



Future Primum A Nobis
The Future Begins with Us

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

Dear Senator Hasmi and Delegate Rasoul,

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

This report is being submitted on under the direction of:

G. Wesley Poole, Ed.D
Superintendent
Wythe County Public Schools

Respectfully,

Russell Street, Ed.D
Director of Finance & Operations

Wythe County Public Schools – HB 2278 Accessibility Report Executive Summary

Pursuant to Virginia House Bill 2278 (2025), Wythe County Public Schools (WCPS) conducts an ongoing evaluation of physical accessibility across all school campuses and surrounding areas for persons with disabilities. The assessment covers: (i) barriers within buildings and on grounds; (ii) obstacles to program participation and support services; (iii) a strategy for removing identified impediments; and (iv) ways state entities can provide support.

Key affirmations from this review include:

1. All WCPS 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. WCPS maintains yearly protocols to sustain ongoing evaluation and enhancement of accessibility.

Review Approach

WCPS performs regular inspections of every school site, encompassing athletic fields and outdoor spaces. WCPS 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

Our evaluation confirms that WCPS facilities satisfy the building codes in effect during their initial construction. All later modifications and additions likewise understood to conform to the USBC and ADA guidelines applicable at the time of those projects.

In keeping with HB 2278’s emphasis on present-day usability rather than solely historical compliance, WCPS acknowledges that structures built to earlier standards may present opportunities for further improvement. This report highlights potential enhancements to better serve students, employees, parents, and community members.

Forward-Looking Improvement Plan

WCPS implements the following ongoing initiatives to advance accessibility:

- **Comprehensive Facility Study:** WCPS has conferred with ZMM Architects and Engineers to perform a detailed facility assessment for our campuses upon request.
- **Capital Improvement Planning (CIP):** The CIP cycle systematically reviews infrastructure needs, factoring in accessibility issues that affect full participation in educational and extracurricular activities. This informs project prioritization and funding proposals.

Annual CIP Inputs Include

- Site-level administrator feedback on program access and observed barriers
- Facilities staff assessments of physical condition and accessibility constraints
- Lifecycle replacement needs, project bundling, and cost estimates
- Security reviews addressing circulation, emergency egress, and operational flow

Project Screening & Ranking

Projects are evaluated based on safety, accessibility impact, effects on students and staff, feasibility, and alignment with available funding. Preliminary scopes and rough-order-of-magnitude costs are developed for CIP deliberation.

WCPS revisits and refines this planning structure within each CIP cycle to incorporate updated conditions, stakeholder perspectives, and resource availability.

Closing Remarks

Wythe County Public Schools remains dedicated to fostering a secure, welcoming, and fully accessible environment for every learner and community member. This submission verifies our adherence to applicable codes while detailing a roadmap for continued progress.

To realize the objectives of HB 2278 and guarantee equitable access, WCPS respectfully seeks:

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

Meaningful, lasting advancement necessitates resources to match new statutory expectations and prevent unfunded mandates. We eagerly anticipate collaboration with state agencies to elevate accessibility standards throughout Virginia's public schools.