



Craftsbury Schools Background
Updated May 14, 2024

Overview

This FAQ document is a project of the Craftsbury Schools Vision Process. *The mission of the Craftsbury Schools Vision Process is to determine the best way to educate the students of Craftsbury given the present opportunities, challenges, resources and constraints.* The information provided here seeks to (1) answer specific questions that have arisen as part of the Craftsbury Schools Vision Process; and (2) provide additional context around the aforementioned mission. This document is a collaborative effort between Vision Process members, Craftsbury Schools administration, and OSSU staff.

What is the current enrollment at the Craftsbury Schools?

As of May, 2024, the total student enrollment (Pre-K-12) in PowerSchool is 188 students. Both that figure and the breakdown below represent physical students in classrooms, not the state weighted average as presented in the budget.

Grade Level	Student Number (April 29, 2024)
Elementary School - lower school campus: (Kindergarten-Grade 2)	Pre-Kindergarten: 9* Kindergarten: 11 Grade 1: 11 Grade 2: 11
Elementary School - upper school campus: (Grades 3-5)	Grade 3: 19 Grade 4: 13 Grade 5: 17
Middle School: Grades 6-8	Grade 6: 17 Grade 7: 15 Grade 8: 17
High School: (Grades 9-12)	Grade 9: 9 Grade 10: 16 (includes 1 at GMTCC) Grade 11: 10 (includes 1 at GMTCC) Grade 12: 13 (includes 1 at GMTCC, 3 Early College)

*In addition to the students currently in the Craftsbury Schools pre-K, we know of 6 Craftsbury residents at Saplings pre-K and one non-resident who is currently planning to tuition in for Kindergarten. Given the variability in local pre-K options, we don't have a complete count.

What is the future enrollment projection?

Enrollments depend on a number of factors that are very hard to predict, ranging from birth rates to real estate availability and beyond. You can see the current and historical enrollment [here](#). The district also had an enrollment study done in 2022; that can be found [here](#). Note that some of the figures in that projection have already been proven imperfect: for example, the births for 2022 and 2023 were predicted to be ~10, while the town reports list births for those years as ~15. In general, enrollments are projected to increase.

What number of Craftsbury students are tuitioning out to schools outside of the district?

We don't have a complete picture at this time and are working on tracking down more information. Anecdotally, several Craftsbury residents do tuition out of the school district to other schools.

How many homeschooled students live in Craftsbury?

There are currently 17 Craftsbury students enrolled in Home Study Programs.

What number of students are utilizing school choice options (Hazenbury exchange, Winooski Valley Collaborative, etc.)?

- Craftsbury students attending Hazen: 3
- Hazen students attending Craftsbury: 5
- Winooski Valley Regional Public School Choice Collaborative: 3 Craftsbury students attending other schools; 2 students coming from other schools to Craftsbury

Is the cooperative sports thing a step toward consolidating our schools?

No. There are many schools around the state who have had cooperative agreements for many years without it leading to school closure. Twinfield and Cabot have had cooperative agreements for many years and while Cabot faces many of the same challenges Craftsbury does, those issues were not caused by cooperative sports. There is also a history of cooperative agreements that eventually lead to schools restarting their own programs. People's Academy and Stowe have recently had cooperative agreements for several sports as well.

How do our costs per pupil compare to other K-12 schools in VT?

The Agency of Education compiles [Per Pupil Budget and Spending figures](#) on its website. It is difficult to compare per pupil costs regionally as the school system structures vary - for example, some neighboring towns have an elementary school and pay tuition for students in grades 7-12, some towns are regional union high schools pulling from multiple towns, some towns are part of union elementary districts, etc. There are 14 other public K-12 school systems in the state. Their FY24 per pupil budgeting and spending is shown below. Please note that these figures utilize Vermont's funding formula prior to Act 127 which benefitted Craftsbury by lowering per pupil spending given the increase in Long Term Average Daily Membership (weighted student counts).

District Name	County	Grades Operate	FY2024 Equalized Pupils	FY2024 Budgets per Equalized Pupil	Budget per EqPup Group Rank (High to Low)	** State Rank of Budgets per Equalized Pupil	FY2024 Education Spending per Equalized Pupil	** State Rank of Education Spending Per Equalized Pupil	Equalized Homestead Tax Rate	Size Detail
Operate public K-12										
Fairfax	Franklin	PK-12	883.87	19,966.55	15	100	17,679.30	113	1.1448	500 <= large < 1000
Stowe	Lamoille	PK-12	745.00	21,032.89	14	91	20,187.25	65	1.3072	500 <= large < 1000
Cabot	Washington	PK-12	163.55	22,134.28	13	78	20,852.44	50	1.3503	100 <= medium < 500
Arlington	Bennington	PK-12	358.10	22,739.30	12	70	20,181.40	66	1.3068	100 <= medium < 500
Colchester	Chittenden	PK-12	2283.61	22,946.74	11	65	17,932.20	109	1.1612	1000 < very large
Milton	Chittenden	PK-12	1498.46	23,856.36	10	43	19,763.88	72	1.2798	1000 < very large
South Burlington	Chittenden	PK-12	2561.11	24,414.43	9	37	19,372.88	79	1.2545	1000 < very large
Danville	Caledonia	PK-12	310.53	24,504.55	8	35	21,240.77	41	1.3754	100 <= medium < 500
Craftsbury	Orleans	PK-12	158.86	27,719.67	7	21	22,887.48	19	1.4821	100 <= medium < 500
Springfield	Windsor	PK-12	1247.09	29,328.47	6	8	21,825.81	31	1.4133	1000 < very large
Burlington	Chittenden	PK-12	3702.88	30,071.97	5	6	21,325.14	39	1.3809	1000 < very large
Winooski ID	Chittenden	PK-12	898.24	32,935.41	4	5	23,089.61	14	1.4952	500 <= large < 1000
Canaan	Essex	PK-12	146.85	34,052.76	3	4	21,447.68	37	1.3888	100 <= medium < 500
Hartford	Windsor	PK-12	1311.57	36,297.82	2	2	21,236.58	42	1.3752	1000 < very large
Rutland City	Rutland	PK-12	1917.04	38,654.91	1	1	20,171.72	67	1.3062	1000 < very large
N = 15			Group Data	18,186.76	28,151.98		20,251.68			

*Note: Act 127 changed pupil calculation formulas, so our per-pupil funding has changed but comparative information is not yet available.

The tuition rate charged to students outside of Craftsbury to come to our schools is lower than our posted per-pupil costs—are Craftsbury taxpayers subsidizing non-Craftsbury residents?

No. It's important to remember that Craftsbury taxpayers are not shouldering the full burden of paying for our school system: all taxpayers pay into the state education fund, which then gets redistributed. Tuition rates are set so that they cover the cost of per pupil spending and generate local revenue, reducing the overall need of Ed Spending from the state. Craftsbury's Per Pupil Spending for FY25 is \$15,256.58, which is derived by dividing the total Ed Spending need by the Long Term Average Daily Membership (weighted student count). Craftsbury's Elementary and Secondary tuition rates for FY25 are \$15,000 and \$18,000, respectively, with the vast majority of students who pay tuition doing so at the secondary level. Tuition-paying students can help lower per pupil spending as the school can accommodate additional students without drastically impacting costs.

What is the condition of the buildings/infrastructure, and what are the estimated costs for addressing facilities issues?

Generally speaking, our buildings are in fair to good condition. While there are some issues to be addressed in the near future, the buildings as a whole are structurally sound and most systems are in good working order. There are a number of repairs and improvements to be addressed in the near future but recent investments have made a significant dent in the maintenance backlog.

The Facility Condition Assessment reports created for the AOE as part of Act 72 gives two indexes that give a sense of building condition. The first is the Facility Condition Index (FCI) which gives the ratio of facility improvements needed compared to total replacement cost. The second is the Depleted Value Index (DVI) which gives the ratio of useful life consumed to average useful life for buildings and components based on industry standards. The table below shows the replacement cost for each building based on a ballpark \$550.00 per square foot cost derived from the TruexCullins report, the FCI, DVI, and repair cost based on current FCI. It should be noted that this cost is only the cost to bring the facility back to like-new condition, not to make any alterations or improvements. There are some inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the reports especially in separating the condition of the Academy and Minden Hall but taken as a whole this gives a reasonable snapshot of our current condition and cost to bring the buildings back to original condition.

Building	Square Feet	Replacement Cost	FCI	DVI	Repair Cost
Academy	34000	\$18,700,000.00	3.70%	22.40%	\$691,900.00
Minden	13000	\$7,150,000.00	1.50%	59.50%	\$107,250.00
Elementary	6000	\$3,300,000.00	9.50%	47.00%	\$313,500.00
				Total	\$1,112,650.00

What would it cost to build a new elementary school? What would it cost to renovate the elementary school?

All cost estimates greatly depend on the final design for a given construction or renovation project. In 2022, we had the firm TruexCullins prepare a study for our schools. You can read their report [here](#) and a cost comparison of the options they presented [here](#). The options presented by TruexCullins include between 18,931 and 42,509 square feet of new construction. At \$550.00 per square foot that equates to between \$10.4 million and \$23.4 million for new space. There would likely be an additional cost of \$3-5 million to alter and renovate current space bringing the total cost to between \$13 million and \$28 million. These costs are based on the desired spaces as identified as part of the initial design process. Alteration of those needs would likely have an impact on the final cost of a project.

Renovation cost was estimated as part of the TruexCullins report at \$281.43 per square foot. Applying that cost to the elementary school gives a renovation cost of \$1.6 million without changing the square footage of the building which would leave many needs unmet.

What exactly are the space/facility issues at the elementary school?

- No gymnasium/multipurpose room for group gathering, PE, indoor recess etc.
- Lack of space for support staff to work and/or meet with students
- Inadequate kitchen/food service space
- Lack of bathroom for Pre-k
- Multiple ADA accessibility deficiencies
- HVAC system has design and balance issues that make the North end of the building hard to keep warm while the south end can get excessively hot. The system also fails to deliver sufficient fresh air to all rooms.
- Inadequate staff room as required by CBA

- Roof on the south end of the building is deteriorating and will require replacement soon. Leakage in the bell tower has been noted on occasion in the past year and repairs are planned for this summer.
- No art/music, STEM spaces
- Parking lot needs improvement and traffic flow is an issue.
- Siding needs repair and painting.
- Nurse's office does not have a proper recovery room for students and there are FERPA issues (this is a common issue in OSSU)
- Sheet vinyl floors are 44 years old and are due for replacement.
- Limited playground equipment some of which is not appropriate for the age group it is serving.
- Pre-k playground should be entirely fenced in.
- While some energy efficiency improvements have been made there is still room for improvement.

What would it cost to close the high school and send our students elsewhere?

We don't have enough information at this time to provide an accurate answer. While we can calculate what it would cost to tuition our current resident students elsewhere, there are a number of complicating factors: we don't know how many students are currently tuitioning out (with families paying the bill); we can't predict how many homeschooled students might shift and require tuition; and we have not done a detailed analysis of how costs might shift from the high school to the elementary/middle school if we were to eliminate certain grades. While high schoolers currently make up about $\frac{1}{4}$ of our student population, eliminating high school would not simply reduce the budget by a similar proportion, as many costs are difficult to pro-rate. Additional factors to consider include the drop in tuition revenue from non-resident students, changes in transportation costs depending on the high school options, and adaptation of existing buildings.