

# Charlottesville City 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 4,000 students in Charlottesville 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. Charlottesville 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, Charlottesville City spent \$18,708 per student, ranking us 15 out of 131 school divisions in the state. Yet, when adjusted for the high cost of living, the spending power drops to \$17,084 per student and Charlottesville City ranks 19 out of Virginia's 131 school divisions.

Charlottesville has seen a drop in local per student spending of \$1,993 or 14% between the 2014-2015 and 2022-2023 school years (adjusted for inflation). The Valley region decreased local per pupil spending by 3% over this time.



### 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 Charlottesville City spent 119%, which is 12 percentage points above the state average.

Charlottesville City has capacity to do more to raise adequate revenue for its schools. The locality has a relatively high revenue capacity according to the Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts. Charlottesville City's property tax effort is 11% below the average city rate.

A one penny property tax increase in Charlottesville City would raise approximately \$940,000 annually.



### Outcomes

Many students lost significant ground on state academic achievement between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. Students in Charlottesville saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 14.3% and 41.7% in math - among the largest declines in the state. Yet further disparities exist, with math SOL pass rates dropping 74.1% for English Learners and 62.5% for economically disadvantaged students. Charlottesville must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



### Staffing

The teacher vacancy rate in Charlottesville was 3.3% as of October 2023. The overall staffing vacancy rate was 5.4% as of October 2023, 0.5 percentage points above the state average, adding pressure for all staff to cover shortage areas.

Charlottesville had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$69,850 in the 2023-2024 school year, which is \$591 below the state average. Adjusted for the relatively high cost of living in the locality, the average teacher salary drops to \$63,786. With high salaries and lower cost of living in nearby communities, on top of a dwindling supply of graduates with teaching degrees, Charlottesville is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.