



Ghazala F. Hashmi <senatorhashmi@senate.virginia.gov>

HB 2278 Report

1 message

Scott Worner <sworner@mcpsweb.org>

Fri, Oct 31, 2025 at 12:41 PM

To: senatorhashmi@senate.virginia.gov, Sam Rasoul <DeISRasoul@house.virginia.gov>

Cc: Christy Peffer <cpeffer@mcpsweb.org>, Erin Fleming <efleming@mcpsweb.org>, Brian Dalton <bdalton@mcpsweb.org>

Senator Hashmi,
Delegate Rasoul,

I was not able to find a form, format, or official survey to address the requirements set forth in Virginia House Bill 2278, therefore, I am reporting (in narrative form) directly to you as the November 1 deadline is tomorrow (Saturday).

I will provide our response to each of the four parameters of the bill below. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Many thanks!

HB2278

[School boards/division superintendent; review of accessibility challenges in local school division.](#)

School boards or division superintendents; review accessibility challenges in the local school division; report.

Requires each school board or division superintendent, in consultation with such other stakeholders as it deems appropriate, to review the extent to which:

(i) public elementary and secondary school buildings and grounds in the local school division present physical accessibility challenges and barriers for individuals with disabilities, including challenges and barriers that may prevent such individuals from fully participating in school activities;

[Response: At this time all of our school buildings are handicapped accessible and compliant with ADA requirements. * \(see iii, below - for exception\)](#)

(ii) challenges in access to programming and supports exist for individuals with disabilities at public elementary and secondary schools in the local school division;

[Response: Mecklenburg County Public Schools has no limitations, nor barriers to programming for any of our individuals with disabilities.](#)

(iii) such schools have begun or plan to address and eliminate all such challenges and barriers;

[We have only one facility that is a two-story building \(Mecklenburg County High & Middle School Complex - built 2022\). Due to recent changes in fire marshal regulations, elevators do not function when an emergency \(fire/smoke related\) occurs. This potentially creates issues for wheelchair bound, or medically fragile students present on the second floor \(currently we have no such students\). However, we wish to be proactive. According to Virginia Code § 22.1-1374 this mandates that public schools and school divisions develop evacuation plans for students with mobility impairments. The law requires that these plans maximize the opportunity for these students to evacuate school buildings alongside their non-mobility-impaired peers during emergencies. The Key provisions of the statute are:](#)

[Purpose: The statute aims to improve the safety and inclusiveness of school emergency plans for students with mobility impairments.](#)

Application: The requirement applies to all school building evacuation plans, policies, and protocols at both the school division and individual school level.

Scope: The law covers elementary and secondary public schools.

Integration: The provisions must be integrated into any existing division-wide or school-specific plan.

Effective date: This section was added to the Code of Virginia in 2024 and became effective on July 1, 2024.

Background and impact

Before this law was passed, some schools did not have effective emergency plans for students with mobility impairments, often requiring them to "shelter in place" until first responders arrived. This was seen as unsafe and could cause stress and fear for the students.

With the passage of this law, public schools in Virginia must: a) Revise existing plans, policies, and protocols; b) Invest in necessary equipment to assist with evacuations; c) Train staff on the updated procedures.

...We are addressing this issue now by utilizing our "pass through" hall from the middle school side to the high school side, to utilize the operating elevator should an emergency take place on only one side of the COMPLEX.

(iv) state agencies can assist such schools to address and eliminate all such challenges and barriers and fully comply with all applicable state and federal laws.

Response: Funding for ancillary stairwell chair lifts (with a battery backup) for our middle and high school complex would be approximately \$250,000+ (based on Engineering & Consultant Services (Louis Sikovesk, P.E.) 2025 costs.

The bill requires each school board or division superintendent to report the findings of such review and any associated recommendations to the Chairs of the Senate Committee on Education and Health and the House Committee on Education no later than November 1, 2025.



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