

Student Information

- 1,431,121 students attend traditional public schools in North Carolina as of the 2020-2021 school year (small decrease from 1,434,153 in 2019-2020)..
- Enrollment grew in Charter and other schools from 121,321 students in 2019-2020 to 129,389 in 2020-2021.
- During the 2008-09 school year, approximately 90% of NC's students were attending a traditional public school. Many public school advocates believe this decline is due to the coordinated push for privatization and increased funding for charters and vouchers.
- NC's high school graduation rate was 87.6% for the 2019-2020 school year, up from 86.5% for the 2018-2019 school year.
- Around 73% of the NC's 2,523 public schools met or exceeded their expectations for NC progress on state exams for the 2018-2019 school year (data not provided for 2019-20).
- The percentage of schools earning "A" and "B" grades increased from 35.6% in 2017-18 to 37.3% in the 2018-2019 school year.
- Grading the States Privatization Score (2018 Schott Foundation): NC ranks 48th overall, 47th by voucher policy and 45th by charter policy. Overall grades were assigned based on the extent of privatized school choice in the form of vouchers, neo-vouchers and charter schools, as well as the quality of the state's laws that promoted accountability, oversight, transparency and civil rights.
- Enrollments in NC Virtual Public School, the nation's second-largest state-supported virtual school, grew to over 51,000. This is likely due to the impact of COVID.
- There is a shortage of available Pre-K slots across North Carolina, and less than [half of eligible children](#) are being served (various reports estimate 35 to 50K children not served).
- Approximately [44% of children live in poor or low-income homes](#).
- 68% of Hispanic or Latinx children [live in poor or low income homes](#).
- 61% of Black children [live in poor or low-income homes](#).
- 56% of 3 and 4 year olds in [NC are not in pre-school](#).
- Black, Latinx and Native American homes are over [10% less likely to have internet](#) service which is vital for students to complete many assignments, especially during the pandemic.
- 64% of [Students in NC with IEPs are economically disadvantaged](#) and 25% of them attend high poverty schools.
- 50% of school districts have [special education funding needs](#) greater than what NC allocates for special education.
- Suicide is the [2nd leading cause of death for NC children ages 10-17](#).

Per-Pupil Funding

- The national average for per-pupil spending in 2019-2020 was \$13,597 compared to NC's per-pupil spending of \$10,632.
- North Carolina [ranks in 39th](#) in Expenditures Per Student in Fall Enrollment
- Over the past decade, per-pupil spending has declined by 6% in NC, resulting in our state's ranking of 6th lowest in the nation (WestEd report).
- According to the latest figures, almost half of North Carolina's children live in poor or low-income households and 20% live in poverty (ncchild.org). The official poverty level for a family of two adults and two children is \$26,200 for 2020.
- Little investment was made to expand school resources with the 2018 budget adjustments. Allotments for teaching assistants, textbooks, At-Risk student services and more are still below 2008-2009 levels when adjusted for inflation.

Teaching Profession

- Teacher pay dropped to 33rd in the Nation for the 2019-2020 school year.
- Average teacher salary in the state is reported as \$54,150. The average national teacher salary was \$64,133.

- According to the NEA's 2021 Rankings and Estimates, the projected national average teacher salary for 2020-2021 is about \$9,000 less than the national average.
- NC has more National Board Certified teachers than any other state.
- North Carolina removed salary increases for educators with advanced degrees in 2013.
- NC Teaching Fellows Program for STEM/Special Ed teachers, created in 2017-19's budget, is significantly less generous than the previous program.
- In some areas of the state, the attrition rates for some [LEAs is as high as 21%](#).
- Enrollment in undergraduate education programs across the UNC system is down, negatively impacting our once vibrant teacher pipeline. There are 15 UNC system schools with teacher preparation programs, and all are reporting declines in enrollment in their degree and licensure programs compared to 2011 (16,315 to 12,094) .
- [No NC Teaching Fellows Program at any Historically Black Colleges and Universities \(HBCUs\)](#).
- NC ranks [44th in average salary](#) for school principals.
- Teachers in NC make 25.3% [less than comparable college graduates](#).
- Teacher pay in NC [ranks 33rd in average salaries for 2020](#).
- The corporate income tax in [NC is only 2.5%, one of the lowest in the nation](#). This leaves far less money available for schools including teacher pay and per-pupil funding.

Charter Schools

- As of October 1, 2020, there are 200 charter schools in North Carolina serving 126,165 students.
- Approximately 8.4 percent of North Carolina's 1.5 million school children attend charter schools.
- In the most recent budget, \$10.37 billion was spent on public education with \$734.7 million allotted for charter schools. Since 1998, 48 charter schools have voluntarily relinquished their charters, one has been assumed by another non-profit board, 10 have been non-renewed, and 17 charters have been revoked by the State Board of Education.
- During the 2018-19 school year, 47 charter schools were identified as either low-performing or continually low-performing.
- Of the charter schools in operation, 80 provide reduced-priced lunches and 108 provide bus transportation. In contrast, all traditional public schools provide reduced-price lunches and offer bus transportation.
- Seven new charter schools opened for the 2020-2021 school year.
- According to the [2020 Annual Charter Schools Report](#), there are ten charter schools scheduled to open in fall 2021.
- The percentage of Charter schools in North Carolina meeting or exceeding expected annual growth lags behind that of traditional public schools.
- Charter schools are allowed to expand one grade level annually without approval from the oversight board regardless of their student academic results.
- Only 50% of charter school teachers are board certified.
- The 2018-2019 Budget Adjustment Bill granted the virtual charter schools pilot an extension for another four years even though both virtual schools were low-performing.

A-F School Performance Grades

- On March 23, 2020, the U.S. Department of Education approved North Carolina's request to waive spring statewide assessments, accountability ratings, and certain reporting requirements in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for the 2019-2020 school year due to widespread school closures related to the novel Coronavirus disease (COVID-19).
- 80% of school performance grades are based on student test scores, 20% on student growth.
- For the 2018-19 school year, 73.3% of all schools met or exceeded growth expectations, a slight increase from the previous year.
- More than a third of NC's approximately 2,500 public schools received a performance grade of A or B during the 2018-2019 school year.

- 28% of all schools exceeded academic growth expectations in 2018-2019. Of the more than 2,500 public schools in North Carolina, 119 of them received a performance grade of A and exceeded academic growth expectations.
- Schools with greater poverty earned fewer As and B's and earned more C's, D's, and F's than schools with less poverty.
- Of the 21.7% of schools receiving a D or F grade, 95% were serving high poverty populations.
- In schools with more than 80% low income students, 60% received a D or F grade. Less than one percent of schools received a D or F grades that had low poverty rates.
- The two state virtual charter schools received D grades and did not meet growth for the fourth year in a row.
- NC's Cumulative funding as of 2020: [\\$1.2B Vouchers & \\$5B Charter Schools](#).

School Vouchers

- In the 2019-2020 school year, 12,285 students received Opportunity Scholarships.
- As of April 14, 2021 16,030 students received Opportunity Scholarships for the 2020-2021 school year.
- The total amount of Scholarships for 2020-21 was \$61,241,959 There were 480 Participating Nonpublic Schools with recipients enrolled.
- Trinity Christian School of Fayetteville, Inc. in Fayetteville NC enrolled 350 students, making it the school with the largest cohort of scholarship recipients. These scholarships amounted to \$1,409,100.
- Cumberland County had the most students receive Opportunity Scholarships with 1,587 students receiving scholarships.
- Opportunity Scholarship Program Recipients by race were: 57% White, 23% Black or African American, 10% two or more Races, 2% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 2% Asian, and 0.2% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. The remainder of Opportunity Scholarship recipients did not offer racial information.
- Opportunity Scholarship Program Recipients by ethnicity were 14% Hispanic, 68% Not Hispanic with 19% choosing not to answer.
- Both SB671 and HB32 were introduced in the 2021 legislative session. They both will substantially expand eligibility for the NC voucher program, funneling millions of taxpayer dollars to increasingly subsidize payments to families with children in private schools. This expansion is estimated to cost taxpayers a minimum of \$159 million over the next nine years on top of the already billions of dollars allocated to the current voucher programs without the new proposed changes.
- The 2017-19 Biennium Budget created a new voucher program, called Personal Education Savings Accounts, for students with disabilities beginning in the 2018-19 school year.
- The 2017-19 Biennium Budget made voucher funding part of the base budget going forward and added \$10 million more annually until yearly funding is \$145 million in 2027-28.

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