

WCPS | Washington County Public Schools



**COMMUNITY
MATTERS**

TONIGHT'S TOPIC:

UNDERSTANDING THE SCHOOL BUDGET

Topics That Matter. Community That Matters.

THANKS FOR JOINING US TONIGHT!

Tonight's Topics



Enrollment

Blueprint Funding

WCPS Expenses

FY 28 Budget Outlook

Community input on WCPS Budget

WCPS CURRENT ENROLLMENT

FY
28

The amount of State aid that a jurisdiction receives is based on:

- the greater of the three-year rolling average
- OR
- most recent 9/30 full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment

K-12 STUDENT ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL SEPT. 2023	ACTUAL SEPT. 2024	ACTUAL SEPT. 2025	PROJECTED SEPT. 2026	3-YEAR AVERAGE
	21,377	21,584	21,513.25	21,558	21,551

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27
Actual Enrollment (K-12)	21,792	21,830	21,087	21,100	21,194	21,377	21,584	21,513
Funded Enrollment (K-12)	21,792	21,830	21,841	21,574	21,374	21,377	21,584	21,513
Enrollment (Pre-K)	871	1128	796	1,040	1,053	1,113	1,105	1,041
Funded Enrollment (Pre-K)	806*	1055*	775*	414	742	818	869	846

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27
Special Education Enrollment (K-12)	2,442	2,508	2,462	2,520	2,674	2,850	2,955	3,041
ML Enrollment (K-12)	567	612	586	614	819	1,036	1,208	1,219

Since FY20, Special Education enrollment has increased 25%, while Multilingual Learner enrollment has more than doubled (+115%)

BLUEPRINT FUNDING

■ CONCENTRATION OF POVERTY

■ TARGETED EDUCATION AID

■ FOUNDATION



TARGETED EDUCATION AID

The targeted formulas recognize the additional costs associated with educating certain student populations:

- Special Education
- Compensatory Education
- English Learners

FOUNDATION PROGRAM

The foundation formula is designed to have the State pay roughly 50% of program costs.

- For wealthy jurisdictions, the State will pay less than 50%
- For less wealthy jurisdictions, the State will pay more than 50%
- In FY27 the cost share for WCPS is 68.16% State and 31.84% local

FUNDING PER STUDENT

	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29
FOUNDATION	\$9,226	\$9,561	\$9,789	\$10,200
COMPENSATORY EDUCATION	\$7,842	\$7,786	\$7,908	\$8,029
MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS	\$9,041	\$9,148	\$9,327	\$9,613
SPECIAL EDUCATION	\$9,503	\$10,900	\$12,368	\$14,367

STUDENT TYPE	FY28 FORMULA	ELIGIBLE FUNDING
Student is FARM	\$9,789 + \$7,908	\$17,697
Student is FARM & ML	\$9,789 + \$7,908 + \$9,327	\$27,024
Student is FARM & ML & Special Ed	\$9,789 + \$7,908 + \$9,327 + \$12,368	\$39,392

PRE-KINDERGARTEN AID

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

- Free to low-income 3- & 4-year-olds up to 300% federal poverty level (FPL)
- Sliding scale for 4-year-olds between 300-600% FPL (FY25)

PER PUPIL	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29
PRE-KINDERGARTEN	\$14,473	\$19,950	\$19,950	\$20,347

MARYLAND BLUEPRINT: FUNDING MUST FOLLOW THE STUDENT

As student needs increase at specific schools, the Blueprint requires that more funding be directed to these schools. School size also matters: Larger schools receive more total funding because they have more students. Smaller schools can cost more per student because many staffing and building costs stay the same, even with fewer students.

BLUEPRINT REQUIREMENT	IMPACT
Funding is based on student enrollment and student need	Schools receive resources tied to the students they serve
At least 75% must be traceable to individual schools	Districts have less flexibility to hold funds centrally
Additional weights follow specific student groups	ML, special education, and compensatory education enrollment directly affect funding

FY26 HIGH SCHOOL FINANCIAL COMPARISON

MEASURE	BOONSBORO HS	SOUTH HAGERSTOWN HS
Funded Enrollment	835	1,663
Total Revenue (MSF Amount)	\$7.70M	\$19.40M
Total Expense	\$9.92M	\$16.47M
Net Revenue / (Expense)	(\$2.21M)	\$2.94M
Revenue Per Pupil	\$9,232	\$11,668
Expense Per Pupil	\$11,883	\$9,902
Net Per Pupil	(\$2,651)	\$1,766
Staff FTE	76.47	143.86
Students per Staff FTE	10.91	11.56
Average Teacher Total Cost	\$106,412	\$99,897

REVENUE ALLOCATION FY 24 THROUGH FY27

	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27
Spend on Resource Pool	\$8,564,549	\$6,451,068	\$8,018,286	\$3,339,204
Spend on Health Insurance	\$1,229,903	\$2,189,517	\$4,664,510	\$5,257,921
Spend on Pension Increases	\$260,000	\$215,000	\$315,000	\$1,085,000
Spend on New Positions	\$11,009,312	\$4,045,897	\$4,245,197	\$4,273,313
Other Staff Spending Not Listed Above	\$214,819	\$0.00	\$2,484,119	\$252,752
Salary Turnover / Other Savings (Reduces Total)	-\$2,533,490	-\$2,039,868	-\$746,216	-\$1,935,764
Total Staff Spending	\$18,745,093	\$10,861,614	\$18,980,896	\$12,272,426
Staff Spending as % of New Money	81.13%	136.93%	84.86%	93.69%

STAFFING CHANGES FY 24 THROUGH FY27

STAFFING TYPE	STAFFING SHIFTS FROM FY24 BUDGET TO FY27 BUDGET	% OF TOTAL NEW POSITIONS
General Education Staffing	22.1	7.54%
Prekindergarten Education Staffing	9.5	3.24%
Multilingual Learners Education Staffing	56.0	19.09%
Special Education Staffing	183.6	62.62%
All Other Staffing	22.0	7.51%

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Staff spending consumes most of the new funding each year.**
Across FY24–FY27, staff-related spending ranges from about **81% to 137% of new money**, showing how little flexibility remains for other priorities after personnel costs are covered.
- **Health insurance is becoming a much larger pressure point.**
Spending rises from about **\$1.2M in FY24 to \$5.3M in FY27**, more than quadrupling over the period.
- **Pension costs are also accelerating.** Pension increases jump to **\$1.085M in FY27**, more than triple the FY26 amount.
- **Special education expenses** have increased by **over 45%** since FY24
- **Multilingual learner expenses** have each increased by **over 150%** since FY24

SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDING

	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29
STATE/LOCAL FUNDING (RECEIVED)	\$29,613,150	\$34,146,900	\$39,831,400	\$47,480,000
GRANTS	\$9,297,571	\$9,555,000	\$9,650,000	\$9,750,000
TOTAL REVENUE	\$38,910,721	\$43,701,900	\$49,841,400	\$57,230,000
EXPENSES	\$57,207,310	\$61,043,100	\$63,874,400	\$66,790,600
DIFFERENCE (REV / EXP)	-\$18,296,589	-\$17,341,200	-\$14,033,000	-\$9,560,600

ELEMENTARY CLASS SIZES

GRADE LEVEL	AVERAGE	RANGE
PRE-KINDERGARTEN*	14.84	14-20
KINDERGARTEN	19.94	14-26
GRADE 1	21.37	16-27
GRADE 2	20.13	12-29
GRADE 3	20.59	15-27
GRADE 4	21.00	15-29
GRADE 5	21.77	15-28

**Pre-Kindergarten is capped at 20 students per Blueprint Law.*

SECONDARY CLASS SIZES

GRADE LEVEL	AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS
MIDDLE SCHOOL <i>(No Hancock or ILC)</i>	• 23 in <i>core</i> courses • 23 in <i>all</i> courses
HIGH SCHOOL <i>(No Hancock or ILC)</i>	• 21 in <i>core</i> courses • 23 in <i>all</i> courses
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL COMBINATION	• 16 in <i>core</i> courses • 14 in <i>all</i> courses

Core Courses Include: English, Math, Science, & Social Studies

BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

- Utilizes current enrollment projections
- Estimates Free & Reduced Rate (FARM) to stay level
- Calculates 75% of targeted funding as restricted funding
- Projects expected expenses (not including inflation)
- Projects wealth equalization

EXPECTED EXPENSES

FY
28

PROJECTED NEW EXPENSES

TIME TO CARE ACT (REQUIRED)	\$1,000,000
PENSION INCREASE (REQUIRED)	\$540,000
HEALTH INSURANCE INCREASE (REQUIRED)	\$550,000 – \$5,500,000
INFLATION (REQUIRED)	\$1,000,000
EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION (1%)	\$2,200,000
• TEACHERS	\$1,490,000
• EMPLOYEE SUPPORT PERSONNEL	\$447,000
• ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPERVISORS	\$283,000
ELEMENTARY COLLABORATIVE PLANNING (PER NEW TEACHER)	\$95,000
SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM (AVERAGE)	\$210,000
CASE MANAGER (PER NEW TEACHER)	\$95,000
PARAPROFESSIONAL (PER NEW PARAPROFESSIONAL)	\$50,000

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Tonight isn't about building the entire WCPS budget...

It's about helping us understand what our community believes should be prioritized, protected, and considered when difficult choices have to be made.

AT YOUR TABLE:

1. Identify what you believe WCPS should **protect first**
2. Discuss where WCPS should have **flexibility** when resources are limited
3. Identify the **principles** you want leaders to use when making tradeoffs
4. Agree on your table's **top 3 recommendations**

There are legal requirements, contractual obligations, and funds that cannot simply be moved wherever we want. So we're not asking you to balance a spreadsheet tonight. We're asking you to help us understand the values and priorities that should guide the decisions we can make.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

QUESTION 1: IDENTIFY PRIORITIES

If WCPS faces difficult budget choices, what should we work hardest to protect?

Choose up to three priorities as a table.

BUDGET PRIORITIES:

- Classroom staffing / class size
- Employee compensation
- Special education staffing / supports
- Multilingual learner staffing / supports
- Collaborative planning / instructional support
- Student support services
- Programs and opportunities for students
- Other

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

QUESTION 2: CONSIDER THE TRADEOFFS

You cannot mark everything "Invest More"

PRIORITY	INVEST MORE	PROTECT	COULD REDUCE/DELAY
Classroom staffing / class size	☐	☐	☐
Employee compensation	☐	☐	☐
Special education staffing / supports	☐	☐	☐
Multilingual learner staffing / supports	☐	☐	☐
Collaborative planning	☐	☐	☐
Other programs/services	☐	☐	☐

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

QUESTION 3: ESTABLISH DECISION-MAKING VALUES

What principle should guide a difficult decision?

Rank your top three, with 1 being the most important.

When WCPS has to make a difficult budget decision, which considerations should matter most?

- Direct impact on student learning
- Serving students with the greatest needs
- Maintaining reasonable class sizes
- Recruiting and retaining high-quality employees
- Providing equitable opportunities across schools
- Long-term financial sustainability
- Minimizing disruption to students
- Other

"When WCPS faces a difficult budget decision, we believe the district should prioritize _____ because _____."

COMMUNITY REVIEW

LEARN • REFLECT • REFINE *(15 minutes)*

- Visit each table and review their responses to the three discussion questions
- Place your dots beside the recommendations you most want WCPS leadership and the Board of Education to consider during development of the FY28 budget
- Notice common themes, different perspectives, and ideas that stand out

FINAL THOUGHT: *On a sticky note, complete this statement:*

"One thing I want budget decision-makers to understand is..._____"

JOIN US FOR MORE CONVERSATIONS...

Topics That Matter. Community That Matters.



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COMMUNITY MATTERS



PLANNING
TO ATTEND?



TOPIC	DATE	LOCATION	FOCUS
UNDERSTANDING THE SCHOOL BUDGET	September 8, 2026	Center for Educational Services	<i>Funding, priorities, transparency, community input</i>
PREPARING ALL STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE	October 14, 2026	North Hagerstown High School	<i>Academic achievement, career readiness, life skills, community input</i>
TO BE DETERMINED	November 12, 2026	Williamsport High School	<i>To be determined</i>

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