

Waynesboro 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 3,000 students in Waynesboro 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. Waynesboro 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, Waynesboro City spent \$15,062 per student, ranking us 51 out of 131 school divisions in the state.

Waynesboro has seen an increase in local per student spending of \$1,338 or 24% between the 2014-2015 and 2022-2023 school years (adjusted for inflation). Compared to the regional average for local per student spending, Waynesboro only spent \$54 more in the 2022-2023 school year. While Waynesboro 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 Waynesboro City spent 153%, which is 46 percentage points above the state average.

Waynesboro City 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. Waynesboro City's property tax effort is 16% below the average city rate.

A one penny property tax increase in Waynesboro City would raise approximately \$340,000 annually.



Outcomes

Many students lost significant ground on state academic achievement between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. Students in Waynesboro saw a drop in pass rates on the reading SOL test of 14.9% and 51.4% in math - among the largest declines in the state. Yet further disparities exist, with math SOL pass rates dropping 72.7% for English Learners and 64.6% for economically disadvantaged students. Waynesboro must do more for its students who face significant barriers to education.



Staffing

The teacher vacancy rate in Waynesboro was 4.5% as of October 2023, 0.6 percentage points higher than the state average. The overall staffing vacancy rate was 4.5% as of October 2023, adding pressure for all staff to cover shortage areas.

Waynesboro had an average budgeted teacher salary of \$56,439 in the 2023-2024 school year, which is \$14,002 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, Waynesboro is not in a strong position to compete for high-quality educators in the future.