



FRANKLIN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Maintenance Department

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Franklin County Public Schools-HB2278 Accessibility Report

Executive Summary

In accordance with Virginia House Bill 2278 (2025), Franklin County Public Schools (FCPS) conducted a comprehensive review of the physical accessibility of all school buildings and grounds for individuals with disabilities. This review addresses the following required areas:

- (i) physical accessibility challenges within school buildings and grounds;
- (ii) barriers to access in programming and supports;
- (iii) a plan to eliminate existing barriers; and
- (iv) recommendations for how state agencies can assist in achieving accessibility goals.

This report affirms that:

- FCPS facilities were constructed in compliance with the building codes and accessibility standards in effect at the time of their original construction.
- All subsequent renovations and additions have met the accessibility standards in place at the time of the work, including the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and the ADA Standards for Accessible Design.
- FCPS remains committed to ongoing review, improvement, and proactive enhancement of accessibility across all facilities.

Review Process

FCPS conducted a division-wide, facility-by-facility review of all schools, including associated grounds and athletic facilities.

The Division collaborated with the Disability Rights and Resources Center (DRRC) to perform accessibility assessments using the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design as a guiding framework. These standards were applied not only to evaluate compliance but also to identify opportunities for greater inclusivity beyond the minimum requirements in effect when the facilities were originally constructed.

Additional input was gathered from school administrators, the FCPS Special Education Department, division leadership, and maintenance staff to ensure a comprehensive and informed review.

Summary of Findings

The review confirmed that all FCPS facilities comply with the building and accessibility codes applicable at the time of their construction or most recent renovation. All subsequent additions and alterations have also been designed and completed in accordance with the Virginia USBC and ADA standards in effect at that time.

Consistent with HB2278's intent to move beyond historical compliance and assess current accessibility conditions, this review identified several opportunities to further enhance accessibility for students, staff, families, and visitors.

While all facilities meet required accessibility standards, the DRRC provided several recommendations to strengthen inclusivity and convenience across the division, including:

- Adding additional accessible (handicapped) parking spaces.
- Installing enhanced signage to clearly identify accessible parking areas and building entrances.
- Providing clear signage to indicate accessible restroom locations.
- Expanding playground equipment options for students with disabilities, subject to available funding.
- Enhance accessibility by improving or creating accessible entrances at multiple locations, including one elementary school and one ball field—both older facilities—pending the availability of additional funding.

In addition, the DRRC recommends conducting a comprehensive review of restroom accessibility across all schools, with particular attention to the following areas:

- Adjusting and extending grab bars
- Increasing stall dimensions and widening partitions
- Relocating paper towel and soap dispensers to accessible heights
- Insulating exposed water lines
- Relocating or adding coat hooks at appropriate ADA-compliant heights

Proactive Action Plan

FCPS will integrate the findings from this review into its long-term facility planning and annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Accessibility considerations will be systematically included when evaluating facility needs, ensuring that future projects address potential barriers and support full participation for individuals with disabilities in all school programs and activities.

Data used to inform CIP planning and project prioritization will be drawn from:

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

Conclusion

Franklin County Public Schools is dedicated to maintaining safe, inclusive, and accessible learning environments for all members of our community. This report confirms the division's compliance with applicable codes and outlines a forward-looking strategy for continuous improvement.

To fulfill the goals of HB2278 and ensure equitable access across all facilities, FCPS respectfully requests targeted funding from the Virginia General Assembly. Sustainable progress requires that new mandates be accompanied by appropriate resources to prevent the creation of unfunded obligations.

FCPS looks forward to continued collaboration with state agencies to advance accessibility and inclusion in every public school within the Commonwealth.



Dr. Andrew Nester
Director of Operations
Franklin County Public Schools

DRRC

DISABILITY RIGHTS & RESOURCE CENTER



Accessibility Survey of Franklin County Public Schools

To: Dr. Andrew Nester, Director of Operations

Date: October 31, 2025

From: Carol Tuning, Executive Director
Sto Belongia, Independent Living Coordinator
Lisa Muse, Independent Living Coordinator

RE: Accessibility Survey

Location: Franklin County Public Schools

Thank you for the opportunity to assist the Franklin County School System in ensuring an inclusive and accessible environment for all. The attached review identifies physical barriers and provides guidance on recommended actions based on our findings.

A copy of the ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities may be found at this site:
<https://adachecklist.org/sites/default/files/documents/ada-checklist.pdf>.

Procedure: This survey consisted of all public schools in Franklin County with a focus on entrances, parking areas, bathrooms, athletic fields, cafeterias, hallways and gyms.

Observations: Discussions with Staff, Physical Measurements

Our survey utilizes a comprehensive Checklist derived from the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), available for reference at www.ADAchecklist.org.

An electronic copy of these documents is crucial for readers seeking detailed information on the cited codes. Crucially, any code noted in this report identifies an area that is not in compliance with these federal guidelines and requires immediate attention

Bathroom summary of all schools surveyed:

We inspected the bathrooms at the schools in the system. We found that most of the schools lacked a designated, fully accessible bathroom. It is not required that all restrooms are accessible, but where possible, we recommend that steps be taken to make one restroom in each school a fully accessible bathroom and steps be taken to make others as accessible as feasible.

The schools that had stalls that were supposed to be accessible we found that the size of the stalls was often too small and often lacked features such as grab bars. The sinks in these bathrooms also did not have insulated pipes to prevent burns on wheelchair users.

It is important to ensure that all restrooms are made as accessible as possible, aligning with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. For single-occupancy restrooms, they can be designated as unisex facilities through the installation of appropriate locking mechanisms. Clear signage must be posted to direct individuals to accessible restroom locations. When considering accessibility in educational settings, particularly those serving younger students, factors such as the height of fixtures, including toilets, require careful consideration. All designated accessible bathrooms and stalls must adhere strictly to ADA guidelines, ensuring sufficient clear floor space and proper fixture placement to accommodate individuals with disabilities.

Guidelines will be provided to offer guidance as to what is required for this requirement.

Parking summary of the schools:

We inspected the parking lots at all schools within the system and identified several areas for improvement regarding accessibility compliance. Common findings included missing or inadequately low signage, a shortage of van-accessible spaces, and a need for additional accessible spaces at certain locations. In some spaces there was accessible parking but no access space next to the spaces. However, most schools excelled in the strategic placement of existing accessible parking, ensuring they were conveniently located with a clear accessible route to the building entrance. Comprehensive guidelines will be distributed to provide necessary guidance on meeting these requirements.

For every 25 spaces at least 1 needs to be accessible. For every 6 or a fraction of 6 at least 1 needs to be van accessible. Accessible parking should be 8 feet wide with an access aisle of 5 feet.

Most schools did not have van accessible parking. Van accessible space is defined as being at least 11 feet wide with an access lane of 5 feet or 8 feet wide with an access of 8 feet.

Signs in and around the schools:

Attention needs to be made towards signs on school property. Accessible signs are needed throughout most schools that include braille. These should be placed on the door handle sign of the doors within 18 inches from the edge of the doors and between 48 and 60 inches from the floor.

The parking lots at most schools need accessible parking signs at the accessible parking spaces. These should be 60 inches from the ground.

Door handles:

We measured several door handles at random locations in the schools. The force should be about 10 pounds. You have to balance security, safety and accessibility. Accessible and inclusive policies may be addressed in school safety and security protocol.

Other points:

The age of the schools in the area were built, in some cases about 50 years ago before current standards were put in place. This means they may not be covered by current guidelines. However, steps should be taken wherever possible, to make the schools as accessible as possible and offer reasonable accommodations where they are needed for the students, staff, parents and other visitors.

Many of the elementary schools have stages in the cafeteria that are not accessible. It was told to us that in most cases the stages are not used for award and other programs.

Sontag Elementary School

- We counted 72 parking spaces on the property which requires 4 accessible parking spaces. They have the required number of spaces but no accessible spaces. There were signs at some of the parking spaces but were not at the required height of 60 inches.
- They have no fully accessible bathroom.
- The signs in the hallway were not accessible.

Snow Creek Elementary School

- We counted 30 parking spaces and 1 accessible parking space. This number requires 2 accessible parking spaces. There were no van accessible spaces and no signs to designate accessible parking.
- The front door pull measured at 15 pounds.
- They have no accessible bathroom stalls but we discussed moving the stall walls to enlarge the rooms for better access.
- There was a coat hook in the bathroom that measured 64 inches. Although coat hooks are not required but if you have them, they should be at 48 inches.

Glade Hill Elementary School

- We counted 47 parking spaces on the property with 2 accessible spaces in the back of the school with no van accessible spaces. One of the accessible spaces was located in front of the door which should be moved and that space be reserved for an accessible route.
- There was no access in the front of the building due to steps. Plans should be made to improve accessibility in the future by adding a ramp. There are no signs letting people know where the accessible entrance is located. There is a buzzer system at the back entrance but there are no signs letting people know where to go from there. There should also be better signs at the door to let people know how to use the buzzer system to gain access. The accessible entrance, if different from the main entrance, should be marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility.
- In the cafeteria the route in the serving line is only 25 inches wide. This should be 36 inches.
- We discussed ways to make the bathrooms more accessible by moving the stall walls to increase the size of the stalls.
- The door near the office measured 14 pounds of force to open; 10 is the maximum.

Dudley Elementary School

- We counted 42 parking spaces with 1 designated accessible parking space. There is no van accessible space. One should be added to get this lot to the required number of spaces. There was one space marked with a sight but it was too low. It should be at 60 inches high.
- One door was measured at 14 pounds of force to open; 10 is the maximum.
- We discussed removing a stall wall to make the space more accessible.

Gereau Center

- The accessible parking signs should be 60 inches from the ground.

Rock Mount Elementary

- We counted 86 parking spaces with 2 accessible spaces with no sign and no van accessible parking. The school needs to add 2 accessible parking spaces.

Lee M. Waid Elementary School

- We counted 78 parking spaces with 4 accessible spaces and no van spaces. The signs that were there were too low and should be at 60 inches from the ground.
- There is an elevator that takes you to the cafeteria but not the other part of the school. We discussed this and they say that accommodations are taken to move teachers to other classes if needed.

Franklin County High School

- We worked with Dr. Andrew Nester on this count. There are well over 200 parking spaces at this location and we feel there is more than enough accessible spaces at this location. Additional spaces are added as the need arises for different events. There is a need for van accessible spaces and the addition of accessible signs.
- There is more than enough accessible seating at their athletic facilities and auditorium.
- The accessible restrooms at this location, including the athletic facilities are good but need accessible signage.

Benjamin Franklin Middle School

- We counted 145 parking spaces on campus. Many parking spaces are being used and marked off by construction activity and were not available for counting. Based on this count they are required to have 5 accessible spaces. We counted 6 accessible spaces at this location.

Several were missing accessible parking signs or are too low and should be raised to 60 inches. No van space is available.

- Signs are needed to instruct students, staff and visitors where the accessible bathrooms are located.
- There is a designated accessible bathroom. There are no grab bars, no insulation on the sink pipes and no sign on the outside. Signs should be posted at other bathrooms to inform people where the accessible restrooms are located.
- The softball field has an accessible parking space on a concrete slab that has a picnic table on it. The bathroom needs a sign on the outside.
- The baseball field is located at the bottom of a hill. A path is there to lead guests from the parking to the field but it is steep. They do allow drop offs down the left field line. Plans should be put in place to make access more accessible. Adding a ramp would be too costly and there might not be enough space. It is suggested that a hand rail be added and the path be made wider to allow people assisting others to walk side by side.

Windy Gap Elementary School

- We counted 95 parking spaces and 2 accessible spaces. There are 4 accessible spaces. No van spaces.
- The aisle for the cafeteria is 30 inches. It should be 36 inches.

Boones Mill Elementary School

- We counted 43 spaces. There are enough accessible spaces however signs are required at the proper height of 60 inches. No van accessible spaces.
- The parking lot is uneven but averages out to an acceptable slope. The unevenness might cause some difficulty and maneuvering.
- There is no accessible restroom.

Ferrum Elementary School

- We counted 57 parking spaces with 2 accessible parking spaces and not van accessible spaces. Based on this count they need one more space.

Calloway Elementary School

- We counted 97 parking spaces with 2 accessible parking spaces and no van spaces. They should have 4 accessible spaces.