

# NC'S PATH TO PRIVATIZATION



**Teaching Fellows program cut**  
From 2011-2017, NC's nationally acclaimed teacher education scholarships were eliminated. Strong public reaction led to a "new" smaller, less robust version in 2018.

**Private school vouchers begin**  
Sold to the public as a way for low-income children to escape "failing schools," NC begins its voucher program with \$15M while the 2013 budget spent \$500M less on public education than in 2008.

**Budget kept at recession level despite growth**  
7,000 state-funded teacher assistants lost since 2008. Nearly 70% of teachers receive no salary increase, continuing to harm veteran teachers.

**Education Savings Account vouchers**  
ESAs provide voucher funds for special needs students to attend private schools, even if those schools do not have experience teaching students with disabilities or cannot provide all needed services.

**Failing virtual charter contracts renewed**  
The NCGA renewed contracts for K-12 Inc. & Connections Academy through 2024 despite both these schools being low performing where students failed to meet annual growth goals set by state since they opened.

**Lawmakers lift charter school cap**  
Allowed explosive growth in charter schools across NC, despite research showing that charters increase costs and racial segregation without little academic benefit.

**Teaching profession debilitated**  
Budget caps lifetime salary for teachers at \$50K and eliminates their career status and due process rights. Stopped pay for longevity pay and Masters pay.

**Voucher funding increases 129%**  
Increases by \$6.8 million in 2015-16 and \$14 million in 2016-17. Total taxpayer dollars for vouchers in 2015-16 is \$17.6 million and \$24.8 million for 2016-17.

**Class Size Chaos**  
NC Lawmakers limit K-3 class sizes without providing funding for extra classrooms and teaching positions. Schools were forced to limit specials and overfill 4-5 classes. Public outcry forced some temporary relief in the 2018 budget.

**Increased funding for charters and vouchers**  
Though traditional public schools perform as well or better than charters and private schools, by 2019 charter funding is at \$5B and vouchers funding at \$1.2B while traditional schools remain underfunded and understaffed.



**NCGA slashes education budget**  
\$800 million in state education funds cut starting in 2012-13. About 2,282 teaching positions were lost yet student enrollment increased; per pupil funding fell to fourth lowest in U.S.

**Teacher pay ranking drops to 46th in U.S.**  
Tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations prioritized over teacher pay — a dramatic shift from the early 2000s when NC was recognized for gains in education and ranked as high as 19th in teacher pay.

**Virtual charter schools opened**  
Despite evidence of failure in other states, NCGA awarded K-12 Inc. & Connections Academy contracts to enroll up to 1,500 students in K-12. Their for-profit structure rewards enrollment, not student success.

**Municipal charter schools allowed**  
Law passed allowing four majority white suburbs in Mecklenburg Co. to fund & run their own district schools with taxpayer money — setting a dangerous precedent of secession from a more integrated, county-wide system.

**Local calendar flexibility restricted**  
NCGA mandated a start date no earlier than the Monday closest to 8/26 with an end date no later than the Friday closest to 6/11. Districts not allowed waivers; charter schools exempted.

**NC starts giving schools A-F letter grades**  
Due to a flawed formula of 80% test scores & 20% growth, grades significantly correlate with poverty rates and unduly affect the image of schools in the community. Bipartisan attempts to correct the formula have failed.

**Innovative School District created**  
Low performing schools would have to close or let the state take over. Only one school was forced into the ISD program. Run by a for-profit, out of state charter company, it shut down in failure in 2021.

**Taxpayer dollars for vouchers triples in 3 yrs**  
Increased from \$15M in 2013 to \$55M in 2018; projected to be at \$145M by 2027. Over 90% of taxpayer dollars spent on school vouchers go to private religious schools-75% biblically-based curriculum.

# NC'S NATIONAL RANKINGS

(FY 2021-22)

Avg. Teacher Starting Salary<sup>1</sup>

#45

Avg. Teacher Salary

#34

Teacher Pay Gap<sup>2</sup>

76¢

Avg. ESP Earnings

#30

Per Student Spending

#41

<sup>1</sup> As compared to minimum living wage of \$48,346 for a family of one adult and one child  
<sup>2</sup> Compared to other college-educated professionals with similar experience

SOURCE: [NEA.ORG](https://www.nea.org)

**Vouchers expanded again**  
 Income eligibility raised to \$85,793/yr for a family of four, almost medium income according to Census (\$88K). Personal Education Student Accounts for Children with Disabilities increased to allocates from \$9k to \$17K.

**New budget continues to underfund schools**  
 Despite a \$9B budget surplus, Leandro Plan still not fully funded, master's pay not restored, Pre-K waiting lists continued. Cutting corporate tax rate to 0% by 2030 puts education funding at greater risk in future.



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**Voucher funding, eligibility expanded**  
 Income eligibility cap raised, allowing families of four making \$75,000/yr to access. Sold to the public in 2013 as a program for low-income households, the NCGA has expanded eligibility every subsequent budget cycle.

**Charters rules change to speed growth**  
 Allowed to expand one grade level each year without approval regardless of student outcomes. Fast-track application added and planning year eliminated. Continue to increase segregation by race and income.

**NC Supreme Court orders Leandro funding**  
 After nearly three decades of court battles, the NC Supreme Court orders full funding for years two & three of the Leandro plan. November elections raise questions about whether the legislature will comply.

**Voucher funding & eligibility increase again**  
 NCGA adds \$56M to the base allocation for vouchers, boosts the annual increase to \$15M, and allows \$500K/yr to recruit participants. Income requirements raised to 200% of Federal F/R Lunch eligibility (i.e. \$103,000/yr for a family of 4). More than \$3.5B will be spent over the next 15 years.

**Mismanaged charter schools continue to close**  
 Many charters close soon after opening or never open, even after receiving state tax dollars. From 1997-2022, 85 charters have been terminated. Most still lack sufficient oversight and accountability.

For updates and more info on these developments, go to our website and follow us on social media!

**Innovative School District (ISD) ends in failure**  
 After 5 years and only one school takeover, NC's ISD failed to improve outcomes for students. Lawmakers discontinued funding for it, as it was a waste of taxpayers money.

**Teacher pipeline worsens**  
 Between 2012-2021, enrollment in bachelor's programs dropped 35% and master's programs 9%. NC has 45th lowest starting teacher pay nationally and the lowest benefit contributions combined compared to surrounding states.

**New teacher licensure plan**  
 NCDPI's Professional Educator Preparation Standards (PEPSC) Commission proposes an overhaul of current licensure and salary scale, causing confusion and concern among educators who want sufficient base pay and a career ladder that is not dependent on test scores and subjective "merit" variables.

**Teacher salaries**  
 Average teacher salary is about \$10,000 less than the national average. Top salary on the pay schedule, including National Boards bonus, is \$60,480 after 25 years. Between 15-24, the schedule is fixed = zero growth.

**Flawed A-F school grading system under review**  
 Education leaders are proposing changes to the formula used to grade schools. Since school grading started, the 80% test scores/20% growth formula has been widely criticized. Bipartisan bills to improve the formula have failed numerous times.