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October 31, 2025

The Honorable Ghazala Hashmi, Chair
Senate Education and Health Committee
201 North 9th Street
Virginia General Assembly Building
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable Sam Rasoul, Chair
House Education Committee
201 North 9th Street
Virginia General Assembly Building
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Senator Hashmi and Delegate Rasoul,

Accomack County Public Schools respectfully submits its Report on Accessibility Findings and Recommendations as required by HB 2278.

The Division Contact for this report is:
Beth Onley, Chief Operations Officer
Accomack County Public Schools
23296 Courthouse Ave
Accomack, VA 23301

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Gennifer Miller'.

Gennifer Miller, Ed. D.
Superintendent

Accomack County Public Schools- HB2278 Accessibility Report

Executive Summary

In accordance with Virginia House Bill 2278 (2025), Accomack County Public Schools (ACPS) completed a comprehensive review of the physical accessibility of all school buildings, playgrounds, and grounds for individuals with disabilities. As required, this review addressed: (i) physical accessibility challenges and barriers in school buildings and grounds that may prevent individuals with disabilities from fully participating in school activities; (ii) challenges in access to programming and supports; (iii) the plan to eliminate barriers; and (iv) how state agencies can assist schools to address and eliminate such challenges and barriers and fully comply with all applicable state and federal laws.

This report affirms that:

1. ACPS facilities were constructed in compliance with building codes in effect at the time of their original construction;
2. All subsequent renovations and additions meet current accessibility standards, including the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design; and
3. ACPS has an annual process that supports our commitment to ongoing review and improvement.

Methodology of Review

ACPS conducted a comprehensive, facility-by-facility review of all schools, including grounds, playgrounds, and athletic facilities. Our review was guided by the methodology of the U. S. Government Accountability Office's June 2020 report (GAO-20-488), K-12 Education: School Districts Need Better Information to Improve Physical Accessibility of School Facilities, "as recommended by the legislation". We also consulted with key stakeholders, including our Special Education Department, design professionals, facilities staff, and parent groups, to ensure a thorough assessment and to determine compliance with two key sets of regulations:

1. Current Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC), including the Virginia Construction Code (VCC), the Virginia Existing Building Code (VEBC), and referenced ICC A117.1- as well as the 2010 ADA Standards of Accessible Design. We assess all facilities against current accessibility requirements for any alterations or new construction undertaken since their original build date.
2. Original Construction Codes and the Virginia Maintenance Code (VMC), as applicable: We confirmed that each school building and its original components were constructed in compliance with the Virginia USBC and other relevant state and federal codes in effect at the time of construction.

Summary of Findings

Based on our detailed review, ACPS affirms that our facilities comply with the relevant building codes applicable to their construction dates. Furthermore, all subsequent alterations or additions have been completed in adherence to the Virginia USBC and ADA standards in effect at the time of the work. However, in our detailed review of the facilities we discovered that one of our middle schools did not have an appropriate curb cut providing access for wheelchairs. Providing this access has become a top priority since the review.

Consistent with HB2278's purpose to look beyond historical compliance and consider current conditions, our facilities were constructed in accordance with the standard in effect at the time, and subsequent alterations are intended to comply with applicable code and ADA requirements. This planning review documents potential opportunities to enhance further accessibility for students, staff, families, and visitors.

Proactive Action Plan

Continued efforts to improve accessibility and improving the student experience are a key consideration in the existing process for the development of the annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Each year, the CIP process evaluates facilities, including accessibility challenges and barriers that affect individuals with disabilities' ability to participate in school activities and programs fully. This process informs CIP planning and prioritizes projects for funding recommendations.

ACPS prioritizes accessibility by integrating universal design principles for physical and digital environments. This includes physical access like ramps, digital access like screen readers, and personalized learning adjustments such as alternative formats and flexible assessments, ensuring all students can participate equitably.

Annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Inputs

- Administrator requests (program access concerns and site-level observations)
- Facilities Department evaluations (facility condition and barrier observations)
- Capital needs (lifecycle and cost considerations)
- Security Evaluations (circulation, egress, and operational constraints)

Items that are considered in development of our CIP include:

- Creating spaces that are inherently usable by all, regardless of ability;
- Installing features like ramps, wide doorways, and accessible bathrooms and;
- Considering classroom layout, lighting, and acoustics to accommodate sensory needs.

Screening and Prioritization

- Consider safety, accessibility, student/staff impact, feasibility, and funding alignment.
- Develop planning-level scopes and order of magnitude costs for CIP considerations.

ACPS reviews and updates this planning framework annually within the CIP cycle to reflect current conditions, stakeholder input, and available resources.

Conclusion

Accomack County Public Schools is deeply committed to creating safe, inclusive, and accessible learning environments for all our students. This report confirms our compliance with applicable codes and reaffirms a strategic plan for continued improvement. To achieve the goals of HB2278 and ensure access for all, ACPS respectfully requests targeted funding from the Virginia General Assembly. Sustainable progress requires resources to accompany new mandates and avoid creating unfunded obligations. We look forward to partnering with state agencies to advance accessibility across all public schools.