

3/12/2026 - School Board Speaking Notes:

**Let's talk about the budget in 3 minutes.**

- I'd like to call your attention to the first Spread Sheet - Per-Pupil-Funding:

- In the FY 24 Superintendents report:

Of 98 of Virginia's Counties, Highland is **4th** from the highest in Per Pupil Funding of **\$24,507**.

- Note that **Loudoun County** (highlighted), the absolute wealthiest County in the Nation, supplied **\$21,183** per student. So, Highland County supplied **\$3,324 more than the wealthiest County In the United States.**

Let's think about this in terms of per-capital wealth. Highland County residents have nowhere near the wealth of the average resident in Loudoun County. Highland has median income of about **\$46,000** per household with Loudoun County at **3 or 4 times that amount.**

So, In consideration of individual wealth, and **ranking #4 out of 98 Counties**, I think it's safe to say that Highland's funding of public schools is beyond generous - it's **lavish.**

Along those lines, I'm sure you've heard "**what-about-isms**" - Highland has this issue, that challenge, etc., etc. In the bottom line, all Counties are different, **IN THE SAME SORT OF WAY.** This is the reason for the Superintendents report - to provide an apples to apples comparison.

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First, let's acknowledge that **the lions share of education funding is in salaries.**

- Now let's take a look at the second spread sheet which I found to be quite shocking.

- Highland has an average of 8.25 students for K-8 and an **amazing 4.01 students per teacher in 8th- 12?** **This ratios are the absolute lowest in the entire state of Virginia.** That's a "**Tutors in the Kings Court**" level of

teachers.

I don't have to look at the **master schedule to know that you have teachers who have 1 or 2 students per class** so rather than talk about "graduation requirements" **why don't we put on our thinking caps and consider having multiple grade levels in the same class?**

**- Lastly please stop trying to expand the student roles by taking in students from outside of Highland.**

All that's doing is increasing education costs to Highland County residents.

- The same goes for pushing Pre-K. I don't have time to go into the Pre-K issue, in 3 minutes, but it's arguably a waste of taxpayer dollars.

**- During the next decade or two, a 10% reduction in Highland Counties population is being forecast. It's time to start thinking about scaling back.**

- Finally, **inflation was about 2.5% last year.** I'm hoping that's what you'll be asking for.