

Local-Level Advocacy Guide for Making the Most of New Federal School Funding



Schools are getting lots of new additional funding from the federal government. Below are ways to advocate for priorities that are important to you and your community.

The new COVID-19 relief package, the American Rescue Plan (ARP), contains the **largest single investment in K-12 education ever by the federal government**, on top of what prior relief packages provided. Most of this money is going directly to local divisions. This means that **local school boards will be deciding how to use these funds** to benefit their schools. Counties and cities will also receive flexible federal funding that they can use to fund local schools. **Parents, students, educators, and community members should have a say in how this money is spent.**

This guide includes information about the funding, along with tips for advocating in your local community to make sure these funds are spent on programs and services that you believe will help your community the most.



In this guide, you'll find some answers on:

How much money will Virginia receive for schools under the plan?

How will funds be distributed?

What can the funds be used for?

What is the deadline for using the funds?

How do I get involved?

How can I center equity in my local advocacy?

Funding by Division

Fund Our Schools envisions a Virginia where every student has the opportunity to attain a high-quality public education.

FundOurSchoolsVA.org

How much money will divisions & localities receive?

Virginia school divisions are directly receiving over \$1.9 billion in additional funding from the most recent federal stimulus, or around \$1,500 in additional per-pupil spending. For context, the average state per-pupil spending in Virginia for the 2020-2021 year is \$6,415, so this represents a substantial investment in public K-12 education for Virginia's students.

*Avg. \$1,500
per student*

Virginia counties and cities are also receiving an additional \$2.9 billion in flexible funding that they can spend on schools. Support for improved tax policy that boosts working faaverage in their pockets and into their communities.

*Localities get
\$2.9 Billion*

How will funds be distributed?

The \$1.9 billion going directly to school divisions will be distributed by the Title I, Part A funding formula, which accounts for the number of children living in poverty. This means that divisions with the highest shares of students living in poverty will receive more funding. Each division will each receive a different amount of funding under this formula. See the table below for more information on how much each division in Virginia will receive.

The \$2.9 billion in federal support going to local governments will be distributed according to multiple criteria and will go to localities at the county, town, and city level. See table link below for information on how much each locality in Virginia will receive.

[Link to Locality
Distribution Table](#)

What can the funds be used for?

For the \$1.9 billion going directly to divisions, **20% must be used for instruction loss recovery ("lost learning time")**. This can be spent on tutoring programs, summer school programs, extended day or extended school year programs, or other creative ways to address instruction loss.

For the other 80% of funds, **divisions have a lot of flexibility**. They can use the funds to make certain upgrades to school facilities or buildings, invest in additional wraparound supports or programs, technology, additional pay for teachers, safe school reopenings, addressing student social and emotional health, and more. Essentially, schools can use the remaining funds for most educational expenses.

Localities have broad flexibility for how they can use their funds, but investing in schools to help them recover from the pandemic is certainly a valid and effective use.

What's the deadline for using the funds?

All division funds (ESSER III) must be obligated by September 30, 2024.

Localities must spend their funds (Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund) by the end of 2024.

How do I get involved?

Local divisions and localities should be receiving their funds and making initial decisions about the use of the funds in spring 2021. Be sure to **review your local division’s school board and local decision-making bodies’ (possibly the board of supervisors or city council) meeting calendars and agendas and watch out for when the new federal funding is being discussed.**

Most meetings will have a public comment period. **You can use the public comment period to send in or express your ideas regarding how the funds should be used.** For example, if you know a school needs new textbooks or a new roof, you can tell the school board or local council that and ask that funds be spent on those things. If you know that English Learners in your community or students with certain disabilities have been missing out on core services, and will need additional support to make up for lost time, you can ask for that. Perhaps you just want to focus more on equitable distribution of funds and want new funding administered in a way that takes

into account student needs in each school—you can ask for that.

You can also try to meet with your local school board and council member to tell them about your priorities. You should be able to look on your locality and school division’s website to find out which member represents your area.

You can also give input on the state’s plan for the use of these funds. Virginia’s state education agency must submit a detailed plan to the federal government about how these funds will be spent. As part of this plan, the state must describe how it “consulted with stakeholders and the public, including students, families, civil rights organizations, including disability rights organizations, school administrators, superintendents, and educators and their unions.” A great way to keep up to date with when the Virginia Department of Education will take public input on use of these funds is to [subscribe to their email here.](#)

How can I center equity in my local advocacy?

- School boards and local decision-making bodies should ensure that all investments consider equity and that funds impact students most likely to experience lost instructional time from the pandemic, including children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, English Learner students, children experiencing poverty, children with disabilities, and students of color. One way to ensure this is to **advocate for distribution of the federal funds to schools in your division based on student need (sometimes called a weighted formula).**
- School boards and local councils should consider how returning to school will be difficult for students who may have experienced pandemic-related hardship and trauma, with particular consideration for students with disabilities, children experiencing poverty and housing instability, and English Learner students. Schools should invest in programs and services that support students’ mental health needs during this challenging time. Investment in restorative justice programming, additional social workers or counselors, and **additional programs to support students is crucial to ensuring students are not pushed out for normal adjustment behaviors when they return to school.**
- As school boards and local councils consider budget investments in remediation services for lost instructional time, **they should prioritize programs with the least barriers to access,** including enhanced tutoring programs that take place during the school day and summer programming that offers transportation and meal options to students that need it.
- Some school divisions and local councils might consider using these funds to purchase security and safety measures that disproportionately punish and surveil students of color, students with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ students. Schools **should prioritize the social and emotional health of students over investments in security and surveillance technologies.**

Funding by Division

As noted above, funding for divisions was allocated based on the federal Title I, Part A formula, which distributes money to divisions based on need. The table below shows the amount divisions will directly receive from the American Rescue Plan Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund.

We know that students living in poverty face the most barriers to educational opportunity. Additionally, state aid for public education is still down from 2009 levels. This means that local divisions are forced to make up this loss, with high-poverty divisions and divisions with the most students of color facing the most difficulty. This results in vast inequities in educational opportunity across the state. Schools are struggling to provide adequate staffing, resulting in an insufficient number of counselors, social workers, instructional aides, and administrative and custodial staff. The pandemic has only widened these gaps; therefore, these funds represent crucial investments in our highest-need students—investments we have failed for too long to make in our state.

SCHOOL DIVISION	American Rescue Plan Act Funding to Division	Amount Per Pupil (using pre-pandemic FY21 enrollment projections)
ACCOMACK	\$13,377,017	\$2,705
ALBEMARLE	\$11,475,395	\$807
ALEXANDRIA	\$34,792,781	\$2,189
ALLEGHANY	\$4,413,299	\$2,466
AMELIA	\$2,146,282	\$1,328
AMHERST	\$7,301,690	\$1,829
APPOMATTOX	\$3,878,287	\$1,751
ARLINGTON	\$18,855,118	\$699
AUGUSTA	\$9,960,309	\$1,012
BATH	\$609,670	\$1,260
BEDFORD	\$12,079,332	\$1,307
BLAND	\$965,629	\$1,497
BOTETOURT	\$3,007,803	\$663
BRISTOL	\$9,253,483	\$4,363
BRUNSWICK	\$5,404,578	\$3,809
BUCHANAN	\$10,200,441	\$4,226
BUCKINGHAM	\$4,919,252	\$2,491
BUENA VISTA	\$1,597,926	\$2,057
CAMPBELL	\$11,654,524	\$1,541

SCHOOL DIVISION	American Rescue Plan Act Funding to Division	Amount Per Pupil (using pre-pandemic FY21 enrollment projections)
CAROLINE	\$6,369,209	\$1,548
CARROLL	\$8,333,140	\$2,415
CHARLES CITY	\$1,275,750	\$2,307
CHARLOTTE	\$5,295,734	\$3,283
CHARLOTTESVILLE	\$10,065,919	\$2,401
CHESAPEAKE	\$51,097,732	\$1,244
CHESTERFIELD	\$51,416,106	\$822
CLARKE	\$1,270,046	\$688
COLONIAL BEACH	\$2,299,309	\$4,041
COLONIAL HEIGHTS	\$4,727,021	\$1,698
COVINGTON	\$1,716,698	\$1,830
CRAIG	\$1,292,386	\$2,380
CULPEPER	\$10,243,226	\$1,212
CUMBERLAND	\$3,312,212	\$2,805
DANVILLE	\$29,674,337	\$5,484
DEP. JJ	\$1,212,358	
DICKENSON	\$6,446,027	\$3,289
DINWIDDIE	\$5,988,525	\$1,418
ESSEX	\$3,229,472	\$2,615

Funding by Division

SCHOOL DIVISION	American Rescue Plan Act Funding to Division	Amount Per Pupil (using pre-pandemic FY21 enrollment projections)
FAIRFAX/CITY	\$188,629,166	\$1,028
FALLS CHURCH	\$323,466	\$126
FAUQUIER	\$5,899,550	\$542
FLOYD	\$3,690,233	\$2,096
FLUVANNA	\$2,719,054	\$802
FRANKLIN	\$14,724,335	\$2,282
FRANKLIN	\$5,732,217	\$889
FREDERICK	\$10,793,769	\$776
FREDERICKSBURG	\$7,843,924	\$2,193
GALAX	\$4,630,847	\$3,607
GILES	\$3,628,017	\$1,607
GLOUCESTER	\$5,497,961	\$1,094
GOOCHLAND	\$2,358,146	\$938
GRAYSON	\$5,387,053	\$3,558
GREENE	\$3,350,581	\$1,159
GREENSVILLE/EMPORIA	\$7,435,605	\$3,740
HALIFAX	\$11,170,273	\$2,518
HAMPTON	\$54,800,634	\$2,880
HANOVER	\$8,341,833	\$490
HARRISONBURG	\$11,822,224	\$1,848
HENRICO	\$78,318,249	\$1,550
HENRY	\$18,051,094	\$2,602
HIGHLAND	\$359,100	\$1,805
HOPEWELL	\$12,531,043	\$3,247
ISLE OF WIGHT	\$4,748,318	\$847
KING & QUEEN	\$1,535,293	\$1,958
KING GEORGE	\$3,079,990	\$699

SCHOOL DIVISION	American Rescue Plan Act Funding to Division	Amount Per Pupil (using pre-pandemic FY21 enrollment projections)
KING WILLIAM	\$1,780,619	\$833
LANCASTER	\$2,900,526	\$3,025
LEE	\$12,089,585	\$4,150
LEXINGTON	\$441,286	\$671
LOUDOUN	\$10,871,859	\$128
LOUISA	\$6,768,601	\$1,386
LUNENBURG	\$3,981,786	\$2,614
LYNCHBURG	\$28,413,544	\$3,685
MADISON	\$2,711,550	\$1,675
MANASSAS CITY	\$9,767,424	\$1,287
MANASSAS PARK	\$2,526,581	\$735
MARTINSVILLE	\$8,801,782	\$5,035
MATHEWS	\$1,516,652	\$1,580
MECKLENBURG	\$11,572,581	\$2,958
MIDDLESEX	\$2,713,880	\$2,460
MONTGOMERY	\$13,581,597	\$1,375
NELSON	\$3,698,763	\$2,486
NEW KENT	\$1,844,821	\$558
NEWPORT NEWS	\$82,142,456	\$3,043
NORFOLK	\$113,301,573	\$4,142
NORTHAMPTON	\$5,048,327	\$3,715
NORTHUMBERLAND	\$3,481,495	\$2,950
NORTON	\$1,890,142	\$2,429
NOTTOWAY	\$6,119,595	\$3,308
ORANGE	\$5,285,712	\$1,094
PAGE	\$6,314,511	\$1,973
PATRICK	\$4,813,293	\$2,011

Funding by Division

SCHOOL DIVISION	American Rescue Plan Act Funding to Division	Amount Per Pupil (using pre-pandemic FY21 enrollment projections)
PETERSBURG	\$22,608,275	\$6,027
PITTSYLVANIA	\$15,397,558	\$1,878
POQUOSON	\$464,284	\$220
PORTSMOUTH	\$46,708,351	\$3,545
POWHATAN	\$2,005,202	\$470
PRINCE EDWARD	\$7,059,250	\$3,690
PRINCE GEORGE	\$4,988,272	\$809
PRINCE WILLIAM	\$87,868,215	\$963
PULASKI	\$8,126,734	\$2,105
RADFORD	\$2,379,093	\$1,508
RAPPAHANNOCK	\$1,131,091	\$1,554
RICHMOND	\$2,321,453	\$1,927
RICHMOND CITY	\$122,811,025	\$5,260
ROANOKE	\$51,744,236	\$3,846
ROANOKE	\$9,748,627	\$725
ROCKBRIDGE	\$4,131,544	\$1,658
ROCKINGHAM	\$10,865,075	\$951
RUSSELL	\$8,180,628	\$2,347
SALEM	\$3,760,004	\$993
SCOTT	\$6,277,176	\$1,859
SHENANDOAH	\$8,183,015	\$1,435
SMYTH	\$9,602,996	\$2,381
SOUTHAMPTON	\$4,324,481	\$1,670

SCHOOL DIVISION	American Rescue Plan Act Funding to Division	Amount Per Pupil (using pre-pandemic FY21 enrollment projections)
SPOTSYLVANIA	\$22,682,023	\$971
STAFFORD	\$14,228,832	\$473
STAUNTON	\$6,258,502	\$2,354
SUFFOLK	\$27,355,557	\$1,981
SURRY	\$1,545,750	\$2,290
SUSSEX	\$4,032,964	\$3,935
TAZEWELL	\$13,744,733	\$2,580
VIRGINIA BEACH	\$82,443,643	\$1,239
VA DEAF & BLIND	\$674,624	
WARREN	\$6,929,670	\$1,327
WASHINGTON	\$13,302,282	\$1,969
WAYNESBORO	\$7,307,729	\$2,682
WEST POINT	\$321,296	\$409
WESTMORELAND	\$4,489,620	\$3,133
WILLIAMSBURG/ JAMES CITY	\$11,083,198	\$973
WINCHESTER	\$8,188,762	\$1,917
WISE	\$17,219,290	\$3,324
WYTHE	\$7,892,555	\$2,102
YORK	\$5,213,525	\$396