

School Budget FY 2026 Report

Rappahannock County Public Schools

Superintendent:
Dr. Shannon Grimsley

Chief Financial Officer:
Mrs. Stacey Whitt

Rappahannockschoools.us
Tel: 540-227-0023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

To Our Stakeholders _____	3
Vision, Mission, Strategic Goals _____	3
Conceptual Framework _____	4
Message from the Superintendent _____	5
Performance Highlights _____	7
Rappahannock County Public Schools Overview _____	9
Understanding Revenue _____	11
Supplemental Basic Aid & SIFT _____	12
Federal Grants _____	14
The School Budget _____	16
Highlights _____	16
Budget Cycle Review _____	20
Understanding the Budget Structure _____	21
Budget Summaries _____	26
Instruction—Notable Adjustments _____	27
Salaries and Benefits _____	28
Commit to Be Fit _____	33
Transportation _____	34
Operations, Maintenance, & Facilities _____	35
Acknowledgements _____	36

TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS

The VISION of RCPS is to...

Empower every student to reach their full potential.

Our MISSION is, through educational opportunities,

To promote a culture of learning, a roadmap for excellence,
and the passion and character that leads to each student's success.

Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Content Knowledge

RCPS will provide an environment that enhances student academic growth for all students in the core academic areas to ensure academic achievement gaps are closed while all students are appropriately challenged and achieving at or above pre-pandemic levels according to 2018-2019 data by the end of School Year 2024.

Goal 2: Career Preparation & Workplace Skills

Students will align knowledge, skills, and personal interests, coupled with demonstrating productive workplace skills, qualities, and behaviors to prepare them for opportunities in enrollment, enlistment, and/or employment (3 E's).

Goal 3: Financial Planning

RCPS will support the Comprehensive Plan Priorities through leveraging a multitude of resources, facilitating community and organization collaboration, advocacy efforts for equitable funding for small, rural schools, and through seeking and writing successful grant applications so that a remarkable education is funded to the maximum extent possible while minimizing the overall impact on county coffers.

Goal 4: Student Community Engagement and Civic Responsibility

RCPS will create an environment to cultivate a successful connection between students, families, and the community in order to produce more responsible, responsive, and life-ready citizens by graduation.

Goal 5: Recruitment and Retention

RCPS will recruit and retain a premier workforce dedicated to fostering educational excellence, continuous improvement, and a compassionate environment, making RCPS the institution of choice for students, parents, and employees.

Goal 6: School & Community General Wellness

RCPS will maintain an emphasis on providing services that promote the academic, physical, mental, and emotional well-being of students, staff, and the community at large as measured by overall participation in wellness activities and programs.

The [RCPS Comprehensive Plan](https://www.rappahannockschools.us/) can be found at our website (<https://www.rappahannockschools.us/>).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: ROAD TO REMARKABLE

The Road to Remarkable is the newly adopted comprehensive plan. This budget supports the following top 6 priorities addressed in the comprehensive plan and incorporates strategies outlined in the “Financial Planning” Priority.

Recruitment and Retention

Recruiting and retaining a premier workforce dedicated to excellence in education.



School Community General Wellness

Promoting the academic, physical, mental, and emotional well-being of students, staff, and the community at large.

Student-Community Engagement & Civic Responsibility

Cultivating a welcoming, inclusive school community environment.



Financial Planning

Supporting district goals and innovation through leveraging all possible avenues of funding.



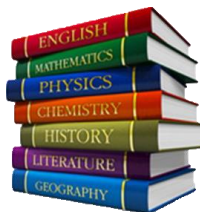
Career Preparation and Workplace Readiness

Providing students authentic experiences to cultivate career and workplace skills.



Content Knowledge

Enhancing academic growth and success for all students while also closing achievement gaps.



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Rappahannock County Family,

First and foremost, thank you for your continued support of your public schools. Without the vital partnerships we have forged with our families and community, we would not be performing at the high levels of academic achievement we have realized in recent years, nor would we be achieving state-wide and nation-wide recognition for our innovative programs (i.e. C2BF, Agriculture and Health Science Academies, MyFuture Learning Accounts, a school-based Wellness Center etc.). As outlined in our comprehensive plan, we aim to continue on this path toward creative innovation to meet the diverse and unique needs of our student population as well as to be of service to our community.

This budget of need is presented to you in a format that we hope will allow for a deep understanding of your local public school system. Again, a major goal is to continue to enhance the transparency by which public tax dollars are being spent on the best possible education for our youth. To this end, each expenditure and revenue category was analyzed thoroughly based on data in order to be sure that all funds were being expended in the manner for which they were intended as well as providing equity in educational services to all. This report will outline the processes used, provide justification for changes, and reiterate the educational and systematic goals set forth by careful comprehensive planning that has been completed in recent years.

Superintendent & School Board priorities for the FY 2026 school budget are:

- Support Comprehensive Plan Goals
 - The RCPS Comprehensive Plan, [*Road to Remarkable*](#), was adopted by the RCPS School Board in June 2022. The budget will continue to support short and long-range goals outlined in the plan.
- Teacher/Staff Compensation
 - RCPS remains committed to keeping stride with state-mandates to bring VA educational salaries to national average and offering competitive benefits.
- Supporting Student / Staff Mental Health
 - Mental health and overall wellbeing continues to be a focus and was also ranked as a high priority on the Community Budget Priorities Survey conducted this year.
- Targeted Support for Instruction
 - With the expansion of the Virginia Literacy Act (VLA), implementation of the Virginia Tiered System of Supports (VTSS), and new accreditation system, needs of our most vulnerable learners directly linked to student intervention and improvement have been given priority in this process.

- AI Integration and Digital Ethics Education
 - In the world of fast changing technology and the new terrain of artificial intelligence, it has become more and more important for RCPS to be proactive and take an active role in creating methods to leverage and safeguard these capabilities within the educational setting.
- Continue Capital Improvements
 - Making the most of combined state and local funding being invested for school infrastructure, construction, and modernization to make progress toward continuing progress on the capital improvement plan as well as maintain our aging bus fleet.

This budget addresses many, but not all, critical needs for the division and is not exhaustive of all the budget work we have done this year, as you will see by reading this report. We aim to continuously adapt and improve our services in order to provide the best possible learning opportunities for our children, no matter what challenges come our way.

Thank you again for your continued support of the amazing young people of Rappahannock County. We are certainly on the *Road to Remarkable* because... We are Rappahannock!

At your service,



Dr. Shannon Grimsley
Superintendent / Cheerleader in Chief



PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Division Overall (No data for 2019-2020 due to COVID-19)

- Fully accredited ten years in a row
- Partnering with agencies like LRCC and RappCE to offer college and career courses
- Exceeding state standards in general for performance, certifications, and high school graduation rates

Rappahannock County Elementary School SOL Pass Rates

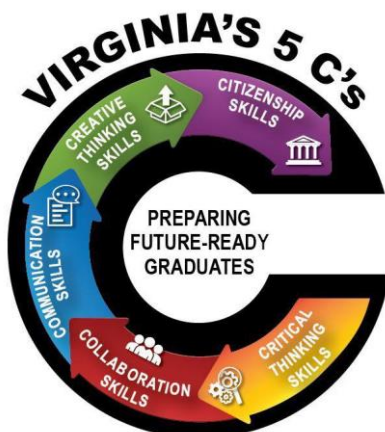
Assessment Type	2018-2019	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	
					RCES	State
English	80	68	87	77	82	73
History	85	N/A	70	58	62	65
Mathematics	90	55	86	80	88	71
Science	90	57	65	84	79	68

Rappahannock County High School SOL Pass Rates

Assessment Type	2018-2019	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	
					RCHS	State
English	86	79	81	77	87	73
Graduation & Completion Index (GCI)	97	93	97	92	96	93
Mathematics	91	51	87	82	75	71
Science	89	61	70	64	65	68

2020-2021 SOL results reflect reduced student participation in state assessments due to COVID-19.

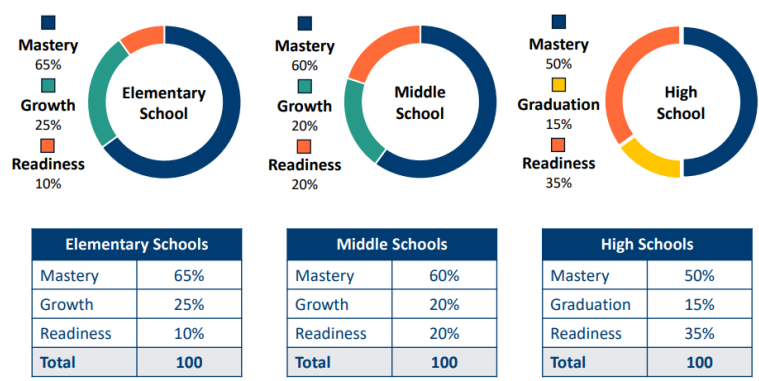
Results for 2019-2020 are not available due to the closure of schools and cancellation of state assessments. The wide variations in participation rates and learning conditions should be taken into consideration when reviewing 2020-2021 data.



VIRGINIA'S SHIFT TO PERFORMANCE AND SUPPORT

VDOE has re-envisioned the accreditation system for schools and the new [Performance and Support Framework](#) will be fully implemented in FY 26.

FRAMEWORK WEIGHTING



The new system will then rate schools as being *Off Track*, *On Track*, or *Distinguished*.

PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES

<i>Distinguished</i>	<i>On Track</i>	<i>Off Track</i>	<i>Needs Intensive Support</i>
Schools are exceeding the state's expectation for growth, achievement, and readiness.	Schools are meeting the state's expectation for growth, achievement, and readiness.	Schools are not meeting the state's expectation for growth, achievement, and readiness. Schools will receive additional support from VDOE.	Schools are significantly not meeting the state's expectation for growth, achievement, and readiness. Schools will receive more intensive support from VDOE in Fall 2025
90 points and above	Between 80 to 89 points	Between 65 to 79 points	Below 65 points

Using current data provided by VDOE, RCPS would rank *On Track* this year, closely approaching *Distinguished*.

School Name	Grade Span	Model Type	Overall Framework Score	Mastery	Growth	Readiness	Graduation
Rappahannock County Elementary	PK-07	ES	86.9	50.31	27.20	9.43	
Rappahannock County High	08-12	MS-HS	88.0	36.35	11.62	31.38	8.66

RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS OVERVIEW

Enrollment Summary and Demographics SY 2024-2025

Preschool - Grade 12 Enrollment Summary: (799 students enrolled)

American Indian/ Alaskan Native: .1%

Asian / Pacific Islander: .25%

Black: 1.5%

Hispanic: 9%

White: 80%

Hawaiian: 0%

Black & White: 4.85%

Unclassified: 4.3%



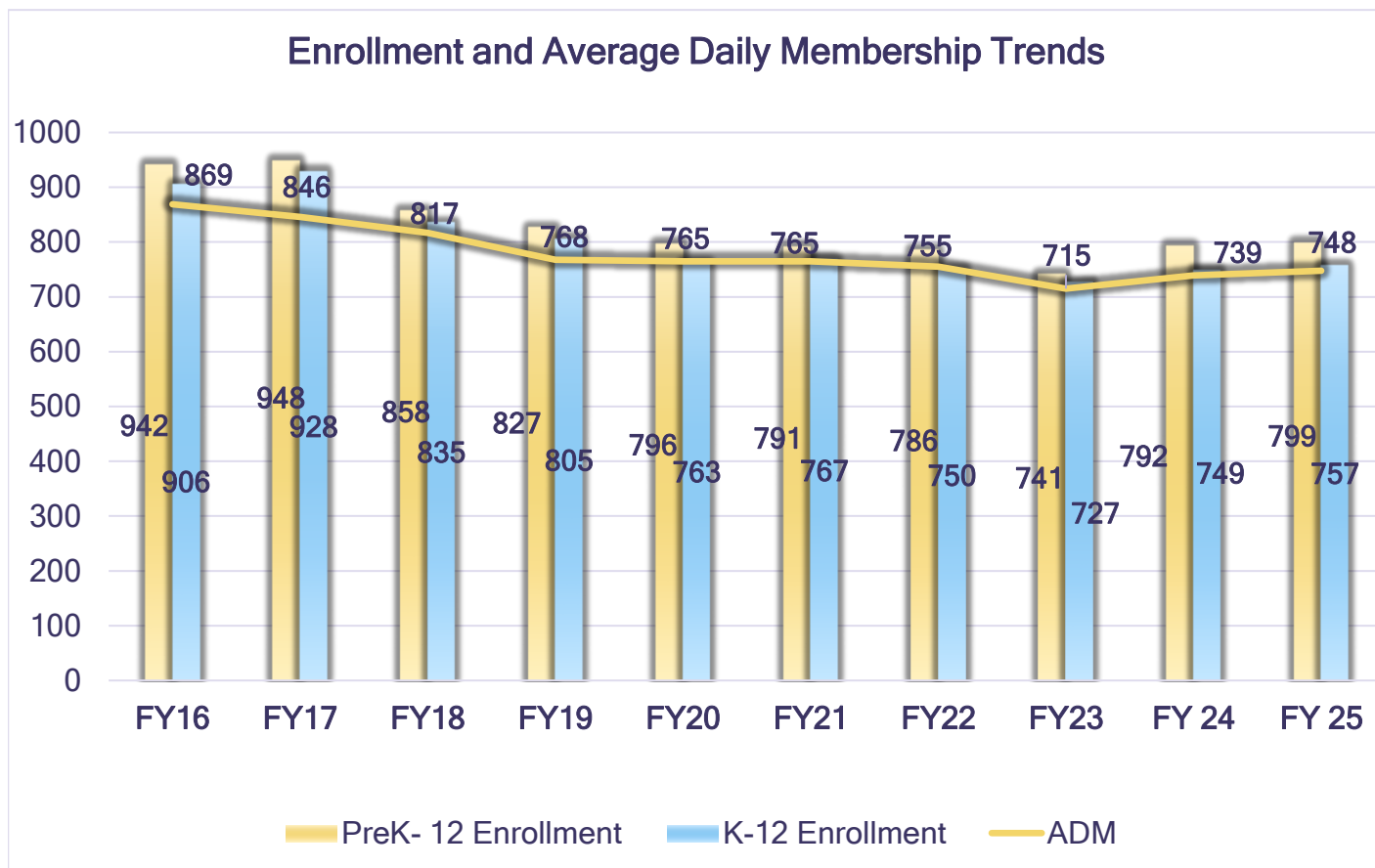
Enrolled student numbers include preschool through grade 12 in the physical building or remote learning. This does not include certain outplaced students. This number will not equal ADM, but should be used as a close projection to determine actual projected expenditures for educating students for whom the school district is responsible for managing scholastic records and services.

Enrollment, LCI, and Average Daily Membership (ADM)

Understanding enrollment and average daily membership projections is key to understanding the funding formulas that provide state and federal aid to schools. State and federal funding is based on a division's Local Composite Index (LCI), which is comprised of three indicators for a locality's ability to fund the school budget: true value of real property, adjusted gross income, and taxable retail sales. The LCI for Rappahannock County used to calculate state and federal revenues for FY 2026 is 0.8000, meaning the locality is expected to fund 80% of the school budget, with only 20% of support from state and federal dollars. The LCI adjusts each biennium with Rappahannock's LCI historically one of the top ten highest in VA.

The Average Daily Membership (ADM) is a calculation used by the state, along with LCI, to determine fundable student slots in the K-12 public school program. This number is determined by dividing the total aggregate daily membership of students in grades K-12 who attend classes “in school” by the total number of days school was in session, from the first day of the school term through the last school day in March.

NOTE: This calculation excludes many students for whom the public school is still responsible in some way. The ADM excludes any students in preschool, VPI, disabled pupils ages 20 and 21, students in alternative education programs, non-public school pupils, students in ISAEP (GED), students in home-based education, private special education, students funded with CSA funds, contiguous out-of-state students with or without the same attendance privileges, students with inter-state compact placement, or students in a virtual program delivered by an approved multi-division online provider (MOP). Therefore, RCPS serves many students for which the school system receives no funding directly. The chart below illustrates the differences between ADM and actual enrollment in public school services as reported on the Virginia Department of Education Student Record Collection Reports for Rappahannock County Public Schools.



UNDERSTANDING REVENUE

SOQ and Basic Aid

The school budget receives revenue from several sources, including the state and federal government, as well as various grants. To project the revenue for the following year, RCPS relies on data from the state to calculate the funding that is anticipated. Staffing formulas are used by the state to determine Basic Aid funds to schools.

Standards of Quality (SOQ)

School staffing and operations are guided by the Virginia Department of Education Standards of Quality. These standards establish minimum staffing levels for position categories on a per pupil basis. State and local funds must be provided to be sure these minimum staffing standards are met. The categories in which schools receive SOQ funding are, "Instructional," "Support," and "Non Personal" -- *Code of Virginia § 22.1-253.13:2*

Overall, for FY 26, examples of SOQ funding provided for staffing are depicted in the tables below:

Elementary Principals	0.92
Elementary Assistant Principals	-
Elementary Librarians	.92
Elementary Guidance Counselors	1.14
Kindergarten Aides	-
Kindergarten Teachers	1.84
Grade 1 Teachers	1.84
Grade 2 Teachers	2.76
Grade 3 Teachers	2.10
Grade 4 Teachers	1.84
Grade 5 Teachers	1.84
Grade 6 Teachers	2.58
Grade 7 Teachers	2.52

Assistant Superintendent	0.18
Instructional Professional	1.63
Instructional Technical/Clerical	1.24
Attendance & Health Administrative	.12
Attendance & Health Technical/Clerical	.32
Administration Administrative	.66
Administration Technical/Clerical	1.02
Technology Professional	.23
Technology Technical/Clerical	.63
Operation & Maintenance	.23
Support Technology	.63
School Based Clerical	2.75
Operation & Maintenance Technical/Clerical	5.78

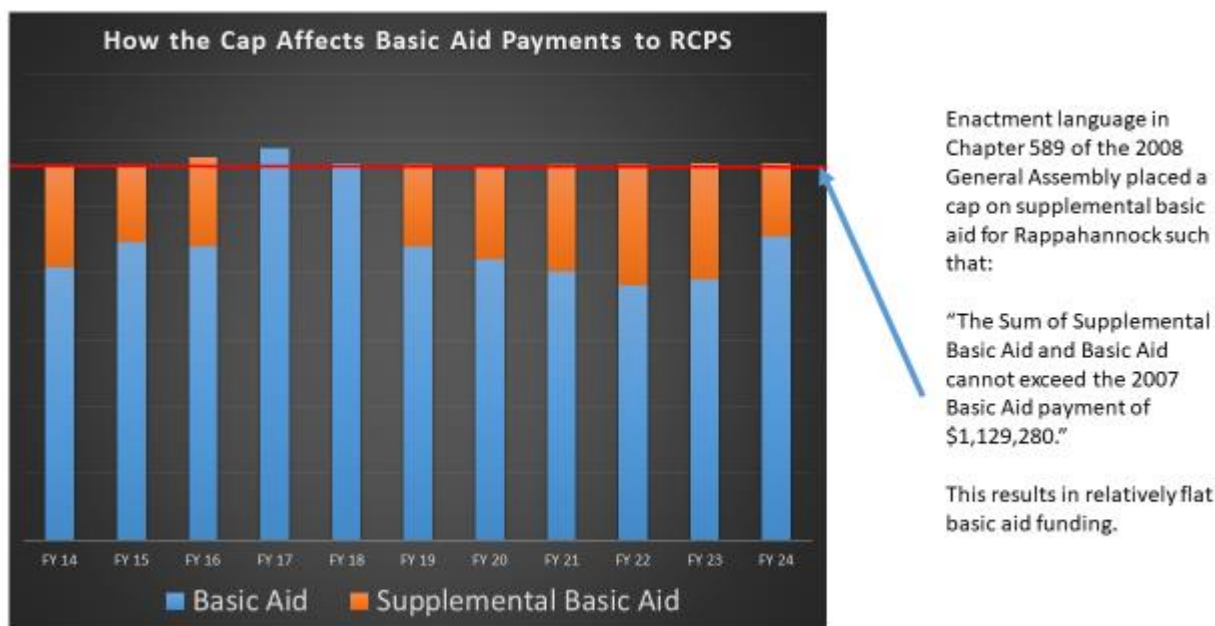
SOQ Funding Formula= (Basic Aid PPE x Projected ADM)-Projected Sales Tax = Basic Aid Cost

* School districts are given flexibility in determining local needs and aligning support positions accordingly in the following areas: Instructional Professional, Instructional Technical/Clerical, Attendance & Health Administrative, Attendance & Health/Technical Clerical, Administration Administrative, Administration Technical/Clerical, Technology Professional, Technology Technical/Clerical, Operation & Maintenance, Support Technology, School Based Clerical, Operation & Maintenance Technical/Clerical.

Supplemental Basic Aid & S.I.F.T.

Part of RCPS's revenue comes from a state subsidy program developed in 2007 called "supplemental basic aid" which provides additional financial support for a limited number of localities who meet the following criteria—fewer than 1100 students, 65% of total revenue generated from the locality's real estate, and a local composite index of .60 or greater. In order to receive this subsidy, a school division must develop a cooperative agreement with a contiguous county that provides cost-sharing services between the two districts. The qualifying district then certifies this agreement with the state and receives a subsidy in supplemental basic aid that is based on the local composite index of the contiguous county. For RCPS, this subsidy is obtained through a cost-sharing agreement with Madison County.

However, the Virginia General Assembly of 2008 placed a cap on this program impacting any qualifying district from receiving the full subsidy amount from that point forward. There are only four counties in the Commonwealth that qualify for this program, and only Rappahannock County and Highland County have established cooperative agreements to receive the subsidy. However, only Rappahannock County has a cap limiting funding, causing the situation depicted in the graph below:



In 2020, the county and school system collaborated to form the School Innovative Finance Taskforce (SIFT). SIFT, founded by the County Administrator and School Superintendent of Rappahannock County, was formed to focus on understanding the current financial realities facing the public schools and the county, as well as researching opportunities to influence that portfolio. The task force spawned "Panther Teams" to research specific areas of interest and report back to the task force with the intention of disseminating the results publicly. Panther Team 1 was tasked with researching the Local Composite Index and to suggest possible scenarios that may impact this formula. Panther Team 2 was tasked with reviewing the state distribution of funds to localities to identify areas of opportunity to advocate for additional state revenue. Panther Team 3 was to examine the needs of RCPS and identify opportunities for local philanthropic sustaining funds to incorporate into the local budget. The full SIFT report can be accessed on the [RCPS Finance Page](#).

As a result of the SIFT efforts, the team was able to:

1. Participate in a JLARC study on the state school funding formula, impacting the state formula revision considerations at the General Assembly as outlined in the [2023 JLARC Report](#),
2. Secure additional philanthropic dollars to help sustain innovative programs and non-SOQ funded positions, and
3. Advocate in General Assembly Session 2023 for removal of the cap on supplemental basic aid (HB 1443) as well as inclusion in the GA state budget for this remedy (HB 1400). HB 1443 was passed by indefinitely in the Senate stating the delay was due to waiting for the JLARC report on the school funding formula.
4. Advocate in General Assembly Session 2024 for removal of the cap on supplemental basic aid (HB 702) as well as in the budget bill proposed by Governor Youngkin. The house and senate committees removed the funding from the Governor's proposed budget and laid HB 702 on the table.
5. Secure and work with a lobbyist (Elizabeth Parker from Troutman Strategies) preceding the General Assembly Session 2025 resulting in two Senate Budget amendments specifically identified as item 125 #4s (Direct Aid) being proposed. The General Assembly Conferees did not include these amendments in the Conference Budget.


It is not known at the time of publishing this report whether the state will fund the budget request for removing the cap on supplemental basic aid as it is now awaiting the Governor's final approval. This budget report outlines a plan for a scenario where this funding is not available.

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) Report

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) published its findings in a [Report](#) in the spring of 2023. Some of these recommendations, if followed by the General Assembly, may have a significant impact on Rappahannock County Public Schools.

The major takeaway from the report is that the Virginia funding formula for public schools significantly underfunds the operations and staffing benchmarks required by the state. This issue is greatly exacerbated in smaller districts where the state funding formula does not adequately account for small divisions' inability to gain economies of scale.

The lower the enrollment, the higher the cost per pupil to educate students. While the overall per pupil expenditure figure may seem high for RCPS, the actual county contribution of PPE is relatively low due to the amount of grant funding the district receives to implement innovative key programs. This chart captures the RCPS PPE longitudinal trend for a ten year period:

		RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PER PUPIL EXPENDITURES					
Fiscal Year	Average Daily Membership	State Funds	Sales Tax	Federal	Grants/Local	County	Total
2014-2015	900	\$1,887	\$1,163	\$609	\$38	\$10,099	\$13,795
2015-2016	900	\$1,944	\$1,245	\$632	\$38	\$10,155	\$14,013
2016-2017	870	\$2,178	\$1,204	\$676	\$38	\$10,447	\$14,543
2017-2018	870	\$2,234	\$1,175	\$624	\$34	\$10,447	\$14,514
2018-2019	855	\$2,116	\$1,217	\$627	\$35	\$10,827	\$14,822
2019-2020	825	\$2,202	\$1,308	\$956	\$610	\$10,872	\$15,948
2020-2021	780	\$2,286	\$1,333	\$933	\$611	\$11,044	\$16,207
2021-2022	765	\$2,675	\$1,401	\$1,615	\$510	\$11,563	\$17,764
2022-2023	765	\$4,266	\$1,520	\$2,165	\$593	\$11,659	\$20,203
2023-2024	715	\$3,214	\$1,706	\$1,421	\$830	\$13,170	\$20,341
2024-2025	728	\$3,357	\$1,585	\$1,091	\$907	\$13,000	\$20,607
Budgeted FY26	736	\$5,062		\$1,212	\$1,618	\$14,890	\$22,783

Federal Grants

The school budget receives funds to administer federal and state programs. These funds are specifically allocated for conducting these programs and extensive oversight, reporting, and evaluation is necessary in order to maintain compliance with federal laws.

The [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA) was signed into law on December 10, 2015, amending the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and replacing No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

RCPS is eligible and receives funds for the following ESSA federal programs:

- **Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs**
Title I provides targeted assistance funding used to support students most at risk for failing. RCPS Title I funds support 100% of the reading/math interventionist salary and supports the portion of Title I aides' salaries commensurate with duties specifically servicing Title I students. Title I funds also support intervention programs and materials and supplies for Title I classrooms.
- **Title II, Part A: Preparing, Training, & Recruiting High Quality Teachers & Principals**
Title II funding is used to support a wide array of activities, including interventions for teacher professional development. These funds support teacher workshops, conferences, tuition reimbursement, and are the source of our collaboration with county Private Schools to participate in the LRCC Ed Consortium.
- **Title III, Part A: Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students**
Federal funds awarded under Title III support programs to address English language proficiency and academic achievement of English Learners (ELs), including the provision of language instruction educational programs and activities that increase the knowledge and skills of teachers who serve ELs. Title III programs also provide enhanced instructional opportunities for immigrant children and youths.
- **Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment**
Title IV funds support increasing the capacity of the division to provide all students with a well-rounded education by improving school conditions for learning and improving the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students. Currently, Title IV funds support counseling services for students who would not be eligible otherwise, as well as supporting innovative technologies in the implementation of the STEAM lab at RCES.



[The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) is the federal law ensuring that services to children with disabilities throughout the nation are equitable.

➤ **Special Education Flowthrough**

At RCPS, these funds support a portion of the Assistant Superintendent's salary who is also the division special education director. Funding also supports portions of special education aides' salaries commensurate with duties specifically servicing students with disabilities. Funds are also used to support special programs or equipment needed to accommodate equitable services.

➤ **Special Education Preschool (Preschool Handicap)**

These funds support materials, supplies, programs, and equipment used in the preschool special education program. Funds may also be used for technology to support preschool students with special needs.

[The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act](#) is the federal program that provides funding to increase focus on the academic achievement of career and technical education students, strengthen connections between secondary and postsecondary education, and improve state and local accountability.

➤ **Perkins Funds**

These funds support the high school vocational programming. Permissible uses of these funds is to provide conference registration and travel for Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers, purchase career credentialing and licensure tests, and to purchase new vocational equipment.



For more information about the federal programs available for public schools in Virginia, visit the Department of Education website at:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/federal_programs/index.shtml

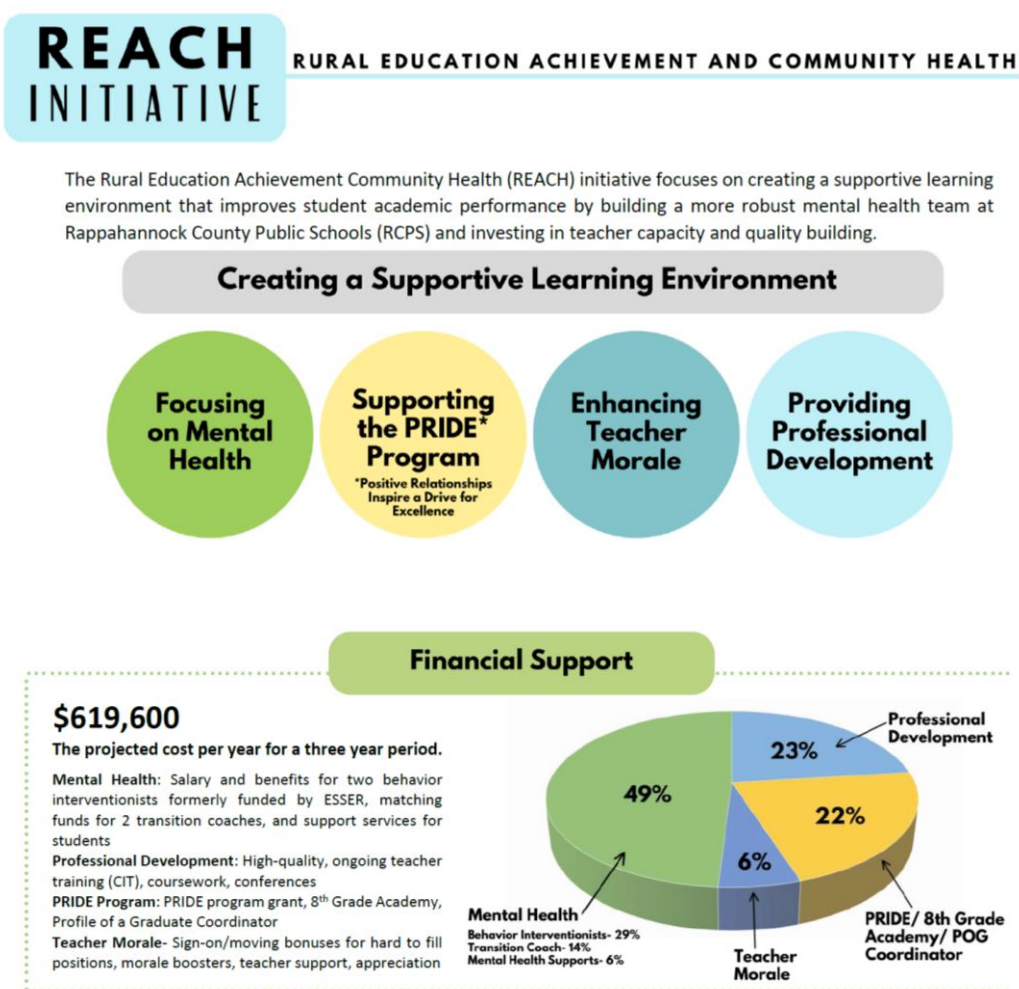
THE SCHOOL BUDGET

Highlights

Grants

Rappahannock County Public Schools receives many grants from other public and nonpublic funding sources. For example, Commit to Be Fit and our VA College Advising Corp grants are ongoing and will continue through our FY 26 budget planning and beyond. This year, RCPS plans to continue to apply for grant funding in critical areas of need to alleviate the burden on the locality.

REACH Program



RCPS has a three-year commitment for REACH to continue and this is included in the FY 26 budget.

RGHS Academies

Rappahannock County Public Schools piloted the high school academy model in two career clusters—Health Science and Agriculture. The academy model was designed to allow students to align aptitude, career exploration, college readiness, and life ready skills in a specialized career cluster resulting in the accumulation of stackable credentials, career certifications, college credits, hands-on work experience, and the incentive of a

post-secondary promise as part of completing the program. The FY 21- FY 22 pilot was extremely successful, and therefore, academies will continue to be funded in the budget, with a focus on the Fine Arts Academy as well as the development of the new Trades Academy in partnership with LRCC.

Health Science (EMS) Academy

The Health Science Academy was initially made possible by a partnership between RCPS and RappCE. Students could enter the Academy as early as 8th grade with a special Intro to the Health Sciences course where students experience hands-on learning for healthcare basics such as First Aid and CPR, as well as take first steps towards healthcare careers in fire/emergency management, nursing, childcare, and life skills needed to protect family and friends. The academy has now evolved to embrace a community-centered Emergency Medical Services (EMS)-focus as a call to action to combine student interest and community need. Kat Waters, NRP with the Rappahannock County Fire and Rescue serves as the EMS Volunteer Coordinator and Health Science Academy adjunct teacher at RCPS, has been instrumental in recruiting students into the program. She has successfully connected students with outside EMS service agencies, already leading to increasing interested volunteers in the Rappahannock Fire and Rescue. Funding to continue this program is included in the FY 26 budget.



Agriculture Academy

The Agriculture Academy, designed and built by Ag Academy Coordinator and FFA Sponsor, Michele Fincham, provides students opportunities in Small Animal Care, Veterinary Science, Horticulture, Environmental Science,



Building Trades, Welding, and Agriculture. Certifications available include animal systems assessment, certified veterinary assistant, customer service specialist, pet sitters certification, canine care, beef quality assurance, agricultural biotechnology, meat evaluation certification, welding certification, and more! The pilot program proved successful and the initial launch of our own local FFA chapter has grown to almost 90 members including junior members in middle school. The FY 26 budget includes funding to continue this program with the addition of plant and soil sciences and horticulture as course options leading

to credentialing.

Fine Arts Academy

Mr. Tyler Ende, director of bands, has been instrumental in continuing to develop the Fine Arts Academy model initially proposed by Kalia Page, former band director. Additionally, he assembled a Fine Arts Academy planning team, including Dr. MJ Boynton, RCHS Principal, Erin Platt, theater/drama coach/RAAC liaison, and Cecilia Falk, GT Coordinator, to mirror the interests and talents of our students as well as the creative landscape of our community. RAAC has partnered with RCPS to officially launch the Fine Arts Academy in the 2025-2026 school year with applications



going out this spring. In accordance with the Comprehensive Plan, the Fine Arts Academy will receive additional support in the FY 26 budget, including an additional full time position.

Trades Academy–



New in FY 25, the Trades Academy, a collaborative effort between Laurel Ridge Community College (LRCC), Workforce Solutions, RCPS, Fauquier County Public Schools, and the LRCC Career Pathways Consortium was officially launched. This program allowed RCHS seniors to access high-quality job training with certification options during the school day by traveling to the Warrenton Trades Academy Building. Students have the ability to earn credentials and certifications in HVAC and Plumbing.

Additionally, students will still have the opportunity to participate in the LRCC Drones Academy, paving the way to entry-level certification in drones and robotics. The FY 26 continues to support the Trades Academy minimally as funding from the Lion's Club has offset the cost to students immensely for tuition costs.

Driver's Education Behind the Wheel (BTW) Program



RCPS answered the call from parents that the backlog in available Behind the Wheel programs required for students under the age of 18 to qualify for a driver's license as well as the very high cost of such programs, had created both a financial and logistical issue for families with eligible teenagers qualifying for a license. Thanks to a grant through the Northern Piedmont Community Foundation (NPCF), RCPS was able to purchase a vehicle meeting VDOE specifications for the BTW program, hire part-time staff to run the program (Elizabeth Fox), and offer the program for only \$50 for RCPS students! The program has been in high demand, and even Rappahannock County private school and homeschool students are

eligible for the program at a slightly higher cost since the state will not reimburse the costs for those non-enrolled students. This program receives direct revenue from the state and will be included in the FY 26 budget as an appropriation when more exact figures are released this summer.

Wellness Center (Fit Kids Wellness Clinic)

In FY 21, Rappahannock County Public Schools received a PATH Foundation grant in the amount of \$69,000 to study the feasibility of starting a school-based wellness center in the elementary school. School-based wellness centers provide accessibility to important preventative and continuing care services within the school building. Mental health services can be provided, as well as physicals, simple diagnostics for flu, strep, and COVID, as well as maintenance for chronic conditions such as asthma and diabetes. In FY 23, the pediatric office discontinued the agreement with RCPS for family practice point of care services. However, the urgent care

department at Valley Health stepped in and proposed an urgent care model which offered point of care services for students AND staff with the potential to expand services to non-RCPS clients. This option was explored further in FY 25 and, through partnership with Rapp at Home, helped explore the potential for urgent care services to be offered to Rappahannock citizens. The Fit Kids clinic is fully supported by the PATH Foundation under the Commit to Be Fit (C2BF) umbrella.

Mental Health Services

Largely supported by REACH, mental health services are provided for students and staff onsite through our Mental Health Innovators Team who meets regularly to review caseloads and behavioral challenges to address these concerns both in and outside of the classroom. The mental health innovators team are made up of the following members:

- Carol Johnson (Asst. Superintendent)
- Erica Jennejahn (School Social Worker)
- Kathy Zehr-Rhodes (School Psychologist)
- Evelyn Wever (Behavior Specialist/Staff Ombudsman)
- Lora Waterbury (Behavior Specialist)
- Krista Riggleson (Transition Coach/Individual/Group Therapy)
- Kayla Robey (RCES School Counselor)
- Dani Pond (RCHS School Counselor)



School Budget Percent of County Budget

The chart below illustrates the total county transfer across the last ten year period:

Review of Previous Budget Cycles

Budget Year	LCI	County Contribution	Debt Service Included	Transfer Net of Debt Service	Difference from Previous Yr
FY 2014	0.8000	\$9,089,098	\$639,209	\$8,449,889	+\$300,000
FY 2015	0.7916	\$9,089,098	\$612,249	\$8,476,849	0
FY 2016	0.7916	\$9,139,098	\$595,164	\$8,543,934	+\$50,000
FY 2017	0.7398	\$9,089,098	\$578,079	\$8,511,019	-\$50,000
FY 2018	0.7398	\$9,089,098	\$560,994	\$8,528,104	0
FY 2019	0.7672	\$9,257,312	\$393,909	\$8,863,403	+\$168,214
FY 2020	0.7672	\$8,969,745	\$0	\$8,969,745	-\$287,567
FY 2021	0.7996	\$8,614,441	\$0	\$8,614,441	-\$355,304
FY 2022	0.7996	\$8,845,964	\$0	\$8,845,964	+\$231,523
FY 2023	0.8000	\$8,918,894	\$0	\$8,918,894	+\$72,930
FY 2024	0.8000	\$9,416,560	\$0	\$9,416,560	+\$547,163
FY 2025	0.8000	\$9,950,551	\$0	\$9,950,551	+533,991
FY 2026	0.8000	\$10,931,102	\$0	\$10,931,102	+\$980,551
*FY 2026 if Supp. Basic Aid cap lifted	0.8000	\$9,950,551	\$0	\$9,950,551	\$0

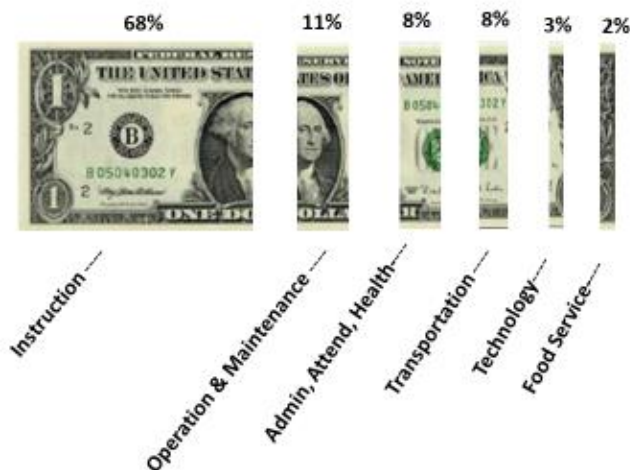
***Note: Should supplemental basic aid cap be lifted in the final state budget, RCPS will adjust locality appropriation to request a level-funded county local transfer request.**

Understanding the Budget Structure

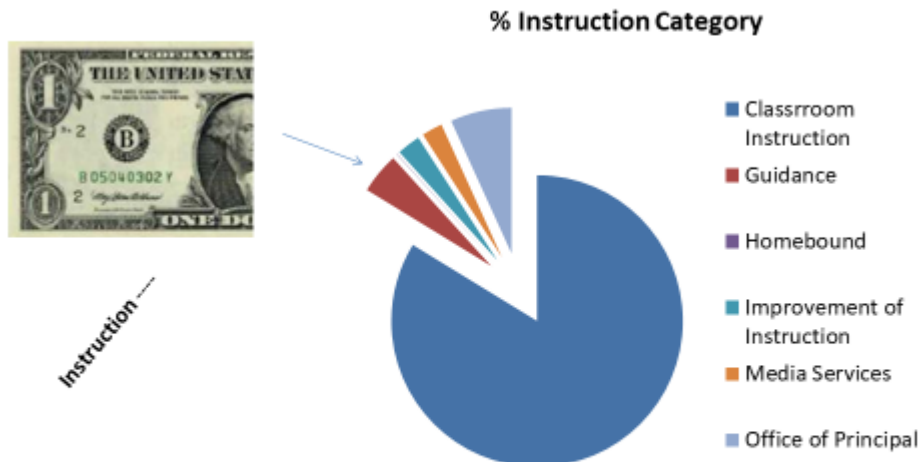
The Rappahannock County Public School Budget is broken down into the categories *Instruction, Administration, Attendance, and Health, Transportation, Operations and Maintenance, Facilities, Debt Service, Technology, and Food Service*. The four largest categories are:

- Instruction
 - This is the largest portion of the school budget allocated to fund salaries and benefits of all instructional personnel, classroom instruction lines, guidance, homebound services, improvement of instruction, media services, and office of the principal.
- Operations and Maintenance
 - The second largest portion of the budget are operations and maintenance funds used for facilities management and direction, building and grounds services, and equipment services.
- Administration, Attendance, and Health
 - Formerly the second largest portion of the school budget (now third) is allocated for Board services, executive administrative services, specialized personnel, fiscal services, health services, social work services, and psychological services.
- Transportation
 - The next largest portion of the school budget is allocated for salaries and benefits of all transportation staff, vehicle operating services, and vehicle maintenance.

The percentage that each category within the overall operating budget (dollar bill) is depicted below along with pie charts describing how each category is used for operations:

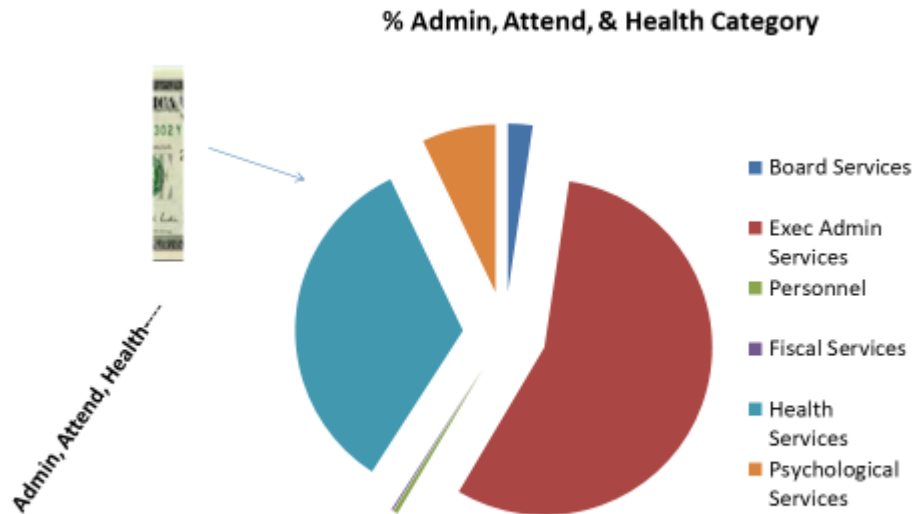


Understanding the Instruction Category



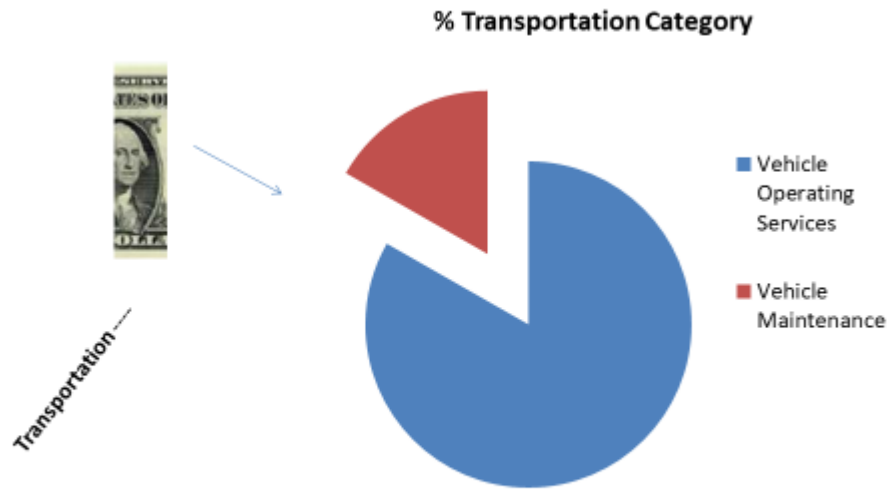
Account	Title	Description	FY 25 Budget	FY 26 Proposed
Function 61100	Classroom Instruction	Compensation & benefits of all instructional staff, materials and supplies, textbooks, substitutes	\$8,777,228	\$9,576,302
Function 61210	Guidance Services	Compensation & benefits of guidance counselors, conference travel funds, and materials and supplies	\$468,935	\$516,599
Function 61230	Homebound Instruction	Compensation and FICA for Homebound teachers, contracted services	\$5,905	\$5,905
Function 61310	Improvement of Instruction	Division-wide professional development, Assistant superintendent salary and benefits, ESL materials	\$281,146	\$296,326
Function 61320	Media Services	Funds for libraries and librarians, equipment, books, etc.	\$252,271	\$262,808
Function 61410	Office of the Principal	Compensation & benefits of principals, office supplies, equipment, miscellaneous.	\$607,927	\$778,145
		Instruction Total	\$10,393,412	\$11,436,086

Understanding the Admin, Attendance, & Health Category



Account	Title	Description	FY 25	FY 26 Proposed
Function 62110	Board Services	Compensation & FICA for School Board members, attorney fees, contracted services, academic excellence	\$52,096	\$43,096
Function 62120	Exec. Admin Services	Compensation & benefits for superintendent, finance office, finance/HR software, and some REACH grant salaries	\$572,035	\$994,371
Function 62140	Personnel Services	HR recruitment, background check/fingerprinting costs, PR materials and supplies	\$8,000	\$8,000
Function 62160	Fiscal Services	Required auditing services	\$3,000	\$3,000
Function 62220	Health Services	Comp. & benefits for school nurses, social worker, C2BF staff, and medical/dental supplies, office supplies	\$634,467	\$614,644
Function 62230	Psychological Services	Comp. & benefits of school psychologist	\$124,885	\$129,545
		Admin, Attendance, Health Total	\$1,394,484	\$1,792,656

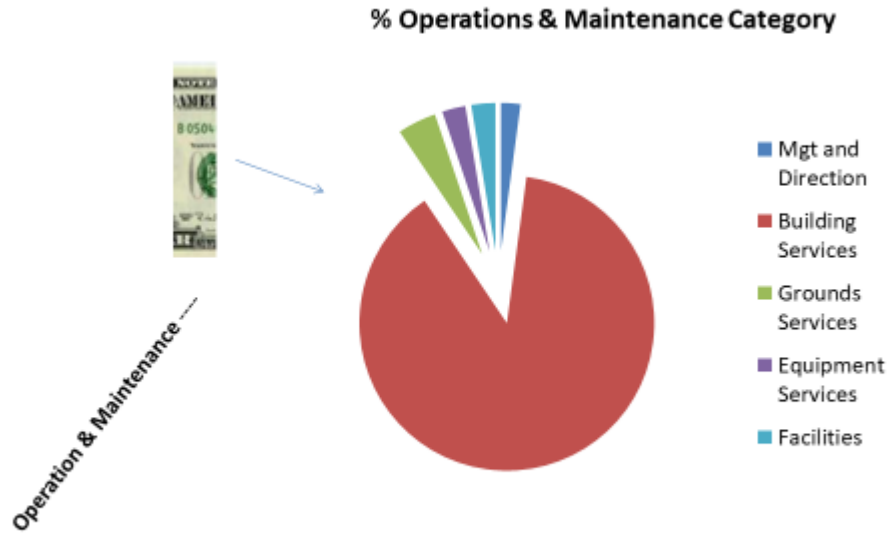
Understanding the Transportation Category



Account	Title	Description	FY 25	FY 26 Proposed
Function 63200	Vehicle Operating Services	Compensation & benefits of all drivers, fleet insurance, gas, diesel, oils, lubricants, repairs, parts, bus replacement , new equipment	\$857,622	\$1,141,011
Function 63400	Vehicle Maintenance Services	Compensation & benefits of mechanics and transportation coordinator	\$195,380	\$229,589
		Transportation Total	\$1,053,022	\$1,370,600



Understanding the Operations & Maintenance Category



Account	Title	Description	FY 25	FY 26 Proposed
Function 64100	Management and Direction	Unemployment compensation, fire and liability insurance	\$28,377	\$28,377
Function 64200	Building Services	Comp. & benefits of custodians, contracted services, utilities, postage, telephone, supplies	\$1,224,623	\$1,177,772
Function 64300	Grounds Services	Contracted services grounds (landscaping, field maintenance)	\$56,510	\$56,510
Function 64400	Equipment Services	Maintenance/services for equipment	\$28,350	\$34,150
Function 66000	Facilities	Capital Improvement (moved \$165,000 to Transportation)	\$200,000	\$35,000
		Operation/Maintenance Total	\$1,337,860	\$1,296,809

Budget Summaries

The total proposed budget amounts by category are listed in the chart below:

Budget Category	Total Amount Proposed
Instruction	\$11,436,086
Administration, Attend., and Health	\$1,792,656
Transportation	\$1,370,600
Operations and Maintenance	\$1,296,809
Facilities	\$35,000
Debt Service	\$0
Technology	\$353,296
Food Service	\$455,716
Grand Total	\$16,740,163

Based on the projected receipts against expected revenues, the county contribution requested in order to fund this school budget of need is **\$10,931,102**, *\$980,551* over previous year.



INSTRUCTION—Notable Adjustments

Salaries and Benefits

The salary adjustment of 3% in the FY 26 budget is based on two factors.

1. The latest information from the General Assembly proposes a 3% increase.
2. Remaining competitive with surrounding districts who will receive greater funding for compensation adjustments.

Surrounding division bachelor's degree teacher salaries in FY 25:

YRS	0	5	15	20	30
Clarke	\$52800	\$56849	\$64284	\$68255	\$78717
Culpeper	\$51377	\$53462	\$59757	\$64693	\$75823
Fauquier	\$50000	\$56597	\$64974	\$69996	\$84587
Frederick	\$52000	\$54710	\$62840	\$69615	\$88165
Madison	\$52000	\$53954	\$57802	\$60514	\$67068
Page	\$49715	\$51339	\$56710	\$59603	\$65839
Orange	\$53848	\$55278	\$60147	\$63940	\$73089
Shenandoah	\$52266	\$55205	\$61587	\$65050	\$72571
RCPS	\$46350	\$55771	\$60657	\$63750	\$72365
Warren	\$52426	\$55934	\$63645	\$67891	\$77251

Surrounding division master's degree teacher salaries in FY 25:

YRS	0	5	15	20	30
Clarke	\$57800	\$61849	\$69284	\$73255	\$83717
Culpeper	\$57946	\$59694	\$66252	\$71394	\$82987
Fauquier	\$52000	\$59123	\$68351	\$74322	\$89268
Frederick	\$56109	\$58819	\$66949	\$73724	\$92274
Madison	\$55800	\$57754	\$61602	\$64314	\$70868
Page	\$53413	\$55037	\$60408	\$63301	\$69537
Orange	\$56848	\$58278	\$63147	\$66940	\$76089
Shenandoah	\$55437	\$58376	\$64758	\$68221	\$75742
RCPS	\$49850	\$59271	\$64157	\$67250	\$75865
Warren	\$54926	\$58434	\$66145	\$70391	\$79751

Current rankings are as follows:

Bachelor's Degree Ranks—among 10 comparison districts FY 25:

1 st Year	15 th Year	30 th Year Veteran
Orange	Fauquier	Frederick
Clarke	Clarke	Fauquier
Warren	Warren	Clarke
Shenandoah	Frederick	Warren
Frederick	Shenandoah	Culpeper
Madison	Rappahannock (down 1 rank)	Orange
Culpeper	Orange	Shenandoah
Fauquier	Culpeper	Rappahannock (down 3 ranks)
Page	Madison	Madison
Rappahannock (same)	Page	Page

Master's Degree Ranks—among 10 comparison districts:

1 st Year	15 th Year	30 th Year Veteran
Culpeper	Clarke	Frederick
Clarke	Fauquier	Fauquier
Orange	Frederick	Clarke
Frederick	Culpeper	Culpeper
Madison	Warren	Warren
Shenandoah	Shenandoah	Orange
Warren	RCPS (same rank)	RCPS (down 1 rank)
Page	Orange	Shenandoah
Fauquier	Madison	Madison
RCPS (same rank)	Page	Page

Teacher Scale Compression and Adjustment

During the FY 26 budget development cycle, based on the comparison data from surrounding districts and the higher than average number of veteran teachers retiring at the end of the previous school year, the teacher scale was reworked in order to be more competitive in attracting new talent to the district. The FY 26 teacher salary scale still reflects these changes with the additional 3% added to each step.

The FY 26 teacher scale with these adjustments is below:

Step	FY 25 Bachelor's Degree	Master's Pay	FY 25 Master's Salary	Doctorate Pay	FY 25 Doctorate Salary
0	\$51,246	\$3,500	\$54,746	\$4,000	\$58,746
1	\$51,759	\$3,500	\$55,259	\$4,000	\$59,259
2	\$52,276	\$3,500	\$55,776	\$4,000	\$59,776
3	\$53,085	\$3,500	\$56,585	\$4,000	\$60,585
4	\$54,678	\$3,500	\$58,178	\$4,000	\$62,178
5	\$56,318	\$3,500	\$59,818	\$4,000	\$63,818
6	\$57,445	\$3,500	\$60,945	\$4,000	\$64,945
7	\$57,733	\$3,500	\$61,233	\$4,000	\$65,233
8	\$58,020	\$3,500	\$61,520	\$4,000	\$65,520
9	\$58,333	\$3,500	\$61,833	\$4,000	\$65,833
10	\$58,602	\$3,500	\$62,102	\$4,000	\$66,102
11	\$59,153	\$3,500	\$62,653	\$4,000	\$66,653
12	\$60,039	\$3,500	\$63,539	\$4,000	\$67,539
13	\$60,639	\$3,500	\$64,139	\$4,000	\$68,139
14	\$61,246	\$3,500	\$64,746	\$4,000	\$68,746
15	\$61,857	\$3,500	\$65,357	\$4,000	\$69,357
16	\$62,477	\$3,500	\$65,977	\$4,000	\$69,977
17	\$63,101	\$3,500	\$66,601	\$4,000	\$70,601
18	\$63,732	\$3,500	\$67,232	\$4,000	\$71,232
19	\$64,370	\$3,500	\$67,870	\$4,000	\$71,870
20	\$65,013	\$3,500	\$68,513	\$4,000	\$72,513
21	\$65,663	\$3,500	\$69,163	\$4,000	\$73,163
22	\$66,321	\$3,500	\$69,821	\$4,000	\$73,821
23	\$66,984	\$3,500	\$70,484	\$4,000	\$74,484
24	\$67,156	\$3,500	\$70,656	\$4,000	\$74,656
25	\$68,170	\$3,500	\$71,670	\$4,000	\$75,670
26	\$69,187	\$3,500	\$72,687	\$4,000	\$76,687
27	\$70,224	\$3,500	\$73,724	\$4,000	\$77,724
28	\$71,278	\$3,500	\$74,778	\$4,000	\$78,778
29	\$72,346	\$3,500	\$75,846	\$4,000	\$79,846
30	\$73,432	\$3,500	\$76,932	\$4,000	\$80,932
31	\$74,536	\$3,500	\$78,036	\$4,000	\$82,036
32	\$75,651	\$3,500	\$79,151	\$4,000	\$83,151
33	\$76,786	\$3,500	\$80,286	\$4,000	\$84,286
34	\$79,461	\$3,500	\$82,961	\$4,000	\$86,961
35	\$81,055	\$3,500	\$84,555	\$4,000	\$88,555
36+	\$81,320	\$3,500	\$84,820	\$4,000	\$88,820
L1	\$83,320	\$3,500	\$86,820	\$4,000	\$90,820
L2	\$85,320	\$3,500	\$88,820	\$4,000	\$92,820
L3	\$86,280	\$3,500	\$89,780	\$4,000	\$93,780
L4	\$87,208	\$3,500	\$90,708	\$4,000	\$94,708
L5	\$89,208	\$3,500	\$92,708	\$4,000	\$96,708
L6	\$91,208	\$3,500	\$94,708	\$4,000	\$98,708

Career Development Teacher Salary

Due to the current teacher shortage, school districts throughout the Commonwealth are working to find ways to attract professionals willing to pursue higher education to fulfill the state requirements for full licensure. To do this, *Career Development Teacher* salaries are offered to employees who would be fulfilling a full-time teacher position as a long-term substitute capacity, but working toward licensure in the area for which the teacher is filling the gap.

While this does not happen often, it does impact several recent hires who are working toward fulfilling licensure requirements while providing excellent instruction with the careful guidance and support of mentors and administration.

For those who meet this criteria, a new salary will be calculated using 50% of the Step 0 teacher scale. These employees will also be eligible to receive benefits.

The table below outlines the across-the-board compensation adjustments provided since FY 2014.

Fiscal Year	Compensation Adjustment
2026	3% increase for all staff (mandate)
2025	3% increase for all staff (mandate)
2024	5% increase for all staff (mandate)
2023	5% increase for all staff (\$1000 bonus to all staff) (both mandates)
2022	5% increase for all staff (mandate)
2021	Step increase (2% for teachers only / \$500 bonus to all staff)
2020	4% (3% increased to 5% mandated by FY20)
2019	2% increase for staff (3% mandated by FY 20)
2018	2% increase for staff except central office administration.
2017	2% increase for staff (mandate)
2016	Step increase
2015	Step increase (mandate)
2014	3% increase to offset increased health care cost

The General Assembly Conference Budget also includes a \$1000 SOQ bonus for staff effective June 1, 2025. The School Board request will also include a request for appropriation to provide this bonus should it be included in the finalized state budget.

Staff Benefits

During budget planning, two employee benefit costs play a major role in the development of the expenditure portion of the FY 25 budget.

1. The Virginia Retirement System (VRS) mandated employer contribution rates.
2. Employer contributions to the Local Choice insurance premiums for staff.



The employer contribution rate for VRS for FY 26 is stable at 14.21%.

The Local Choice is a statewide pooling plan that helps mitigate premium risk for smaller school divisions and municipalities.

For FY 26, insurance rates went up 18%. In order to maintain a high level of insurance coverage for all staff, the cost of the premium increase was absorbed fully on the high deductible plan at the direction of the School Board since some of the rate increase was passed onto employees last year. However, ten percent of the increase on the Key Advantage 500 and 1000 Plans was absorbed, still passing 8% of the increase onto the employee. This is consistent with the School Board's plan to phase into covering 100% on the high deductible plan only.

The focus on employee health and wellness through programs like the Commit to Be Fit (C2BF) program has had great results and has saved the county hundreds of thousands in rising health care costs as well as maintaining competitive, affordable health care options for employees. However, after COVID, the health care system and insurance companies have struggled to maintain stability. In fact, FY 23 was the first increase to health insurance rates the division had realized since the previous 6 years. To incentivize moving to the high deductible plan and making informed and healthy choices, we will also include an automatic initial \$500 deposit into a Health Savings Account (HSA) should employees switch. Continuing to focus on staff physical and mental health will continue to be a priority in programs like C2BF and REACH.

RCPS Local Choice Health Insurance Rates

12 MONTH RATES

2025-2026

LOCAL CHOICE HEALTH INSURANCE MONTHLY RATES

Effective October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026

Local Choice Key Advantage 500 (Base Plan), KA 1000 and High Deductible Healthy Plan

Board Rates Based on Local Choice Key Advantage 500 Plan

		Local Choice KA 500 w/Comprehensive Dental	Local Choice KA 500 w/Preventive Dental Only	Local Choice KA 1000 w/Comprehensive Dental	Local Choice KA 1000 w/Preventive Dental	High Deductible Plan w/Comprehensive Dental	High Deductible Plan w/Preventive Dental
Subscriber	Monthly Premium	\$974.00	\$949.00	\$920.00	\$897.00	\$772.00	\$747.00
	Paid by SB	\$813.00	\$792.00	\$768.00	\$787.00	\$772.00	\$747.00
	Payroll Deduction	\$161.00	\$157.00	\$152.00	\$110.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Subscriber + 1 Minor	Monthly Premium	\$1,801.00	\$1,755.00	\$1,704.00	\$1,659.00	\$1,428.00	\$1,382.00
	Paid by SB	\$1,463.00	\$1,428.00	\$1,404.00	\$1,370.00	\$1,309.80	\$1,271.00
	Payroll Deduction	\$338.00	\$327.00	\$300.00	\$289.00	\$118.20	\$111.00
Subscriber + Spouse	Monthly Premium	\$1,801.00	\$1,755.00	\$1,704.00	\$1,659.00	\$1,428.00	\$1,382.00
	Paid by SB	\$1,363.00	\$1,328.00	\$1,304.00	\$1,270.00	\$1,209.80	\$1,171.00
	Payroll Deduction	\$438.00	\$427.00	\$400.00	\$389.00	\$218.20	\$211.00
Family	Monthly Premium	\$2,627.00	\$2,561.00	\$2,487.00	\$2,420.00	\$2,083.00	\$2,017.00
	Paid by SB	\$1,977.00	\$1,927.00	\$1,871.00	\$1,822.00	\$1,764.80	\$1,709.00
	Payroll Deduction	\$650.00	\$634.00	\$616.00	\$598.00	\$318.20	\$308.00

The employee may choose to participate in either the Local Choice KA 500, KA 1000 or the High Deductible Health Plan

The School Board's contribution will be based on the Local Choice KA500 rates as indicated

HSA Plans will be available for the High Deductible plans. Any employee switching from KA500 or KA 1000 to the HDP will receive \$500 towards their HSA.

FSA Plans are available for the KA500 and KA1000 Plans

High Deductible Plan will also offer an incentivized HSA account (\$500 initial deposit for switching using grant funds)

KA: Key Advantage through Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield





commit to be fit

Commit to Be Fit (C2BF) Program

(<http://rappc2bf.com>)

Commit to Be Fit is a school-sponsored, grant funded program. Through the generosity of the PATH Foundation, Commit to Be Fit was created to help promote healthier lifestyles for students, staff, and county residents/employees. All classes, workshops, and events are free of charge and held primarily at Rappahannock County Public Schools, while other offerings have expanded to various locations in the county. The program is fully-funded by the PATH Foundation in a non-competitive health priority cycle.

Commit to Be Fit is a three pronged approach to creating a healthier culture in the Classroom, in the Cafeteria, and in the Community. For FY 24 and 25, RCPS was the only Virginia recipient of a USDA Action for Healthy Kids (AFK) grant to improve access to locally sourced, scratch-based foods in the cafeteria. The C2BF team brought Chef Brian Volmrich aboard to work with the cafeterias, Farm to Table, and the culinary program at the high school to achieve the grant objectives.

PATH Foundation Grants Awarded for C2BF:

- \$100,000 Pilot Year FY 17
- \$10,550 Kick-off FY 17
- \$311,500 Continuation FY 18-FY 19
- \$250,750 Continuation FY 19-FY 20
- \$3685 ASHA Conference
- \$8000 FY 19 Conferences
- \$297,000 FY 20 -FY 21
- \$280,000 FY 21- FY 22
- \$327,000 FY 22-FY 23
- \$450,000 FY 23- FY 24
- \$450,000 FY 24 - FY 25
- \$400,000 FY 25- FY 26
- \$400,000 anticipated FY 26-27



C2BF Funds Total since FY 17 (including anticipated FY26-27):

\$3,288,485

Transportation

RCPS includes one bus in the budget to work toward replacing one bus per year to maintain the fleet.

The recommended replacement schedule is outlined below.

Bus #	Model	Year	Replacement Year
21	Blue Bird	2008	FY24
6	International	2011	FY25
26	Thomas	2014	FY26
18	Thomas	2014	FY28
10	Thomas	2014	FY28
24	Thomas	2014	FY29
2	International	2015	FY30
3	Thomas	2014	FY31
9	International	2016	FY32

5	International	2017	FY33
25	Thomas	2018	FY34
1	Thomas	2017	FY35
19	Thomas	2019	FY 36
20	Thomas	2019	FY 37
27	Chevy	2021	FY 37
28	Chevy	2021	FY 37
29	Chevy	2022	FY 38
11	Thomas	2020	FY 38
12	Thomas	2021	FY 39

Additional information about our Transportation Department Operations can be found in the superintendent [*Optimizing the Fleet*](#) presentation given at the Joint School Board/Supervisors meeting on February 13, 2024.



Operations, Maintenance, & Facilities

Over the past five years, RCPS has been collaborating with the Rappahannock County government to collectively discuss and plan for capital improvement. This has been a very beneficial collaboration, resulting in significant progress in completing the district's previous 5-year capital improvement plan. Additionally, with the infusion of state capital improvement dollars during and directly after COVID, many projects were completed ahead of schedule. In fact, last summer, the remaining capital funds were used to complete the 5-year plan within two years!

By state code, RCPS must maintain a 5-year capital improvement plan for review and approval in the school budget by the school board. A summary of the projects ahead for the next 8-year period is provided below:

Budget Year	Description	Cost
FY 24	17 classrooms, RCHS Library, Culinary, 34 RCES Bard Units (HVAC)	Budgeted/Paid-\$740,000 Completed
FY 25	Roof work, Interior doors at both schools, 4 RCES restrooms, RCHS transition room, and auditorium	Budgeted/Paid- \$168,710 Completed except aud. rigging
FY 26	4 classrooms, RCES Interior/Exterior Doors, RCES roof replacement	\$622,750 - working with Secure Futures for solar option to offset cost of roof replacement
FY 27	RCHS exterior doors, 4 classrooms, RCHS 8 th grade bathrooms, primary heat pumps (½)	\$465,327
FY 28	Primary heat pumps (other ½), 4 classrooms	\$240,327
FY 29	RCHS auditorium (rigging, sound, lighting), 5 classrooms	\$336,413
FY 30	RCHS gym roof, 4 classrooms	\$275,000
FY 31	RCHS Sand beds/sewage treatment plant	\$220,000
	Total Remaining (not including paid FY24 & FY 25)	\$2,159,817

Cost Comparison—A Tale of Two Counties

Every school year at budget time, RCPS receives scrutiny and critical feedback about the high cost of educating its students and the high percentage of the county budget allotted to the schools. Additionally, in our quest to fight for state funding in Richmond, it was frequently opined that the state is less than impressed with the local contribution to the school system and its efforts in raising local revenue. In order to provide additional context, a comparison is provided between Rappahannock and a very similar county regarding school funding; namely, Surry County.

Surry County is one of the three counties also eligible to receive the Supplemental Basic Aid subsidy from the state. This means that Surry, like Rappahannock, also serves less than 1100 students, generates over 65% of its revenue from the locality's real estate, and has a local composite index of 0.6000 or greater.

	RCPS FY 25 Budget	Surry FY 24 Budget
Total Citizens	7,502	6,561
Total School-Aged Children	799	643
Local Composite Index	0.8000	0.08000
Median Household Income	\$98,125	\$71,458
Total County Budget	\$30.1 million	\$65.2 million
Total School Budget	\$15.001 million	\$17.9 million
Total County Transfer	\$9.9 million	\$13.4 million
Total FTE Staff	152	194
Per Pupil Expenditures	\$20,618	\$27,121

In this simple comparison, one can see that the RCPS school budget is not unreasonable when compared to another similar county. These types of comparisons are noted in Richmond and may be part of the challenge when arguing for additional state funding.

Acknowledgements

The faculty, staff, and administration would like to thank our parents, community agencies, nonprofits, organizations, and county leaders for all the support you continually give to our school system for the students of Rappahannock County. We are a very blessed community with so many caring supporters, and we could not provide the high quality services we do without this vital network. It truly takes a village to raise children, and in a vastly changing world, the educational landscape has become much more challenging to navigate. Thank you for taking this journey with us and working toward making Rappahannock County Public Schools the best small public school system in the Commonwealth for our most precious asset—our children.

School Board Members

Special thanks to our School Board members who work tirelessly to advocate for the children of Rappahannock County.



Pictured left to right (Superintendent, Dr. Grimsley, Vice Chair, Larry Grove, Chris Ubben, Missy McCool, Chairman Wes Mills, and Rachel Bynum

Rappahannock County Board of Supervisors

Special thanks to our county Board of Supervisors members who continue to work collaboratively with the School Board to provide a quality education for our students.

Debbie Donehey, Chair

Keir Whitson, Vice Chair

Van Carney

Donna Comer

Christine Smith

Rappahannock County Administration

Special thanks to our county administrator, Mr. Garrey Curry, and deputy county administrator, Ms. Bonnie Jewell, for all their hard work, ongoing dialogue, problem solving, and collaboration in helping the county and schools.

