

Student Information

- The state's high school graduation rate was 86.5% for the 2018-2019 school year.
- Around 73% of the state's 2,523 public schools met or exceeded their expectations for student progress on state exams.
- The percentage of schools earning "A" and "B" grades increased from 35.6% in 2017-18 to 37.3% last school year.
- An estimated 1.469 million attend one of NC's 2,461 traditional public schools; an estimated 114,057 attend charter schools.
- 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 the 2008-09 school year, approximately 90 percent of North Carolina'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 (Schott Foundation) in 2018: 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.
- Kids Count Data Book 2019 ranking: NNC is 33rd out of 50 states (overall).

Per-Pupil Funding

- For 2019 Per-Pupil funding was estimated at \$9,907, \$3,013 less than the US average of \$12,920.
- Over the past decade, per-pupil spending has declined by 6% in North Carolina, leaving our state ranked the 6th lowest in the nation on this measure (according to the recently released 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 22% 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. As of February 1, 2020 no 2019 budget has been passed.
- In the EdWeek Quality Counts report for 2019, North Carolina finished 37th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. In School Finance, North Carolina receives a D and ranks 45th.

Teaching Profession

- NC has more National Board Certified teachers than any other state.
- The average teacher salary in NC for 2019 according to the Rankings and Estimates from the NEA was \$53,975 for 2018-19. This is 10,168 less than the national average teacher pay of \$64,143.
- NC teachers earn just 65.4 cents on the dollar compared with other college graduates-the 3rd widest pay gap in the nation (U.S. is 77 cents on dollar).
- There is 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 – less generous than previous program and limited to a few schools of education.
- 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.
- In some areas of the state, the teacher attrition rates for LEAs is as high as 30 percent.
- NC has approximately 8,000 fewer teacher assistants than 2008-09.

Charter Schools

- Currently, more than 114,000 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 are approved to open in the 2020 school year 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 percent of the state's education funding is currently allocated to charter schools.
- During the 2017-2018 school year, 68.7 percent of charters met or exceeded growth, a figure that has trended down since 2012. They did not meet the academic goal of 75 percent 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 schools.
- 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.
- Only 50% of charter school teachers have to be certified to teach in charter schools.
- 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.
- The 2018-2019 Budget Adjustment bill gives the virtual charter schools an extension for another 4 years even though both virtual schools are low-performing.

A-F School Performance Grades

- For the 2018–19 school year, 73.3 percent of all schools met or exceeded growth expectations, a slight increase from the previous year.
- More than a third of North Carolina's approximately 2,500 public schools received a performance grade of A or B last school year.
- Twenty-eight percent 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.
- The school performance grades are based on student test scores (80%) and 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 percent of schools receiving a D or F grade, 95 percent were serving high poverty populations.
- In schools with more than 80 percent low income students, 60 percent received a grade of 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 and did not meet growth for the fourth year in a row.

School Vouchers

- In the 2018-2019 school year, 9,651 students received school vouchers.
- There were 405 private schools with recipients enrolled in voucher program.
- The total cost of these vouchers was \$37.9 million.
- The largest cohort of voucher recipients attended a single religious school in Fayetteville (Trinity Christian School) with those 271 students making up more than half of its student population.
- Trinity Christian School received \$1,121,400 in disbursements during the 2018-2019 school year.
- The 2018-2019 Budget Adjustments bill increased funding for the voucher program from \$45 to \$55 million.
- More than 90% of voucher monies in 2017 went to religious schools.
- 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.
- The 2018-2019 Budget adjustments added an additional \$13 million (\$10 million to vouchers and \$3 million to Disabilities Grant. Expanded eligibility from HB 90 will lead to the need to increase the funding for this program.

Resources

A-F Performance Grades, Public Schools First NC, September 2019,
<https://www.publicschoolsfirstnc.org/resources/fact-sheets/a-f-school-performance-grades/>
Charter Schools, Public Schools First NC, September 2019, <https://www.publicschoolsfirstnc.org/know-the-issues/charter-schools/>

Facts on Child Poverty, Public Schools First NC, January 2020,
<https://www.publicschoolsfirstnc.org/resources/fact-sheets/facts-on-child-poverty/>

NC Charter Schools Fall Short on Academics, Rate High on Finance, WFAE, September 2019,
<https://www.wfae.org/post/nc-charter-schools-fall-short-academics-rate-high-finance#stream/0>

NC GOP promotes 'incredible strides' in education. Report says things have worsened, News and Observer, January 2020, <https://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/education/article238868598.html>

NC has released 2018-19 school test scores. See how your child's school did, News and Observer, September 2019, <https://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/education/article234660897.html>

Privatizing Our Public Schools, Public Schools First NC, September 2019,
<https://www.publicschoolsfirstnc.org/know-the-issues/privatizing-our-public-schools/>

What grade did your school receive? Search our 2018-19 NC school performance database, WRAL, September 2019,
<https://www.wral.com/what-grade-did-your-school-receive-search-our-2018-19-nc-school-performance-database/18608843/>

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