

WHAT ARE SCHOOL VOUCHERS ?

School vouchers are a way for education tax dollars to be diverted from public schools to subsidize tuition at private schools. Some voucher programs also pay for other educational expenses. School voucher programs exist in a number of states; each has specific requirements and restrictions.

North Carolina currently has two voucher programs administered by the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority ([NCSEAA](#)).

VOUCH!ERS



SCAN for our
FACT SHEET to
LEARN more



NC'S VOUCHER PROGRAMS

The Opportunity Scholarship (OS) Grant Program is the state's largest voucher program. It transfers tuition funds up to 100% of the average state per pupil allocation directly to the private school. This program was initially designed for low-income students who had attended public schools.

Personal Education Student Accounts for Children with Disabilities (ESA+) provides \$9K-\$17K in funds to cover education expenses for students with documented disabilities.

NC VOUCHER PROGRAM EXPANSION

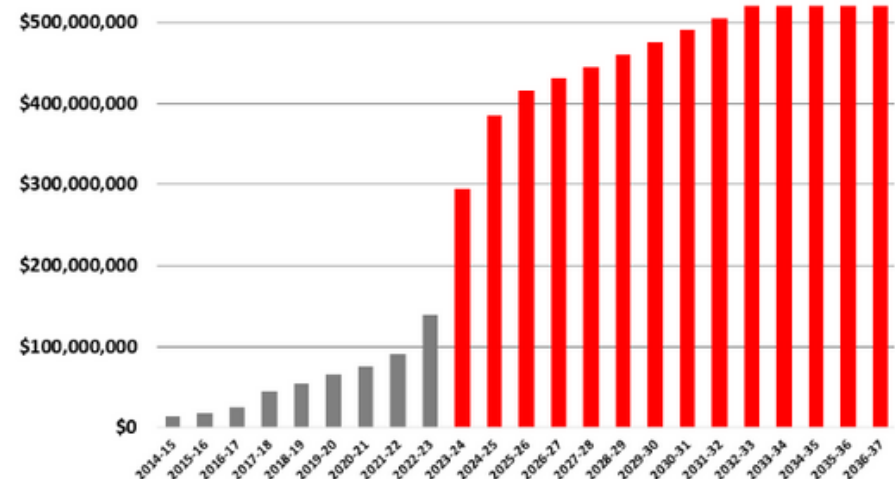


Since launching in 2014, voucher funding has grown steadily. The Opportunity Scholarship (OS) voucher program has **grown from \$14M/year to a projected \$520M/year in 2032-33**. Eligibility has expanded this year from poor families earning less than 100% of the federal reduced price lunch eligible income to include even the wealthiest families.

OS vouchers have increased from the initial \$4,200 maximum to 100% of the average state per pupil expenditure (\$6,492 in 2022-23). The ESA+ vouchers grew from \$6K/year to the current \$9K-\$17K/year.

Nearly \$5 Billion cumulative dollars will be spent on OS vouchers by 2033.

NC Opportunity Scholarship Allocations with 2023 Appropriations Act (red)



Data source: NCGA budget documents

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

www.publicschoolsfirstnc.org

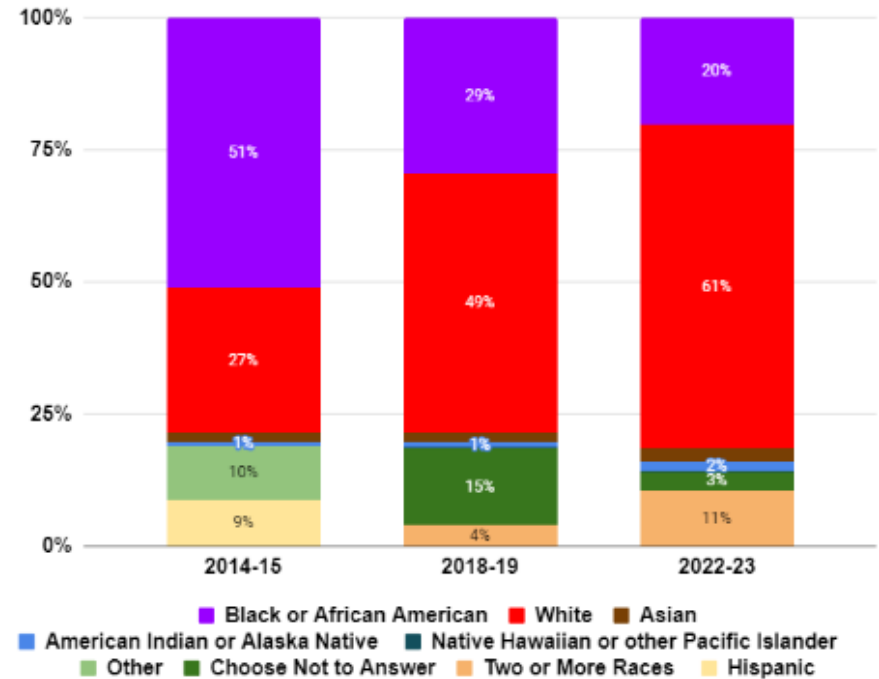
VOUCH!ERS



Why are Vouchers for Private Education a Problem?

- **Private Schools Are Allowed to Discriminate** (Click to read report). NC private schools are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, or national origin; however, other forms are practiced including discrimination based on religion, disability, and LGBTQ+ status.
- **Vouchers Do Not Improve Student Success.** Research has shown that private or religious schools do not offer a higher quality education for voucher students than public schools.
- **Essential Funds are Lost to Public Schools.** Vouchers divert money from an already underfunded public system creating operating cost inefficiencies while reducing the funding needed to address teacher shortages and provide needed student services.
- **Lack of Teacher Quality and Safety Standards.** In NC, private school teachers do not have to be licensed or college graduates. Only one staff member is required to pass a criminal background check.
- **Lack of Accountability.** Voucher programs divert tax dollars to largely unregulated private entities that are not required to make their financial records public. NC private schools have no curriculum standards and do not participate in the state testing program. Only 6% of applicants are audited for fraud.
- **Fewer Services Provided to Students.** Private schools are not required to serve free/reduced price meals, offer transportation, provide EL instruction or offer special ed. services.

OS Voucher Recipients by Race 2014 - 2023



The race/ethnicity of voucher recipients has changed sharply since they were first introduced. The proportion of Black or African American (purple) students has steadily dropped while the proportion of White students (red) has grown.

FAST FACT

A total of 88.9% of voucher dollars went to religious schools in 2022-23, with Christian schools receiving 85.6% of the total voucher dollars.