

Pittsylvania 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 7,000 students in Pittsylvania 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. Pittsylvania 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, Pittsylvania County spent \$13,717 per student, ranking us 86 out of 131 school divisions in the state.

Pittsylvania has seen an increase in local per student spending of \$581 or 21% between the 2014-2015 and 2022-2023 school years (adjusted for inflation). Compared to the regional average for local per student spending, Pittsylvania spent a whopping \$1,857 less in the 2022-2023 school year. While Pittsylvania 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 Pittsylvania County only spent 42%, which is 65 percentage points below the state average. Pittsylvania would need to spend \$10,352,979 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).

Pittsylvania County has capacity to do more to raise adequate revenue for its schools. Pittsylvania County's property tax effort is 25% below the average regional rate.

A one penny property tax increase in Pittsylvania County would raise approximately \$440,000 annually.



Outcomes

Many students lost significant ground on state academic achievement between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. Students in Pittsylvania saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 4.9% and 24.4% in math. Yet these total numbers mask worrisome disparities, with math SOL pass rates dropping 31.0% for English Learners and 32.5% for economically disadvantaged students. Pittsylvania must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



Staffing

The teacher vacancy rate in Pittsylvania was 2.7% as of October 2023. The overall staffing vacancy rate was 5.8% as of October 2023, 0.9 percentage points above the state average, adding pressure for all staff to cover shortage areas.

Pittsylvania had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$55,602 in the 2023-2024 school year, which is \$14,839 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, Pittsylvania is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.