



POWHATAN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Inspiring · Empowering · Innovating

October 29, 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,

Attached is an accessibility report prepared in accordance with the requirements of HB 2278 for Powhatan County Public Schools.

The Division Contact for this report is:
Tom Sulzer, Director of Facilities
Powhatan County Public Schools
4290 Anderson Highway
Powhatan, Virginia 23139

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Teigen, PhD
Superintendent

Pocahontas Landmark Center

4290 Anderson Highway • Powhatan, Virginia 23139 • 804-598-5700 • www.powhatan.k12.va.us
Division Superintendent • Beth N. Teigen, Ph.D.



POWHATAN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Inspiring · Empowering · Innovating

Powhatan County Public Schools - HB2278 Accessibility Report

Executive Summary

In accordance with Virginia House Bill 2278 (2025), Powhatan County Public Schools (PCPS) completed a comprehensive review of the physical accessibility of all school buildings and grounds for individuals with disabilities. As required, this review addresses: (i) physical accessibility challenges in school buildings and grounds; (ii) challenges in access to programming and support; (iii) the plan to eliminate barriers; and (iv) how state agencies can assist.

This report affirms that:

1. PCPS facilities were constructed in compliance with the building codes in effect at the time of their original construction.
2. All subsequent new construction, 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. PCPS has annual processes that support our commitment to ongoing review and Improvement.

Methodology of Review

PCPS conducted a comprehensive, facility review of all schools, including grounds and athletic complexes. Our review was guided by the methodology of the U.S. Government Accountability Office's June 2020 report (GAO-20-448), "K-12 EDUCATION: School Districts Need Better Information to Improve Physical Accessibility of School Facilities," as recommended by the legislation.

In addition to this present-day review, a Facilities Study completed in 2023 by Dewberry Engineers was taken into consideration. This study was focused on major mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, but also included items like casework and furniture. Additionally, PCPS reflected on the feedback from its annual internal safety walkthroughs, particularly the most recent ones conducted in April 2025. Lastly, we worked with several key stakeholders including school administration, facilities staff, and members of the special education department to ensure compliance with:

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 for Accessible Design.*

We assessed 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 applicable state and federal codes in effect at the time of construction.

Pocahontas Landmark Center

4290 Anderson Highway • Powhatan, Virginia 23139 • 804-598-5700 • www.powhatan.k12.va.us

Division Superintendent • Beth N. Teigen, Ph.D.



POWHATAN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Inspiring · Empowering · Innovating

Summary of Findings

After our review, PCPS confirms that our facilities meet the building codes that applied at the time of their original construction. In addition, all later new renovations have been carried out in accordance with the Virginia USBC and ADA standards in place at the time of each project.

Aligned with HB2278's intent to assess present conditions rather than only historical compliance, we recognize that our buildings were designed to meet the requirements in place at the time of their original construction, and that subsequent improvements have aimed to satisfy applicable code and ADA provisions. This planning assessment also identifies opportunities to further strengthen accessibility for students, staff, families, and visitors.

Proactive Accessibility Action Plan

The school division integrates ongoing accessibility improvements into its annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process. Each year, this process assesses facilities with a focus on removing barriers that limit participation in school programs and activities for individuals with disabilities. The findings guide CIP planning and help prioritize projects for funding recommendations.

Inputs to the Annual CIP

- Administrator Feedback: School-based requests often are the most timely and reflective of the current needs
- Facilities Department Assessments: Building conditions and barrier identification
- Capital Needs: Lifecycle planning, project bundling, and cost analysis
- Security Considerations: Circulation, egress, and operational constraints

Screening & Prioritization

- Evaluate safety, accessibility, impact on students and staff, feasibility, and funding alignment
- Develop preliminary project scopes and order-of-magnitude cost estimates for CIP Review

PCPS updates this planning framework annually as part of the CIP cycle to incorporate current conditions, stakeholder feedback, and available resources.

Conclusion

Powhatan County Public Schools remain dedicated to fostering safe, inclusive, and accessible learning environments for every student. This report verifies our adherence to all relevant codes and presents a plan for ongoing improvements. To fulfill the objectives of HB2278 and guarantee access for all, PCPS respectfully seeks targeted support from the Virginia General Assembly. Sustainable advancement depends on pairing new requirements with the resources needed to meet them, avoiding unfunded mandates. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with state agencies to enhance accessibility throughout every public school in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Pocahontas Landmark Center

4290 Anderson Highway • Powhatan, Virginia 23139 • 804-598-5700 • www.powhatan.k12.va.us

Division Superintendent • Beth N. Teigen, Ph.D.



POWHATAN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Inspiring · Empowering · Innovating

Summary of Walkthroughs

Checklist: Physical Accessibility in K-12 School Facilities (Based on GAO-20-448)

1. Baseline / Assessment

Has the district conducted a **physical accessibility evaluation** of its school facilities (either as part of a facilities condition assessment or a standalone audit)? **Yes**

If yes, when was the last evaluation done (within the last 10 years)? **2023**

Does the district maintain a **transition plan** or roadmap to correct identified barriers? **No**

Are the evaluations aligned with the **2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design** (or applicable standards for building/alteration dates)? **Yes**

For each school, have **entrance, interior, and recreational areas** been reviewed for accessibility barriers? **Yes**

Notes: **A Facility Study was conducted by Dewberry Engineers in 2023. The Safety Team completes annual walkthroughs, most recently in April 2025. Facilities staff, administration, and staff from the special education department provide both formal and informal feedback throughout the year for immediate improvement as well as consideration for the CIP.**

2. Entrance / Exterior / Access Routes

Accessible parking spaces present, properly signed, and van-accessible where required **Yes**

Accessible route from parking / drop-off to main entrance (ramps, sidewalks, curb cuts) **PHS staff lot has wheelchair accessible parking. Ramps to get to the sidewalk exist. A large light pole in the middle of the sidewalk is a barrier. Other handicap parking options are available for staff and visitors.**

Ramps are within slope/level-change thresholds (no abrupt changes > ½ inch, cross slope, running slope limits) **Yes**

Directional signage to accessible entrances (with braille/raised characters as appropriate) **See below.**

Main entrance vestibules / doors allow adequate maneuvering room (especially for wheelchair users) **Yes**

Exterior door hardware is accessible (operable with one hand, no tight grasping, pinching, or twisting)

Notes: **All schools have curbs that have shifted over time resulting in changes of height greater than ½ inch. These are marked with paint and are noted for improvement / repair. Signage for accessible entrances would be beneficial, but all main entrances are handicap accessible as designed.**

Pocahontas Landmark Center

4290 Anderson Highway • Powhatan, Virginia 23139 • 804-598-5700 • www.powhatan.k12.va.us

Division Superintendent • Beth N. Teigen, Ph.D.



POWHATAN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Inspiring · Empowering · Innovating

3. Main Office / Security / Check-in Areas

Visitor check-in counters include a portion no higher than 36 inches for accessibility **PHS counter is greater than 36"**

Automatic door openers (if present) are operable and maintained (not deactivated) **Yes**

No protruding objects (like fire extinguishers, drinking fountains) intrude into circulation paths **None noted**

Security features (doors, vestibules) do not unduly impede accessibility (e.g. heavy doors, narrow spaces) **Correct**

Notes: **The PHS front counter is greater than 36". Walkways exist on either side of the counter allowing for accessibility. The PLC counter is greater than 36". One walkway exists for accessibility.**

4. Interior / Doorways / Corridors

Doorways meet minimum clear width (e.g. 32 inches clear) where required **Yes**

Interior doors require ≤ 5 lb of force (for nonfire doors) where feasible **Yes**

Door hardware (lever handles, accessible design) present and functional **Yes. Certain doors at Powhatan Elementary and the PLC have round handles.**

Doors / signage include braille / raised characters where appropriate **Powhatan Elementary does not have braille signs.**

Circulation paths (aisles, between desks, bookshelves) are wide (e.g. ≥ 36 inches where needed) **Yes**

Temporary barriers (furniture, trash bins, containers) are not blocking accessible routes **Yes**

Notes: **Each school has rooms with movable furniture that would allow for accessible routes. No fixed furniture exists that would limit access into / through a room.**

5. Restrooms

Restrooms (including "accessible" stalls) reviewed for barriers (e.g. sink height, exposed pipes, reach ranges) **Yes. Bathrooms exist at every school with accessible stalls.**

Accessible restroom signage includes braille/raised characters **Not at Powhatan Elementary**

Exposed pipes under sinks are insulated or configured to protect from contact (burn risk) **Some schools have insulation that has fallen and needs to be replaced or reinstalled.**

Soap dispensers, hand dryers, toilet paper dispensers are within reachable heights for wheelchair users **Yes**

Turning radius, grab bars, clear floor space, approach paths in stalls meet standards **Yes**

Notes: **In the elementary schools, most classroom bathrooms are not handicap accessible. However, each elementary school has multiple restrooms that are handicap accessible.**

Pocahontas Landmark Center

4290 Anderson Highway • Powhatan, Virginia 23139 • 804-598-5700 • www.powhatan.k12.va.us

Division Superintendent • Beth N. Teigen, Ph.D.



POWHATAN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Inspiring · Empowering · Innovating

6. Academic / Instructional Spaces

Classrooms, labs, libraries / media centers evaluated for accessible layout, paths, and reach ranges **Yes**

Science labs, media rooms, etc. have adjustable work surfaces or alternative accommodations **Yes. At PHS, some science labs do not have adjustable work surfaces built in the casework. Adjustable surfaces can be brought in as needed.**

Furniture is arranged so wheelchair users can navigate (aisles wide enough) **As needed**

Adequate accessible seating in instructional / lecture / presentation settings **Yes**

Notes: **PHS has various CTE offerings. Some spaces are more accessible than others due to larger equipment.**

7. Auditoriums, Stages, and Performance Spaces

Accessible routes to auditorium entrances (ramps, lifts) are provided **Yes**

Wheelchair-accessible seating is integrated, with companion seating and unobstructed lines of sight **Integrated only at PHS. All other schools build their performance spaces as needed.**

Stage access (ramps or platform lifts) available and operable independently where required.

PocES has a lift that is inoperable. A plan exists to bring it back online.

Transfer areas or alternative arrangements for stage access **Yes**

Notes:

8. Recreational Areas, Playgrounds, and Athletic Facilities

Ramps, walkways, and surfaces in stadiums, fields, athletic areas are within slope and surface tolerances **No**

Accessible seating and routes in stadiums / bleachers **PHS - Yes. PMS - No.**

Playgrounds have stable, firm surfaces (rather than loose mulch, grass, sand) in accessible routes **No**

Accessible routes to play equipment, inclusive play features where feasible **No.**

Notes: **Not all ramps and walkways at PMS, PocES, FRES, and PowES are within the slope and surface tolerances. PMS has inaccessible bleachers; however, these are not utilized by the school. All playgrounds use mulch. Several of the playgrounds have accessible mats that make navigation easier. PowES playground areas have multiple inaccessible locations.**

9. Sensory / Environmental Considerations

Evaluate lighting and acoustics (for students with sensory processing disabilities) **Yes**

Consider the inclusion of sensory rooms or quiet spaces with muted lighting and sound mitigation **Yes**

Pocahontas Landmark Center

4290 Anderson Highway • Powhatan, Virginia 23139 • 804-598-5700 • www.powhatan.k12.va.us

Division Superintendent • Beth N. Teigen, Ph.D.



POWHATAN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Inspiring · Empowering · Innovating

10. Planning, Funding & Prioritization

Does the district have a multi-year plan for accessibility improvements (3-year horizon, or more)?

No. We will be developing one.

Are accessibility improvements included as part of broader capital or renovation projects? **Yes**

Is there a mechanism for minor, quick fixes (e.g. ramp over curb, door hardware change) independent of large projects? **Yes**

Are funding sources identified (local, state, federal) and budgeted for accessibility work? **No**

Has the district evaluated trade-offs or tensions between security / safety upgrades and accessibility, and designed solutions to avoid impairing access? **Yes**

11. Technical Assistance, Guidance & Coordination

Has the district or state engaged with DOJ, Department of Education, or disability technical assistance providers for guidance on accessibility in schools? **No**

Are staff aware of ADA / Section 504 obligations and accessibility standards? **Yes**

Does the district have a point of contact or accessibility coordinator? **Yes, the Director of Facilities**

Is there a feedback or complaint mechanism for stakeholders (students, families, staff) to report access issues? **Yes**

12. Monitoring & Maintenance

Are accessibility features (ramps, doors, lifts, signage) regularly checked, maintained, and repaired? **Yes**

Are temporary barriers (e.g. stored objects) routinely cleared from accessible paths? **Yes**

Are modifications or renovations reviewed for their impact on accessibility (i.e. “does this change break something else”)? **Yes**

13. Documentation & Reporting

Inventory of barriers and planned improvements is documented and updated **Developing**

Transition plan or roadmap is reported to relevant stakeholders (school board, public) **Developing**

Reports or audits track progress, delays, challenges **Yes**

Community / parent / disability-advocate input is incorporated into planning **As received**

Pocahontas Landmark Center

4290 Anderson Highway • Powhatan, Virginia 23139 • 804-598-5700 • www.powhatan.k12.va.us

Division Superintendent • Beth N. Teigen, Ph.D.