

# Petersburg 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 4,000 students in Petersburg 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. Petersburg 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, Petersburg City spent \$15,992 per student, ranking us 34 out of 131 school divisions in the state.

Petersburg has seen a drop in local per student spending of \$1,047 or 29% between the 2014-2015 and 2022-2023 school years (adjusted for inflation). The Central Virginia region increased local per pupil spending by 5% over this time. Compared to the regional average for local per student spending, Petersburg spent a whopping \$3,342 less in the 2022-2023 school year. While Petersburg 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 Petersburg City only spent 35%, which is 72 percentage points below the state average. Petersburg would need to spend \$5,811,582 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).

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

A one penny property tax increase in Petersburg City would raise approximately \$210,000 annually.



### Outcomes

Many students lost significant ground on state academic achievement between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. Students in Petersburg saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 15.4% and 51.9% in math - among the largest declines in the state. Yet further disparities exist, with math SOL pass rates dropping 65.9% for English Learners and 53.1% for economically disadvantaged students. Petersburg must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



### Staffing

The teacher vacancy rate in Petersburg was 21.1% as of October 2023, 17.2 percentage points higher than the state average. The overall staffing vacancy rate was 19.3% as of October 2023, 14.4 percentage points above the state average, adding pressure for all staff to cover shortage areas.

Petersburg had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$57,746 in the 2023-2024 school year, which is \$12,695 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, Petersburg is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.