

SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

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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 Senate Education and Health Committee
201 North 9th Street
Virginia General Assembly Building
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Senator Hasmi and Delegate Rasoul,

Smyth County Public Schools respectfully submits its Report on Accessibility Findings and Recommendations as required by HB 2278.

The Division Contact for this report is:
Mr. Jesse Morris, Director of Facilities and Maintenance
121 Bagley Circle, Suite 300
Marion, Va. 24354
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Smyth County Public Schools – HB 2278 Accessibility Report Executive Summary

In accordance with Virginia House Bill 2278 (2025), Smyth County Schools has 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 building 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:

1. All Smyth County School buildings were originally built in accordance with the construction codes applicable at the time of erection.
2. Every renovation or expansion completed thereafter has adhered to the prevailing Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

3. Smyth County Schools maintains yearly protocols to sustain ongoing evaluation and enhancement of accessibility.

Review Approach

Smyth County Schools performs regular inspections of every school site, encompassing athletic fields and outdoor spaces. Smyth County Schools considers the framework outlined in the U.S. Government Accountability Office report (GAO-20-448), “K-12 Education: School Districts Need Better Information to Improve Physical Accessibility of School Facilities,” as suggested by the legislation. We also engage relevant parties, including the special education team, architectural consultants, and maintenance personnel, to achieve compliance with the following standards:

1. **Current Regulations:** Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC), Virginia Construction Code (VCC), Virginia Existing Building Code (VEBC), and ICC A117.1, alongside the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. All post-construction modifications are measured against these contemporary criteria.
2. **Original Standards:** Buildings and their initial elements met the Virginia USBC and other pertinent state and federal requirements in force when first constructed, supplemented by the Virginia Maintenance Code (VMC) where relevant.

Key Observations

Based on our review, Smyth County Schools affirms that our facilities comply with the relevant building codes from their respective construction dates. Furthermore, all subsequent alterations or additions have been completed in adherence to the Virginia USBC and ADA standards in effect at their time of work. A few years ago there were significant improvements and renovations to address some of the non-compliance issues.

Consistent with HB 2278's purpose to look beyond historical compliance and consider current conditions, our facilities were constructed according to the standards in effect at the time, and subsequent alterations are intended to comply with applicable code and ADA requirements. This planning review documents potential opportunities to enhance further accessibility for students, staff, families, and visitors.

Forward-Looking Improvement Plan

Smyth County Schools will possibly advance accessibility by:

1. Possible Facilities Review by an outside Architect and Engineering firm
2. Possible new construction of two new gyms at two of high schools
3. Possible Capitol Improvement Plan revamped
4. Possible band room renovations

Closing Remarks

Smyth County Public Schools is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and accessible learning environment and athletic facilities for all of students and stakeholders. This report confirms our compliance with HB 2278 and plans for continued improvement.

To realize the objectives of HB 2278 and guarantee equitable access, Smyth County Schools respectfully seeks:

- **Legislative Funding Support:** Appropriations from the Virginia General Assembly would enable essential capital upgrades that enhance accessibility for all stakeholders.

We appreciate the support and look forward to working with everyone across different state agencies to improve our facilities and be ADA compliant. We look forward to working with all stakeholders to have safe, compliant, and premium facilities and campuses.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brad B. Haga,
Superintendent of Smyth County Schools