Section X

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Education in Hampton Roads

The quality of education provided in Hampton Roads will determine future economic success in this region. Improved educational outcomes enable a higher quality of life for the residents of Hampton Roads.

High school education is important to individual residents, as workers with high school equivalence have lower unemployment rates and higher wages than those who do not attain that level of education. Furthermore, concentrated pockets of low education achievement have a negative impact when localities fail to effectively educate residents. Over the past five years, Hampton Roads' graduation rate has steadily grown, reflecting progress in the region's school systems. Additionally, the percentage of individuals with at least a high school equivalence is higher than the graduation rate, demonstrating the region's ability to recruit workers.

College education plays a strong role for the entire region's growth prospects. The share of college educated workers is closely related to income growth, as demonstrated in the July 2011 Hampton Roads Regional Competitiveness report released by the HRPDC. Hampton Roads needs to continue to support educational institutions in the region and work with them to ensure that each locality's high school graduates are ready to pursue post-secondary education.

The final two figures in this section examine government financing, as the financial burden of education has been spread among the federal, state, and local governments for many years. That burden has shifted, as the state's contribution for education funding has fallen from 58% regionally in 2000, to 40% in 2017, while the local burden has increased from 34% to 41% over that same time period. Before a slight rebound in 2015, real education funding per pupil declined throughout the state in response to budget pressures placed on all levels of government as a result of the Great Recession.

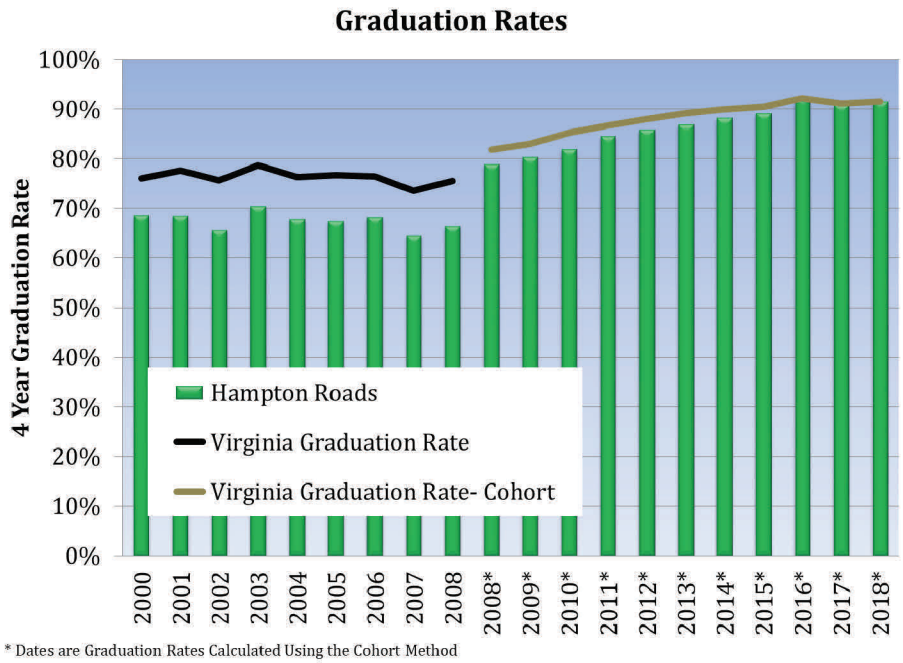
Figure 10.1 Graduation Rates in Hampton Roads and Virginia

Why is it important?

Graduation rates are a reflection of a school system's ability to retain and educate students. High graduation rates prevent uneducated residents from becoming a social burden and contribute to a more educated workforce and an increased quality of life.

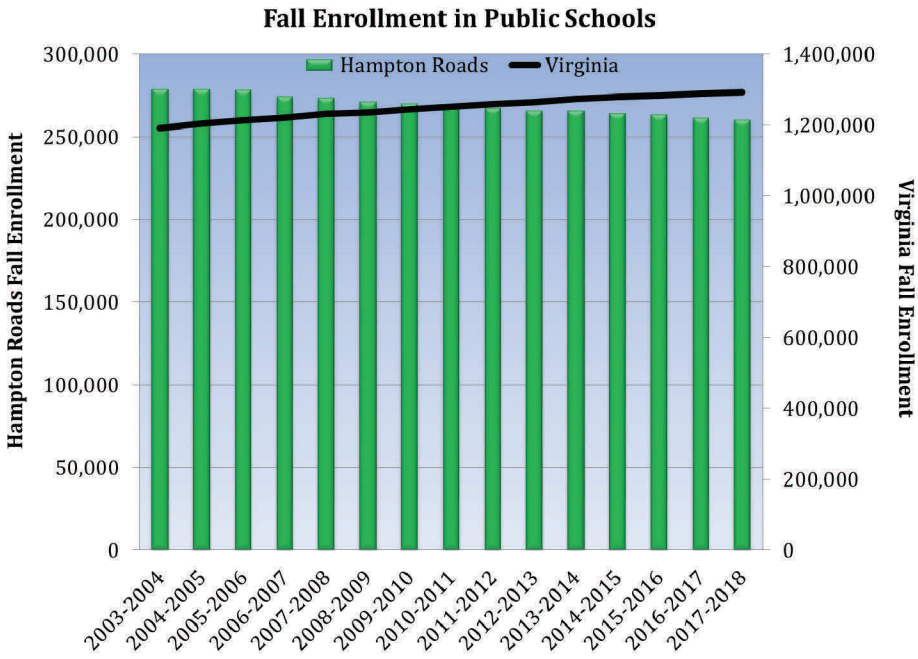
How are we doing?

Graduation rates in Hampton Roads have consistently underperformed those of the state, but with improved metrics since 2008, the gap is smaller than was previously thought to exist. In 2018, the Hampton Roads' on-time graduation rate was 91.4%, only 0.2 percentage points below that of the Commonwealth.



Source: Virginia Department of Education, HRPDC

Figure 10.2 Enrolled Students in Hampton Roads



Why is it important?

The number of enrolled students serves as one method of measuring population change. The trend of school enrollments also helps identify future education needs in the region.

How are we doing?

While public school enrollment in the state has slowly grown, the region has seen a gradual decline in the number of students enrolled in public schools, starting in the 2005-2006 school year.

Source: Virginia Department of Education, HRPDC

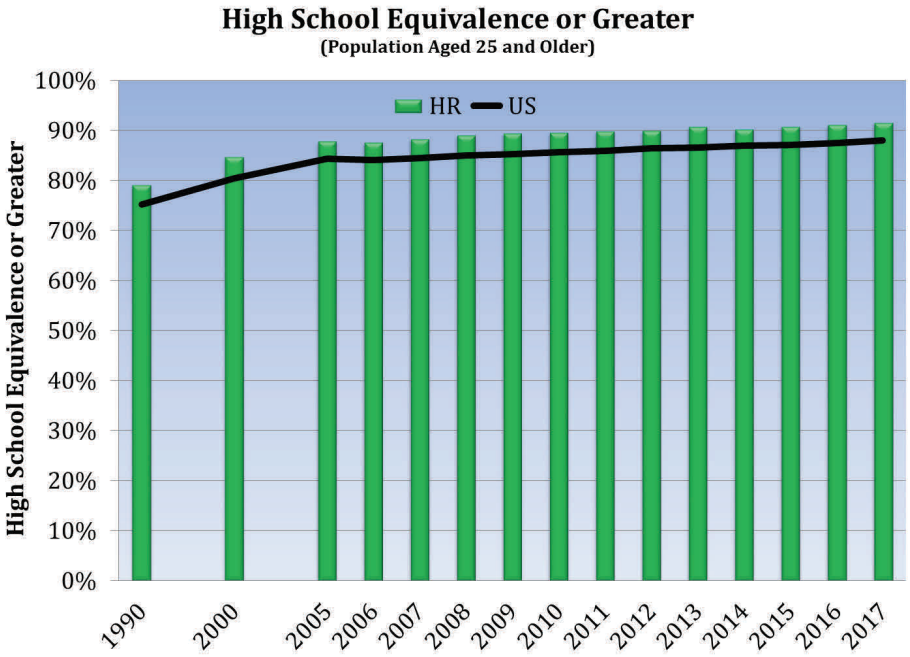
Figure 10.3 Percent of Population Attaining High School Equivalency or Greater

Why is it important?

An educated workforce has proven to be an excellent path to economic growth and allows for greater flexibility in the regional labor market.

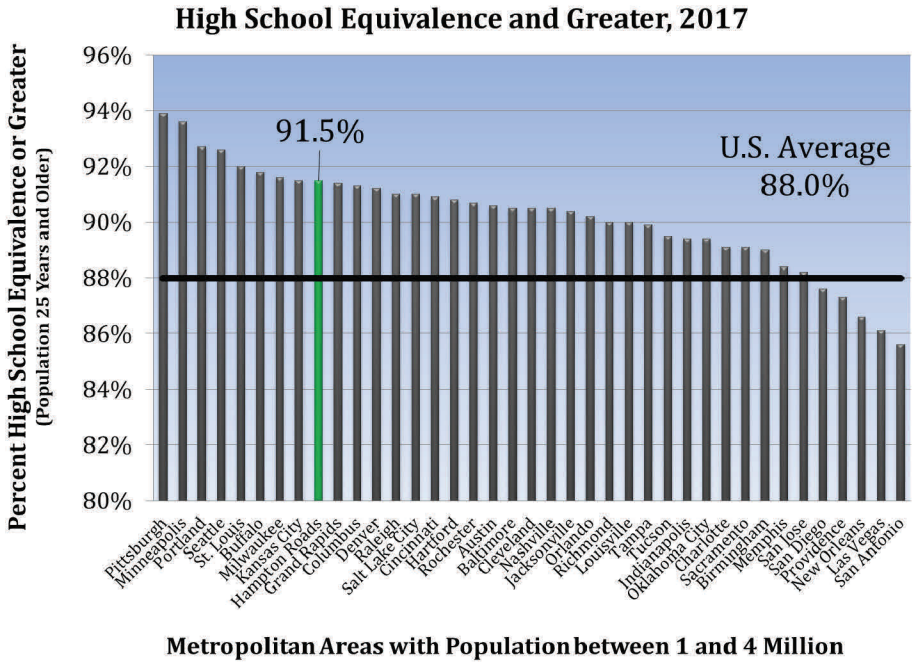
How are we doing?

The region's population has always outperformed the nation's as a whole in terms of achieving basic levels of education. A greater share of the region's population has attained at least high school equivalency as a result of the military, as well as strong employment opportunities that bring educated individuals to Hampton Roads.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, HRPDC

Figure 10.4 High School Equivalence Attainment in Hampton Roads and Reference Metro Areas



Why is it important?

Measuring education attainment in Hampton Roads as compared to the region's reference metro areas gives an indication of its economic performance. Where there are concentrations of individuals with low levels of educational attainment, there is often urban decline and lower home values.

How are we doing?

Hampton Roads ranks ninth in high school equivalence attainment among metropolitan areas with populations between 1 and 4 million.

Source: American Community Survey, HRPDC

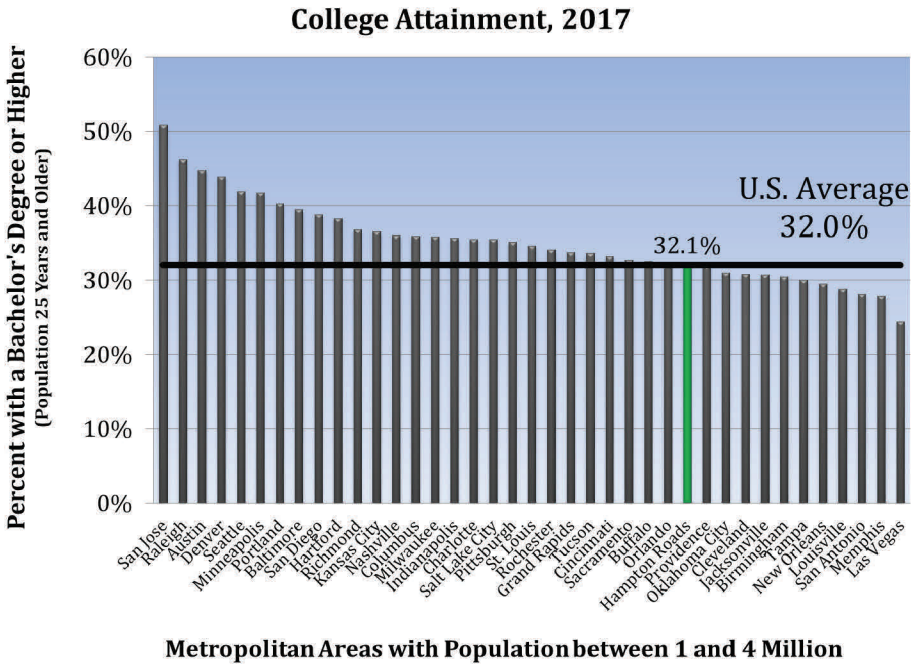
Figure 10.5 College Attainment in Hampton Roads and Reference Metro Areas

Why is it important?

College attainment in a region has been shown to have an impact on income within that region, with higher levels of college attainment causing faster income growth for the entire population.

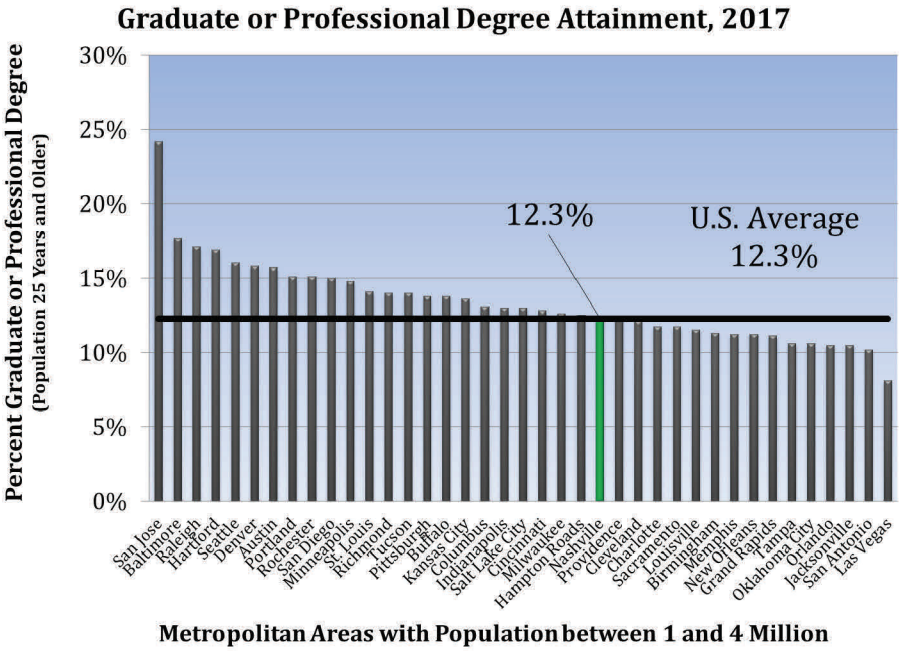
How are we doing?

32.1% of the Hampton Roads population has at least a college degree, equal to the general U.S. population. Hampton Roads ranks 28th among the 39 metro areas with populations between 1 and 4 million.



Source: American Community Survey, HRPDC

Figure 10.6 Population with Professional and Advanced Degrees in Hampton Roads and Reference Metro Areas



Why is it important?

Graduate degrees are often used as a proxy for both productivity and innovation and indicate a region's capacity for high level growth.

How are we doing?

Hampton Roads ranks 23rd among its 39 reference MSAs in terms of population with a graduate or professional degree, and the residents of the region have obtained advanced degrees at the same rate as the national average of 12.3%.

Source: American Community Survey, HRPDC

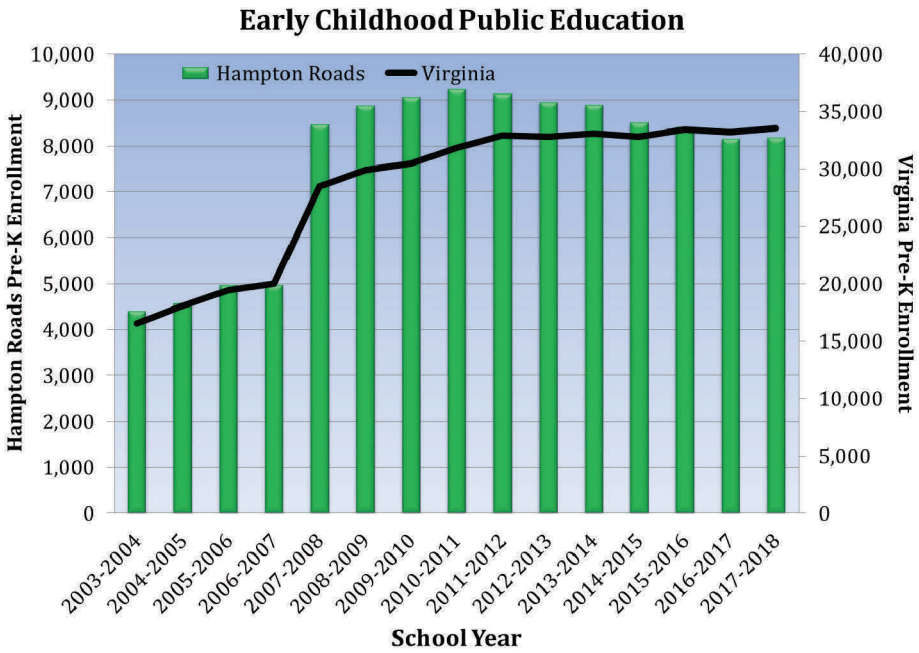
Figure 10.7 Early Childhood Enrollment

Why is it important?

Early childhood education has been identified by several groups as an area traditionally under-invested in by local and state governments. Tracking pre-kindergarten public enrollment measures the focus placed on this age group in the region.

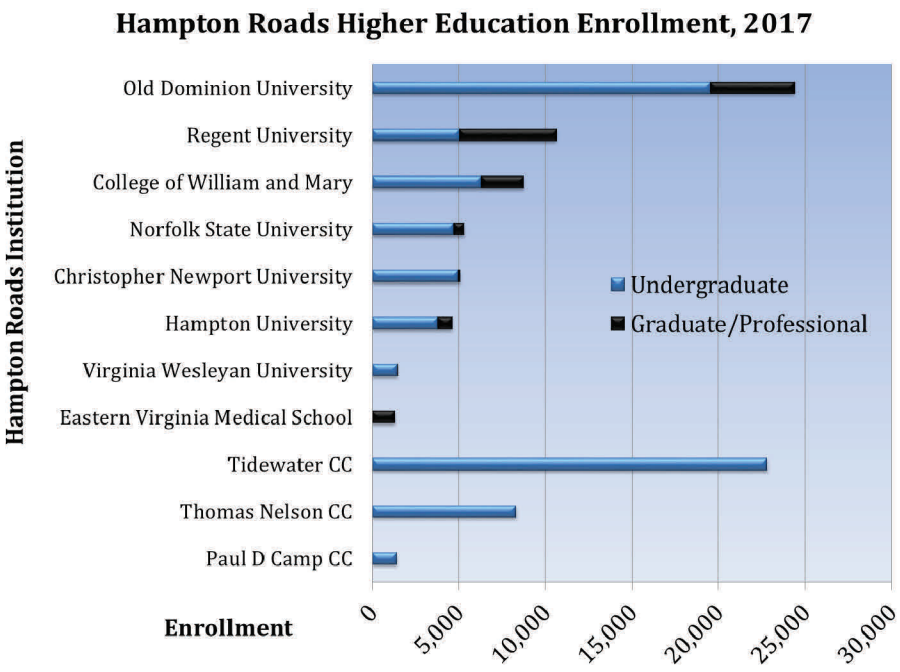
How are we doing?

The number of students enrolled in public preschool expanded rapidly in 2007-2008 at both the state and regional level, but since has gradually declined in the region, following the declines in total enrollment.



Source: Virginia Department of Education, HRPDC

Figure 10.8 Number of Enrolled Students at Regional Colleges and Universities



Why is it important?

The share of college educated individuals in a region has been shown to have a strong correlation to income growth and economic development in the region. Robust educational opportunities in the region help to introduce motivated students from around the country to this region, as well as providing opportunities to local students.

How are we doing?

This region has a diverse selection of public and private colleges, as well as a strong community college system.

Source: Virginia Department of Education, HRPDC

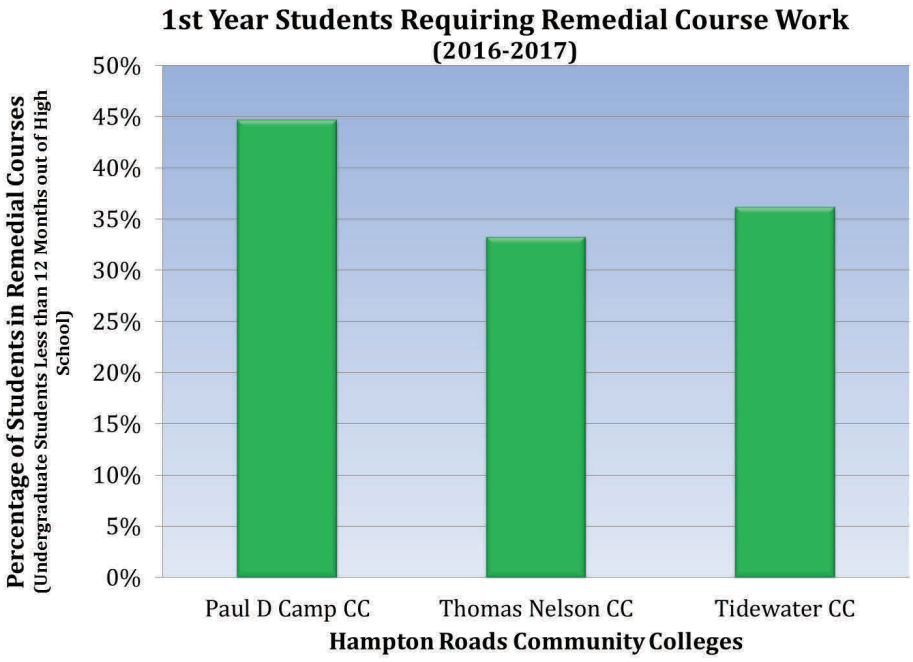
Figure 10.9 Percentage of First Year Students who Require Remedial Coursework

Why is it important?

This measure examines the percentage of students less than 12 months out of Virginia high schools who have to take at least one remedial class at regional community colleges. This is a measure of college preparedness for regional high schools, as it is likely the majority of these students attended high school in Hampton Roads.

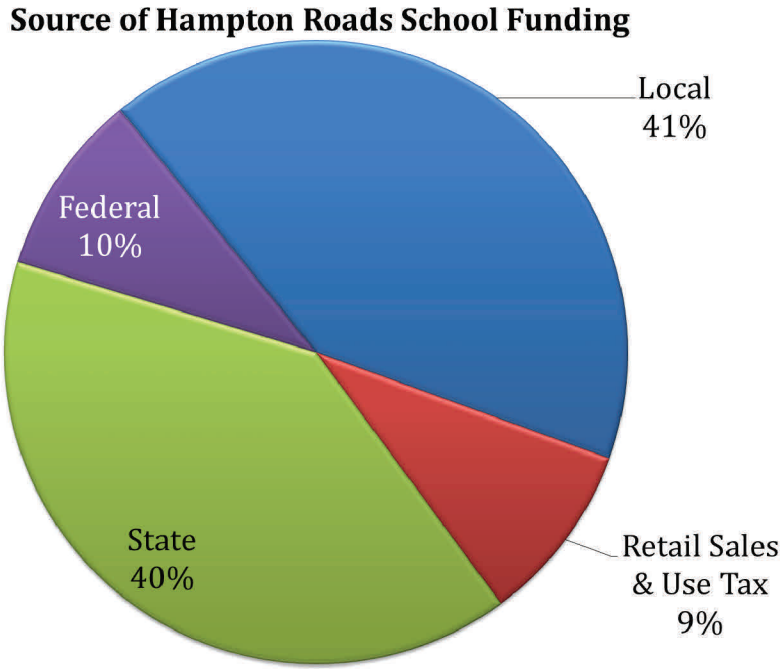
How are we doing?

A high percentage of 1st year students at regional community colleges require remedial course work in math, reading, or writing within the first year of enrollment.



Source: Virginia Department of Education, HRPDC

Figure 10.10 Distribution of K-12 Education Financing in Hampton Roads



Source: Virginia Department of Education, HRPDC

Why is it important?

It is important to see the range of funding sources that support the region's schools. In Virginia, the local, state, and federal governments all share the burden of funding education.

How are we doing?

41% of all education spending comes from local sources, marking an increase from 2000 when local financing constituted 34% of education financing. During that time period, state support has shrunk considerably. In the rest of the Commonwealth, the localities contribute an average of 51% of education funding, and the state's share is only 33%.

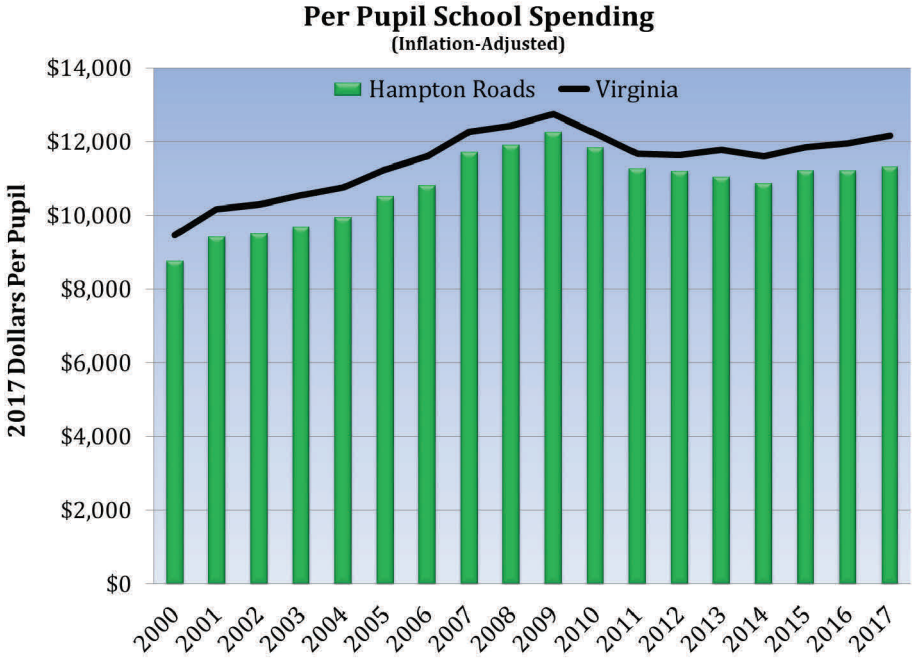
Figure 10.11 Inflation-Adjusted Per Pupil Expenditures in Hampton Roads and Virginia

Why is it important?

Figure 10.11 illustrates the cost of education in the region per public school pupil, as well as the relative priorities of the region.

How are we doing?

Per pupil education expenditures declined in real (inflation-adjusted) terms after 2009, as the recession placed the budgets of local government throughout the Commonwealth under pressure, but per pupil spending recovered slightly in the commonwealth and the region over the past two years.



Source: Virginia Department of Education, Bureau of Economic Analysis, HRPDC