

Charles City 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 500 students in Charles City 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. Charles City 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, Charles City County spent \$20,224 per student, ranking us 10 out of 131 school divisions in the state. Yet, when adjusted for the high cost of living, the spending power drops to \$19,548 per student and Charles City County ranks 6 out of Virginia's 131 school divisions.

Charles City has seen an increase in local per student spending of \$2,440 or 30% between the 2014-2015 and 2022-2023 school years (adjusted for inflation).



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 Charles City County only spent 75%, which is 32 percentage points below the state average. Charles City would need to spend \$957,946 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).

Charles City 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. Charles City County's property tax effort is 12% below the average regional rate.

A one penny property tax increase in Charles City 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 Charles City saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 21.9% and 64.2% in math - among the largest declines in the state. Yet further disparities exist, with math SOL pass rates dropping 67.7% for economically disadvantaged students. Charles City must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



Staffing

The teacher vacancy rate in Charles City was 11.5% as of October 2023, 7.6 percentage points higher than the state average. The overall staffing vacancy rate was 9.2% as of October 2023, 4.3 percentage points above the state average, adding pressure for all staff to cover shortage areas.

Charles City had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$55,564 in the 2023-2024 school year, which is \$14,877 below the state average. Adjusted for the relatively high cost of living in the locality, the average teacher salary drops to \$53,707. With high salaries and lower cost of living in nearby communities, on top of a dwindling supply of graduates with teaching degrees, Charles City is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.