



100 YEARS *of* EXCELLENCE



2022-2023
ANNUAL REPORT
Winchester Public Schools

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.

STRATEGIC PLAN: EMPOWER 2025



Learner Empowerment

All students will cultivate and assert their voice and choice as they deepen their understanding in essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions, while nurturing their personal, social, and emotional well-being.



Staff Empowerment

Each member of the WPS team engages in a culture of equitable and empowered learning by developing individual and shared professional goals while executing continuous improvement actions through collective efficacy and shared accountability.



Community & Family Empowerment

Winchester families, caregivers, community members, and school staff engage in strong and mutually supportive partnerships to ensure students' personal, social, emotional, and academic growth.



Organizational Empowerment

Winchester Public Schools practices responsive, transparent stewardship in an efficient, cost effective, and equitable manner, while galvanizing the trust, support, and satisfaction of internal and external stakeholders.

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

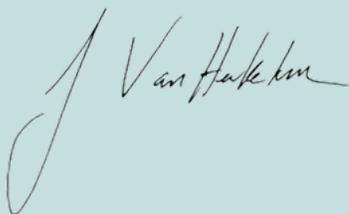
In 1923, John Handley High School opened its doors to begin building a legacy unlike any other public high school in the country. To ensure learning for all, the Douglas School opened four years later to educate the African American population in Winchester and the surrounding area.

In 2023, we celebrate 100 years of Handley while honoring the important history of the Douglas School. We officially moved our central office into the newly renovated and expanded Douglas School in January 2023, and we look forward to opening a museum honoring Douglas alumni in 2024.

Throughout our shared history, outstanding educators have been the foundation of public education in Winchester. One of our own, Mr. Jeff Keller, was recognized as the 2024 Teacher of the Year for Virginia. We were full of Handley Pride across the district as we watched Mr. Keller accept this prestigious honor.

As we continue the rich traditions that exist at Handley, we must also innovate in ways that will bring us closer to our vision of an inclusive community that empowers all students to thrive. After a year of increased graduation rates and decreased chronic absenteeism, I am confident in the extraordinary potential of our students, teachers, families, and community.

Sincerely,



**DR. JASON
VAN HEUKELUM**

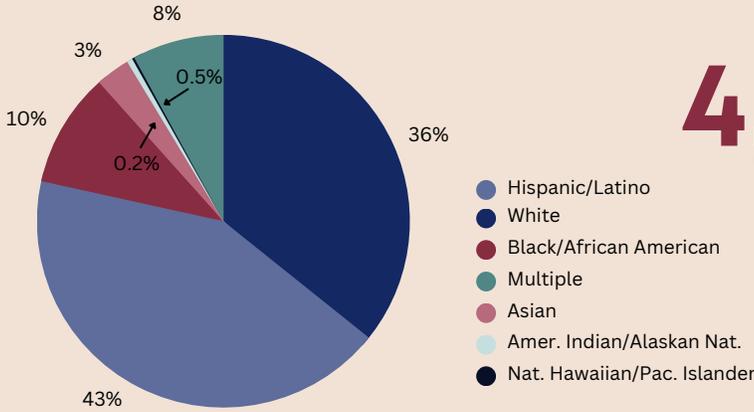
**Virginia
Region IV
Superintendent
of the Year**

“Great leaders are known not by their titles but by the number of lives they’ve impacted. Dr. Van Heukelum is a great leader, a man of integrity, discipline, and excellence, and because of his exceptional leadership, the students, employees, and families in Winchester Public Schools have all benefited.”

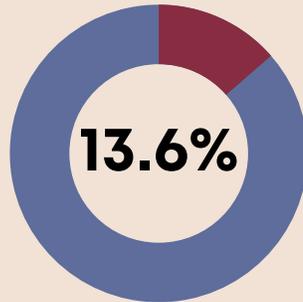
**-Marie Imoh
School Board Chair**

DISTRICT QUICK STATS

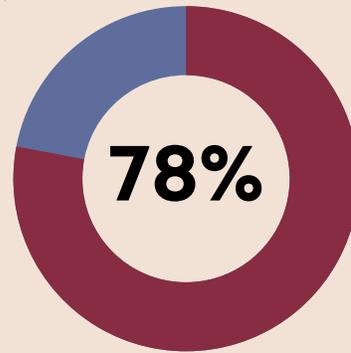
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



4,233
STUDENTS



of students receive special education services



of students qualify for free & reduced meals

*as reported in December 2022

776
FULL-TIME
STAFF

60% of staff have advanced degrees



407
INSTRUCTIONAL
STAFF



of staff hired in 22-23 have more than 5 years of experience

31%

English Language Learners



5th

highest ELL percentage population in VA



30

languages spoken



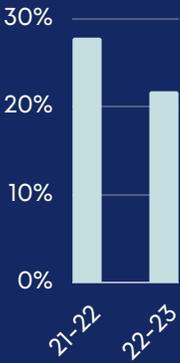
22-23 HIGHLIGHTS



Winchester History Teacher Named 2024 Virginia Teacher of the Year



Mr. Jeff Keller, Handley history teacher, was named the 2024 Virginia Teacher of the Year in May.



CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

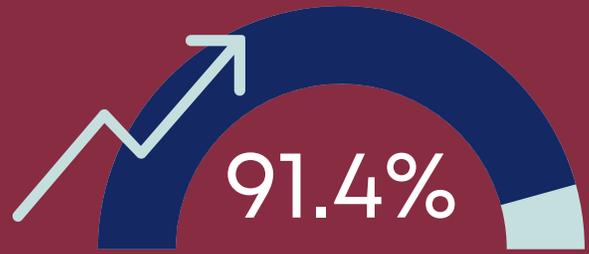
6.1 point decrease from 2021-22



Photo Credit: JEFF TAYLOR/The Winchester Star

Handley 100th

Hundreds gathered at Handley in June to kick off a year of celebrations marking Handley's centennial.



GRADUATION RATE

4.3 point increase from 2021-22

GRADUATES EARNED

\$5.6M

IN SCHOLARSHIPS



Douglas Night

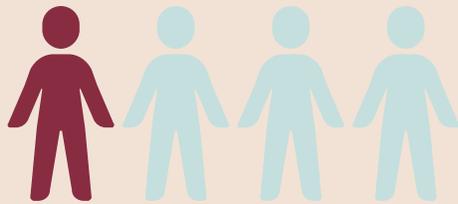
Handley basketball players wore blue and white jerseys in January for a special Douglas Night to celebrate the historic Douglas Bulldogs.



2ND YEAR IN A ROW

Handley named a **Best High School** and **#1** in the Metro Winchester Area

WORK-BASED LEARNING



**1 IN 4 GRADUATES
PARTICIPATE IN
WORK-BASED LEARNING**

HIGH-QUALITY WORK-BASED LEARNING INCLUDES:

- Job Shadowing
- Service Learning
- Externship
- Clinical Experience
- Mentorship
- Internship
- Cooperative Education
- Entrepreneurship
- School-Based Enterprise

NANCY MEMBRENO
Handley Class of 2020

First CTE Class: Programming
Work-Based Learning: Winchester Public Schools Central Office

Current Status: Recently Promoted to Payroll Specialist at WPS Central Office



LUIS MARQUEZ-CARDOSO
Handley Class of 2023

First CTE Class: Materials and Processes

Work-Based Learning: Beiler & Co.

Current Status: Employed with contracting company Beiler & Co.

LAUREN MASON
Handley Class of 2023

First CTE Class: Physical Therapy & Occupational Therapy

Work-Based Learning: Pro Physical Therapy

Current Status: Attending Shenandoah University, Studying Physical Therapy



EXCELLENCE FOR ALL




 VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION
 2023
**Continuous Improvement
Exemplar Award**
 presented to
Frederick Douglass Elementary
Winchester City Public Schools

FDES received a 2023 Continuous Improvement Exemplar Award for a 10+ point increase in the combined rate for math, reading and science scores across the past 3 years.

**WPS 3-5TH GRADERS
RANK IN THE**

90TH percentile
nationally

for positive responses about

**RELATIONSHIPS
WITH THEIR
TEACHERS**



**SCHOOL
BELONGING**

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

**1 IN 4 HANDLEY STUDENTS ENROLL
IN AP CLASSES**



300+ AP STUDENTS | **20+** AP CLASSES

DUAL ENROLLMENT



**13% OF HANDLEY
STUDENTS DUAL
ENROLL AT LRCC**



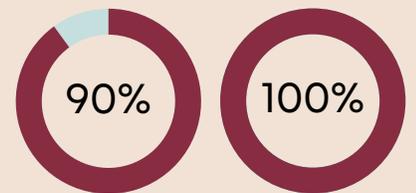
A team of 4th grade ExCEL students from WPS schools won the "Are You Smarter Than a Fourth Grader?" event hosted by the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum in April.

EQUITY ADVISORY COUNCIL



JHHS students on the Equity Advisory Council meet each month to assist the Principal in making sure students have what they need to thrive at Handley.

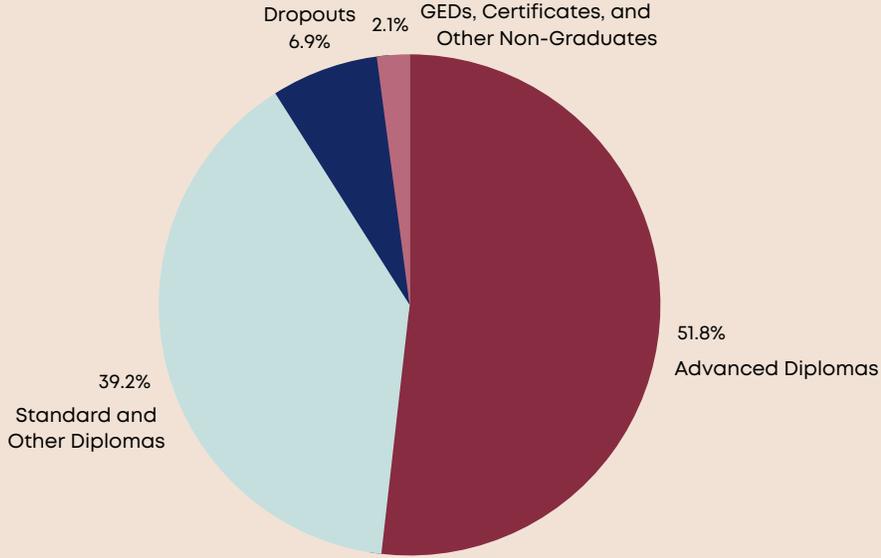
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION



90% of teachers and 100% of administrators have received at least 2 hours of Culturally Responsive Instruction training. The new Professional Learning Framework was also finalized in 2022-2023.

Portrait of a GRADUATE

DIPLOMAS AND COMPLETION



88%

**EMPLOYED, ENLISTED,
OR ENROLLED IN
HIGHER EDUCATION**

Our 2023 Grads Attend:



CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

70%
INCREASE IN
CTE COMPLETERS
SINCE 2021



95%
INCREASE IN
INDUSTRY
CERTIFICATIONS



56%
INCREASE IN
INDUSTRY
CREDENTIALS



22%
INCREASE IN NON-
TRADITIONAL CTE
REPRESENTATION






ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

LISA ASHE



“I GOT A VERY HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION AT HANDLEY. [...] EVERYONE WAS ABLE TO GET THE SAME QUALITY OF EDUCATION AS LONG AS THEY SEIZED THOSE OPPORTUNITIES. MY MOTHER PUSHED AND THE SCHOOL STAFF ENSURED I HAD THE CLASSES I NEEDED TO GET TO COLLEGE. I BENEFITED FROM BOTH ACADEMIC AND CO-CURRICULAR EXPERIENCES.”

1988 Handley graduate Lisa Ashe has been appointed to a four-year term on the National Assessment Governing Board by U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. Ms. Ashe, who is currently a Secondary Mathematics Consultant for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, has worked at all levels of education to develop mathematics instructional leaders and build capacity for mathematics teaching and learning.

Born and raised in Winchester, Ms. Ashe attended Winchester Public Schools and graduated from John Handley High School in 1988. She pursued higher education at Hampton University and obtained a degree in pure and applied mathematics.

Ms. Ashe is passionate about providing opportunities for equitable access to high quality education for all children. She has facilitated professional development at the local, state, and national level on high quality instructional practices and equity-based teaching.

“I appreciate that Secretary Cardona has ensured the [National Assessment Governing] Board is diverse,” she said. “Now that there are more voices at the table, I see it as my privilege to be an equity-focused voice for those who are underserved.”

Throughout her leadership experiences, Ms. Ashe says she stays focused on the students. “This is always about our ultimate end users,” she said. “I must ensure that what I’m doing will better the lives of the 1.6 million children in North Carolina.” Now Ms. Ashe will have the opportunity to better the lives of students across the country.

2023 HANDLEY TRUST INNOVATION GRANTS

STAFF EMPOWERMENT



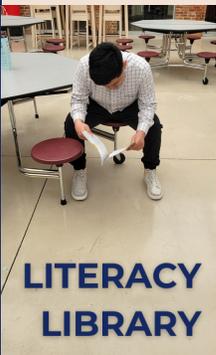
CHANGE YOUR TUNE

JHHS School Counselor Lara Maquera partnered with Music Therapy students from Shenandoah University to provide a variety of music opportunities to help address students' social and emotional needs.

MERGE WITH LEARNING

Instructional Technology Coach Kara McDaniel brought AR and VR technology to students at VACDES with a Merge Cube. Merge Cubes provide digital hands-on teaching aids, simulations, and interactive holograms.

In the photo, 2nd graders were applying their knowledge of weather conditions and patterns to predict the weather around the world!



LITERACY LIBRARY



A specialized team at JHHS created a Literacy Library to account for small groups, cultural diversity, and reading levels of students. The Literacy Library includes picture books, leveled readers, adapted texts, and books to support the teaching of literary terms and devices.



YOGA AFTER SCHOOL

FDES Art Teacher Jessie Westman received Mindfulness, SEL (Social Emotional Learning), and Yoga Teacher Training so she could host an after school yoga club for students.

WHAT ARE INNOVATION GRANTS?

Through the Handley Trust, WPS offers annual grant opportunities in 3 categories: Classroom Innovation, Multi-Classroom Innovation, and School Innovation. Funding is awarded up to \$15,000 for innovative projects that align with the school's improvement and the division's strategic plan.



STAFF EMPOWERMENT



VIRTUAL REALITY

Students at FDES get to use virtual reality headsets thanks to a grant proposal from Instructional Technology Coach Kelly Carey. The Class VR headsets and controllers, along with 2,000 educational resources and tools, allow students to visit ancient civilizations, tour other countries, experience cultural celebrations, and take virtual field trips to otherwise inaccessible locations.

AMERICAN HISTORY MUSEUM



Erin Fox and her English 11 students applied for a grant to go on a field trip to the Smithsonian Museum of American History. English 11 Standards of Learning are centered around American literature, and the museum trip provided an opportunity for students to learn information about American authors, history, culture, innovation, and restoration.

MIDDLE SCHOOL FIBER ARTS

DMMS Fine Arts teacher Amanda Bryant Poliakoff was surprised to learn that students were interested in fiber arts as one of their top three art electives, so she got materials to start an after school fiber arts club. Fiber art includes art made from fibrous materials such as yarn, textiles, and paper.



21ST CENTURY CLASSROOM

Shane Campbell wanted to bring his JHHS math classroom into the 21st century, so he replaced traditional desks with modular furniture that includes dry erase tops. This allows for more collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking for students.



WHAT A YEAR!

Whether schoolwide or across the nation, WPS employees received outstanding recognition in 2022-2023.

2023 STEWART BELL JR. EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD



Joy Cusick, STEAM Teacher
Frederick Douglass Elementary School

2023 EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE AWARDS



Tammy Turner, Teaching Assistant
at Melvin Rhodes Center
Bill Clements, Supervising Network Engineer
Penny Gale, Teaching Assistant at JKES



WPS Teacher of the Year MR. JEFF KELLER

John Handley
High School



Angel Wood

Daniel Morgan
Middle School



Nicole Hobson

Garland R Quarles
Elementary School



Andrew Divico

Frederick Douglass
Elementary School



Hannah Obitts

John Kerr
Elementary School



Morganne Mease

Daniel Morgan
Intermediate School



Troy Phillips

Virginia Avenue
Charlotte DeHart
Elementary School



JILL MCDANIEL

VA RISE Award

Bus Driver Jill McDaniel received statewide recognition as one of two VA recipients of the Recognizing Inspirational School Employees Award, also known as the RISE Award. The RISE Award honors classified school employees, such as clerical, school nutrition, health, transportation, and custodial staff, who provide exemplary service to students and their communities.

During her 43 years with WPS, McDaniel logged more than 300,000 miles behind the wheel. She was an inspirational employee, showing up to work each day with a smile on her face. In recent years, when WPS experienced a driver shortage, Jill backfilled so routes could be covered and all students could arrive safely to school on time.

Ms. McDaniel transported generations of WPS students during her time as a bus driver. Students she developed relationships with many years ago have now grown up to have families of their own — and she transported their children, too. This unique experience built a very special type of community amongst Jill and the neighborhoods she served.

DR. HAYLEY MULLINS

Early Career Special Education Leader

Dr. Hayley Mullins received the Mary Lou Wall Award of Excellence For Early Career Special Education Leaders from the Virginia Council of Administrators of Special Education (VCASE). Dr. Mullins, Director of Special Education & Related Services, has worked in the field of education for 14 years and started out as a Special Education Teacher. She later became an Autism & Behavior Specialist and the Coordinator of Special Education with Campbell County Public Schools before coming to Winchester.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. April Bruce nominated Dr. Mullins because, in 30 years working in education, she has never seen an administrator rise so quickly as a leader in a school division. “Her passion for excellence and presence in all aspects of the school division have made us better, and we are very fortunate to have her on our team,” Dr. Bruce wrote in her nomination letter. “She has listened to stakeholders and made significant changes to her department that are innovative and creative.” Dr. Mullins leads by example and has proven herself to be a highly effective leader across the Division.



PAM HOYLE

CodeVA Computer Science Coach of the Year



Ms. Pam Hoyle was named the VDOE and CodeVA 2023 Computer Science Coach Educator of the Year for her service as the Computer Science Integration Equity and Community Outreach Coach through the WPS Metrics Grant. In her role, Ms. Hoyle works with educators to establish experiential learning opportunities and ensure equity for all participants.

Her work helps bring computer science to life for students through field trips, after school clubs, and guest speakers. Her emphasis on equity ensures that computer science is accessible for everyone. “This is truly an award for the whole team, I would not have received it without them,” she said. “I am so proud of the ways we have worked together to build computer science integration across the division.”

VIRGINIA TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Jeff Keller embodies *learning for all* each day in his History classroom at John Handley High School. For the past 15 years, Mr. Keller has learned how to balance supporting students while also challenging them in ways that help them grow. For him, it all starts with a relationship.

"Students want to know that you know them beyond just a name on the roster. Building relationships like this means not only that I know my students, but also that I know when and how to push students to move beyond surface level thinking."

-Jeff Keller



Mr. Keller is known at Handley for holding students to a high standard. He was described by Principal Susan Braithwaite as an irreplaceable, highly valued member of the Handley community. "Mr. Keller is willing to do anything that is asked of him in order to make the high school experience better for our staff and students," she said. "He is relentless in regards to holding high expectations for EVERY student. He works tirelessly to make John Handley High School a safe place for all students."

Mr. Keller's dedication to equity is unmatched. He has a deep understanding of the History content, and student voice and choice are visible in his classroom. His instructional delivery addresses individual student learning styles, and he incorporates technology on a daily basis.

Outside the classroom, you can find Mr. Keller working with the student equity panel and supporting students in the Black Student Union.

Mr. Keller was recognized as the Region IV Virginia Teacher of the Year in October 2022 and the Virginia Teacher of the Year during a special ceremony at the Governor's Mansion in April 2023.

Winchester: A Place You Want to Be

WPS is moving through a nationwide teacher shortage to recruit educators who seek an environment that is small enough to make an impression but large enough to innovate.



Provisionally Licensed Special Education Cohort

With teacher preparatory program enrollment declining significantly, WPS is thinking differently about staffing special education teaching positions. This cohort seeks to grow alternatively licensed special education teachers so we are able to better recruit and retain staff while also improving student achievement.

Learn more in this [2023 Winchester Star article](#).

- 106** MONTHLY SESSIONS FOCUSED ON INSTRUCTION AND CASE MANAGEMENT
- 21%** OF SPECIAL ED TEACHERS ARE PROVISIONALLY LICENSED
- 27%** GROWTH IN INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES AMONG COHORT
- 24%** GROWTH IN SPECIAL ED CASE MANAGEMENT AMONG COHORT
- 29%** IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
- 33%** STUDENT SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL IMPROVEMENT

WPS SCHOOL-BASED STAFF RANK IN THE **80TH** percentile nationally for positive responses about **RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LEADERSHIP & STAFF**

Mindy Loy “Come Back to Teach” scholarships



The Winchester Education Foundation awarded 5 “Come Back to Teach” scholarships to assist JHHS graduates who have decided to serve as educators, administrators, and other certified professionals in WPS. The first grants were given in the 2018-2019 school year. Since then, the WEF has awarded more than \$157,500 in “Come Back to Teach” grants to WPS educators.



STAFF EMPOWERMENT

CTE PARTNERSHIPS

A win-win for industry partners & student learning



Navy Federal Credit Union



The Law Office of Karen M Holman



Winchester Police Dept



Blauch Brothers Inc.



Fabritek

INDUSTRIES INCLUDE:

- Architecture and Construction
- Business Management and Administration
- Education and Training
- Finance
- Public Administration
- Health Science
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- STEM for Engineering



**INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS
TRIPLED
IN 2022-2023!**

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

DIGITAL READERS:
Visit our website
to view the full
[Capital Improvement Plan](#)

**\$3.2
MILLION**

COST OF
22-23 CAPITAL
PROJECTS

**\$38
MILLION**

FUNDING NEEDED
FOR FUTURE
CAPITAL PROJECTS



PHOTO CREDIT: JEFF TAYLOR / THE WINCHESTER STAR

DOUGLAS SCHOOL MOVE-IN

The WPS Central Administrative Office officially moved to the Douglas School at 598 N. Kent St. in January 2023. The Douglas School educated Black students from the city of Winchester and surrounding counties from 1927 to 1966. Douglas School Alumni have been a key part of the renovation and museum exhibit that will share the building's story. The museum exhibit is set to open in 2024.



PHOTO CREDIT: JEFF TAYLOR / THE WINCHESTER STAR

OTHER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- Roof and trim replacement at JHHS
- Updated VACDES STEM Classroom

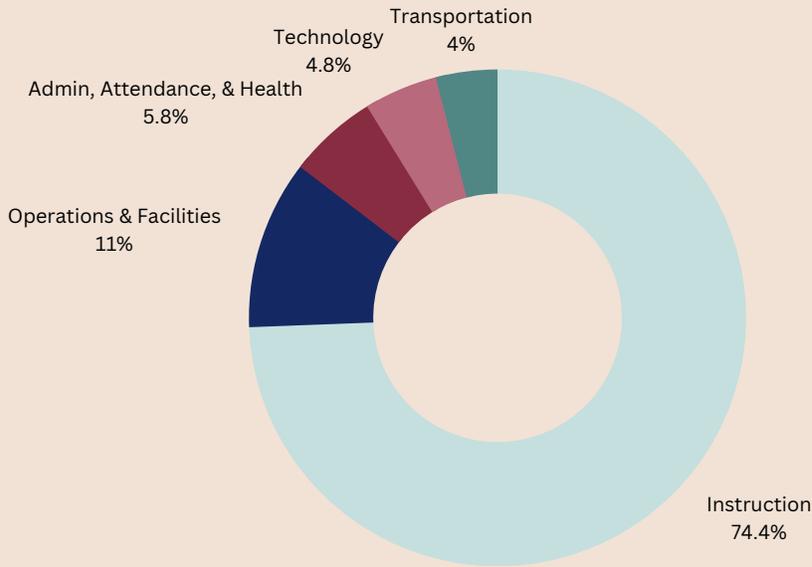
CUSTOMER SERVICE



In 2022-2023, all WPS administrative assistants received professional development in customer service. They were trained in *The Winchester Way*, the new WPS Customer Service Model.

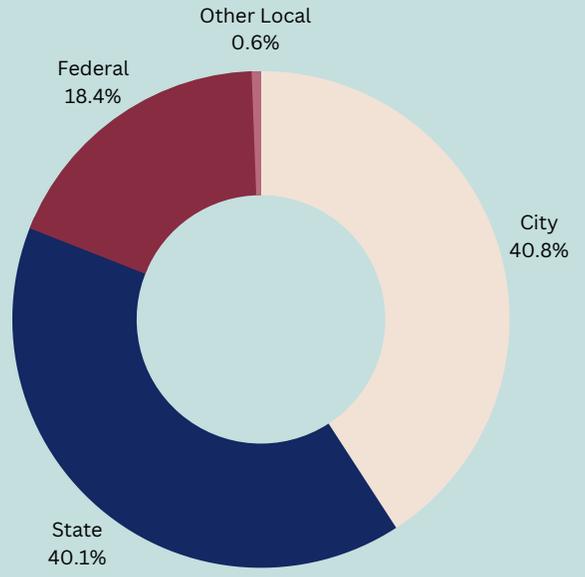
ORGANIZATIONAL EMPOWERMENT

FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2024 BUDGET PROCESS



FY24 OPERATING EXPENSES

FY24 REVENUE Total Budget: \$102,921,589



Historical Local vs State Per Pupil Funding

Per Pupil Expenditure by Local Revenue



Per Pupil Expenditure by State Revenue



*as reported in April 2023

»»» Nearly 3/4 of the operating budget goes toward instruction

PAY INCREASES

PAY INCREASES WERE A TOP PRIORITY DURING THE FY24 BUDGET CYCLE.

5%
cost of living increase for all employees

2%
additional pay increase for teachers

**WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
VOTED TO
FULLY FUND
THE WPS BUDGET
REQUEST FOR 2024!**

OUR SCHOOL BOARD



Top Row, Pictured from Left

Elyus Wallace	Ward 3
Melissa Harris	At Large
Michael Birchenough	Ward 1
Carmen Crawford	Ward 2
Stuart Eiland	At Large

Bottom Row, Pictured from Left

Bryan Pearce-Gonzales	Board Vice-Chair, Ward 4
Marie Imoh	Board Chair, At Large
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 oversees budget expenditures and school staff and carries out responsibilities connected with school buildings.

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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