



## ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

*January 1, 2009*

**This publication is available on the board website ([www.dpcdsb.org](http://www.dpcdsb.org))**



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## **Executive Summary**

People with disabilities represent a significant and growing part of our population. According to Statistics Canada, about 1.5 million Ontarians (13.5% of Ontario's population) have disabilities. This number is expected to increase to 20% by 2020 as the population ages.

The *Accessibility For Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and *Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) were enacted to ensure improved opportunities for people with disabilities and provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the Province. To this end, the ODA requires that school boards prepare annual accessibility plans.

This is the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board's (the "Board") sixth annual accessibility plan (the "Plan"). This plan describes measures the Board has taken to date and those to be taken in 2008/2009 to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities who use the Board's facilities and services.

In response to results from a public survey that was conducted by the Board in 2004, Access Dufferin-Peel (the Board's accessibility planning working group) has focused on information and public awareness over the past few years. Initiatives and activities completed in this regard are detailed in this Plan.

In May, 2006 a new Steering Committee, entitled "Safe, Caring Inclusive and Healthy School Communities" - in Dufferin-Peel", was created to oversee the implementation of 11 public interest remedies that have been agreed to with the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Three of these remedies specifically pertain to students with disabilities and are included in this Plan.

The Board recognizes the value of community partnerships and a best practice approach to accessibility planning. The Board's Accessibility Coordinator is a member of Peel Partners in Accessibility, which is comprised of accessibility coordinators from local school boards, municipalities, post-secondary institutions and hospitals. This partnership, which provides opportunities for information exchange and collaborative planning, has been instrumental in enabling the Board to implement several initiatives in the past few years. Items of common interest will continue to be pursued in 2008/2009.

On a daily basis, the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board educates and

accommodates some 7,000 students who may have need for programs and services provided by professionally trained administrators, teachers, special services staff and other support staff. Professional development opportunities are regularly provided for those who work with students who require accommodations. With such activities forming such an integral and regular part of the Board's day-to-day operations, it is very difficult to capture everything the Board has put in place to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities. This plan does, however, attempt to highlight some of the initiatives.

## **1. Aim**

This Plan describes the many measures that the Board has taken to date and those that will be taken this year to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities who work in, use, or attend board facilities and services.

## **2. Objectives**

This Plan:

- a) Describes initiatives previously implemented by the Board that identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.
- b) Describes efforts made to date to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
- c) Describes measures the board will take in 2008/2009 to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.

## **3. Description of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board**

The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board is the successor to the Dufferin-Peel Roman Catholic District School Board, which was established by the merger of eight small separate boards in 1969. The Board's jurisdiction covers over 1,000 square miles, extending throughout the municipalities of Mississauga, Brampton, Bolton, Caledon, Orangeville and Dufferin County.

The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board is one of the largest school boards in Ontario and one of the largest employers in the region. Its 145 elementary and secondary schools service a day school enrolment of approximately 88,000 students. In addition, over 35,000 students are enrolled in Continuing Education and Alternative Education programs.

### **Our Mission**

*The mission of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, in partnership with the family and church, is to provide, in a responsible manner, a Catholic education which develops spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional, social and physical capabilities of each individual to live fully today and to meet the challenges of the future, thus enriching the community.*

#### **4. Definitions**

The ODA, the AODA and this Plan apply to barriers and disabilities that extend well beyond those that are physical. The ODA and AODA contains the following broad definitions of “barrier” and “disability”:

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

**Disability** means

- a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement 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 coordination, 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 development 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 the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 (“handicap”).

A disability may be a temporary or permanent infirmity.

The identification, removal and prevention of barriers for people with disabilities have significant impact for Board departments, locations and general operations.

## **5. Commitment to Accessibility Planning**

The Board reconfirmed its commitment to accessibility planning in 2004 by adopting the following Commitment to Accessibility Planning Mission Statement:

**Commitment to Accessibility Planning Mission Statement**

The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board is committed to:

- a) The continual improvement of access to school premises, facilities and services for students, employees and members of the community with disabilities;
- b) The participation of people with disabilities in the development and review of its annual access plans;
- c) The provision of quality services to all students, parents and members of the community to meet the needs of a wide range of people, including people with disabilities.

The Director of Education has authorized Access Dufferin-Peel to prepare annual accessibility plans that will enable these commitments to be met.

The Board remains seriously concerned, however, that the provincial government continues to expect school boards to develop and implement accessibility plans using existing resources even though the current public education funding model still does not provide any additional funding to support accessibility planning. The absence of targeted public funding continues to impede the Board's ability to implement new barrier removal initiatives that would further improve access for people with disabilities. The Board sent correspondence to the provincial government several times over the past few years regarding these concerns, yet no response or acknowledgement of any kind was ever received.

## Access Dufferin-Peel – Members & Role

Access Dufferin-Peel was formally constituted by the Board in 2003. The following identifies membership for 2008/2009.

MEMBER	ORGANIZATION/DEPARTMENT REPRESENTED
Geiser, Joseph (Chair)	Supervisory Officers-Corporate Services
D'Anna, Ertha	Recorder
Larm, Wendy (eff. Sept.'08)	Accessibility Coordinator (Equity and Diversity Officer)
Campbell, Bruce	Communications & Community Relations
Cooper, Kathleen	Educational Resource Workers' Assn.
Goodland, Sharon	Principal/Vice Principal Assn.-Secondary
Heimbecker, Brian	OECTA - Secondary Unit
Jamal, Rose (eff. Sept.'08)	Special Education Advisory Committee
Kazimowicz, Liz	Supervisory Officers-Instructional Services
Kendrick, Shirley	Principal/Vice Principal Assn.-Elementary
Lawton, Roland	Plant Department
MacSween, Jim	OECTA - Elementary Unit
Marcon, Doris	Assn. Professional Student Services Personnel
Marshall, Nancy	Mid-Mgmt.Assn./Communications Dept.
Morizio, Maria	Special Education Department
Schaule, Lynne	Mid-Mgmt.Assn/Health & Safety Dept.
Southwell, Ruth	Canadian Union Public Employees-Local 2026
Stevenson, Larry	Canadian Union Public Employees-Local 1483
Teply, Lesia	OECTA - Occasional Teachers
Welsh, Wendy	Mid-Mgmt./Health Promotion/Wellness
Williamson, Grace (eff. Sept.08)	Central Cmte. For Catholic School Councils

Noted: OECTA = Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association

In 2004, Trustees confirmed the role of Access Dufferin-Peel as follows:

**Role of Access Dufferin-Peel**

The Director of Education has established the Accessibility Planning Working Group (Access Dufferin-Peel) to carry out the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board's commitment to accessibility planning. Access Dufferin-Peel is authorized to:

- a. Conduct research on barriers to people with disabilities in all facilities, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services offered by the board.
- b. List facilities, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services that cause or may cause barriers to people with disabilities.
- c. Recommend barriers to be removed or prevented.
- d. Describe how these barriers would be removed or prevented.
- e. Prepare an annual report on these activities, and after its approval by the board of Trustees, make the plan available to the public.

Access Dufferin-Peel meets bi-monthly during the school year. Sub-Committees, which, in some instances include individuals beyond Access Dufferin-Peel membership, also continue to be established and operate as specific needs are identified. Meetings are scheduled as needed. Accessibility Coordinator responsibilities are currently assigned to Wendy Larm, Equity and Diversity Officer (Acting), effective September 1, 2008.

## **6. Barrier-Removal Initiatives**

Through the Equity and Diversity Office of the Communications & Community Relations Department, the "Diversity Workshop Series" continued to provide opportunities for all employees to participate in monthly workshops with topics ranging from Racism to Disability awareness. Participants who attend eight or more workshops received a certificate for their portfolio. 2008-09 sessions that focus on accessibility issues are highlighted throughout this Accessibility Plan. Some of the workshops included: Diversity and Equity in the elementary classroom; Hearing Loss and, in April 2009, a conference which will hold workshops on various disabilities.

a) **Physical Barriers**

The Board has recognized in many ways the need to ensure access to all Board facilities and services, including the provision of student transportation and accommodation of employees and students with disabilities in a manner appropriate to their needs. Specialized health support services are provided for students in consultation with local health agencies. Injured/ill employees who are returning to work are provided with individual vocational rehabilitation plans to promote integration into the workplace. Some of the physical barrier removal initiatives implemented to date include:

- Appropriate student transportation opportunities
- Specialized health support services
- Assistance with mobility
- Ergonomic modifications
- Workstation accessibility
- Designated handicap parking and curb cuts at all sites
- Barrier-free washroom facilities, including ceiling lifts where needed
- Lightweight/customized tools
- Individualized vocational rehabilitation plans
- Specialized equipment (transfers and lifts)
- Orthopedic facilities
- Special Education and Support Services Department
- Health Promotion & Wellness Department
- Health & Safety Department
- Health & Safety Plant audits

Special Education and Support Services and Health Promotion & Wellness Department staff monitor the needs of individual students and staff with disabilities and advises the Board's Plant Department when modifications, are required, e.g., accessible washrooms, installation of ramps, curb cuts, change tables, automatic door openers or additional handicapped parking at a particular facility. These types of projects are funded through the general Facilities Renewal budget.

There are also many initiatives that enable students with disabilities to participate in events that are similar to their able-bodied student counterparts. One example is the Annual Special Events Basketball Invitational, held in November. Nearly 150 special needs athletes from 13 Dufferin-Peel secondary schools participate in this tournament. The event provides an opportunity for students to compete in a fun, safe and inclusive setting, while getting involved in the athletic spirit of their school and being recognized, celebrated and appreciated by the school communities.

The Board also works with local municipalities to identify and remove barriers of mutual interest. One recent example is the installation of a modified pedestrian signal at the main intersection adjacent to the Board's Catholic Education Centre. The signal provides a visual display and audio accounting of the time remaining for pedestrians to cross the road safely. This service was implemented in response to an identified need for a blind Board employee to access public transit stops on either side of the intersection as the employee traveled to and from work. In this instance, the Board identified the barrier and the municipality took steps to remove it.

In addition, the Plant Department, working with the City of Brampton, has revised all barrier free parking signs and pavement markings at schools in Brampton to provide better access to facilities.

Student participation in the Peel Children's Water Festival is another example of the partnership between the Board and local municipalities that has resulted in the removal of physical barriers. To that end, elementary and secondary school classes that included students with special needs were able to attend the event and participate in most of the activities.

In June 2007, the Board's Joint Health and Safety (Secondary) Committee passed a motion that a Scent Sensitivity Awareness Campaign be developed and implemented in all Board facilities in order to heighten staff and student understanding of this issue. This initiative was assigned to Access Dufferin-Peel. An Access Dufferin-Peel Sub-Committee was established in 2007/2008 and continues its campaign in 2008/2009.

The sub-committee was successful in obtaining permission to use both the 'We Share the Air' label and the associated logo from the scent sensitivity awareness campaign of the same name that originated at Dalhousie University and was similarly adopted by both McMaster University and the University of Calgary. The awareness campaign is a broad based one that will be accessed through a web-document hosted on the ACCESS Dufferin-Peel website. The web-document, that will hopefully be ready for public access early in 2009, includes directions on how to handle scent sensitive situations from the perspective of a board employee, parent/guardian/student or site supervisor. The resource document will also provide answers to frequently asked questions as well as other promotional material such as posters, teacher lesson plans, scent free alternatives as well as links to further web-based information. The goal for 2009 will be to complete a working document that has all of the similar components that are included in the other 'We Share the Air' campaigns and to work at promoting it within the schools. For the following year the plan would be to increase the depth of the

resource and promotional material that is available.

b) Architectural Barriers

Board-approved Design Guidelines for new elementary and secondary schools identify many components to aid access for those with physical disabilities, including designated barrier-free parking, ramps, power-assisted entrance doors, lifts, elevators and barrier-free washrooms. Doors and washroom sinks have lever handles, while some built-in workstations and student lockers are wheelchair accessible. Certain classrooms have a barrier-free kitchen, orthopedic washroom and barrier-free millwork components where warranted.

Board Design Guidelines address the needs of those with hearing and vision impairments by providing Braille elevator signage; highly visual strips on stair edges; strobe lights near fire alarms that flash when the fire alarm discharges; and installation of sound field amplification systems to accommodate those with hearing loss.

After the province introduced design standards for government buildings each local municipalities in Peel finalized their own design guidelines. In 2006-2007 an Access Dufferin-Peel Sub-committee reviewed these documents to identify any areas where the Board's current design guidelines could be improved with respect to accessible planning.

Board Design Department staff also attended the Developing a Universal Design Lens for City Planning presentation hosted by the City of Mississauga in 2006 that provided additional information and reference used in the review of the Board's Design Guidelines. The Plant Department continues to work with Special Education staff to make renovations to existing facilities to accommodate special needs students when identified.

c) Informational Barriers

The 2004 survey results identified a need to increase public awareness of accessibility issues and to communicate the Board's accessibility planning initiatives as an on-going priority. The Communication and Public Awareness Sub-Committee has remained active in promoting issues, events and activities related to accessibility through its various channels for information dissemination.

Initiatives that have been implemented include:

- An accessibility logo appears on Board communications regarding accessibility to provide brand recognition and a quick visual indication of subject matter.
- Access Dufferin-Peel website with prominent links from main board website.

- Access Dufferin-Peel newsletter is published and widely distributed to staff, community partners, local MPPs, municipalities and others and is posted on the board website. Newsletter articles include updates on new legislation, Board accessibility initiatives and various topics of interest such as the Toys “R” Us “Toy Guide for differently-abled kids” publication.
- Accessibility symbols have been incorporated into the Board’s Directory of Schools and Occasional Teachers’ Atlas.
- Periodic updates regarding accessibility issues are provided in the Director of Education’s Bulletin to staff and other board publications.
- Accessibility Coordinator participation with Peel Partners in Accessibility.
- Participation in North American Occupational Safety and Health Week
- Scheduling speakers at monthly diversity workshop series to discuss accessibility related issues

Many other provisions are also in place to provide alternatives to assist those with disabilities to access information. Specially trained staff works with students to teach skills and provide opportunities that will improve their current and future ability to access information. Some of the available service, resources and technologies are:

- Braille available on request
- Staff trained in ASL (American Sign Language) or Sign language interpretation as needed
- Picture Exchange Communications System
- BoardMaker Software and/or other specialized A/T (Assistive Technology) support
- Staff development and training
- Special Education and Support Services Department (including Special Education Consultants; Psychologists; Child & Youth Workers; Social Workers; Speech, Language, Hearing, Vision and Physical/Medical resource specialists)
- Special Education staff assigned to school sites to work with students and staff
- Equity and Diversity Officer

The Board is also actively involved in many annual activities that raise awareness of organizations that service people with disabilities and their clients, including:

- Participation in National Denim Day to support Breast Cancer research.
- Hosting golf tournaments that benefit various charities and organizations that service people with disabilities. (e.g., Community Living Mississauga)
- Various activities to support United Way throughout the Board, including an annual walk/run/rollerblade event.
- DP Donations Unlimited (featured in recent media stories)
- DP Representation on Transition Advisory Committee to support students and families.
- Transition Planning series for students and their families to support school to community or workplace setting.
- The Annual Terry Fox Foundation's-National School Run Day.
- Student and employee participation in such events as "Big Bike for Stroke", which raised funds and awareness for the Heart and Stroke Foundation and Citizens Challenge presents A Hair Cutting and Hair Donation Fundraising event, which raised funds and awareness for Dreams Take Flight and Angel Hair For Kids.
- Hosting a community craft show by L'Arche, a faith-based community founded by Jean Vanier. L'Arche members, all of whom have developmental disabilities, participate in activities such as craft making and wood-working. The craft show provides them with an opportunity to publicly display and sell their artifacts.
- Newly designed Special Education and Support Services website.

Many other information initiatives have been implemented over past years. One example is the Junior and Senior Kindergarten information session that is held annually for parents of children who have special needs. Information regarding the session is sent to local child care centres and nursery schools and highlighted in school newsletters. At the session parents are provided with a general orientation to our schools and more specific information regarding available programs and supports to ensure a smooth transition to school. Community agency representatives, Board special education teachers and Family and Board consultants are available at the session to answer questions that parents may have.

In May 2008, the Fifth Annual Mission Employable Conference and Employment Expo was held as a joint Dufferin-Peel CDSB and Peel District School Board initiative. This two-day session is specifically aimed at Grade 12 students entering the world of work after graduation. The purpose of the conference is to help students improve and enhance their employability skills, while providing them an

opportunity to connect with prospective employers and community agencies. The event also includes a parents' evening session to provide them with an overview of pathways, apprenticeship and skilled trades programs offered at the secondary school level.

The Accessibility Coordinator has also presented information regarding the Board's accessibility initiatives to such groups as York University Special Education Part II students, the Joint Peel Caledon Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Principals' Courses for The Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO). Information regarding community events and seminars presented by groups representing people with disabilities is also distributed to Board staff on an on-going basis. Events during the past year included the annual Community Resource Fair for Persons with Disabilities, presented by the Coalition for Persons with Disabilities and Erinoak; Credit Valley Hospital's Teddy Bear Clinic; the Attention Deficit Resource Network's workshop; and, Sabrina's Law Education Night, hosted by Anaphylaxis Canada.

#### **d) Communication Barriers**

Several initiatives to reduce communication barriers have been established. Teachers are able to provide alternatives that are tailored for students with special needs. New assistive technology is also offered to employees who have specific disabilities that interfere with communication. Initiatives to remove communicational barriers include:

- Kurzweil
- Oral exams
- Books on tape
- Enlarged text on computers
- Large print material
- FM systems
- Voice Amplification systems
- Text messaging services
- Special assistance for visually impaired
- High volume telephones
- Email access
- Voicemail access
- Special Education Department (including Special Education Consultants; Psychologists; Child & Youth Workers; Social Workers; and Speech, Language, Hearing and Vision specialists)
- Special Education staff assigned to school sites to work with students and staff

e) **Attitudinal Barriers**

The Board's longtime commitment to the elimination of attitudinal barriers is evidenced by the establishment and maintenance of an Equity and Diversity Officer position. The Equity and Diversity Officer is responsible for ensuring that Human Rights, including the rights of people with disabilities, are respected in all dealings of the board.

A variety of programs and services are also offered to students and staff to increase their understanding of the needs of those with disabilities. Attitudinal barrier removal initiatives include:

- Staff and student focused presentations by Equity and Diversity Officer
- Bullying prevention programs
- Conflict resolution programs
- Public awareness programs (e.g. Access Dufferin-Peel newsletter and poster series)
- Staff training
- Employee Assistance Program
- Religion and Family Life programs

During the past year, Access Dufferin-Peel finalized its poster campaign featuring students who are involved in accessibility programs and services that this Board provides.

Events are also held to showcase the talents of students who have disabilities and to provide the broader community with information regarding programs and services that the Board offers. During the past year, such events included the Planning For Independence Program Talent Show; an Autism Spectrum Disorder Class Open House; First Annual Inspirations Art Show; the Region of Peel Secondary School Athletic Association Special Events Track and Field Meet; and, the Joe Sax Activity Day.

f) **Technological Barriers**

The Board's Web Architect works collaboratively with Board stakeholders to develop and implement an action plan that continues to realize the Board's short and long-term Web services objectives. This includes the ongoing review of the board's website to ensure that it is accessible to those with disabilities. In 2007/2008, further updating of the website occurred. Accessibility as part of equity and diversity was highlighted through links between the Equity and Access Dufferin-Peel websites.

The Board also provides options within Windows XP that provide text-to-speech for students and staff with reading and writing challenges and text magnification for students and staff with visual impairments.

Monies are included in the Board's annual budget to support school technological investments. Technology upgrades may include the provision of devices and programs that provide support to those who would benefit from these accommodations. The Board, through Instructional Council, continues to support annual plans to increase access to technology to the students within a framework of Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction for students as needed. Their actions reflect Ministry directions to increase general access to assistive technology for all students and supports requirements to provide technology to access curriculum that is essential for some students, eg. Special Equipment Amount (SEA).

On November 21, 2007, a session entitled Challenges of Assistive Technology from a Student's Perspective was held as part of the Diversity Workshop Series. The presenter discussed the use of technology in the classroom, various forms of technological advancements and the importance of integration of students with special needs within the school environment. Adaptive technologies such as Kurzweil and Dragon were examined as well as the importance of educators being familiar with the positive and negative aspects of each program.

The Board, through the Special Education and Support Services Department, has developed a process to review student needs for special equipment including computer hardware, software and training. Board staff (administration, teachers, support staff) are annually updated regarding the process. Updates include policies related to Ministry funded access to technology (Special Equipment Amount).

**g) Policy/Practice Barriers**

Through the Special Education and Support Services Department, the Health Promotion & Wellness Department, the Health & Safety Department and the Communications & Community Relations Department represented by the Diversity and Equity Officer, many of the Board's policies and practices are reviewed and amended on an on-going basis in order to ensure that students and staff with disabilities are able to access all Board services and programs. Some of these reviews are mandated, by and subject to, the Education Act, Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, and the Human Rights Code. Efforts to remove policy and practice barriers include:

- Special Education plans and programs
- Special Education Advisory Committee
- Identification, Program and Review Committees (IPRC)
- Accessing funds to meet special accommodation needs
- Itinerant Special Education teachers, Itinerant Resource teachers and support staff (Physical/Medical, Behaviour, Autism, Hearing, Vision, Speech, Language)
- Alternative Education Programs
- Disability Management Practice
- Workplace Accommodation
- Health Promotion & Wellness Department
- Health & Safety Department
- Special Education and Support Services Department (including Special Education Consultants; Psychologists; Child & Youth Workers; Social Workers; and Speech, Language, Hearing and Vision specialists)
- Diversity and Equity Officer
- General Administrative Procedures
- By-Laws and Policies of the board (including an anaphylactic policy)

The Education Act also requires that school boards develop annual Special Education Plans. The Board's June 2008 Special Education Plan outlines actions taken to address access for students with disabilities through modification and accommodation of academic programs and services such as Individual Education Plans for students with special needs, staff training, accessibility of school buildings and transportation. Information regarding the Special Education Plan can be obtained through the Board Special Education and Support Services Department or area Family Special Education Consultant.

As indicated in the Executive Summary, a new Steering Committee, entitled “Safe, Caring, Inclusive and Healthy Schools in Dufferin-Peel”, was created in May 2006 to oversee implementation of the 11 public interest remedies agreed to with the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

In the Fall of 2006, all administrators attended a two day seminar on anti-racism, conducted by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and the law firm of Keel Cottrelle. This session included training on the new Investigations Protocol and outlined how disability should be examined as a mitigating factor.

Discussions on the topic of Inclusion of all students within the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board Community are ongoing.

As of February 1, 2008, the legislation for Progressive Discipline and School Safety came into force. Dufferin-Peel’s response to this legislation is framed under the Safe, Caring, Inclusive and Healthy School Communities Initiative. This committee continues to meet regularly to review the implementation of Progressive Discipline and School Safety, 2007, to review board process related to the Catholic Code of Conduct, Progressive Discipline and Bullying Prevention. As well, aligned supports for lockdown procedures, police protocol, Positive School Climate, Restorative Practice, and other issues related to school safety are considered. The board’s vision for Safe Schools can be accessed at <http://www.dpccsb.org/CEC/Schools/Safe+Schools/vision.htm>

## **7. Identification of Existing Barriers**

Access Dufferin-Peel conducted a public survey in 2004 to assist in identifying existing barriers. The survey format mirrored the categories and terminology contained in the tool kit developed through the Accessibility Directorate. In addition to providing detailed information regarding identified barriers, survey participants were also able to briefly comment on the barriers indicated. Almost 300 detailed submissions were received, with over 90% of the respondents being employees of the board.

While some responses did indicate barriers in specific Board locations, programs or practices, the majority of identified barriers fall within the categories of Informational and Attitudinal. These results confirm the need for Access Dufferin-Peel to focus on communication and public awareness as main priorities.

In 2006-2007, an Access Dufferin-Peel Sub-Committee worked on developing a poster that confirmed that service and assistance is available for people with disabilities and indicated where to access such assistance. This poster was finalized and circulated to all schools and board offices in the fall of 2008.

## **8. Next Steps: 2008/2009 Work Plan**

The Board has already initiated and implemented many measures to improve opportunities for people with disabilities, many of which are outlined in this report. Access Dufferin-Peel will continue to build on and expand these earlier initiatives in 2008/2009, with a primary focus on taking measures to remove and prevent communication and attitudinal barriers.

The Diversity Workshop Series operates on a monthly basis and includes Accessibility and Disability topics.

## **9. Communication of the January, 2008-09 Accessibility Plan**

The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board's January 2008-09 Accessibility Plan will be posted on the board website at [www.dpcdsb.org](http://www.dpcdsb.org). Hard copies will also be available upon request by contacting the board's Communications Department.

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Submitted: on behalf of Access Dufferin-Peel