

# Lynchburg 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 7,000 students in Lynchburg 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. Lynchburg 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, Lynchburg City spent \$15,913 per student, ranking us 36 out of 131 school divisions in the state.

Lynchburg has seen a drop in local per student spending of \$675 or 12% between the 2014-2015 and 2022-2023 school years (adjusted for inflation). The Valley region decreased local per pupil spending by 3% over this time. Compared to the regional average for local per student spending, Lynchburg spent a whopping \$1,852 less in the 2022-2023 school year. While Lynchburg 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 Lynchburg City only spent 56%, which is 51 percentage points below the state average. Lynchburg would need to spend \$10,966,591 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).

Lynchburg City has capacity to do more to raise adequate revenue for its schools.

A one penny property tax increase in Lynchburg City would raise approximately \$620,000 annually.



### Outcomes

Many students lost significant ground on state academic achievement between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. Students in Lynchburg saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 13.0% and 50.7% in math - among the largest declines in the state. Yet further disparities exist, with math SOL pass rates dropping 79.2% for English Learners and 69.7% for economically disadvantaged students. Lynchburg must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



### Staffing

The teacher vacancy rate in Lynchburg was 12.3% as of October 2023, 8.4 percentage points higher than the state average. The overall staffing vacancy rate was 14.6% as of October 2023, 9.7 percentage points above the state average, adding pressure for all staff to cover shortage areas.

Lynchburg had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$49,559 in the 2023-2024 school year, which is \$20,882 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, Lynchburg is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.