

Northumberland 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 1,000 students in Northumberland 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. Northumberland 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, Northumberland County spent \$17,707 per student, ranking us 19 out of 131 school divisions in the state. Yet, when adjusted for the high cost of living, the spending power drops to \$16,859 per student and Northumberland County ranks 24 out of Virginia's 131 school divisions.

Northumberland has seen an increase in local per student spending of \$2,413 or 25% between the 2014-2015 and 2022-2023 school years (adjusted for inflation).



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 Northumberland County only spent 110%, which is 17 percentage points below the state average. Northumberland would need to spend \$1,070,069 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

Northumberland County has capacity to do more to raise adequate revenue for its schools. The locality has one of the top revenue capacity scores according to the Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts and a low level of fiscal stress. Northumberland County's property tax effort is 23% below the average state rate.

A one penny property tax increase in Northumberland County would raise approximately \$290,000 annually.



Outcomes

Many students lost significant ground on state academic achievement between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. Students in Northumberland saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 19.5% and 46.5% in math - among the largest declines in the state. Yet further disparities exist, with math SOL pass rates dropping 54.4% for English Learners and 59.8% for economically disadvantaged students. Northumberland must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



Staffing

The teacher vacancy rate in Northumberland was 3.9% as of October 2023. The overall staffing vacancy rate was 2.8% as of October 2023.

Northumberland had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$55,617 in the 2021-2022 school year (most recent year it provided data to VDOE), which is \$14,824 below the state average. Adjusted for the relatively high cost of living in the locality, the average teacher salary drops to \$52,952. With high salaries and lower cost of living in nearby communities, on top of a dwindling supply of graduates with teaching degrees, Northumberland is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.