

Modernizing Virginia's School Infrastructure Can't Wait

Virginia's public school buildings are aging, underfunded, and leaving students to learn in worsening conditions.

Why Virginia Needs Updated Schools Now

- Over half of Virginia's schools are over 50 years old, and the state has identified \$25 billion of backlog infrastructure needs in 2021.
- Virginia contributed \$1.25 billion for school infrastructure in the most recent budget for the next two years, a historic increase but likely not enough to meet the growing backlog in a typical year.
- Virginia's [oldest schools are in many of the state's poorest localities](#), where communities have the least ability to raise local revenue.
- [Updated air filtration systems are essential to mitigating the spread of COVID](#) in schools, and additional funding is needed to modernize all buildings.
- Many schools are [not ADA compliant](#) - preventing students with disabilities from fully engaging in safe and accessible public schooling.
- Investing in school infrastructure [will yield returns over the long-term](#), boost local economies with new construction jobs, and, as numerous studies conclude, lead to [improved student outcomes](#), school climate, [health, teacher effectiveness, and stronger teacher retention](#).

Virginia Is Neglecting Its Students' Learning Conditions

- The [state covered only 10%](#) of school infrastructure needs between 2009-2020, leaving localities with vastly different capacities to raise revenue to pay the rest. No student in a high-income state like Virginia should have to learn in a crumbling school, regardless of zip code.
- Virginia's contribution to school infrastructure has been among the lowest of any state in the country, and [every other neighboring state](#) and D.C. offer ongoing direct support to school divisions for infrastructure needs. Virginia should commit to a sustainable state support model.
- Aging school infrastructure is related to worse instruction for students, [negatively impacts student achievement](#), increased absenteeism, and increased dropout rates.
- Research has shown that poor infrastructure in rural schools [negatively affected student outcomes](#) more than teacher turnover and socioeconomic challenges.

Virginia Has the Resources To Bring Its Schools Into the 21st Century by:

- Implement the bipartisan Commission on Social Construction and Modernization [recommendations](#).
- Identify sustainable revenue streams that can fund school infrastructure in the billion-dollar range each budget cycle and work to reduce our infrastructure backlog.
- [Allow localities to hold referendums](#) to increase their own sales tax for school infrastructure.