FACTS & FIGURES

EDUCATION IN NORTH CAROLINA

June 2025 Online Edition

BEST NC's Vision:

Every student graduates with the knowledge, skills, and behaviors to succeed in a competitive global economy.

BEST NC (Business for Educational Success and Transformation) is a nonprofit organization created by business leaders who believe the future of our state's economy is inseparable from the quality of our education. North Carolina's education system must keep pace with the rapidly changing economic landscape of the 21st century. BEST NC supports the creation of the boldest education success story in America, one that nurtures the talents of every student, from early learning to post-graduate, by investing in students, teachers, school leaders, and innovation, and establishing high standards of success for all.

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A Note About Icons:

Throughout *Facts & Figures*, graphs, tables, and other assets may be denoted by one or more of the three following icons:

Updated Data Not Currently Available, Coming Soon
Some of the data found exclusively in *Facts & Figures* are provided directly to BEST NC from state agencies. This year some of those data were delayed. In order to deliver this guide in a timely manner, it was printed before the data were updated. This icon indicates the affected assets, which will be updated in the online version as the data become available.

COVID-19
Many key education metrics were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and related school closures. The COVID-19 icon indicates data that may have been impacted by the pandemic, and we encourage the use of caution when interpreting longitudinal trends.
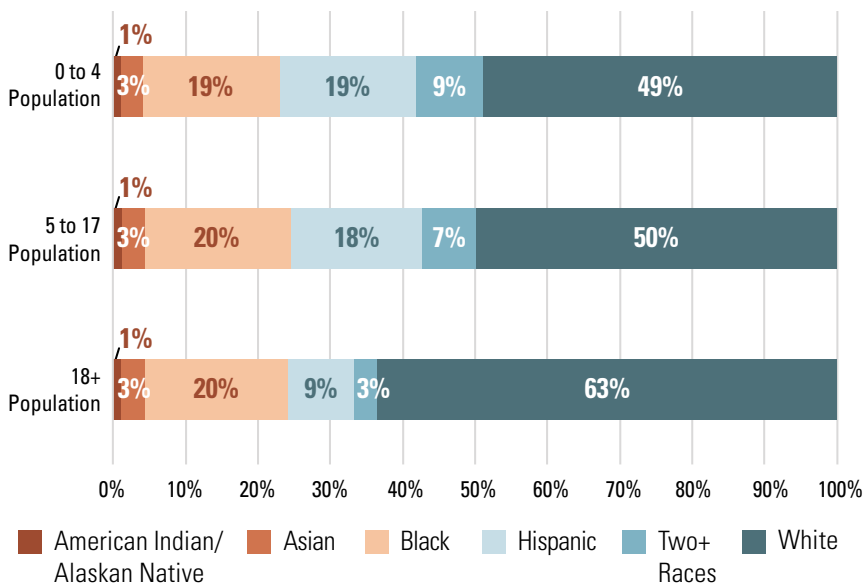
myFutureNC
The myFutureNC icon indicates key education performance measures directly tied to North Carolina's education-to-workforce continuum and the state goal of increasing educational attainment to 2 million by 2030. For more information visit: **myfuturenc.org**.

North Carolina Population, by Age and Race/Ethnicity (2023)

Age Group	American Indian/Alaskan Native	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Two+ Races	White
0 to 4 Population	1%	3%	19%	19%	9%	49%
5 to 17 Population	1%	3%	20%	18%	7%	50%
18+ Population	1%	3%	20%	9%	3%	63%

Legend: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Black, Hispanic, Two+ Races, White

Source: *U.S. Census Bureau (2023), American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table S0201*

Children Ages Three and Four Not in School (2023)

59% North Carolina

52% National
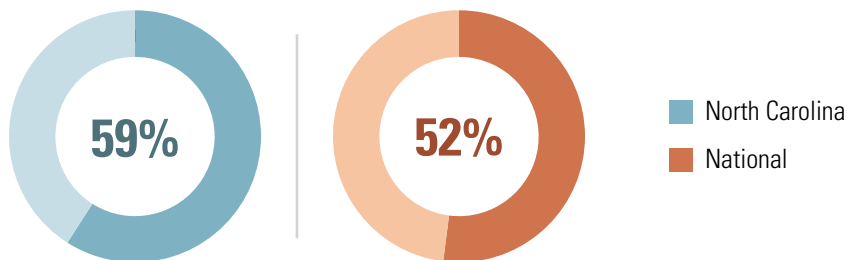
Source: *U.S. Census Bureau (2023), American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table B14003*

72%

In 2023, **72%** of children in both the United States and North Carolina specifically lived in households where all parents were in the labor force.

Source: *U.S. Census Bureau (2023), American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table B23008*

North Carolina Preschool Enrollment and 0 to 4 Population, by Race/Ethnicity (2023)

	American Indian/Alaskan	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Two+ Races	White
0 to 4 Population	1%	3%	19%	19%	10%	48%
Preschool Population	1%	2%	19%	15%	8%	55%

Legend: ■ 0 to 4 Population ■ Preschool Population
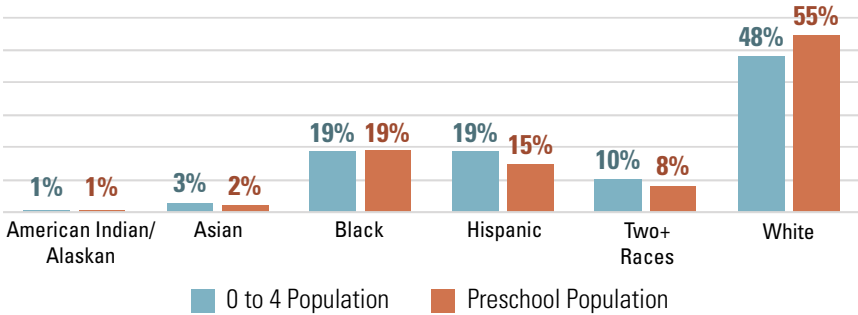
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023), American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table S0201

Children Age Four Enrolled in State Pre-K (2022-23)

21% North Carolina
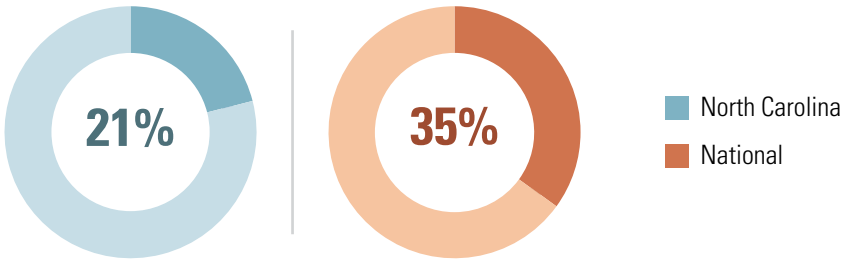
35% National

Note: 57% of eligible 4-year-olds in North Carolina are participating in NC Pre-K (see page 6 for information on eligibility). Enrollment data for eligible children are not available at the national level.

Source: NIEER 2023 State of Preschool Report; myFutureNC, NC Pre-K Enrollment

North Carolina Pre-K Seats (2015 to 2025)
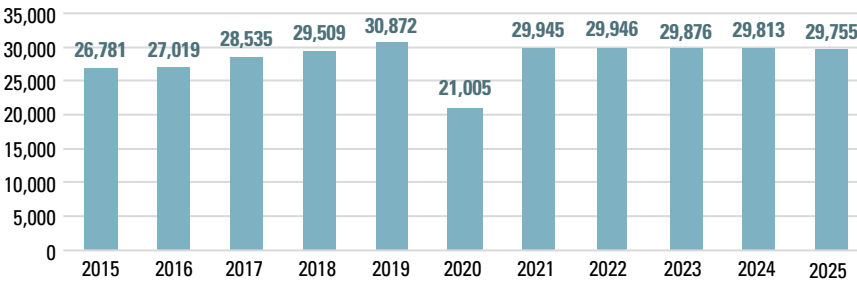
Year	Seats
2015	26,781
2016	27,019
2017	28,535
2018	29,509
2019	30,872
2020	21,005
2021	29,945
2022	29,946
2023	29,876
2024	29,813
2025	29,755

Source: NC Dept. of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education (Data Request)

North Carolina Pre-K (NC Pre-K)

Since it was initiated in 2001, the North Carolina Pre-K program (formerly More at Four) has served more than 350,000 children. Students enrolled in NC Pre-K attend school for 6.5 hours per day, 180 days per year.

Families at or
BELOW 75%
of the state median income are eligible.

Children from families at or below 75% of the state median income are eligible to enroll in NC Pre-K, along with English language learners, children with developmental disabilities or chronic health conditions, and children of active-duty military members.

36% OF NC COUNTIES
meet NIEER enrollment targets for NC Pre-K.

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) encourages states to enroll 75% of eligible children in state Pre-K programs. Approximately 36% of North Carolina's counties met NIEER's enrollment targets in 2022-23.

Source: NC Dept. of Health and Human Services, NC Pre-K Program; myFutureNC, NC Pre-K Enrollment

North Carolina Subsidized Child Care

The Subsidized Child Care Program is a statewide child-care assistance program for low-income and other eligible families. This program helps families afford child care by sharing the cost. Most parents must pay a fee, depending on the size of their family and their income.

Families at or
BELOW 200%
of the federal poverty level are eligible.

The Subsidized Child Care Program helps families that earn at or below 200% of the federal poverty level to pay for child-care while they work or attend school.

65,011 CHILDREN
benefited from the Child Care Subsidy Program.

In November 2024, there were 65,011 children participating in the Subsidized Child Care Program, while another 4,125 eligible children were on the waiting list.

Source: NC Dept. of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education (Data Request)

Children Under 18 Living At or Below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line (2023)
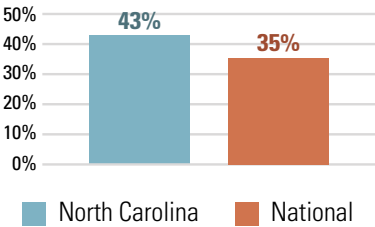
| North Carolina | National |

Children Ages Nine to 35 Months Receiving Developmental Screening (2016 and 2023)
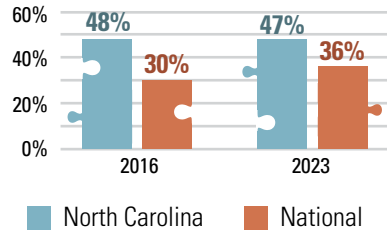
| North Carolina | National |

School-Age Population as a Percentage of State Population (2000, 2013, and 2023)
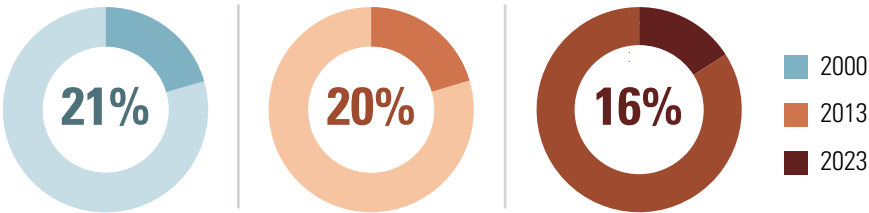
2000
2013
2023

Children Living in Households with Food Insecurity (2012 to 2022)
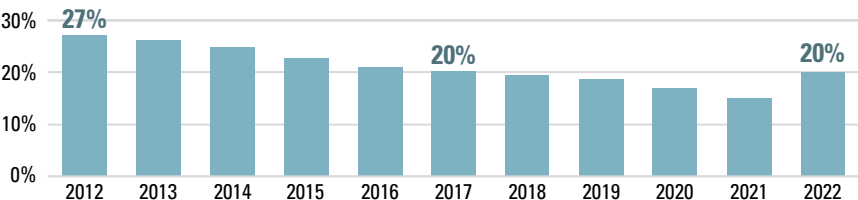
K-12 Enrollment, by School Type (2013-14 to 2023-24)

Homeschool
98,172
142,037
157,642

Private School
95,768
102,400
131,230

Public Charter
57,639
109,051
143,906

Traditional Public
1,434,180
1,410,911
1,362,784

> **Total Enrollment**
> **2013-14: 1,685,759**
> **2018-19: 1,764,399**
> **2023-24: 1,795,562**

| 0 | 200,000 | 400,000 | 600,000 | 800,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,200,000 | 1,400,000 | 1,600,000 |

■ 2013-14   ■ 2018-19   ■ 2023-24
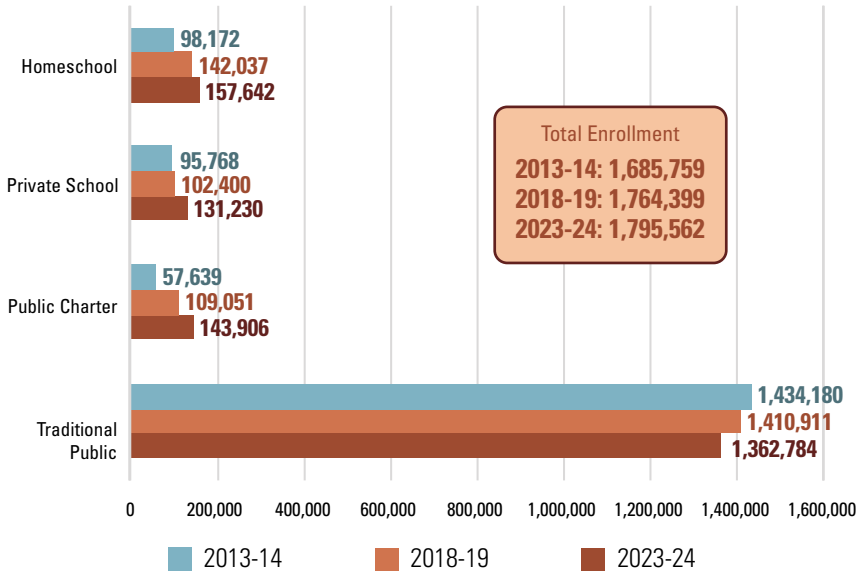
Source: NC DPI Statistical Tables 1 & 3; NC Statistical Summary for Private Schools 2023-2024; NC Statistical Summary for Homeschools 2023-2024

10-Year Percentage Change in K-12 Enrollment, by School Type (2013-14 to 2023-24)

+61% Homeschool
+37% Private School
+150% Public Charter*
-5% Traditional Public
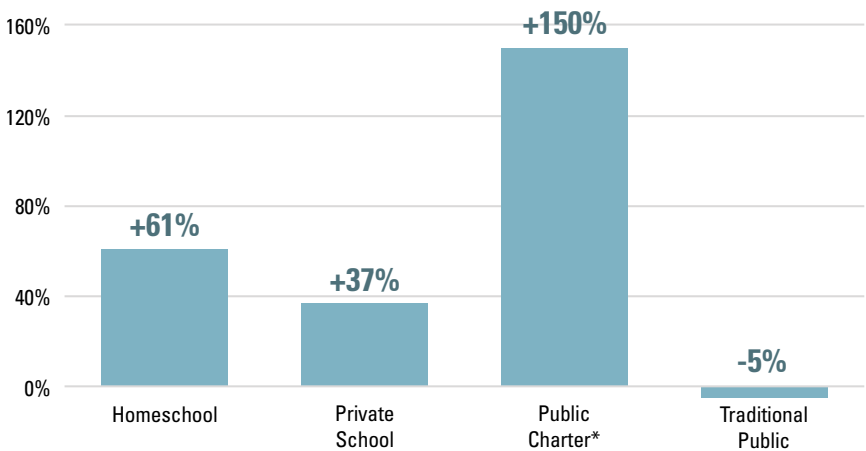
In 2012, the 100-school cap on the number of charter schools in North Carolina was lifted.

Source: NC DPI Statistical Tables 1 & 3; NC Statistical Summary for Private Schools 2023-2024; NC Statistical Summary for Homeschools 2023-2024

K-12 Traditional Public School Enrollment, by District (2024-25)

School Type	Enrollment
Charter ('24-'25)	157,653
Homeschool ('23-'24)	157,642
Private('23-'24)	131,230

447   161,321

Source: NC DPI 2025 Highlights of the Public School Budget
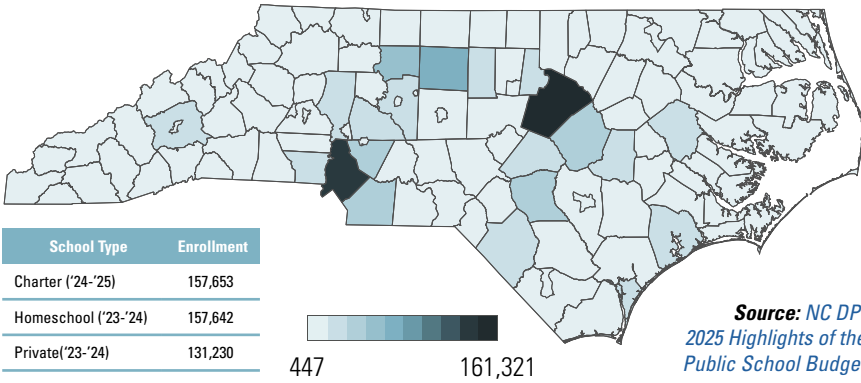
In 2024-25, enrollment in K-12 traditional public-school districts ranged from **447** in Tyrrell County Schools to **161,321** in Wake County Public School System, with a median of **5,469** students.

Source: NC DPI 2025 Highlights of the Public School Budget

Five-Year Percentage Change in K-12 Traditional Public School Enrollment, by District (2019-20 to 2024-25)

-24%   16%

Source: NC DPI 2025 Highlights of the Public School Budget
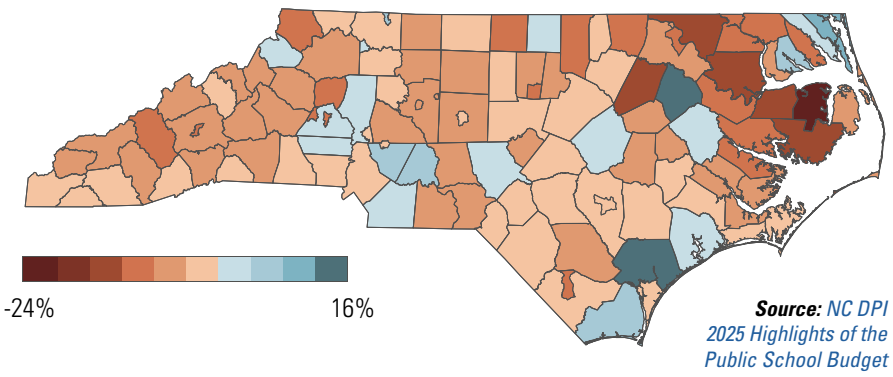
3.4%

Overall enrollment in K-12 traditional public schools decreased by **3.4%** between 2019-20 and 2024-25, with **66 of 115 districts** experiencing a decline.

Source: NC DPI 2025 Highlights of the Public School Budget   9

Public Charter School Enrollment as a Percentage of Total K-12 Public School Enrollment, by District (2024-25)

0%   50%
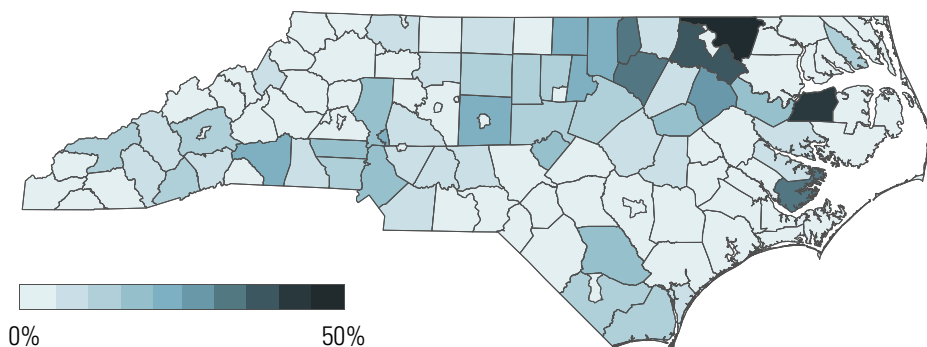
Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table B1

Homeschool Enrollment as a Percentage of Total Number of K-12 Students, by County (2023-24)

3%   20%
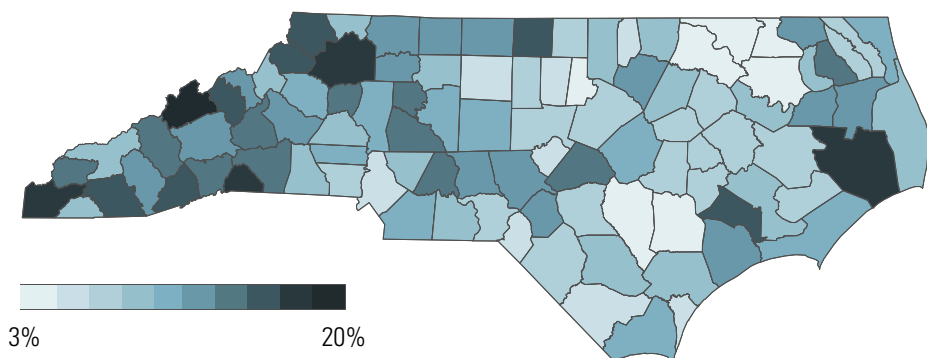
Source: NC DPI Statistical Table 10; NC Statistical Summary for Homeschools 2023-2024

Between 2018-19 and 2023-24, the number of public charter school students increased by **35%** and the number of homeschool students increased by **11%**. In 2023-24, charter and homeschool students represented **8%** and **9%** of the total K-12 student population, respectively.

Source: NC DPI Statistical Table 10; NC Statistical Summary for Homeschools 2023-2024

K-12 Public School Enrollment, by Race/Ethnicity (2013-14 and 2023-24)

Race/Ethnicity	2013-14	2023-24
American Indian/Alaskan	1%	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3%	4%
Black	26%	25%
Hispanic	14%	19%
Two+ Races	4%	5%
White	52%	46%
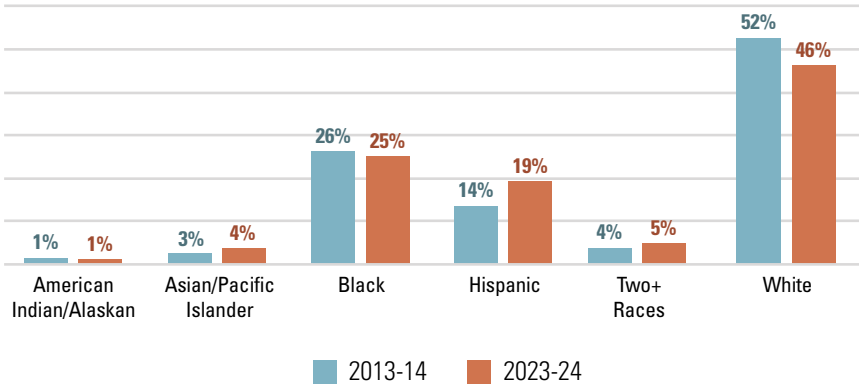
Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 10, 11, & 37

K-12 Public School Enrollment, by School Type and Race/Ethnicity (2023-24)

Race/Ethnicity	Traditional Public	Public Charter
American Indian/Alaskan	1%	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%	4%
Black	24%	26%
Hispanic	22%	14%
Two+ Races	6%	8%
White	43%	46%
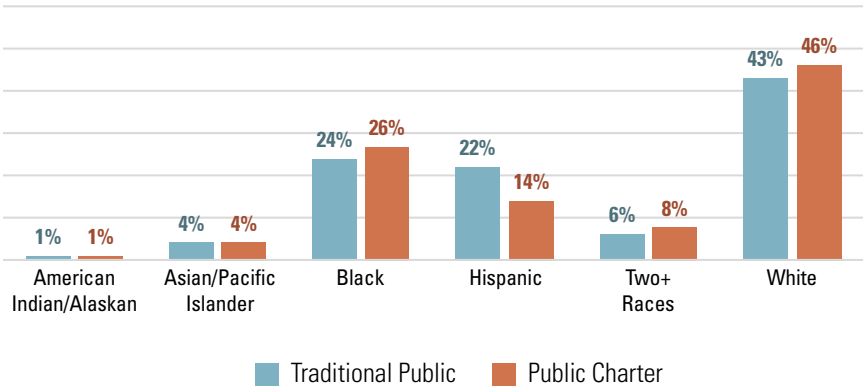
Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 10, 11, & 37

From 2014 to 2024, the number of Hispanic and Asian students in K-12 public schools increased by **50%** and **61%**, respectively. At the same time, the number of White students decreased by **11%** and the number of Black students stayed about the same.

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 10, 11, & 37

K-12 Public Schools, by School Poverty Level and School Type (2024-25)

- % of Traditional Public Students (n=2,486 schools)
- % of Public Charter Students (n=210)
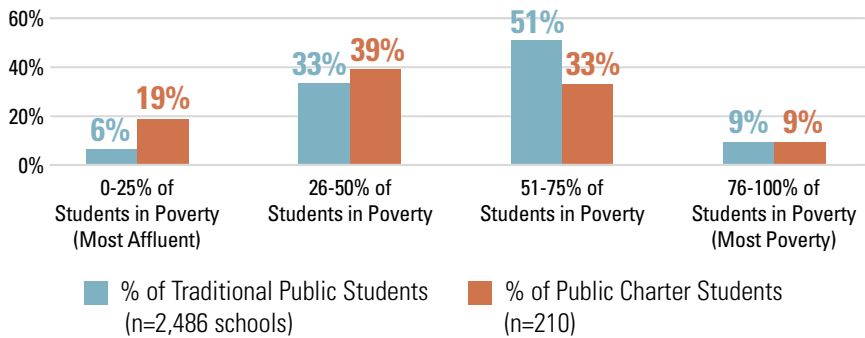
Source: NC DPI Data & Reports, Economically Disadvantaged Students

During the 2023-24 school year, **33,243** North Carolina students experienced homelessness, representing **2.2%** of all students in K-12 public schools.

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 1 & 3; McKinney-Vento Act (2022-2023), Ed Data Express

Homeless Youth, by Primary Nighttime Residence (2023)

- Doubled-Up (e.g., Living with Another Family)
- Shelters/Transitional Housing
- Hotels/Motels
- Unsheltered (e.g., Cars, Parks, Campground, Temporary Trailer, or Abandoned Buildings)
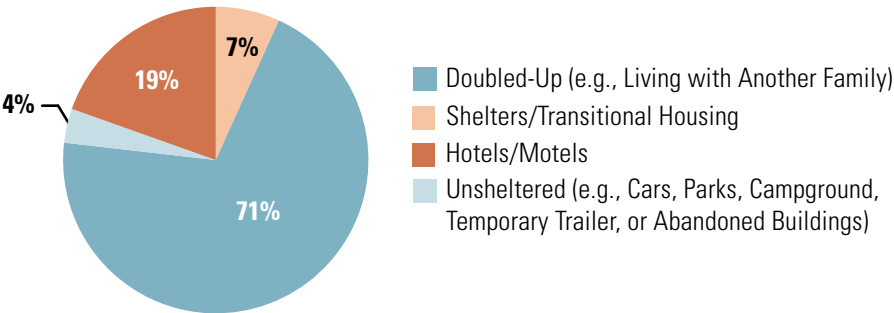
Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 1 & 3; McKinney-Vento Act (2022-2023), Ed Data Express

In 2024-25, **6%** of traditional K-12 public schools had fewer than 25% economically disadvantaged students (EDS), while **16%** of public charter schools had fewer than 25% EDS.

Source: NC DPI Data & Reports, Economically Disadvantaged Students

Short-Term Suspension Rates in K-12 Public Schools, by Race/Ethnicity (2023-24)

Group	Rate
All Students	1.62
American Indian	3.47
Asian	0.23
Black	3.35
Hispanic	1.08
Two+ Races	2.02
White	0.91

# of Suspensions per 10 Students Enrolled
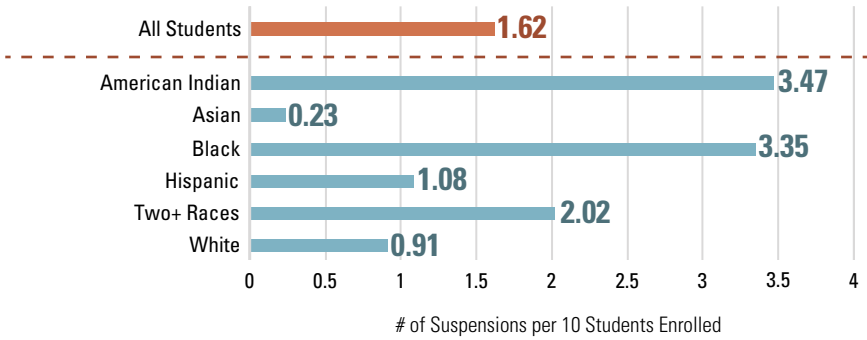
Source: *NC DPI Consolidated Data Report 2023-24*

Chronic Absenteeism* in K-12 Traditional Public Schools, by Student Subgroup (2023-24)
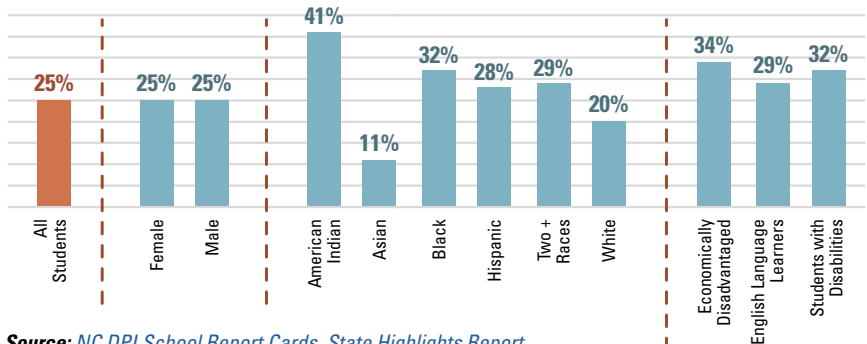
Subgroup	Percent
All Students	25%
Female	25%
Male	25%
American Indian	41%
Asian	11%
Black	32%
Hispanic	28%
Two + Races	29%
White	20%
Economically Disadvantaged	34%
English Language Learners	29%
Students with Disabilities	32%

Source: *NC DPI School Report Cards, State Highlights Report*

Chronic Absenteeism* in K-12 Traditional Public Schools (2017-18 to 2023-24)

Year	Percent
2017-18	15%
2018-19	16%
2019-20	10%
2020-21	26%
2021-22	31%
2022-23	27%
2023-24	25%
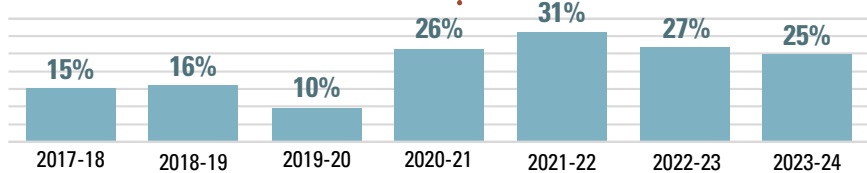
Source: *NC DPI School Report Cards, State Highlights Report*

**Chronic absenteeism is defined as students who are enrolled in a school for at least 10 days and absent for 10% or more of those days.*

Chronic Absenteeism in North Carolina

Since the pandemic, students have been increasingly absent from school. While improving somewhat, chronic absenteeism, defined as a student missing 10 or more days in a school year, has risen significantly nationwide and in North Carolina, compared to pre-pandemic levels.

In 2023, a National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) study found a direct relationship between absenteeism and declining math and reading scores. In North Carolina, reading scores remain below pre-pandemic levels and persistently high absenteeism rates are likely contributing to the slow recovery.

16%-27% of math score declines and 36%-45% of reading score declines can be directly attributed to changes in absenteeism.

Figure 1: Percentage of Students Chronically Absent (2018-19 to 2023-24)
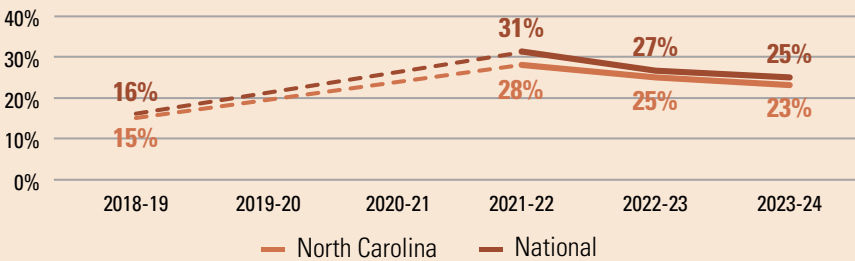
Absenteeism has remained higher than pre-pandemic rates for all student groups:

Figure 2: Percentage of Students Chronically Absent, by Student Subgroup (2018-19 to 2022-23)
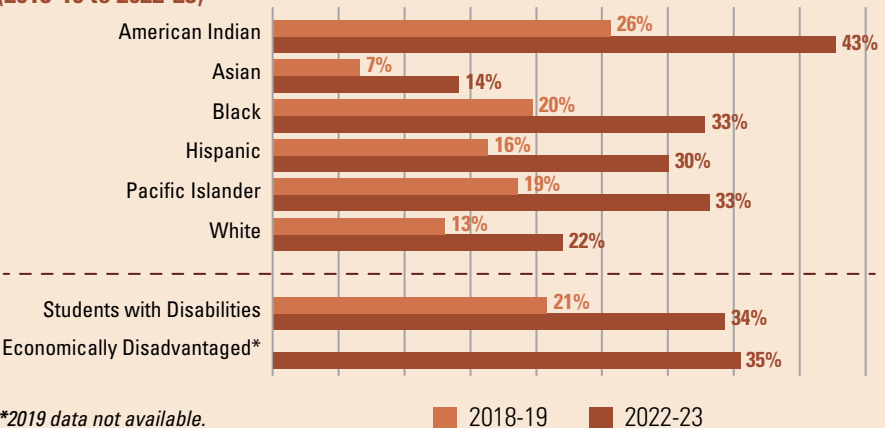
2019 data not available.   ■ 2018-19   ■ 2022-23

Note: *State and Federal data during 2019-20 and 2020-21 for chronically absent students is generally unavailable due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, 2023-24 data is estimated pending on official reporting from states/districts.*

Source: *NCES K-12 Dive; FutureEd; NC DPI School Report Card Data Set*

North Carolina Community College System Full-Time Equivalent Enrollment (Fall 2024)

Fall Curriculum Enrollment	
Career and Technical Education	83,028
Transfer and General Education	92,910
Special Credit	8,767
Total Curriculum Unduplicated Enrollment	**184,749**

Fall Continuing Education Enrollment	
Basic Skills	12,442
Workforce Development	44,202
Total Continuing Education Unduplicated Enrollment	**56,644**

Note: Many community college students enroll part-time, so the total number of enrolled students is substantially higher than the unduplicated full-time equivalent enrollment shown here.

Source: *North Carolina Community College System Data Dashboard*

UNC System and North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU) Enrollment (1994 to 2024)

Legend:
- UNC System Graduate Students
- UNC System Undergraduate Students
- NCICU Graduate Students
- NCICU Undergraduate Students

Year	UNC System Graduate Students	UNC System Undergraduate Students	NCICU Graduate Students	NCICU Undergraduate Students
1994	29,149	124,366	10,082	54,714
2004	39,580	150,035	14,743	63,711
2014	44,244	177,744	20,867	67,565
2024	52,037	195,890	24,765	59,128
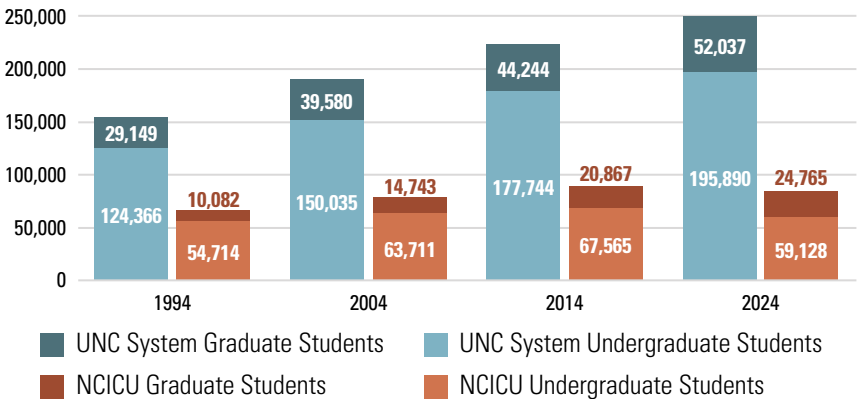
Source: *UNC System Interactive Data Dashboards; NCICU (Data Request)*

K-12 Traditional Public School (2023-24) vs. UNC System (Fall 2023) Enrollment, by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	K-12 Public Schools	UNC System
American Indian/Alaskan	1%	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%	6%
Black	25%	21%
Hispanic	19%	9%
Two+ Races	5%	4%
White	46%	53%
International & Unknown	>1%	7%

■ K-12 Public Schools ■ UNC System
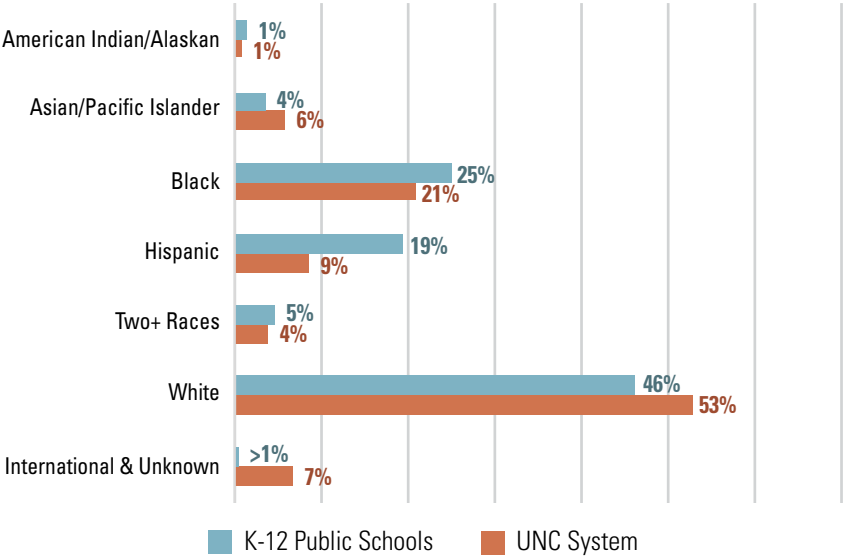
Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 10 & 37; UNC System Interactive Data Dashboards

K-12 Traditional Public School (2023-24) vs. UNC System (Fall 2023) Enrollment, by Gender

K-12 Public Schools: Female 49%, Male 51%

UNC System: Female 59%, Male 41%

■ Male ■ Female
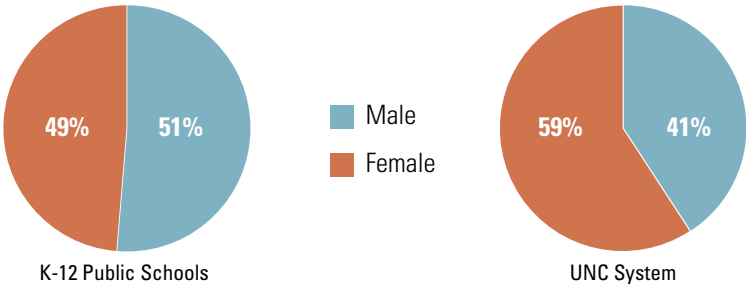
Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 10; UNC System Interactive Data Dashboards

In 2023-24, **53%** of UNC System students were White, while only **46%** of K-12 public school students were White. In contrast, Hispanic students accounted for **19%** of the K-12 student population, but only **9%** of the UNC System enrollment.

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 10; UNC System Interactive Data Dashboards

Early Childhood Educators, by Occupation (2013, 2018, and 2023)
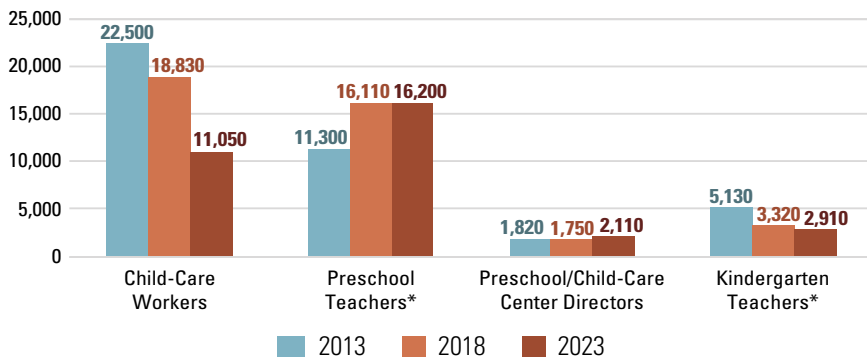
	Child-Care Workers	Preschool Teachers*	Preschool/Child-Care Center Directors	Kindergarten Teachers*
2013	22,500	11,300	1,820	5,130
2018	18,830	16,110	1,750	3,320
2023	11,050	16,200	2,110	2,910

Excludes special education. **Note:** *Preschool Teacher data includes both public and private centers.*

Source: *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2023), Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)*

> **INFANT AND TODDLER TEACHERS** are required to complete **1 COURSE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**.

> **NC Pre-K requires ALL LEAD TEACHERS** to hold a **BACHELOR'S DEGREE** in Early Childhood Education.

Source: *NC Dept. of Health and Human Services, NC Pre-K Program*

Early Childhood Education Graduates at North Carolina Community Colleges, by Program Type (2013-14 to 2023-24)
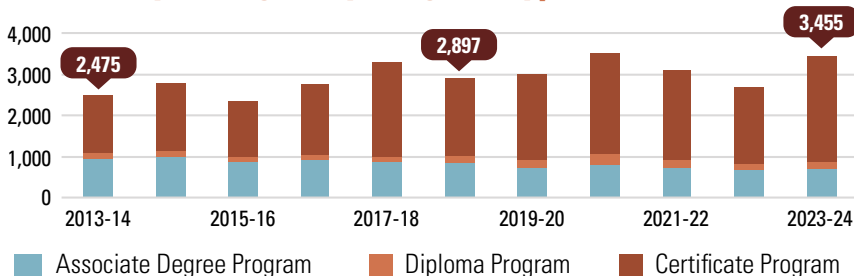
Legend: Associate Degree Program, Diploma Program, Certificate Program

Source: *North Carolina Community College System Data Dashboard*

Median Early Childhood Education Wages, by Occupation (May 2023)
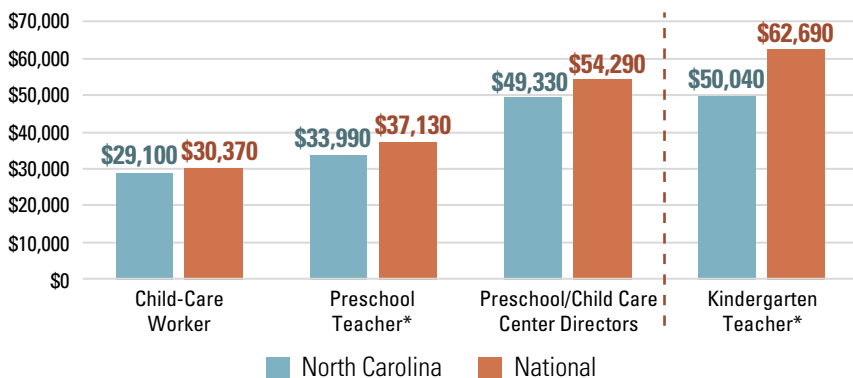
Child-Care Worker: North Carolina $29,100, National $30,370
Preschool Teacher*: North Carolina $33,990, National $37,130
Preschool/Child Care Center Directors: North Carolina $49,330, National $54,290
Kindergarten Teacher*: North Carolina $50,040, National $62,690

■ North Carolina ■ National

***Excludes special education.** **Note:** Preschool Teacher data includes both public and private centers.

Source: *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2023), Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)*

Average Wages for North Carolina Community College System Graduates, by Program Area and Over Time (2016-17 Graduating Class)

After 1 Year (2017-18): Associate Degree in All Subject Areas $19.508, Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education $19,499
After 4 Years (2020-21): Associate Degree in All Subject Areas $33,707, Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education $24,747

■ Associate Degree in All Subject Areas   ■ Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education
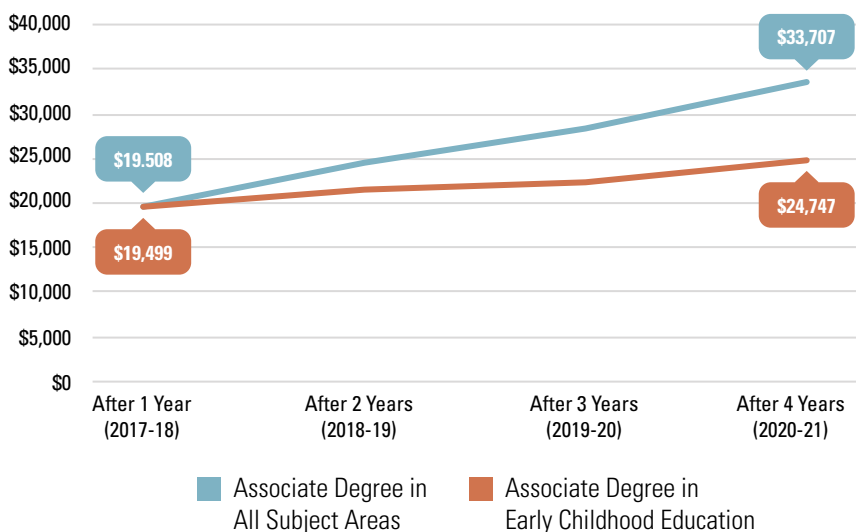
Source: *NC TOWER*

Public and Independent Educator Preparation Program Enrollment, by Degree Type (2014-15 to 2023-24)

Year	Undergraduate	Graduate	Residency Licensure*	Total
2014-15	10,770	1,016		11,786
2015-16	10,425	982		
2016-17	9,842	1,103		
2017-18	9,345	1,162		
2018-19	9,590	1,216	531	
2019-20	9,341	1,534	2,306	
2020-21	10,331	1,935	1,103	
2021-22	9,432	2,102	4,185	
2022-23	7,884	2,014	5,639	
2023-24	6,707	2,069	6,348	15,124

Legend: Undergraduate | Graduate | Residency Licensure*
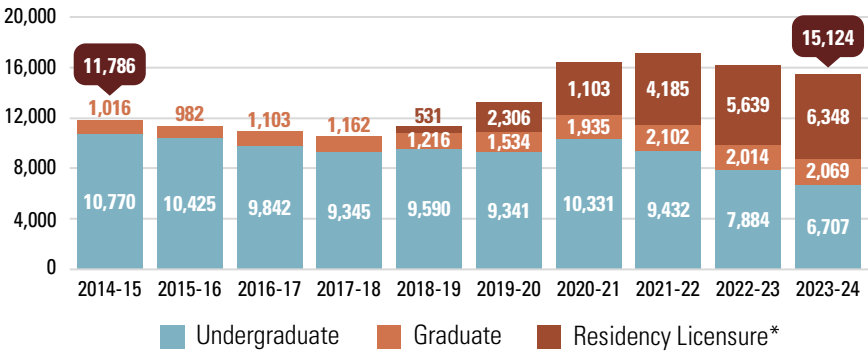
Residency programs began in 2018-19.

Source: *NC DPI (Data Request)*

Public and Independent Educator Preparation Program Completion in the United States and North Carolina (2003 to 2023*)

North Carolina axis (left):
- 2003: 3,176
- 2013: 5,513
- 2017: 4,222
- 2023: 4,830
- 5,235

National axis (right):
- 232,336
- 240,491
- 192,334
- 152,803
- 156,089

Legend: — Program Completers in North Carolina — Program Completers Nationally
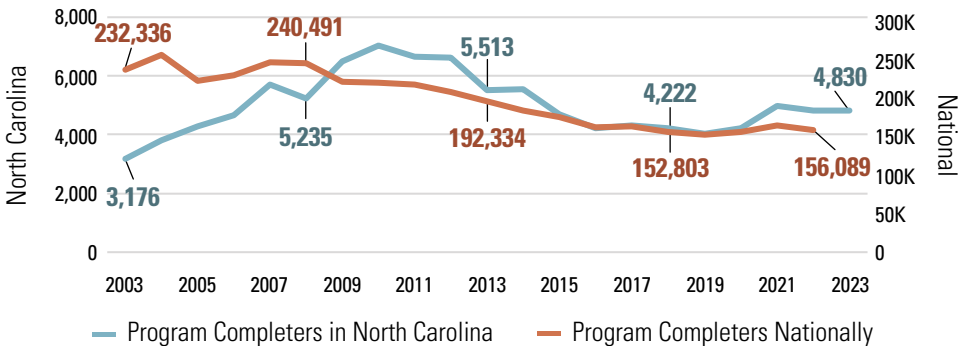
Due to changes in the national Education Department for Title II, national Educator Preparation Program Completion is no longer publicly available.

Note: *Year corresponds to the year the individual completed the educator preparation program.*

Source: *U.S. Dept. of Education 2023 Title II Report , Academic Year Data; NC DPI Educator Preparation Program Dashboard*

79% The percentage of North Carolina educator preparation program completers who were employed in North Carolina public schools the next year rose from **71%** in 2018-19 to **79%** in 2023-24.
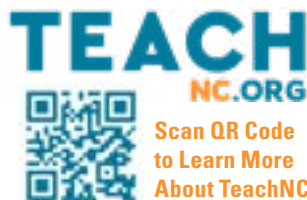
Source: *NC DPI EPP Dashboard*

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## TeachNC – North Carolina's Comprehensive Teacher Recruitment Initiative

TeachNC is designed to increase the quantity and quality of teachers in North Carolina by inspiring teaching candidates to pursue the profession and removing barriers that stand in their way.

TEACH
NC.ORG

Scan QR Code to Learn More About TeachNC

First established in 2018 as a public-private partnership between BEST NC, TEACH, and the NC Department of Public Instruction, TeachNC was fully adopted by the state in 2022.

In 2023-24, TeachNC assisted **more than 3,700 individuals** in successfully applying to a NC Educator Preparation Program. During that same period, the platform added **over 35,000 new registered users**, increasing its total to 102,000.

Figure 1: TeachNC-Supported Applicants to North Carolina Educator Preparation Programs, by Year (2019-20 to 2023-24)
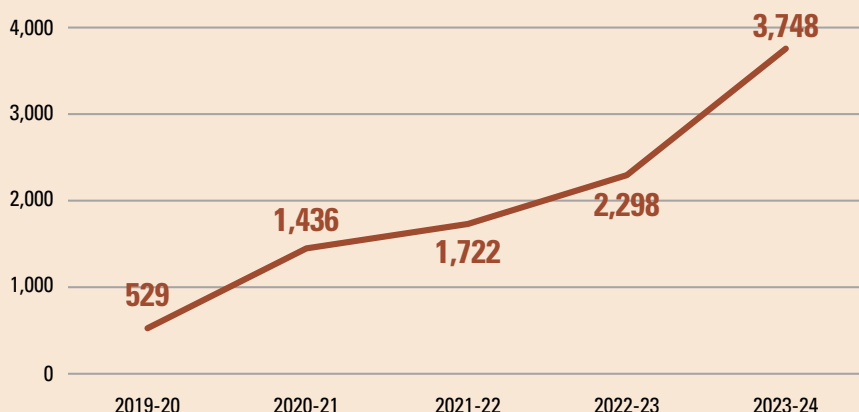
In 2023-24, TeachNC was tapped to disperse $3 million in Governor's Emergency Education Relief funding to prospective educators seeking a professional license. Through this initiative, TeachNC issued over $930,000 in test preparation reimbursements, over 5,000 vouchers for Praxis testing fees, and nearly 4,000 Study.com licenses. These funds benefited **more than 7,000** current and aspiring North Carolina educators.

58%
of Users Reported an Increased Interest in Teaching After Using TeachNC.

48%
of Users Indicated They Would Not Have Applied to an EPP without TeachNC.

Source: NC DPI, 2025 TeachNC Recruitment Initiative Report

Distribution of Preparation Routes for Newly Hired K-12 Public School Teachers (2015 to 2024)
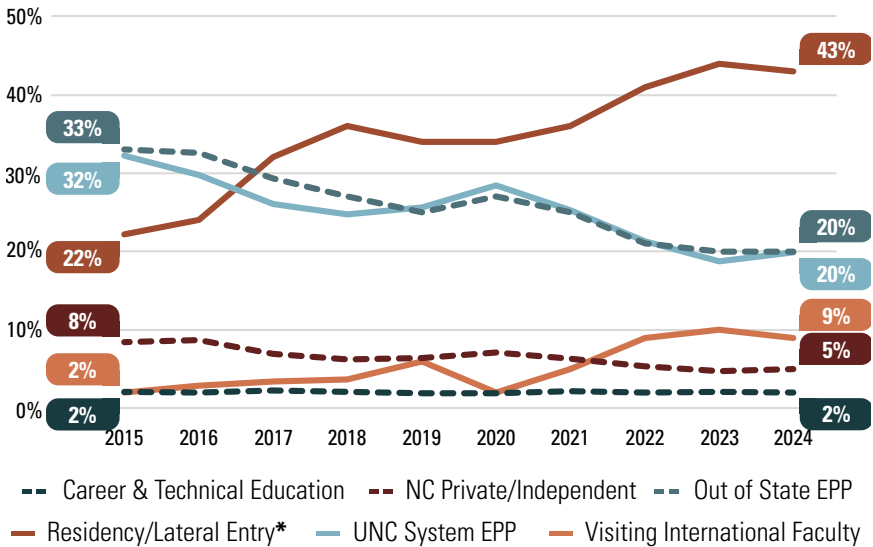
Source: *NC DPI State of the Teaching Profession and School Administrator Report (April 2025)*

Distribution of EVAAS Scores for First Year K-12 Public School Teachers, by Preparation Route (2023-24)

	Did Not Meet Growth	Met Growth	Exceeded Growth
UNC System	20%	73%	7%
Residency/Lateral Entry*	26%	67%	7%
NC Private/Independent	19%	72%	8%
Out of State	20%	72%	8%
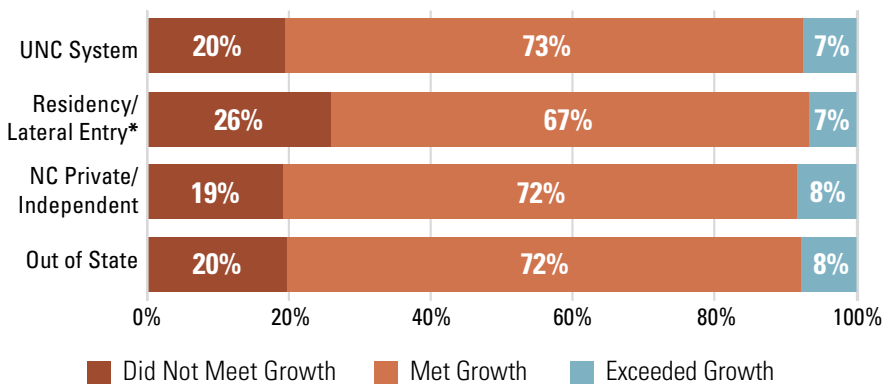
Source: *NC DPI (Data Request)*

***Beginning in 2019-20, the route for alternate certification changed from lateral entry to residency licenses. The Residency/Lateral Entry category includes those teaching with an Emergency License or Permit to Teach.*

Teacher Apprenticeship in North Carolina

Exploring In-Classroom Preparation for the Next Generation of Teachers

Research has consistently found that teachers are the single-most important in-school factor for student success. Unfortunately, recent state-level data highlights serious challenges in North Carolina's teacher pipeline. In 2022-23, teacher attrition reached a seven-year high at 11.5% and in 2022-23, there were an estimated 6,000 teacher vacancies, with higher vacancy rates in hard-to-staff subject areas like math and special education and in higher-poverty districts.

Perhaps even more important, new teachers in North Carolina are nearly twice as likely to be underprepared for the job than they were just 10 years ago. In the 2022-23 school year, 41% of new teachers had no required teacher preparation or in-class experience before entering the classroom. On average, these teachers have higher turnover rates and are less effective than traditionally prepared teachers. They also create a vicious cycle that increase vacancies.

In 2022-23

41%

of new NC teachers had no formal teacher preparation or in-class experience before entering the classroom as the teacher of record.
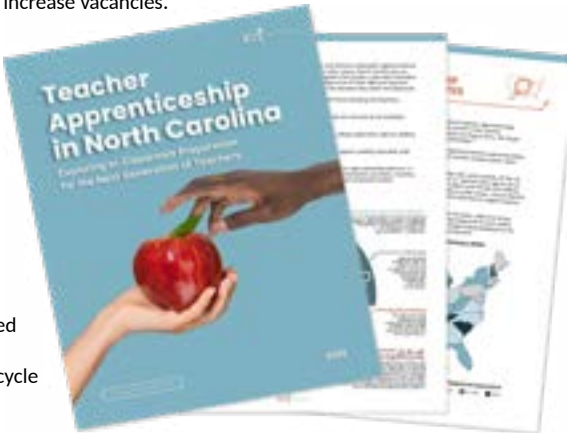
BEST NC believes a robust, statewide registered teacher apprenticeship program can turn the vicious cycle described above into a virtuous cycle (see graphic below) by:

1. Reducing attrition and helping schools retain more of their teachers.

2. Addressing challenges created by the growing pipeline of new teachers who have no traditional teacher preparation or classroom experience.

3. Eliminating barriers to the teaching profession and recruiting candidates from the teacher assistant workforce and others who have not yet earned a college degree.

Scan QR Code to Learn More & Access a Digital Copy of the Brief!

Sources: *NC DPI, 2022-23 State of the Teaching Profession Report; NC DPI (Data Request)*

Percentage of Teachers Meeting or Exceeding Expected Student Growth, by District (2023-24)

62%   94%
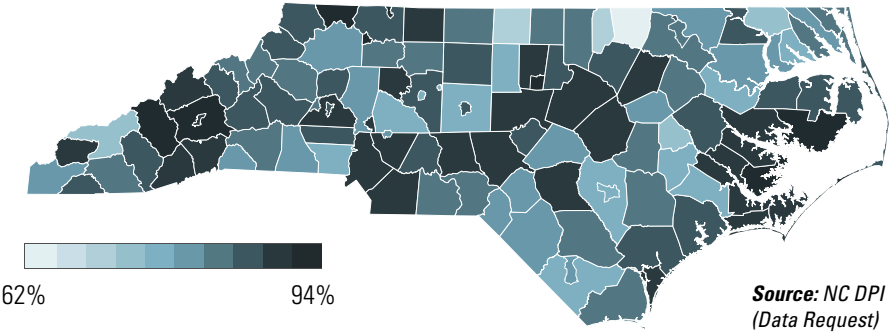
Classroom Teacher Allotment Ratios* for North Carolina Public Schools (2024-25)

Grade	Allotment Ratio
K**	1:18
1**	1:16
2-3**	1:17
4-6	1:24
7-8	1:23
9	1:26.5
10-12	1:29

***Expressed as teachers per students in average daily membership.*

****Maximum average class size, as required by state law.*

K-12 Traditional Public School Teachers and Teacher Assistants, by Funding Source (2014-15 and 2024-25)
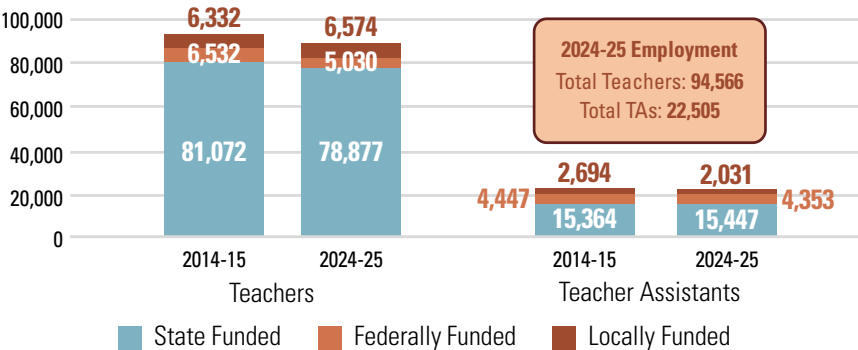
Teachers

- 2014-15: 6,332 (Locally Funded); 6,532 (Federally Funded); 81,072 (State Funded)
- 2024-25: 6,574 (Locally Funded); 5,030 (Federally Funded); 78,877 (State Funded)

Teacher Assistants

- 2014-15: 4,447 (Federally Funded); 2,694 (Locally Funded); 15,364 (State Funded)
- 2024-25: 4,353 (Federally Funded); 2,031 (Locally Funded); 15,447 (State Funded)

2024-25 Employment
Total Teachers: **94,566**
Total TAs: **22,505**

Legend: ■ State Funded   ■ Federally Funded   ■ Locally Funded

Distribution of K-12 Public School Students, Teachers, and Principals, by Race/Ethnicity (2023-24)

	Students	Teachers	Principals
All Other	11%	3%	0%
Black	25%	18%	26%
Hispanic	21%	4%	2%
White	44%	75%	72%
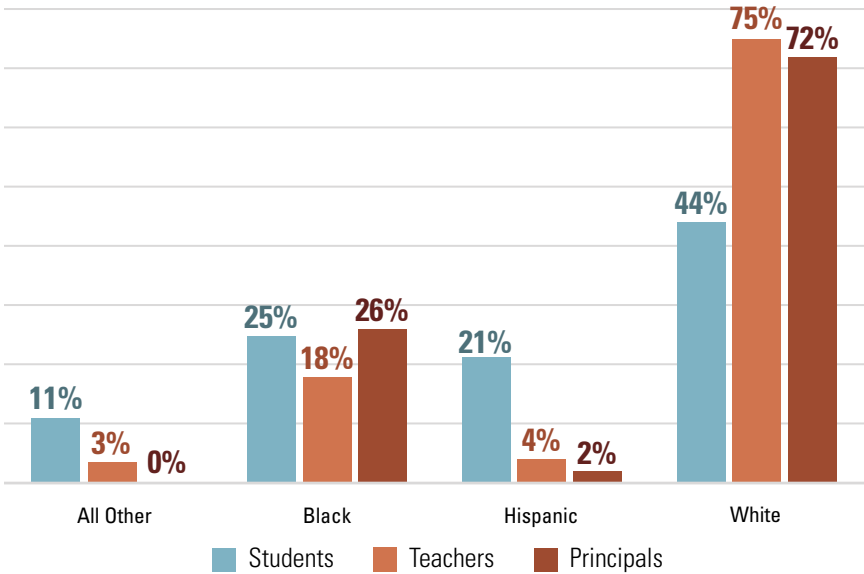
Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 10, 16, 16.1, & 37; NC DPI (Data Request)

K-12 Public School Teachers, Principals, and Assistant Principals, by Gender (2024-25)

Teachers
Total=100,072
Male 22%
Female 78%

Assistant Principals
Total=3,573
Male 32%
Female 68%

Principals
Total=2,707
Male 37%
Female 63%

Legend: Male, Female
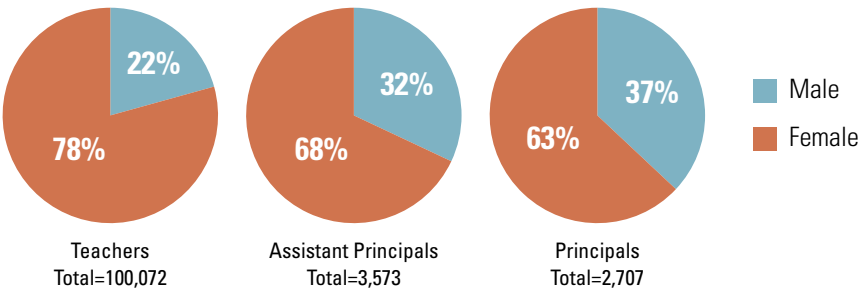
Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 16, 16.1; NC DPI (Data Request)

37% In 2024-25, **37%** of all principals were male, while **22%** of K-12 public school teachers were male.

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 10 & 16

Average Years Principals Have Led Their Current K-12 Traditional Public School, by School Poverty Quartile (2023-24)

62% 38% 69% 31% 74% 26% 76% 24%

Lowest Poverty Quartile (Most Affluent)

■ % < 5 Years   ■ % > 5 Years

Highest Poverty Quartile (Most Poverty)

Note: Schools were sorted by their percentage of economically disadvantaged students and grouped into quartiles such that the number of schools was equal across each quartile.

Source: NC DPI (Data Request)

Ratio of K-12 Public School Guidance Counselors, Nurses, and Psychologists to Students (2014-15 to 2023-24)

1 : 1,896   1 : 1,730
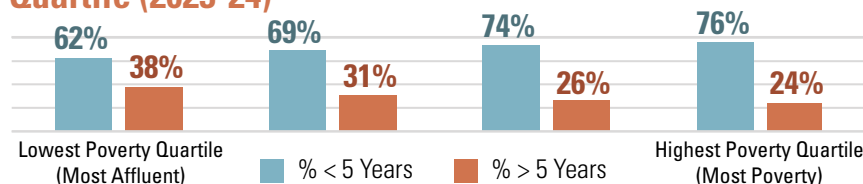1 : 1,112   1 : 834
1 : 372   1 : 317

2,500
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
0

2015-16   2017-18   2019-20   2021-22   2023-24

— School Psychologist : Student Ratio   — School Nurse : Student Ratio
— School Guidance Counselor : Student Ratio

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 1 & 16; NC Dept. of Health and Human Services, School Nursing Support

The National Association of School Psychologists recommends a ratio of
1 : 500

The National Association of School Nurses recommends a ratio of
1 : School

The American School Counselor Association recommends a ratio of
1 : 250*

*Counselors do not include GearUp counselors and Community College coaches.

Sources: American School Counselor Association, School Counselors Matter; National Association of School Nurses, School Nurse Workload, Staffing for Safe Care; National Association of School Psychologists, Shortage of School Psychologists

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Percentage of Teachers Not Fully Licensed, by District (2023-24)

7%　　　　　　　　　62%

Note: *Fully licensed is defined as having a Continuing Professional License (CPL). Teachers not fully licensed are those with an Initial Professional Licensed (IPL), who are generally beginning teachers, or those with other license types such as Residency, Visiting International Faculty, Emergency, or Permit to Teach.*

Source: *NC DPI (Data Request)*

Beginning Teachers* and National Board-Certified Teachers in K-12 Traditional Public Schools, by School Poverty Quartile** (2022-23)

12%	13%	

Lowest Poverty Quartile (Most Affluent)

■ Beginning Teachers　　**■ National Board Certified Teachers**

Highest Poverty Quartile (Most Poverty)

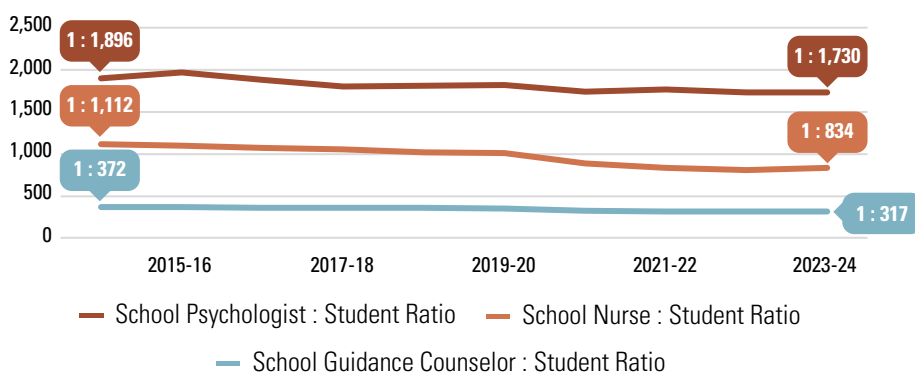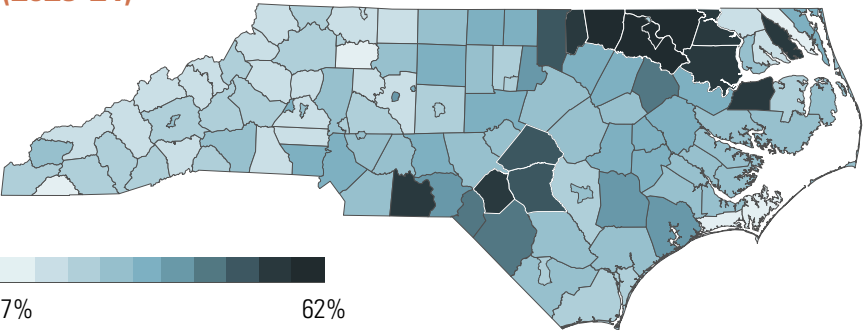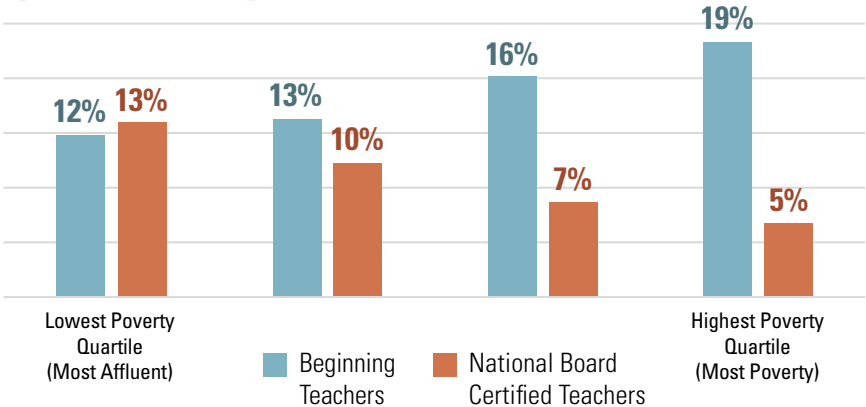***Beginning Teachers are teachers with between 0 and 2 years of experience.*

****Schools were sorted by their percentage of economically disadvantaged students (EDS) and grouped into quartiles such that the number of schools was equal across each quartile. The lowest poverty quartile includes schools with 0-30% EDS, while the highest poverty quartile includes schools with 56-95% EDS.*

Source: *NC DPI School Report Card Data Set; NC DPI (Data Request)*

Average EVAAS Scores* of K-12 Teachers Who Remained In and Departed From Public Schools, by Years of Experience (2023-24)

Remained in NC Public Schools — **Departed from NC Public Schools**
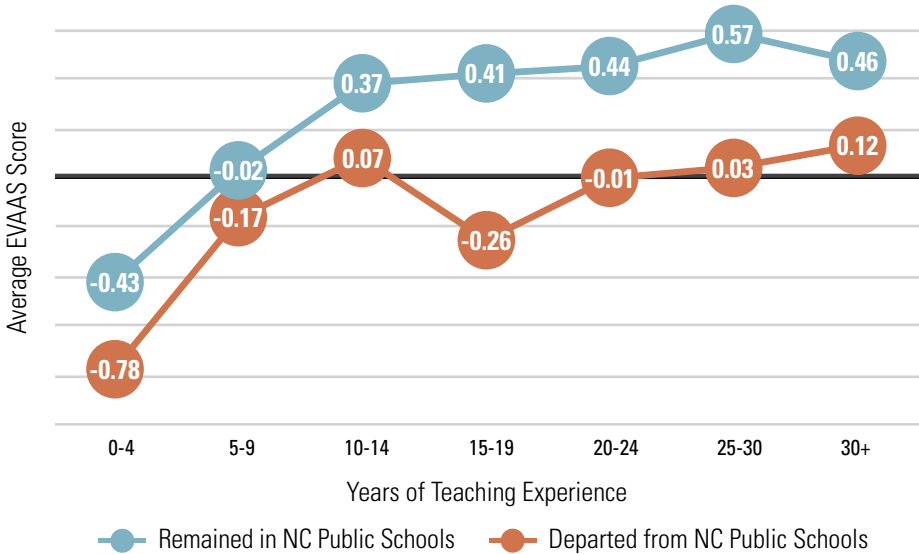
*Teachers with EVAAS scores of zero are considered to be as effective as the hypothetical "average" North Carolina teacher.

Source: *NC DPI 2023-24 State of the Teaching Profession Report*

Teacher Attrition Rates in K-12 Traditional Public Schools, by Teacher Category (2023-24)

Experienced Teachers
(3+ Years of Experience)
7,061 out of 75,848 — **9.3%**

Beginning Teachers, All Routes*
(0-2 Years of Experience)
1,825 out of 14,124 — **12.9%**

Residency Licensed Teachers*
634 out of 4,133 — **15.3%**

Temporary Licensed Teachers**
1,100 out of 4,937 — **22.3%**
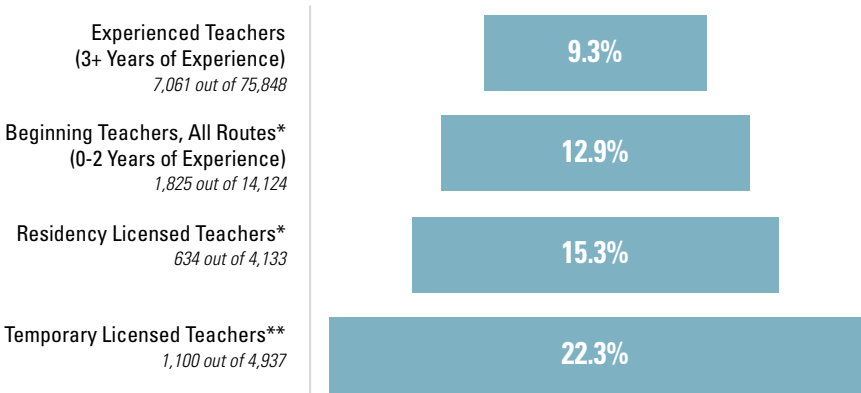
*Residency Teachers and Temporary Licensed teachers also count as Beginning Teachers.

**Temporary Licensed Teachers are those on a Permit-to-Teach or Emergency License.

Source: *NC DPI 2023-24 State of the Teaching Profession Report*

K-12 Traditional Public School Teacher Departure Rates*, by District (2022-23)

4%   19%

Departure rate is the sum of the percentage of teachers who left teaching in North Carolina and the percentage of teachers who switched districts.

Source: *NC DPI 2023-24 State of the Teaching Profession Report*

Teacher Attrition Rates in K-12 Traditional Public Schools (2015-16 to 2023-24)

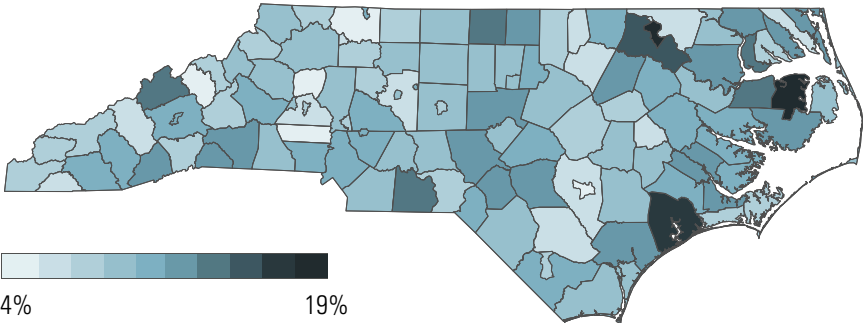|								
9%	9%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	11%	10%
2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
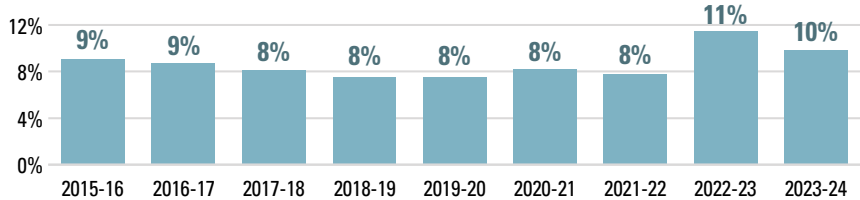
Source: *NC DPI 2023-24 State of the Teaching Profession Report*

Top Reasons for K-12 Traditional Public School Teacher Attrition (2022-23)

Retired with Full or Reduced Benefits	Other or Unknown Reasons	Career Change	Family/ Child Care	Family Relocation	Teach in Another State
23%	21%	17%	8%	7%	5%
2,056	1,863	1,495	680	651	464
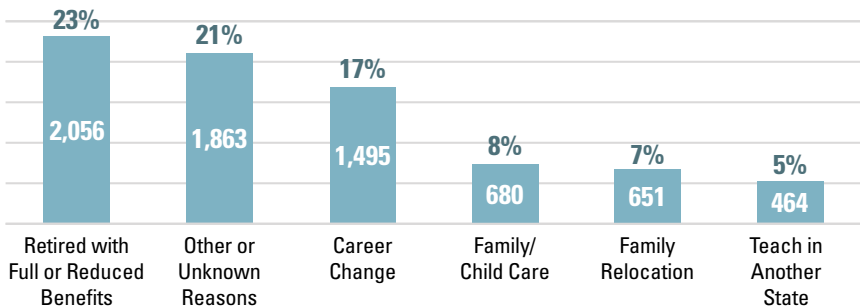
Source: *NC DPI 2022-23 State of the Teaching Profession Report*

Average Compensation (including Benefits) for K-12 Public School Teachers, by Years of Experience (2024-25)

Legend:
- 2024-25 State Base Annual Salary
- Average Local Supplement ($7,028)
- Average State Supplement ($2,210)
- State Retirement Contribution (24.04% of Salary)
- State Health Insurance Contribution ($8,095)
- National Board Supplement (12% of Salary)

In addition to state base salary and local salary supplements, there are several state and local opportunities for higher salaries (see below). For example, Advanced Teaching Roles* can pay as much as $20,000 more.

Legend:
- State Base Pay
- Average Local Supplement
- Average State Supplement
- NBCT Salary Supplement
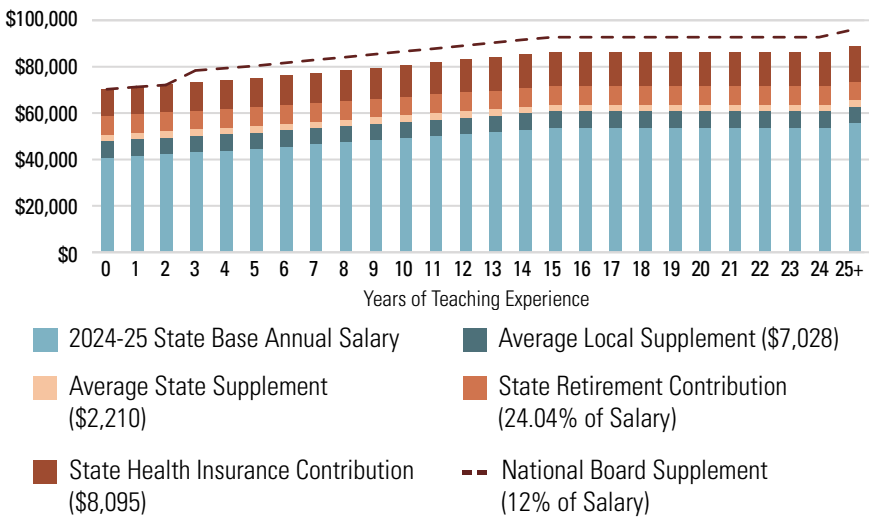- Classroom Excellence
- Adult Leadership
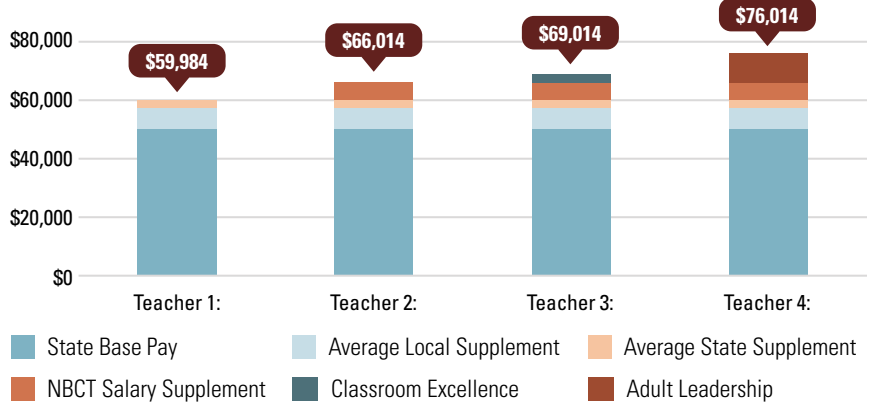
Advanced Teaching Roles (ATR) supplements are paid along a range. Supplements included in the chart reflect work in a Title I school.

Note: *The teachers in these scenarios have 10 years of experience. Teachers 2, 3, and 4 are National Board Certified. Teacher 3 holds an ATR "Classroom Excellence" position and earns an additional $3,000, while Teacher 4 holds an "Adult Leadership" position and earns an additional $10,000 dollars.*

Average K-12 Teacher Salaries, Inflation-Adjusted to 2024 Dollars (2012-13 to 2023-24)

North Carolina values shown: $59,317 (2013-14), $62,626 (2015-16), $64,158 (2017-18), $66,200 (2019-20), $60,009 (2021-22), $58,292 (2023-24)
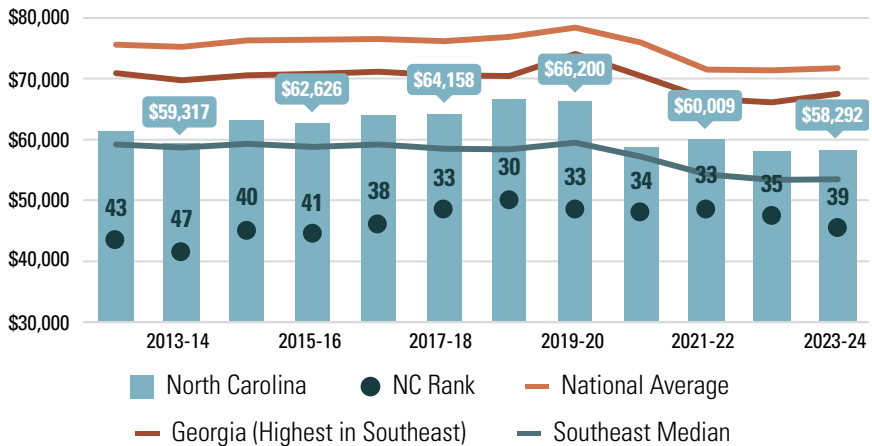
NC Rank values: 43, 47, 40, 41, 38, 33, 30, 33, 34, 33, 35, 39

Legend: North Carolina ■ | NC Rank ● | National Average — | Georgia (Highest in Southeast) — | Southeast Median —

Source: 2023 NEA Rankings and Estimates Report; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

Average Local Salary Supplement for K-12 Teachers in Traditional Public Schools, by District (2024-25)

Statewide Avg: $7,028

$0 — $11,289
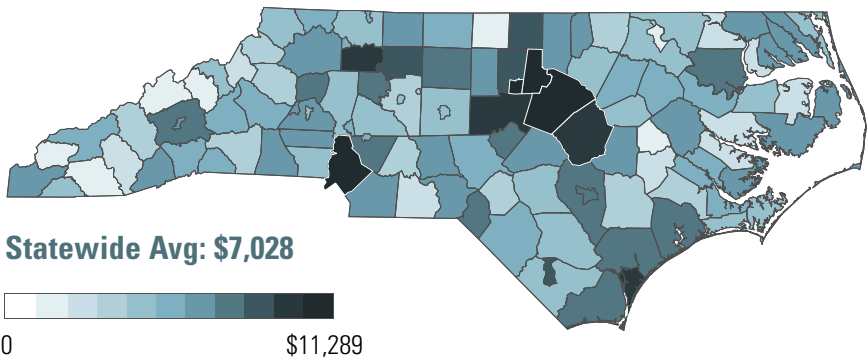
Note: *Figures do not include funds from the Teacher Supplement Assistance Allotment. Three school districts offer no local salary supplements for K-12 teachers: Caswell County Schools, Graham County Schools, and Weldon City Schools.*

Source: *NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 20*

In 2023-24, the average K-12 teacher salary in **36 states** was below the national average.

Source: *2024 NEA Rankings and Estimates Report*

Compensation Distribution for K-12 Traditional Public School Teachers (2023-24)

29%

Salary
Benefits

71%

Compensation Distribution for the Private Sector in the U.S. South Atlantic Region (Sep 2024)

17%

Salary
Benefits

83%
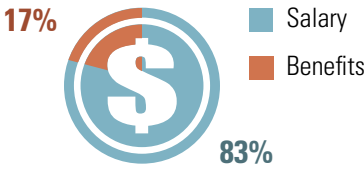
Note: Salary is defined as wages and salaries, paid leave, and supplemental pay. Benefits is defined as insurance, retirement contributions, and all other legally required benefits.
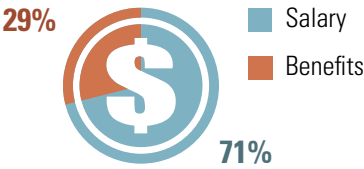
Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 27

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2024), Employer Costs for Employee Compensation

State Retirement Contributions for K-12 Traditional Public School Teachers and District Personnel, as a Percentage of Employee Salary (2014-15 to 2024-25)

FICA (Social Security and Medicare Benefits)
Retiree Health Benefits
Pension and Other Benefits
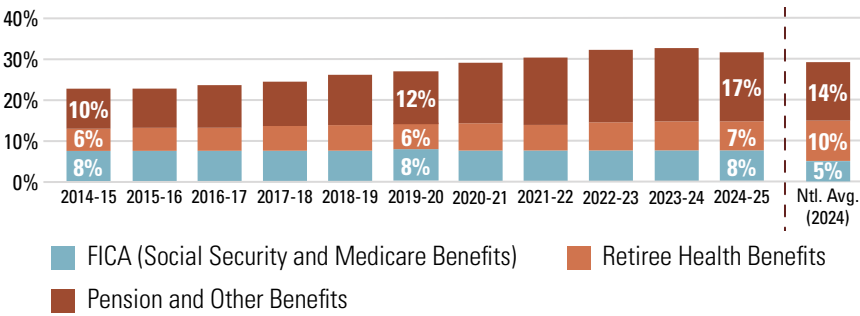
Source: Current Operations Appropriations Act of 2023; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2024), Employer Costs for Employee Compensation

State Health Coverage Contributions for K-12 Traditional Public School Teachers and District Personnel, Inflation-Adjusted to 2024 Dollars (2014-15 to 2024-25)

Source: Current Operations Appropriations Act of 2023

Average Local Salary Supplement for K-12 Principals in Traditional Public Schools, by District (2024-25)

Statewide Avg: $16,341

$0 $40,606
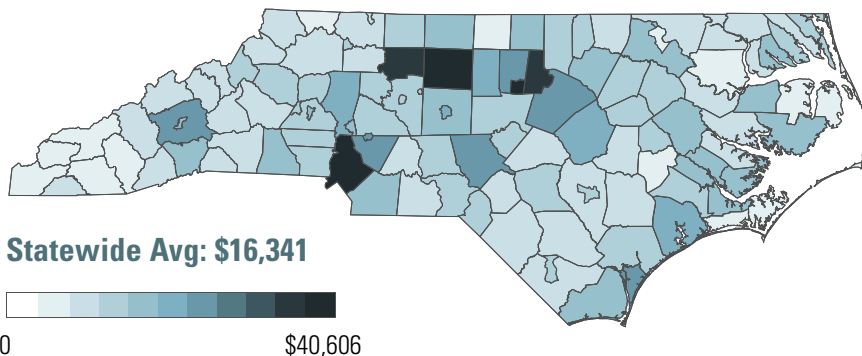
Note: *Five districts have no local salary supplements for principals: Carteret County Schools, Caswell County Schools, Dare County Schools, Rutherford County Schools, and Swain County Schools.*

Source: *NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 20*

Average K-12 Principal Salaries, Inflation-Adjusted to 2024 Dollars (2014-15 to 2024-25)

State Avg. **$99,459**

$16,527

$82,933

Natl. Median **$103,460**

State Avg. **$108,105**
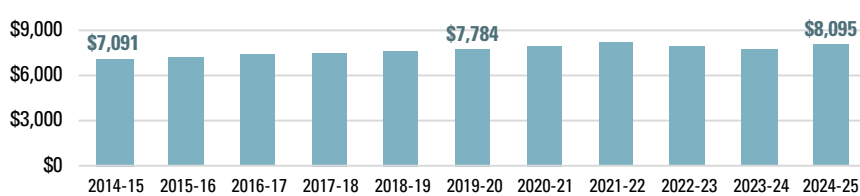
$16,341

$91,764

■ NC State Base Salary   ■ Avg. Local Salary Supplement   ● National Median
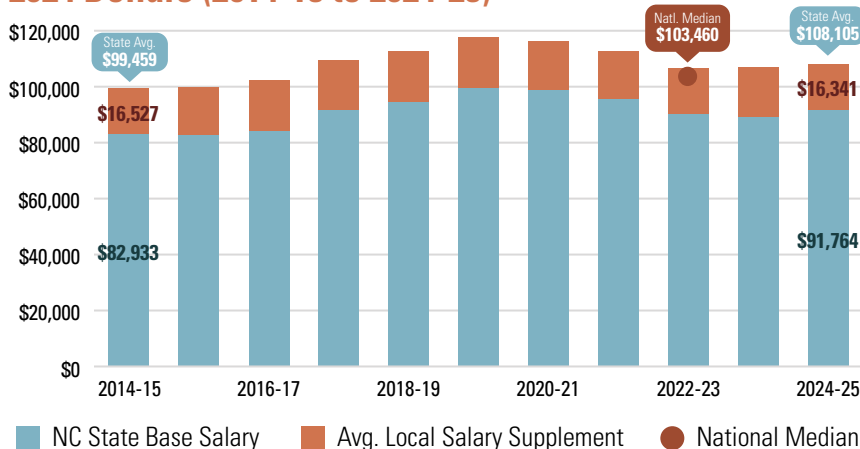
Source: *NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 20; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook 2023 – Elementary, Middle, and High School Principals; NC DPI 2024 Highlights of the Public School Budget*

16.1%

North Carolina public school principal attrition from September 2022 to September 2023 was **16.1%** (397 principals). Average principal attrition from 2018-19 to 2022-23 was **13.6%**.

Source: *EPIC*

Cost of Living-Adjusted Higher Education Salaries for Instructional Staff in the U.S. Southeast Region* (2023-24)

Public Four-Year Institutions

National Average: **$77,858**

Virginia $96,059
Alabama $92,145
Tennessee $91,485
North Carolina $90,130
South Carolina $86,074
Georgia $83,124
Kentucky $80,259
Mississippi $79,563
West Virginia $76,910
Louisiana $75,460
Arkansas $75,307
Florida $64,484

Public Two-Year Institutions

National Average: **$56,049**

Alabama $72,828
Virginia $68,064
Tennessee $67,455
South Carolina $61,045
Mississippi $60,463
West Virginia $58,062
North Carolina $57,126
Louisiana $54,455
Kentucky $53,075
Arkansas $51,395
Georgia $50,916

**Salaries represent the average salary within each state for full time instructional staff, equated to a 9-month contract total.*

Note: *Florida is not included in the public two-year institution chart, as it did not report salary data for the current reporting year.*

Source: *NCES IPEDS Statistical Tables*

Licensed Child-Care Programs, by Star Rating (2023)

- Five Star Facilities
- Four Star Facilities
- Three Star Facilities
- Two Star Facilities
- One Star Facilities
- All Other Facilities*

4% ★
>1% ★★
13% ★★★
23% ★★★★
50% ★★★★★
9%
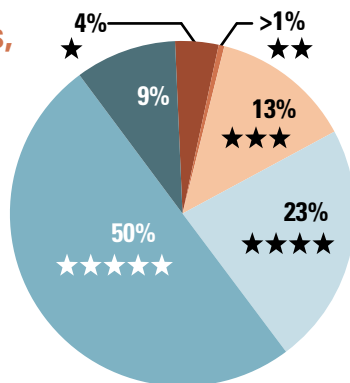
***20,691 children are enrolled in child-care programs that are exempt from the star-rated license system. For instance, religious-sponsored child-care programs do not receive a star rating unless they choose to apply.*

Source: *NC Dept. of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education Statistical Summary Report, December 2023*

In February 2025, **221,169** North Carolina children attended one of **5,321** licensed child-care programs: **4,280 (80%)** were child care centers and **1,102 (20%)** were family childcare homes.
Source: *NC Early Care and Learning Dashboard*

K-12 Schools, by Type (2024-25)

Traditional Public	2,537
Cooperative Innovative High Schools	134
Public Charter	213
Regional and Lab Schools	8
Statewide: Deaf & Blind	3
Private	881
Total Schools	**3,642**

Note: *There are also over 96,529 individual homeschools across North Carolina.*

Source: *NC DPI Educational Directory and Demographic Information Exchange (EDDIE); NC DPI Statistical Summary for Private Schools 2023-24; 2023 NC Home School Statistical Summary; NC DPI Education Services for the Deaf and Blind 2023-2024*

Public School Units (2024-25)

There are
337 PSUs
in North Carolina
as of August 2024

Public School Units (PSUs) include local education agencies (districts), public charter schools, lab schools, regional schools, and public residential schools.

Source: NC DPI Financial and Business Services

K-12 Traditional Public School District Enrollment (2024-25)

North Carolina has **115** school districts (otherwise known as Local Education Agencies or LEAs). Districts range in size from **447** students to **161,321** students.

5,469 Students
Median District Size

11,998 Students
Average District Size

Source: NC DPI 2025 Highlights of the Public School Budget

47%
of K-12 traditional public school students attend one of the largest 10 school districts.

Wake County and **Charlotte-Mecklenburg** school districts each enroll more students than the **54 smallest districts combined**.

Source: NC DPI 2025 Highlights of the Public School Budget

In the 2023-24 academic year, North Carolina had **157,642** home-schooled students. If homeschooling were a district, it would be the second largest district in North Carolina.

Source: NC DPI 2025 Highlights of the Public School Budget; NC Statistical Summary for Homeschools 2023-2024

School Safety & Discipline in North Carolina

In recent years, teachers, parents, and students have expressed growing alarm over school safety and discipline, as behavioral incidents and crimes in schools have increased. Among other reasons, disciplinary incidents are concerning because they result in lost instructional time.

In North Carolina, school discipline policies and practices are largely determined by local boards of education and therefore vary across the state. The NC Department of Public Instruction collects data on student behaviors leading to short- and long-term suspensions. In 2023-24, 99% of all reported incidents resulted from unacceptable behavior and were not a crime or violent offense.

Trends in Student Suspensions
In 2023-24, 26% of reported behavior incidents were assigned a short-term suspension. Most of these resulted from a single incident, with less than one percent of short-term suspensions resulting from recurring or multiple incidents. Defiant Behavior accounted for 46% of short-term suspensions, while Assaults or Threats accounted for 28% of all short-term suspensions.

Figure 1: Number of Unacceptable Behavior Short-Term Suspensions, by Incident Category (2023-24)
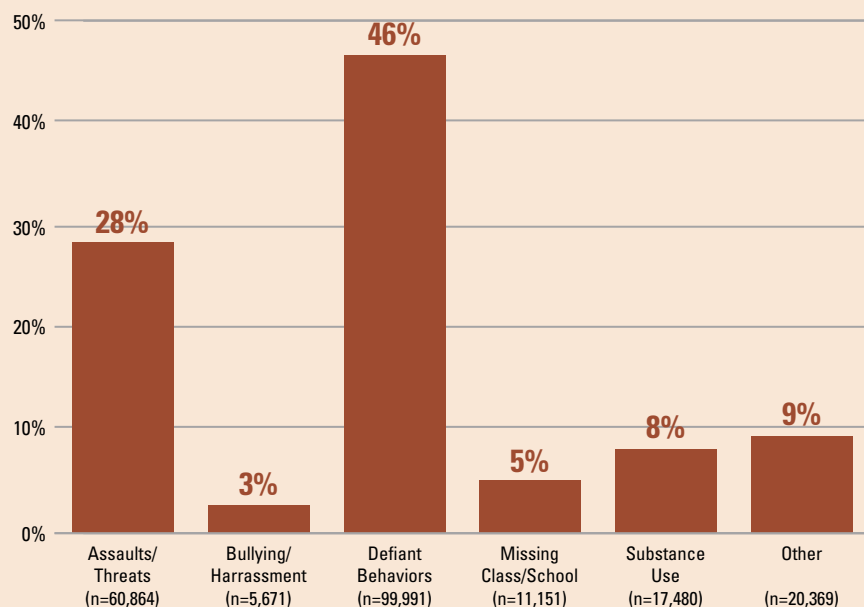
Middle schools have the highest rate of suspensions, with an average of 286 short-term suspensions per 1,000 students, compared to 176 short-term suspensions per 1,000 students in high schools. Additionally, Bl ack male students have the highest rate of suspensions with 20% receiving a suspension in 2023-24. Black male students accounted for 29% of all students suspended.

School-Based Crime and Violence
In 2023-24, 26% of reported behavior incidents were assigned a short-term suspension. Most of these resulted from a single incident, with less than one percent of short-term suspensions resulting from recurring or multiple incidents. Defiant Behavior accounted for 46% of short-term suspensions, while Assaults or Threats accounted for 28% of all short-term suspensions.

Figure 2: Acts of Crime and Violence, by Category and School Level (2023-24)

High Schools — 6,332 Incidents
- 71%
- 14%
- 6%
- 6%
- 4%

Middle Schools — 3,444 Incidents
- 54%
- 24%
- 6%
- 11%
- 4%

Elementary Schools — 1,325 Incidents
- 39%
- 2%
- 48%
- 5%
- 7%

Legend:
- Posession of a Controlled Substance
- Posession of Weapon
- Posession of Alcohol
- Assault on School Personnel
- Other
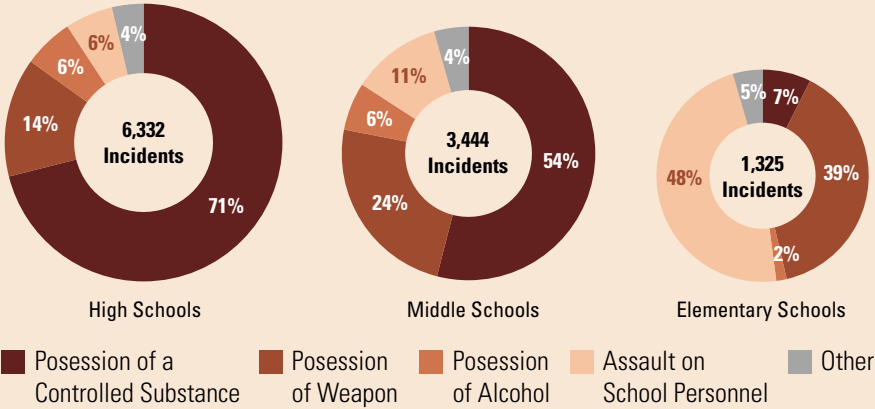
State Efforts on School Safety

In an effort to ensure all North Carolina public schools and students are safe, North Carolina established two ongoing grant programs that provide state funding to public school units to support the hiring of new School Resource Officers and the purchasing of physical equipment to make schools more secure.

In 2021, North Carolina also established the Center for Safer Schools (CFSS). Given the increasing number of students facing disciplinary actions following the return to school after COVID, the CFSS is developing a discipline matrix to support school districts in crafting more effective discipline policies that will help ensure all students have an opportunity to learn.

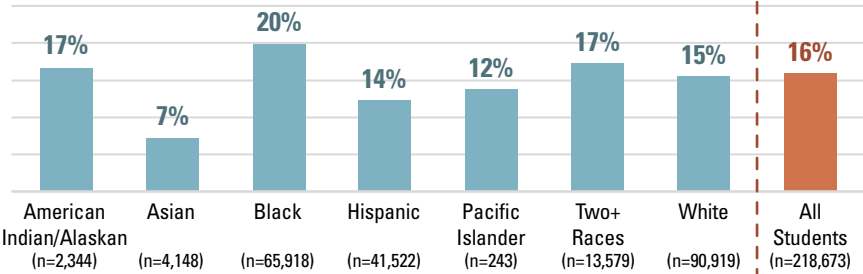For more information, see page 13.

12,212
acts of crime and violence were reported in NC public schools during the 2023-24 academic year.

Source: NC DPI Consolidated Data Report 2023-24; NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 10

Children Receiving Special Education Services in K-12 Public Schools, by Race/Ethnicity (2023-24)

Category	Percentage
American Indian/Alaskan (n=2,344)	17%
Asian (n=4,148)	7%
Black (n=65,918)	20%
Hispanic (n=41,522)	14%
Pacific Islander (n=243)	12%
Two+ Races (n=13,579)	17%
White (n=90,919)	15%
All Students (n=218,673)	16%

Source: *NC DPI Federal Child Count Reporting (April 2024); NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 10*

Limited English Proficient Students in K-12 Public Schools (2015-16 to 2024-25)

Year	Percentage
2015-16 (n=99,513)	6.9%
2016-17 (n=95,905)	6.3%
2017-18 (n=108,664)	7.1%
2018-19 (n=116,357)	7.6%
2019-20 (n=128,060)	8.3%
2020-21 (n=124,505)	8.3%
2021-22 (n=131,247)	9.6%
2022-23 (n=146,141)	9.6%
2023-24 (n=162,778)	10.7%
2024-25* (n=178,688)	12.5%
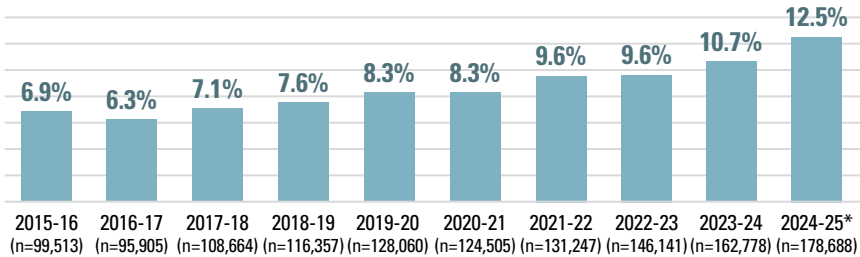
Data for 2024-25 from Month 1 of Principal's Monthly Accounting Report in NC DPI's Statistical Profile.

Source: *NC DPI, Report to the North Carolina General Assembly – Headcount of English Learners (December 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, & 2024)*

Children in Academically and Intellectually Gifted Programs in K-12 Public Schools, by Race/Ethnicity (2023-24)

Category	Percentage
American Indian/Alaskan (n=1,097)	8%
Asian (n=17,145)	29%
Black (n=17,826)	5%
Hispanic (n=19,687)	6%
Pacific Islander (n=167)	9%
Two+ Races (n=9,562)	12%
White (n=116,914)	20%
All Students (n=182,398)	13%
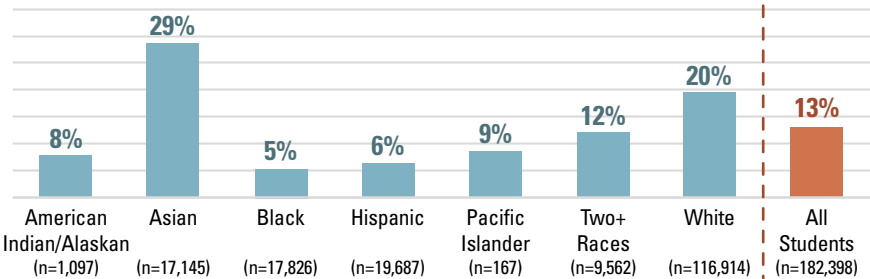
Source: *NC DPI Academically and Intellectually Gifted Child Count, 2024*

Career and Technical Education

Career and Technical Education (CTE) in North Carolina public schools provides students with academic, technical, and employability skills along with industry-recognized certifications and licenses that have value in local, regional, state, and global economies.

CTE Credentials Earned in K-12 Traditional Public Schools (2013-14 to 2023-24)
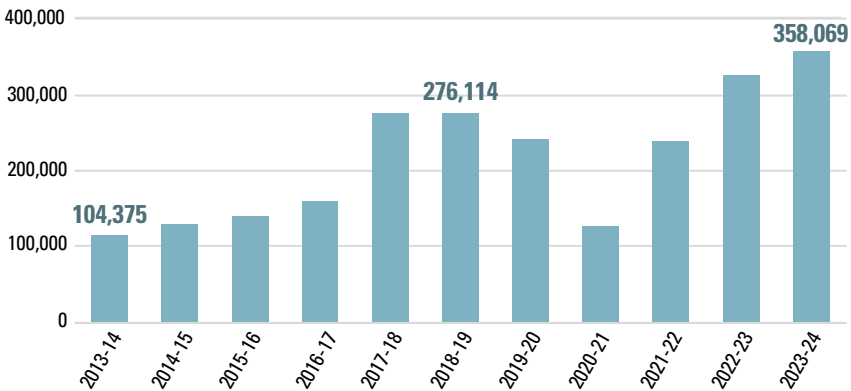
Source: NC DPI CTE Credentials and Reporting Page (2023-24 Credential Report)

Youth Apprenticeship programs prepare participants for entry into Registered Apprenticeships. Many of these programs feature partnerships between industry, K-12 school districts, local community colleges, and other community partners. Youth apprenticeships are designed to connect K-12 CTE programs to adult apprenticeship opportunities through certified career pathways.

K-12 Student Participation in Youth Apprenticeship Programs (FY2014 to FY2024)
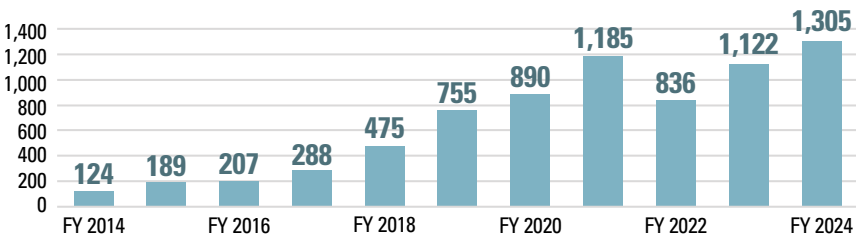
Source: ApprenticeshipNC (Data Request)

School Systems as Employers

Traditional K-12 public school districts are the single-largest employer in 35 North Carolina counties, a top-3 employer in 85 counties, and a top-5 employer in 98 counties. Institutes of higher education are the single-largest employer in 3 North Carolina counties, with all three being part of the UNC System.

Largest Employing Industries, by County (2024)

▇ K-12 Education	▇ Health Services	▇ Manufacturing
▇ Public Administration	▇ Other	
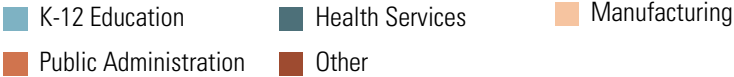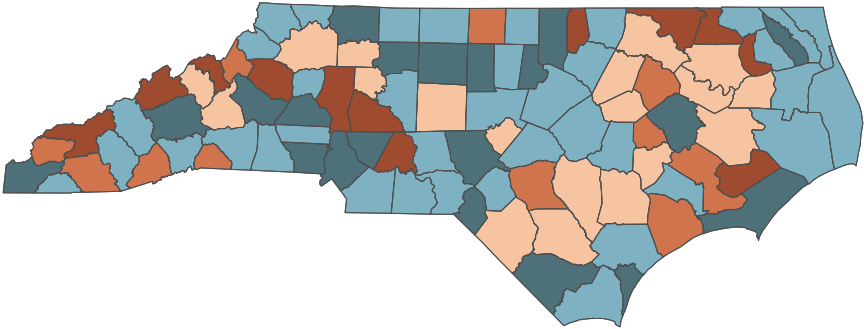
Source: *NC Department of Commerce, Quarterly Census of Employers and Wages, Quarter 2, 2024*

Higher Education Institutions (2025)

North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS)

58 **Community Colleges**
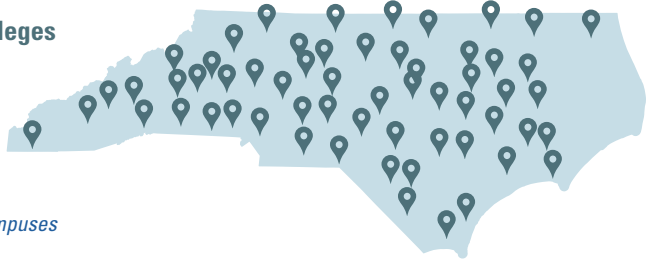
Source: *NCCCS Main Campuses*

UNC System

17 **Public Campuses**
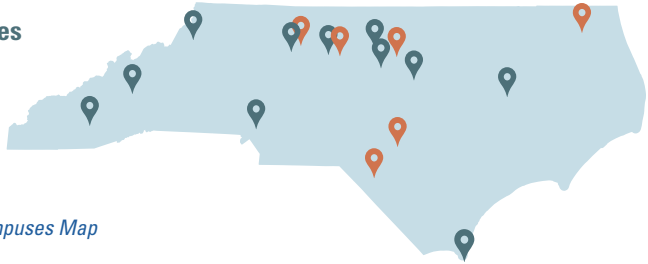
Source: *UNC System Campuses Map*

Independent Colleges and Universities

36 **Institutions**
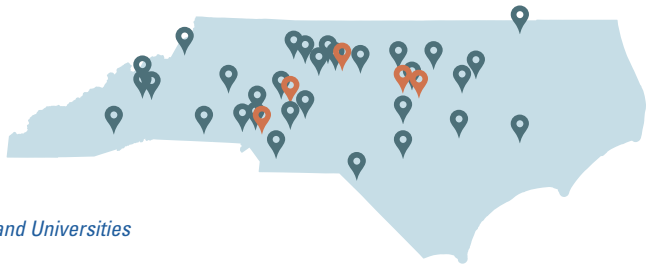
Source: *NCICU Colleges and Universities*

Note: Orange markers indicate the location of Historically Black Colleges or Universities (North Carolina African American Heritage Commission) and Historically American Indian Universities (U.S. Department of Education).

In Fall 2022, **215,338 students** attended North Carolina community colleges (including full-time and part-time students, but not including non-credit workforce enrollment), making it the **5th-largest** community college system in the nation.

Source: *North Carolina Community College System (Data Request)*   **41**

North Carolina General Fund Appropriations (2024-25)

K-12 Schools	$11,959,016,128	44%
NC Community College System	$1,515,602,757	6%
UNC System	$2,890,380,561	11%
Health & Human Services	$7,735,163,346	29%
HHS: Division of Child Development & Early Education	$297,398,292	1%
Justice & Public Safety	$1,697,815,512	6%
General Government	$566,490,532	2%
Agricultural, Natural & Economic Resources	$631,826,768	2%
Transportation	$41,412,642	<1%
Total	**$27,037,708,246**	**100%**
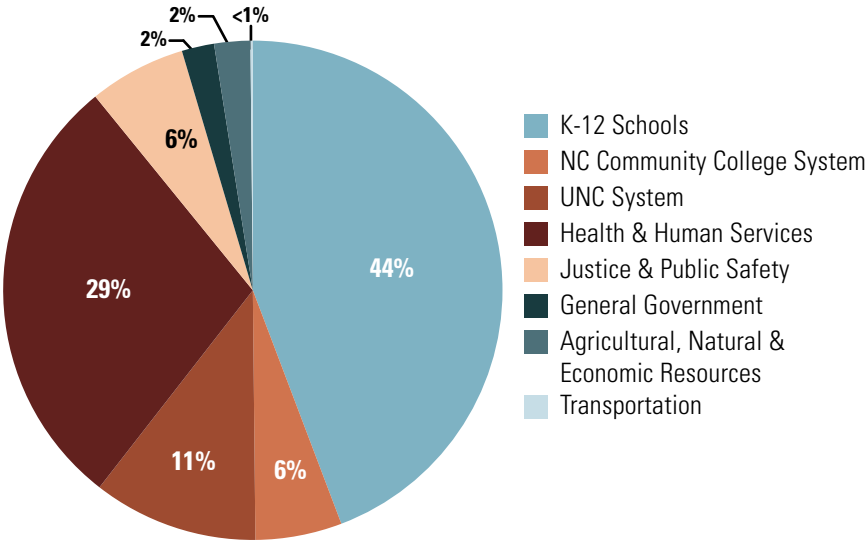
- K-12 Schools
- NC Community College System
- UNC System
- Health & Human Services
- Justice & Public Safety
- General Government
- Agricultural, Natural & Economic Resources
- Transportation

Source: *North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management, Certified Budget Fiscal Year 2024-25*

62% In 2024-25, **62%** of the North Carolina General Fund appropriations support K-12 public and higher education.

Source: *North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management, Certified Budget Fiscal Year 2024-25*

Total Spending per Child Enrolled in State Pre-K Programs, by Funding Source (2023)

$8,504

$8,294

North Carolina:
- **$1,832** (Federal and Local Funds)
- **$6,672** (State Funds)

National:
- **$1,017** (Federal and Local Funds)
- **$7,277** (State Funds)

■ State Funds ■ Federal and Local Funds*
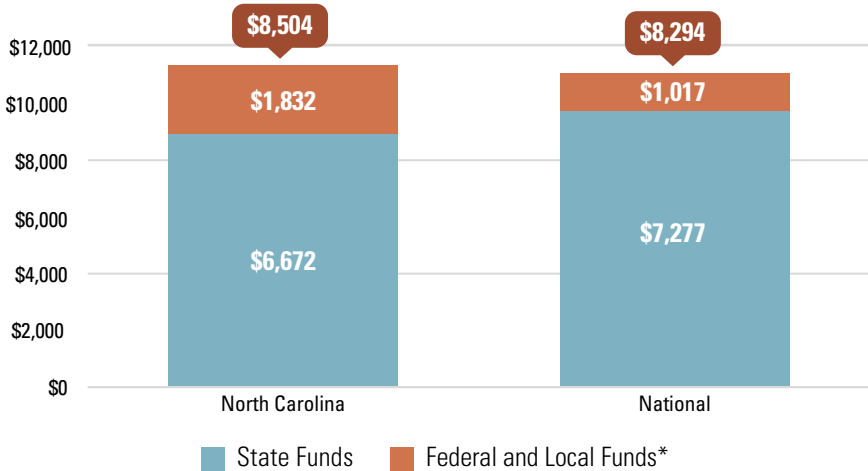
Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure. To learn more, check out the NC Early Childhood Foundation Cost of NC Pre-K Fact Sheet.

Source: *NIEER 2023 State of Preschool Yearbook*

State Spending per Child Enrolled in NC Pre-K, Inflation-Adjusted to 2023 Dollars (2002 to 2023*)

- 2002: **$10,495**
- 2023: **$6,672**
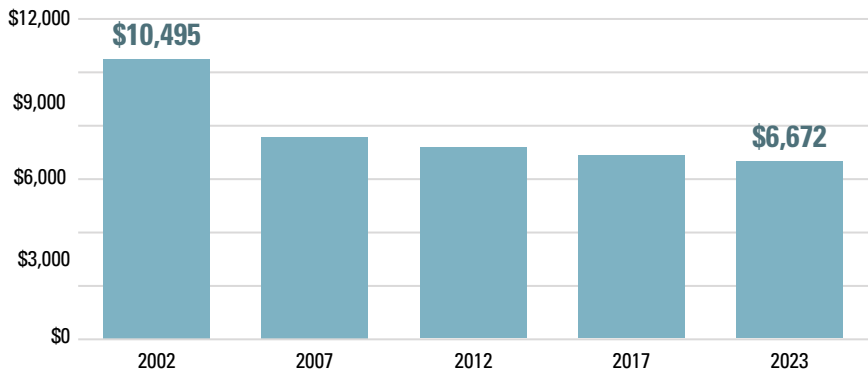
Selective years as reported National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER).

Source: *NIEER 2023 State of Preschool Yearbook, NC Profile*

Per Pupil Revenue for K-12 Public Education, by Source (FY2023)*

	North Carolina	National Average
Total Revenue Per Pupil	**$13,448**	**$18,911**
State %	$7,505 (56%)	$8,267 (44%)
Federal %	$2,738 (20%)	$2,564 (14%)
Local %	$3,205 (24%)	$8,079 (43%)

***Includes substantial
Federal ESSER funds.**

Source: *U.S. Census, 2023 Public Elementary-Secondary
Education Finance Data, Summary Tables 1 & 19*

Distribution of K-12 Public Education Expenditures, by Function (FY2022)
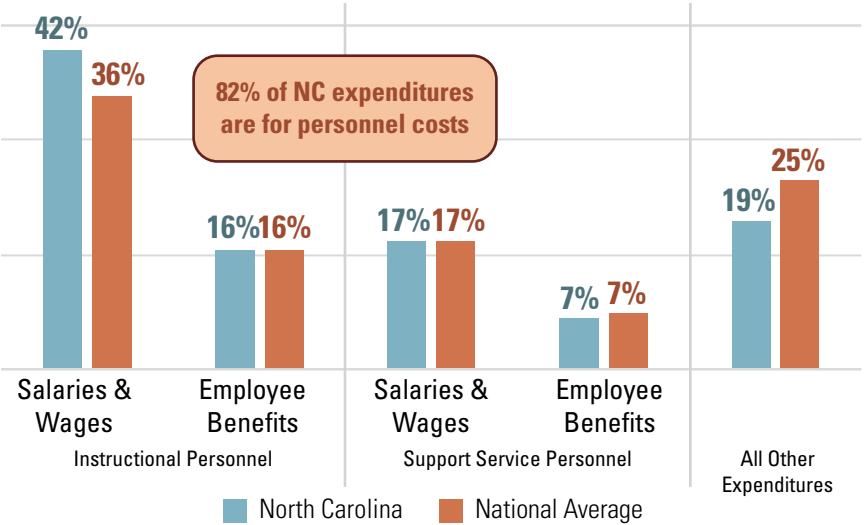
42% **36%**

**82% of NC expenditures
are for personnel costs**

16% 16% **17% 17%** **7% 7%** **19% 25%**

Salaries & Wages	Employee Benefits	Salaries & Wages	Employee Benefits	All Other Expenditures
Instructional Personnel		Support Service Personnel		

■ North Carolina ■ National Average

Source: *U.S. Census, 2022 Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data, Summary Table 6*

In North Carolina, **58%** of K-12 expenditures fund the salary and benefits of instructional personnel, compared to **53%** nationally.

Source: *U.S. Census, 2022 Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data, Summary Table 6*

Increasing Costs of Teacher Benefits in North Carolina

In North Carolina, teachers are eligible for a comprehensive benefits package including healthcare and a defined-benefit retirement plan, also called a pension plan. Nationwide and in North Carolina, teacher retirement and healthcare benefits costs have risen sharply over the past two decades and require increasing levels of investment in order to maintain benefit levels and to fully fund pension obligations.

In 2023-24, these benefits cost the state an average of $19,073 per teacher for retirement and $7,557 per teacher for healthcare. Teachers are also required to contribute 6% of their annual salary to the state retirement system. Together, the benefits package reflects a 45% cost increase per teacher for every dollar invested in salaries. In other words, for every $1 billion investment in teacher salaries, the actual cost to the state is another $450 million spent on benefits.

> For every **$1 spent on teacher salaries,** the state spends **an additional 45 cents on benefits.**

Between 2013-14 and 2023-24, state expenditures on teacher benefits increased by 88% while state expenditures on teacher salaries have grown by just 33%.

Figure 1: State Expenditure on Instructional Personnel, by Type (2013-14 to 2023-24)

Bar chart showing values: $1.16B, $2.76B (2013-14); $2.17B, $3.68B (2023-24)

Legend: ■ Classroom Teacher Salaries ■ Estimated Matching Benefits
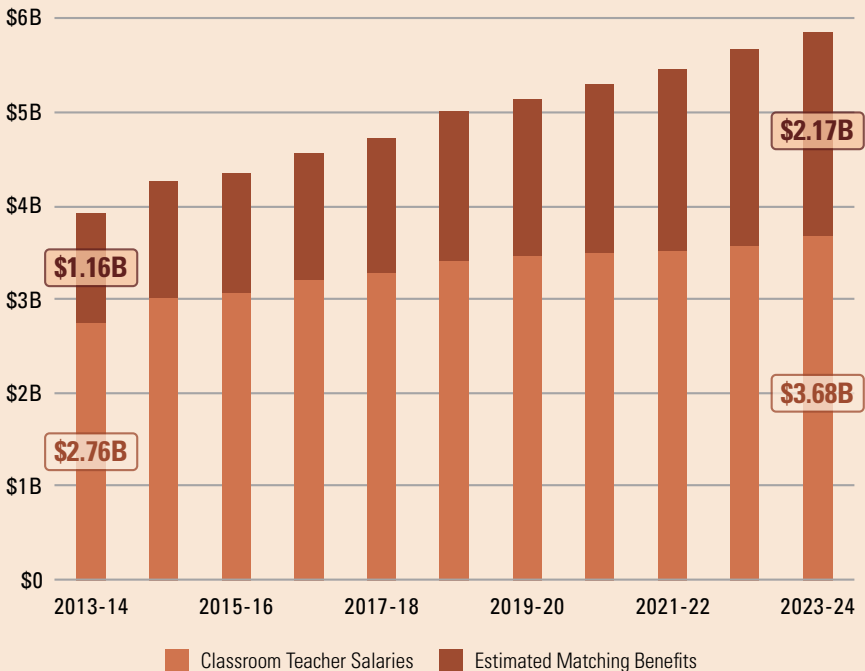
Note: *Estimated Matching Benefits includes funds for Social Security, Retirement, and Hospitalization for position allotments for Classroom Teachers, Instructional Support, and School Building Administration.*

> **For related infographics on teacher salaries and benefits, please see pages 29 and 31.**

Source: *Current Appropriations Act of 2023; NEA Rankings and Estimates Report 2024*

State Education Funding in North Carolina

North Carolina provides a base level of state funding to all districts, determined, in part, by the number of students enrolled, and provides additional state funding to districts based on student needs and district characteristics. In 2024-25, state spending on K-12 education was $12.6 billion from all state sources, including the following allotments for special circumstances:

Funding for Children with Disabilities:
$1.19 Billion

Funding for English Language Learners:
$145 Million

Disadvantaged Student Supplemental Funding:
$110 Million

Small County Supplemental Funding:
$59 Million
(for 30 county school districts)

Low Wealth District Supplemental Funding:
$330 Million
(for 77 school districts)

Source: *NC DPI 2025 Highlights of the Public School Budget*

In 2024, North Carolina ranked 37th in total per pupil funding.*

37th

In 2024, North Carolina ranked 17th for the percentage of education funding provided by the state.

17th

This ranking is not adjusted for cost of living amongst states and does not include federal COVID funding.

Source: *2024 NEA Rankings and Estimates Report*

State Revenue Sources for K-12 Public Education (2023-24)

General Fund — **$12B**
Lottery: Operating — **$485M**
Lottery: School Construction — **$408M**
Civil Penalties — **$198M**
Dept. of Revenue Sales Tax Return — **$124M**
Indian Gaming Fund — **$11M**

$0 $2B $4B $6B $8B $10B $12B

General Fund appropriations come primarily from individual and corporate income tax revenue and state sales tax revenue.
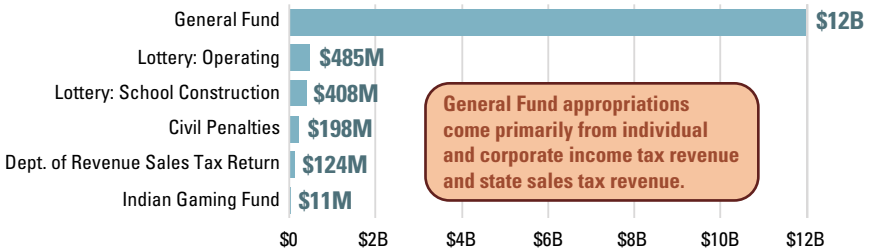
Source: North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management, Certified Budget FY 2022-23

North Carolina Education Lottery: Education-Directed Spending, by Category (FY16-FY25)

FY 25
FY 24
FY 23
FY 22
FY 21
FY 20
FY 19
FY 18
FY 17
FY 16

$0 $200 $400 $600 $800 $1,000
In Millions

■ School Construction   ■ UNC Needs-Based Aid   ■ NC Pre-K   ■ College Scholarships
■ Non-Instructional Support Personnel   ■ LEA Transportation
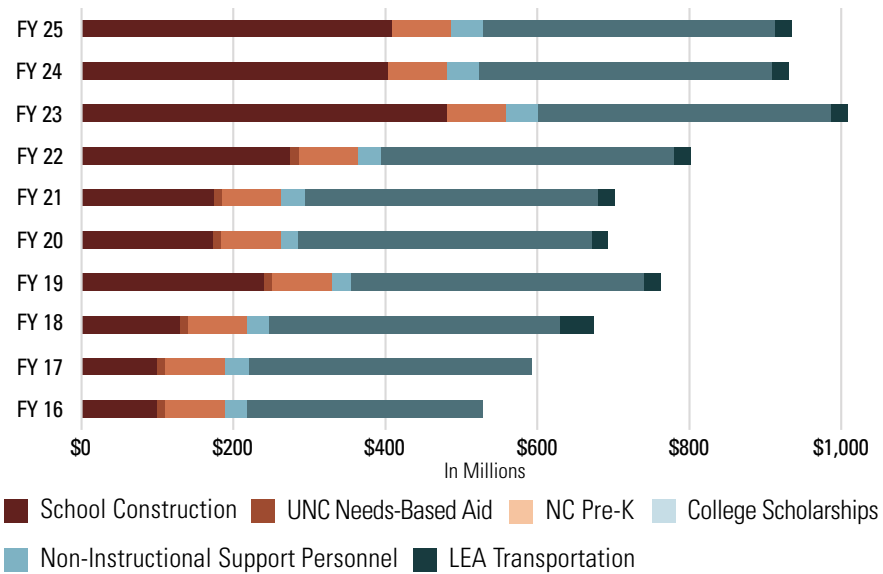
Source: Current Operations Appropriations Act of 2023

"The General Assembly shall provide by taxation and otherwise for a general and uniform system of free public schools, which shall be maintained at least nine months in every year, and wherein equal opportunities shall be provided for all students."

– Article IX, Section 2, North Carolina Constitution

Example Federal and State per Pupil K-12 Public Education Funding, by Student Characteristic (2024-25)

$20,926

$7,204

Student A:
1st Grade Student with Limited English Proficiency and Special Learning Issues, Economically Disadvantaged

Student B:
1st Grade Student with No Special Learning Needs, Non-Economically Disadvantaged

- Every 1st Grade Student
- Limited English Proficient
- Special Learning Issues (IEP)
- Title I: Student from Low Income Family
- Disadvantaged Student Supplement

Note: Data are based on student characteristics and exclude all local funding, as well as any low-wealth and small county supplemental funding from the state.
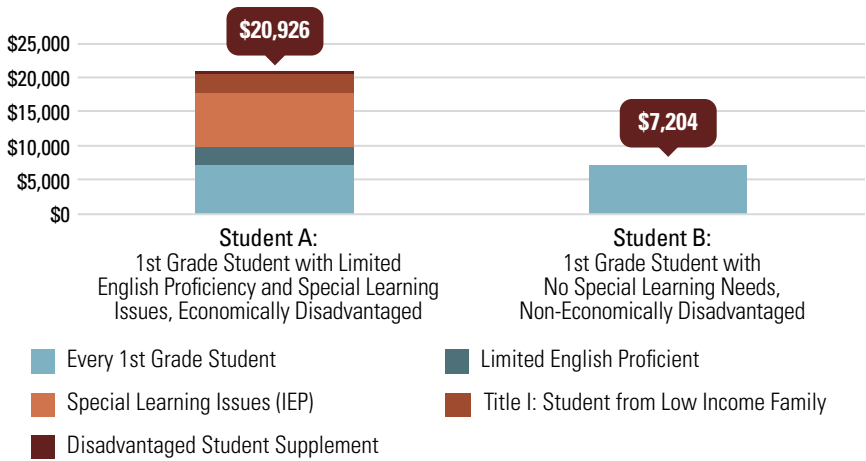
Source: *NC DPI 2025 Highlights of the Public School Budget*

Federal Education Funding in North Carolina

In most school years, roughly 10% of K-12 public education funding in North Carolina comes from the federal government. However, due to COVID-19 relief funding, federal funding accounted for 20% of K-12 public education funding in North Carolina in 2022-23. Traditionally, federal funds mainly support child nutrition, students with disabilities, and students from low-income households (Title I).

Source: *NC DPI 2025 Highlights of the Public School Budget*

Distribution of Federal K-12 Public Education Funds (2023-24)

- Child Nutrition
- Title I
- Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Other

3%
10%
28%
24%
35%
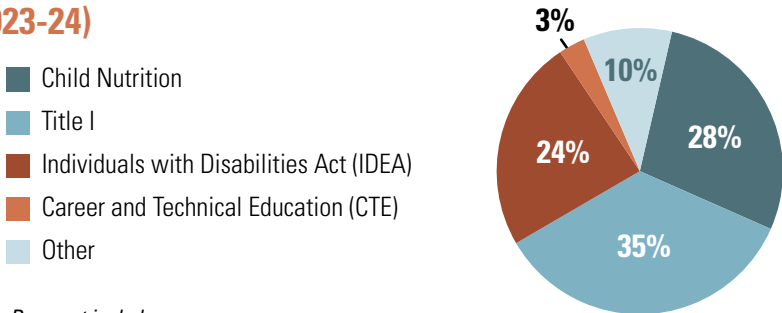
Note: Does not include one-time COVID-19 relief funding.

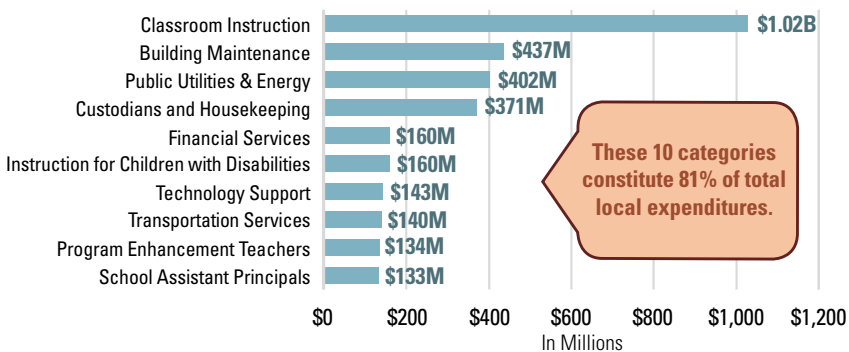**Source:** *NC DPI 2025 Highlights of the Public School Budget*

Local Education Funding in North Carolina

In addition to state and federal funds, North Carolina counties provide local funding to supplement K-12 school "operations," such as funding for teachers and other staff. Local funds are also used for "capital expenditures," which help build, furnish, and maintain K-12 school buildings.

In 2023-24, local funds for school operations ranged from **$1,137 per pupil in Harnett County Public Schools** to **$8,822 per pupil in Chapel-Hill/Carrboro City Schools**, with **a median of $2,587 per pupil** in districts across the state. In 2023-24, local dollars funded **27,520 positions** in K-12 public schools, including **6,703 service workers**, **6,349 teachers**, **1,875 teacher assistants**, and **804 assistant principals** across the state.

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Tables 16 & 24

Top-10 Local K-12 Public Education Operating Expenditures (2023-24)

Classroom Instruction — $1.02B
Building Maintenance — $437M
Public Utilities & Energy — $402M
Custodians and Housekeeping — $371M
Financial Services — $160M
Instruction for Children with Disabilities — $160M
Technology Support — $143M
Transportation Services — $140M
Program Enhancement Teachers — $134M
School Assistant Principals — $133M

In Millions

These 10 categories constitute 81% of total local expenditures.

Note: This does not include capital expenditures (see below).

Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 27

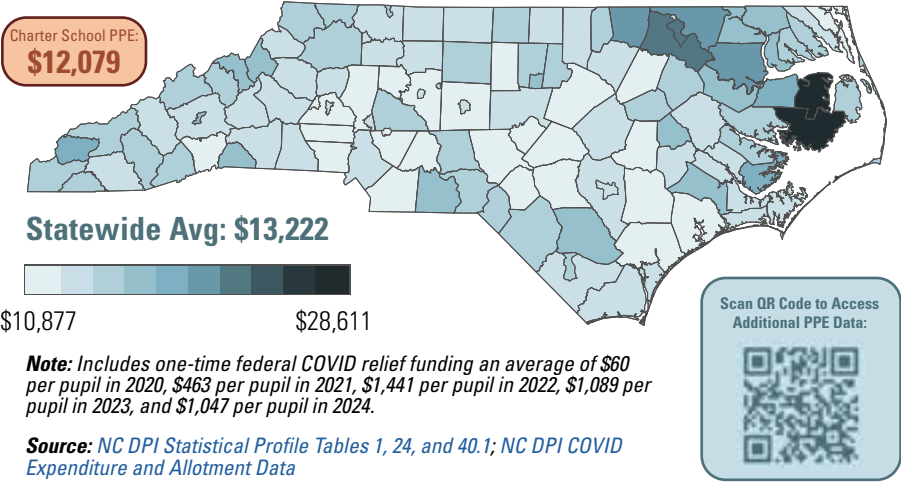## K-12 Public Education Capital Expenditures, Inflation-Adjusted to 2024 Dollars, by Source (2014 to 2024)

In Millions

$601,881,427
$1,550,832,908
$1,918,090,195

Local   State   Federal
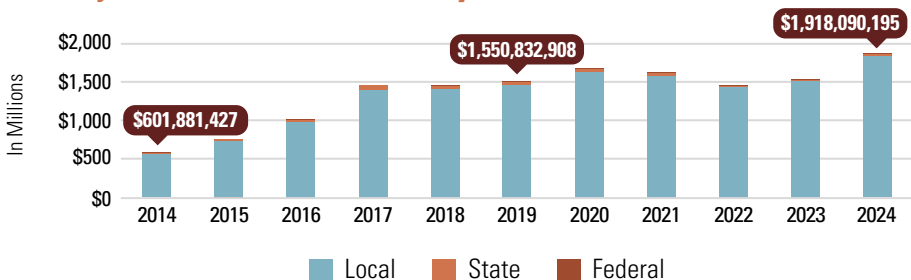
Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 28

Total K-12 Traditional Public Education per Pupil Expenditures from All Sources, by District (2023-24)

Charter School PPE:
$12,079

Statewide Avg: $13,222

$10,877 $28,611

Note: *Includes one-time federal COVID relief funding an average of $60 per pupil in 2020, $463 per pupil in 2021, $1,441 per pupil in 2022, $1,089 per pupil in 2023, and $1,047 per pupil in 2024.*

Source: *NC DPI Statistical Profile Tables 1, 24, and 40.1; NC DPI COVID Expenditure and Allotment Data*

Scan QR Code to Access
Additional PPE Data:

K-12 Traditional Public Education Per Pupil Expenditures, Inflation-Adjusted to 2024 Dollars, by Source (2005 to 2024)
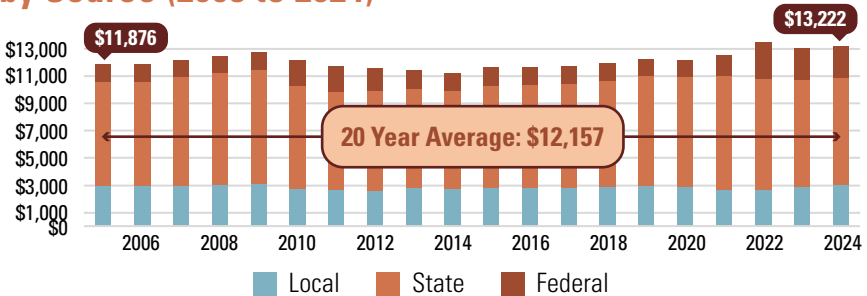
$11,876

$13,222

20 Year Average: $12,157

| Local | State | Federal |

Note: *Includes one-time federal COVID relief funding an average of $60 per pupil in 2020, $463 per pupil in 2021, $1,441 per pupil in 2022, $1,089 per pupil in 2023, and $1,047 per pupil in 2024.*

Source: *NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 23; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Databases, Tables & Calculators by Subject*

Between 2019 and 2024, inflation-adjusted total per-pupil expenditures in North Carolina have increased by **8%**. The size of this increase is due in part to an influx of one-time federal COVID relief funds. Inflation-adjusted federal and expenditures increased by **88%**.

**Source:** *NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 23*

K-12 Traditional Public Schools per Pupil Expenditures*, by School Growth Status (2022-23)

$12,506	**$13,265**	**$12,500**
428,066	569,433	459,837
Did Not Meet Growth (n=669)	Met Growth (n=1,095)	Exceeded Growth (n=713)

● Median ● # of Students
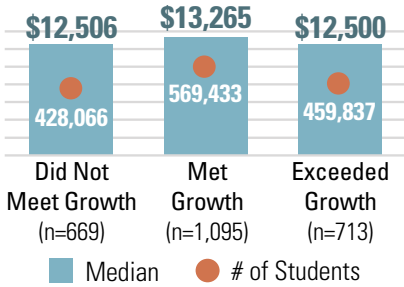
Includes federal COVID relief funding.

Source: *NC DPI Accountability Dashboards; NC DPI School Report Card Data Set*

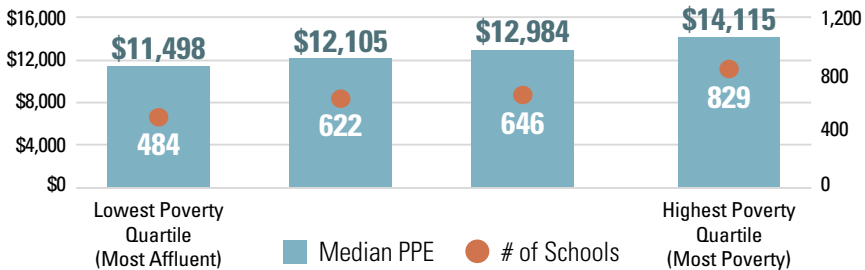## K-12 Traditional Public School per Pupil Expenditures*, by Source and Rural Status (2022-23)

Rural	Non-Rural
$12,323	**$12,440**
$2,375	$3,230
$2,149	$1,994
$7,799	$7,216

● State ● Federal ● Local
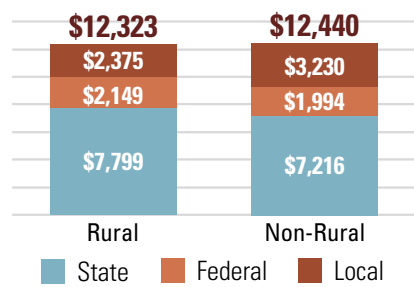
Includes federal COVID relief funding.

Source: *NC DPI EDDIE Database; NC DPI School Report Card Data Set*

Median per Pupil Expenditures* in Traditional K-12 Public Schools, by School Poverty Level (2022-23)

Lowest Poverty Quartile (Most Affluent)			Highest Poverty Quartile (Most Poverty)
$11,498	**$12,105**	**$12,984**	**$14,115**
484	622	646	829

● Median PPE ● # of Schools

Per pupil expenditures include COVID relief funding.

Note: Schools were sorted by their percentage of economically disadvantaged students and grouped into quartiles such that the number of students was equal across each quartile.

Source: *NC DPI School Report Card Data Set*

23% Traditional public schools in the highest poverty quartile receive 23% **more** per pupil funding than traditional public schools in the lowest poverty quartile (the most affluent schools).

Source: *NC DPI School Report Card Data Set*

North Carolina Community College System: State Spending per Full-Time Student, Inflation-Adjusted to 2024 Dollars (2014-15 to 2024-25)
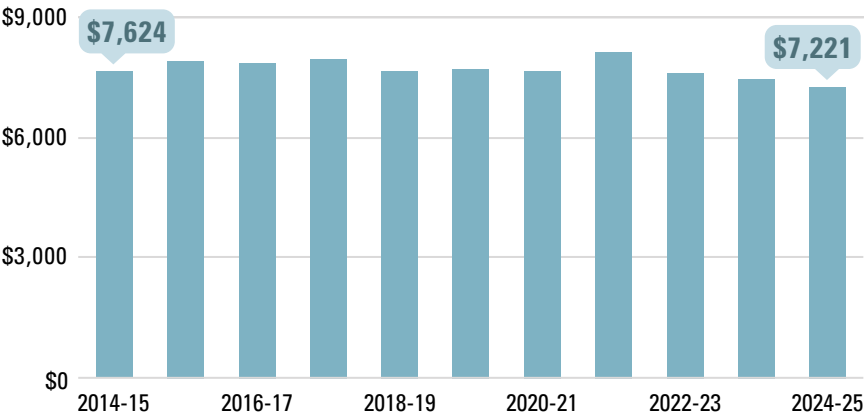
UNC System: State Spending per Full-Time Student, Inflation-Adjusted to 2024 Dollars (2014-15 to 2024-25)

State and Local Funding for Higher Education per Full-Time Student (2022-23)

$11,430

$11,040

■ North Carolina　■ National Average

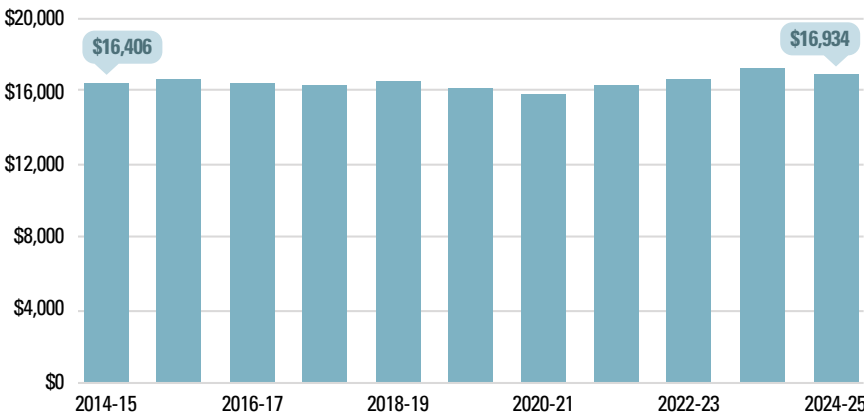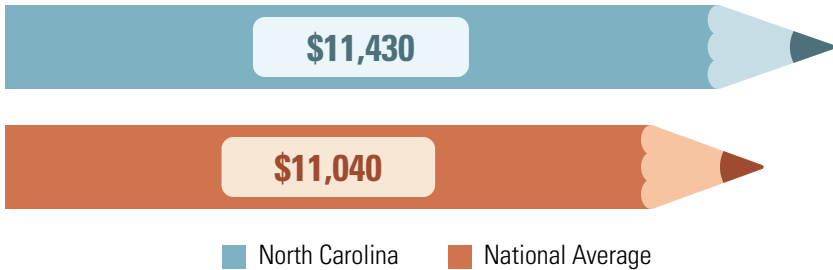*Source: College Board, Trends in College Pricing Annual Report*

Average In-State Tuition and Fees at Public Four-Year Higher Education Institutions (2024-25)

$7,470

$11,610

■ North Carolina　■ National Average
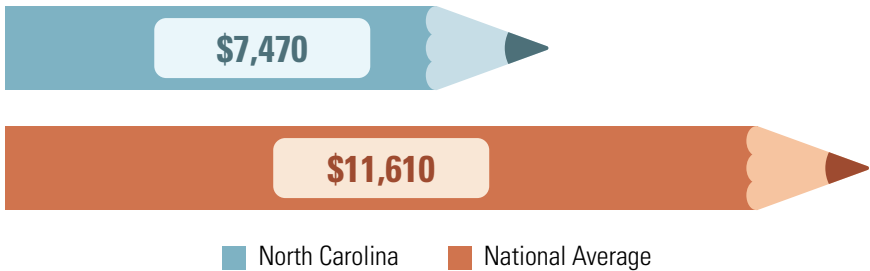
Source: College Board, Trends in College Pricing Annual Report

In 2022-23, North Carolina ranked 17th nationally for public higher education funding per full-time student.

17th

In 2024-25, average in-state tuition at North Carolina's public four-year institutions was 3rd-lowest nationally.

3rd

Source: College Board, Trends in College Pricing Annual Report

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be filled out by anyone seeking federal aid to help fund their higher education expenses. This is a key metric for educational matriculation and attainment. In North Carolina, FAFSA completions range from between 35% and 39% in Anson and Richmond County Schools to greater than 70% in Columbus County and Weldon City Schools, with a median district completion rate between 50% and 54%.

FAFSA Completion Rates, by District (2024-25 Cycle, through December 2024)

37%   72%
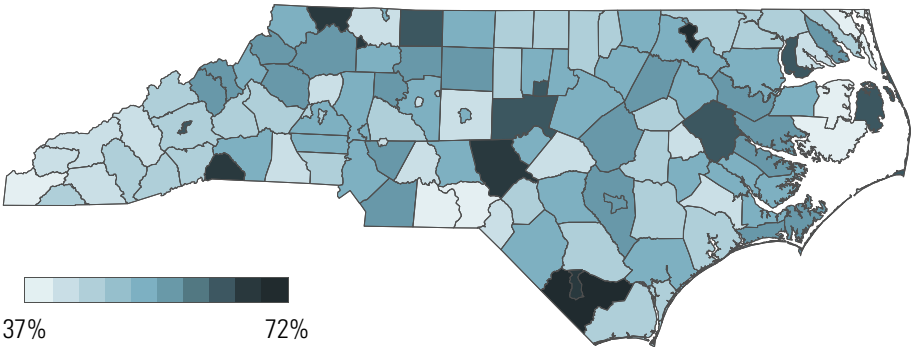
Source: U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid, FAFSA Completion by High School and Public School District (December 2024)

55% of North Carolina public school districts have an estimated FAFSA completion rate of 50% or higher in 2023-24.

Source: U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid

> "The General Assembly shall provide that the benefits of The University of North Carolina and other public institutions of higher education, as far as practicable, be extended to the people of the State free of expense."
>
> – Article IX, Section 9, North Carolina Constitution

Median College Debt and Percentage of Graduates with Debt, by Institution Type (Class of 2020)

	NC Median Debt	National Median Debt	NC % with Debt	National % with Debt
Public 2-Year	$12,000	$11,835	15%	27%
Public 4-Year	$24,771	$24,821	64%	51%
Private Nonprofit 4-Year	$26,349	$28,169	62%	58%
Private For-Profit 4-Year*		$31,797		77%

Legend: ▮ NC Median Debt ▮ National Median Debt ● NC Percentage with Debt ● National Percentage with Debt
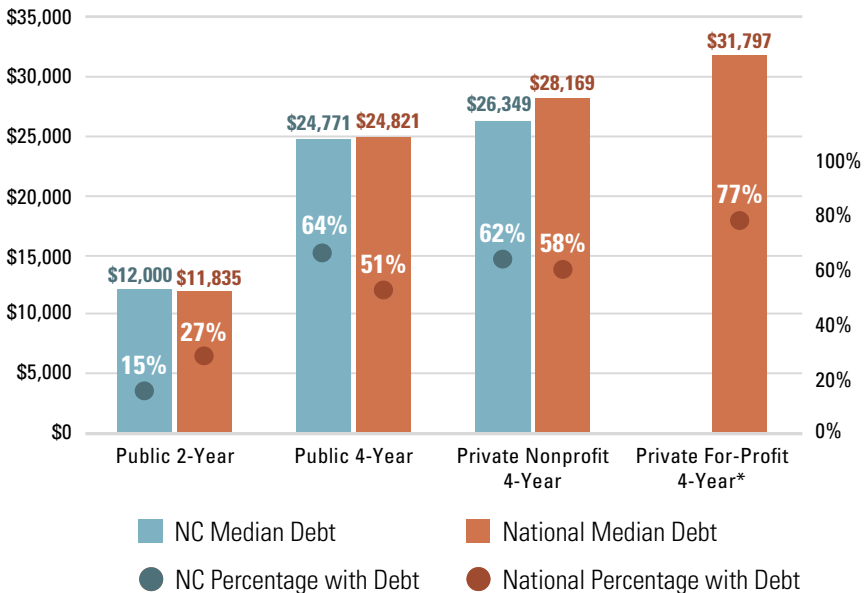
* Reporting standards not met for North Carolina.
Source: *NCES Powerstats*

$38,834
The Average Federal Student Loan Debt Owed by NC Borrowers in 2024

7th
NC's Cost-of-Living Adjusted Federal Student Loan Debt Ranking Amongst All States in 2024

Note: *92% of all student loan debt is a result of federal loans, nationally.*
Source: *Federal Student Aid, Federal Student Loan Portfolio*

SECTION 5: Achievement

Statewide Assessments for K-12 Public School Students

In addition to the statewide assessments below, local districts often require multiple additional assessments, such as interim or benchmark tests, that provide educators with more information about student growth and achievement across the school year.

Test	State	Federal
K-3 Reading (Various Assessments)	✔	
3rd Grade Beginning-of-Grade Reading	✔	
3rd-8th Grade End-of-Grade Tests in Math and Reading, and also in Science for 5th and 8th Grades		✔
End-of-Course Tests in Biology, Math I, English II, & Math III		✔
ACT Testing Suite, Given in 10th and 11th Grades	✔	
Career and Technical Education (CTE) Assessments in CTE Courses		✔

Note: Assessments above are given to the majority of students in North Carolina.

Source: NC DPI Testing and School Accountability, Technical Information

Achievement Levels on North Carolina End-of-Grade and End-of-Course Tests

Performance on North Carolina End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) tests is broken down into four achievement levels.

| Achievement Level*	Command of Grade-Level Knowledge and Skills	Indicates Grade-Level Proficiency	On Track for College and Career Readiness
5	Comprehensive	Yes	Yes
4	Thorough	Yes	Yes
3**	Sufficient	Yes	No
Not Proficient	Inconsistent	No	No

*For NCEXTEND Alternate Assessments, student achievement levels are Level 4, Level 3, and Not Proficient.

**Students performing at this level have a sufficient command of grade-level knowledge and skills, but may need academic support to engage successfully in the next grade level.

Source: NC DPI Testing and School Accountability, Technical Information

Retention* (Non-Promotion) Rates in K-12 Traditional Public Schools, by Grade Level (2013-14 and 2023-24)

Legend: ■ 2013-14 ■ 2023-24

Total callouts: 3.3% (2013-14), 2.5% (2023-24)
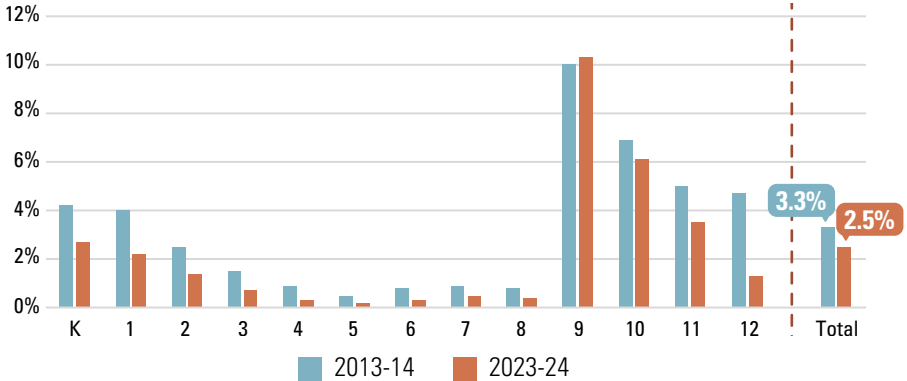
Students were retained at the end of the academic year listed and remained in the same grade for the following school year.

Source: *NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 1*

College and Career Readiness* of K-12 Traditional Public School Students, by District (2023-24)

Charter Avg. CCR: **38%**

13% — 58%
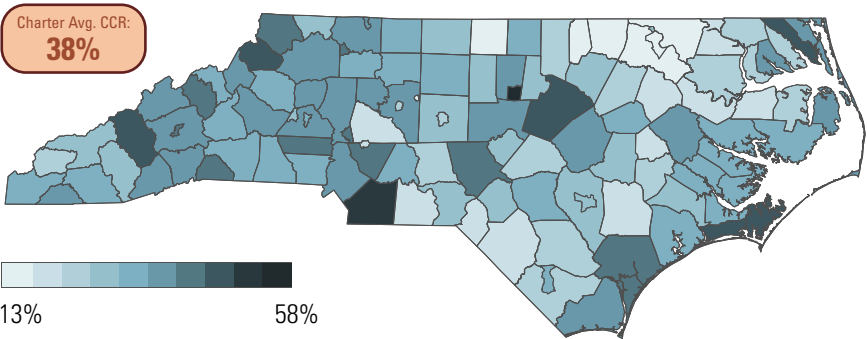
College and career readiness is indicated by a score of 4 or 5 on all End-of-Grade or End-of-Course assessments.

Source: *NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports*

In 2024-25, the overall student retention rate in North Carolina traditional public schools was 2.5%. Retention was **highest** in grade 9 (10.3%) and grade 10 (6.1%) and **lowest** in grades 4-8 (less than 1%).

Source: *NC DPI Statistical Profile, Table 2*

K-12 Public School Students On Track for College & Career, by Selected Subject (2018-19 to 2023-24)

3rd Grade Reading
- 45%
- 34%
- 27%
- 29%
- 29%

5th Grade Science
- 62%
- 42%
- 51%
- 54%
- 55%

8th Grade Math*
- 34%
- 17%
- 26%
- 28%
- 30%

Math I**
- 15%
- 7%
- 11%
- 13%
- 13%

Math III
- 34%
- 25%
- 32%
- 36%
- 34%

Biology
- 52%
- 39%
- 43%
- 47%
- 45%

HS English II
- 50%
- 35%
- 35%
- 34%
- 36%

Legend: 2018-19 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24
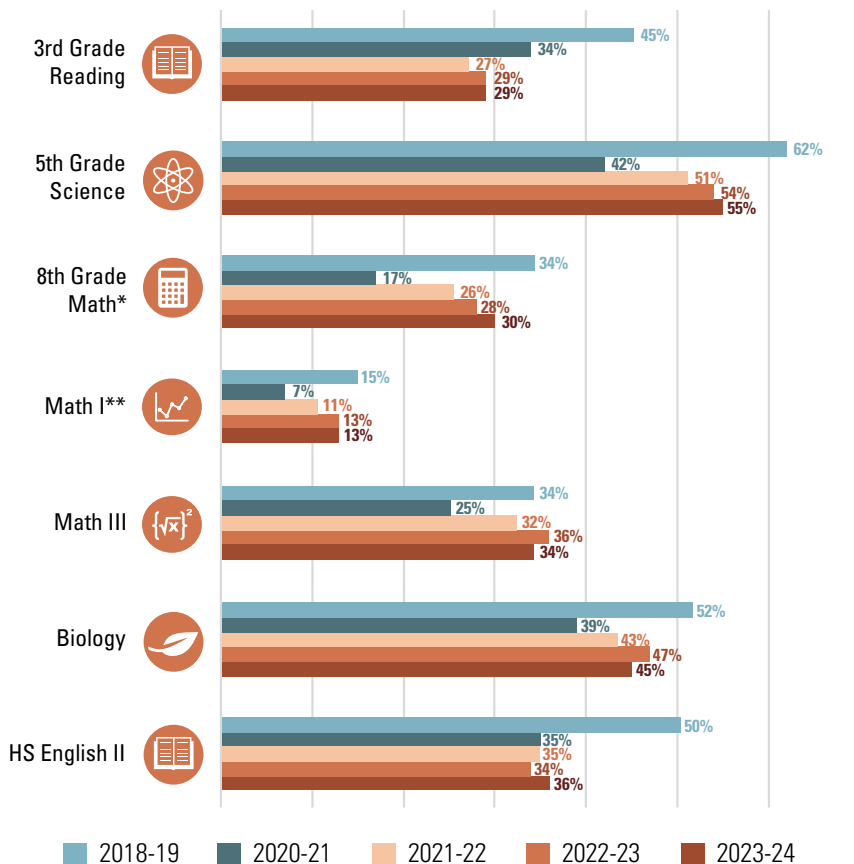
***Represents a composite of the scores of 8th grade students on the Grade 8 Math EOG and the Math 1 EOC.*

****Does not include the scores of students who took the Math 1 EOC in 8th grade.*

Source: *NC DPI Testing Dashboard*

29%
of 3rd grade students in North Carolina public schools were on track for college and career in reading in 2023-24.

Source: *NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports*

Math 3 Achievement in North Carolina

In the wake of the pandemic, academic achievement across the United States was negatively impacted by school closures, disruptions to learning, and the shift to remote education. While recovery has been slow in many areas, North Carolina student achievement in Math 3 is unique in that it is well above pre-pandemic levels.
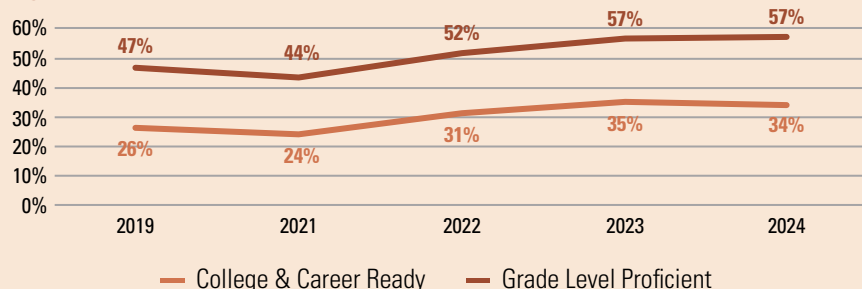
Recovery and Growth in Math 3 Achievement

In 2023-24, the percentage of students proficient on the Math 3 End-of-Course test (EOC) exceeded pre-pandemic levels (2019) by 10 percentage points.

Figure 1: Math 3 EOC Achievement Rates (2019 to 2024)

— College & Career Ready   — Grade Level Proficient

Increases in Math 3 proficiency has occurred across all student subgroups:

Figure 2: Math 3 Students Scoring at or Above Grade Level Proficiency, by Student Subgroup (2019 and 2024)
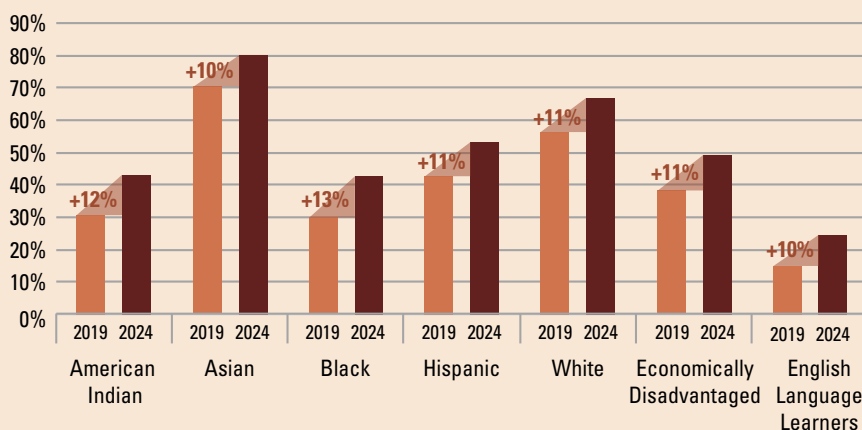
Factors Contributing to Growth

The improvements in math may be due, in part, to North Carolina's automatic enrollment policy which increases enrollment in advanced coursework by requiring that all students with a qualifying EOC/EOG score be automatically enrolled in an advanced math course the following school year.

Scan QR Code to Learn More about Auto-Enrollment:

College and Career Readiness of K-12 Traditional Public School Students, by Student Subgroup (2018-19 to 2023-24)*

Subgroup	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2023-24
All Students	45%	30%	36%	36%
American Indian	31%	16%	23%	24%
Asian	71%	60%	68%	68%
Black	27%	14%	19%	20%
Hispanic	34%	19%	25%	25%
Two+ Races	44%	28%	35%	36%
White	57%	41%	48%	49%
Economically Disadvantaged Students	30%	16%	22%	23%
Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students	58%	38%	50%	51%
Academically or Intellectually Gifted	91%	77%	86%	86%
Homeless Students	22%	9%	12%	12%
Students with Disabilities	13%	7%	9%	9%
English Language Learners	15%	6%	11%	11%

*Data from 2021-22 not available.   ***Source:*** *NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports*

College and Career Readiness Achievement Gap (2023-24)

Gap between White and Black students:	Gap between White and Hispanic students:	Gap between ED* and Non-ED students:
28 PERCENTAGE POINTS	**24 PERCENTAGE POINTS**	**27 PERCENTAGE POINTS**

*Economically disadvantaged

Source: *NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports*

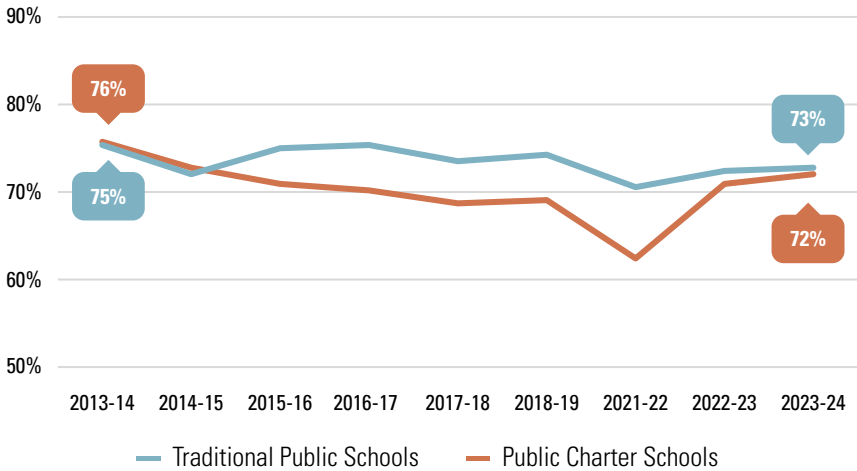## K-12 Public Schools Meeting or Exceeding Expected Student Growth, by School Type (2013-14 to 2023-24)

Legend: ─ Traditional Public Schools ─ Public Charter Schools

Data points: Traditional Public Schools 75% (2013-14) to 73% (2023-24); Public Charter Schools 76% (2013-14) to 72% (2023-24)

Note: School performance grades were not calculated in 2019-20 or 2020-21.

Source: NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports

Distribution of Academic Growth for K-12 Public Schools, by Student Subgroup (2023-24)

American Indian/Alaskan (n=49)
Asian (n=241)
Black (n=1,614)
Hispanic (n=1,640)
Two+ Races (n=418)
White (n=2,007)

Students with Disabilities (n=1,482)
English Language Learners (n=1,071)
Economically Disadvantaged (n=2,438)

Legend: ■ Did Not Meet Growth ■ Met Growth ■ Exceeded Growth
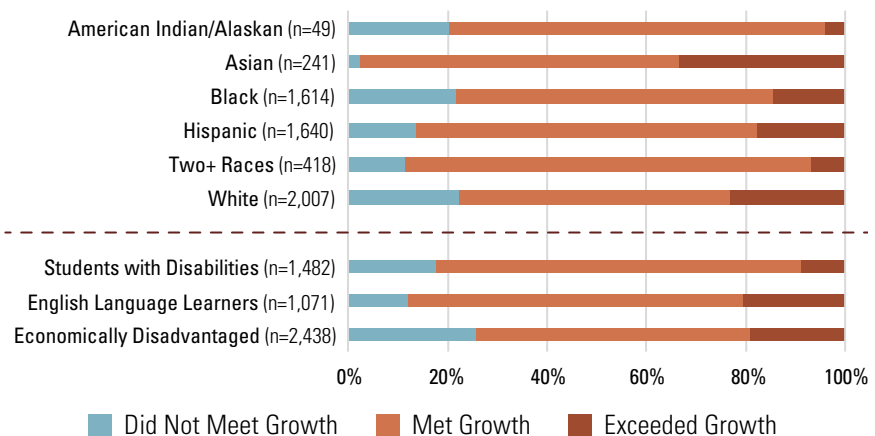
Note: n = the number of schools with 30 or more students in the indicated subgroup.

Source: NC DPI Performance and Growth of NC Public Schools 2023-24 Annual Testing Report

K-12 Public School Performance Grades, by Student Academic Growth (2023-24)

Number of North Carolina K-12 Public Schools

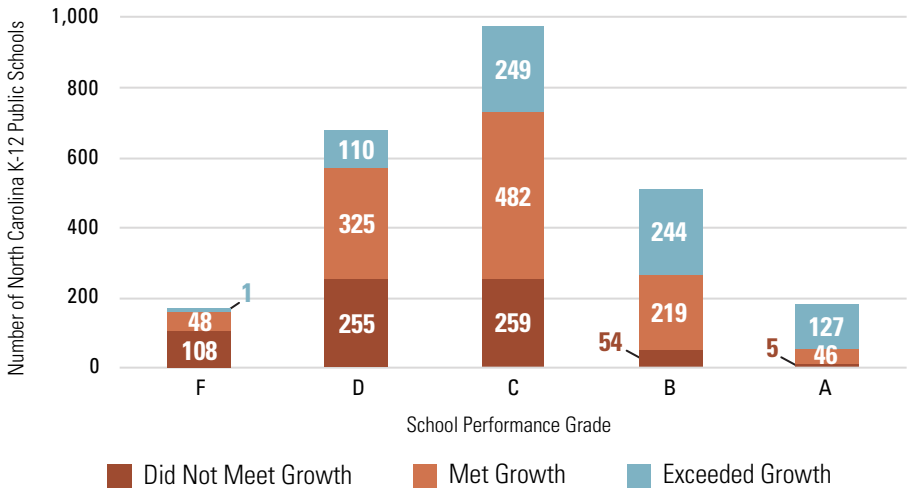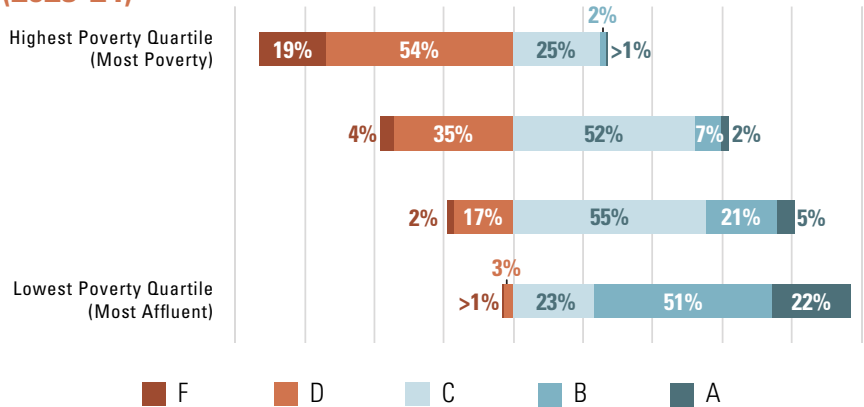| School Performance Grade	Did Not Meet Growth	Met Growth	Exceeded Growth
F	108	48	1
D	255	325	110
C	259	482	249
B	54	219	244
A	5	46	127

■ Did Not Meet Growth ■ Met Growth ■ Exceeded Growth

Source: NC DPI Performance and Growth of NC Public Schools 2023-24 Annual Testing Report

School Performance Grades, by School Poverty Level (2023-24)

Highest Poverty Quartile (Most Poverty): 19%, 54%, 25%, 2%, >1%

4%, 35%, 52%, 7%, 2%

2%, 17%, 55%, 21%, 5%

Lowest Poverty Quartile (Most Affluent): 3%, >1%, 23%, 51%, 22%

■ F ■ D ■ C ■ B ■ A

Note: Schools were sorted by the percentage of economically disadvantaged students and grouped into quartiles such that the number of schools was equal across each quartile. N=107 schools were excluded from this analysis, as they did not have a reported SPS or EDS for 2024.

Source: NC DPI Economically Disadvantaged Status Data; NCDPI Accountability Services Division, School Performance Grades

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (2024)

All states participate in NAEP, making it the most comprehensive measure of K-12 student achievement, trends, and state rankings across the nation. For more detailed data visit: **www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile** and **www.NCEdFacts.org**.

| Grade | Subject Area | % of Students At or Above Proficient | | Highest Proficiency Rate |
		North Carolina	National Public Average	
4th	Reading	30%	30%	40% (MA)
4th	Math	41%	39%	51% (MA)
8th	Reading	27%	29%	40% (MA)
8th	Math	31%	27%	37% (MA & WI)

Note: Use caution when interpreting aggregated student achievement data. NAEP exams are taken by a representative sample of all students. The makeup of the student population - including the percentages of economically disadvantaged students, students receiving special education services, and English learners - varies from state to state, and the performance of student subgroups is masked by aggregated achievement data.

Source: NAEP Data Explorer

41%
of North Carolina 4th grade students met proficiency standards on the 2024 NAEP reading assessment.

Source: NAEP Data Explorer

Middle School Math in North Carolina

A key focus of middle school math instruction is to prepare students for success in Math 1, which is the first high school math course for North Carolina students. Math 1 proficiency is recognized as a critical milestone for college readiness and lifetime achievement. Students who successfully complete Math 1 by the end of 9th grade are far more likely to graduate high school on time, enroll in postsecondary education, and pursue STEM-related careers. Conversely, students who struggle with Math 1 often face lower college completion rates and reduced earning potential in adulthood.

Middle School Math Proficiency

In the latest National Assessment for Education Progress (NAEP) report on students' academic achievement in reading and math, North Carolina stood out as one of five states nationwide that significantly improved in 8th grade math, tying with Tennessee as the top-ranking state in the Southeast. Importantly, North Carolina outpaced or tied the national average in nearly all subgroups. While the recent NAEP results are promising, 8th grade math results remain slightly below pre-pandemic levels, and only 31% of North Carolina's 8th grade students are considered college and career ready in math.

Figure 1: NAEP 8th Grade Math Proficiency (2009 to 2024)

Legend:
- - - North Carolina: EDS
— North Carolina: Non-EDS
- - - National Public: EDS
— National Public: Non-EDS
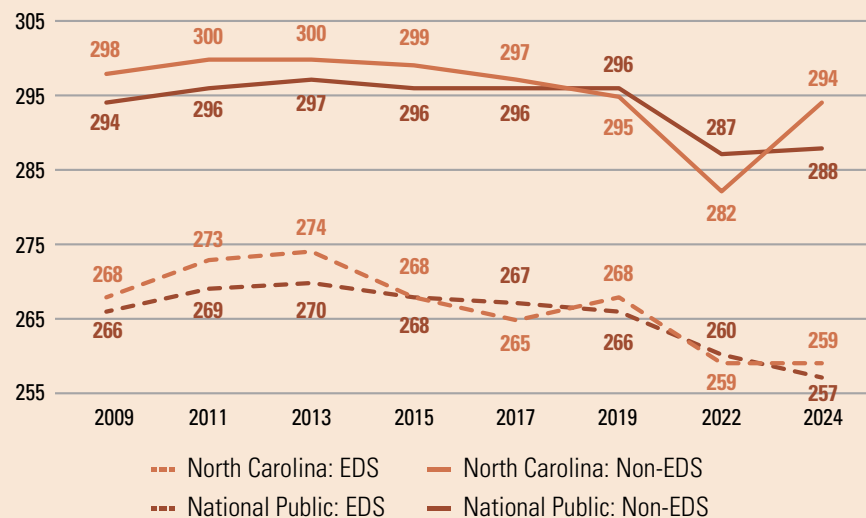
Factors Contributing to Growth

In the 2018 -19 school year, North Carolina implemented an automatic enrollment policy for math. Beginning in fourth grade, the policy requires school districts to place students who score a five on their end of grade assessment into advanced math courses.

The improvements in middle school math may also be attributed, at least in part, to students' access to more rigorous course work, including explicit (directly taught) and systematic (presented in a structured, logical sequence) instruction in key mathematical concepts enabling students develop a strong foundation in middle school math content before progressing to more complex topics.

Scan QR Code to Learn More about North Carolina's Auto-Enrollment Policy:
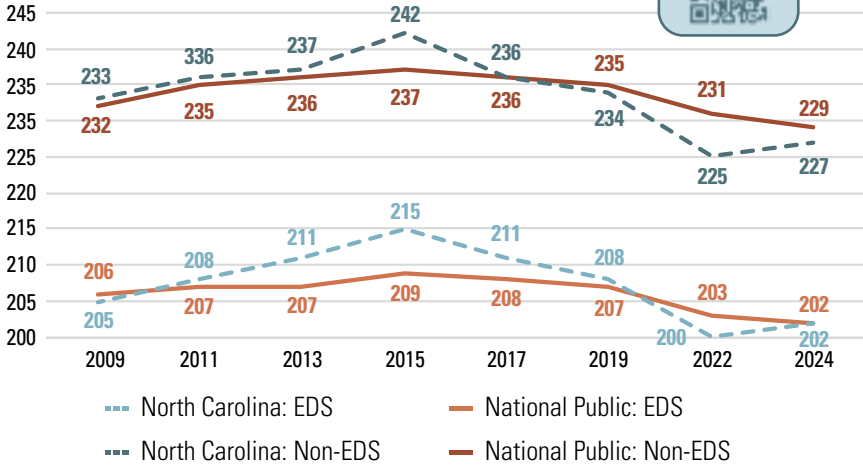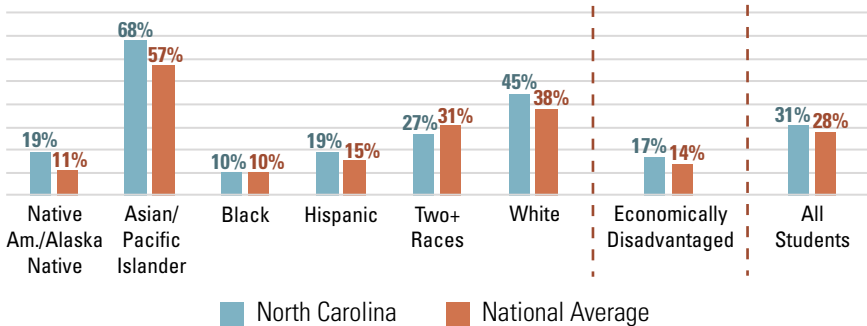
Source: NAEP Data Explorer

NAEP 4th Grade Reading Proficiency, by Economically Disadvantaged Status (EDS) (2009 to 2024)

Scan QR Code for Additional NAEP Analysis:

Non-EDS values:
- North Carolina: Non-EDS — 2009: 233, 2011: 336, 2013: 237, 2015: 242, 2017: 236, 2019: 234, 2022: 225, 2024: 227
- National Public: Non-EDS — 2009: 232, 2011: 235, 2013: 236, 2015: 237, 2017: 236, 2019: 235, 2022: 231, 2024: 229

EDS values:
- North Carolina: EDS — 2009: 205, 2011: 208, 2013: 211, 2015: 215, 2017: 211, 2019: 208, 2022: 200, 2024: 202
- National Public: EDS — 2009: 206, 2011: 207, 2013: 207, 2015: 209, 2017: 208, 2019: 207, 2022: 203, 2024: 202

Legend:
- - - North Carolina: EDS
—— National Public: EDS
- - - North Carolina: Non-EDS
—— National Public: Non-EDS

Source: *NAEP Data Explorer*

NAEP 8th Grade Math Proficiency, by Student Subgroup (2024)

Subgroup	North Carolina	National Average
Native Am./Alaska Native	19%	11%
Asian/Pacific Islander	68%	57%
Black	10%	10%
Hispanic	19%	15%
Two+ Races	27%	31%
White	45%	38%
Economically Disadvantaged	17%	14%
All Students	31%	28%

■ North Carolina   ■ National Average

Source: *NAEP Data Explorer*

27%

**of North Carolina 8th grade students met proficiency standards on the 2024 NAEP math assessment.**

American College Testing (ACT)

The ACT and ACT WorkKeys assessments are used to measure college and career-preparedness among high school students in North Carolina public schools. All 11th grade students are required to take the ACT. All 12th grade students with a Career and Technical Education (CTE) concentration also take the ACT WorkKeys career readiness assessment.

Average ACT Composite Score for States with 85% or Greater Participation (Class of 2024)
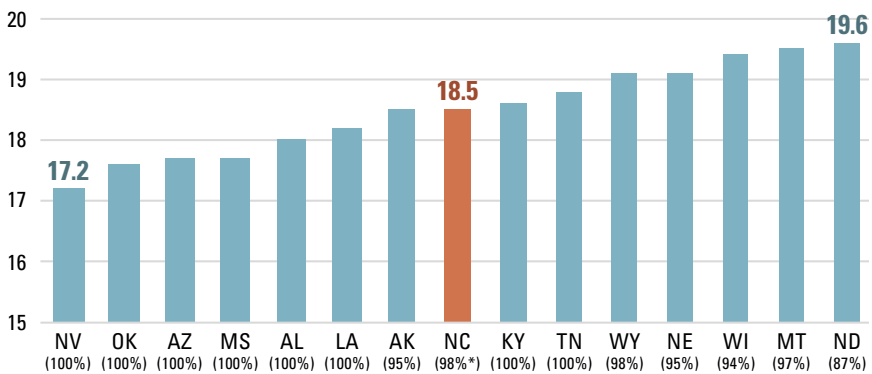
Note: State participation percentages in parentheses.

*Participation in NC was calculated using the number of students tested and NC 4th grade enrollment.

Source: *ACT, Average ACT Test Scores by State Graduating Class of 2024*

In 2023-24, 40% of 11th grade students in North Carolina **scored above 19 on the ACT,** which is the minimum entry score required for admission into UNC-System institutions.
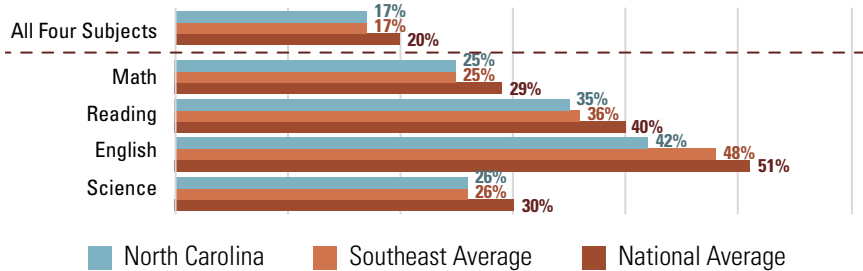
Source: *NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports*

60%

of high school seniors with a CTE concentration earned at least a Silver Career Readiness Certificate on the ACT WorkKeys assessment in 2023-24.

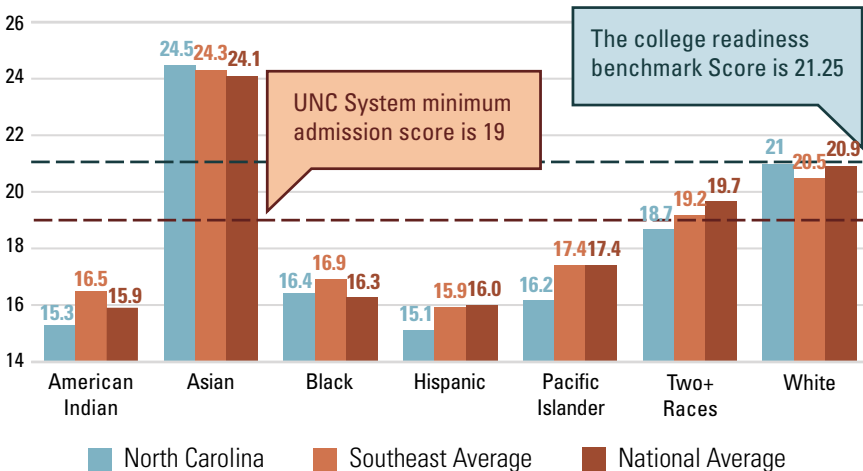**Source:** *NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports*

High School Students Meeting College Readiness Benchmarks on the ACT, by Subject Area (Graduating Class of 2024)*

Subject	North Carolina	Southeast Average	National Average
All Four Subjects	17%	17%	20%
Math	25%	25%	29%
Reading	35%	36%	40%
English	42%	48%	51%
Science	26%	26%	30%

■ North Carolina   ■ Southeast Average   ■ National Average

Source: *ACT High School Graduating Class Data Visualization Tool 2024*

Average ACT Composite Score, by Race/Ethnicity (Class of 2024)*

The college readiness benchmark Score is 21.25

UNC System minimum admission score is 19

Race/Ethnicity	North Carolina	Southeast Average	National Average
American Indian	15.3	16.5	15.9
Asian	24.5	24.3	24.1
Black	16.4	16.9	16.3
Hispanic	15.1	15.9	16.0
Pacific Islander	16.2	17.4	17.4
Two+ Races	18.7	19.2	19.7
White	21	20.5	20.9

■ North Carolina   ■ Southeast Average   ■ National Average

Source: *ACT High School Graduating Class Data Visualization Tool 2024*

***North Carolina requires all 11th-grade students to take the ACT. In many other states, the test is elective and typically is taken by a more college-going student population*
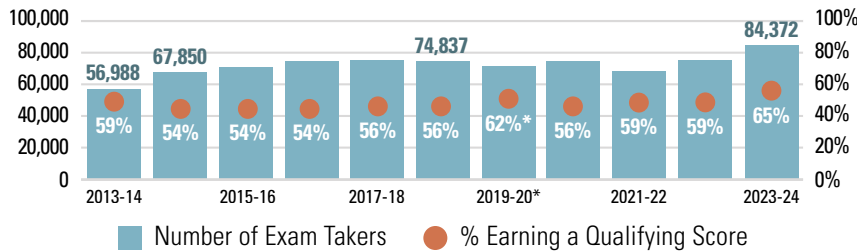
Only **23%** of economically disadvantaged students had a 19 or higher ACT composite score in 2023-24, compared to **53%** of non-economically disadvantaged students.

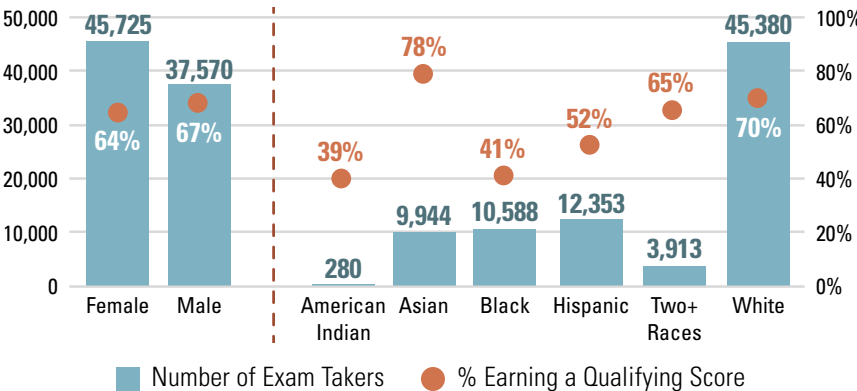**Source:** *NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports*

Advanced Placement (AP) Exam Participation and Percentage Earning a Qualifying Score in K-12 Public Schools (2014-15 to 2023-24)
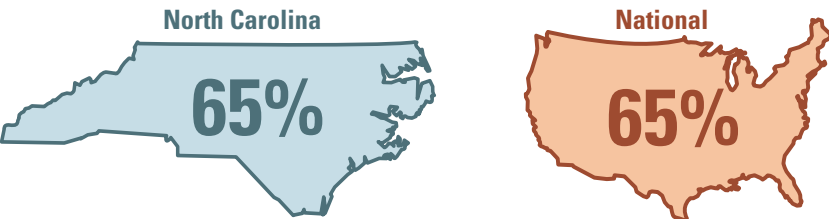

AP Exams were taken at home in 2019-20.

Source: *NC DPI SAT and AP Reports*

AP Exam Participation and Percentage Earning a Qualifying Score in K-12 Public Schools, by Student Subgroup (2023-24)

Source: *NC DPI SAT and AP Reports*

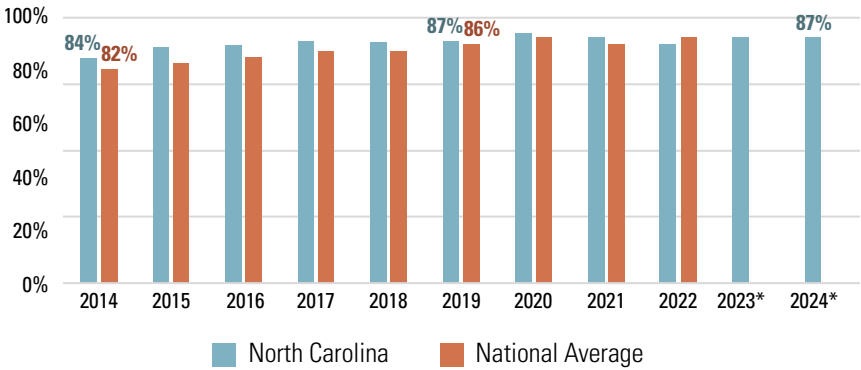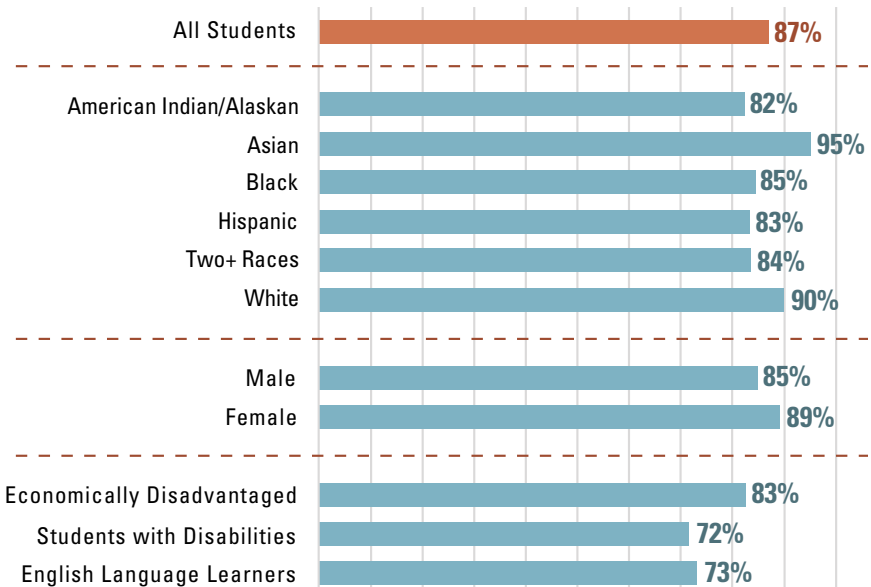# AP Exams Receiving a Qualifying Score (2023-24)

North Carolina 65%

National 65%

Source: *NC DPI SAT and AP Reports*

K-12 Public High School Graduation Rates (Classes of 2014 to 2024)

North Carolina — **National Average**

***National averages are not yet availale.**

Source: *NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports; NCES Digest of Education Statistics, Table 21*

K-12 Public High School Graduation Rates, by Student Subgroup (Class of 2024)

All Students	87%
American Indian/Alaskan	82%
Asian	95%
Black	85%
Hispanic	83%
Two+ Races	84%
White	90%
Male	85%
Female	89%
Economically Disadvantaged	83%
Students with Disabilities	72%
English Language Learners	73%

Source: *NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports*
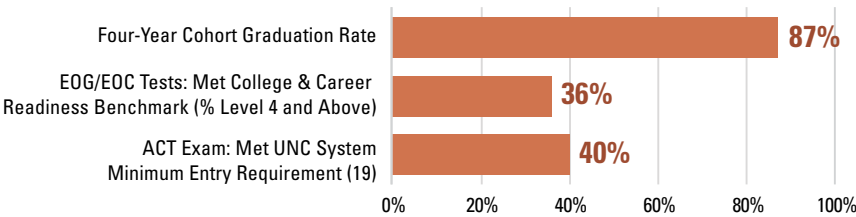
High School Diploma Integrity

The four-year cohort graduation rate in North Carolina public schools increased from **77%** in 2010 to **87%** in 2024. The integrity of North Carolina's high school diploma is called into question when high school graduation rates are compared with ACT scores and End-of-Course exam proficiency. The majority of students graduate without achieving college and career ready standards in math, English, and biology, and without meeting the minimum ACT score required for admission into UNC System universities, with greater disparities for economically disadvantaged students.

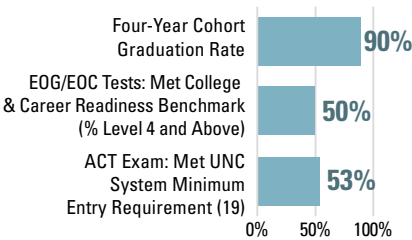***Source:*** *NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports*

Public High School Graduation Rates vs. Postsecondary Readiness, by Student Subgroup (Graduating Class of 2024)
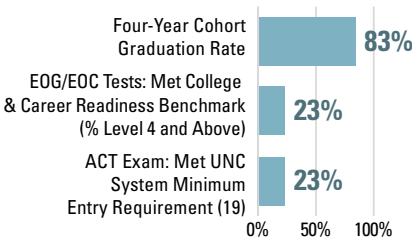
All Students

Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	87%
EOG/EOC Tests: Met College & Career Readiness Benchmark (% Level 4 and Above)	36%
ACT Exam: Met UNC System Minimum Entry Requirement (19)	40%

Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students

Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	90%
EOG/EOC Tests: Met College & Career Readiness Benchmark (% Level 4 and Above)	50%
ACT Exam: Met UNC System Minimum Entry Requirement (19)	53%

Economically Disadvantaged Students

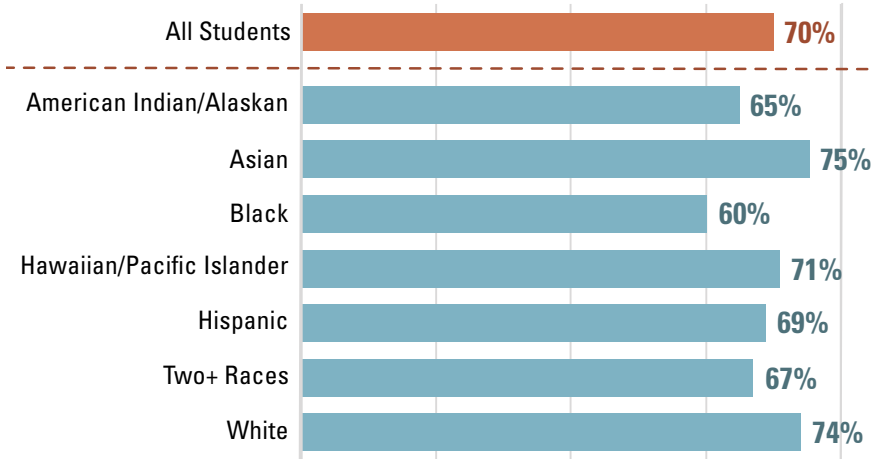|	
Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	83%
EOG/EOC Tests: Met College & Career Readiness Benchmark (% Level 4 and Above)	23%
ACT Exam: Met UNC System Minimum Entry Requirement (19)	23%

Source: *NC DPI Accountability Data Sets and Reports*

In 2023, female students had a 4-year graduation rate of **89%** and a college enrollment rate of **45%**, while male students had a 4-year graduation rate of **85%** and an enrollment rate of **31%**.

Source: *myFutureNC Data Dashboards, Career & College Access*
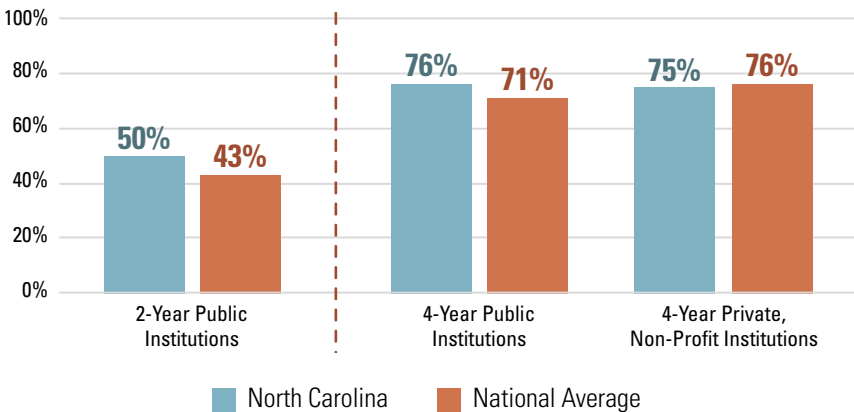
70

First Year Progression Rate* in the North Carolina Community College System, by Race/Ethnicity (Fall 2022)

Category	Rate
All Students	70%
American Indian/Alaskan	65%
Asian	75%
Black	60%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	71%
Hispanic	69%
Two+ Races	67%
White	74%

Percentage of first-time credential-seeking students who graduate prior to or are enrolled in postsecondary education during the subsequent fall term.

**Source:** *NCCCS Analytics and Reporting, First Year Progression Dashboard*

Six-Year Higher Education Graduation Rates (Fall 2018 Cohort)

Institution	North Carolina	National Average
2-Year Public Institutions	50%	43%
4-Year Public Institutions	76%	71%
4-Year Private, Non-Profit Institutions	75%	76%

Source: *National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, Yearly Progress and Completion*
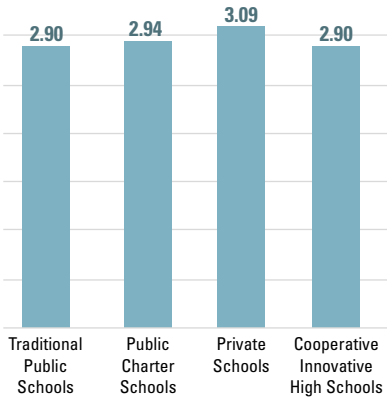
UNC System Acceptance Rates, by Incoming High School Type (Fall 2024)
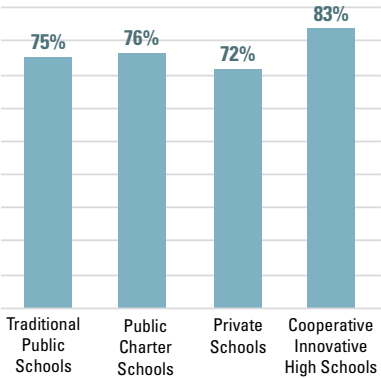
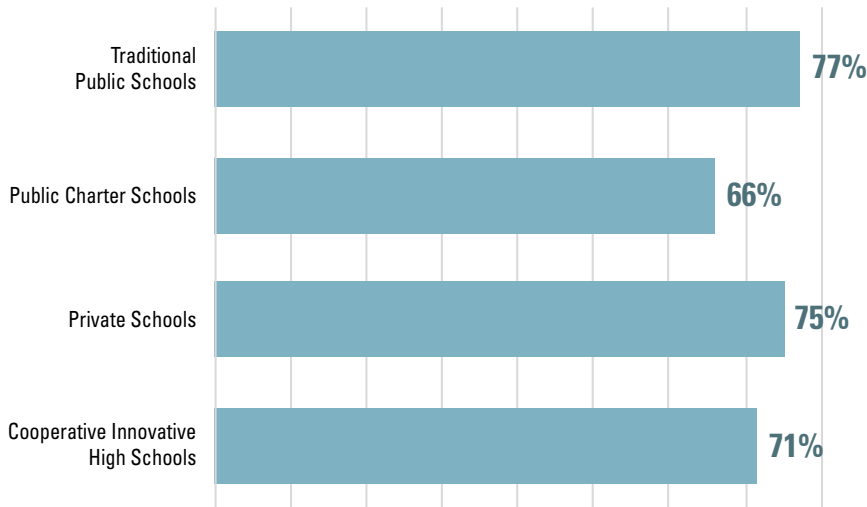*Source: UNC System Interactive Data Dashboards*

UNC System First Year GPA, by Incoming High School Type (Fall 2023)

Source: UNC System Interactive Data Dashboards

UNC System Six-Year Graduation Rates, by Incoming High School Type (2018 Cohort)

Source: UNC System Interactive Data Dashboards

UNC System Enrollment and Six-Year Graduation Rates of First-Time Students Attending Full-Time (2018 Cohort)

Institution	Enrollment	Graduation Rate
Appalachian State University	3,445	75%
East Carolina University	4,175	62%
Elizabeth City State University	418	43%
Fayetteville State University	518	38%
NC A&T State University	2,204	57%
NC Central University	1,143	41%
NC State University	4,845	85%
UNC Asheville	788	54%
UNC-Chapel Hill	4,327	91%
UNC Charlotte	3,708	69%
UNC Greensboro	2,989	56%
UNC Pembroke	1,233	43%
UNC School of the Arts	243	78%
UNC Wilmington	2,161	70%
Western Carolina University	2,198	60%
Winston-Salem State University	933	47%
UNC System Total	**34,428**	**68%**

Source: *UNC System Interactive Data Dashboards*

At **91%**, UNC-Chapel Hill has the highest six-year graduation rate within the UNC System for full-time students attending for the first time.
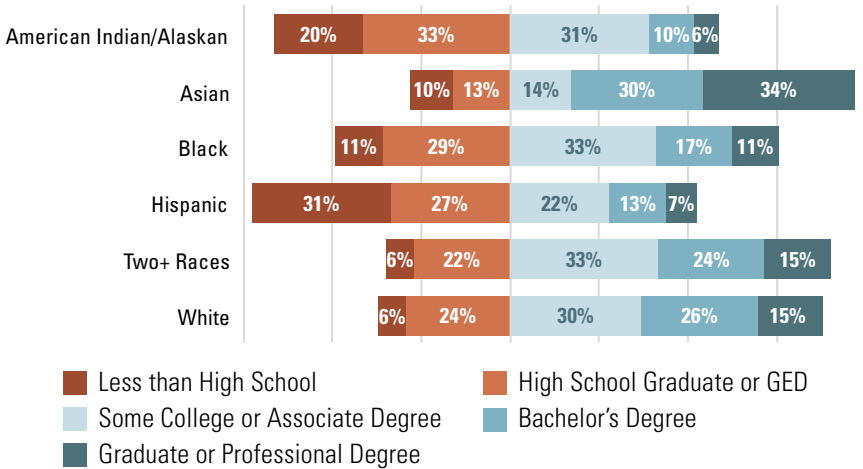
Source: *UNC System Interactive Data Dashboards*

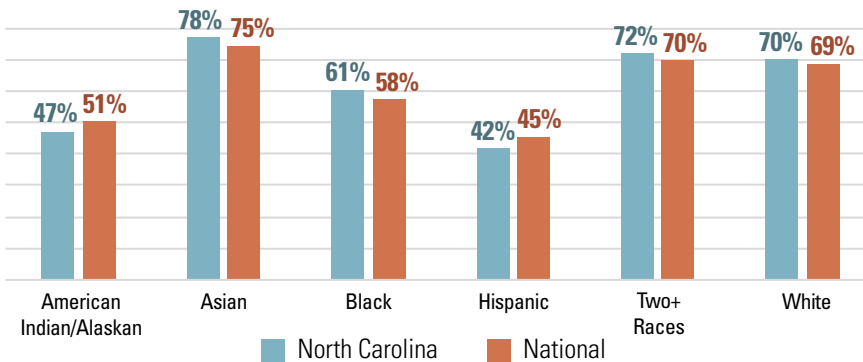## Educational Attainment of Adults Ages 25 and Older, by Race/Ethnicity (2023)

Race/Ethnicity	Less than High School	High School Graduate or GED	Some College or Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
American Indian/Alaskan	20%	33%	31%	10%	6%
Asian	10%	13%	14%	30%	34%
Black	11%	29%	33%	17%	11%
Hispanic	31%	27%	22%	13%	7%
Two+ Races	6%	22%	33%	24%	15%
White	6%	24%	30%	26%	15%

- Less than High School
- High School Graduate or GED
- Some College or Associate Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Graduate or Professional Degree

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023), American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table S0201

## Adults Ages 25 and Older with Any Postsecondary Education, by Race/Ethnicity (2023)

Race/Ethnicity	North Carolina	National
American Indian/Alaskan	47%	51%
Asian	78%	75%
Black	61%	58%
Hispanic	42%	45%
Two+ Races	72%	70%
White	70%	69%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023), American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table S0201

31% of Hispanic adults and **11%** of Black adults over the age of 25 have less than a high school diploma, compared to **6%** of White adults.
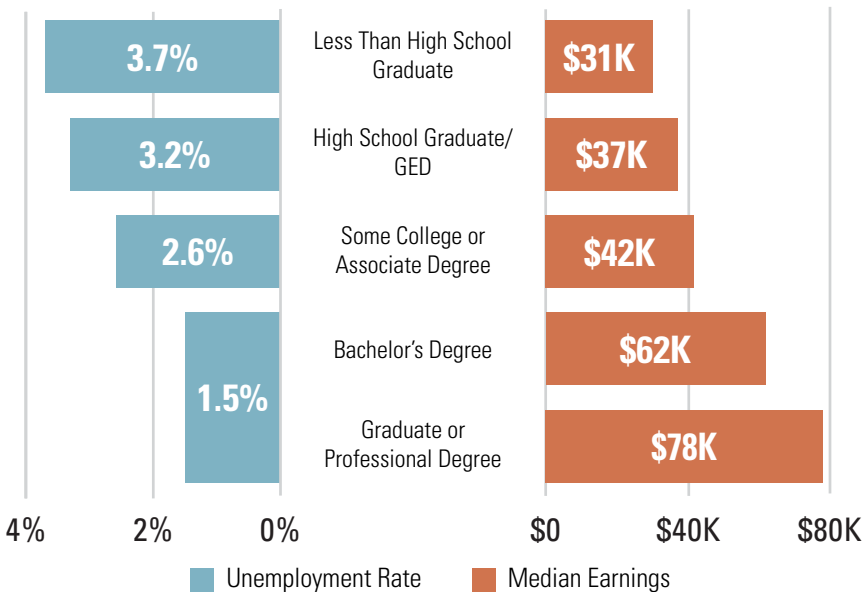
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023), American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table S0201

Percentage of Adults Ages 25 to 44 with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, by County (2025)

22.6%   79.5%
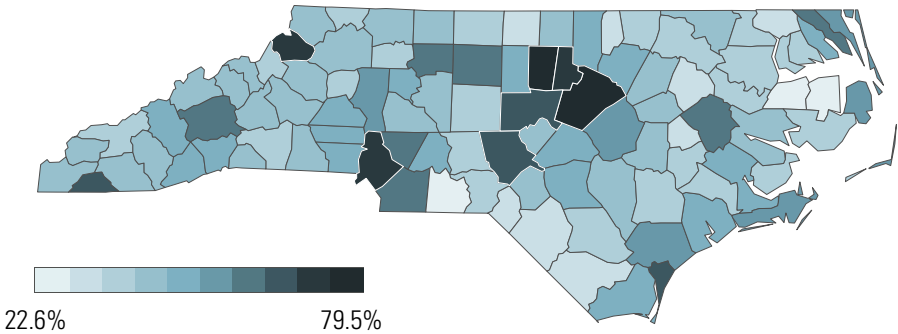
Source: myFutureNC

Unemployment Rate and Median Earnings of Adults Age 25 and Older, by Educational Attainment (2023)

	Unemployment Rate	Median Earnings
Less Than High School Graduate	3.7%	$31K
High School Graduate/GED	3.2%	$37K
Some College or Associate Degree	2.6%	$42K
Bachelor's Degree	1.5%	$62K
Graduate or Professional Degree	1.5%	$78K

4%   2%   0% $0 $40K $80K

■ Unemployment Rate   ■ Median Earnings

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023), American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table B20004; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment (2023), Table 15

BEST NC

Business for Educational Success and Transformation

Our Vision

At BEST NC, we envision a North Carolina in which every student graduates with the knowledge, skills and behaviors to succeed in a competitive global economy.

BEST NC's mission is to unite an engaged and informed business perspective to build consensus toward dramatically transforming and improving education in North Carolina.

BEST NC Board