

Student Information

- [1,429,275 students](#) attend traditional public schools in North Carolina as of the 2020-2021 school year.
- Charter School enrollment grew from 129,389 students in the 2020-2021 to [130,286 in the 2021-2022](#).
- [179,900 children](#) were homeschooled in the 2020-2021 school year, which is an increase from 149,173 students in the 2019-2020 school year. Data for the 2021-2022 school year will be available after June 30th, 2022 when the home school statistics year ends.
- Approximately 87 percent of NC's students were attending a traditional public school in 2008-09. Students enrolled in a traditional public school during the 2020-2021 school year was [77 percent](#).
- Overall, the percentage enrollment in traditional public schools has decreased from 2009-2021, while homeschools, public charter schools, and private schools have experienced increases in enrollment. Many public school advocates believe this decline is due to the coordinated push for privatization and increased funding for charters and vouchers.
- NC's high school graduation rate was [87.0% for the four-year cohort graduation rate](#) in the 2020-2021 school year. This is slightly lower than in 2019-20 (87.6%) but higher than 2018-19 (86.5%).
- [The NC General Assembly](#) waived requirements for reporting school performance grades and achievement growth in the 2020-2021 school year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - According to the [NCDPI Annual Testing Report](#) EOG and EOC testing performances declined in the 2020-2021 school year when compared to the 2018-2019 school year.
 - Around 73% of the NC's 2,523 public schools met or exceeded their expectations for NC progress on state exams for the 2018-2019 school year. (Data is not provided for 2019-20 due to a pandemic testing waiver.
 - The percentage of schools earning "A" and "B" grades increased from 35.6% in 2017-18 to 37.3% in the 2018-19.
- Grading the States Privatization Score ([2022 Network for Public Education](#)). NC ranks 46th worst overall, moving up from 48th from the 2018 ranking ([2018 NPE & Schott Foundation](#)). 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.
- [NC Virtual Public School](#) is the nation's second-largest state supported virtual school, serving as a supplemental service to NC public schools. Students enroll through their local public school, grades are reported to their public school, and their school awards credit. In the 2020-21 school year, the NC Virtual Public School taught over 55,000 student enrollments from approximately 31,000 students and offered 18 new courses including six middle school and 12 high school courses.
- In the 2020-2021 school year the number of four-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K dropped from [25% in 2020 to 19% in 2021](#).
- Only [51% of eligible children](#) (30,152) attend some form of Pre-K in NC, leaving 49% of eligible children (28,848) unserved.
- Over [204,000](#) K-12 students identify as children with disabilities who need special education. The [12.75% funding cap](#) on special education adds an unnecessary limit to the funding needed to fully support students with disabilities.
- [According to the NC Child Fatality Task Force](#), the leading cause of death in 2020 for children ages 0-17 were "conditions originating in the perinatal period" (i.e. immediately before and after birth) at 33.9% and for ages 1 to 17 the leading cause of death were homicides at 16.6% in 2020 (see page 11 of the 2022 Child Fatality Task Force Report). The leading cause of death for other age groups:
 - Ages 1-4 unintentional injuries (e.g. drowning, bicycle accidents, poisoning) at 29.1%
 - Ages 5-9 motor vehicle injuries at 22.2%
 - Ages 10-14 suicides at 19.4%
 - Ages 15-17 homicides at 27.5%

- Overall, the rate of child deaths has decreased by 48% since the creation of the Child Fatality Task Force & broader Child Fatality Prevention System in 1991.
- Mental health in K-12 education has been cause for major concern these past two years. In the 2020-2021 school year there was a [46% increase](#) in the number of youth who experienced one or more depressive episodes. The pandemic, lack of school counseling support, and mass shootings have all been noted as contributing factors to this increase in poor mental health.

Per-Pupil Spending and Child Poverty

- According to [NEA's 2022 Rankings and Estimates Report](#), The national average for per-pupil expenditures for 2021-22 fall enrollment was \$15,047. North Carolina's expenditures per pupil were \$11,651.
- According to Education Law Center's [2021 Making the Grade: How Fair is School Funding in Your State?](#), North Carolina earned an "F" grade for both funding level and funding effort (i.e. funding allocated to support K-12 public education as a percentage of the state's economic activity). North Carolina ranked 47th of 51 for funding level and 49th of 51 for funding effort. Only Arizona and DC ranked below NC in funding effort.
- According to the most [recent data from the US Census BNC Teaching Fellows Program](#), NC ranked the 5th lowest in the Southeast for per pupil spending in 2020.
- Approximately [44% of children live in poor or low-income homes](#) and 20% live in poverty as of 2020 (ncchild.org). The federal poverty guidelines in 2021 for a family of two adults and two children is \$26,500. In 2020, the guideline was \$26,200. Children of color are [three times](#) more likely to live below the poverty line than white children.
 - 61% of African-American or Black children live in poor or low-income households.
 - 68% of Hispanic or Latinx children live in poor or low-income households.
 - 33% of Asian children live in poor or low-income households.
- North Carolina's child poverty rate is the [10th highest in the nation](#) according to recent estimates. The official poverty level for a family of two adults and two children is [\\$27,750](#) for 2022.

Teaching Profession (Read the fact sheets on [teacher pay](#) and [teacher pipeline](#))

- According to [NEA Rankings](#), teacher pay was to [46th in the nation](#) for the 2020-21 school year and estimated at [34th in the nation for the 2021-22 school year](#).
- Average starting teacher salary was \$37,127 in the 2020-2021 school year placing NC at 45th in the nation for average starting salaries.
- Overall average teacher salary in the state was reported as \$54,517, placing North Carolina at 34th in the nation. The average national teacher salary was \$64,133.
- NC has more [National Board Certified teachers](#) than any other state, with 23,418 having earned certification, nearly 10,000 more than the number two state (FL) which has 13,576.
- NC removed salary supplements for educators with advanced degrees in 2013.
- In 2017, the [NC Teaching Fellows Program](#) was revived on a smaller scale than the original program, extending only to teachers seeking careers in special education or STEM rather than all areas of study. The program is currently offered at 8 schools which is still less than half of [the original 17 schools](#).
- North Carolina A&T and Fayetteville State are the only Historically Black Colleges/Universities (HBCU) included in the NC Teaching Fellows Program. Both schools were added to the program recently and are enrolling their first student cohorts in the 2022-23 school year.
- According to a [2022 National Education Association \(NEA\) Survey](#), 86% of surveyed NEA members have seen more educators leaving the profession or retiring early. Reasons given are pandemic, lack of fair compensation, and safety concerns.

- Enrollment in undergraduate education programs across the UNC system is down 35% from 2012, negatively impacting our once vibrant teacher pipeline. There are 15 UNC system schools with teacher preparation programs, and nearly all are reporting declines in enrollment in their degree and licensure programs compared to 2012.
- NC ranks [26th in average salary](#) for school principals in 2022.
- Teachers in NC make 25.3% [less than comparable college graduates](#).
- The corporate income tax in [NC is only 2.5%, one of the lowest in the nation](#). By the end of the decade the tax will be reduced to 0% due to changes made in the [2021-2023 state budget report](#). This leaves far less money available for schools including teacher pay and per-pupil funding.

Charter Schools ([Read the fact sheet](#))

- As of October 1, 2021, there were 204 charter schools in North Carolina serving about 130,000 students. One school's charter was revoked in early 2022, leaving 203 charter schools.
- According to the [2021 Annual Charter Schools Report](#), approximately 8.4 percent of North Carolina's 1.5 million school children attend charter schools.
- In the most recent budget, \$10.37 billion was spent on public education with \$734.7 million allotted for charter schools.
- Since 1998, 52 charter schools have voluntarily relinquished their charters, one has been assumed by another non-profit board, 10 have been non-renewed, and 20 charters have been revoked by the State Board of Education.
- At the end of SY 2020-21:
 - one charter school relinquished its charter
 - two planning year schools relinquished charters prior to opening
 - two planning year schools had their charters revoked prior to opening
 - one charter school had its charter revoked after three years in operation
- During the 2018-19 school year, 47 charter schools were identified as either low-performing or continually low-performing. Due to the pandemic, the 2018-19 performance classifications have been retained. No updated performance levels were identified for SY 2020-21.
- Eight charter schools are scheduled to open in the fall of 2022.
- Of the charter schools in operation, 105 schools (52%) provide bus transportation. In contrast, all traditional public schools offer bus transportation.
- [Charter schools in NC](#) are not required to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). However, all charter schools are required to have a plan that ensures that every child who needs lunch provided will receive a meal. In the 2021-22 SY, 76 schools (37%) participate in the NSLP.
- Charter schools are allowed to expand one grade level annually without approval from the oversight board regardless of their student academic results.
- Only 50% of charter school teachers are required to hold teaching licenses. Teachers who are teaching in the core subject areas of mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts must be college graduates. (NC General Statutes, Chapter 115C-281.90. Employment requirements.)
- The 2018-2019 Budget Adjustment Bill granted the virtual charter schools pilot an extension for another four years even though both virtual schools have been low performing every year since they opened.

A-F School Performance Grades ([Read the fact sheet](#))

- On March 23, 2020, the U.S. Department of Education approved North Carolina's request to waive spring statewide assessments, accountability ratings, and certain reporting requirements in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for the 2019-2020 school year due to widespread school closures related to the novel Coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

- 80% of school performance grades are based on student test scores, 20% on student growth.
- For the 2018–19 school year, 73.3% of all schools met or exceeded growth expectations, a slight increase from the previous year.
- More than a third of NC’s approximately 2,500 public schools received a performance grade of A or B during the 2018-2019 school year.
- 28% of all schools exceeded academic growth expectations in 2018-2019. Of the more than 2,500 public schools in North Carolina, 119 of them received a performance grade of A and exceeded academic growth expectations.
- Schools with greater poverty earned fewer As and B’s and earned more C’s, D’s, and F’s than schools with less poverty.
- Of the 21.7% of schools receiving a D or F grade, 95% were serving high poverty populations.
- In schools with more than 80% low income students, 60% received a D or F grade. Less than one percent of schools received a D or F grades that had low poverty rates.
- The two NC virtual charter schools received D grades and have not met growth in the four years that data is available since they opened in 2017-18.
- NC’s annual funding for charter schools has increased from nearly \$17 million in 1996-97 to more than \$900 million in 2021-22.

School Vouchers ([Read the fact sheet](#))

- In the 2021-2022 school year, [13,456 students were awarded Opportunity Scholarships](#). Of those who were awarded scholarships, 7,407 students enrolled in school using them.
 - As of May 19, 2022 10,439 students were awarded Opportunity Scholarships for the 2022-2021 school year.
- The total dollar amount of scholarships awarded for 2021-2022 was \$79,384,525. There were 503 participating nonpublic schools with recipients enrolled.
 - [Trinity Christian School of Fayetteville, Inc.](#) enrolled 357 Opportunity Scholarship students, making it the school with the largest cohort of scholarship students in 2021-22, followed by Berean Baptist Academy in Fayetteville (296 students) and Grace Christian School in Sanford (271 students).
 - [Cumberland County](#) was the county with the largest number of students enrolling in schools using the Opportunity Scholarships in 2021-22 with 1,854 students. Mecklenburg (1,333) and Wake County (1,318) followed at #2 and #3 highest number of students enrolling in schools using the scholarships.
- [Opportunity Scholarship Program Recipients by race were](#): 60% White, 22% Black or African American, 10% two or more Races, 2% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 2% Asian, and 0.2% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. The remainder of Opportunity Scholarship recipients did not offer racial information.
- Opportunity Scholarship Program Recipients by ethnicity were 14% Hispanic, 74% Not Hispanic with 12% not reported.
- The [NC 2021-23 budget](#) incorporated changes to the NC voucher program that substantially expanded eligibility.
 - Family income qualification increased from 150% to 175% of the federal free lunch cutoff (from \$73,000/year to nearly \$85,000/year).
 - Individual voucher allocation increased from \$4,200 to \$5,850 per student.
 - Up to \$500,000 was designated to market the Opportunity Scholarship Program

- The base funding annual increase changed from \$10 million to \$15 million per year. Total allocation for the vouchers will be \$133 million in 2022-23 and will grow to greater than \$240 million by 2032. More than **\$3.1 billion** will be spent on the program over the next 15 years.
- The NC 2021-23 budget combined the Special Education Scholarship for Students with Disabilities and the Personal Education Savings Accounts under a new name, Personal Education Student Accounts for Children with Disabilities (PESA) Program. The annual scholarship increased to \$9,000 for all eligible students and up to \$17,000/year for students with qualifying disabilities (e.g. Hearing Impairment).

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