



Quality Profile

2025





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Van Wert City School District

OUR MISSION

We continue to be a source of Cougar Pride while providing each student a quality education through innovative methods and technology.

OUR VISION

In partnership with our community, we will ensure that all students develop the knowledge, skills, and attributes they will need to thrive in post-secondary education, careers, and civic life.

OUR COMMUNITY

The Van Wert City School District is made up of two communities: the city of Van Wert (approximately 11,045 people) and the village of Ohio City (approximately 760 people) located in Van Wert County, Ohio. These communities are surrounded by farmland, with agriculture being a major industry in Van Wert County. A variety of industries and businesses offer employment for business, professional, skilled and unskilled workers.

OUR SCHOOLS

Van Wert City Schools is at the forefront of education as a PBL (Project Based Learning) district, bringing education to life with innovative instructional methods. Enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year is 2,058 students who are served by five schools: the Early Childhood Center (Preschool-Kindergarten), Elementary (grades 1-5), Middle School (grades 6-8), High School (grades 9-12), and School at the Goedde (alternative grades 6-12).



Superintendent's Message

Van Wert Cougar Community -

During the 2024-2025 school year, Van Wert City Schools embarked on a Strategic Plan process. With input from our community, we created a shared vision for Van Wert City Schools. Our Strategic Plan consists of five goals, and this Quality Profile will highlight some of the great work happening in each goal area:

1. Academic Achievement & Education Innovation

VWCS will ensure student achievement and growth, by promoting active learning through evidence-based instructional strategies with an emphasis on student engagement.

2. Students, Staff, & Family Wellness

All VWCS students, staff, and families will be given unique and varied physical and mental health opportunities and tools to support one another in developing a balance in their lives.

3. Community Engagement & Public Relations

VWCS will obtain a comprehensive and integrated communication strategy for district awareness within the community.

VWCS will maintain and increase collaboration and civic engagement within the school community through the development and implementation of relationship-building initiatives.

4. Funding & Resources

VWCS will operate strategically with the district's finances to enhance revenues, to evaluate value added cost saving measures and efficiencies, and to monitor spending prioritizing that the majority of resources are devoted towards instruction.

VWCS will demonstrate and promote financial transparency and accountability to our stakeholders through communications, publications, and the district website.

5. School Safety & Facilities

The district will evaluate annually all current safety and facility needs using available data, resources, and standard operating procedures.

Additionally, Van Wert City Schools strives to be a model district for all to follow, and this Quality Profile allows us to promote the superior opportunities available to all students beyond the basics. VWCS will always be a We > Me and Culture > Strategy district that will love, serve, and care to give ourselves a chance. We value a positive culture and understand that, as both professionals and role models, our behavior can impact the overall effectiveness of Van Wert City Schools.

Thank you for your continued support of our students, staff, and schools.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out at 419-238-0648 or m_bagley@vwcs.net.

Mark Bagley
Superintendent
Van Wert City Schools





Academic Achievement

An Award Winning Education

Van Wert City Schools is an award-winning school district that serves students of all ages, from preschool through twelfth grade.

Van Wert Early Childhood Center offers all-day preschool (with 2 or 3-day options based on age) from 8:10 AM to 2:40 PM, as well as all-day, every-day kindergarten from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. The preschool program is rated “Gold” by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. As a play-based center, instruction is guided by required curricula including Grade Level Standards, Heggerty Phonemic Awareness, and the Literacy Collaborative Framework. Preschool also uses Creative Curriculum, while kindergarten incorporates UFLI phonics, Big Ideas Math, Number Talks, and will add *Being a Reader* next year. All literacy programs align with the Science of Reading.

Van Wert Elementary School serves students in grades 1–5 and offers a range of academic, health, and wellness programs, including the 100 Mile Club, Road Runners, WATCH D.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students), and Jumpin’ Jammers. With a strong focus on literacy through the Literacy Collaborative initiative, the school promotes academic growth and a love for learning. VWES has earned the OAESA’S Hall of Fame Award twice since 2017, and in 2023, Assistant Principal Tracy Wehner was named OAESA’S Assistant Principal of the Year.

Van Wert Middle School serves students in grades 6–8 and has been designated an *Ohio School to Watch* since 2006. As a *Project Lead the Way* Distinguished School, VWMS integrates STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) into the daily schedule, providing students with hands-on, real-world learning experiences. Students can explore their interests through more than 10 Discovery classes, including art, music, engineering, fitness, technology, and consumer sciences. VWMS also offers a wide range of extracurricular opportunities, such as athletics, Cougar Leaders, 4-H, History Club, Quiz Bowl, and Robotics Club—giving every student a place to lead, learn, and belong.

Van Wert High School is a leader in educational innovation, offering over 100 elective courses, eight AP classes, and College Credit Plus options for students in grades 9–12. Students are encouraged to participate in the school community through 11 clubs and 22 athletic programs. VWHS has earned recognition for its female representation in AP Computer Science and has been named one of *U.S. News & World Report’s* “Best High Schools” since 2018.

Van Wert School at the Goedde provides a supportive and personalized learning environment for students in grades 6–12 who need extra support or a new beginning. By focusing on each student’s strengths and challenges, the school helps them succeed both academically and personally. High school students build job skills and community pride through a daily work-study program, while middle schoolers develop responsibility and teamwork through hands-on service projects. With a strong emphasis on emotional growth and coping strategies, students work to overcome past obstacles, recover credits, and move confidently toward graduation and a future full of promise.



ECC students celebrate 100 days



VWES Jumpin' Jammers, 2025 Ohio Has Talent Champions



VWMS Fall Festival, Merit claims the trophy



VWHS Robotics Club Team 5501



Goedde students host Breakfast with a Vet

Building Lifelong Success



The Career Education Opportunity (CEO) Program at Van Wert City Schools offers high school seniors hands-on experience through apprenticeships and internships with local businesses. Initiated nine years ago by career counselor Kerry Koontz to bridge the gap between traditional education and career readiness, the program has expanded from 17 students to over 90 participants, collaborating with over 140 businesses.

This growth reflects the program's effectiveness in preparing students for the workforce by providing practical skills and insights into various professions. The CEO Program has garnered national recognition, with Koontz discussing its transformative impact on career education on the *America's Work Force Union* Podcast.

The program's success is also evident in its alumni, such as 2018 graduate Dalton Heppard (pictured above), who has consistently donated a portion of his business proceeds back to the CEO Program, acknowledging its significant influence on his personal and professional development.

By fostering strong partnerships between students and the local business community, the CEO Program continues to equip students with the experiences and skills necessary for future success.





Collaborative Culture

Wellness, Mental Health, and Safety

RAPTOR
TECHNOLOGIES

THE GOLD STANDARD IN SCHOOL SAFETY

HEART SAFE SCHOOL DISTRICT
Project ADAM

School safety is the top priority at Van Wert City Schools. Our mission is to enhance safety, security, and emergency plan development in accordance with the School Climate Guidelines, School Safety/Emergency Operations Plan Template, and Ohio Law. The goal of Van Wert City Schools is a total commitment in supporting all of our schools to ensure the safety of students, employees, and visitors through effective policies and procedures, training, and community and interagency involvement.

In August 2024, Van Wert City Schools enhanced campus security by partnering with Raptor Technologies to implement a new visitor management system. This system requires all visitors to present a driver's license for scanning upon entry, ensuring thorough screening before issuing visitor badges. In proactive collaboration with local law enforcement, this security upgrade enhances our

school safety preparedness, and is a testament to our commitment to ensuring the highest level of safety for our students, employees, and visitors.

All five buildings in the Van Wert City School District have earned Heart Safe School designation through Project ADAM, a national initiative that equips schools with training and resources to respond to cardiac emergencies. The district now has 33 AEDs in place, including eight portable units for use during off-campus activities.

In addition to our team of school psychologists and counselors, Westwood Behavioral Health Center, in conjunction with VWCS, provides clinical counseling and consultation services to students in need.

Van Wert City Schools offers a comprehensive Wellness Program promoting active, healthy lifestyles through activities like the Walking Program, 100 Mile Club, Roadrunners, Jumpin' Jammers, and Nutrition Education. We believe healthy students are happy students.

As part of this commitment, VWCS transformed its weight room into a fully equipped fitness center, featuring treadmills, bikes, resistance gear, and more. This inclusive space supports students' physical and mental well-being, encouraging lifelong healthy habits and overall personal growth.



FITNESS CENTER

Cougar Culture

WHOLE CHILD FOCUS

Van Wert City Schools is dedicated to supporting the social-emotional well-being of every student. We focus on developing resilient, well-rounded individuals who are motivated by a culture of continuous growth and supported every step of the way. By creating a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment, we give students the space they need to learn from challenges, build strong relationships, and grow in both confidence and character.

THE R-FACTOR

To further strengthen this commitment, we introduced the R-Factor district-wide this year. Based on the formula $E + R = O$ (Event + Response = Outcome), this powerful framework empowers students to recognize that while they can't always control what happens, they can control how they respond. It's a simple, impactful approach that builds resilience, responsibility, and confidence while preparing students for success in school and in life.

ARTS, ATHLETICS, & BEYOND

- **Music Education:** The district boasts a strong music program with award-winning vocal and instrumental performers at both the middle school and high school levels. Through band, choir, and specialized ensembles, students build confidence and discipline while sharing their talents with the community.
- **Theatre Arts:** Create, perform, and inspire through theatrical arts. The Van Wert High School Theatre Department stages two major productions each year, a fall play and a spring musical, and involves students in grades 6–12. Productions are supported by the Niswonger Performing Arts Center, providing students with a professional and enriching experience.
- **Athletics:** The Cougars have a proud athletic tradition, offering 11 middle school programs and 22 high school athletic programs. From football to cross country to tennis and more, student-athletes develop teamwork, perseverance, and leadership.
- **Clubs and Organizations:** Van Wert City Schools offers a variety of clubs from elementary school through high school that cultivate character, encourage leadership, and build meaningful connections among students, peers, and community members.

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR LIFE

At Van Wert City Schools, we are proud to provide opportunities where every student can thrive—academically, socially, emotionally, and creatively. Through the R-Factor mindset, a wide variety of extracurriculars, and a whole-child approach, our students build confidence, resilience, and real-world skills. Whether in the classroom, on stage, or under the lights at Eggerss Stadium, our students are gaining the confidence and skills they need to succeed in post-secondary education, careers, and civic life.



VWMS Students, 2025 OMEA Jr. High Honors Choir



Students embracing the R-Factor



2024 VWXC State Qualifiers



Jaiden & Mr. Bowen showing off new haircuts



VWHS athletes connect with 2nd Graders to promote reading as part of the 2nd & 7 Program



Community Engagement

Connected to Community

Van Wert City Schools is committed to building relationships with our community members and providing them with information. With our heavy social media presence and newly revamped website, we are able to reach thousands of community members and provide them with information regarding district operations, announcements, and student accomplishments.

At every grade level, students engage with the community on a regular basis. Some examples are below:

ECC KISS Days - Kids Invite Someone Special

Whether it's going on an Elf Hunt during the holidays or making a craft together the ECC hosts KISS Days where students get to invite someone special to join them for a memorable, interactive experience.

Elementary VIP Days - Very Important Persons

The elementary hosts VIP days for students to invite one very important person to spend time with them either during the morning walking program or for 30 minutes during the school day.

ECC & Elementary PTO - Parent-Teacher Organization

The PTO promotes open communication between the administration, faculty, parents, and the community. PTO supports teachers, staff, and faculty in their educational and recreational needs through fundraising and family activities.

Van Wert Middle School Business Fair

Each year, the Van Wert Middle Schools hosts a dynamic business fair, welcoming community members over two days for student-led innovation and entrepreneurship. Eighth-grade students engage in the full entrepreneurial process—developing, marketing, and producing a product using the Media Center's Makerspace. They then present and sell their creations at the business fair. Following the event, students donate a portion of their proceeds to a local nonprofit, blending real-world business skills with meaningful community impact.

Extracurricular Activities - Student Involvement

Both Van Wert Middle School and High School offer many different areas of interest in which students can get involved. Organizations like student council, 4-H, quiz bowl, FCCLA, and theatre help students find others with common interests and build relationships that will last a lifetime. Students are encouraged to enjoy their middle school and high school years by being active in these organizations in order to contribute to their school and community.

PBIS Program - Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Launched in fall 2021, our PBIS initiative continues to recognize and celebrate students who demonstrate positive behaviors throughout the school day. With support from local businesses and donors, PBIS has become a cornerstone of our district's culture of respect and responsibility.



VWECC KISS Day



VWES VIP Day



VWMS students prepare for business fair



VWCS Assistant Superintendent Bob Priest shops the business fair



VWHS Theatre rehearses for an upcoming musical performance

Students Making an Impact



Each year, Van Wert School at the Goedde students and staff come together to host a homemade Thanksgiving feast for community members. Using ingredients grown in their very own hydroponic farm, they prepare the entire meal from scratch and serve it with pride—turning a simple holiday dinner into a heartwarming display of generosity and gratitude.

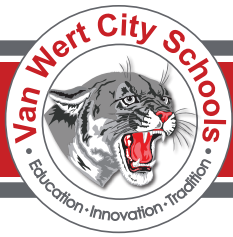
But the school's outreach doesn't stop there. Throughout the year, Goedde students engage in a variety of community service projects, from raking leaves for elderly neighbors to maintaining the community garden and supporting local nonprofit efforts. Their acts of service not only benefit others but also foster real-world learning and character development.

Another standout initiative is the Goedde Boutique, a 100% donation-based retail store that offers clothing, shoes, accessories, and more—completely free of charge. Whether hosting a pop-up-shop, or shopping by appointment, the boutique welcomes anyone in the community in need of a helping hand.

"Volunteerism is an extremely important piece of what makes the Goedde special," said Rhonda Cunningham, Director of Van Wert School at the Goedde. "Our purpose is to show our kids that even if you don't personally know someone in need, there's always someone who could use a helping hand. These opportunities help our students build empathy, confidence, and important social skills."

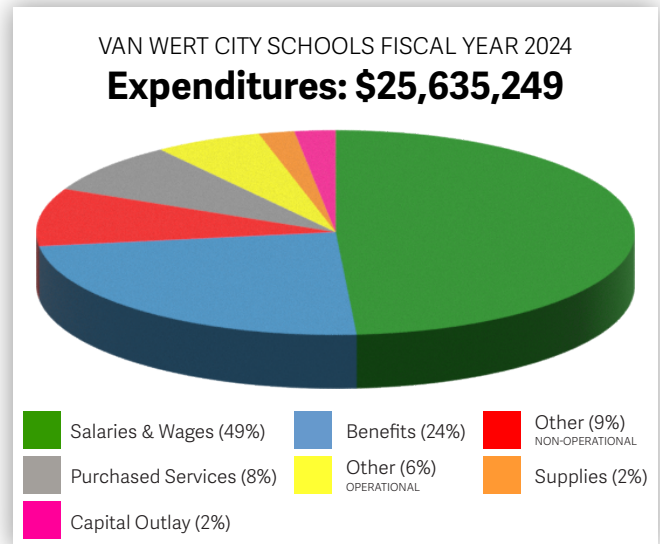
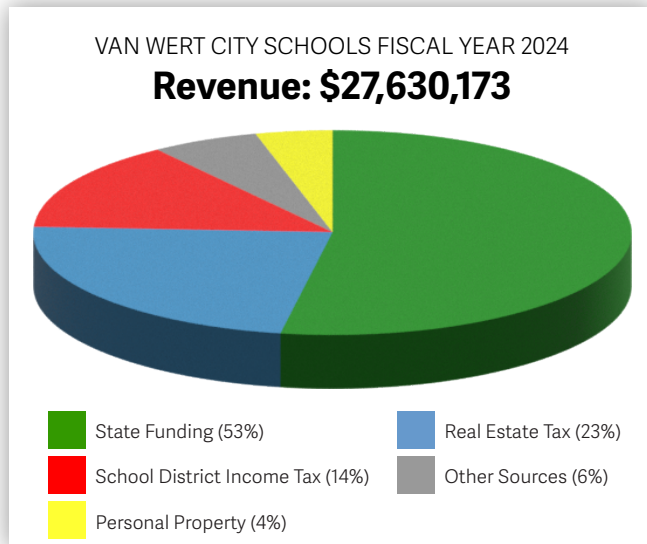
This statewide recognition affirms what the Van Wert community already knows—that the students and staff at the Goedde are making a powerful difference, one act of kindness at a time.





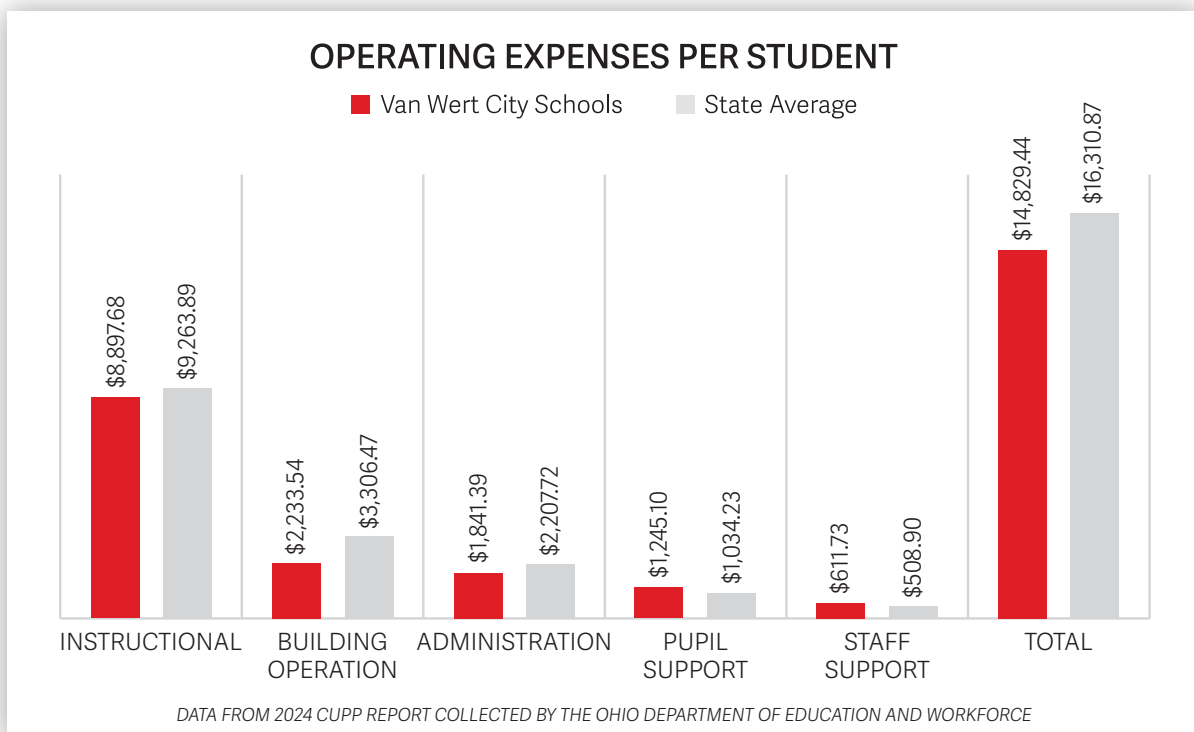
Fiscal Responsibility

Fiscal Year Review



Academic Excellence and Financial Accountability

Van Wert City Schools is committed to providing an exceptional educational experience while adhering to a fiscally responsible budget. Fiscal responsibility commits to operational efficiency and ensures that the majority of funding is spent on classroom instruction, resulting in an excellent return on investment for community members. In addition to investing more in classroom instruction, Van Wert City Schools has lower building operation and administration costs than the state average, resulting in a lower total cost overall.



FY 2024 VWCS Financial Facts



Full-Time Employees

VWCS employs 297 full-time staff.



VWCS Buildings

VWCS buildings are valued at more than \$161 million.



Transportation

VWCS 15 district-owned school buses traveled in excess of 90,000 miles during the 2023-2024 school year.



Nutrition in Numbers

VWCS Food Services Department served 197,286 lunches and 69,263 breakfasts during the 2023-2024 school year.



Student Enrollment

VWCS provides educational opportunities to more than 2,000 students - THANK YOU!



A Note From the Treasurer

A review of VWCS fiscal year 2024 general fund operations discloses that 73% of our \$25.6 million operating budget was expended on salaries and fringe benefits. The remaining 27% was used to support and supplement our educational programs, which includes items such as classroom textbooks and materials, technology related equipment and software, contracted educational support services, audit fees, and for services and supplies related to our facility, transportation, and equipment programs.

Our fiscal year 2024 operations provided a balanced budget that included the establishment of a set-aside fund as a means to address current and future needs of our aging facilities. Fiscal year 2024 also marked the end of ESSER funding, one-time "COVID-19" funding in which VWCS received \$4.4 million.

In budgeting and planning for each educational year the Board of Education and administration strives to operate in an efficient manner without sacrificing the overall delivery of the quality educational programs that we provide to our students. As stewards of taxpayers resources, we are entrusted to keep our students and community in focus as we plan and invest in education for generations to come.

Thank you for your support of our school system.

Troy Bowersock, Treasurer
Van Wert City Schools
Phone: 419-238-5432 | Email: t_bowersock@vwcs.net





Stay Connected!

We value the input of every member of our Van Wert City Schools community. Stay connected to the district, and get involved in making our schools and community even better. Scan the QR code on the left to visit our website or follow us on social media!



vwcs.net



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Van Wert City Schools

Education • Innovation • Tradition

Van Wert Early Childhood Center

Preschool - Kindergarten

1120 Buckeye Drive
Van Wert, Ohio 45891
Phone: 419-238-0384

Van Wert Elementary School

Grades 1 - 5

10992 State Route 118 South
Van Wert, Ohio 45891
Phone: 419-238-1761

Van Wert Middle School

Grades 6-8

10694 State Route 118 South
Van Wert, Ohio 45891
Phone: 419-238-0727

Van Wert High School

Grades 9 - 12

10708 State Route 118 South
Van Wert, Ohio 45891
Phone: 419-238-3350

Van Wert School at the Goedde

Alternative - Grades 6-12

205 West Crawford Street
Van Wert, Ohio 45891
Phone: 419-238-6540

Van Wert City Schools

District Office

205 West Crawford Street
Van Wert, Ohio 45891
Phone: 419-238-0648



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