

Isle Of Wight 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 5,000 students in Isle Of Wight 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. Isle Of Wight 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, Isle of Wight County spent \$12,601 per student, ranking us 120 out of 131 school divisions in the state. Yet, when adjusted for the high cost of living, the spending power drops to \$12,014 per student and Isle of Wight County continues to rank 120 out of Virginia's 131 school divisions.

Isle Of Wight has seen a drop in local per student spending of \$260 or 5% between the 2014-2015 and 2022-2023 school years (adjusted for inflation). Compared to the regional average for local per student spending, Isle Of Wight spent \$146 less in the 2022-2023 school year. While Isle Of Wight 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 Isle Of Wight saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 8.8% and 26.5% in math - among the largest declines in the state. Yet further disparities exist, with math SOL pass rates dropping 38.9% for English Learners and 39.4% for economically disadvantaged students. Isle Of Wight must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



Capacity and Effort

Virtually every division 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 127% above the Required Local Effort, but Isle of Wight County only spent 76%, which is 51 percentage points below the state average. Isle Of Wight would need to spend \$7,715,727 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). *Data from 2021-22 school year when division last submitted to VDOE

Isle of Wight County 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 and has a lower level of fiscal stress than most localities. Isle of Wight County's property tax effort is 13% below the average regional rate.

A one penny property tax increase in Isle of Wight County would raise approximately \$500,000 annually.



Staffing

The overall staffing vacancy rate was 3.6% as of October 2023, adding pressure for all staff to cover shortage areas.

Isle Of Wight had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$ in the 2023-2024 school year, which is \$70,441 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, Isle Of Wight is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.