

**Annual Accessibility Plan
for the**

**BRUCE-GREY CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

September 2008 - August 2009

Prepared by
Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board
Accessibility Working Group

This publication is available on the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board's Website
(www.bgcdsb.org Website)
and in accessible formats upon request

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Executive Summary

The purpose of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) was to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province.

The ODA required 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.

Bill 118, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), was passed by unanimous vote by the Ontario Legislature on May 10, 2005, and subsequently received Royal Assent. This new law is intended to be more proactive in achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities in Ontario. The AODA, 2005 establishes a process to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards relating to services, facilities and employment. The AODA, 2005 more broadly defines "organization" to include a greater number of Ontario's organizations. Although portions of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* were repealed, the planning requirements of the ODA, 2001 will not be repealed until they have been replaced by standards under the new AODA, 2005. As such, there will be a transition period during which the Board will continue to have planning and other obligations under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*.

The Board plan for 2008-09 will report on the measures that the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board will take during the year (2008 - 2009) to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.

The Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board is committed to the continual improvement of access to school board facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community with disabilities.

The Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board Annual Accessibility Plan is posted on the board website at www.bgcdsb.org.

1. Aim

This plan describes the measures that the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board has taken in the past and measures that will be taken during the year (2008 - 2009) 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 Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board will identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities
2. Lists the policies, procedures, programs, practices and services that the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board will review in the *coming year* to identify barriers for people with disabilities
3. Describes the *measures* the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board will take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities
4. Describes how the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board will make this accessibility plan *available to the public*

3. Commitment to Accessibility Planning

On May 27th, 2003, the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board reviewed the Ontarians with Disabilities Act and passed the following motion:

The Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board is committed to:

- *Establishing an Accessibility Working Group*
- *Consulting with people with disabilities in the development and review of its annual accessibility plans*
- *Ensuring school board policies and procedures are consistent with the principles of accessibility*
- *Improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community*

The Board has authorized the Accessibility Working Group to prepare an accessibility plan that will enable the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board to meet these commitments.

During 2004-05, the Board approved a policy on Accessibility Planning reinforcing their commitment to improving opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

4. Description of the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board

The Bruce-Grey Separate School Board was formally established in 1969. In 1998, the Bruce-Grey Separate School Board became The Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board.

Presently, the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board serves 3,800 students through 2 secondary and 11 elementary schools. The mission statement of the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board is

Committed to a vibrant Catholic education, we ensure quality learning experiences through community partnerships that:

- Nurture each student in body, mind and Spirit;
- Embrace the teachings of Christ, giving witness to Gospel values.

The Board is committed to offering accessible programs in accessible settings through accessible services to all students.

5. The Accessibility Working Group Members

The accessibility working group consists of the following members:

List of working group members		
<i>Working Group member</i>	<i>Department</i>	<i>Contact information</i>
<i>Jim Aitken</i>	<i>Plant Operations/Maintenance</i>	Jim_aitken@bgcdsb.org <i>364-5820 Ext 229</i>
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<i><u>Sam Finnie</u></i>	<i><u>Trustee Special Education Advisory Committee</u></i>	Sam_Finnie@bgcdsb.org
<i><u>Edward Goetz</u></i>	<i><u>Principal</u></i>	Edward_goetz@bgcdsb.org <i><u>364-2760</u></i>
<i><u>Jules Vanhaelemeesch</u></i>	<i><u>Trustee</u></i>	Jules_Vanhaelemeesch@bgcdsb.org
<i><u>Suzanne White</u></i>	<i><u>Human Resources</u></i>	Suzanne_White@bgcdsb.org <i><u>364-5820 Ext 232</u></i>
<i><u>Catherine Penner</u></i>	<i><u>APSSP Special Education Advisory Committee</u></i>	Catherine_Penner@bgcdsb.org <i><u>364-5820 Ext 242</u></i>
<i><u>Kathy Knapp</u></i>	<i><u>CUPE-Clerical</u></i>	Kathy_Knapp@bgcdsb.org <i><u>364-5820 Ext 0</u></i>

6. Recent Barrier-removal Initiatives

Over several years, there have been a number of initiatives at Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

Accessibility has been facilitated with the inclusion of automatic door openers on exterior doorways;

Accessibility has been improved by the addition of elevators and lifts in all schools with multiple stories;

All facilities have been upgraded with ramps and accessible washrooms;

All renovation, addition and construction of new school projects have architectural features that incorporate principles of universal access;

Current renovations to existing buildings have accessibility for people with disabilities addressed in the plans.

Signage and lighting has been improved in parking lots, front entrances, washrooms to indicate accessibility.

Sound field systems have been installed in all classrooms.

7. Preventing new barriers

All school board programs, policies, practices and services are subject to the guiding principles of inclusion and integration.

We will strive to create an environment that is accessible to all people, regardless of age or ability.

Through the annual accessibility planning process, Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board's programming, policies and practices will be assessed to ensure continuous improvement in accessibility.

The design of new schools and renovation and addition projects to existing schools will have architectural features that incorporate principles of universal access. This will be facilitated by adopting the Canadian Standards Association B-651 standards for barrier-free access.

8. Barrier Identification

In 2003, the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board contracted the services Catherine Smart, an Accessibility Consultant for the Ontario March of Dimes to complete a "Points of Public Access" Audit and Report. The report is available on a school by school basis on the Board website at www.bgcdsb.org.

9. Barriers Identified

As a result of the "Points of Public Access" Audit conducted in 2003, some barriers have been identified. Board facilities were found to be moderately accessible and/or accessible and, in general, the committee was very pleased with the results of the report.

In addition to the audit, the committee conducts reviews of schools each year as part of their regular committee meeting. This provides the framework for developing the plan for the subsequent year.

The Accessibility Working Group has decided to focus on the following barriers:

Physical

Communicational

Attitudinal/Communicational

Policy/Practice

11. Review and monitoring process

Since 2003, many physical and architectural barriers have been identified and removed. Appendix A contains an updated summary of the current status of each site.

The Accessibility Working Group meets regularly during the planning year to review progress. Throughout the year, evaluation of the effectiveness in implementing the barrier-removal and prevention strategies will be ongoing in preparation for the subsequent year of accessibility planning. The Working Group reminds staff about roles in implementing the plan. Meetings scheduled for 2008-09 are as follows:

December 10, 2008 at 11:30 a.m.- Catholic Education Centre, Hanover

April 16, 2009 at 10:30 a.m. – St. Anthony's School, Kincardine

12. Communication of the plan

The Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board's accessibility plan will be posted on the board website at www.bgcdsb.org and hard copies will be available at each school and the Board Office. The plan can be made available in accessible formats upon request. Any questions about the plan may be directed to the telephone number below