



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:

Lynchburg City Schools respectfully submits its Report on Accessibility Findings and Recommendations as required by HB-2278.

The division's contact for this report is:

Mr. Travis Marshall, Chief Operations Officer
Lynchburg City Schools
915 Court Street
Lynchburg VA 24504

Respectfully,

Dr. Kristy N. Somerville-Midgette
Superintendent
Lynchburg City Schools

HB 2278 Accessibility Review Report – Lynchburg City Schools

Dear Committee Chairs:

In accordance with the requirements of House Bill 2278, Lynchburg City Schools (LCS) has conducted a division-wide review of accessibility across all elementary, middle, and high schools. This review focused on identifying physical barriers that may affect individuals with disabilities and assessing how our facilities support full participation in all aspects of school life. LCS understands that the intent of House Bill 2278 is to go beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), ensuring that all students have equitable access to educational opportunities and that facilities reflect a commitment to inclusion.

Review Process and Findings

LCS completed an internal review led jointly by the Departments of Facilities and Special Education, with support from school administrators and building-level staff. The review examined building entrances, classroom configurations, restrooms, common areas, playgrounds, and outdoor learning and athletic spaces. Given the time constraints of this report and the number of schools within the division, the most comprehensive reviews were conducted at facilities constructed prior to the passage of the ADA, as these buildings are most likely to have residual accessibility challenges.

Lynchburg City Schools newer and recently renovated facilities—such as Heritage High School and Sandusky Middle School—meet or exceed accessibility expectations outlined in the June 2020 Government Accountability Office report (GAO-20-448). However, several older schools, designed before the adoption of modern accessibility standards, continue to present challenges related to ramps, stage access, restrooms, and playground inclusivity. These findings are consistent with those of many other Virginia school divisions with aging infrastructure.

The review also included an assessment of site accessibility, including walkways, parking areas, and outdoor access routes. While most campuses provide adequate accessibility from parking areas and main entrances, a few sites would benefit from additional paved paths or improved grades to ensure that students and staff with mobility needs can reach exterior learning areas and athletic fields with ease.

Progress to Date

Over the past decade, LCS has made steady progress in improving accessibility through major

capital projects and targeted facility upgrades. Recent school replacements—such as Heritage High School and Sandusky Middle School—were designed with universal access in mind, providing inclusive environments that support all learners. Accessibility improvements have also been incorporated into renovations at several of the schools including E. C. Glass High School, T. C. Miller Academy, and the Laurel Regional Program.

LCS has prioritized the installation of lifts, accessible restrooms, and improved routes to playgrounds and outdoor areas as needs have been identified. Where feasible, portable classrooms have been phased out or renovated to ensure accessible learning environments for all students.

Future Steps

While this internal review has provided valuable information for ongoing maintenance and capital planning, LCS recognizes the importance of continuous evaluation to identify and address remaining accessibility barriers. The division plans to develop a formal accessibility audit schedule, aligned with the guidance from GAO-20-448, and may seek to partner with an external firm for comprehensive assessments. These audits will be used to guide future facility improvements and ensure that accessibility remains central to capital planning and renovation priorities.

In the coming years, LCS will continue to prioritize accessibility in planned renovation and replacement projects, including improvements to older elementary schools, the Community Development project for Dunbar Middle School, and the modernization of athletic and outdoor learning spaces across the division. Collaboration among the Departments of Facilities and Special Education will remain a cornerstone of this effort to ensure that accessibility considerations are embedded in every stage of project design and implementation.

State Support

LCS appreciates the Virginia General Assembly's leadership in advancing accessibility and equity in public education. While the division continues to make steady progress through local resources and partnerships, state-level funding support remains essential to accelerate the pace of improvements, particularly in aging facilities that predate current design standards. Targeted funding for accessibility upgrades would enable school divisions like ours to address remaining barriers more swiftly and comprehensively while leveraging existing local expertise in architecture and construction.

Conclusion

Lynchburg City Schools remains committed to ensuring that every student, staff member, and community visitor experiences our schools as safe, inclusive, and accessible environments. Accessibility reflects our division's core belief that every child — by name and by need — deserves equitable access to educational opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration of this report and for your continued support of Virginia's public schools. LCS stands ready to collaborate with the Commonwealth and local partners to ensure that all schools meet both the letter and spirit of accessibility standards.