

# Franklin 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 6,000 students in Franklin 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. Franklin 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, Franklin County spent \$14,361 per student, ranking us 71 out of 131 school divisions in the state.

Franklin has seen a drop in local per student spending of \$217 or 4% between the 2014-2015 and 2022-2023 school years (adjusted for inflation). Compared to the regional average for local per student spending, Franklin only spent \$209 more in the 2022-2023 school year. While Franklin 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 Franklin County only spent 62%, which is 45 percentage points below the state average. Franklin would need to spend \$8,737,660 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).

Franklin County 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 and a low level of fiscal stress. Franklin County's property tax effort is 26% below the average regional rate.

A one penny property tax increase in Franklin County would raise approximately \$730,000 annually.



### Outcomes

Many students lost significant ground on state academic achievement between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. Students in Franklin saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 8.9% and 20.9% in math. Yet these total numbers mask worrisome disparities, with math SOL pass rates dropping 26.6% for economically disadvantaged students. Franklin must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



### Staffing

The teacher vacancy rate in Franklin was 2.8% as of October 2023. The overall staffing vacancy rate was 4.2% as of October 2023, adding pressure for all staff to cover shortage areas.

Franklin had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$51,181 in the 2023-2024 school year, which is \$19,260 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, Franklin is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.