



NC's Per Pupil Spending

NC ranked 39th in the U.S. for 2017

NC is spending \$9,528 per student compared to the national average of \$11,934

North Carolina's per pupil expenditure is **all** of the money the state spends on K-12 public schools divided by the number of students in the entire public school system. The number of students is based on those included in average daily membership (ADM) by [the NC Department of Public Instruction \(NCDPI\)](#). According to NCDPI, North Carolina's per pupil expenditures pay for salary and benefits for administrators and teachers, textbooks, transportation, classroom services, driver's education, lunches, and other non-instructional support services.

State funding from the General Fund (not including lottery and funding from fines and other sources) has declined over the past several decades. A note in NCDPI's 2018 report to the General Assembly reads: "Since 1970, the Public School's share of the General Fund has decreased by 13.7%. *If our Public Schools were still funded at the same percentage as in FY 1969-70, we would have an additional \$3 billion for our students.*"

Between 2008-09 and 2017-2018:

- Per-pupil spending went from \$8867 (\$10,483 in today's dollars) to \$9,528
- NC public schools have added more than 90,000 students, including many more English language learners and students living in poverty.
- Currently, almost half of North Carolina's children live in poor or low-income households (ncchild.org)
- Textbook funds reduced from \$76 (inflation adjusted) to \$42 per pupil
- Classroom supplies funding reduced from \$66 (inflation adjusted) to \$30 per pupil

Overview of 2008-17 Budget

Budget Year	2008-09	2017-2018
Teacher Pay	25th in U.S.	37th
Teacher Career Status	Yes	Only for teachers who attained it before 2013
Supplement for Master's	Yes	No
NC Teaching Fellows	Yes	Yes, with restrictions
Capped Class Size 4-12	Yes	No
State Per Pupil Expenditure	\$8,867	\$9,528
Total Education Budget	\$8.706 billion	\$8.93 billion
Students	~1.4 million	~1.5 million

- ▶ Total state per pupil expenditure is **\$9,528**
- ▶ TA positions: decrease of over 8,000 TAs since 2008
- ▶ Textbooks: Dropped from a high of \$88.15 to \$47.86 in the most recent budget adjustments
- ▶ Voucher funding increases until until yearly funding is \$145 million in 2027-28
- ▶ 2018-2019 budget adjustments added an additional \$10 million to Opportunity Scholarships and \$3 million to Education Saving Accounts
- ▶ Newest budget adjustments continue planned cuts in the amounts of \$4 million from central office budget and \$5 million from DPI's budget
- ▶ 2018-2019 budget adjustments also set beginning teacher salary at \$3,500 per month. Increases by \$100/ month for each year of service until year 15.
- ▶ Years 15-24 teachers earn base salary of \$5,000 per month. Salary schedule frozen here until 25+ years, when the monthly salary would be \$5,200 per month.

In the NEA's 2018 [ranking of states' education spending](#), NC ranked 39th in per pupil funding which puts us approximately in the bottom 30% in the Southeast. Here's a comparison chart of current and coming state & local K-12 expenditures in the Southeast.

State	2016-2017 per-pupil funding	National Rank	Estimated 2018 per pupil funding
West Virginia	\$14,274	14	\$13,927
South Carolina	\$11,552	21	\$12,484
Louisiana	\$11,234	23	\$12,030
Virginia	\$11,141	24	\$12,156
Kentucky	\$10,508	31	\$11,303
Georgia	\$10,010	33	\$10,571
Arkansas	\$9,871	35	\$10,543
Tennessee	\$9,393	37	\$9,995
North Carolina	\$9,329	39	\$10,072
Alabama	\$9,238	40	\$9,625
Florida	\$9,110	41	\$9,897
Mississippi	\$8,361	44	\$8,515

Funding for other classroom needs, like textbooks, supplies, and teaching assistants, is almost \$1 billion less than it was before the recession began, according to NCDPI. By the same token, the gap between local per pupil expenditures in richer counties and poorer counties has grown since the late 90s when the state started providing extra money to low-wealth counties because of the *Leandro* decision. [Public School Forum of NC](#) recently calculated that "The spending gap between



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the top-ten spending and bottom-ten spending counties has grown from \$1,094 in 1997 to the current gap of \$2,364 per student. Significantly, this gap has widened every year since 2011 and 18 of the past 20 years.” All of North Carolina’s real public education funding declines reflects the state’s ongoing prioritizing of tax cuts for the wealthiest citizens over investments in the people and the future of this state.

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