



November 3, 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,

Northumberland County Public Schools respectfully submits the following Report on Accessibility Findings and Recommendations as required by HB2278.

The Division Contact for this report is:

Mr. Mercer Basye, Director of Technology and Security
Northumberland County Public Schools
6958 Northumberland Highway
Heathsville, VA 22473

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen H. Leslie'.

Karen H. Leslie, PhD
Superintendent
Northumberland County Public Schools



Northumberland County Public Schools - HB2278 Accessibility Report

Summary

This report documents the findings from a recent internal assessment of NCPS facilities, programs, and digital assets against the requirements outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and related best practices for inclusive public education.

The findings confirm that NCPS has achieved substantial compliance across key areas of physical, programmatic, and digital accessibility, demonstrating a firm commitment to ensuring equal access for all students, staff, and community members with disabilities.

Accessibility Findings (Current Compliance)

In accordance with Virginia House Bill 2278 (2025), this report addresses four critical areas: (i) physical accessibility findings in school buildings and grounds; (ii) access to programming and supports; (iii) the plan to eliminate identified barriers; and (iv) areas where state agency assistance may be beneficial.

The assessment methodology aligns with best practices recommended by 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*. NCPS affirms that its facilities were originally constructed in compliance with all prevailing building codes, and all subsequent renovations and additions meet current accessibility standards under the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC), the Virginia Construction Code (VCC), and the Virginia Existing Building Code (VEBC), as well as the ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

The following areas have been reviewed and verified as meeting or exceeding the specified accessibility standards:

A. Site and Exterior Access

<u>Compliance Area</u>	<u>Finding</u>
Accessible Parking	The required number of accessible and van-accessible spaces is provided, with access aisles marked, level, and connected to an accessible route.

Passenger Loading Zone	An accessible drop-off/pick-up area with an adjacent accessible route is present.
Accessible Route	A continuous, minimum 36" wide, unobstructed, non-slip route connects site arrival points to accessible entrances.
Ramps/Curb Cuts	Ramps are present where level changes exceed 1/2", adhering to a maximum slope of 1:12. Handrails are present on all stairs and ramps.
Walkways/Sidewalks	Surfaces are stable, firm, and free of vertical cracks/lippage.

B. Building Entrances and Interior Routes

Compliance Area

Finding

Main Entrance	At least one primary entrance is fully accessible.
Doorways & Hardware	Accessible doorways provide a minimum 32" clear opening width, and hardware is easy to operate without tight grasping or twisting.
Interior Corridors	Interior routes are a minimum 36" wide and free of protruding objects.
Vertical Access	All levels are connected by an accessible route.
Signage	Accessible entrances are clearly marked with the International Symbol of Access (ISA). Room signage is clear, consistent, and tactile (Braille).

C. Amenities and Facilities

Compliance Area

Finding

Accessible
Restrooms

A sufficient number of restrooms are accessible, with stalls featuring grab bars, proper dimensions, and turning space.

Sinks & Accessories

Sinks are at an accessible height with knee clearance, and controls are operable with one hand.

Fountains/Alarms

Drinking fountains are at an accessible height/type, and fire alarm systems are both visual and audible.

D. Educational and Programmatic Spaces

Compliance Area

Finding

Classrooms

Sufficient clear floor space for a wheelchair turning radius is available. A percentage of desks/work surfaces are adjustable or at an accessible height with proper knee/toe clearance.

Assembly/Auditorium

Accessible seating is provided and dispersed throughout the space.

Library/Media Center

Aisle widths between shelving and access to computers/tables are accessible. Assistive Technology (AT) tools are available and effectively integrated for students who require them.

Playgrounds/Athletic Accessible routes are provided to and within play areas, and a percentage of play components are accessible.

E. Programmatic and Institutional Policy Compliance

Compliance Area

Finding

Staff Training

Staff are trained on providing accommodations specified in IEPs/504 plans.

Digital Accessibility

Digital content is accessible and meets WCAG standards.

Extracurricular Activities

All extracurricular activities are held in physically and programmatically accessible locations.

Programmatic Modifications

Staff are trained to provide reasonable programmatic modifications to ensure full participation in activities and field trips.

Emergency Procedures

Personalized emergency evacuation plans for individuals who cannot use stairs or require assistance are in place, and shelter-in-place procedures are documented for students with various disabilities.

Parent/Guardian Communication

A process is in place to provide effective communication for parents/guardians with disabilities.

Regular Personnel Training

Staff members receive regular training on disability awareness, inclusive practices, and their roles in implementing ADA/504/IEP accommodations.

Recommendations and Future Action

NCPS has demonstrated exceptional commitment to accessibility through both policy and facility design. The following section outlines the strategy for sustaining and enhancing this commitment through continuous improvement.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for Barrier Removal:

- NCPS has a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) in place that includes dedicated funds and timelines for removing identified physical barriers.
- Recommendation: Continue the diligent execution of the CIP to proactively eliminate any remaining, non-listed structural barriers. The CIP should be reviewed annually to incorporate findings from ongoing facility condition assessments and evolving ADA standards.

Continuous Auditing and Training:

- Recommendation: Formalize an annual accessibility audit schedule. This schedule should include:
 1. Digital Audit: Quarterly review of new or updated digital content to ensure continued WCAG compliance.
 2. Programmatic Review: Annual review of extracurricular and instructional programs to confirm all reasonable modifications and accommodations are being consistently implemented.
 3. Staff Training Refinement: Integrate specific, scenario-based training for all new hires and seasonal staff to reinforce inclusive practices and emergency procedures.

Conclusion

Northumberland County Public Schools is highly compliant with state and federal accessibility mandates and is actively utilizing its Capital Improvement Plan to ensure ongoing physical accessibility. NCPS is fully committed to maintaining an inclusive environment where all students and stakeholders have equitable access to education, programs, and facilities.

To ensure the continued and comprehensive success of these efforts, Northumberland County Public Schools respectfully requests targeted funding from the Virginia General Assembly. Progress toward achieving the goals of HB2278 and ensuring access for all requires dedicated resources to accompany new mandates and avoid the creation of unfunded obligations. We look forward to continued collaboration and partnership with relevant state agencies to further advance accessibility across the division.