

# Prince George 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 6,000 students in Prince George 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. Prince George 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, Prince George County spent \$12,564 per student, ranking us 121 out of 131 school divisions in the state.

Prince George has seen an increase in local per student spending of \$602 or 24% between the 2014-2015 and 2022-2023 school years (adjusted for inflation).

Compared to the regional average for local per student spending, Prince George spent a whopping \$2,808 less in the 2022-2023 school year. While Prince George 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 Prince George County only spent 64%, which is 43 percentage points below the state average. Prince George would need to spend \$4,784,419 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).

Prince George County has capacity to do more to raise adequate revenue for its schools, and has a lower level of fiscal stress than most localities. Prince George County's property tax effort is 5% below the average regional rate.

A one penny property tax increase in Prince George County would raise approximately \$380,000 annually.



### Outcomes

Many students lost significant ground on state academic achievement between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. Students in Prince George saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 9.6% and 20.2% in math. Yet these total numbers mask worrisome disparities, with math SOL pass rates dropping 46.7% for English Learners and 30.0% for economically disadvantaged students. Prince George must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



### Staffing

The teacher vacancy rate in Prince George was 7.2% as of October 2023, 3.3 percentage points higher than the state average. The overall staffing vacancy rate was 7.1% as of October 2023, 2.2 percentage points above the state average, adding pressure for all staff to cover shortage areas.

Prince George had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$65,988 in the 2023-2024 school year, which is \$4,453 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, Prince George is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.