

# HENRICO COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DR. AMY E. CASHWELL  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS



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October 24, 2025

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

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

Dear Senator Hashmi and Delegate Rasoul:

Henrico County Public Schools respectfully submits its Report on Accessibility Findings and Recommendations as required by House Bill 2278.

The Division Contact for this report is:

Leonard Pritchard, Chief of Operations  
Henrico County Public Schools  
406 Dabbs House Road  
Henrico, VA 23223

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy E. Cashwell".

Amy E. Cashwell, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

Enclosure

## ***Henrico County Public Schools – HB2278 Accessibility Report***

In accordance with House Bill 2278 (2025), Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) completed a 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 supports; (iii) the plan to eliminate barriers; and (iv) how state agencies can assist.

This report affirms that:

1. HCPS facilities were constructed in compliance with the 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. HCPS has active annual processes that support ongoing ADA accessibility review and improvement.

### **Methodology of Review:**

HCPS conducted a review of our school facilities, including grounds and athletic components. This 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. HCPS also consulted with key stakeholders, design professionals, and Facilities staff 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 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.

### **Findings:**

HCPS has 73 school facilities encompassing more than 7.6 million square feet. We have nine high schools, twelve middle schools, forty-six elementary schools, and six program centers. Our schools were built between 1925 and 2021 with an overall average age of approximately 52 years. Of our schools built prior to 1990, all but ten of them have gone through comprehensive building renovations. These ten are in the 10-year capital improvement planning for either comprehensive renovations or possible rebuilds. Our

remaining schools were built either following the published 1991 standards or the revised 2010 standards and should meet full compliance.

In 2006/2007, HCPS worked with a third-party consultant to review a portion of our older facilities for targeted ADA improvements. This was funded through the 2000 Bond Referendum. The survey produced a listing of potential projects, some of which were addressed at that time with the referendum funding. The projects included automatic door openers (generally at office entrances), accessible drinking fountains, handrails, portable wheelchair lifts, ramps and stairs, accessible parking, signage, window a/c unit protection (along sidewalks of campus-style classrooms), toilet room access, and grab bars. In addition to building improvements, the HCPS Facilities Department began building adaptive furniture components in-house to serve the needs of our students with disabilities. This in-house program allows HCPS to meet both general and specific needs of our exceptional education learners.

In 2014, Henrico County passed a Meals Tax program, which provided an additional source of Capital revenue for HCPS to utilize each year. This program targets deferred maintenance projects, which include various types of building work. Many of these projects incorporate upgrades to ADA accessibility in our existing buildings. The projects can include bathroom renovations, serving line replacements, hardware replacements, and parking improvements, just to name a few.

In 2018, HCPS, along with Henrico County, made the decision to begin replacing some of our aging school buildings rather than only performing comprehensive renovations. The accessibility of an existing school and its ability to be renovated into a fully accessible structure are two of the major consideration points in relation to whether a school gets renovated or rebuilt. We currently have a middle school rebuild that was determined to be a replacement project, largely based on not being able to bring the building into full ADA accessibility without extensive physical alterations, which created a loss of educational space.

Based on our review, HCPS asserts that our facilities comply with the applicable building codes from their respective construction dates. Furthermore, consistent with the intent of HB2278 to look beyond historical compliance and consider current conditions, all subsequent alterations or additions will be completed in adherence to the applicable Virginia USBC and ADA standards. This review documents the current plans and potential opportunities to enhance further accessibility for students, staff, families, and visitors.

#### Action Plan:

HCPS will engage in the ongoing efforts to improve accessibility in our schools and on the school sites. Accessibility will continue to be a key consideration in existing processes for developing the annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Each year, maintenance and CIP processes will continue to evaluate facilities, including consideration of accessibility challenges and barriers affecting students' ability to fully participate in school activities

and programs. These processes inform the capital planning team of potential projects to be included in funding recommendations.

HCPS utilizes the following considerations for annual CIP development.

- Administrator requests (program access concerns, site-level observations)
- Facilities evaluations (work order tracking, facility condition, barrier observations)
- Capital needs (lifecycle, scope bundling, cost considerations)
- Safety/Security evaluations (circulation, egress, operational constraints)

HCPS utilizes the following methods for screening and prioritizing potential projects.

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

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

Closing:

Henrico County Public Schools is committed to all of our students and staff having safe, welcoming, innovative, and accessible learning environments. This report affirms our past and current compliance with applicable codes. It also outlines our current action plans for continued assessment and improvement in ADA accessibility.

While incorporating accessibility requirements into new construction projects is a relatively seamless process, retrofitting older building architecture can be very invasive and costly. Sustainable progress requires dedicated resources to provide continued improvements to building amenities, programming, and student supports. While HCPS has leveraged different components of the capital planning towards this work, additional funding can always be utilized and is the primary extent to which state agencies can assist with this work. We look forward to partnering with state agencies to advance accessibility to the fullest extent across all schools.

The Division Contact for this report and any questions is:

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