

# Louisa 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 Louisa 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. Louisa 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, Louisa County spent \$14,679 per student, ranking us 58 out of 131 school divisions in the state. Yet, when adjusted for the high cost of living, the spending power drops to \$14,476 per student and Louisa County ranks 64 out of Virginia's 131 school divisions.

Louisa has seen a drop in local per student spending of \$134 or 2% 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 Louisa County only spent 101%, which is 6 percentage points below the state average. Louisa would need to spend \$1,419,906 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).

Louisa 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. Louisa County's property tax effort is 10% below the average state rate.

A one penny property tax increase in Louisa County would raise approximately \$660,000 annually.



### Outcomes

Many students lost significant ground on state academic achievement between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. Students in Louisa did not see a change on the reading SOL test pass rates and 25.0% in math. Yet these total numbers mask worrisome disparities, with math SOL pass rates dropping 33.3% for English Learners and 36.4% for economically disadvantaged students. Louisa must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



### Staffing

Louisa had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$59,931 in the 2023-2024 school year, which is \$10,510 below the state average. Adjusted for the relatively high cost of living in the locality, the average teacher salary drops to \$59,101. With high salaries and lower cost of living in nearby communities, on top of a dwindling supply of graduates with teaching degrees, Louisa is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.