

Albemarle 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 13,000 students in Albemarle 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. Albemarle 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, Albemarle County spent \$17,460 per student, ranking us 23 out of 131 school divisions in the state. Yet, when adjusted for the high cost of living, the spending power drops to \$15,944 per student and Albemarle County ranks 33 out of Virginia's 131 school divisions.

Albemarle has seen an increase in local per student spending of \$1,810 or 16% between the 2014-2015 and 2022-2023 school years (adjusted for inflation).



Capacity and Effort

Virtually every division 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 in the Valley region spent 127% above the Required Local Effort, but Albemarle County spent 187%, which is 60 percentage points above the Valley regional average. *Data from 2021-22 school year when division last submitted to VDOE.

Albemarle County has capacity to do more to raise adequate revenue for its schools. The locality has one of the top revenue capacity scores according to the Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts and a low level of fiscal stress.

A one penny property tax increase in Albemarle County would raise approximately \$2,290,000 annually.



Outcomes

Many students lost significant ground on state academic achievement between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. Students in Albemarle saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 4.8% and 14.5% in math. Yet these total numbers mask worrisome disparities, with math SOL pass rates dropping 38.7% for English Learners and 31.0% for economically disadvantaged students. Albemarle must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



Staffing

The overall staffing vacancy rate was 3.6% as of October 2023, adding pressure for all staff to cover shortage areas.

Albemarle had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$61,079 in the 2021-2022 school year (most recent year it provided data to VDOE), which is \$9,362 below the state average. Adjusted for the relatively high cost of living in the locality, the average teacher salary drops to \$55,776. With high salaries and lower cost of living in nearby communities, on top of a dwindling supply of graduates with teaching degrees, Albemarle is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.