

Galax 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 1,000 students in Galax 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. Galax 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, Galax City spent \$15,609 per student, ranking us 40 out of 131 school divisions in the state.

Galax has seen an increase in local per student spending of \$917 or 27% 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 Galax City only spent 88%, which is 19 percentage points below the state average. Galax would need to spend \$535,033 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).

Galax City has capacity to do more to raise adequate revenue for its schools. Galax City's property tax effort is 7% below the average city rate.

A one penny property tax increase in Galax City would raise approximately \$50,000 annually.



Outcomes

Many students lost significant ground on state academic achievement between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. Students in Galax saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 12.8% and 38.6% in math - among the largest declines in the state. Yet further disparities exist, with math SOL pass rates dropping 60.5% for English Learners and 50.0% for economically disadvantaged students. Galax must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



Staffing

Galax had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$56,780 in the 2023-2024 school year, which is \$13,661 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, Galax is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.