

Roanoke 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 13,000 students in Roanoke City 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. Roanoke City 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, Roanoke City spent \$17,594 per student, ranking us 20 out of 131 school divisions in the state. Yet, when adjusted for the high cost of living, the spending power drops to \$17,220 per student and Roanoke City ranks 16 out of Virginia's 131 school divisions.

Roanoke City has seen a drop in local per student spending of \$958 or 13% between the 2014-2015 and 2022-2023 school years (adjusted for inflation). The Western Virginia region decreased local per pupil spending by 8% over this time.



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 Roanoke City spent 127%, which is 20 percentage points above the state average.

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

A one penny property tax increase in Roanoke City would raise approximately \$970,000 annually.



Outcomes

Many students lost significant ground on state academic achievement between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. Students in Roanoke City saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 15.9% and 48.7% in math - among the largest declines in the state. Yet further disparities exist, with math SOL pass rates dropping 65.7% for English Learners and 54.8% for economically disadvantaged students. Roanoke City must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



Staffing

The overall staffing vacancy rate was 4.7% as of October 2023, adding pressure for all staff to cover shortage areas.

Roanoke City had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$67,104 in the 2023-2024 school year, which is \$3,337 below the state average. Adjusted for the relatively high cost of living in the locality, the average teacher salary drops to \$65,679. With high salaries and lower cost of living in nearby communities, on top of a dwindling supply of graduates with teaching degrees, Roanoke City is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.