

Colonial Heights 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 3,000 students in Colonial Heights 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. Colonial Heights 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, Colonial Heights City spent \$15,496 per student, ranking us 41 out of 131 school divisions in the state.

Colonial Heights has seen a drop in local per student spending of \$944 or 10% between the 2014-2015 and 2022-2023 school years (adjusted for inflation). The Central Virginia region increased local per pupil spending by 5% 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 Colonial Heights City spent 138%, which is 31 percentage points above the state average.

Colonial Heights City 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.

A one penny property tax increase in Colonial Heights City would raise approximately \$200,000 annually.



Outcomes

Many students lost significant ground on state academic achievement between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. Students in Colonial Heights saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 15.8% and 37.3% in math - among the largest declines in the state. Yet further disparities exist, with math SOL pass rates dropping 57.5% for English Learners and 47.6% for economically disadvantaged students. Colonial Heights must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



Staffing

The teacher vacancy rate in Colonial Heights was 3.8% as of October 2023. The overall staffing vacancy rate was 3.5% as of October 2023, adding pressure for all staff to cover shortage areas.

Colonial Heights had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$66,172 in the 2023-2024 school year, which is \$4,269 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, Colonial Heights is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.