

# Newport News 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 24,000 students in Newport News 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. Newport News 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, Newport News City spent \$14,920 per student, ranking us 54 out of 131 school divisions in the state. Yet, when adjusted for the high cost of living, the spending power drops to \$14,496 per student and Newport News City ranks 63 out of Virginia's 131 school divisions.

Newport News has seen a drop in local per student spending of \$353 or 7% between the 2014-2015 and 2022-2023 school years (adjusted for inflation). The Tidewater region decreased local per pupil spending by 6% over this time. Compared to the regional average for local per student spending, Newport News spent a whopping \$1,144 less in the 2022-2023 school year. While Newport News 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 Newport News City only spent 102%, which is just 5 percentage points below the state average. Newport News would need to spend \$3,215,732 more annually to be at the average state percent above the Required Local Effort.

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

A one penny property tax increase in Newport News City would raise approximately \$1,770,000 annually.



### Outcomes

Many students lost significant ground on state academic achievement between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. Students in Newport News saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 17.2% and 53.5% in math - among the largest declines in the state. Yet further disparities exist, with math SOL pass rates dropping 74.5% for English Learners and 62.5% for economically disadvantaged students. Newport News must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



### Staffing

The teacher vacancy rate in Newport News was 6.7% as of October 2023, 2.8 percentage points higher than the state average. The overall staffing vacancy rate was 11.7% as of October 2023, 6.8 percentage points above the state average, adding pressure for all staff to cover shortage areas.

Newport News had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$69,767 in the 2023-2024 school year, which is \$674 below the state average. Adjusted for the relatively high cost of living in the locality, the average teacher salary drops to \$67,784. With high salaries and lower cost of living in nearby communities, on top of a dwindling supply of graduates with teaching degrees, Newport News is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.