of people with disabilities, or those community-based agencies who advocate on behalf of those with disabilities, to contribute to the development of its annual accessibility plans.

While the Accessibility Working Group identified categories of barriers to be addressed during the annual plan, it has also emphasized the necessity of maintaining a measure of flexibility for response to site-specific accessibility issues as circumstance may warrant.



RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD - ACCESSIBILITY PLAN - SEPTEMBER 2009

- 2 -

1. **Aim**

This plan describes the measures that the Renfrew County District School Board has taken in the past and measures that will be taken during the next year (2009 - 2010) to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities who work in, use, or attend school board facilities and services.

2. **Objectives**

This plan:

1. Describes the *process* by which the Renfrew County District School Board will identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.
2. Reviews efforts at the Renfrew County District School Board to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities during the *past year (2008 - 2009)*.
3. Lists the policies, procedures, programs, practices, and services that the Renfrew County District School Board will review in the *coming year* to identify barriers for people with disabilities.
4. Describes the *measures* the Renfrew County District School Board will take in the coming year to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.
5. Describes how the Renfrew County District School Board will make this accessibility plan *available to the public*.

3. **Commitment to Accessibility Planning**

The Renfrew County District School Board is committed to:

- (a) Establishing an Accessibility Working Group
- (b) Consulting with people with disabilities, or those community-based agencies that advocate on behalf of those with disabilities, to contribute to the development and review of its Annual Accessibility Plan
- (c) Ensuring school board policies and procedures are consistent with the principles of accessibility
- (d) Improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services for students, staff, parents / guardians, volunteers, and members of the community.



RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD - ACCESSIBILITY PLAN - SEPTEMBER 2009

- 3 -

The Director of Education has authorized the Accessibility Working Group to prepare an Accessibility Plan that will enable the Renfrew County District School Board to meet these commitments.

4. Description of the Renfrew County District School Board

The Renfrew County District School Board was established in 1969 as a result of the amalgamation of individual school boards throughout Renfrew County. Presently the Renfrew County District School Board serves 9,663 students through 7 secondary, 4 adult and 20 elementary schools. Our schools vary in size ranging from very small rural schools to mid-sized schools in more populated areas. The Renfrew County District School Board's motto "Education for Life, Opportunities for All" is apparent in all our settings. The philosophy of the Renfrew County District School Board is to develop each student to his / her greatest potential as individuals within our society. All students, regardless of special talents or challenging needs, can grow and they can grow best by attending schools which offer accessible programs in accessible settings through accessible services.

5. The Accessibility Working Group Members

The Accessibility Working Group was formally constituted in September 2002 and consists of the following members:

Member	Department	Contact
Stephen Sliwa (Chair)	Superintendent of Special Education	735-0151 (ext. 3307)
Loran Young	Principal, Adult & Continuing Education Department	735-0151 (ext. 3323)
Marjorie Doering	Trustee	735-0151
James Brose	Plant Manager	735-0151 (ext. 2265)
Dennis Weatherdon	Supervising Principal for Special Services	735-0151 (ext. 3302)
Bill Murray	Manager – Health, Safety and Wellness Department	735-0151 (ext. 2247)
Penny Williamson	Health and Safety Officer	735-0151 (ext. 2274)

6. Recent Barrier Removal Initiatives

During the last school year, there have been a number of formal and informal initiatives at the Renfrew County District School Board to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities. These initiatives include:

- A) The R.C.D.S.B., through its Special Education Plan 2005 - 2006 has addressed access for students with disabilities through modifications and accommodations of programs and services. The Special Education Plan is available on the Board website at www.renfrew.edu.on.ca.



RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD - ACCESSIBILITY PLAN - SEPTEMBER 2009

- 4 -

B) Accessibility has been facilitated through the following achievements in 2008 - 2009:

- Installation of automatic door openers at Pincrest PS, Rockwood PS, Eganville PS and Cobden PS;
- Installation of a wheelchair ramp at Eganville PS, General Lake PS and Westmeath PS

C) Attitudinal barriers for people with disabilities was addressed through a survey strategy conducted by students within our schools in June 2009, as part of the Character Development / Civic Engagement focus within the Renfrew County District School Board. The results of the curriculum focus is forthcoming.

7. **Preventing New Barriers**

As of September 2002, all school board programs, policies, practices, and services will be subject to the guiding principles of inclusionary practice. We will strive to create an environment that is accessible to all people, regardless of age or ability. Through the annual accessibility planning process, Renfrew County District School Board's programming, policies, and practices will be assessed to ensure continuous improvement in accessibility. For example, when an addition was built at A.J. Charbonneau PS, accessibility was a key consideration.

8. **Barrier-Identification Methodologies**

The Accessibility Working Group will use the following barrier-identification methodologies:

Methodology	Description	Status
Presentation to Senior Administration / Principals	Opportunity for input and feedback	October 2009 & April 2010
Community Consultations	Meetings to solicit input from local agencies and the Board's Special Education Advisory Committee	September - December 2009



RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD - ACCESSIBILITY PLAN - SEPTEMBER 2009

9. Barriers Identified

The Accessibility Working Group identified a number of barriers in the initial Accessibility Plan for 2003 - 2004. The Accessibility Working Group has decided to focus on the following, subject to the availability of resources:

Type of Barrier	Description	Strategy for Removal / Prevention
Physical: (<i>Mary Street</i>)	The front doors of some schools are heavy and may be difficult to open for a wheelchair user or someone with limited strength	Install power-operated doors
Physical: (<i>Mary Street, Morison (yard),</i>)	Ramps are required at some sites; some sites require ramps to be upgraded	Install ramps and upgrade
Physical: (<i>Madawaska Valley, Pembroke Plant, Fellowes</i>)	Technical equipment not accessible in some schools	Refer to T.E.R.R.I. Committee for technical information renewal
Physical: (<i>Fellowes</i>)	Music room not accessible	Re-consider location of music room in light of vacant space
Architectural: (<i>Mary Street</i>)	No Lift / Lack of Elevator	Install elevator
Architectural: (<i>Mary Street, Renfrew Cl, Sherwood</i>)	Washroom accessibility for wheelchairs	Renovate washrooms as part of Capital Improvement plans
Architectural: (<i>Fellowes, Central, Mary Street</i>)	Basement level not accessible at these sites	Install Lift / Elevators
Architectural: (<i>Madawaska Valley, Fellowes</i>)	Weight room not accessible	Plant to add asphalt ramp as part of the exterior renovation - Autumn 2009
Communication / Information	(a) Board policies / resources were not accessible in alternate format (i.e. large print, Braille, audio)	(a) To extend alternative format to documents other than the Board's Special Education Information materials, such as board procedures and policy manual, school year calendar document (b) Begin preparations for addressing "customer service standards" required by amendments to the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Strategy: Develop timeline for staff development required for compliance with the amended Act.



RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD - ACCESSIBILITY PLAN - SEPTEMBER 2009

10. Barriers to be Addressed in 2009 - 2010

The Accessibility Plan seeks to address the following categories of barriers during the coming year, subject to available resources:

Barrier	Objective	Means to Remove / Prevent	Performance Criteria	Resources	Timing	Responsibility
Physical	To install automatic door openers and ramps as required To install air conditioner in classroom (student whose medical condition requires climate control).		Opeongo HS / Champlain Discovery PS Herman Street PS	General Maintenance Budget	Fall 2009	Plant
Architectural	To Install an elevator in a site identified in Item 9 of the Accessibility Plan To assess and improve exterior lighting Seek estimate for elevator or lift		Mary St. Ed. Centre Central PS	Facilities Renewal Budget	Fall 2009	Plant
Attitudinal	When the need arises, to expand the membership of school-based Identification, Placement and Review Committees (IPRC) to include personnel with information to support accessibility issues				Ongoing	Special Education Department
Attitudinal	To survey students / staff to gauge attitudinal barriers that currently exist		Survey designed and administered		Spring 2010	Senior Administration & School Sites



RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD - ACCESSIBILITY PLAN - SEPTEMBER 2009

- 7 -

11. **Customer Service** (to be implemented by January 1, 2010)

Accessible Customer Service Standards comes into effect as law on January 1, 2008 and are to be implemented by January 1, 2010. Public Sector organizations such as school boards are now legally required to make their customer services operations accessible to people with disabilities. Achieving accessible customer service standards will be done by identifying and removing barriers to customer service in such areas as operational practices, policies and procedures, communications and staff training

Areas of the Board Reviewed for Accessibility	Barriers Identified as of September 2009	Strategies to Remove & Prevent Barriers	Responsibilities & Timeline
AODA Customer Service Standard	Staff training and awareness initiatives identified in the Customer Service Standard	Develop staff training and awareness initiatives	Human Resources Department and Special Education Department in collaboration with the Board's Accessibility Working Group
AODA Customer Service Standard	Policy and procedures	Using resources available to the Board through the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ontario Educational Services Corporation and, establish a process to assist departments and school sites to review existing policy and procedures for compliance	Accessibility Working Group, in conjunction with RCDSB Managers and RCDSB site administrators.

12. **Review and Monitoring Process**

The Accessibility Working Group endeavours to meet regularly during the planning year to review progress. Throughout the year, evaluation of effectiveness in implementing the barrier - removal and prevention strategies will be ongoing in preparation for the next year of accessibility planning. Due to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service approaching an implementation date of January 2010, the committee will reconvene in the Fall 2009.

13. **Communication of the Plan**

The Renfrew County District School Board's accessibility plan will be posted on the Board's website at www.renfrew.edu.on.ca and hard copies will be available in schools.