



cms
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

Charlotte–Mecklenburg Schools

2026–27 Budget Request

Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners

Wednesday, May 13, 2026

Endless possibilities

Pillars of Excellence & Strategic Plan Review

Endless possibilities ²

Endless possibilities start with CMS!



Our Children. Their Future. Our Commitment.

Mission, Vision, Core Beliefs, Pillars, Goals + Guardrails

Endless possibilities start with



OUR MISSION

To create an innovative, inclusive, student-centered environment that supports the development of independent learners.

OUR VISION

To lead the community in educational excellence, inspiring intellectual curiosity, creativity, and achievement so that all students reach their full potential.

2024 – 2029 DISTRICT GOALS

-  Improve Early Literacy in Grades K – 2
-  Improve Literacy Skills in Grades 3 – 8
-  Strengthen Math Performance in Math I
-  Post-Grad Readiness

CORE BELIEFS

Public education is essential to democracy and necessary for economic opportunity, mobility and the broader public good.

We are responsible for building and maintaining a high performing school district.

Each student is uniquely capable and deserves an engaging, relevant, and challenging educational experience.

Our principals and teachers make the critical difference in student achievement and building a positive school community.

The school system, families, and communities are necessary partners in ensuring the academic, social, emotional and behavioral success of students.

GUARDRAILS



Equity over Equality:
Reducing Achievement Gaps



Safety & Security



Attending to the Whole Child:
Wellbeing & Engagement



Staffing:
High Quality Teachers

FOUR PILLARS OF EXCELLENCE



Academic
Excellence



People
Excellence



Operational
Excellence



Engagement
Excellence

OUR COMMITMENT TO DELIVER **EXCELLENCE** WITHOUT EXCEPTION

2024-29 Strategic Plan Year 1 Accomplishments

Pillars of Excellence/Strategic Plan

Our strategic plan enables excellence without exception.

Our vision and mission have driven our Goals and Guardrails, which collectively enable four Pillars of Excellence across our school system — academic excellence, people excellence, operational excellence and engagement excellence.



**Academic
Excellence**



**People
Excellence**



**Operational
Excellence**



**Engagement
Excellence**



**Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
Strategic Plan
2024–2029**

2024-29 Strategic Plan Year 1 Accomplishments



2024-29 Strategic Plan Year 1 Accomplishments



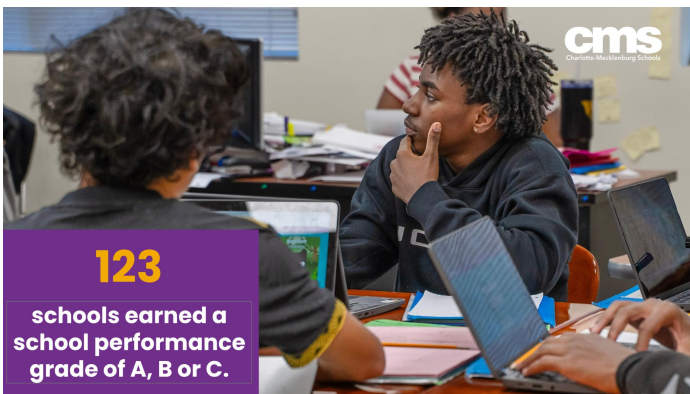
Ranked
#10 out of **115**
public school districts in the state for the percentage of schools meeting or exceeding academic growth.

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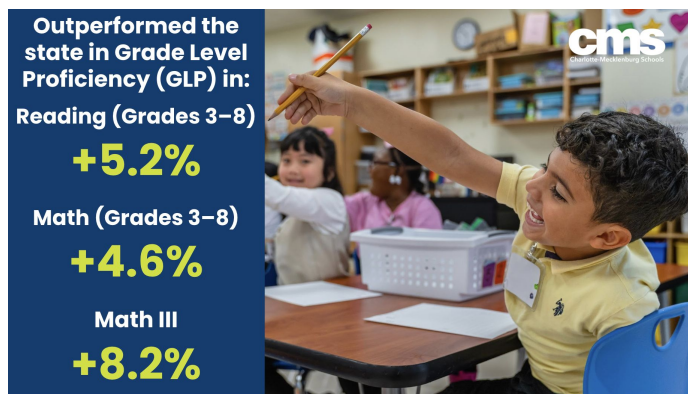
Highest number and percentage of schools meeting or exceeding academic growth in CMS history — with
89.1%
schools meeting or exceeding growth.

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123
schools earned a school performance grade of A, B or C.

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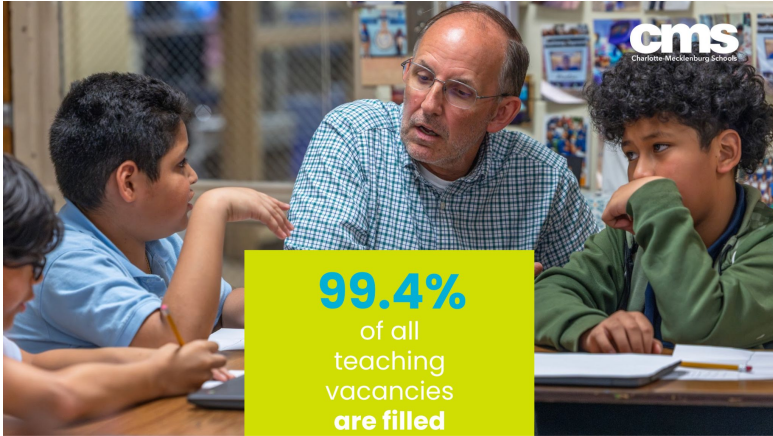


Outperformed the state in Grade Level Proficiency (GLP) in:
Reading (Grades 3–8)
+5.2%
Math (Grades 3–8)
+4.6%
Math III
+8.2%

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2024-29 Strategic Plan Year 1 Accomplishments



2024-29 Strategic Plan Year 1 Accomplishments



Completed initial project for the historic 2023 bond: **Sedgefield Montessori**



Operations By The Numbers



78,000
Students Transported



25,500
Bus Stops



98,000
Daily Miles



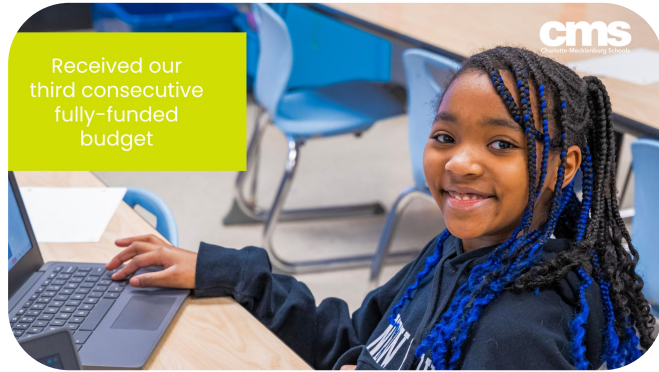
17,346,000
Annual Miles



115,000
Meals Served Daily



300,000
Meals Served During Summer



Received our third consecutive fully-funded budget



2024-29 Strategic Plan Year 1 Accomplishments

Engagement by
the Numbers



480+
Partners



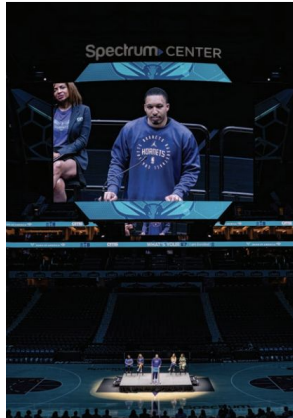
55.8K
Registered and
Active Volunteers



145,900
Volunteer Hours



\$4.9M
Value from
Volunteer Hours



**Engagement
Excellence**

Budget Alignment to the Goals and Theory of Change


Endless possibilities ¹¹

Budget Alignment to Goals and Theory of Change

GOAL 1 Improve Early Literacy in Grades K-2 <i>Increase percentage of K-2 students scoring at or above benchmark in early literacy as measured by DIBELS</i>	GOAL 2 Improve Literacy Skills in Grades 3-8 <i>Increase percentage of students scoring CCR (College and Career Ready) on reading end-of-grade assessments in grades 3-8</i>	GOAL 3 Strengthen Math Performance in Math I <i>Increase percentage of students scoring CCR (College and Career Ready) on Math I Assessments</i>	GOAL 4 Post-Grad Readiness <i>Increase percentage of high school students graduating with their graduation cohort on track to be enrolled, enlisted, or employed, as demonstrated by achieving at least one indicator</i>
GUARDRAIL 1 Equity over Equality Reducing Achievement Gaps	GUARDRAIL 2 Safety & Security Ensuring a safe environment in schools, at school-related events, and on transportation	GUARDRAIL 3 Attending to the Whole Child Ensuring support for student well-being and engagement	GUARDRAIL 4 Staffing High-Quality Teachers

Endless Possibilities
START WITH CMS!

To learn more about Student Outcomes Focused Governance (SOFG), please scan the QR code or visit:
cmsk12.org/strategicplanMP



Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
Strategic Plan
2024-2029

2026-27 Annual Targets

GOAL 1
Improve Early Literacy in Grades K-2

Increase the percent of K-2 students scoring at or above benchmark in early literacy as measured by DIBELS

Year	Overall Measure (%)
2022-23	67
2023-24	71
2024-25	75
2025-26	79
2026-27	83
2027-28	87
2028-29	91

GOAL 2
Improve Literacy Skills in Grades 3-8

Increase the percentage of students scoring CCR (College and Career Ready) on reading end-of-grade assessments in grades 3-8

Year	Overall Measure (%)
2022-23	31
2023-24	34
2024-25	37
2025-26	40
2026-27	43
2027-28	46
2028-29	50

GOAL 3
Strengthen Math Performance in Math I

Increase percentage of students scoring CCR (College and Career Ready) on Math I Assessments

Year	Overall Measure (%)
2022-23	27
2023-24	32
2024-25	37
2025-26	42
2026-27	47
2027-28	52
2028-29	57

GOAL 4
Post-Grad Readiness

Increase the percent of high school students graduating with their graduation cohort on track to be enrolled, enlisted, or employed, as demonstrated by achieving at least one indicator

Year	Overall Measure (%)
2022-23	72
2023-24	74
2024-25	76
2025-26	78
2026-27	80
2027-28	82
2028-29	85

GUARDRAIL 1
Equity over Equality

Reduce the performance gap between the highest and lowest performing racial/ethnic student groups within each Goal

GUARDRAIL 2
Safety and Security

Ensure a safe environment in schools, at school-related events, or on transportation

GUARDRAIL 3
Attending to the Whole Child

Ensure support for student well-being and engagement

GUARDRAIL 4
Staffing

Ensure all schools have teachers equipped to deliver high-quality instruction

	Goal Status	Projected to Achieve 2025-26 Target
Goal 1	Progressing 	Yes
Goal 2	Progressing 	Yes
Goal 3	Progressing 	Yes
Goal 4	On Track 	Yes

Developing the 26-27 Annual Budget

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Operating Funds

State
(55.8%)

Sound Basic Education

State determines spending
Primarily enrollment driven
[GS115C-47\(1\)](#); [GS115C-408](#)

Federal
(6.1%)

Supplemental

Federal determines
spending rules

Local
(34.4%)

Sound Basic Education
(Good → Great)

General Statutes define
basic funding structure
[GS115C-426](#); [GS115C-408](#)

1 - Navigate and Skillfully Leverage Various Funding Sources

2026-27 Proposed Operating Budget

+ Local Supplement (County Funded Compensation Layer)
Not shown in positions - critical to competitiveness and cost of living in Charlotte

2026-27 Proposed Budget Staffing by Funding Source:



State Funded Positions: 78% Local Funded Positions: 15% Federal Funded Positions: 7% Special Revenue Funded Positions: 2%

 2,707 Locally Funded Positions




1 - Navigate and Skillfully Leverage Various Funding Sources

2026-27 Proposed Operating Budget

Staff Provided by State Funding:



Funding for Teaching Positions

-  State Funded Teaching Positions: 88%
-  Locally Funded Teaching Positions: 7%
-  Federally Funded Teaching Positions: 5%



*Each individual icon represents 100 teachers

2026-27 Budget Highlights

- ✓ Student-Focused Budget
 - ❑ Investing in strategies that work to support the board's aggressive student outcomes and to position CMS to exceed last year's historic academic gains

- ✓ Continuous-Improvement Mindset
 - ❑ Treating efficiency as a standard practice, preparing for constraints, and re-allocating funding to higher impact strategies to remain sustainable
 - ❑ Innovation is no longer an option – it's a must

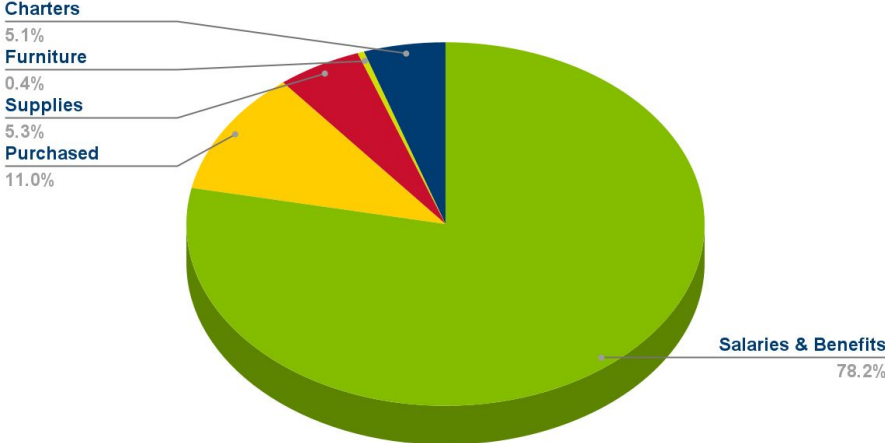
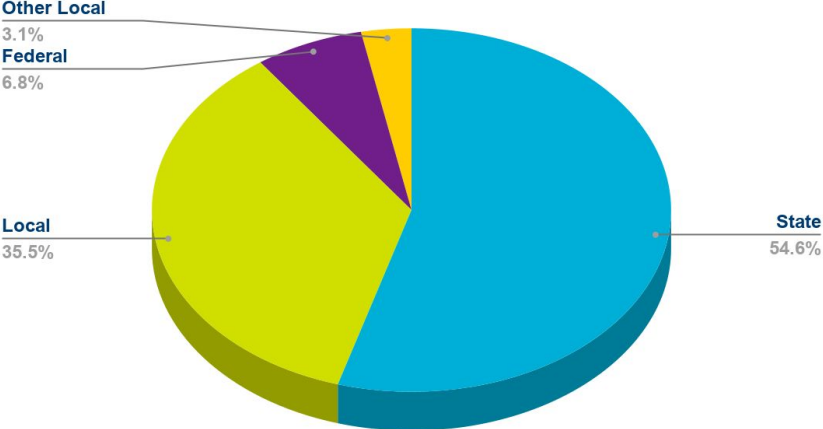
- ✓ Prioritizes Retention and Recruitment
 - ❑ Assumed 5% State-Driven Pay Increase for All Staff
 - ❑ Average of a 5% Certified Supplement Increase
 - ❑ Implementing Phase III of Market Aligned Salary Schedules for Classified Staff

- ✓ Capital Outlay
 - ❑ Invests in safety, security, roofing and HVAC upgrades to mitigate operational risks



2026-27 Budget

2026-27 Operating Budget



2026-27 Proposed Operating Budget: \$ 1,966,914,026
2026-27 Enrollment: 139,607 Students

2026-27 Total Budget

Revenues by Source		Proposed Budget
State of North Carolina		1,073,515,464
Mecklenburg County		698,687,069
Federal Grants		133,211,894
Other and Special Revenue		61,499,599
	Total Operating Budget	\$ 1,966,914,026
Capital Funding		
Capital Appropriation		32,960,000
	Total Capital Funding	32,960,000
Enterprise Funds		
School Nutrition Services		100,756,616
After School Enrichment Program (ASEP)		12,546,738
	Total Enterprise Funds	\$ 113,303,354
	Total Recommended Budget	\$ 2,113,177,380



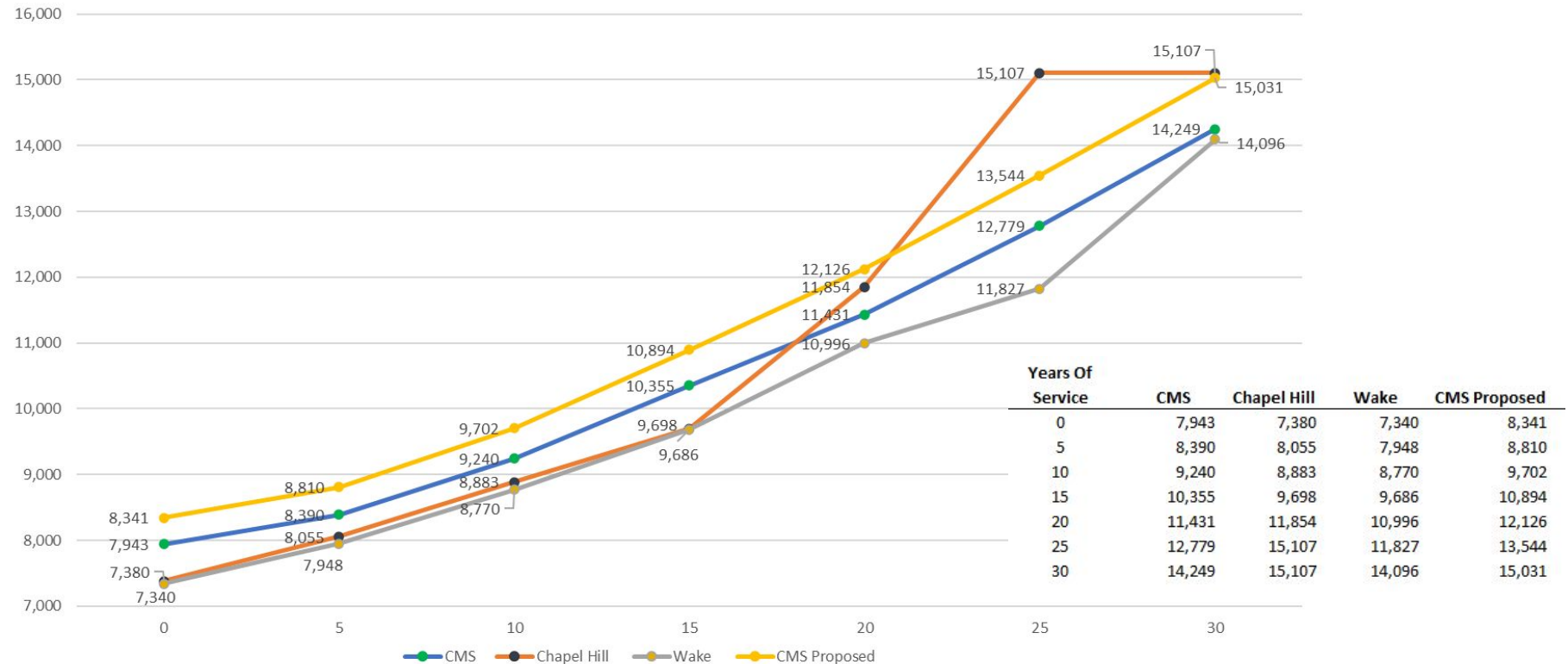
2026-27 Requested Operational County Appropriation

Proposed County Appropriation 2026-27 Recurring Operational Costs

Budget Expansion	Strategic Initiative	Requested Amount
Investing in Our Employees		
Certified Supplement (Average of 5%)	PE.1	8,787,074
State Driven Salary (3% of 5% assumed) + Benefit Adjustments	OE.3	9,702,498
Classified Compensation Study (Phase III)	PE.1	392,561
Statutory Required Needs		
Charter School Pass-Through	-	8,109,510
Operational Needs		
Opening of New Schools	OE.1	2,667,609
Utility Rate Increase		1,481,982
	2026-27 Expansion Request	\$ 31,141,234
	FY 2025-26 Local Salary Funds Available*	(6,034,014)
	Total 2026-27 Expansion Request	\$ 25,107,220

*Local funds designated for state-mandated salary increases that were not implemented because no state budget was approved

FY27 Proposed Teacher Supplements Comparison Across Districts



Where CMS Ranks in North Carolina

Average Teacher Supplement (FY2026)

#1

Chapel Hill-Carrboro
\$11,612

#2

Wake County
\$11,493

#3

Charlotte-Mecklenburg
\$10,598

North Carolina District Distribution

- Top Tier: 3 districts | \$10,598 - \$11,612
- Upper Tier: 7 district | \$8,904 - \$9,649
- Above State Average: 16 districts | \$7,233 - \$8,397
- Below State Average: 89 districts | Below \$7,233
- Statewide Average Supplement: \$7,233

[Link to 115 Districts Ranking](#)

Source: [North Carolina Department of Public Instruction \(NCDPI\) Statistical Profile — Full District Teacher Supplement Rankings](#)

CMS ranks in the top 3 statewide while serving more than 9,300 teachers.

Why Direct District Comparisons Are Difficult

Different Supplement Structures

Districts use flat dollar amounts, percentage-based supplements, bonuses, and tiered approaches.

Teacher Experience Impacts Averages

Districts with more veteran teachers naturally report higher average salaries and supplements.

Regional Cost of Living Matters

Charlotte's labor market and cost pressures require competitive local supplements.

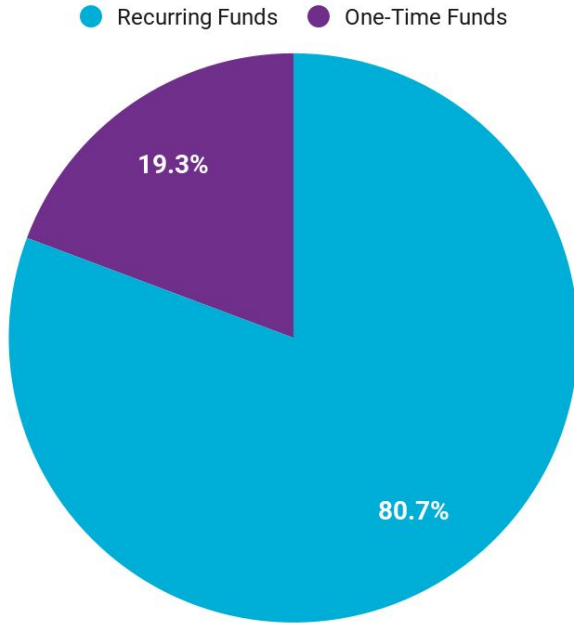
CMS Operates at a Large Scale

CMS supports more than 9,300 teacher receiving local supplements support.

Proposed County Appropriation 2026-27 One-Time Operational Costs


Budget Expansion	Strategic Initiative	Requested Amount
Program Continuation		
Student Device Refresh	OE.2	\$ 6,000,000

Proposed County Appropriation



2025-26 Adopted Recurring Operational County Appropriation	\$ 666,129,849
Fines & Forfeitures*	\$1,450,000
Identified Needs: Recurring Funds	25,107,220
Identified Needs: One-Time Funds	6,000,000
2026-27 Proposed Operational County Appropriation	\$ 698,697,069

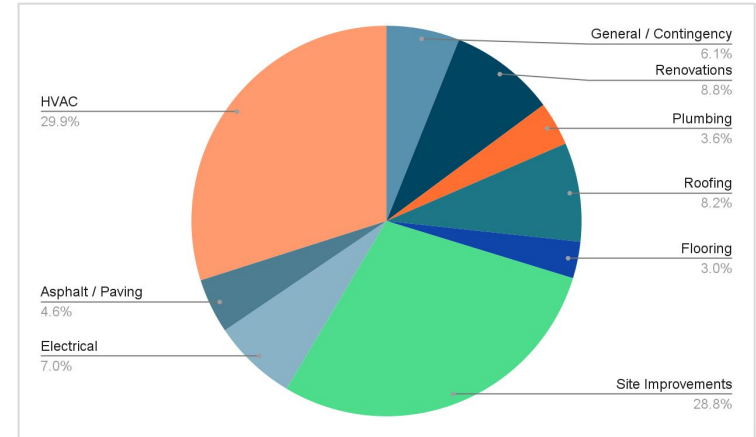
* Fines and forfeitures are county-collected revenues that are passed through to CMS pursuant to North Carolina statutory requirements



2026-27 Proposed Capital Outlay

FY 2026-27 Capital Funding Request

Project Category	Project Budget	Estimated # of Projects
General / Contingency	2,000,000	0
Renovations	2,900,000	122
Plumbing	1,200,000	30
Roofing	2,700,000	7
Flooring	1,000,000	45
Site Improvements	9,500,000	27
Electrical	2,300,000	22
Asphalt / Paving	1,500,000	7
HVAC	9,860,000	45
Total	\$ 32,960,000	305



Five-Year Financial Forecast

Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools
Five-Year Financial Forecast
FY 2026 - 2030

Operational / Strategic Plan Requests	Request	Strategy						Estimated Budgetary Impact
			25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	
Strategic	State Driven Salary + Benefit Adjustments	OE.3	9,898,000	9,702,498	10,430,185	10,795,242	11,173,075	51,999,000
	Crown Academy	PE.4	840,000	-	-	-	-	840,000
	Compensation Study	PE.1	8,300,000	392,561	-	-	-	8,692,561
	Compensation Adjustment for Assistant Principals	PE.1	1,700,000	-	-	-	-	1,700,000
	Student Device Refresh	OE.2	2,000,000	6,000,000	4,000,000	-	-	12,000,000
	K-2 Student & Staff Device Refresh	OE.2	-	-	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000	7,500,000
	Teacher Supplements	PE.1	8,066,000	8,787,074	9,490,040	10,249,243	11,069,183	47,661,540
Operational	Modernization Project	OE.2	4,700,000	4,700,000	4,700,000	-	-	14,100,000
	Student Growth (New Schools + Staff)	OE.1	-	2,667,609	2,700,000	-	-	5,367,609
	Utility Rate Increases		-	1,481,982	1,541,261	1,602,912	1,667,028	6,293,183
	Charter School Growth		-	8,109,510	2,975,500	3,262,102	3,358,992	17,706,104

2026-27 Budget Book

2026-27 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Budget

Board Approved - 05/12/2026

The detailed budget book supporting the approved amended Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools 2026-27 budget resolution will be updated and made available to the public no later than May 22, 2026.



Endless Possibilities

start with

cms