NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

2024 Annual Charter Schools Report
S.L. 2013-335; S.L. 2014-115; S.L. 2019-165; S.L. 2020-49

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Date Due: August 15, 2025
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2024-2025

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2024 Annual Charter Schools Report
Executive Summary

Nearly thirty years after the North Carolina General Assembly passed the Charter School Act (1996), North Carolina charter schools are a vibrant and unique presence within the state's educational options evidencing consistent statewide enrollment growth and wide geographical distribution. North Carolina charter schools feature an increasingly varied spectrum of choice, each bringing distinctive missions, pedagogical methodologies, and programming to the educational landscape.

The Annual Charter Schools Report is prepared by the Office of Charter Schools and presented to the Charter Schools Review Board and the State Board of Education prior to submission to the General Assembly. This 2024 Annual Charter Schools Report summarizes the state of North Carolina charter schools during the 2023-2024 school year, and where available, presents current 2025 school year data. The report outlines charter school authorizing and monitoring within the state, provides data on charter school student demographics, and reports on academics and funding. Finally, the report highlights best practices and recognitions within the large range of diverse and unique North Carolina charter schools, as well as information regarding access to the state's charter schools and challenges faced in the sector.

During the 2024-2025 school year, 208 charter schools operated in the state. The number of charter schools within the state has more than doubled since the lifting of the charter school cap in 2011. While the sector continues to expand, so do the complexities of operating schools. Challenges seen over the last few years include the rising cost of transportation programs, staffing challenges, and difficulties acquiring and funding facilities for new schools, and for improving and expanding operating schools. Addressing these challenges requires collaborative efforts among stakeholders, policymakers, educators, and community members.

The best 1 of 2 Average Daily Membership[1] for the current 2024-2025 school year shows charter membership at 153,480 students which equates to just over 10% of the statewide public school unit membership[2]. One hundred and sixty-one (161) charter schools reported having a waitlist at the start of the 2024-25 school year, totaling 74,287 students (it should be noted that figures could include duplicate students as students could be waitlisted at multiple charter schools). Statewide charter school membership now surpasses the number of enrolled students in all but one district, Wake County.

The Office of Charter Schools and Charter Schools Review Board look forward to continued partnership with the State Board of Education and General Assembly to ensure North Carolinian families have access to high-quality schools of choice. The future of charter schools in North Carolina hinges on continued collaboration, data-driven decision-making, and a commitment to educational excellence and equity. As the educational landscape evolves, charter schools will play a vital role in promoting innovation, collaboration, choice, and student success.

[1] Data and definitions available here.
[2] District membership 1,371,565. Lab school membership 1,072. Total best 1 of 2 public school unit membership 1,526,117.

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Legislation and Historical Background

In 1996, the North Carolina General Assembly passed the Charter School Act, thereby authorizing the establishment of "a system of charter schools to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, pupils, and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently of existing schools, as a method to accomplish all of the following:

1. Improve student learning;
2. Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are identified as at-risk of academic failure or academically gifted;
3. Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
4. Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning at the school site;
5. Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system;
6. Hold the schools established under this Part accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results and provide the schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems."

Article 14A, Chapter 115 of North Carolina General Statute outlines how the system of charter schools must operate. The law includes the following sections:

- Purpose of charter schools; establishment of North Carolina Charter Schools Review Board and North Carolina Office of Charter Schools
- Eligible applicants; contents of applications; submission of applications for approval
- Opportunity to correct applications; opportunity to address Review Board
- Fast-track replication of high-quality charter schools
- Final approval of applications for charter schools
- Review and renewal of charters
- Material revisions of charters
- Nonmaterial revisions of charters
- Appeals to the State Board of Education
- Charter school exemptions
- Charter school operation
- Civil liability and insurance requirements
- Open meetings and public records
- Accountability; reporting requirements to State Board of Education
- Charter school facilities
- Reservation of water and sewer capacity for proposed charter school facilities
- Public approval for private activity bonds
- Charter school transportation
- Charter school transportation grant program
- Admission requirements
- Charter school nonsectarian
- Nondiscrimination in charter schools
- Student discipline
- North Carolina School Report Cards

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- Driving eligibility certificates
- General operating requirements
- Display of the United States and North Carolina flags and the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance
- Course of study requirements
- Employment requirements
- Identification of low-performing and continually low-performing charter schools
- Causes for nonrenewal or termination; disputes
- Dissolution of a charter school
- State and local funds for a charter school
- Notice of the charter school process; review of charter schools
- Operation of NC Pre-K programs
- Remote charter academies

Finally, G.S. §115C-218.110 directs that the State Board "shall report annually no later than June 15 to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the following:

1) The current and projected impact of charter schools on the delivery of services by the public schools.
2) Student academic progress in charter schools as measures, where available, against the academic year immediately preceding the first academic year of the charter schools' operation.
3) Best practices resulting from charter school operations.
4) Other information the State Board considers appropriate."

This report fulfills this legislated reporting requirement.

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North Carolina Charter School Authority and Oversight

North Carolina Charter Schools Review Board

On August 16, 2023, the NC General Assembly passed Session Law 2023-110, commonly referred to as House Bill 618, an act converting the Charter Schools Advisory Board to the Charter Schools Review Board ("CSRB"). This new law shifted the authority for approval of charter applications, material revisions to the charter agreement, and charter renewal terms from the State Board of Education ("SBE") to the CSRB. The new law created a right of appeal to the SBE for any of the above-referenced CSRB decisions. Codified in NC General Statute as Article 14A of Chapter 115C (115C-218, et al,) the charter schools law established the Charter Schools Review Board and outlines the role of the State Board of Education.

General Statute outlines the duties and responsibilities of the CSRB:

> a. To make recommendations to the State Board of Education on the adoption of rules regarding all aspects of charter school operation, including time lines, standards, and criteria for acceptance and approval of applications, monitoring of charter schools, and grounds for revocation of charters.
>
> b. To review and approve or deny charter applications, renewals, and revocations.
>
> c. To make recommendations to the State Board on actions before the State Board on appeal under G.S. 115C-218.9.
>
> d. To undertake any other duties and responsibilities as assigned by the State Board.

With the establishment of the CSRB's new authority in 2023, charter law further defines the role of the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education shall have the following duties:

> 1) Rulemaking. -- To establish all rules for the operation and approval of charter schools. Any rule adopted by the State Board shall first be recommended by the Charter Schools Review Board.
>
> 2) Funding. -- To allocate funds to charter schools.
>
> 3) Appeals. -- To hear appeals from decisions of the Charter Schools Review Board under G.S. 115C-218.9.
>
> 4) Accountability. -- To ensure accountability from charter schools for school finances and student performance.

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North Carolina Charter Schools Review Board Membership

The CSRB consists of eleven voting members; four appointed by the North Carolina Senate, four appointed by the North Carolina House of Representatives, two appointed by the State Board of Education, and finally, the Lieutenant Governor or the Lieutenant Governor's designee. The Superintendent of Public Instruction or the Superintendent's designee serves as the secretary of the board and a nonvoting member.

Statute outlines the term requirements:

- Appointed members shall serve four-year terms of office beginning on July 1.
- No appointed member shall serve more than eight consecutive years.
- Vacancy appointments shall be made by the appointing authority for the remainder of the term of office.

Table 1: Charter Schools Review Board Members

Appointed By	First Name	Last Name	Start Date of Current Term	End Date of Current Term
State Board of Education	Eric	Guckian	July 1, 2025	June 30, 2027
State Board of Education	Eric	Sanchez	July 1, 2025	June 30, 2029
Superintendent (Non-Voting)	Jeremy	Wall	2025	June 30, 2027
Lt. Governor	Stephen	Gay	January 1, 2025	January 1, 2029
House	Bruce	Friend	2021	June 30, 2025
House	Hilda	Parlér	2021	June 30, 2025
House	Lindalyn	Kakadelis	2025	June 30, 2025
House	Shelly	Shope	2021	June 30, 2025
Senate	Bartley	Danielsen	2022	June 30, 2025
Senate	John	Eldridge	2021	June 30, 2025
Senate	Rita	Haire	2021	June 30, 2025
Senate	Todd	Godbey	2021	June 30, 2025

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North Carolina Office of Charter Schools

N.C. General Statute §115C-218(c) stipulates the establishment of the NC Office of Charter Schools, staffed by an executive director and additional personnel to carry out necessary duties. Pursuant to state statute, the Office of Charter Schools has the following powers and duties:

I. Serve as staff to the Review Board and fulfill any tasks and duties assigned to it by the Review Board.
II. Provide technical assistance and guidance to charter schools operating within the State.
III. Provide technical assistance and guidance to nonprofit corporations seeking to operate charter schools within the State.
IV. Provide or arrange for training for charter schools that have received preliminary approval from the Review Board.
V. Assist approved charter schools and charter schools seeking approval from the Review Board in coordinating services within the Department of Public Instruction.
VI. Assist certain charter schools seeking to participate in the NC prekindergarten program in accordance with G.S. 115C-218.115.
VII. Other duties as assigned by the State Board.

The Office of Charter Schools is currently staffed by eight consultants, an Assistant Director, and an Executive Director, with office responsibilities divided into three teams with multiple workflows, each managed by an individual consultant. In addition to leading workflows, consultants support several additional workflows.

Authorizing Team

The OCS Authorizing Team works to ensure a transparent charter authorizing and opening process which is aligned to state law and holds charter boards to high expectations resulting in quality charter schools. Responsibilities include:

1. Applications - Facilitates the new school application process, provides technical assistance and training to applicants, hires and trains external evaluators, and works with the CSRB to implement the charter application interview process.

2. Ready to Open - Provides training and support to newly approved schools prior to opening, reviews submitted documentation to ensure compliance with statute, policy, and the Charter Agreement, and provides the CSRB with updates several times a year to ensure newly approved schools are making progress towards a successful opening.

3. Amendments - Facilitates the process for material changes to a school's charter application including review of required documents and adherence to the approval process.

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4. Rules/Reports - Produces reports required by legislation and/or CSRB/SBE requests. Works with the Department of Public Instruction Rules Coordinator and Rules Commission to facilitate the process as it pertains to charter-related rules.

5. SBE/CSRB - Plans, implements, and manages the CSRB meetings. Prepares and presents SBE materials.

Accountability Team

The OCS Accountability Team works to ensure North Carolina's charter schools are fiscally, operationally, and academically strong by providing support, oversight, and rigorous renewal standards. Responsibilities include:

1. Performance Framework - Facilitates the yearly collection and audit of documents from schools to ensure compliance with statute, policy, and the Charter Agreement.

2. Renewals - Facilitates the two-year charter renewal process including renewal data collection, renewal site visits, renewal interviews, and training. Prepares renewal documentation and presentations for the CSRB and SBE.

3. Risk Assessment - Conducts site visits and monitors at-risk schools. Manages agency-wide compliance team meetings; tracks and analyzes Department of Public Instruction charter school compliance data. Manages closure process and revocation appeals.

4. School Improvement – Analyzes academic data; monitors and supports low-performing charter schools. Conducts site visits and assists with review of School Improvement Plans.

External Support Team

The OCS External Support Team works to support the diverse stakeholders of the NC charter school system including members of the public, media, researchers, parents, and staff. The External Support Team also leads and supports various external and internal working groups and committees. Responsibilities include:

1. Stakeholder Support - Manages grievances and inquiries from stakeholders. Produces OCS Guidance Documents and tools/resources.

2. Partnerships/School Support – Coordinates training and events for Charter School leaders; collaborates with other Department of Public Instruction Divisions. Facilitates internal projects such as the Alternative Evaluation Instruments, Teacher of the Year, and Scholarship reviews.

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3. Communications/Data - Manages all internal and external communication between the Office of Charter Schools and the general public. Responds to data requests. Provides Epicenter assistance. Assists with public record requests.

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Legislative Updates

Throughout the 2024 Legislative Short Session, the General Assembly passed several bills impacting the North Carolina charter school community, including, but not limited to the following:

SESSION LAW 2024-42 | SENATE BILL 559|

- *Section 1* of S.L. 2024-42 overrides the time limitation in current law (G.S. 135-48.54) to allow four specified charter school boards of directors to elect participation in the North Carolina State Health Plan for Teachers' and State Employees.

- *Section 2* amends the law (G.S. 135-48.54) to outline the process for charter schools operated by private nonprofit corporations or municipalities to elect participation in the State Health Plan.

- *Section 4* permits charter school boards that contract with education or charter management organizations (EMOs or CMOs) to require them to provide paid parental leave for teachers that must be consistent with local boards of education policy. If required by contract, the charter school board may receive substitute teacher funding.

SESSION LAW 2024-53 | SENATE BILL 743| Additional School Calendar Flexibility

- *Section4A*.1 grants public school units impacted by Hurricane Helene additional calendar flexibility.

SESSION LAW 2024-57 | SENATE BILL 382| Charter School Appeal Changes

- *Section 3J.10* repeals the State Superintendent's ability to appeal a final decision of the Charter Schools Review Board related to grants, renewals, revocations, or amendments of a charter to the State Board of Education.

SESSION LAW 2024-51 | HOUSE BILL 149 | Instructional Hours Flexibility and Compensation

- *Section 8.1*, as amended by Section 1B.1 of S.L. 2024-57, provides instructional hour flexibility and compensation for school employees affected by recent natural disasters.
    - School Calendar Flexibility - Public school units that closed due to Hurricane Helene or PTC8 (September-November 2024) may deem up to 20 instructional days complete if located in a federally declared disaster area. Other affected schools may deem up to two days complete.
    - Additional Remote Instruction - Schools in federally declared disaster areas as a result of Hurricane Helene can use up to 30 remote instruction days (or 180 hours). Other schools affected by Hurricane Helene can use up to 10 days (60 hours).
    - Employee Compensation - Except for charter schools, all employees and contractors will be compensated for instructional days deemed completed due to Hurricane Helene. Charter school boards may choose to provide this compensation. Additionally, $16 million is allocated to compensate employees and contractors in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

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SESSION LAW 2024-53 | SENATE BILL 743 | Readmission of Displaced Charter School Students

- *Section 4A.2* states: If a student was enrolled in a charter school located in the affected area during the 2024-2025 school year and withdrew from the school due to the impacts of Hurricane Helene, the charter school shall consider the student to have been continuously enrolled for the entire 2024-2025 school year for admission purposes and, pursuant to G.S. 115C-218.45(h), the student shall not be required to reapply to the school for the 2025-2026 school year.

- *Section 4A.8* allocates funds for mental health services in public school units affected by Hurricane Helene. Services may be provided in person or via telehealth, with compliance and consent notice laws. DPI must report by March 15, 2025 on fund allocation and usage. Funds may be used for:
    - Contracting with community partners
    - Hiring licensed school health personnel
    - Hiring licensed mental health professionals not currently employed by a public school unit

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Charter School Accountability

Regulatory Accountability

As schools of choice, charter schools are accountable to parents and guardians, who may withdraw their student(s) should the school not meet expectations. Additionally, the North Carolina General Assembly, the Charter Schools Review Board (CSRB) and State Board of Education (SBE) have approved several concrete measures through which charter schools are held accountable to stakeholders.

- Many charter school accountability requirements and processes are outlined in NC Administrative Code.

- General Statute mandates charter schools meet academic, governance, and operational accountability requirements including, but not limited to, open meetings and public records law, employment requirements, academic standards, and health and safety requirements.

- State Board of Education policies expand upon charter school accountability measures in areas such as charter school renewal, planning year, testing, insurance requirements, and audits.

A charter school is operated by a Board of Directors which receives a Charter Agreement to operate a charter school. Each Charter Agreement contains a multitude of areas in which charter schools are held accountable and reiterates the requirements of state and federal law. Charter Agreements are updated as necessary with changes to law; the most recent Charter Agreement can be found here.

Academic Monitoring

Schools identified as low-performing or continually low-performing receive various supports, and must meet specific requirements, from the Office of Charter Schools and other divisions within NCDPI. Those include but are not limited to:

- Low-performing schools are subject to similar requirements as traditional public schools: stakeholder notification of low-performing status, school improvement teams, and school improvement plan submission and review.

- Low-performing schools may be asked to appear before the Charter Schools Review Board for updates on progress/plans for improvement.

- The Office of Charter Schools School Improvement and/or Risk Assessment processes which may include site visits and progress monitoring.

- Low-performing schools receive support including School Improvement Plan training.

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- Schools are offered professional development and support through OCS and other NCDPI divisions.

Further, the Office of Charter School's newly created School Improvement Team conducts site visits, provides 1:1 support, and analyzes academic data to monitor the progress of low performing schools. During each school's two year renewal process, each renewal school undergoes an extensive review of its academic data, must submit goals in its self-study for renewal, and present to the Charter Schools Review Board.

Charter Termination and Closure

Charter schools are held accountable in several ways including academic, financial, operational, and governance monitoring. If a charter school fails to meet standards set out in law, the Charter Agreement, the school's charter application, and/or policy, it risks closure.

General Statute specifies reasons for charter termination:

§115C-218.95. Causes for nonrenewal or termination; disputes.

(a) The Review Board may terminate, not renew, or seek applicants to assume the charter through a competitive bid process established by the State Board upon any of the following grounds:

(1) Failure to meet the requirements for student performance contained in the charter;
(2) Failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management;
(3) Violations of law;
(4) Material violation of any of the conditions, standards, or procedures set forth in the charter;
(5) Two-thirds of the faculty and instructional support personnel at the school request that the charter be terminated or not renewed; or
(6) Other good cause identified.

Charter closures occur under a number of circumstances and fall into four categories: relinquishment, assumption, non-renewal, or revocation.

- Relinquishment occurs when a charter board voluntarily surrenders the charter.
- Assumption occurs when a charter board's Charter Agreement is assumed by another charter board.
- Non-renewal occurs when a charter board fails to receive a renewal term and the current Charter Agreement expires.
- And finally, revocation occurs when a charter board's Charter Agreement is revoked pursuant to legal allowances for the termination of a charter.

In 2024, two charter schools relinquished their charters: Veritas Community School (Mecklenburg County) and Apprentice Academy High School of North Carolina (Union County). Two charter schools were nonrenewed in 2024: Ridgeview Charter School (Gaston County) and Children's Village Academy (Lenoir County). One charter school, Valor

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Preparatory Academy, located in Cabarrus County, relinquished and closed at the conclusion of the 2024-2025 school year.

Since 1998, there have been a total of 94 charter closures. This includes schools that were in operation and those that may have been in the planning year program prior to opening the school to students.

Table 2: Types of Charter School Closures, 1998-2025

Revoked	Relinquished	Assumed	Non-Renewed	Total
22	55	1	16	94

The following data gives additional insight into charter school closures in North Carolina:

- Average years opened for revoked charter schools: 4.41
  - Most common reason: Financial and/or compliance related

- Average years opened for relinquished charter schools: 4.11
  - 23 of 55 relinquishments never opened
  - 3 of 55 opened less than one year
  - Most common reason: low enrollment and/or facility acquisition

- Average years opened for nonrenewed charter schools: 10.69
  - Primary reason: Academics

Charter School Closure Impact

Charter schools enter into a charter agreement (essentially a contract with the state outlining the terms in which it may operate a public charter school) knowing that nonrenewal or revocation are possible consequences of not meeting accountability standards. As seen above, since 1998 nearly one hundred schools have closed - some without ever opening and others after many years of operation. Despite the understanding that closure is a possibility for a number of reasons, the impact of closures should not be underestimated or understated.

Charter school closures create far-reaching consequences that extend well beyond the immediate disruption to students and families. Closures generate complex challenges across multiple stakeholder groups and administrative systems. The impacts span employment displacement, administrative burden, financial complications, and community disruption. These impacts require coordinated responses from state agencies, districts, and local communities. The key impact areas of charter closures observed here in North Carolina can be summarized as follows:

1. Employment Impact
2. Student Records Management
3. State Administrative Burden

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4. Financial Consequences
5. Community Impact
6. Regulatory and Legal Impact

Charter school closures result in employment consequences for education professionals. Teachers, administrators, support staff, and specialized personnel such as counselors face sudden job loss. The timing of many closures exacerbates employment challenges, which is why the Office of Charter Schools recommends end of school year closures whenever possible, with as much advance notice as possible to stakeholders. Affected employees often face gaps in employment that can disrupt retirement contributions, health insurance coverage, and professional development trajectories. When not handled properly at the school level, the Office of Charter Schools is relied on to help with employment verification and records.

The closure of charter schools creates significant administrative complexities around student records management. Schools must ensure the secure transfer of comprehensive academic records, including transcripts, exceptional children program records, graduation requirements tracking, and course completion documentation. Charter schools often have students residing in multiple counties which makes the process more complex.

Charter school closures impose substantial administrative demands on state education agencies and authorizing bodies. State officials must oversee compliance with closure procedures, conduct financial audits, and ensure proper asset disposition while maintaining focus on educational continuity for affected students. This oversight requires significant staff time and collaboration amongst multiple departments and agencies.

The regulatory framework surrounding closures involves multiple compliance requirements, including public notification procedures, stakeholder engagement processes, and appeal mechanisms. The Office of Charter Schools and Department of Public Instruction must navigate complex legal requirements while coordinating with multiple parties, including the closing school's governing board, receiving schools, parents, and community members. Documentation and reporting requirements create additional administrative workload that can strain agency capacity.

The financial implications of charter school closures can vary greatly. Some schools close with few challenges in this area, while others may leave behind webs of financial obligations, including vendor contracts, facility lease commitments, employee compensation obligations, and outstanding debt. Asset distribution presents another set of challenges including logistical and legal.

Charter school closures create disruption for families who selected these schools based on specific educational philosophies, specialized programs, or convenience factors. Parents must quickly identify alternative educational options, often during the school year when choices may be limited and enrollment processes compressed. Further, transportation arrangements frequently become complicated, as families may need to navigate new routes, different schedules, or increased distances to reach alternative schools. For working parents, these logistical changes can create additional stress and potential economic impact through missed work or childcare adjustments.

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The loss of school community connections affects both students and families, as relationships with teachers, administrators, and other families are severed. Students may lose access to extracurricular activities, specialized programs, or educational approaches that originally attracted their families to the charter school.

Charter School Closure - Considerations Going Forward

Analysis of closure causes and other patterns can inform better authorization practices, enhance oversight, and improve support systems for struggling schools. Charter school closures represent complex events that require coordinated responses across multiple systems and stakeholder groups. While closures may be necessary when schools fail to meet academic, financial, or operational standards, the process generates significant challenges that extend well beyond the closing institution. Effective management of these impacts requires robust planning, adequate resources, and clear communication among all affected parties. Understanding and preparing for these multifaceted consequences is essential for education leaders, policymakers, and communities navigating the charter school landscape.

The Office of Charter Schools believes the data regarding charter school closures reinforces the following:

- Rigorous authorizing practices and adequate planning time with sufficient support and training are critical safeguards against charter school closures.

- Operational, governance, and financial support is especially important during the first five years of operation. Authorizing should include a thorough vetting of applicants' educational programs, financial projections, governance structures, and operational capacity before approving new schools.

- Academic support is critical for low-performing schools, especially during the three years preceding renewal.

- Facility acquisition is a continued challenge for schools that must be considered carefully by boards.

- Low enrollment is a leading cause of closures. Authorizing practices should include a thorough review of the applicant's knowledge and understanding of enrollment demand and current market conditions in the school's proposed county.

- The Office of Charter Schools and Department of Public Instruction must have sufficient staffing capacity to manage the complex administrative burden that follows closures. Without adequate staff resources dedicated to closure management, the impacts described above are unable to be adequately mitigated. It is essential to build both strong front-end authorization processes and back-end closure management capacity at the state level.

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2024 Performance Framework

The State Board of Education (SBE) sets goals and measures for all public Charter Schools to annually monitor and track performance trends. Identification and analysis of charter school performance trends provides the opportunity for targeted programmatic support and professional development offerings by the Office of Charter Schools (OCS). The measures for charter schools operating in the 2023-2024 academic year include information from annual accountability data along with financial and operational requirements set forth in General Statute, SBE Policies, and the Charter Agreement.

Approach to Monitoring

Implementation of the Epicenter document management system in fiscal year 2019 continues to be a valuable resource for managing the heavy load of reviewing and providing meaningful guidance on thousands of documents annually by a small team of OCS and DPI staff. The overall compliance statistics are then captured in the final School Performance Framework Report presented here.

2024 Performance Framework Analysis

In 2014, OCS created the Performance Framework to serve as the standard mechanism for annual reporting on progress toward achievement of the State Board's goal to increase the number of charter schools meeting academic, operational, and financial goals. The Framework provides a consolidated view of each charter school's performance relative to operational, financial, and academic criteria. The operational and financial elements of the Framework are all requirements outlined in General Statute, State Board policy, or the Charter Agreement. The academic elements align with the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan of the SBE, along with academic performance measures applicable to all public-school units.

The Performance Framework reports on 46 operational, financial, and academic indicators. Some measurements were not applicable to all schools, such as required EMO/CMO reporting, posting of previous performance scores (not applicable to first year schools), renewal criteria, and other measurements that did not yield a data point for some schools, such as subgroup accountability data.

This section provides accountability numbers and percentages for charter schools based on three of the four main categories of the Performance Framework which include operational criteria, renewal criteria, and financial criteria. Academic outcomes are directly received from state accountability data and are reported within this report.

For each section, percent compliant is reported. The compliance percentage is calculated for each school by the number of criteria measures met divided by the total number of criteria the school was measured against for the given category.

Section: A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria

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Two hundred and eight (208) of 210 charter schools, or 99%, achieved at or above 80% in the category of operational annual monitoring criteria. Seventy-nine (79) charter schools, 37.6%, were compliant in every single applicable measure. Two schools fell below the 80% threshold, scoring 72% respectively. All charter schools were measured against a maximum of 21 operational criteria, of which some were not applicable to a given school.

Operational Annual Monitoring Results by Measure

Eleven (11) of 21 criteria yielded a charter school compliance percentage above 80% but below 100%. Of the 21 operational criteria, nine criteria measured as having 100% of charter schools in compliance, with one measure being identified as N/A for all charter schools. The lowest scoring criteria and identified N/A performance criteria are listed below:

A7. Official funded ADM is within 10% of projected. This measure was marked as non-applicable for all charter schools as the average daily membership projection law on which this was based is no longer in effect.

A17. The school is compliant with all student health and safety requirements as defined in general statute, SBE policy, or the signed charter agreement. One hundred thirty two (132) of 206 schools, 62.9%, met this target. The Charter School Nurse Consultants work closely with OCS to remind schools of the importance of having all thirteen of the required pieces in place and accurately reporting so on the annual self-report, which cannot be amended once it is submitted to DHHS by the school. OCS is working to address challenges with accurate reporting of these measures and anticipates improvement in future reviews.

Table 3: Operational Compliance Results by Measure, 2023-2024

Measure	Percent Compliant
A1. The NC Report Card and Letter Grade are prominently displayed on the school's website and schools with D/F have sent letter to notify parents.	99.01%
A2. The school has an assigned administrator in the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS).	99.05%
A3. The school meets the required number of instructional hours or days in accordance with State law.	100%
A4. The school adheres to all testing and accountability policies for state assessments.	100%
A5. The school implements mandated programming as a result of state or federal requirements; Title I Status, Title II, EC Status, School Nutrition, English Learners.	98.57%

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A6. The school follows student admissions and lottery requirements as stated in North Carolina General Statute, State Board of Education Policy, and the signed charter agreement.	100%
A7. The school's official funded ADM is within 10% of the projected ADM.	N/A
A8. The non-profit board has a current grievance policy.	98.10%
A9. The non-profit board has a current conflict of interest policy that complies with G.S. 115C-218.15.	100%
A10. The non-profit board has a current nepotism policy.	99.52%
A11. A quorum of the non-profit board of directors meets no less than 8 times a year (including annual meeting).	100%
A12. The majority of the non-profit board members primary residence in NC.	100%
A13. There is evidence of current fire inspections and related records.	93.33%
A14. The school has a viable certificate of occupancy or other required building use authorization.	100%
A15. The non-profit board holds current, active civil and liability insurance with the minimum coverage as defined in the signed charter agreement.	99.52%
A16. The non-profit board has a criminal history check policy that mirrors the LEA in which the school is located.	99.52%
A17. The school is compliant with all student health and safety requirements as defined in general statute, SBE policy, or the signed charter agreement.	60.48%
A18. The school is compliant with teacher licensure percentage requirements by maintaining at least 50% of teachers licensed from December 31 through the end of the school calendar year in accordance with SBE policy.	99.52%
A19. The charter school is compliant with the annual EMO/CMO public records request.	100%
A20. The charter school is compliant with maintaining the required dissolutions funds as required by G.S. 115C- 218.100.	96.23%
A21. The school is compliant with the implementation of a School Improvement Plan submitted through NCStar.	100%

Section: B. Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria

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Schools in Year 1 of the Renewal Process are evaluated on the Performance Framework against state requirements such as graduation requirement adherence, state laws on open meetings and the individual school's charter mission, vision statements and educational programming. The framework measures are part of the renewal monitoring criteria. Only one school was found noncompliant in these areas and was placed on governance noncompliance.

Section: C. Financial and operational goals as measured by the Office of Charter School's Performance Framework

Of the 210 operating charter schools, three schools were reported as having cautionary or disciplinary financial status. This is a decrease from last year's report of seven schools.

Conclusion

Overall, the vast majority of charter schools show compliance in operational, financial, and renewal criteria each year. It should be noted that compliance ratings are reported based on evidence provided that a measure has been met within a certain timeframe. It should not be assumed and is not always the case that a charter school is violating a law or policy due to failure to provide timely evidence of compliance.

The Performance Framework is a tool used by the OCS to maintain high standards for charter school operation, and provides an "at a glance" picture of the charter schools' academic, financial, governance, and operational foundations. The Charter Schools Performance Framework is a vital accountability tool used by OCS to review compliance annually for the over 200 charter schools currently operating in the state with the goal of improvement and stability in operational, academic, governance and financial status.

Between 2023 and 2024, the OCS conducted a full review of the tool, which had not been revised since 2014. The OCS brought suggested changes to the Charter Schools Review Board (CSRB) for review and discussion. On June 11, 2024, the CSRB voted and approved a revised Performance Framework for the first time since its adoption by the State Board of Education on November 4, 2014. The revisions within the Performance Framework have been in response to both the growing number of charter Schools within the state, as well as recent legislative changes. OCS believed it was the appropriate time to refine the Performance Framework as a more meaningful tracker and guide to performance standards while eliminating redundancies and ineffective performance measures.

The updated Performance Framework template will monitor four "key" areas which are now indicated by logical abbreviations and a more concise monitoring document:

- Operational (OP)
- Governance (GOV)
- Financial (FIN)
- Academic (ACAD)

Renewal Performance Measures will now be reviewed during the school's renewal cycle and reported through that process.

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The performance measures will monitor the charter school's performance by providing:

- A clear and consistent measure of operational, governance, financial, and academic performance;
- Feedback for school leaders and boards;
- Transparency for schools, parents, students, and the public;
- Tracking information regarding school performance over time.

To support school leaders and board members, the OCS Performance Framework team created documents for each measure to reflect alignment to laws and policies, resources, references, and required versus best practice measures. In addition, training modules will be available for any questions that arise. The continued objective of the performance framework will be to provide a clear picture of a charter school's organizational performance and compliance with state and federal laws. The new performance framework took effect during the 2024-2025 school year.

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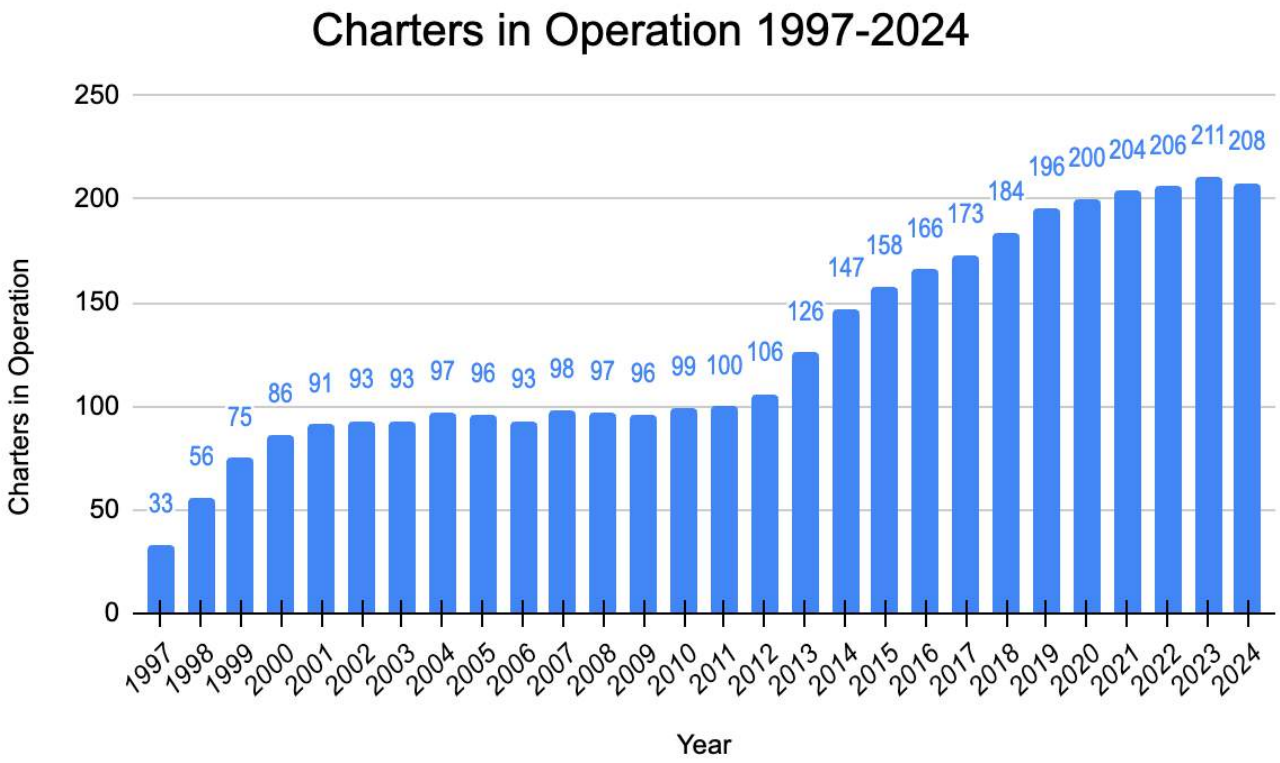
2024 Charter Sector Growth

The North Carolina charter school sector began in 1996 when the General Assembly passed the Charters School Act. The original Act placed a cap on charter school growth at 100 schools. That cap was eliminated in 2011 and since that time the number of charter schools has increased by 111% to the highest number of operating charter schools of 211 at the beginning of the 2023 school year. Since that time, the number of operating schools has decreased slightly to the 208 currently operating charter schools as of the time of this report.

Charter School Growth by Year

Figure 1: North Carolina Charter Schools in Operation By Year, 1997-2024



Charter School Openings, 2024-2025

After successful completion of the Ready to Open process, two new charter schools opened for the 2024-2025 school year.

Table 4: Charter Openings, 2024

School Name	County	1st Year Grade Levels	Approved Grade Levels
ALA Monroe	Union	K-8	K-12
Riverside Leadership Academy	Craven	K-8	K-12

Ready to Open Status, 2025

The Ready to Open status is frequently changing as schools face the challenges of opening a new school and decide to delay or withdraw from the process. As of June 1, 2025, there are nine charter schools scheduled to open in the fall of 2025, contingent upon the successful completion of the Ready to Open process and a final approval vote from the Charter Schools Review Board to receive Charter Agreements. Six applicant boards withdrew from the Ready to Open process and will need to reapply should they choose to open a charter school in the future.

Table 5: Ready to Open Status, 2025

School Name	Year approved	County	1st Year Grade Levels	Approved Grade Levels
Agape Achievement Academy	2023	Cumberland	K-3	K-5
Anderson Charter School	2023	Forsyth	1-4	K-8
Carolina Achieve	2023	Orange	K-5	K-8
Honor Prep Academy	2021	Mecklenburg	K-1	K-5
Liberty Classical Academy	2023	Guilford	K-9	K-12

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Nalanda Charter School	2022	Wake	K-2	K-6
North Oak Academy	2019	Durham	K-5	K-8
Sledge Institute	2023	Vance	K-2, 6	K-10
Triad International School	2023	Guilford	K-2	K-6

An additional eight charter applicant boards are being supported by the Office of Charter Schools as the cohort slated to open in 2026.

2024 Charter Application Cycle

Thirteen non-profit boards submitted applications to open public charter schools by the April 26, 2024, application deadline. Of these, two applicants sought approval for Acceleration to open in the 2025-2026 school year with another eleven applying under the regular timeline to open in 2026. One applicant withdrew before Charter Schools Review Board (CSRB) interviews took place.

Once an application is deemed complete, it is presented to evaluators including external evaluators with a variety of charter and educational experience, NC DPI staff evaluators, and CSRB members. Applicant boards then appear for an interview with the CSRB and are either forwarded to a second-round interview or recommended for denial or approval. If an applicant is forwarded to a second-round interview, the CSRB makes a final vote of recommendation for denial or approval. It should be noted that non-profit board applicants may choose to partner with a management organization according to guidelines set forth in NC Administrative Code. Those applicants partnering with a management organization receive additional interview time to allow the CSRB members to direct questions toward said management organization.

2024 Accelerated Applications

Two accelerated applications were received; however neither were approved by the CSRB to enter Ready to Open (RTO) status.

2024 Standard Timeline Applications

Eleven standard timeline charter applications were received and reviewed by external evaluators, NCDPI staff, and CSRB between May 2024 and August 2024. Six applications were recommended for approval by the CSRB.

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During the CSRB interview period, two of the applicants were asked to return for a second-round interview. Of those second-round applicants, both applicants were ultimately approved by CSRB.

Dispositions of the thirteen applications received by the application deadline:

- One applicant withdrew
- Six applicants recommended for approval
- Six applicants not recommended

At the conclusion of the 2024 Charter School Application Cycle, six schools were approved by CSRB to open on a standard timeline.

Table 6: Charter Application Approvals, 2024 Cycle (Slated to Open Fall 2026)

School Name	LEA Location	1st Year Grade Levels	Approved Grade Levels
Granite Charter Academy	Chatham	K-6	K-12
Legacy Traditional Schools	Forsyth	K-8	K-8
Bettis Academy	Wake	K-6	K-12
Centerpoint Classical Academy	Guilford	K-5	K-12
North Carolina Connections Academy	Statewide Virtual	K-12	K-12
Warren Young Explorers School	Warren	K-6	K-12

Charter School Authorizing Staff

The Office of Charter Schools serves as staff to the current North Carolina authorizer, the Charter Schools Review Board. The Office creates, implements, monitors, and supports the entire authorizing process from application creation to final ready to open status. When a charter applicant moves into an operating school, the Office then supports and monitors pursuant to the processes established for operating schools. Thus, the Office supports both non-operating charter board applicants and the over 200 operating charter schools.

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) conducts an annual survey to inform their Annual State of Authorizing reports. Per its mission, NACSA advances and strengthens the ideas and practices of authorizing so students and communities - especially those who are historically underresourced - thrive. According to the 2024 State of Authorizing survey,

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the majority (59%) of surveyed respondents (overseeing approximately 60% of charter schools nationally), serve fewer than five charter schools per staff member. Ninety-two percent (92%) of respondents oversee ten or fewer schools per full-time staff member.

North Carolina's average of eight consultants staffing the Office of Charter Schools provides a ratio of 26 schools per consultant. When considering the addition of 17 schools in the planning process, the average increases to over 28 schools per consultant.

Charter School Renewals

Each charter school that the State Board of Education (SBE)/Charter Schools Review Board (CSRB) approves to operate has a time-limited charter term that is not guaranteed for renewal. NC General Statute 115C-218.6 governs the renewals and review of charters.

The Renewal Process takes two years to complete, starting in July, two years before the school's charter expires. For the schools whose charter ends June 30, 2025, the process began in July 2023 ("Year 1" = July 2023 - June 2024, Year 2 = July 2024 - June 2025). The Office of Charter Schools works with two Cohorts of renewal schools during any Renewal Cycle. As one Renewal Cohort receives new Charter Agreements in July, a new Cohort enters the process, and the remaining Cohort continues into the second-year tasks culminating in a charter renewal term vote by the Charter Schools Review Board.

The renewal process is outlined in State Board Policy CHTR-007, which was updated in April 2024, after several months of work to develop improvements through collaboration of the Charter Schools Review Board, the Office of Charter Schools, and the State Board of Education. The revisions were developed in order to (1) better align with statutes for renewal and termination of charters, (2) better align with what is done in practice in the renewal process by the Office of Charter Schools, other DPI Staff, and the Charter Schools Review Board, (3) Create more clarity between the different renewal terms and (4) provide more clarity regarding subgroup performance in the consideration of a renewal term.

Section A of the newly revised policy had several language updates including updating the policy to reflect the "Charter Schools Review Board" which was previously the "Charter School Advisory Board." Additionally Section A named the "DPI Portfolio," a collection of data and materials submitted by the Office of Charter Schools to the Charter Schools Review Board, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the State Board of Education. The DPI Portfolio is created as a collaboration between the Office of Charter Schools and various departments within DPI that have materials pertinent to the evaluation of the charter school.

Section B of the newly updated policy provides necessary definitions and specifies the criteria for determining how a school provides services to certain targeted subgroups, thereby providing clarity to the legislative requirements for a renewal. This section also contains the revised Renewal Guidelines that provide the Charter Schools Review Board the criteria for awarding a 10-year, 7-year, 5-year, or 3-year renewal, along with the criteria for not renewing a charter school.

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2025 Renewals

Thirty-eight charter schools requested renewal of their charters that will expire June 30, 2025. Receipt of a ten-year renewal is based on statutory requirements. The Charter Schools Review Board granted a ten-year charter renewal to schools meeting requirements of G.S. §115C-218.6. The schools have provided financially sound audits the previous three years, have academic outcomes comparable to the local LEA for the preceding three years, and are in compliance with State law, federal law, the school's own bylaws, and the provisions set forth in its charter granted by the State Board of Education.

Schools that did not meet the ten-year requirements were interviewed over several CSRB meetings beginning in November 2024 with voting on renewal terms taking place at public CSRB meetings beginning in January 2025.

Table 7: Renewal Terms, 2025

A ten (10) year renewal was granted to:

Code	School Name
01F	Alamance Community School
07A	Washington Montessori
10A	Classical Charter Schools of Leland
11B	ArtSpace Charter School
26B	Alpha Academy
32Q	Reaching All Minds Academy
32T	Discovery Charter
34G	The Arts Based School
36B	Piedmont Community Charter School
41K	Piedmont Classical High School
41Q	Revolution Academy
51B	Johnston Charter Academy
60F	Metrolina Reg Scholars Academy
60J	Socrates Academy
65A	Cape Fear Center for Inquiry
73A	Bethel Hill Charter
86T	Millennium Charter Academy
90A	Union Academy

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93V	Doral Academy of North Carolina
95A	Two Rivers Community School

A seven (7) year renewal was granted to:

Code	School Name
93J	RISE Southeast Raleigh Charter

A five (5) year renewal was granted to:

Code	School Name
65H	Wilmington School of the Arts
79A	Bethany Community School
93P	Rolesville Charter Academy

A three (3) year charter renewal was granted to:

Code	School Name
13C	A.C.E. Academy
32C	Community School of Digital & Visual Art
32D	Kestrel Heights School
43D	Achievement Charter Academy
53C	Rising Leaders Academy
60K	Charlotte Secondary
61J	Lakeside Charter Academy
61K	United Community School
61T	Movement Charter School
65B	Wilmington Preparatory Academy
92P	Southern Wake Academy
93A	Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School
93T	Cardinal Charter Acad at Wendell Falls
96C	Dillard Academy

The CSRB voted to nonrenew the charter for Community School of Digital & Visual Art in Durham, but the nonrenewal was appealed to the SBE which remanded the matter back to the CSRB for a second consideration. On remand, the school received a three-year renewal with stipulations.

Final decisions and discussions can be found in CSRB minutes and livestream recordings.

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Charter School Student Enrollment and Demographics

The North Carolina charter school sector began in 1996 when the General Assembly passed the Charters School Act. The original Act placed a cap on charter school growth at 100 schools. That cap was eliminated in 2011 and since that time the number of charter schools has increased by 111% to the highest number of operating charter schools of 211 at the beginning of the 2023 school year. Since that time, the number of operating schools has decreased slightly to the 208 currently operating charter schools as of the time of this report.

Two hundred and six (206) are brick-and-mortar charter schools operating in 63 counties, and two are virtual charter schools. Both virtual charter schools have brick-and-mortar headquarters in Durham County.

The best 1 of 2 Average Daily Membership[3] for the current 2024-2025 school year shows charter membership at 153,480 students which equates to just over 10% of the statewide public school unit membership[4].

Figure 2: North Carolina Charter School Membership, 2019-2024[5]

[3] Data and definitions available here.
[4] District membership 1,371,565. Lab school membership 1,072. Total best 1 of 2 public school unit membership 1,526,117.
[5] Data 2019-2023 is a December 1st headcount number from CEDARS. 2024 membership represents best 1 of 2 average daily membership as submitted to School Business Services, NCDPI.

Table 8: Charter Schools by County, as of April 1, 2025

County Description	Official School Name ----------
Alamance	River Mill Academy
Alamance	Clover Garden
Alamance	The Hawbridge School
Alamance	Alamance Community School
Avery	Marjorie Williams Academy
Beaufort	Washington Montessori Public Charter School
Bladen	Paul R. Brown Leadership Academy
Bladen	Emereau: Bladen
Brunswick	Classical Charter Schools of Leland
Brunswick	Classical Charter Schools of Southport
Buncombe	Evergreen Community Charter
Buncombe	ArtSpace Charter School
Buncombe	IC Imagine
Buncombe	The Franklin School of Innovation
Buncombe	Asheville PEAK Academy
Buncombe	Francine Delany New School for Children
Buncombe	Mountain City Public Montessori
Burke	New Dimensions: A Public Charter School
Cabarrus	Carolina International School
Cabarrus	Valor Preparatory Academy
Cabarrus	A.C.E. Academy
Cabarrus	Concord Lake STEAM Academy
Caldwell	Oak Hill Charter School
Carteret	Tiller School
Chatham	Chatham Charter
Chatham	Woods Charter
Chatham	Willow Oak Montessori
Cleveland	Pinnacle Classical Academy
Columbus	Thomas Academy
Columbus	Classical Charter Schools of Whiteville
Cumberland	Alpha Academy
Cumberland	The Capitol Encore Academy
Currituck	Water's Edge Village School
Davidson	Davidson Charter Academy Inc.
Durham	North Carolina Cyber Academy
Durham	NC Virtual Academy
Durham	Maureen Joy Charter School
Durham	Durham Charter School
Durham	Community School of Digital and Visual Arts
Durham	Kestrel Heights School

Durham	Research Triangle Charter Academy
Durham	Central Park School for Children
Durham	Voyager Academy
Durham	Global Scholars Academy
Durham	Research Triangle High School
Durham	The Institute for the Development of Young Leaders
Durham	Reaching All Minds Academy
Durham	Excelsior Classical Academy CFA
Durham	KIPP Durham College Preparatory
Durham	Discovery Charter School
Edgecombe	North East Carolina Preparatory
Forsyth	Quality Education Academy
Forsyth	Carter G. Woodson School
Forsyth	Forsyth Academy
Forsyth	The Arts Based School
Forsyth	NC Leadership Charter Academy
Franklin	Crosscreek Charter School
Franklin	Youngsville Academy
Franklin	Wake Preparatory Academy
Gaston	Piedmont Community Charter School
Gaston	Mountain Island Charter School Inc
Gaston	Ridgeview Charter School
Gaston	Community Public Charter
Granville	Falls Lake Academy
Granville	Oxford Preparatory School
Guilford	Greensboro Academy
Guilford	Guilford Preparatory Academy
Guilford	Phoenix Academy Inc
Guilford	Triad Math and Science Academy
Guilford	Cornerstone Charter Academy: A Challenge Foundation Academy
Guilford	The College Preparatory and Leadership Academy of High Point
Guilford	Summerfield Charter Academy
Guilford	Piedmont Classical High School
Guilford	Gate City Charter Academy
Guilford	Next Generation Academy
Guilford	The Experiential School of Greensboro
Guilford	Revolution Academy
Guilford	Summit Creek Academy
Halifax	KIPP Halifax College Preparatory
Halifax	Hobgood Charter School
Harnett	Anderson Creek Academy
Harnett	Achievement Charter Academy

Haywood	Shining Rock Classical Academy
Henderson	The Mountain Community Sch
Henderson	FernLeaf Community Charter School
Iredell	American Renaissance School
Iredell	Success Institute Charter School
Iredell	Pine Lake Preparatory, Inc.
Iredell	Langtree Charter Academy
Iredell	Iredell Charter Academy of Arts & Science
Jackson	Summit Charter School
Johnston	Neuse Charter School of Johnston County
Johnston	Johnston Charter Academy
Johnston	American Leadership Academy - Johnston
Lee	Ascend Leadership Academy: Lee County
Lee	MINA Charter School of Lee County
Lee	Central Carolina Academy
Lenoir	The Children's Village Academy
Lincoln	Lincoln Charter School
Lincoln	West Lake Preparatory Academy
Martin	Bear Grass Charter School
Mecklenburg	Sugar Creek Charter
Mecklenburg	Lake Norman Charter
Mecklenburg	Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy
Mecklenburg	Queen's Grant Community School
Mecklenburg	Community School of Davidson
Mecklenburg	Socrates Academy
Mecklenburg	Charlotte Secondary School
Mecklenburg	KIPP Charlotte
Mecklenburg	Corvian Community School
Mecklenburg	American Leadership Academy Charlotte
Mecklenburg	Bradford Preparatory School
Mecklenburg	Commonwealth High School
Mecklenburg	Pioneer Springs Community School
Mecklenburg	Lakeside Charter Academy
Mecklenburg	United Community School
Mecklenburg	Stewart Creek High School
Mecklenburg	Charlotte Lab School
Mecklenburg	The Math and Science Academy of Charlotte
Mecklenburg	VERITAS Community School: A Challenge Foundation Academy
Mecklenburg	Mallard Creek STEM Academy
Mecklenburg	Matthews Charter Academy
Mecklenburg	Unity Classical Charter School
Mecklenburg	Movement Charter School
Mecklenburg	Bonnie Cone Classical Academy

Mecklenburg	East Voyager Academy of Charlotte
Mecklenburg	Jackson Day School
Mecklenburg	Steele Creek Preparatory Academy
Mecklenburg	Southwest Charlotte STEM Academy
Mecklenburg	Movement School Eastland
Mecklenburg	Telra Institute
Mecklenburg	Bonnie Cone Leadership Academy
Mecklenburg	Aspire Trade High School
Mecklenburg	Movement School Southwest
Mecklenburg	Movement School Northwest
Montgomery	Tillery Charter Academy
Moore	The Academy of Moore County
Moore	Sandhills Theatre Arts Renaissance School
Moore	Moore Montessori Community School
Nash	Rocky Mount Preparatory School, Inc.
New Hanover	Cape Fear Center for Inquiry
New Hanover	Wilmington Preparatory Academy
New Hanover	Classical Charter Schools of Wilmington
New Hanover	Island Montessori Charter School
New Hanover	American Leadership Academy-Coastal
New Hanover	Girls Leadership Academy of Wilmington
New Hanover	Wilmington School of the Arts
Northampton	KIPP Gaston College Preparatory
Onslow	Z.E.C.A. School of Arts and Technology
Orange	Eno River Academy
Orange	The Expedition School
Pamlico	Arapahoe Charter School
Pasquotank	Northeast Academy for Aerospace & Advanced Technologies
Person	Bethel Hill Charter
Person	Roxboro Community School, Inc.
Pitt	Winterville Charter Academy
Randolph	Uwharrie Charter Academy
Robeson	CIS Academy
Robeson	Southeastern Academy
Robeson	Old Main STREAM Academy
Rockingham	Bethany Community School
Rockingham	Legacy Classical Academy
Rowan	Faith Academy
Rutherford	Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy: A Challenge Foundation A
Rutherford	Lake Lure Classical Academy
Stanly	Gray Stone Day School
Surry	Millennium Charter Academy

Swain	Mountain Discovery Charter School
Transylvania	Brevard Academy: A Challenge Foundation Academy
Union	Union Academy Charter School
Union	Union Day School
Union	Union Preparatory Academy at Indian Trail
Union	Monroe Charter Academy
Union	Apprentice Academy High School of North Carolina
Vance	Vance Charter School
Vance	Henderson Collegiate
Wake	The Exploris School
Wake	The Magellan Charter School
Wake	Sterling Montessori Academy
Wake	Franklin Academy
Wake	East Wake Academy
Wake	Raleigh Charter High School
Wake	PreEminent Charter School
Wake	Quest Academy
Wake	Southern Wake Academy
Wake	Casa Esperanza Montessori Charter School
Wake	Endeavor Charter School
Wake	Triangle Math and Science Academy
Wake	Longleaf School of the Arts
Wake	Wake Forest Charter Academy
Wake	Cardinal Charter Academy
Wake	Envision Science Academy
Wake	RISE Southeast Raleigh Charter School
Wake	Central Wake High School
Wake	Peak Charter Academy
Wake	Pine Springs Preparatory Academy
Wake	Rolesville Charter Academy
Wake	Carolina Charter Academy: CFA
Wake	Raleigh Oak Charter School
Wake	Cardinal Charter Academy at Wendell Falls
Wake	Doral Academy of North Carolina
Wake	The Math and Science Academy of Apex
Warren	Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School
Washington	Pocosin Innovative Charter
Watauga	Two Rivers Community School
Wayne	Dillard Academy Charter School
Wayne	Wayne Preparatory Academy
Wayne	Wayne STEM Academy
Wilson	Sallie B Howard School of Arts and Science
Wilson	Wilson Preparatory Academy

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Ethnicity and Racial Demographics

The figures below show racial and ethnic composition within all charters and all district schools for the 2024-2025 school year, as well as a comparison between the previous two school years.

Despite experiencing the largest absolute decrease in representation across both sectors (-1.1% in districts, -0.9% in charters), White students maintained their over-representation in charter schools. This decline likely reflects broader demographic shifts in the student population rather than changes in charter school access patterns as the North Carolina student population becomes more diverse[6].

Hispanic students represent the largest under-served population in charter schools, comprising nearly a quarter of district enrollment (21.9% in 2023, 22.8% in 2024) but only about 15% of charter enrollment (14.2% in 2023, 14.8% in 2024). Interestingly, while Hispanic representation grew in both sectors between 2023 and 2024, the proportional gap remained virtually unchanged. Hispanic students gained 0.9 percentage points in district schools and 0.6 percentage points in charter schools.

Hispanic under-representation may reflect barriers such as:

- Language barriers in charter school application and information processes
- Geographic distribution of charter schools relative to Hispanic communities
- Cultural factors affecting school choice preferences
- Economic factors such as transportation or school nutrition programming availability

White over-representation might indicate:

- Greater familiarity with school choice options and application processes
- Geographic concentration in areas with more charter school options
- Higher levels of educational advocacy and information sharing within communities
- Economic advantages that facilitate charter school access

Black/African-American students represent the second-largest demographic group and show a pattern opposite to Hispanic students—they are slightly over-represented in charter schools. In 2024, they comprised 25.7% of charter enrollment compared to 24.2% of district enrollment, maintaining a similar 1-2 percentage point advantage seen in 2023 (26.1% charter vs. 24.4% district). Black/African-American representation decreased in both sectors between 2023 and 2024, with a larger decline in charter schools (-0.4%) than in district schools (-0.2%).

Asian students, while representing a smaller proportion of overall enrollment (around 4-5%), show the strongest positive trend in charter school representation. Their charter school presence grew from 4.5% in 2023 to 5.1% in 2024, a 0.6 percentage point increase that outpaced their growth in district schools (+0.3%). This suggests increasing charter school access or preference within Asian communities.

[6] Nathan Dollar, "Who are North Carolina's public school students?," Carolina Demography, February 20, 2024, https://carolinademography.cpc.unc.edu/2024/02/20/who-are-north-carolinas-public-school-students/.

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Students identifying as two or more races maintain consistent over-representation in charter schools, comprising 7.1% of charter enrollment in both years while representing 5.6% and 5.8% of district enrollment respectively. Their stability in charter representation combined with slight growth in district representation suggests well-established charter school access patterns for this demographic.

Both American Indian and Pacific Islander students represent very small proportions of enrollment in both sectors. American Indian students show minimal presence in charter schools (0.8% in 2023, 0.9% in 2024) relative to their already small district representation (1.0% in both years). Pacific Islander students maintain roughly equal representation across both sectors at 0.1%.

Figure 3: 2024-2025 Ethnicity and Racial Data

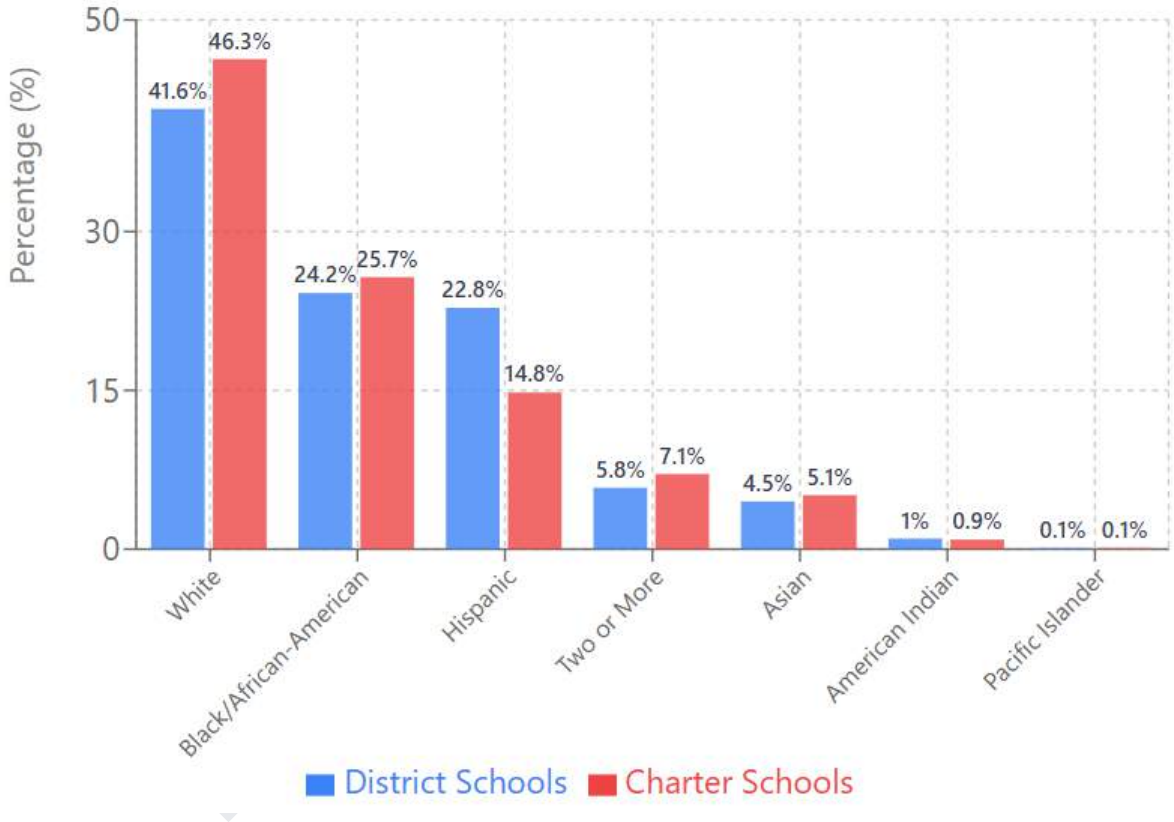

Figure 4: One Year Demographic Changes, 2023-2024 to 2024-2025 School Years

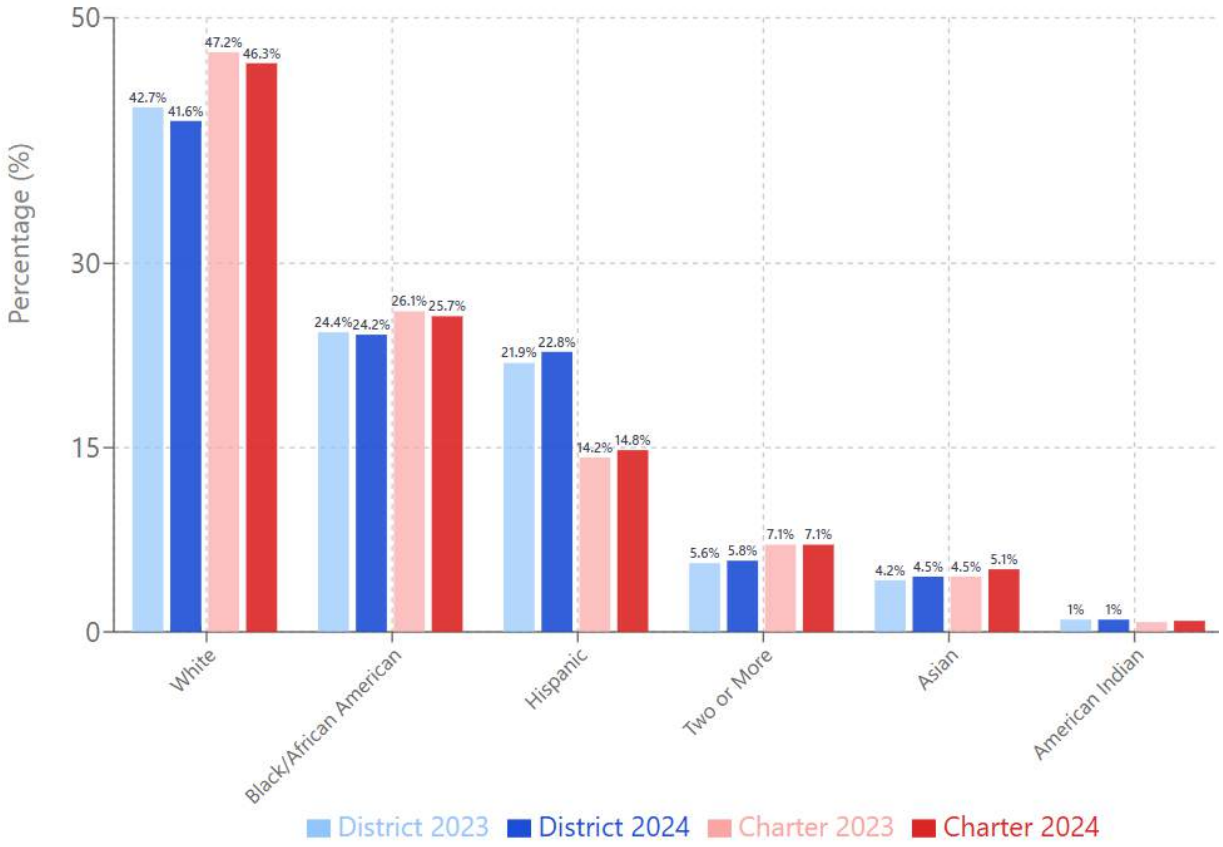

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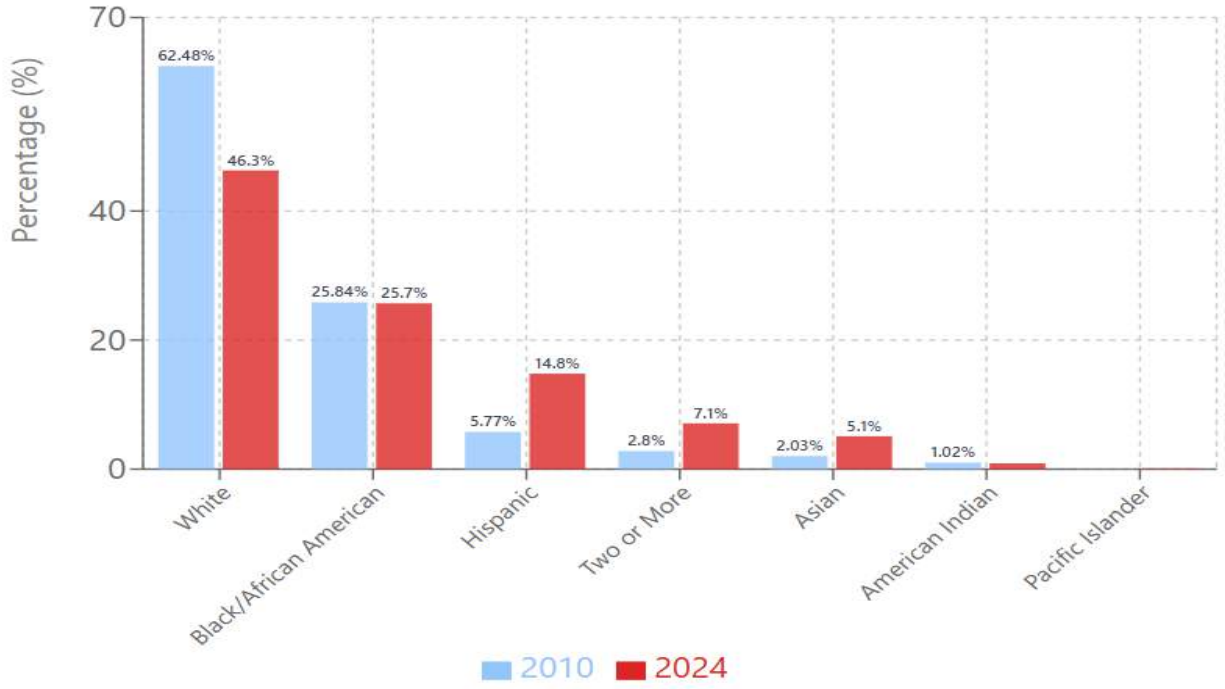
Figure 5: Ethnicity and Racial Demographic Trends, Charters Only, Long Term 2010 v. 2024



From 2010 to the current school year, there have been dramatic changes in student demographic trends in charter schools[7]. The most dramatic change is the drop from over 60% white student enrollment in 2010 to just over 46% currently (-16.2%). While Hispanic students continue to be underrepresented in charter membership, the demographic has nearly tripled from 5.8% in 2010 to 14.8% in 2024 (+9.0%). Black/African American membership was virtually unchanged at ~26% throughout the entire 14-year period. Finally, Asian students more than doubled (2.0% → 5.1%) and students of Two or More races increased 2.5x (2.8% → 7.1%).

In 2010, charter schools primarily served White and Black students (88% combined). By 2024, this had shifted to a much more diverse student body, with significant Hispanic, Asian, and multiracial representation. This transformation suggests that charter schools have become more accessible to or preferred by diverse communities.

The data tells a story of a charter school sector that has fundamentally changed its demographic composition over 14 years, becoming significantly more diverse and reflective of broader demographic changes in the student population.

[7] Similar trends are seen in national data on charter school enrollment racial/ethnic data. National Center for Education Statistics, "Public Charter School Enrollment," Condition of Education (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, 2023), https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgb/public-charter-enrollment, accessed 6/3/2025.

Special Population Student Enrollment

Students with Disabilities

As of December 1, 2024, students with disabilities comprised 11.74% of North Carolina charter school enrollment, representing a slight increase from 11.48% the previous year.

Figure 6: Students with Disabilities, Charters and Districts, 2024 Headcount

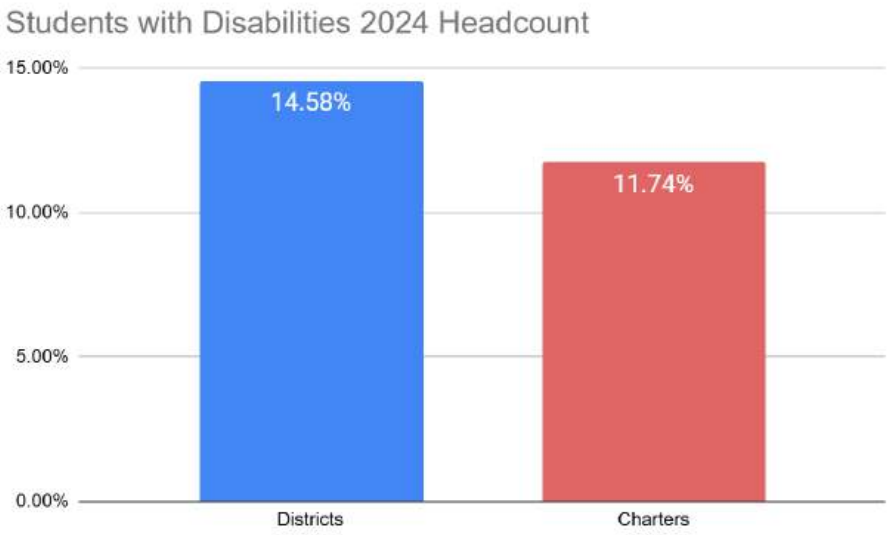
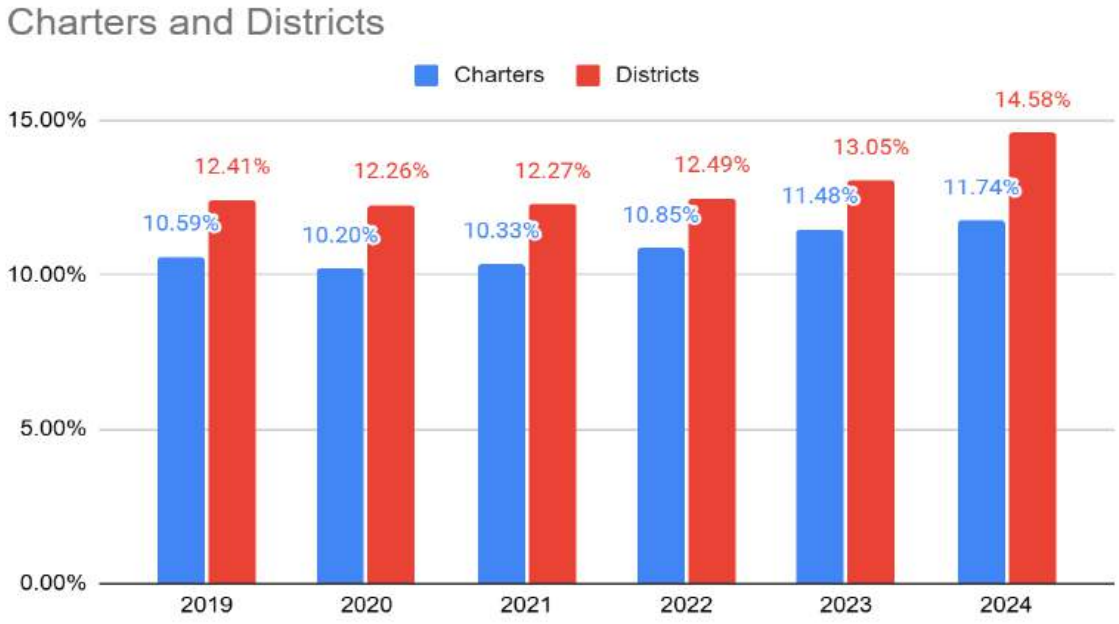


Figure 7: Students with Disabilities Charters and Traditional LEAs, 2019-2024



Traditional districts consistently enroll greater numbers of SWD than charter schools across all years examined. There is also greater variability in the headcount numbers for traditional districts with a headcount range from 12.26% to 14.58% (+2.32%), while charter school enrollment remained more stable within a narrower band of 10.20% to 11.74% (+1.54%). By 2024, charter schools enrolled the greatest number of SWD (during the time period measured) at 11.74%, representing a 1.54 percentage point increase from their 2020 low.

The special education enrollment gap between districts and charters has widened over the measurement period. Beginning at 1.58 percentage points in 2019, the gap expanded to 2.84 percentage points by 2024.

Implications and Considerations

The enrollment patterns reveal several critical issues for educational equity and resource allocation that affect both charter schools and traditional districts. Since 2022, both sectors have seen significant upward trajectories in SWD populations. Both charter schools and traditional districts must receive appropriate resources that reflect the complexity and intensity of services required by their enrolled students with disabilities, rather than funding models that fail to account for these varied enrollment patterns. This approach would ensure that all students with disabilities receive high-quality educational opportunities and necessary support services, regardless of whether they attend charter or traditional district schools.

When analyzing SWD enrollment data in charter schools specifically, it is important to note that there is a large variance between SWD enrollment in individual charter schools. The 2024 headcount data shows a variation ranging from a low enrollment percentage of two percent to a high of 29% SWD population. And 77 charter schools evidence a headcount over 13% which is the cap for state funding students with disabilities. Some possible factors contributing to SWD enrollment variance include:

- School design and mission including targeted populations, program/pedagogical focuses such as trades, STEM, arts, or college prep
- Physical facilities and accommodations (accessible buildings, sensory rooms, therapy spaces)
- School philosophies, behavioral interventions, and whole child services
- Administrative experience with special education compliance and programming
- Location and access relative to families of students with disabilities; transportation
- Community awareness and outreach efforts
- Proximity to other special education resources or competing schools
- Information provided to families about available services
- Waiting lists and lottery systems that may affect enrollment patterns
- Parental perceptions about charter school capacity to serve their child
- Previous experiences with traditional districts vs. charter schools
- Word-of-mouth recommendations within disability communities

While it's difficult to ascertain with certainty enrollment differences between charters and districts, and between individual charter schools, these trends underscore the need for continued monitoring of special education enrollment patterns and targeted strategies to ensure that all

students with disabilities have equal access to high-quality educational opportunities, regardless of the institutional model they choose. Further, more research is needed related to equitable funding models[8], costs related to service needs, and staffing challenges in the special education/exceptional child sector.

English Learners

The current North Carolina headcount for English Learners (ELs) (in all public school units) identified and assessed as ELs under the State Board of Education (SBE) policies as of November 1, 2024, is 178,688. This reflects an increase of 15,910 students over the year[9].

While the EL student population continues to grow rapidly in North Carolina, ELs show consistent underenrollment in charter schools when compared to district schools[10]. In 2019, 3.61% of charter school students qualified as EL while 8.29% attended district schools. The most recent headcount shows 5.71% of charter school students qualified as EL while 10.92% attend district schools.

Likely reasons for the enrollment gap between charter schools and district schools include access challenges such as[11]:

- Language barriers in accessing information about school choice options
- Limited translation services and multilingual outreach
- Cultural unfamiliarity with American school choice systems
- Inadequate social networks to share information about charter options

However, charter schools are well-suited for using their flexibility and autonomy to provide high quality options to English Learners including:

- Tailored curricula and schedules designed for multilingual learners
- Flexibility in hiring bilingual teachers who may not meet traditional certification requirements
- Ability to create specialized programs like dual-language immersion schools
- Development of culturally responsive educational models

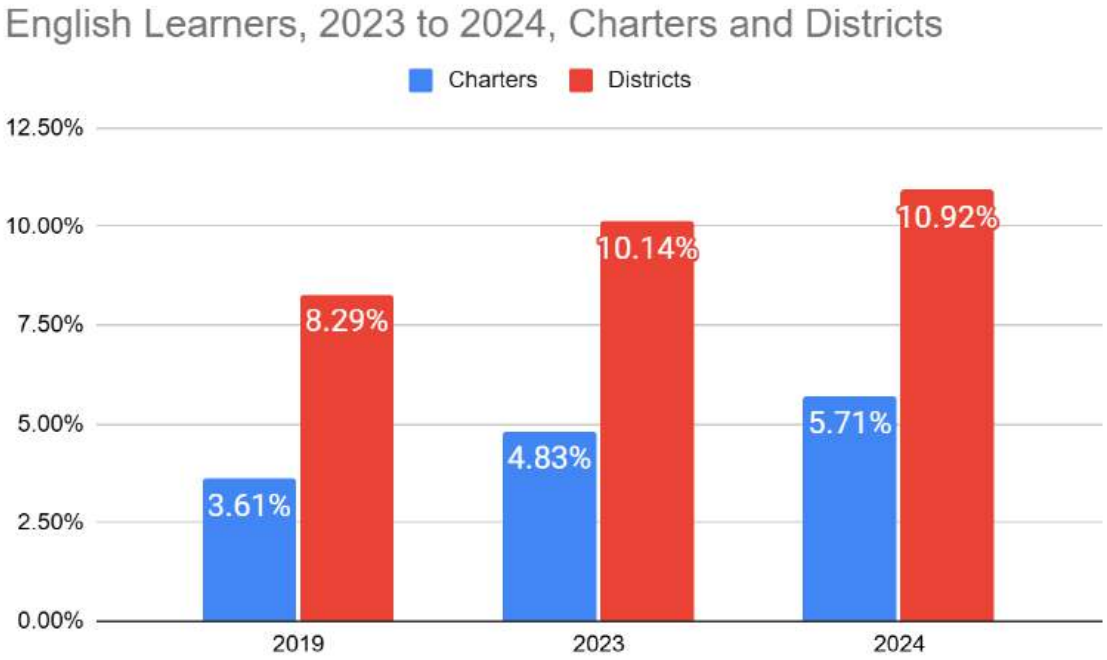
[8] EC Funding Model Proposal; EdExplainer | Exploring weighted student funding in North Carolina, accessed 6/7/25.

[9] More information about the English Learner headcount for North Carolina can be found here, accessed 6/7/25.

[10] Although there is limited recent data on national English Learner enrollment in charter schools, historically this has been a subgroup less likely to attend charter schools than traditional district public schools. English Learners in Charter Schools, accessed 6/3/25.

[11] Conor P. Williams, "English Learners and School Choice: Helping Charter Schools Serve Multilingual Families," The Century Foundation, March 2019, https://tcf.org/content/report/english-learners-school-choice-policies-delivering-charter-schools-equity-potential/, accessed 6/3/2025.

Figure 8: English Learners Percent Enrolled, 2023 to 2024, Charters and Districts



While there is little research related to the disparity between EL enrollment in districts and charters, the data underscores the need for continued monitoring of EL enrollment patterns and targeted strategies to ensure that all students have equal access to high-quality educational opportunities, regardless of the institutional model they choose, and that those schools are funded properly to serve the unique needs of English language learners and Multilingual students.

Economically Disadvantaged Students

Beginning with the 2021–22 school year, the criteria for identifying Economically Disadvantaged Student (EDS) status was updated by the United States Department of Education. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction is defining Economically Disadvantaged status as: Any student identified by a Public School Unit (PSU), meeting the criteria of Directly Certified, Categorically Eligible, or a method consistent with state or federal guidance for financial assistance regardless of participation or eligibility in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Direct certification involves matching student enrollment records with data from other government programs, such as SNAP or TANF, to automatically qualify eligible students for free meals without requiring a separate application. One recent significant change is that Categorically Eligible now includes children who are Medicaid recipients, thus impacting the increase of students within the economically disadvantaged subgroup statewide.

Figure 9: Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students, 2024

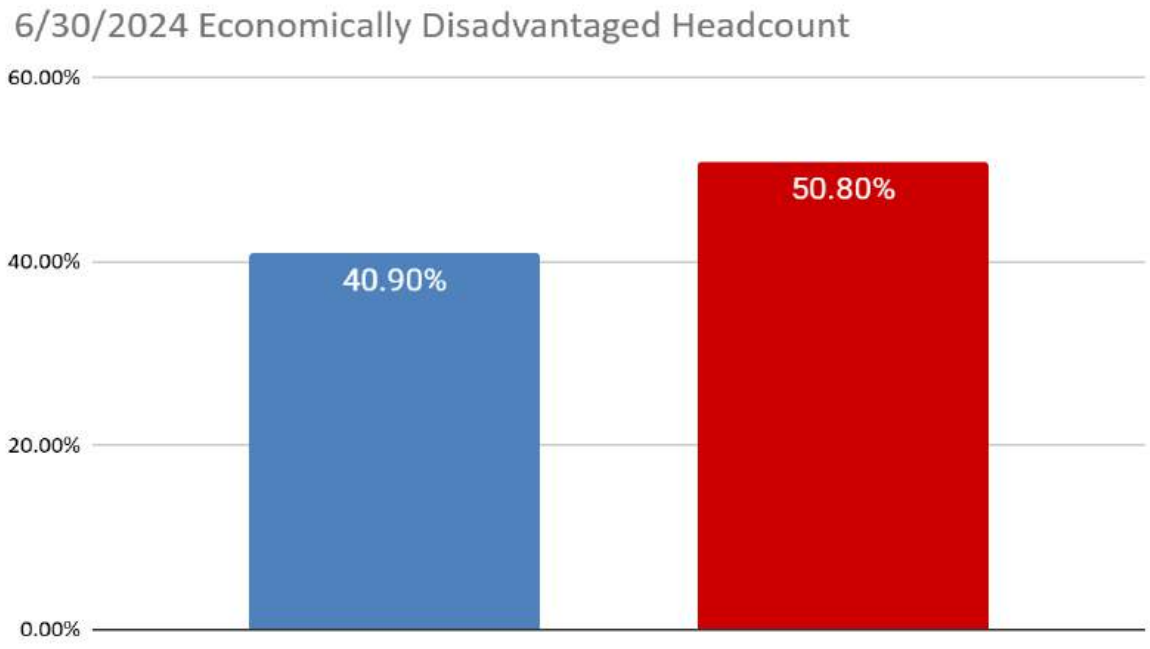
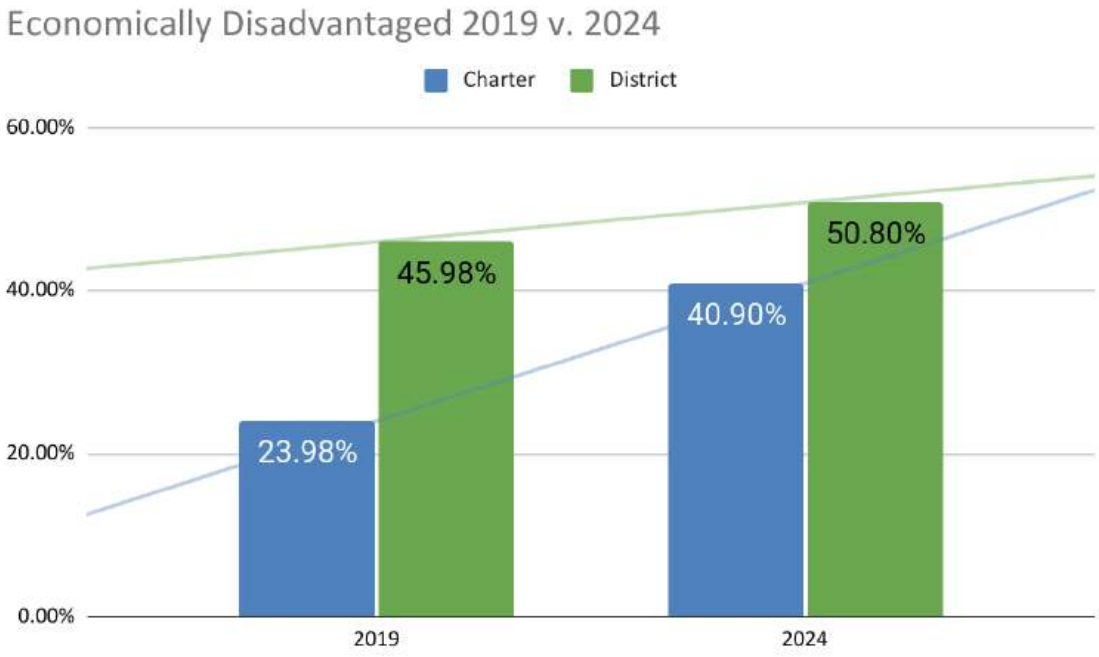


Figure 10: Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students, 2019 v. 2024



Charter Schools

- 2019: 23.98% economically disadvantaged
- 2024: 40.90% economically disadvantaged
- Increase of 16.92 percentage points

District Schools

- 2019: 45.98% economically disadvantaged
- 2024: 50.80% economically disadvantaged
- Increase of 4.82 percentage points

The data shows charter schools experienced a much more dramatic increase in economically disadvantaged enrollment (71% relative increase) compared to district schools (10% relative increase). Charter schools are serving a significantly more economically disadvantaged population than they did five years ago. The difference between charter and district schools' economically disadvantaged populations has decreased from 22 percentage points in 2019 to about 10 percentage points in 2024. Charter schools may be becoming more accessible to lower-income families, or economic conditions may have shifted the demographics of families choosing charter options. It is also very likely that this shift is due to intentional targeting of economically disadvantaged and educationally disadvantaged students through the now-concluded Charters Schools Program grant and the use of weighted lotteries, as well as an emphasis on ensuring that charter school applicant boards intending to serve a diverse population are well-positioned to market to those students and provide access through services such as school nutrition and transportation.

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Eliminating Barriers to Access

Charter schools promise educational choice and innovation, and a strong and vibrant charter community depends on access to high quality school choice systems. Barriers to access that need to be intentionally addressed can include:

- Admissions and application hurdles may include confusion or lack of clarity regarding the processes for admission, language barriers, or a general lack of knowledge regarding charter schools and the fact they are tuition-free schools of choice.
- Geographic barriers exist including the fact that there are more urban charter schools as opposed to rural options, transportation challenges specific to certain geographic areas, and waitlist and demand variations in specific areas of the state.
- Transportation is another barrier that may exist as transportation systems vary widely among charter schools.
- School meal programs serve as crucial safety nets for many families. Charter schools with limited school nutrition programs may impact whether a family chooses to attend that school.

These individual access barriers intersect with broader systemic challenges that affect charter school quality and sustainability. Rigorous authorization processes serve as essential safeguards, ensuring only well-planned schools receive approval. However, even well-authorized schools face enormous challenges during their critical first five years of operation, when they must simultaneously build educational programs, establish community trust, and achieve financial stability with limited funding for programs such as transportation and nutrition.

Weighted Lotteries

The ability to conduct a weighted lottery is codified in G.S. §115C-218.45(g1). Charter schools may not discriminate in their admissions process based on race, creed, national origin, religion, or ancestry; however, they can use additional controls to enroll underserved populations, if supported by the school's mission.

A weighted lottery at a charter school refers to a specific method used to prioritize student admissions based on certain criteria, typically designed to promote diversity within the school's student body. In a weighted lottery system, certain applicants are given preference or additional chances of being selected based on specific factors such as socio-economic status. North Carolina follows the federal definition related to educationally disadvantaged students in determining which subgroups may be weighted in a weighted lottery: economically disadvantaged, English learners, Students with Disabilities, migrant students, and homeless/unaccompanied minors.

Here's how a weighted lottery typically works:

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1. **Identifying Criteria:** The charter school establishes criteria that will be used to prioritize student admissions. These criteria must meet the federal guidance and definitions for educationally disadvantaged students.
2. **Assigning Weights:** Each criterion is assigned a "weight" or numerical value that reflects its importance in the admissions process. For example, being eligible for free or reduced-price meals might carry a higher weight than having a sibling at the school.
3. **Applying Weights in the Lottery:** When the school conducts its admissions lottery (a random selection process used when there are more applicants than available spots), applicants' names (or more often, an identifier such as a number is used) are entered into the lottery pool. However, applicants who meet specific criteria receive additional entries or chances in the lottery based on the weights assigned to those criteria. This means that students meeting certain criteria have a higher probability of being selected in the lottery.
4. **Ensuring Diversity and Equity:** The purpose of a weighted lottery is often to promote diversity and equity within the school's student population. By giving preference to students from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds, the school aims to create a more inclusive learning environment that reflects the broader community's diversity.
5. **Transparency and Accountability:** It's essential for schools using a weighted lottery system to be transparent about the criteria, weights assigned, and the overall admissions process. This transparency helps build trust among parents, community members, and stakeholders, ensuring that the lottery process is fair and equitable. The Office of Charter Schools works with schools to develop lottery and admissions policies that meet these objectives.
6. **Legal and Regulatory Compliance:** Charter schools implementing a weighted lottery must ensure compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and policies governing admissions practices. This includes adhering to anti-discrimination laws and guidelines regarding fair access to educational opportunities for all students.

Overall, a weighted lottery at a charter school is a strategic approach to admissions that goes beyond a purely random selection process. By considering specific criteria and assigning weights accordingly, charter schools can proactively address diversity, equity, and inclusion goals in their student enrollment practices.

Over 70 charter schools are approved to utilize a weighted lottery. As more charter schools begin to implement a weighted lottery, the hope is to see a continued increase in the number of educationally disadvantaged students enrolling in charter schools. As part of the charter approval process, schools must explain how the needs of educationally disadvantaged students will be met. Many schools report an increase in staff, improved nutrition and transportation programs, as well as increased community outreach and partnerships.

Transportation

General Statute §115C-218.40 states that a charter school “may provide transportation for students enrolled at the school. The charter school shall develop a transportation plan so that transportation is not a barrier to any student who resides in the local school administrative unit in which the school is located. The charter school is not required to provide transportation to any student who lives within one and one-half miles of the school.”

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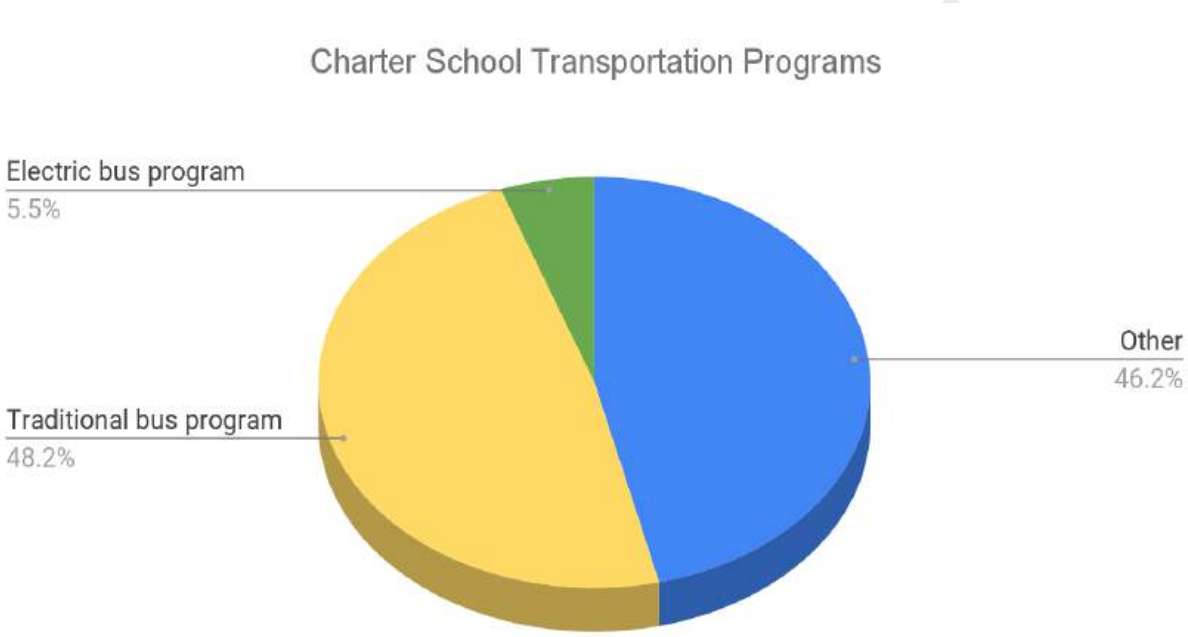
To ensure transportation is not a barrier for students residing in the local district in which the school is located, schools employ a variety of transportation programs. One hundred and ninety-nine (199) of 208 charter schools completed the annual report survey which indicates the following type of transportation programs being utilized in NC charter schools.

Figure 11: Charter School Transportation, 2024-2025 School Year



According to the OCS annual survey, the transportation options offered at charter schools vary as seen above, with most schools offering busing. Several charter schools were recipients of electric bus grants or have transitioned independently to electric bus options recently. Some schools are slowly moving their fleet from diesel to electric and currently use a mix of both buses. Many schools employ a mix of procedures which is indicated by "other" in the survey below and includes public transportation or rideshare vouchers/financial assistance, parent and parent association organized carpooling, and smaller contracted transportation options.

Those charter schools not providing traditional bus transportation report cost and staffing as main barriers. This should not come as a surprise, as school transportation nationally is increasingly facing challenges. Some of the most frequent challenges facing transportation programs, not only in North Carolina charter schools, but based on national data:

Driver Shortages

The school bus driver shortage has reached crisis levels in many districts. According to a 2022 survey by the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT), 86% of school districts reported moderate to severe driver shortages.[12] These shortages lead to route consolidations, longer ride times, and in some cases, canceled routes.

Funding Constraints

Charter schools in North Carolina are not automatically provided with state transportation funding like traditional public (district) schools. Instead, they receive transportation funding through the per-pupil allocation formula, but this amount is typically insufficient to cover the full cost of providing transportation services. The National Education Association (NEA) reports that transportation costs have increased by over 75% since 2000, while funding has not kept pace.[13]

Maintenance

Many charters report increasing costs of maintaining bus fleets. While traditional districts/local boards of education have access to the school bus and service vehicle replacement programs[14], charter schools do not and therefore must fund all purchases, services, and replacements from their per-pupil funding.

Charter School Transportation Grant

During the 2021 legislative session, the Charter School Transportation Grant was made permanent. This grant appropriates $2.5 million to charter schools who meet the eligibility requirement of serving 50% or more economically disadvantaged students. In the most recent grant cycle, fall 2024, a total of 63 eligible charter schools submitted applications with eligible expenses totaling nearly $8.2 million dollars, far above the available funding. Feedback from grant recipients confirm that the transportation grant is allowing greater use and upkeep to traditional yellow busing which has become more costly over the years due to fuel and supply costs. Further, grant recipients report the ability to expand transportation services and move funds from transportation to other areas of need within the school.

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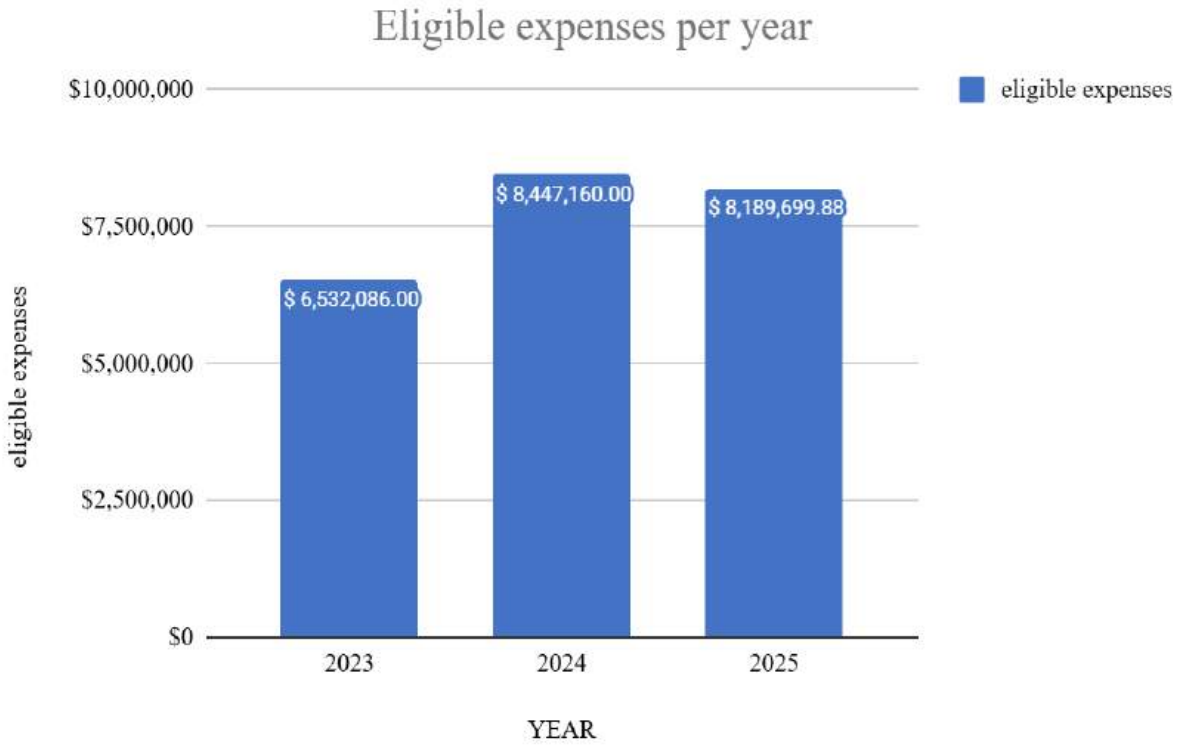
[12] National Association for Pupil Transportation, "2022 School Bus Driver Shortage Survey" (Warrensburg, NY: NAPT, 2022).
[13] National Education Association, "School Transportation Funding Crisis" (Washington, DC: NEA, 2023).
[14] https://www.ncbussafety.org/manuals/fleetmanualexcerptvehicles03march2011.htm#_Toc288801935

Figure 12: Charter School Transportation Grant Program, 2023 to 2025



The amount of state funding budgeted for the 2025 Charter School Transportation Grant was $2.5 million. A total of $2,499,284 was distributed to the eligible schools in the second week of February 2025. Individual school award amounts are determined based on the statutory provision allowing 65% of eligible expenses to be reimbursed. Given the number of eligible schools (63) and amount of eligible expenses (over 8 million dollars), that percentage of eligible expenses was significantly reduced to meet the total funds available. For the 2025 award, schools received approximately 35% of eligible expenses. Because the state funding was fully expended following fall semester applications, there was no spring semester application.

Child Nutrition

Charter schools in North Carolina are not required to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), however, like the transportation provision, they are required to have a plan that ensures that every child who needs lunch provided will receive a meal. Child nutrition plans are evaluated during the initial charter school application phase and are a consistent component of interview questioning prior to CSRB approving applications.

In the 2023-2024 school year, 82 charter schools participated in NSLP and for the current 2024-2025 school year, 84 schools implemented the NSLP.

Charter School Academic Performance

The sixth legislative purpose of charter schools outlined in statute is to "hold schools established under this Part accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results and provide the schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems." The data below summarizes academic performance for North Carolina charter schools for the most recent accountability period, school year 2023-2024. Two hundred and ten (210) charter schools received accountability data during this period.

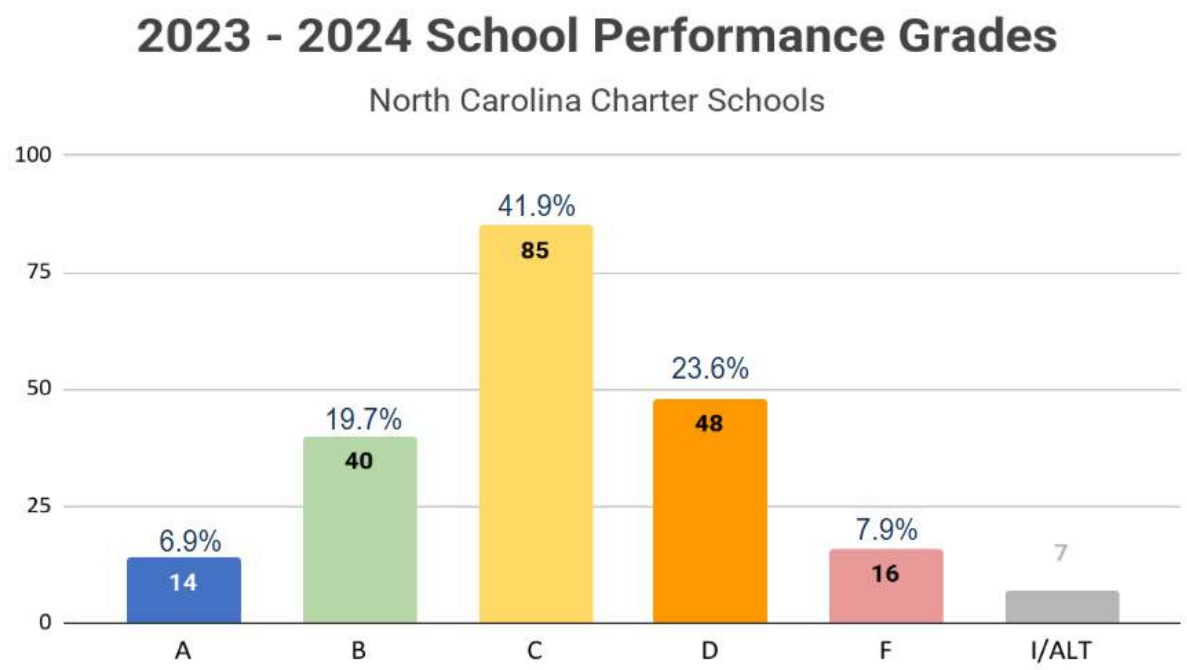
Each year the NCDPI Accountability Division publishes an Annual Testing Report[15] with detailed academic analysis on the state's public schools, including charter schools.

Academic Performance 2023-2024 – School Performance Grades and Growth Status

Percentage of charter schools receiving a School Performance Grade of an A or B

Fifty-four of 203 (26.6%) of charter schools received a School Performance Grade (SPG) of an A or B. This calculation does not include seven schools that did not have tested grades or in which the number of students tested was less than 30, or those schools participating in the Alternative Schools' Accountability Model.

Figure 13: Charter School School Performance Grades, 2023-2024

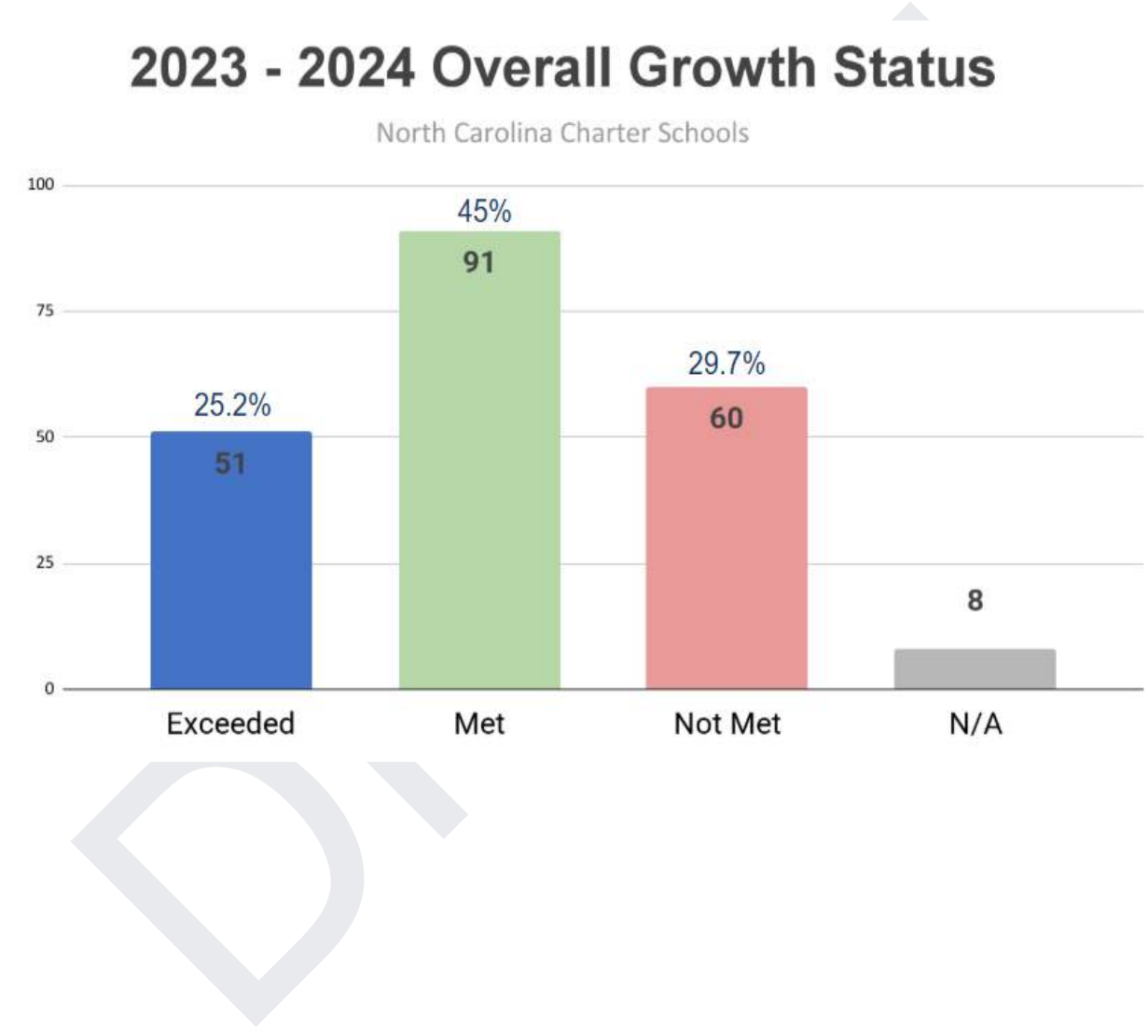


[15] 2022–23 Performance and Growth of North Carolina Public Schools Annual Testing Report (September 6, 2023) Statistical Summary

Percentage of charter schools meeting or exceeding expected annual academic growth

One hundred forty-two of 202 (70.3%) of charter schools met or exceeded expected growth for 2023-24. This calculation does not include eight schools that did not have growth measures reported for 2023-24.

Figure 14: Charter School Growth Status, 2023-2024



Subgroup Proficiency 2019-2024

Table 9: Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency Percentage by Year, Charter, 2019-2024

*Absolute change (difference) between 2019 (pre-pandemic) to 2024 data is highlighted.

Year	All	American Indian	Asian	Black	Econ. Disadvantaged
2019	67.2%	53.7%	89.1%	49.2%	48.7%
2022	58.7%	46.2%	85.5%	40.4%	40.7%
2023	60.6%	50.7%	86.7%	44.0%	45.0%
2024	60.9%	50.4%	87.9%	45.9%	46.7%
	-6.3	-3.3	-1.2	-3.3	-2.0
Year	English Language Learners	Hispanic	Multiracial	Students with Disabilities	White
2019	38.4%	59.5%	65.3%	30.9%	75.5%
2022	31.2%	51.3%	57.4%	24.5%	68.1%
2023	32.7%	52.3%	59.6%	25.4%	69.2%
2024	34.8%	53.3%	58.9%	25.1%	69.0%
	-3.6	-6.2	-6.4	-5.8	-6.5

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Subgroup data from charter school GLP shows that all students experienced a notable decline in overall proficiency from 2019 to 2022, dropping from 67.2% to 58.7% - reflecting the impact of the pandemic on student learning. However, there has been steady recovery since then, with proficiency rates climbing to 60.6% in 2023 and 60.9% in 2024, though still below pre-pandemic levels.

No subgroup has returned to pre-pandemic GLP (2019). The data below show the absolute change and relative change between 2019 and 2024 for each subgroup.

Grade Level Proficiency: 2019-2024 Changes

Absolute Change (Percentage Points)

- All Students: -6.3 percentage points (67.2% → 60.9%)
- American Indian: -3.3 percentage points (53.7% → 50.4%)
- Asian: -1.2 percentage points (89.1% → 87.9%)
- Black: -3.3 percentage points (49.2% → 45.9%)
- Economically Disadvantaged: -2.0 percentage points (48.7% → 46.7%)
- English Language Learner: -3.6 percentage points (38.4% → 34.8%)
- Hispanic: -6.2 percentage points (59.5% → 53.3%)
- Multi Racial: -6.4 percentage points (65.3% → 58.9%)
- Students with Disabilities: -5.8 percentage points (30.9% → 25.1%)
- White: -6.5 percentage points (75.5% → 69.0%)

Relative Change (Percentage Decline)

- All Students: -9.4% decline
- American Indian: -6.1% decline
- Asian: -1.3% decline
- Black: -6.7% decline
- Economically Disadvantaged: -4.1% decline
- English Language Learner: -9.4% decline
- Hispanic: -10.4% decline
- Multi Racial: -9.8% decline
- Students with Disabilities: -18.8% decline
- White: -8.6% decline

Asian students showed the smallest relative change from 2019 to 2024 with a -1.3% decline and Economically disadvantaged students showed relatively modest declines (-4.1%) compared to other vulnerable populations. American Indian students and Black students both experienced identical absolute declines of -3.3 percentage points, though Black students faced a slightly steeper relative decline (-6.7% vs -6.1%). English language learners declined by -3.6 percentage points (-9.4% relative decline). The subgroups showing the most severe declines in proficiency were Students with Disabilities, Hispanic students, Multi-racial, and White students. Students with disabilities experienced the most devastating decline (-5.8 percentage points, -18.8% relative decline), dropping from an already low 30.9% to just 25.1%. Hispanic students experienced over -10% relative decline in proficiency and Multi-racial students -9.8%. White

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students had the largest absolute decline (-6.5 percentage points) but a more moderate relative decline (-8.6%).

Table 10: Subgroup College and Career Readiness Percentage by Year, Charter, 2019-2024

*Absolute change (difference) between 2019 (pre-pandemic) to 2024 data is highlighted.

Year	All	American Indian	Asian	Black	Econ. Disadvantaged
2019	52.0%	37.7%	79.9%	32.8%	32.7%
2022	39.4%	27.1%	71.3%	22.1%	22.4%
2023	40.9%	29.4%	73.3%	24.4%	25.4%
2024	41.0%	30.7%	74.7%	25.7%	26.5%
	-11.0	-7.0	-5.2	-7.1	-6.2

Year	English Language Learners	Hispanic	Multiracial	Students with Disabilities	White
2019	22.6%	43.0%	50.3%	19.6%	60.6%
2022	14.3%	31.3%	38.5%	12.7%	48.0%
2023	16.1%	32.2%	39.9%	13.0%	49.2%
2024	17.2%	32.6%	39.8%	12.7%	48.8%
	-5.4	-10.4	-10.5	-6.9	-11.8

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The college and career readiness data reveals even more dramatic declines than general proficiency, with all subgroups experiencing significant losses over the five-year period.

College and Career Ready Proficiency: 2019-2024 Changes

Absolute Change (Percentage Points)

- All Students: -11.0 percentage points (52.0% → 41.0%)
- American Indian: -7.0 percentage points (37.7% → 30.7%)
- Asian: -5.2 percentage points (79.9% → 74.7%)
- Black: -7.1 percentage points (32.8% → 25.7%)
- Economically Disadvantaged: -6.2 percentage points (32.7% → 26.5%)
- English Language Learner: -5.4 percentage points (22.6% → 17.2%)
- Hispanic: -10.4 percentage points (43.0% → 32.6%)
- Multi Racial: -10.5 percentage points (50.3% → 39.8%)
- Students with Disabilities: -6.9 percentage points (19.6% → 12.7%)
- White: -11.8 percentage points (60.6% → 48.8%)

Relative Change (Percentage Decline)

- All Students: -21.2% decline
- American Indian: -18.6% decline
- Asian: -6.5% decline
- Black: -21.6% decline
- Economically Disadvantaged: -19.0% decline
- English Language Learner: -23.9% decline
- Hispanic: -24.2% decline
- Multi Racial: -20.9% decline
- Students with Disabilities: -35.2% decline
- White: -19.5% decline

Low-Performing Charter School Data 2023-2024

State Low-Performing Schools and Districts

Each year low-performing school information is presented to the State Board of Education and submitted to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee (JLEOC) regarding districts and schools identified as low-performing, effective improvement planning, and recommendations for additional legislation to improve student performance and increase local flexibility. Data on low-performing and continually low-performing charter schools is included within that report[16].

[16] November 2024 Low-Performing Report

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The North Carolina General Assembly has enacted requirements to identify low-performing schools, low-performing districts, and recurring low-performing schools based on Legislative requirements.

North Carolina identifies low-performing public school units annually. There are four designations for low-performing public school units:

- **Low-Performing School (applies to charter schools)**
- Low-Performing District (does not apply to charter schools)
- Recurring Low-Performing School (used for non-charter public school units)
- **Continually Low-Performing Charter Schools (applies to charter schools)**

Low-Performing Schools. A low-performing school has a School Performance Grade of 'D' or 'F', and a growth status of 'Met' or 'Not Met.'

Low-Performing District. Low-performing districts are defined as districts that have greater than 50% of schools identified as low-performing.

Recurring Low-Performing School. A recurring low-performing school is identified as low-performing in any two of the last three years.

Continually Low-Performing Charter Schools. A continually low-performing charter school is identified as low-performing in any two of the last three years.

Table 11: Low Performing Status, Charter Schools As of June 2025

The percentages below reflect currently open charter schools in the 2024-2025 School Year.

Four (4) Charter Schools closed that were identified as CLP following the 2023-2024 state testing. Those schools (Children's Village Academy, Ridgeview Charter School, VERTIAS Community School, Apprentice Academy) are not represented in this data.

Category	# of Schools	% of Open Charters
LP	51	25%
CLP	55	26%
CLP (not LP)	18	9%
Total LP or CLP	69	33%

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Figure 15: Low Performing Status, Charter and District Schools 2022 - 2024

Figures 15 and 16 do not include the four charter schools that have since closed.

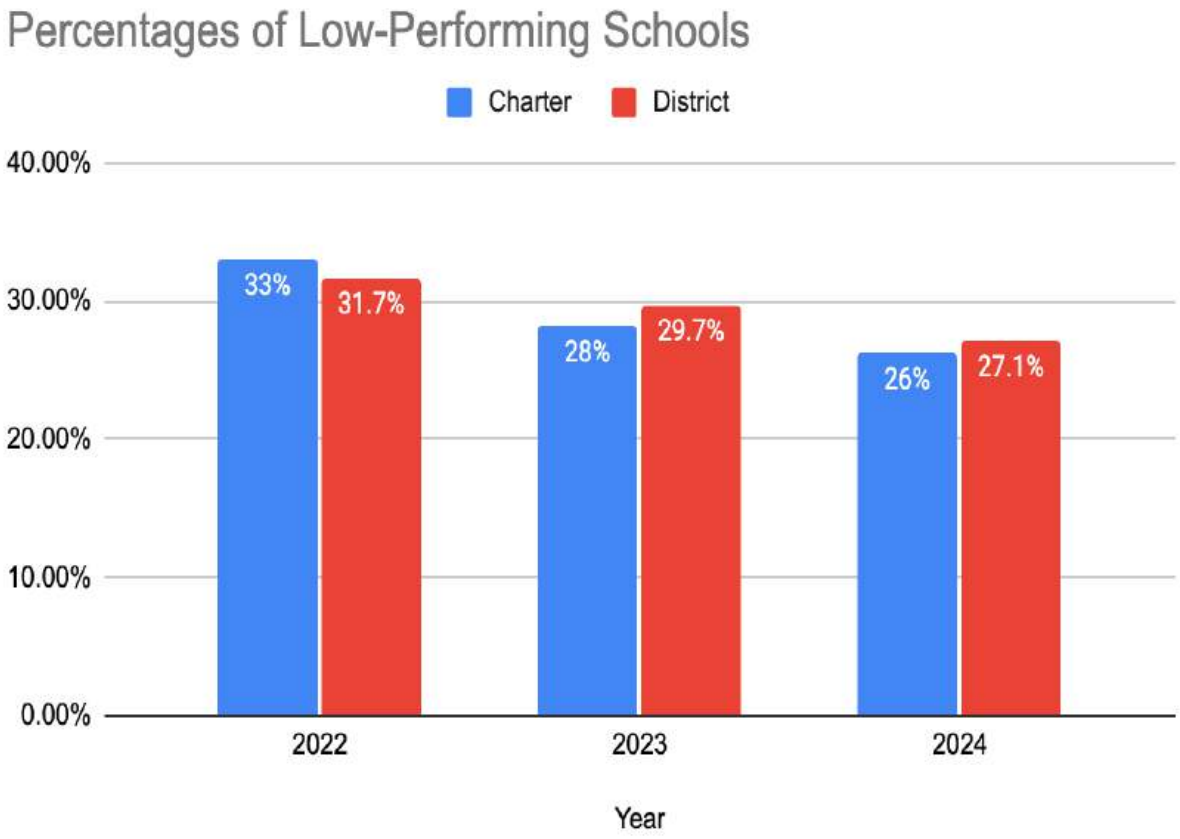
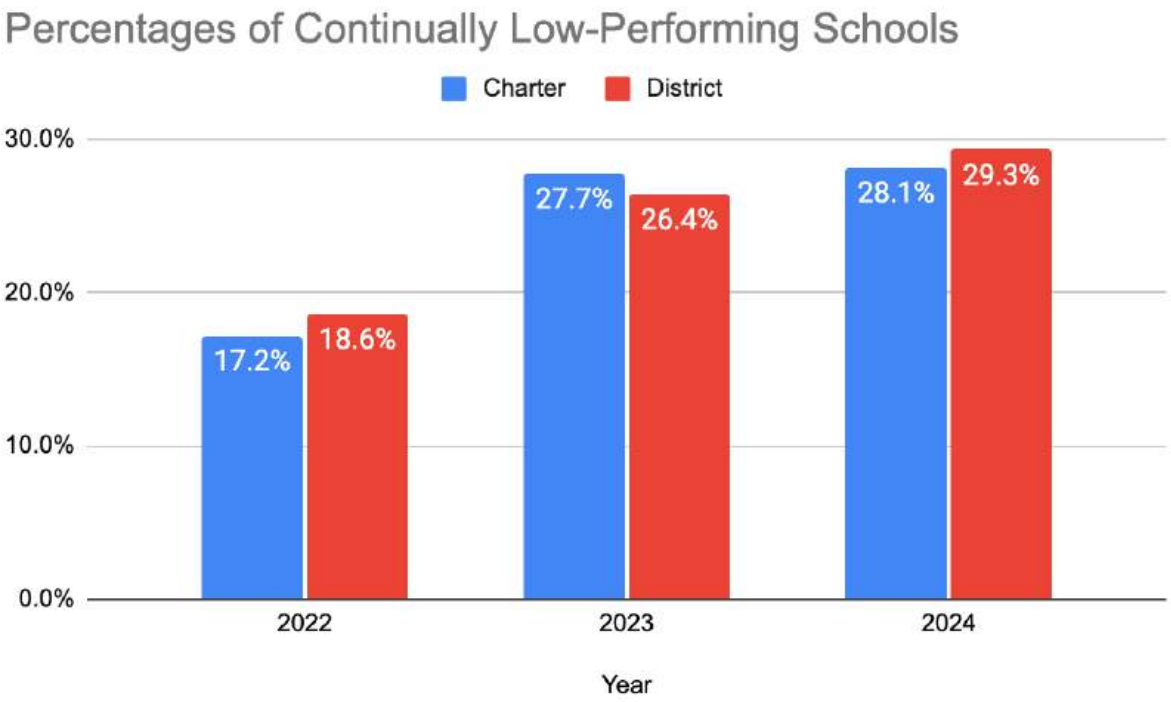


Figure 16: Continually Low Performing Status, Charter and District Schools 2022 - 2024



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Charter School Impact on Local Communities

Funding and Membership

For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the allotted ADM was 156,524, equating to 10.2% of total ADM and $1,182,929,082 in state allotted funding[17] out of the $12.60 billion total State Public School Budget.

State funds are allotted based on the number of students in ADM at an individual charter school. State funds may be used for any purpose with the exception of purchasing a building. Most federal funds are targeted to specific school populations such as Title I or IDEA Handicapped. Local funds are based on the local current expense appropriation in the county in which the student resides. Local funds may be used for any purpose.

Unlike local education agencies, charter schools are not bound to serve only the students residing within a particular county or district. Many charter schools serve students from multiple districts, which often poses challenges related to transportation and funding allocations. Given the large number of districts from which a charter school may enroll students, it is difficult to pinpoint the specific fiscal impact of a given charter school on its "home district."

Detailed financial data regarding student enrollment, school personnel, expenditures, and reports can be found at NCDPI Financial and Business Services.

Facility and Economic Development

Charter schools often drive innovative approaches to educational facilities. As explained above in this report, facility acquisition is one of the greatest hurdles to a successful opening. The need to be creative can lead to adaptive reuse of existing buildings - converting former retail spaces, office buildings, or warehouses into educational facilities. This process can revitalize underutilized properties and bring new life to vacant or declining commercial areas.

Many charter schools also partner with community organizations, sharing facilities with libraries, community centers, or faith-based organizations. This collaborative approach maximizes the utility of community assets and can lead to more efficient use of public and private resources.

Charter schools can serve as economic anchors in their communities. They create direct employment opportunities for teachers, administrators, and support staff. Beyond direct employment, they generate economic activity through purchases of supplies, services, and facility maintenance from local businesses. Furthermore, the vast majority of charter school capital projects are funded through bonds, private financing, grants, and private donations rather than typical government educational funding, contributing tens of millions of dollars to local

[17] https://www.dpi.nc.gov/documents/fbs/resources/25-highlights-finalpdf/download?attachment
Accessed 3/20/25.

economic development. These investments not only create new educational facilities but also generate employment opportunities in construction and related industries.

Charter schools often partner with local organizations to share resources such as sports fields or building space. The presence of quality educational options can make neighborhoods more attractive to families, potentially increasing property values and encouraging residential investment. This is especially significant in areas where traditional public schools may be underperforming, as charter schools can provide an alternative that keeps families in the community rather than prompting them to relocate.

Charter schools focused on specific themes - such as STEM, arts, or career preparation - can also align with local economic development goals by preparing students for industries the community wants to attract or strengthen. The flexibility that charter schools have in their operations and partnerships may allow them to respond more quickly to community needs and economic opportunities than traditional district schools, making them valuable tools in comprehensive community development strategies.

Examples of economic development, facility innovation, and community partnerships in the North Carolina charter school sector include:

- As the furniture industry declined in Jamestown, NC, many former furniture galleries and showplaces became empty. The Point, a charter school in Jamestown, has gradually expanded and renovated large sections of furniture industry buildings that otherwise remained vacant and blighted.

- Moore Montessori Community School transformed a historic 1948 Georgian Revival school building in Southern Pines. The charter school purchased the 17,000-square-foot "B Building" and the entire old elementary campus for $1.6 million in 2021, then invested two years and significant community effort into thoughtful renovations that preserved the building's historical character while modernizing it for contemporary educational use. The restoration project demonstrates how charter schools can serve as stewards of historic educational architecture, with the school preserving original features like the distinctive Buckingham slate roof and 11-foot-tall single-pane windows while updating infrastructure and incorporating sustainable practices like passive heating and cooling. This adaptive reuse not only preserved an important piece of local architectural heritage but transformed a closed public school into a thriving Montessori charter school serving pre-K through third grade students, exemplifying how educational facilities can be given new life while honoring their legacy as places of learning. Back to School - PineStraw Magazine

- Socrates Academy in Matthews, NC embarked on a major capital campaign to construct a new state of the art High School building. An Economic Impact Report was conducted estimating the economic activity surrounding the Project would lead to an estimated $44M increase in the region’s GDP as well as the creation of 285 construction related jobs.

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- Originally built by Liggett and Myers in 1967 as their Operations Center, this Jeffersonian-style building on North Roxboro Street in Durham, NC changed hands and underwent renovations multiple times following the 1979 relocation of the Liggett headquarters to New Jersey. In 2008, while most of the building stood empty, part of the first floor was leased as temporary quarters for the Durham Public Schools magnet school, City of Medicine Academy. Within three years, their permanent facility was completed on the grounds of Durham Regional Hospital, and they vacated. After briefly housing two other schools, Excelsior Classical Academy ("ECA") began leasing space in 2015 for 252 K-4 students and gradually expanded throughout the building. In 2018, ECA purchased the 159,570 square foot facility and completed renovations in 2022 to support their full K-12 program. The school added a gymnasium in 2023, which now serves the broader community by hosting the Durham Police Athletic League (DPAL) for basketball on Saturdays. DPAL is a youth mentoring program designed to deter juvenile crime through sports, recreational activities, and educational initiatives that build connections between law enforcement, youth, and the community.

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LIGGETT & MYERS
OPERATIONS CENTER

- Lake Norman Charter School in Huntersville, NC is currently constructing its second elementary school, scheduled to open in August 2026, which has generated $18 million in local economic activity (not including additional impacts from supplies and job creation). Through a longstanding partnership with Huntersville Parks & Recreation, Lake Norman Charter School shares its gymnasium facilities for community use—currently three gyms with a fourth being added at the new elementary school. The new school's location adjacent to a planned municipal park has created an opportunity to partner on six tennis courts. This reciprocal arrangement allows Parks & Recreation to provide athletic facilities for Lake Norman Charter School's sports teams while the school contributes gymnasium and court space, creating an efficient use of public resources that avoids duplication and maximizes community benefit.

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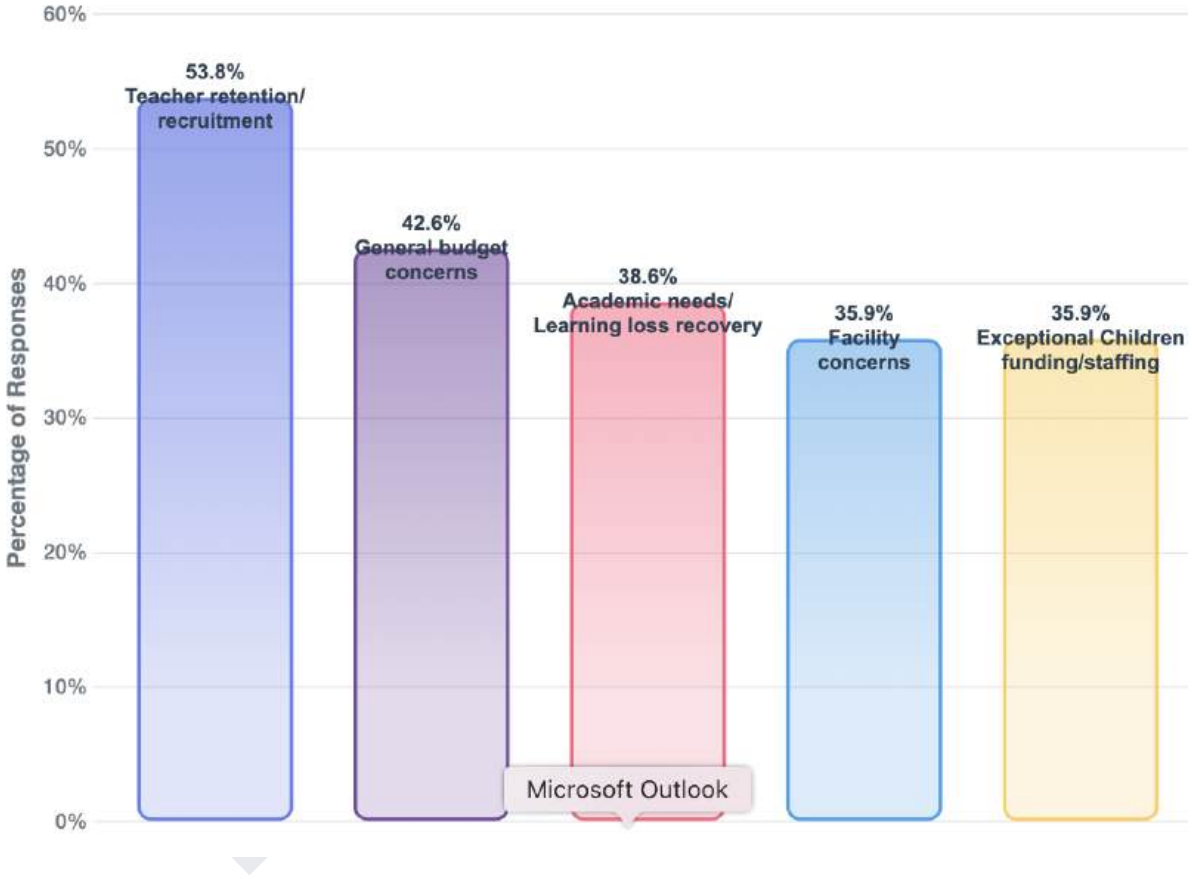
Challenges and Concerns

Charter schools were asked to report on their top challenges and concerns. One hundred and ninety-nine (199) of 208 charter schools completed the annual report survey including responses to "What are your current top three challenges or concerns?" The information below summarizes those responses.

Figure 17: Top Five Challenges Reported for 2024-2025



Teacher recruitment and retention emerges as the most critical challenge facing charter schools, with over half of all respondents identifying this as a primary concern. This staffing concern is closely intertwined with general budget constraints, which 42.6% of schools noted as a top concern and directly impact their ability to offer competitive compensation packages necessary to attract and retain quality educators. These foundational challenges are evident in the third most pressing concern—academic needs and learning loss recovery—which 38.6% of schools noted as a primary concern, as understaffed schools or those finding it difficult to recruit highly

qualified staff struggle to provide the intensive support students need to close the learning loss gaps still evident several years after the pandemic. Rounding out the top five concerns are facility maintenance and acquisition costs, along with exceptional children staffing and funding, with approximately 36% of charter schools highlighting as a top concern.

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Best Practices and Innovation

Charter schools represent a transformative approach to public education, offering families meaningful alternatives within the existing system. Through a rigorous charter development process, founders create schools with distinctive educational philosophies, innovative curricula, and specialized programming designed to serve diverse student needs and interests. The appeal of charter schools stems from their ability to provide targeted educational experiences aligned with specific missions—whether emphasizing arts integration, STEM focus, classical education, or unique pedagogical approaches. North Carolina's charter school success fundamentally rests upon empowering families with **choice**—allowing parents to select learning environments and educational approaches that best nurture the individual talents, interests, and learning styles of their children.

The spotlights below reflect some of the current diverse opportunities available through the North Carolina charter community including recognitions and innovations:

LETRS Training

- Over 150 charter educators have completed LETRS training as of January 2025. LETRS is a two-year training and is not required for charter educators.

Reaching All Minds
Durham

- Reaching All Minds Academy has innovatively converted a decommissioned school bus into a mobile "Greenhouse Bus" that serves as a functional traveling greenhouse. Students and their Agriculture teacher use this mobile greenhouse to attend community events throughout East Durham and surrounding areas, where they help community members plant starter plants and learn about home gardening. This creative repurposing transforms what would have been retired transportation equipment into an educational outreach tool that helps address food access issues in food desert communities while teaching sustainable agriculture practices beyond the school's walls. Community Garden | RAM Academy

The Northeast Academy for Aerospace and Advanced Technologies (NEAAAT)
Elizabeth City

- The Hoover Institute at Stanford University featured NEAAAT as part of the Beyond the Carnegie Unit Project. Beyond the Carnegie Unit is a research and reporting project of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. Its goal is to showcase the innovative approaches the nation's schools and districts are using to move beyond the century-old seat-time structure of the Carnegie Unit. NEAAAT is recognized for its three-part framework for student outcomes and design thinking model.

Charlotte LAB School
Charlotte

- The Canopy Project, a collaborative effort by the Center on Reinventing Public Education and Transcend Education spotlighted Charlotte Lab School as a part of its efforts to

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showcase innovative educational environments. Guided by its core values, known as The Lab Way, Charlotte Lab School promotes learning through a student-centered approach focused on the whole child. Students here develop fluency in either Spanish or Mandarin Chinese through dual language immersion, nurse "passion projects" from infancy to actualization, and are guided through their schooling through an individualized Advisory Program.

Maureen Joy Charter School
Durham

- Also featured by The Canopy Project, Maureen Joy Charter School was recognized for its unique principles surrounding student data. While traditional methods of measuring student achievement rely heavily on state test scores, Joy aims to redefine student success through its Portrait of a Learner: a set of school-level aspirations for what each child will be capable of upon graduation. Designed with real-world authenticity in mind, students leave with a set of interdisciplinary, academic and non-academic skills taught with the real world in mind.

Union Academy
Monroe

- Union Academy's Promising Practice "Big Cardinal - Little Cardinal (BCLC) Program" was recognized by Character.org, a leading advocate for cultivating the importance of character throughout American society and worldwide, as a pioneer in peer-to-peer mentorship. Through BCLC, high school students provide individualized and group tutoring to elementary school students. In addition to supporting educational growth, "Big Cardinals" also foster relationships with "Little Cardinals," guiding them through their educational journeys at Union and promoting character and academic excellence.
- Union Academy 4H Club members also swept both the Junior and Senior divisions of the Poultry Judging competition at NCSU.
- Union Academy has been recognized as a Project ADAM Heart Safe School, the first of its kind in Union County. Project ADAM, or Automated Defibrillators in Adam's Memory, is a nationwide initiative that trains schools on how to handle sudden cardiac arrest emergencies. With this certification, Union Academy has successfully implemented a sudden cardiac arrest program of awareness, and completed thorough emergency response training to promote student, visitor, and staff safety.

Brevard Academy
Pisgah Forest

- Brevard Academy has opened an on-site health facility to provide immunizations, prescriptions, check ups, sports physicals, and other services to students, staff, and their families. Operated in partnership with Blue Ridge Health, the facility will be staffed by registered nurses and a nurse practitioner, and will utilize a sliding scale to determine cost of service based on patient ability to pay and insurance.

The Point - College Preparatory and Leadership Academy
High Point

- The Point's "Elite High School" is an innovative model of high school which has achieved a 100% graduation rate, with the majority of students graduating with honors and qualifying for early graduation. Hundreds of college credits are earned each year through the Dual Enrollment program at Guilford Technical Community College. Classes average 13 students per teacher and students receive college counseling and preparation beginning in ninth grade.
- The Point partners with Congdon Foundation to help teachers earn their master's degree in STEM programming. The Point also provides a free comprehensive benefits package to teachers, as well as providing subsidized childcare at an onsite preschool.

Classical Charter Schools of America
Leland, Whiteville, Southport, and Wilmington

- The Roger Bacon Academy schools have achieved significant academic and extracurricular recognition, with Stanford identifying them as major "gap-busters" for closing learning disparities between different student groups. CCS-Leland earned recognition as a 2023 Exceptional Charter School in Special Education and ranked in the top twenty nationally for Classical Learning performance, while also excelling in athletics with state-ranked archery students and award-winning dance teams. Classical Charter Schools of Leland and Classical Charter schools of Whiteville, scored first and third nationally on the Classical Learning Test (CLT8). A summative and diagnostic assessment, the CLT8 contains verbal reasoning, grammar and writing, and quantitative reasoning sections to measure high school readiness in 7th and 8th graders.

TSMA Public Charter Schools
Charlotte, Apex, Cary, Greensboro

- The TSMA Board of Directors voted to increase the certified-license teacher base salary by 10% to $57,000 for the 2025-2026 school year. The TSMA Charlotte campus has also introduced a $5,000 Sign-on Bonus Program. These efforts reflect TSMA's commitment to providing competitive compensation for educators and promoting teacher retention.
- **Triad Math and Science Academy (TMSA) Elementary School** proudly announced it has been certified as a **Leader in Me Lighthouse School** by **FranklinCovey Education**—a distinguished recognition granted to schools that demonstrate outstanding achievement in leadership development, school culture, and academic excellence.This recognition is evidence that the school has produced outstanding results in school and student outcomes, and because of the extraordinary impact the school is having on staff, students, parents, and the greater community.

Alpha Academy, Anderson Creek Academy, North Carolina Cyber Academy, The Academy of Moore County, The Math & Science Academy of Apex, Northeast Academy for Aerospace & Advanced Technologies (NEAAAT), NC Leadership Charter Academy, Pine Springs Preparatory Academy, Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy: A Challenge Foundation, Ascend Leadership Academy, Wayne Preparatory Academy, Wayne Stem Academy

- Twelve charter schools across North Carolina received the Purple Star Award, which recognizes schools that demonstrate military-friendly practices and show commitment to

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military students and their families. All schools awarded with this designation completed several required activities, such as having a dedicated page on their websites for military family resources, and option activities, such as a school-hosted Month of the Military Child.

Sallie B. Howard School of Arts & Science, Island Montessori, Reaching All Minds Academy, Northeast Academy for Aerospace and Advanced Technologies
Wilson, Wilmington, Durham, Elizabeth City

- Four North Carolina Charter Schools have been recognized with 2025 Impact Awards by Building Hope, a non-profit organization that provides facilities, financial, and operational services for charter schools. In particular, Sallie B. Howard School of Arts and Science received the Joseph Bruno Charter Leadership Award, Island Montessori the Community Engagement Award, Reaching All Minds Academy the Educational Innovation Award, and Northeast Academy for Aerospace and Advanced Technologies the Student Empowerment Award.

Teaching and Leading Recognitions

The Wells Fargo Principal of the Year Award was introduced in 1984 to recognize the role of the principal in establishing an environment conducive to the pursuit and achievement of academic excellence in North Carolina's schools. The Wells Fargo Principal of the Year serves as the North Carolina ambassador for the state's approximately 2,500 principals.

2023 Principal of the Year for charter schools:

- T.J. Worrell- Northeast Academy for Aerospace and Advanced Technologies, Elizabeth City, NC

2024 Principal of the Year for charter schools:

- Dr. Serena Fuller- Art Space Charter School, Swannanoa, NC

2025 Principal of the Year for charter schools:

- Dr. Jacob Wilson, Mountain Island, Charter School, Mount Holly, NC

The Burroughs Welcome Fund Charter School Teacher of the Year chooses a candidate who is dedicated and highly skilled, a candidate proven capable of inspiring students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn.

2023 Charter Teacher of the Year:

- Ryan Henderson, Sugar Creek Academy, Charlotte, NC

2024 Charter Teacher of the Year:

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- Lee Haywood, Uwharrie Charter School, Asheboro, NC

2025 Charter Teacher of the Year:

- Lindsay Phillips, Mountain Island Charter School, Mount Holly, NC

Resources

Please see the links below for additional data and information related to North Carolina's charter schools.

Recognitions

Accountability Data

Data and Reports

NC School Finances

NC DPI Financial and School Business

School Report Cards

MyFutureNC Attainment Profiles

AEFP Live Handbook

Identifying Gap-Busting Charter Schools for Educational Equity

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