



Press contact:

Pete Zeller
216.579.6100 ext. 2
email: pete@CunninghamBaron.com

School's Out; Time to Plan ADA Upgrades for Next Year

Automatic doors lead wish lists for improved accessibility

June 22, 2023—School is out for students, but the school year never stops for facility managers and administrators. Now is the time they start implementing facility upgrades for next year. Since 1977, new school construction as well as renovation to existing facilities must include accommodations for students with disabilities.

A patchwork of federal laws governs accessible school construction, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, passed in 1975.

The latter, now called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), was accompanied by federal funds and was the focal point of schools in serving children with disabilities. IDEA requires public schools to make available to all eligible children with disabilities a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their individual needs.

For students with mobility issues, these accommodations often include automatic doors at entrances and even key interior doorways. The [American Association of Automatic Door Manufacturers](#) reminds us that at least 60% of public pedestrian entrances for facilities are required to comply with ADA standards. Entrances can include the door, signage, security installations, the route to the entrance, and a communication system.

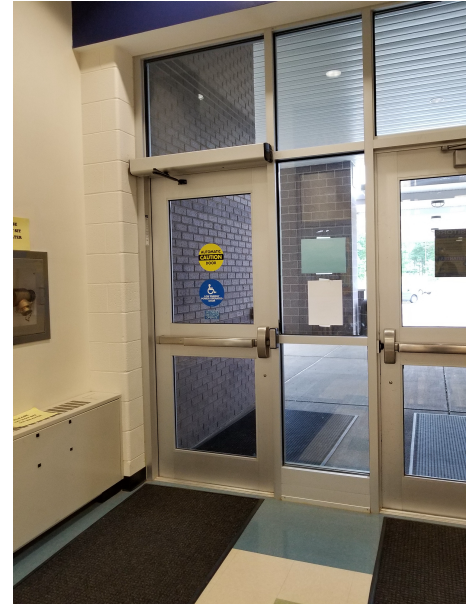
Note that the 60% figure is always rounded up. The significance of this is illustrated in this simplified example: If there are two public entry/exit doors for a facility, 60% of 2 is 1.2, so BOTH doors would have to comply.

How important are automatic doors to students with disabilities? So important that one Texas high school student with cerebral palsy raised \$87,000 to install them at Austin High School (see the story of that student, Archer Hadley, [here](#)). Facility managers have it within their power to support and improve the lives of students with disabilities. Whole communities can work together to champion inclusion and accessibility for all.

For more information about automatic doors, visit www.aaadm.com.

About AAADM

The American Association of Automatic Door Manufacturers (AAADM) is a trade association of



manufacturers of automatic pedestrian door systems. AAADM was founded in 1994 with the following mission: to increase awareness of automatic doors and accessibility needs; to increase education, training, and professionalism among installers and service providers; and to generally promote the safe use of automatic doors. Each year on March 19, AAADM celebrates National Automatic Door Day to raise awareness about the many benefits of automatic doors, including providing access to those with physical challenges and helping to prevent germs by eliminating the need to touch door handles. www.aaadm.com.

Image: ASSA ABLOY

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