

School Building

Accessibility means ensuring that the entire school environment—classrooms, library, playground, restrooms, cafeteria—are designed for every learner. This is a key condition for enabling students with physical, visual, auditory, and intellectual disabilities to navigate and learn independently. Utilizing a whole child approach to plan for students with visual impairment helps to confirm that everyone’s needs are addressed, including those of staff and students. Building teams can use the following components to guide discussions about planning to support environmental access.

- Read each component and indicate a Yes, No, or Unsure response.
- Take turns sharing observations and ideas.
- Note possible safety and accessibility problems.
- Suggest specific changes or supports that would help.
- Identify any additional components that need to be addressed.
- Document who will follow up and by when.

Universal Components

Table 1 Universal Components

Points	Yes	No	Unsure
1. Opportunities to get familiar with the campus before the start of the school year are made available.			
2. Signs to entrances are clear and accessible for non-visual users.			
3. Lighting throughout the building, including overhead and windows, can be adjusted throughout the day to meet student need.			
4. Stairwells are well marked.			
5. Safety plans (fire, tornado, lockdown, etc.) address how staff can provide assistance to students when necessary.			
6. The numbering and/or room identification system used in the building is clear and easy to follow.			
7. Landmarks that may be helpful for orienting to different spaces have been identified.			
8. Training for staff includes how to identify if a student needs help and opportunities to practice offering assistance.			
9. Training for building staff includes discussion about potential barriers or safety concerns to look out for in			

Points	Yes	No	Unsure
common areas of the building including restrooms, hallways, cafeteria, auditorium and main office.			
10. Building walkthroughs include assessing unnecessary clutter in hallways (e.g., bookbags, chairs, library carts), and protruding objects (e.g., doors ajar, fire extinguishers) to maintain safety.			

Targeted Components

Table 2 Targeted Components

1. The need for orientation & mobility training for the building has been determined.			
2. Signs throughout the building have accessible media for the student (i.e., high contrast, large print, accurate braille), including wall decorations.			
3. Restrooms are clearly marked and the student is aware of their locations throughout the building.			
4. Handwashing stations around the building including restrooms, classrooms, and common areas are easy to access.			
5. The numbering system has an understandable pattern to assist the student with orientation within the building.			
6. The student knows the most time efficient, accessible routes around campus.			
7. Stair edges are clearly marked for identification and safety.			
8. Staff training addresses considerations for working with a student with visual impairment, including how to provide human guide, and ways to support independence and choice-making.			
9. Staff have been informed of the importance of using descriptive language when communicating information.			
10. Clear points of contact for accessibility concerns have been determined and shared with the student and family for the purposes of self-advocacy.			
11. The student has opportunity to begin developing a mental map of the space prior to the start of the school year.			
12. Additional considerations, questions, concerns, and/or training required specific to the student have been noted in planning documents for follow up.			