

IN THIS ISSUE...

- We Share the Air
- Wheelchair Etiquette
- Font Accessibility
- A Sensory Sensitive Movie Going Experience

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board Trustees

Anna da Silva
Brampton Wards 1, 3 & 4

Linda Zanella
Brampton Wards 2, 5 & 6

Scott McLauchlan
Brampton Wards 7-10

Frank Di Cosola
Caledon/Dufferin

Mario Pascucci
Mississauga Wards 1 & 3

Sharon Hobin (Vice-Chair)
Mississauga Wards 2 & 8

Anna Abbruscato (Chair)
Mississauga Ward 4

Thomas Thomas
Mississauga Ward 5

Peter Ferreira
Mississauga Wards 6 & 11

Bruno Iannicca
Mississauga Ward 7

Esther O'Toole
Mississauga Wards 9 & 10

We Share the Air

As spring approaches, it is a great time to remind everyone of "We Share the Air," the board's scent sensitivity awareness campaign. Some organizations have created a no-scent policy, however, such a policy, would require an enforcement mechanism. An awareness campaign, is a viable alternative to a policy, because it educates us on the issues.



Our campaign brings attention to the existence and prevalence of certain sensitivities to scents. The goal is to empower those who are on all sides of this issue; those sensitive to scents, those who might feel alienated or offended because of their use of scented products and those in management roles who must intercede in circumstances that involve health and safety.

We want to remind you that the board promotes awareness around scents and ask that you familiarize yourself with our, *We Share The Air* web site, which is available in the Quick Links section of the board web site. The site has many helpful tips such as: how to handle scent-sensitive situations, FAQs, worksheets for supervisors, as well as scent free alternatives.

Be sensitive to those around you. Be aware of the scents you bring with you to the workplace. The workplace is a shared environment. Remember . . . We Share the Air.

Wheelchair Etiquette

The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board provides services, not only to students and staff, but to many other people who enter our facilities. Generally speaking, we are educated around disability issues. However, assumptions can create barriers, and not everyone feels comfortable approaching people with disability challenges. The following information can help as a guide.

- Focus on the person, not his/her disability;
- Always ask the person who uses a wheelchair if he/she would like assistance before you jump in to help;
- Don't hang or lean on a person's wheelchair. A wheelchair is part of a person's personal space;
- Speak directly to the person using the chair, not to someone they might be with as if the person in the wheelchair cannot speak for themselves;
- Don't discourage children from asking a person with a disability about their wheelchair or other mobility device. Open communication helps overcome fearful or misleading attitudes;
- It is okay to say, "running along" or "going for a walk," when speaking to a person in a wheelchair;
- Don't classify people who use wheelchairs as "sick". Wheelchairs are used to help people adapt to or compensate for mobility impairments;
- Don't assume that using a wheelchair is a tragedy. Wheelchairs allow the user to move about independently and fully engage in life;
- Don't pet guide dogs or other service animals...they are working;
- Don't use terms like "confined", "bound", "restricted to" or "dependent upon". Instead say "person who uses a wheelchair"

A Sensory Sensitive Movie-Going Experience

Many children get to experience what it is like to see a movie in a theatre. However, some children who have sensory sensitivities may never get to have this experience, because the usual theatre environment can be overwhelming.

A Dufferin-Peel ERW has learned of an opportunity to rent a theatre and show a movie in a sensory friendly way. Some AMC Theaters have been opening their theatre, one Saturday a month with their lights brought up and the sound turned down. AMC Theatres is now giving Dufferin-Peel children with sensory sensitivities, an opportunity during the school week to go to a movie. If you would like to have your sensory sensitive students take part in this activity, please contact Shannon Lutes, ERW, St. Valentine, ext. 60599.

Choosing Accessible and Easy to Read Fonts

There are many different types and ranges of visual impairments and eye conditions, such as partial blindness, and low vision, that can impact someone's ability to read text. Many people find different types of fonts more difficult to read, compared to others. When writing an article, a letter, or even an e-mail, it is important to consider 'font accessibility.' When deciding which fonts to use, there are a number of main principles to follow.

Consider choosing a sans serif font - Text with serifs, the little lines at the tops and bottoms of characters, can make text more difficult to read. According to many people who are legally blind and rely more on their peripheral vision, they dislike the use of these fonts, such as Times New Roman, and prefer sans serif fonts, like Arial. Studies on font accessibility generally agree that Verdana is one of the most well-liked fonts for on-screen viewing, because it has a simple and clear-cut design. Tahoma and Arial are also considered good choices for people with visual impairments.

Avoid small font sizes - Avoiding small font sizes are recommended to ensure the words are read clearly and do not strain the readers' eyes.

Choose colours with contrast - Ensuring that there is sufficient contrast between the text color and the background color makes for clear and readable text. For example, black coloured type on a background that is white, is good contrast; and yellow coloured type on a background that is white, is bad contrast. Bad contrast makes text difficult to read, especially for someone who is legally blind or has damage to their retina.

Limit font variations - In many cases, text may be bolded, underlined, italicized, or all of the above, to indicate a title, a name or make something stand out. Limiting such font variations helps improve readability. When too many font variations are used throughout an article or letter, it can become confusing and send your eyes wandering throughout the page, instead of reading information in the intended order, that's why it is best to keep it simple and readable.

Clean up clutter - When documents are cluttered, it makes it extremely difficult for some people to read; less clutter means a reduced amount of confusion. Curb cluttering by making proper use of margins and spacing. Well spaced-out text, can make long articles seem less intimidating.

Like good penmanship, we should always strive to ensure our work is clear and easily readable. Choosing an accessible font can greatly improve the chances that your writing will actually be read, and that readers will comprehend your material. For more tips and information on font accessibility, visit: <http://webaim.org/techniques/fonts/>.

For more information about ACCESS Dufferin-Peel, visit www.dpcdsb.org or contact Les Storey, Accessibility Coordinator at 905-890-0708 ext. 24405.