

Hanover 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 16,000 students in Hanover 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. Hanover 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, Hanover County spent \$12,702 per student, ranking us 115 out of 131 school divisions in the state. Yet, when adjusted for the high cost of living, the spending power drops to \$12,033 per student and Hanover County ranks 119 out of Virginia's 131 school divisions.

Hanover has seen an increase in local per student spending of \$803 or 15% between the 2014-2015 and 2022-2023 school years (adjusted for inflation). Compared to the regional average for local per student spending, Hanover only spent \$387 more in the 2022-2023 school year. While Hanover had a strengthening economy over this time, its level of commitment and effort towards schools did not reflect this.



Outcomes

Many students lost significant ground on state academic achievement between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. Students in Hanover saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 3.6% and 12.4% in math. Yet these total numbers mask worrisome disparities, with math SOL pass rates dropping 46.2% for English Learners and 22.4% for economically disadvantaged students. Hanover must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



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 Hanover County only spent 67%, which is 40 percentage points below the state average. Hanover would need to spend \$24,459,242 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).

Hanover 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. Hanover County's property tax effort is 7% below the average regional rate.

A one penny property tax increase in Hanover County would raise approximately \$2,030,000 annually.



Staffing

The overall staffing vacancy rate was 3.0% as of October 2023, adding pressure for all staff to cover shortage areas.

Hanover had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$61,984 in the 2023-2024 school year, which is \$8,457 below the state average. Adjusted for the relatively high cost of living in the locality, the average teacher salary drops to \$58,718. With high salaries and lower cost of living in nearby communities, on top of a dwindling supply of graduates with teaching degrees, Hanover is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.