

ONWARD & UPWARD

Celebrating our progress,
elevating our future.



2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT
Winchester Public Schools

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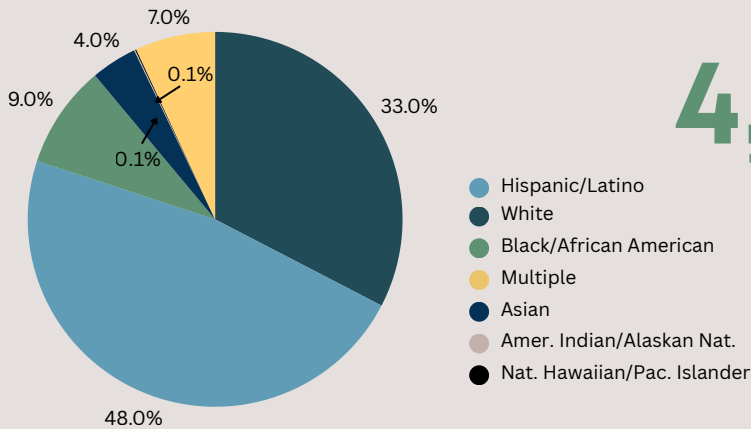
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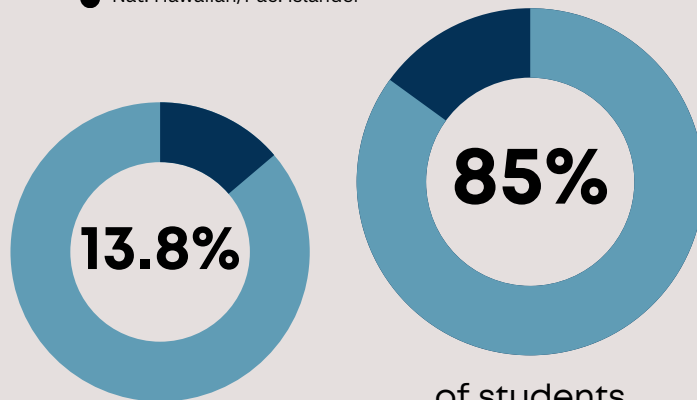


DISTRICT QUICK STATS

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



4,259
STUDENTS



of students receive
special education
services

of students
qualify for free &
reduced meals

*as reported in December 2024

7
SCHOOLS
PK-12

763
FULL-TIME
STAFF

53% of professionally licensed staff
have advanced degrees



418
INSTRUCTIONAL
STAFF

51% of professionally licensed staff
hired in 24-25 have more than 5
years of experience

32%

English Language
Learners
2X the VA State Average



5th

highest ELL
percentage
population in VA



34

languages
spoken



EMPOWER & ELEVATE:

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

As we wrap up our Empower 2025 strategic plan, I am incredibly proud of the progress we have made together. Empower 2025 strengthened our instructional practices, expanded opportunities for students, and deepened partnerships with families and our community. From early learning to innovative student experiences, our achievements reflect work done with purpose and heart.

Our 2024-2025 annual report highlights just some of the ways Empower 2025 has shaped teaching, learning, and student support across WPS. You will see several areas where we are doubling down—from student agency and project-based learning to employee development and community partnerships.

As we look ahead to Elevate 2030, we carry forward not only our progress but also the momentum and shared belief that every student can thrive. Elevate 2030 builds on the strong foundation we've created while raising our expectations for student learning, staff excellence, family engagement, and organizational growth.

Thank you for your continued partnership and trust. Together, we will celebrate our progress and elevate our future—ensuring that Winchester Public Schools continues moving onward and upward for every student we serve.

Sincerely,

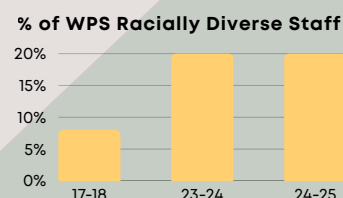


**DR. JASON
VAN HEUKELUM**



Celebrating Our Progress

Teacher and School Leader (TSL) Grant led to **significant increase in racially diverse staff**



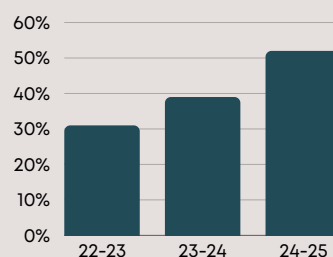
7/7 Common Sense Schools

This designation recognizes a commitment to helping students think critically and use technology responsibly



52% of students engage in work-based learning with 88 industry partners

% of JHHS Students Engaged in Work-Based Learning



JHHS and GQES received **RAMP® designation for their school counseling programs** from the American School Counselor Association



**internet»
essentials**
FROM COMCAST

100% of students have access to broadband internet where they live

Our Strategic Plan



Elevating Our Future

OUR VISION

We aspire to be an inclusive community that empowers all students to thrive.

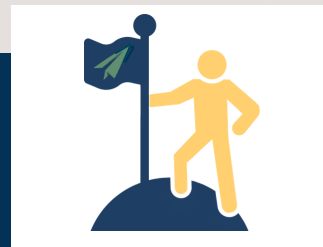
OUR MISSION

We ensure students have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to embrace rigorous challenges, navigate personalized pathways, and enrich their civic communities.



ELEVATE LEARNERS

Students have agency, motivation, knowledge, and skills to set and pursue learning goals toward academic and life success.



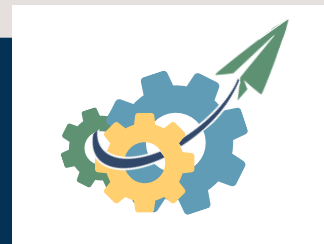
ELEVATE STAFF

Employees are empowered and valued for their unique contributions, which fosters a positive environment through collective efficacy and shared accountability.



ELEVATE FAMILY & COMMUNITY

WPS cultivates student success through mutually supportive family connection and community partnerships.



ELEVATE SYSTEMS

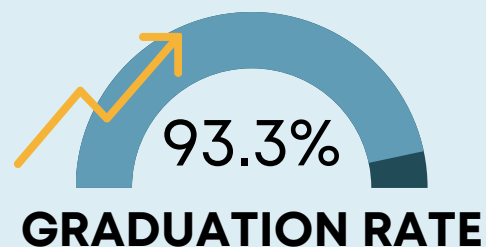
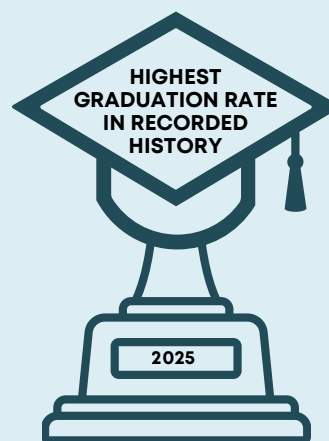
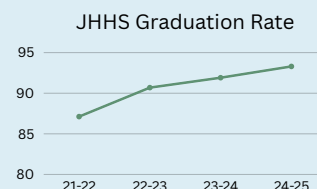
WPS provides excellent operational support that ensures transparent stewardship, while ensuring efficient, environmentally responsible, and equitable practices to build stakeholder trust and satisfaction.

2024-2025 School Performance

Virginia significantly redesigned how schools are measured in 2024-2025. **Accountability** is measured using the new School Performance and Support Framework (SPSF). The SPSF uses a points-based rating system based on a set of indicators, including academic progress, attendance, readiness for the next grade, and graduation. **Accreditation** is based on the Standards of Quality in the Code of Virginia, focusing on whether a school meets operational requirements.

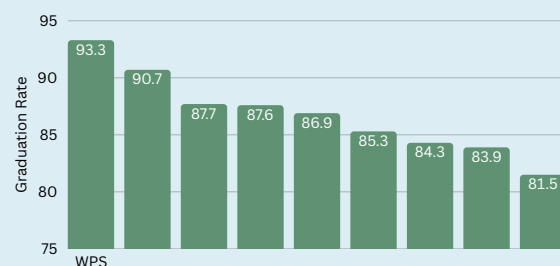
We are pleased to report that **all seven WPS schools are fully accredited**. Under the SPSF, **five WPS schools met or exceeded state accountability expectations** and two schools will be targeted for additional support.

Performance Framework Score	
Distinguished: 90-100	 94.7
On Track: 80-89	 85.1  84.6  83.7  83
Off Track: 65-79	
Needs Intensive Support: 0-65 OR Federally Identified*	 77.9  75
*Federally Identified Schools are automatically designated as Needs Intensive Support	

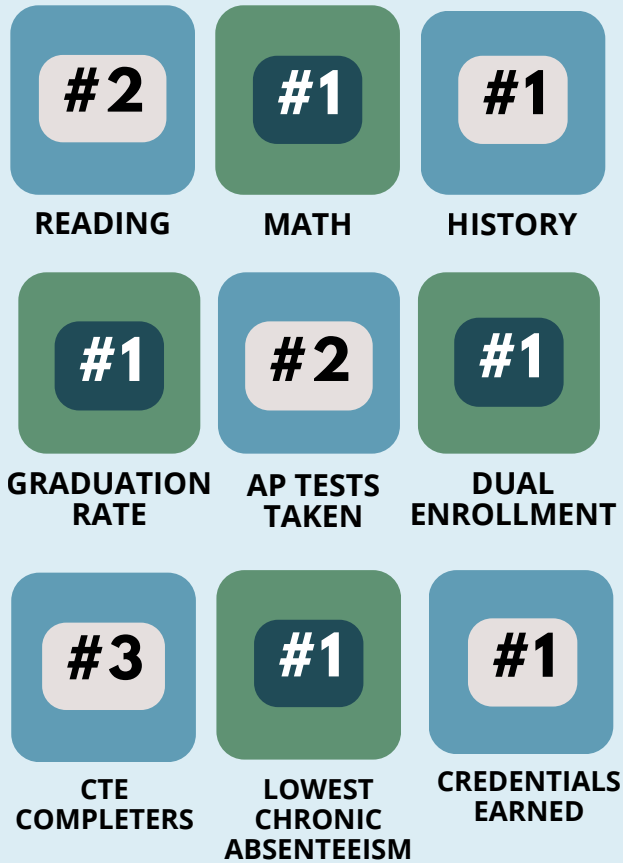


**#1 IN
PEER
GROUP**

2025 Affinity Group Graduation Rates

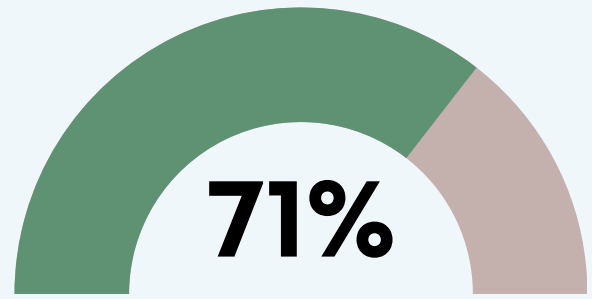


PEER GROUP* COMPARISONS



HANDLEY NAMED EXEMPLAR PERFORMANCE SCHOOL

John Handley High School was recognized as an Exemplar Performance School by the Virginia Department of Education. Handley is one of just 21 schools in the state of Virginia to be recognized in the area of continuous improvement for graduation and dropout rates.

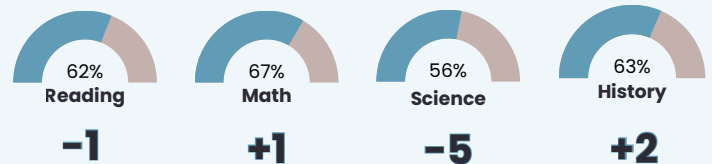


of WPS schools meet or exceed state expectations



2024-2025 STANDARDS OF LEARNING (SOL) SCORES

Overall WPS Scores with percentage point changes from 23-24



NICHE RANKINGS

BEST
School Divisions
in Virginia

#47 / 129
2022-2023

#30 / 129
2023-2024

#27 / 129
2024-2025



***About the WPS Peer Group:** This group of other city school districts has similar numbers of English Language Learners and students who qualify for Free & Reduced Lunch. The group includes: Harrisonburg, Manassas, Manassas Park, Roanoke, Lynchburg, Charlottesville, Waynesboro, and Alexandria Cities.

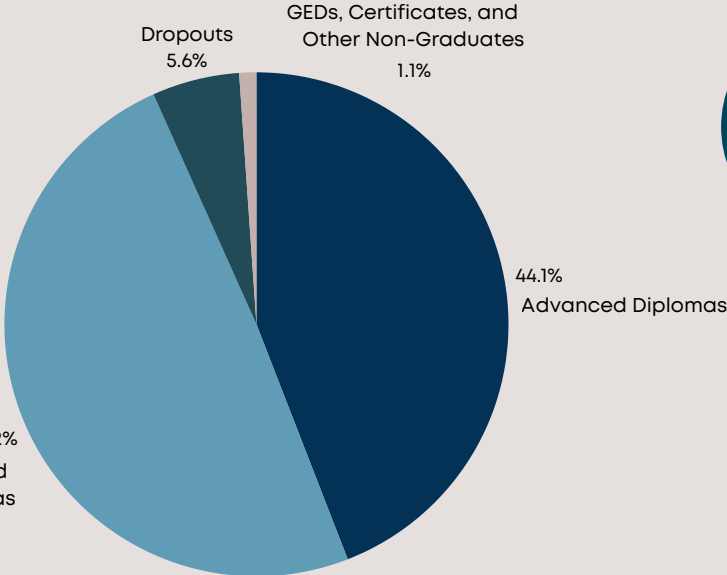
****About the Local Group:** The Local Group includes Frederick, Clarke and Warren Counties.



Portrait of a GRADUATE

DIPLOMAS AND COMPLETION


\$5.3M
IN SCHOLARSHIPS



LEARNER EMPOWERMENT

100% EMPLOYED, ENLISTED,
OR ENROLLED IN
HIGHER EDUCATION

ADVANCED PLACEMENT



1 IN 4 HANDLEY STUDENTS ENROLL
IN AP CLASSES

356 | **21**
AP STUDENTS | AP CLASSES

*Economically
Disadvantaged student
participation in AP
classes has increased
115% since 2023.*

DUAL ENROLLMENT



34% OF HANDLEY
STUDENTS DUAL
ENROLL AT LRCC

2X THE STATE AVERAGE

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

61%
OF GRADUATING SENIORS
ARE CTE COMPLETERS



726
INDUSTRY CREDENTIALS
EARNED BY HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENTS



24 CTE
PROGRAMS,
INCLUDING:



VIDEO &
MEDIA



WELDING



ELECTRICIAN



ENTREPRENEURSHIP



MEDICAL LABORATORY
TECHNOLOGY



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: MATAZ ALNAJAR



“APPRECIATE WHAT YOU HAVE AND NEVER TAKE YOUR OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRANTED. CONTINUE YOUR EDUCATION, BECAUSE CHAOS OFTEN COMES FROM IGNORANCE. RESPECT YOUR ELDERS AND LEARN FROM THEIR EXPERIENCES AND MISTAKES.”

Mataz Alnajar, Handley Class of '20, embodies resilience, perseverance, and the transformative power of education. Born in Homs, Syria, Mataz spent his childhood amid the devastation of the Syrian civil war. By the age of ten, he had witnessed violence, experienced hunger, and was forced to leave school for his own safety. In 2012, his family fled to Jordan with no food or money. Mataz began working at just twelve years old to help support his family.

In August 2016, Mataz and his family were resettled in the United States and made Winchester their new home. Just one week later, Mataz enrolled at John Handley High School, speaking only a few words of English and navigating an entirely new culture and school system. He was placed in ESL classes and quickly found a supportive community that helped him adapt and grow.

A pivotal moment in Mataz's journey came when he connected with Handley librarian Fay Stump, who spoke broken Arabic and played a critical role in helping him learn English.

Through hours spent in the library using language-learning software and peer-to-peer learning with a fellow student, Mataz rapidly gained confidence and fluency. He credits this encouragement, along with the support of his teachers, for making Handley a welcoming place where learning felt possible and meaningful.

Mataz found inspiration in many of his classes, particularly World History, English, Earth Science, and elective courses like Computer Information Systems and Technical Drawing and Design. These experiences sparked early interests in cybersecurity and architecture and helped him envision a future beyond survival. Despite graduating during the COVID-19 pandemic, Mataz proudly earned his diploma in 2020, marking the close of one chapter and the beginning of another.

After graduation, Mataz attended Shenandoah University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and Criminology. Shaped by his lived experience under an unjust regime, Mataz developed a deep interest in understanding crime, power, and justice—and a desire to serve others. In March 2025, he began his career with the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office and is now working toward his long-term goal of becoming a detective.

Mataz credits Handley with preparing him for his career and life beyond the classroom. Learning English from the ground up taught him patience, adaptability, and resilience—skills he relies on daily as a deputy.



ADDRESSING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

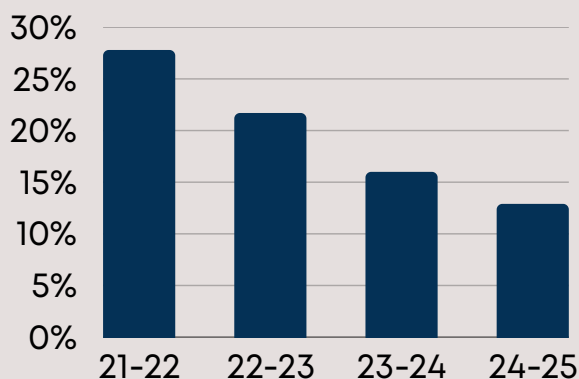


Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% of the academic year for any reason, including excused absences, and is **one of the readiness indicators** that determines school performance and support.

Chronic absenteeism is a significant factor in student success.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM IS DOWN

54% *from 2021-2022*



Chronic Absenteeism Rates (% of student population)

School	Chronic 22-23	Chronic 23-24	Chronic 24-25
FDES	15.17%	10.56%	9.2%
GQES	16.46%	12.04%	9.38%
JKES	16.41%	16.97%	9.41%
VACDES	20.55%	14.09%	10.13%
DMIS	17.8%	15.68%	10.1%
DMMS	23.35%	17.63%	13.7%
JHHS	27.26%	17.63%	18.69%
2024-2025 WPS Average			12.9%

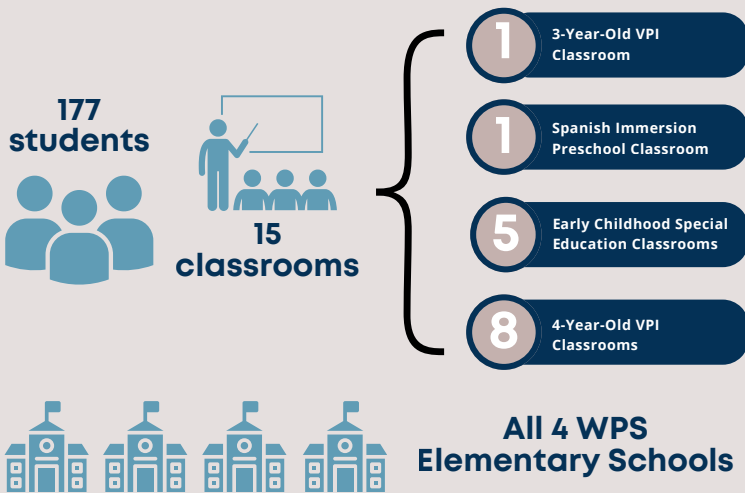
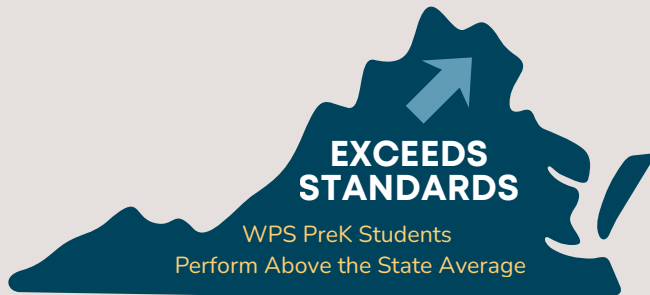


WPS students participated in regular attendance competitions between schools, homerooms, or classes. Kona Ice was a frequent prize along with petting zoos and pep rallies. Community partners help to sponsor attendance competitions!

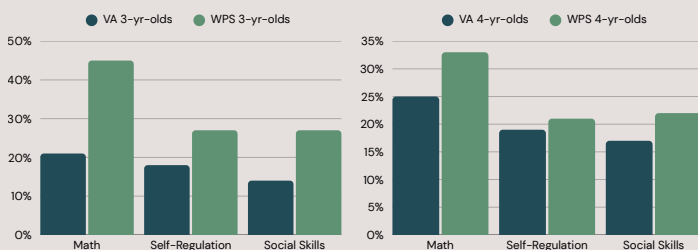
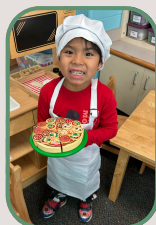
WPS overall chronic absenteeism numbers have **decreased by 15 percentage points** (a 54% reduction) since 2021-22. For 2024-2025, the WPS chronic absenteeism rate was **12.9%**, which puts WPS ahead of the Virginia state average and the districts in our peer group.

PRESCHOOL @ WPS

A Decade of Commitment to Early Childhood Education



Percentage of Students Who Score in Strong Range



Launching Early Childhood Special Education

The WPS Preschool Program grew in 2025 to further expand early education for our youngest learners. On December 9, the School Board voted to establish an in-house Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program that supports students ages 2-5 who are eligible for special education services. These classrooms are now located within Winchester schools instead of NREP (Northwestern Regional Educational Programs), providing families with more streamlined support. ECSE classes opened for the 25-26 school year.



The ECSE classrooms are currently housed at John Kerr Elementary School. To give the students the best possible experience, a class at the Emil & Grace Shihadeh Innovation Center put together a proposal for a fully-accessible playground at JKES. The Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy class, taught by Ms. Heba Frye, presented a project-based learning proposal that was approved by WPS stakeholders. The new playground is outfitted with equipment that is accessible for children with varying abilities and was dedicated to the students in Ms. Frye's class.



OUTSTANDING STAFF

Whether schoolwide or across the division, WPS employees received outstanding recognition in 2024-2025.

2025 ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AWARD



Kristen Smith
Special Education Teacher
Frederick Douglass
Elementary School

2025 STEWART BELL JR. EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD



Troy Phillips
Preschool Teacher
Virginia Avenue Charlotte
DeHart Elementary School

2025 EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE AWARDS



Britni Buchanan, *Teaching Assistant at FDES*
Doug Shaw, *Nurse at DMMS*
Sara Weinstein, *Work-Based Learning
Coach at EGSIC*



WPS Teacher of the Year
**MS. MARY CATE
CORNISH**
Daniel Morgan Middle School



**Rhonda
Taylor**
John Handley
High School



**Ashley
Cootware**
Garland R Quarles
Elementary School



**Christie
Upshaw**
Frederick Douglass
Elementary School



**Rachel
Doering**
John Kerr
Elementary School



**Amy
Vaden**
Daniel Morgan
Intermediate School



**Heidi
Chilcott**
Virginia Avenue
Charlotte DeHart
Elementary School

THE TEACHER EXPERIENCE @ WPS

Small enough to make an impression, large enough to innovate

When they come to work at WPS, teachers find the perfect balance: the resources and innovation of a forward-thinking district coupled with a close-knit community where a person's individual impact is genuinely felt and celebrated.



SCHOOL CLIMATE

is in the
99TH percentile
nationally
as ranked* by WPS teachers



SCHOOL LEADERSHIP, FEEDBACK & COACHING, AND EVALUATION

are in the
90TH percentile
nationally
as ranked* by WPS teachers



BEST
Places to
Teach



On the Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions,

WPS TEACHERS:

- Rate their working conditions **higher than the state average**
- Want to continue teaching in their school and division at **higher rates than the state average**
- Rank the physical environment, school leadership, and staff collegiality **higher than the state average**
- Rank teacher agency and rigorous instruction **higher than the state average**



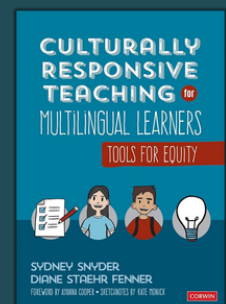
ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES

DESIGNATED PD DAYS

There are six designated professional development days on the WPS calendar, offering teachers ample opportunity to grow and develop their skills.

BOOK STUDIES

Numerous book studies are offered to provide teachers with extended professional learning opportunities.

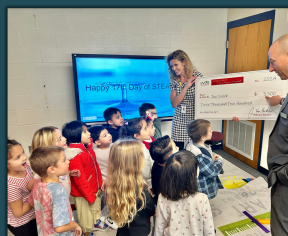


TASK FORCES

Teachers are provided with leadership opportunities to extend their voice into decision making that guides and improves teaching and learning.

96%
TEACHER
SATISFACTION RATE
FROM PERSONALIZED
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

FUNDING FOR INNOVATION



Through the Handley Trust, WPS offers annual grant opportunities up to \$15,000 for innovative projects.

*Panorama Survey results when WPS is compared to other school divisions with a free & reduced lunch percentage of 70% or higher

SPECIAL PROJECTS

AI IN EDUCATION

Winchester Public Schools leads the Commonwealth in AI for both teachers *and* students. Because of early preparation and readiness, WPS was the first school division to provide access to Google Gemini for students.



Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly changing how we live and learn. WPS has been on the forefront of learning about AI and how it will impact education.

- Key training sessions were held for leaders to build a common understanding, define guiding principles, and develop a framework.
- Advanced Learning Partners engaged staff in purposeful training and professional development.
- WPS joined two other divisions to lead the way in responsible AI integration in Virginia through a cohort with the Virginia Association of School Superintendents.
- An internal task force developed resources and lesson plans for AI use in the classroom.
- John Handley High School students completed AI training courses.
- Starting in spring 2025, students in grades 9-12 began using Google Gemini to complete special assignments in core classes using the power of AI.

WPS is embracing the evolving nature of AI and its impact on education.

Profile of an AI-Ready Graduate



Learner

Students use AI to set learning goals, create plans for learning new skills, identify strategies to get unstuck, and seek targeted feedback.



Connector

Students use AI to increase human collaboration, including overcoming language barriers and finding common ground among divergent perspectives.



Ideator

Students use AI as a brainstorming partner to generate new ideas and explore a wide range of possibilities.



Synthesizer

Students use AI to synthesize, remix, and refine information into unique formats and levels of complexity.



Researcher

Students use AI to investigate and analyze topics, evaluate claims, and compare sources of information.



Storyteller

Students use AI to present and communicate complex ideas through text, image, audio, video, and other media.

Credit: ISTE+ASCD



Scan the QR code or visit [WPS Evolve](#) to view our video on YouTube



MULTIPLE CHOICE FILM PREMIERE

Over the course of two school years, the Emil & Grace Shihadeh Innovation Center was part of a unique project - a documentary film highlighting Career & Technical Education as an important choice for students. The film, *Multiple Choice*, premiered in September 2025 and has been screened in the U.S. and internationally. Learn more about producer Ted Dintersmith and the organization What School Could be by visiting [whatschoolcouldbe.org](#).



About the Film

For decades, America's data-driven college-for-all agenda has created a no-win choice for most high school graduates: take on the risk and expense of college or work a low-wage job. But in an economically-challenged Virginia community, one superintendent is demonstrating the immense power of career-based learning—not as a last-chance resort for some, but as foundational for all.

The film *Multiple Choice* immerses viewers in the district's Innovation Center, where all students explore diverse careers, collaborate, and master traditional and new-economy skills. Amid political turmoil and tech upheaval, *Multiple Choice* offers an inspiring vision of kids finding purposeful paths, with a community united toward the goal of prosperity for all.



Learn more about [Multiple Choice](#) and Host a Screening:



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

View the
full **Capital
Improvement
Plan:**



GORDIAN FACILITY CONDITION ASSESSMENT

In October 2024, Winchester Public Schools hired Gordian, Inc. to conduct a Facility Condition Assessment (FCA) for all of the school district buildings. A FCA is a systematic evaluation of the physical state of school buildings and campuses. Its purpose is to provide school districts with an objective understanding of how well their facilities are performing, what deficiencies exist, and what capital investments are needed to maintain safe, functional, and educationally supportive environments.

Major Findings:

- Garland R Quarles Elementary School is in need of a significant renovation or replacement. Other WPS buildings are in a healthy phase on par with other Gordian school districts.
- The total budget needed to address 603 projects over the next 10 years is \$67.1 million. This includes a \$24.9 million backlog of needs that are past due.
- 61% of items are in the “Services” category, which includes electrical, HVAC, and plumbing.



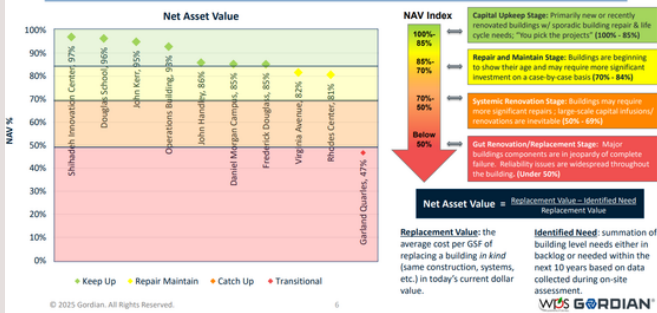
\$67.1 MILLION

NEEDED FOR
FUTURE CAPITAL
PROJECTS

MAJOR UPCOMING PROJECTS

YEAR	PROJECT	COST
FY26	GQES Renovation - Concept Study	\$500,000
	JKES Parking Lot Capacity Increase	\$70,000
	DM Original Roof (Sec 1 & 2)	\$300,000
	DM Concession Stand/Bathrooms	\$250,000
	Handley Emergency Parking	\$150,000
	Handley Bowl Concrete	\$100,000
	Handley Student Union Sound Absorption	\$200,000
	Handley Gym ADA Access	\$50,000
	Handley Planetarium	\$50,000
	Handley Gym Scoreboard	\$80,000
	Handley Football Video Scoreboard	\$350,000
	Handley Theatre Sound, Video Wall, Marquee Sign	\$260,000
FY27	FDDES Bathrooms	\$300,000
	GQES Design	\$500,000
	VACDES Bathrooms	\$300,000
	DMMS Roof (Sec 3 & 4)	\$350,000
	DMMS Fencing	\$100,000
	JHHS Patsy Cline Theatre Seats	\$1,200,000
	JHHS Athletic Practice Facility	\$2,000,000
FY28	FDDES Gym Floor	\$100,000
	GQES Construction (1 of 2)	\$17,500,000
	DMMS Roof (Sec 5, 6 & 7)	\$350,000
	JHHS Athletic Practice Facility	\$3,000,000
	JHHS Roof Replacement	\$160,000
	Jim Barnett Bathroom Rebuild	\$250,000

Net Asset Value (NAV) Measures “Percent Good”



Annual Report

2024-2025

Message from the Board

As we embark on our second quarter century of advancing excellence in Winchester Public Schools, the Winchester Education Foundation remains a positive catalyst for change, strengthening our community and investing in the future of our students. Over the past year, we have expanded our board, bringing renewed energy and expertise to ensure we maximize our impact in alignment with the ELEVATE 2030 strategic plan.

Our success is made possible through the generous support of our donors, volunteers, and partners. This annual report highlights how collaboration and investment in education drive real results, sharing the stories, milestones, and successes of our programs. We invite you to join us in shaping a brighter future for all by contributing your time, talent, or resources to be part of this inspiring journey.

Board of Directors & Staff

Carl Rush, President
Glenn Burdick, Vice President
Madelyn Jimenez-Torres, Secretary
Lisa Frye, Treasurer
Mike Birchenough, Director
Candace Davenport, Director
Dawn Devine, Director
Thomas Dixon, Director
Bruce Downing, Director
Marie Imoh, Director
Irina Khanin, Director
Claire Prosser, Director
Stephen Slaughter, Director
Kathy Thomas, Director
Larry Weiss, Executive Director
Dr. Jason Van Heukelum, Ex-Officio

THE WEF BY THE NUMBERS



\$404,846

received in donations,
pledges and grants

\$244,038 provided to Winchester
Public Schools by the WEF

11

scholarships and
grants awarded to
graduating seniors



totaling

\$28,500



8

teachers received WEF "Come
Back to Teach" grants totaling

\$27,500

Ready to make a difference?

Become a Partner in Education
for as little as \$25 per year! Scan
the QR code or
email us at
wefsuccess@gmail.com.



"Partner in Education" Program

The WEF's "Partner in Education" program is designed to help provide the funding needed to continue administering existing programs and to develop new partnerships.

By becoming a Partner in Education, you support scholarships, teacher incentives and pioneering programs. The following businesses and individuals have already committed to achieving excellence together as a WEF "Partner in Education."



Judge Level

\$5,000

The Borden Foundation



Founder Level

\$2,500

Mike Birchenough
Bank of Clarke
United Bank
Kathy Thomas Charitable
Fund



Patron Level

\$1,000

Frederick Block Brick and Stone
Sharon Byrd
Cary Nelson-HN Funkhouser
Atlantic Union Bank
Martha and Wilborn Roberson



Supporter Level

\$500

Glenn & Laura Burdick
Amy & Steve Slaughter
The Winchester Group
Hottel & Willis
William Eaton
Shenandoah Valley
Westminster-Canterbury



Star Level

\$100

Apple Federal Credit Union
Larry & Cathy Weiss
Courtney Reilly
Thach Nguyen
Eugene & Karen Schultz



Member Level

\$25

Joann Rinker
Nikolay Nikolov

(as of September 19, 2025)

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Winchester Education Foundation was proud to participate in the Baccalaureate ceremony at John Handley High School to present our 2025 scholarships to outstanding members of Handley's graduating class.



- **Diana Najarro Gonzalez**, Wells Fargo Scholarship
- **Addison Bessette and Joseph Cooper**, Eugene B. Cooper Scholarship
- **Hayley Davis and Mario Gomez**, The Mindy Loy Future Educator Scholarship

- **Moustafa Hassand**, The Mindy Loy Vocational Technical Scholarship
- **James Mabe**, The John and Polly Duvall Scholarship
- **Ana Aquino Batista, Joseph Cooper, Tatiana Diaz, and Olivia Jett**, Rees Memorial Scholarships
- **Luis Ruiz Maya and Luis Fernandez**, Hispanic Heritage Month Award
- **Emeryce Worrell and Blessed Makahamadze**, Black History Month Award

EDUCATION GRANTS



The annual *Mindy J. Loy "Come Back to Teach" Education Grants* are funded by a testamentary trust of the late Mindy J. Loy, Handley Class of 1974. These grants assist JHHS graduates who serve as educators, administrators, and certificated professionals in Winchester

Public Schools with monetary awards that help defray the costs of past or continuing education. Five grants, each in the amount of \$5,000, were awarded to newly hired members of our WPS team. One \$2,500 grant was awarded to a current member of the WPS teaching staff.

- **Wendy Houser**, Assistant Principal, JKES (\$5,000)
- **Tiffany Markosky**, Nurse Aide Teacher, JHHS (\$5,000)
- **Sarah Palmer**, Special Education Teacher, DMIS (\$5,000)
- **Sabrina Ramey**, Math Teacher, JHHS (\$5,000)
- **Jeremiah Wilson**, English Teacher, DMMS (\$5,000)
- **Sarah Walrath**, Math Teacher, JKES (\$2,500)

Two Navy Federal Credit Union grants were also awarded. The goals of the Navy Federal Credit Union WPS Educator Grants are to assist professional staff who serve as educators, administrators, and other certificated professionals in Winchester Public Schools and to promote recruitment and retention of outstanding education professionals.



- **Laura Filppu**, Music Teacher and Band Director, DM
- **Yelena Bravo Edwards**, Kindergarten Teacher, GQES

2024-2025 HIGHLIGHTS

WEF Initiates Porterfield Endowment



The WEF and WPS are proud to announce the establishment of the Porterfield Endowment, a new fund created to honor the legacy of beloved educator James R. Porterfield, Jr. The endowment supports the John Handley High School English Department.

Mr. Porterfield, a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute Class of

1965 and Virginia Tech University, was a distinguished English teacher at John Handley High School from 1972 until his retirement in 2001. He was the first recipient of the Stewart Bell Excellence in Teaching Award, a testament to his commitment to quality teaching and instructional leadership.

The Porterfield Endowment was established by generous donors and John Handley High School Alumni Gerald and Kaye Smith, who were both inspired by Mr. Porterfield's legacy to provide funds for new initiatives that promote mastery of literacy through high-quality instructional resources and direct student experiences.

The endowment will also support teacher training, leadership development, and engaging programs that enrich opportunities for both students and staff, including field experiences and flexible learning environments.

WEF Hosts "Lunch with the Superintendent" for Key Donors

This signature event provided Founder and Judge level donors with an opportunity to connect directly with Dr. Jason Van Heukelum, WPS Superintendent. Dr. Van Heukelum shared reflections on the successful completion of the district's five-year strategic plan, Empower 2025, and introduced the new strategic plan, Elevate 2030. His remarks highlighted key accomplishments of the past five years and outlined the primary goals that will drive the next chapter of progress for WPS.

During the luncheon, WEF also honored three departing Board Directors for their dedicated service:

- **Martha Roberson**: Long-serving Director, Secretary, and Chair of the Education Programs Committee
- **Dennis Haston**: Long-serving Director and Education Programs Committee member, who brought his experience as a retired Handley math teacher to the board
- **Bill Armstrong**: Chair of the Donor Relations Fundraising Committee and Director

Each was recognized with a certificate of appreciation in recognition of their exceptional contributions. As the only nonprofit dedicated to supporting Winchester Public Schools, the WEF remains committed to fostering excellence in education through private philanthropy.

WEF Launches YouTube Channel

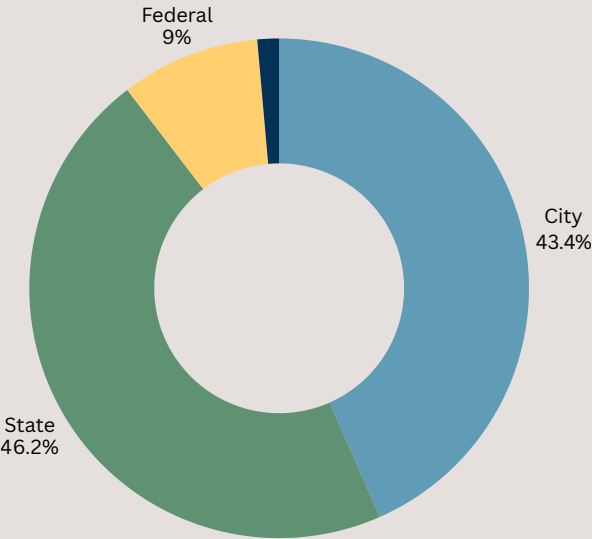
The Winchester Education Foundation is now online with a YouTube channel! This channel features short video interviews with members of the WPS faculty who have received Educator Grants from the WEF.

Take a minute to visit the channel and learn more about some of the most gifted members of our WPS faculty and staff. Come back often as new video content will be added monthly. You can find the channel here:



FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2026 BUDGET OVERVIEW

FY26 REVENUE



Nearly 3/4 of the operating budget goes toward instruction

FY26 HIGHLIGHTS

**UPDATED
SALARY SCALES**

4.84%

Average pay increase for teachers



38%

increase for entry-level bus drivers

4.63%

Average pay increase for non-teachers



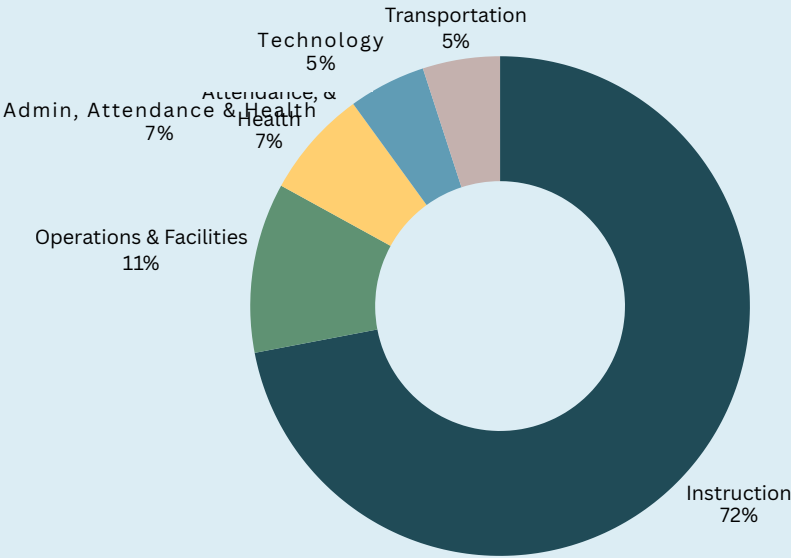
11%

Average pay increase for bus drivers

8%

Average pay increase for cafeteria workers

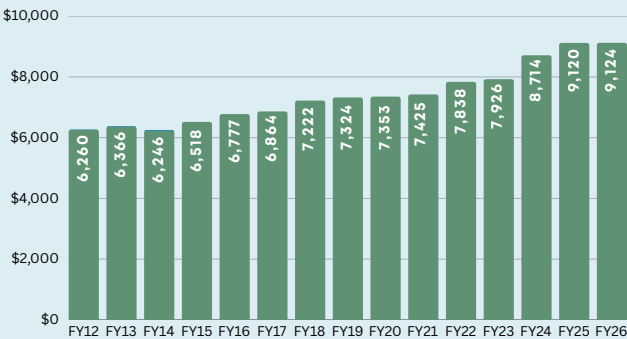
FY26 OPERATING EXPENSES



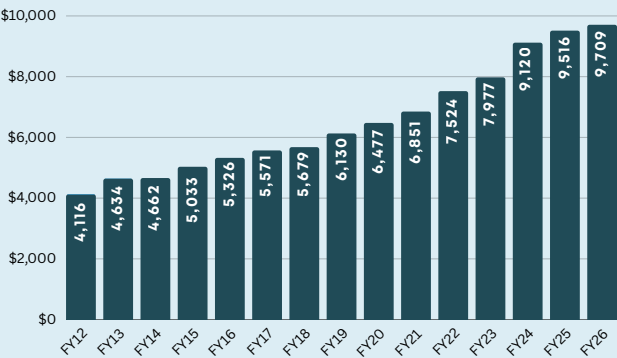
**TOTAL FY26 BUDGET:
\$95,921,095**

Historical Local vs State Per Pupil Funding

Per Pupil Expenditure by Local Revenue



Per Pupil Expenditure by State Revenue



*based on budgeted Average Daily Membership (ADM)

OUR SCHOOL BOARD



Top Row, Pictured from Left

Benjamin Rothermel	Ward 3
Mary Tedrow	At Large
Melissa Harris	At Large
Karen Burrough	Ward 2
Stuart Eiland	At Large

Bottom Row, Pictured from Left

Michael Birchenough	Ward 1, Vice-Chair
Bryan Pearce-Gonzales	Ward 4, Chair
Jason Van Heukelum	Superintendent

ROLE OF THE BOARD

The functions of the School Board are policy-forming and legislative, while those of the Superintendent are administrative and executive. The Board directs the expenditure of the budget, oversees staff, and carries out responsibilities connected with school buildings and sites.

BOARD MEETINGS

Board meetings are usually held on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 6 p.m. For additional info, visit the WPS website:

<https://www.wps.k12.va.us/domain/58>



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**We reached
9,000 Facebook
followers in 24-25!**



