

Richmond County Public Schools Budget Factors

The Schools Our Children Deserve

We all want our children to attend schools that are well-resourced and able to provide reliable transportation, nutritious meals, quality instruction, and essential health services. Since the pandemic, our roughly 1,000 students in Richmond face more challenges than ever, from staff shortages, drops in academic achievement, and additional mental health needs. When looking at our current local spending, it's clear our budget comes up short in meeting the most pressing challenges our students and schools face today. Richmond can step up to fund our schools at levels that meet our students' needs and better reflect our capacity and commitment to our children.



Budget

In the 2022-2023 school year, Richmond County spent \$12,308 per student, ranking us 126 out of 131 school divisions in the state.

Richmond has seen a drop in local per student spending of \$1,068 or 19% between the 2014-2015 and 2022-2023 school years (adjusted for inflation). The Northern Neck region increased local per pupil spending by 6% over this time. Compared to the regional average for local per student spending, Richmond spent a whopping \$1,010 less in the 2022-2023 school year. While Richmond had a strengthening economy over this time, its level of commitment and effort towards schools did not reflect this.



Capacity and Effort

Virtually every locality in the state spends beyond what the state requires it to match (referred to as Required Local Effort) because the state vastly underestimates what it actually costs to run schools. In aggregate, divisions spent 107% above the Required Local Effort, but Richmond County only spent 47%, which is 60 percentage points below the state average. Richmond would need to spend \$2,063,980 more annually to be at the average state percent above the Required Local Effort (this reflects the low level of effort the division puts into per pupil spending relative to the state).

Richmond County has capacity to do more to raise adequate revenue for its schools. The locality has a typical revenue capacity score according to the Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts, but does far less than most and has a lower level of fiscal stress than most localities. Richmond County's property tax effort is 12% below the average state rate.

A one penny property tax increase in Richmond County would raise approximately \$90,000 annually.



Outcomes

Many students lost significant ground on state academic achievement between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. Students in Richmond saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 19.5% and 54.1% in math - among the largest declines in the state. Yet further disparities exist, with math SOL pass rates dropping 83.5% for English Learners and 68.7% for economically disadvantaged students. Richmond must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



Staffing

Richmond had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$59,347 in the 2023-2024 school year, which is \$11,094 below the state average. With high salaries and lower cost of living in nearby communities, on top of a dwindling supply of graduates with teaching degrees, Richmond is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.