

Page 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 3,000 students in Page 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. Page 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, Page County spent \$13,610 per student, ranking us 90 out of 131 school divisions in the state.

Page has seen a drop in local per student spending of \$366 or 9% between the 2014-2015 and 2022-2023 school years (adjusted for inflation). The Northern Virginia region barely changed local per pupil spending over this time. Compared to the regional average for local per student spending, Page spent a whopping \$7,845 less in the 2022-2023 school year. While Page 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 in the Northern Virginia region spent 132% above the Required Local Effort, but Page County only spent 41%, which is 91 percentage points below the Northern Virginia regional average. Page would need to spend \$6,868,633 more annually to be at the average regional percent above the Required Local Effort (this reflects the low level of effort the division puts into per pupil spending relative to neighbors).

Page 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. Page County's property tax effort is 18% below the average regional rate.

A one penny property tax increase in Page County would raise approximately \$240,000 annually.



Outcomes

Many students lost significant ground on state academic achievement between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. Students in Page saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 13.9% and 45.5% in math - among the largest declines in the state. Yet further disparities exist, with math SOL pass rates dropping 50.7% for economically disadvantaged students. Page must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



Staffing

The teacher vacancy rate in Page was 2.8% as of October 2023. The overall staffing vacancy rate was 1.8% as of October 2023.

Page had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$60,470 in the 2023-2024 school year, which is \$11,651 below the regional average. With high salaries and lower cost of living in nearby communities, on top of a dwindling supply of graduates with teaching degrees, Page is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.