



# BRANT HALDIMAND NORFOLK Catholic District School Board

## Multi-Year Integrated Accessibility Plan 2024-2029

This publication is available through the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board:

Website: [www.bhncdsb.ca/accessibility](http://www.bhncdsb.ca/accessibility)

Hard copies and accessible formats are available upon request to:

Tracey Austin, Manager of Communications & Public Relations

Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board

322 Fairview Drive, Brantford ON

Phone Number: (519) 756-6369 ext. 11234

[info@bhncdsb.ca](mailto:info@bhncdsb.ca)

# Table of Contents

- BHNCDSB Multi-Year Integrated Accessibility Plan 2024-2029 ..... 3
  - Aim ..... 3
  - Objectives..... 3
  - Executive Summary ..... 3
- Definitions and Terminology ..... 4
- Commitment to Accessibility Planning ..... 4
- Description of the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board ..... 5
  - Our Vision ..... 5
  - Our Motto ..... 5
  - Board Values ..... 5
  - Board Strategic Commitments ..... 5
- Strategy for Prevention of Removal of Barriers ..... 6
- Barrier Identification ..... 6
- Barriers to be Addressed under the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2024-2029..... 6
- Review and Monitoring Process ..... 8
- Communication of the Plan ..... 8
- Accessibility Planning Resources for School Boards ..... 9

# BHNCDSB Multi-Year Integrated Accessibility Plan 2024-2029

## Aim

The Integrated Accessibility Plan (the “Plan”) has been developed in accordance with Ontario Regulation 191/11 Integration Accessibility Standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA). It incorporates the intentions of the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic School Board (the “Board”) to meet its obligations un the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001. The plan describes the measures the Board has taken in the past as well as measures that will be taken moving forward in order to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities who work, learn and participate in the School Board community and environment including students, staff, parents and guardians, volunteers and visitors to the Board and its schools.

## Objectives

This Plan:

- Reviews recent efforts of the Board to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities;
- Describes the process by which the Board will identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities;
- Describes the measures the Board will take to identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- Makes a commitment to provide an annual status report on the Board’s implementation of the Multi-Year Integrated Accessibility Plan;
- Makes a commitment to review and update the Plan at least once every 5 years; and
- Describes how the Board will make this Accessibility Plan available to the public.

## Executive Summary

This Plan has been prepared in accordance with:

- Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA)
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
- Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR)

The purpose of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers and to promote their full participation in the life of the province. The ODA requires each school board to prepare a multi-year accessibility plan; to consult with people with disabilities in the preparation of this plan and to make the plan public.

The Accessibility for Ontarians Act, 2005 is the Provincial Act with the purpose of developing, implementing, and enforcing accessibility standards to make the province accessible for all people with disabilities by 2025. Since 2005, two regulations outlining the accessibility standards have ben made under the AODA:

- Accessibility Standards for Customer Services (O. Reg 429/07)
- Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg 191/11)

One of the requirements of the IASR is to develop, implement and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan to outline strategies to prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements of the ISAR.

## Definitions and Terminology

**Ableism:** Attitudes in society that devalue and limit the potential of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are assumed to be less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute and take part, and of less value than other people. Ableism can be conscious or unconscious and is embedded in institutions, systems, or the broader culture of a society.

Ableism refers to discrimination towards persons with disabilities. It can be through actions as well as underlying beliefs and attitudes. Ableism involves systemic barriers as well as person-to-person interactions, stereotypes, and negative attitudes that devalue and limit the potential of persons with disabilities

**Accessibility:** the enabling of people to achieve their full potential.

**Accommodation:** is a means, through reasonable efforts, of preventing and removing – in a timely manner - barriers that impede individuals with disabilities from participating fully.

**Barrier:** anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, policy or a practice; (“obstacle”).

**Disability:** covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and some not visible. A disability may have been present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time.

## Commitment to Accessibility Planning

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board is committed to:

- Maintaining an Accessibility Steering Committee;
- Continuing consultation with various stakeholders, in particular those with disabilities and with the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) in the development and review of accessibility plans;
- Ensuring Board policies and procedures are consistent with the principles of accessibility and inclusive/universal design. The Accessibility Steering Committee will provide input re: accessibility issues, where appropriate, to new policies and procedures and to those under review; and
- Improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community. Ongoing identification of barriers must be brought to the Accessibility Steering Committee for due consideration and incorporation into the Multi-Year Integrated Accessibility Plan.

The Director of Education has authorized the Accessibility Steering Committee to review and update the Multi-Year Integrated Accessibility Plan that will enable the Board to meet these commitments.

## Description of the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board was founded January 1, 1998, through the amalgamation of two former school boards: The Brant County Catholic Board of Education and the Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board.

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board provides a Christ-centered education to over 12,000 students in 32 schools. We employ over 900 teachers who are supported by a team of consultants, principals, and administrators. Over 500 non-academic staff ensure that the best possible facilities, supports, and resources are available to teachers, students, and the system. The Board encompasses the broad geographical area of the City of Brantford and the counties of Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk. We are unique in that we belong to three Dioceses: Hamilton, London, and St. Catharines. There are six trustees in the Board and two student trustees.

### Our Vision

Our faith-based communities inspire life-long learning and service to others.

### Our Motto

Excellence in Learning ~ Living in Christ

### Board Values

1. Cultivating healthy, respectful, faith-filled Catholic learning and teaching environments:
  - nurturing ongoing faith formation and personal relationships with Jesus to develop a Catholic worldview.
  - recognizing the possibility within all learners and responding with personalization and precision.
  - advocating through a Catholic lens and ensuring everyone feels supported, seen, and heard.
2. Building support through collaboration, partnerships, and connected communities.
  - engaging active partnerships with all including students, staff, families, parishes, and community partners.
  - working in solidarity with partners to build strong, authentic, resilient communities that support all individuals.
  - building a culture of collaboration and connectedness through relationships.
3. Inspiring and nurturing curiosity, development, success, and stewardship.
  - pursuing innovative and evidence-based practices in teaching, learning, and faith formation.
  - developing learners as local and global citizens who embrace their responsibility for the wellbeing of our common home.
  - recognizing the possibility within all learners and responding with personalization and precision.
4. Reaching every individual and honouring their contributions, values, and goals.
  - through our faith, advocating for equity, inclusion, and social justice.
  - honouring the voices of staff and students through acknowledgement, response, and action.
  - recognizing the importance of our integrated experience in the promotion of prioritizing wellbeing.

### Board Strategic Commitments

Belonging:

Ensuring a safe, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming environment for all to foster engagement and faith formation.

Teaching and Learning:

Offering innovative, collaborative, and responsive teaching and learning environments for all.

Wellness for All:

Develop a faith-filled community where all individuals are equipped and supported so they can live their best life.

## Strategy for Prevention of Removal of Barriers

The principles of inclusionary practice, freedom from barriers and accessible environments inform all Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board policies, procedures and services. Through the annual Accessibility Plan Status Report implemented under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), 2001, the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board's programming, policies and practices have been assessed to ensure continuous improvement in accessibility.

This process will continue through the establishment of the renewed Multi-Year Integrated Accessibility Plan, which places particular emphasis on the regulations made under the AODA with regard to Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, School Transportation, and the Design of Public Spaces, in accordance with legislation.

## Barrier Identification

Group	Methods
Students	Barriers to accessibility are identified by students and parents/caregivers. Staff members in all schools and departments work with stakeholders to remove/prevent barriers and develop accommodation plans.
Staff	In consultation with staff, Human Resources and Health and Safety, identify barriers, restrictions and limitations and develop accommodation plans.
Public	Barriers to accessibility are identified by individuals accessing programs and services offered by the school board. Members of the public may bring concerns to the attention of the school, the Catholic Education Centre or may use the Board website: <a href="http://www.bhncdsb.ca/accessibility">www.bhncdsb.ca/accessibility</a> Barriers identified by members of the public are referred to the Board's Accessibility Steering Committee for further review.
Board Wide	Ongoing liaison with bargaining partners, provincial associations, school boards, and public sector agencies provides updates on emerging barriers to accessibility. SEAC and the Ontario Education Services Corporation are examples of some of the resources used for barrier identification. Review of our facilities provides up-to-date identification of barriers and plans to remove/prevent such barriers and permits planning to remove/prevent such barriers. Barriers to accessibility are referred to the Board's Accessibility Steering Committee for review.

## Barriers to be Addressed under the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2024-2029

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 Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board demonstrates this through this Plan its intentions to address barriers to accessibility related to the IASR.

Through the 2024-29 Multi-Year Integrated Accessibility Plan, the Board intends to take action to address attitudinal barriers to accessibility with a special emphasis on supporting all students in inclusive environments.

Type of Barrier	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Policy	All policies are reviewed on a cyclical basis and will include consideration of equity, inclusion, and accessibility legislation. New policies will also include consideration of equity, inclusion, and accessibility legislation	Ongoing	Director of Education and Superintendents
Attitudinal	Continue to implement mandatory (AODA) accessibility awareness training to ensure new staff have been trained. Implementation of program to notify employees (new and existing) and their supervisors of completion rate of mandatory trainings (inclusive of AODA training requirements)	Ongoing	Human Resource Services
Attitudinal	Accessibility Awareness Month, December	Annually	Superintendent of Education (Accessibility)
Attitudinal	Provide professional development opportunities for staff as outlined in the Mental Health Strategy, Special Education Plan, and Student Support Services Plan.	Ongoing	Mental Health Lead Special Education Lead Superintendent of Education (Student Support Services)
Attitudinal	Maintain broad representation on the Accessibility Steering Committee	Ongoing	Superintendent of Education (Accessibility)
Attitudinal	Provide professional development and resources for parents, focusing on special education and mental health resources, such as wellbeing, social emotional learning, autism, etc.	Ongoing	Mental Health Lead Special Education Lead
Architecture	Facility Services will continue to plan and provide accessible facilities ensuring all renovations and additions meet building code requirements (Ontario Regulation 368/13 & AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards, 2012)	Ongoing	Facility Services
Architecture	Facility Services will work with VFA (Ministry of Education - School Assessment Agent). The accessibility information previously gathered has been incorporated into the Facility Services' Five-Year Capital Planning document.	Ongoing	Facility Services
Technological	Continue to provide in-service and support to staff, students, and parents on the utilization of assistive technology in order to build capacity across the System.	Ongoing	Special Education
Technological	Provide ongoing training to Grade 3 and Grade 6 classroom teachers and students with the use of assistive technology in preparation for the EQAO assessment	Ongoing	Special Education

Type of Barrier	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Technological	Continue to provide differentiated literacy instruction to struggling readers by providing access to appropriate web-based literacy programs	Ongoing	Special Education
Information and Communication	Monitor Helpdesk for input and feedback to confirm appropriateness of deployment plan and assess effectiveness of in-year improvements	Ongoing	Information Technology Services
Information and Communication	Continue to review revised SEA deployment strategy and research new technologies/software that may enhance the learners' experience.	Ongoing	Special Education and Information Technology Services

## Review and Monitoring Process

Accessibility issues are addressed on an ongoing basis in the Board. Wherever possible, proactive measures are put in place to ensure accessible working and learning environments. Feedback and input are through input received from school board staff, families, and community members.

The Accessibility Steering Committee meets regularly during the year to consider feedback received, review progress, evaluate the effectiveness of implementation of barrier-removal and prevention strategies and to plan for increased accessibility throughout the Board. In respect to the Multi-Year Integrated Accessibility Plan the following steps take place:

- a) An annual status report on the progress of the measures taken to implement the Plan is brought to the Board for approval at the Committee of the Whole meeting in November;
- 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 stakeholders. The Plan will be brought to the Board for consideration and approval.

## Communication of the Plan

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board's Multi-Year Integrated Accessibility Plan and annual status report will be posted on the Board website:

[www.bhncdsb.ca/accessibility](http://www.bhncdsb.ca/accessibility)

Hard copies and other accessible formats will be provided upon request to:

Tracey Austin, Manager of Communications & Public Relations  
 Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board  
 322 Fairview Drive, Brantford ON  
 Phone Number: (519) 756-6369 ext. 11234  
[info@bhncdsb.ca](mailto:info@bhncdsb.ca)

## Accessibility Planning Resources for School Boards

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005

<https://www.aoda.ca/>

Accessibility for Ontarians

<https://www.oesc-cseo.org/resources/accessibility-for-ontarians/>

Accessibility Standards for Customer Services (O. Reg 429/07)

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/070429>

Canadian Standards Association:

B6521-95 Barrier Free Design

<https://www.csagroup.org/standards/areas-of-focus/healthcare-and-well-being/standards-for-building-a-barrier-free-canada/>

B480-02 Customer Services Standard for People with Disabilities

<https://www.csagroup.org/store/product/B480-02/>

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg 191/11)

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/110191>

Ontario Human Rights Commission – Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate

<https://www.ohrc.on.ca/pt/node/2461>

Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), 2001

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/01o32>