

Student Information

- 1,434,153 students attend traditional public schools in North Carolina.
- NC's high school graduation rate was 86.5% for the 2018-2019 school year.
- Around 73% of the NC's 2,523 public schools met or exceeded their expectations for NC progress on state exams.
- The percentage of schools earning "A" and "B" grades increased from 35.6% in 2017-18 to 37.3% in the 2018-2019 school year.
- 20% of the state's students attend charter schools, private schools or are homeschooled instead of attending a traditional public school. This is a decline from the 2008-09 school year, when approximately 90% of NC's students were attending a traditional public school. Many public school advocates believe this decline is due to the coordinated push for privatization and increased funding for charters and vouchers.
- Grading the States Privatization Score (2018 Schott Foundation): NC ranks 48th overall, 47th by voucher policy and 45th by charter policy. Overall grades were assigned based on the extent of privatized school choice in the form of vouchers, neo-vouchers and charter schools, as well as the quality of the state's laws that promoted accountability, oversight, transparency and civil rights.
- Enrollments in NC Virtual Public School, the nation's second-largest state-supported virtual school, are approximately 52,000.
- There is a shortage of available Pre-K slots across North Carolina, and less than half of eligible children are served (estimated in various reports to be 35 to 50K children).
- 19.3% of children live in poverty. NC ranks 41st in the nation.
- Nearly half of NC's children live in poor or low income homes.
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for NC children ages 10-17.
- 43% of children in NC live in poor or low income homes.
- 71% of Hispanic or Latinx children live in poor or low income homes.
- NC Children of Color comprise 45% of the child population but 65% of them live in poverty.
- 56% of 3 and 4 year olds in NC are not in pre-school .
- Black, Latinx and Native American homes are over 10% less likely to have internet, service which is vital to completing many assignments especially during the pandemic.
- 64% of Students in NC with IEPs are economically disadvantaged and 25% of them attend high poverty schools.
- 50% of school districts have special education funding needs greater than what NC allocates for special education.

Per-Pupil Funding

- The estimated national average for per-pupil spending for 2019-2020 is \$13,384 compared to NC's estimated per-pupil spending of \$10,632 (NEA).
- NC ranks 46th in per pupil funding (NEA).
- The national average for per-pupil spending in 2018-2019 was \$12,978 compared to NC's per-pupil spending of \$10,165
- Over the past decade, per-pupil spending has declined by 6% in NC, resulting in our state's ranking of 6th lowest in the nation (WestEd report).
- NC public schools have added more than 90,000 students, including many more English language learners and students living in poverty. According to the latest figures, almost half of North Carolina's children live in poor or low-income households and 20% live in poverty (ncchild.org). The official poverty level for a family of two adults and two children is \$26,200 for 2020.

- Little investment was made to expand school resources with the 2018 budget adjustments. Allotments for teaching assistants, textbooks, At-Risk student services and more are still below 2008-2009 levels when adjusted for inflation.
- In the EdWeek Quality Counts report for 2020, NC finished 44th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. In School Finance, NC receives an F and ranks 48th.

Teaching Profession

- According to the NEA's 2020 Rankings and Estimates, the projected national average teacher salary for 2019-2020 is \$63,645. The projected average salary for North Carolina teachers is estimated at \$54,682, about \$9,000 less than the national average.
- NC has more National Board Certified teachers than any other state.
- No salary increase for earning a Master's degree after 2013.
- NC Teaching Fellows Program for STEM/Special Ed teachers created in 2017-19 budget – significantly less generous than previous program.
- Approximately 8,000 fewer teacher assistants than in 2008-09.
- In some areas of the state, the attrition rates for LEAs is as high as 30%.
- Enrollment in undergraduate education programs across the UNC system is down, negatively impacting our once vibrant teacher pipeline. There are 15 UNC system schools with teacher preparation programs, and all are reporting declines in enrollment in their degree and licensure programs.
- No NC Teaching Fellows Program at any HBCU.
- NC ranks near the bottom nationally in principal pay.
- Teachers in NC make 25.3% less than comparable college graduates.
- NC ranks 30th in average teacher salaries in 2019.
- NC funds approximately 50% of needed school-based mental health professionals based on what experts recommend.
- The corporate income tax in NC is only 2.5%, one of the lowest in the nation. This leaves far less money available for schools including teacher pay and per-pupil funding.

Charter Schools

- Currently, more than 121,231 students are enrolled in 196 Charter schools in North Carolina. Twelve of these schools opened at the start of the 2019-2020 school year.
- An additional 14 charters schools approved to open in the 2020-21 bringing the state's total to 210. A list of applicants is available on the N.C. Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) Office of Charter Schools' website.
- State funding has increased from about \$16.5 million in 1997, when there were 34 schools, to more than \$674 million by 2018-19. About 7% of the state's education funding is currently allocated to charter schools.
- During the 2017-2018 school year, 68.7% of charters met or exceeded growth, a number that has trended down since 2012. They did not meet the academic goal of 75% of charter schools meeting or exceeding growth set forth by the state. Twenty-eight of North Carolina's charter schools were deemed continually low performing.
- The percentage of Charter schools in North Carolina meeting or exceeding expected annual growth lags behind that of traditional public schools.
- Charter schools allowed to expand one grade level annually without approval from oversight board regardless of their student academic results.
- Only 50% of charter school teachers are board certified.
- Rules for evaluating charters relaxed in 2016, making it harder for State Board of Education to close underperforming charters.

- The two online charters given new relaxed rules for student retention despite both receiving D performance grades and not meeting growth goals.
- 2018-2019 Budget Adjustment bill grants the virtual charter schools pilot an extension for another four years even though both virtual schools are low-performing.

A-F School Performance Grades

- For the 2018–19 school year, 73.3% of all schools met or exceeded growth expectations, a slight increase from the previous year.
- More than a third of NC's approximately 2,500 public schools received a performance grade of A or B last school year.
- 28% of all schools exceeded academic growth expectations. Of the more than 2,500 public schools in North Carolina, 119 of them received a performance grade of A and exceeded academic growth expectations.
- 80% of school performance grades are based on student test scores, 20% on student growth.
- Schools with greater poverty earned fewer A/A+NG's and B's and earned more C's, D's, and F's than schools with less poverty.
- Of the 21.7% of schools receiving a D or F grade, 95% were serving high poverty populations.
- In schools with more than 80% low income students, 60% received a D or F grade. Less than one percent of schools with less than 20% low income student populations received a D or F grades.
- The two state virtual charter schools received D grades not meeting growth for the fourth year in a row.
- NC's Cumulative funding as of 2020: \$1.2B Vouchers & \$5B Charter Schools.

School Vouchers

- In the 2019-2020 school year, 12,285 students received Opportunity Scholarships.
- There were 456 private schools with recipients enrolled. The total cost of these scholarships was over \$48 million.
- The largest cohort of Opportunity Scholarship recipients attended a single religious school in Fayetteville, Trinity Christian School, with those 309 students making up more than half of its student population.
- Trinity Christian School received \$1.2 million in disbursements during the 2019-2020 school year.
- 2017-19 Biennium Budget created a new voucher program, called Personal Education Savings Accounts, for students with disabilities beginning in 2018-19 school year.
- 2017-19 biennium budget made voucher funding part of the base budget going forward and adds \$10 million more annually until yearly funding is \$145 million in 2027-28.
- 2018-2019 Budget adjustments added an additional \$13 million. \$10 million to Opportunity Scholarships and \$3 million to Disabilities Grant. Expanded eligibility from HB 90 will lead to the need to increase the funding for this program.

Resources

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NEA 2019 Rankings and Estimates, NEA, https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/2020%20Rankings%20and%20Estimates%20Report%20FINAL_0.pdf

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